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PLAINS GUARDIAN

VOLUME 51 NO. 1 *Serving the Kansas Army and Air National Guard, Kansas Emergency Management, Kansas Homeland Security and Civil Air Patrol* FEBRUARY 2008

731st Transportation Company receives heroes' welcome

By Steve Larson

The weather was sunny in Wichita on Feb. 7 and so were the faces of hundreds of family and friends of the 731st Transportation Company who were at the Century II Convention Center to welcome home their Soldiers from a year-long deployment to Iraq.

The crowd's mood was one of excitement and anticipation as they waited in the auditorium for the appearance of their Soldiers. Many had signs of welcome. Many others wore T-shirts proclaiming their proud connection with a particular Soldier — a husband, a daddy, a daughter, a friend.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," announced Capt. Roland Galliard, master of ceremonies, "please welcome home 731st SECFOR."

It was an invitation that did not need to be repeated as the crowd erupted into cheers and applause, waving their signs while the stage curtain rose to reveal the Soldiers of the 731st Transportation Company, which had been designated a SECFOR (Security Force) while in Iraq.

Following the invocation by Chaplain (Col.) Donald Davidson, Galliard introduced Maj. Brad Burns, commander of the 731st.

"The 731st is all present and accounted for," said Burns, an announcement that produced another round of cheers and applause.

"The 731st is the most decorated company in the battalion and known as one of the elite companies to have ever served in Iraq," Burns continued. "I'm very proud of that."

"However, many of you may recall back in November of 2006 when I asked the Soldiers to have a common goal with me. Do you remember what that was?" asked Burns. "To come home safe." He paused. "Mission accomplished."

Burns recognized Stacy Sanders, the company's family readiness coordinator and the members of the Patriot Guard "who support all Soldiers." Burns also thanked the families "for all the sacrifices you've made. This country can never repay you."

"I'm proud to be the commander of this company," Burns concluded. "I'm proud to have served with each of you. 731st, welcome home."

"No unit has served with more valor and distinction than the finest Soldiers you'll ever see standing behind me right now here today," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general.

"My sincere thanks to the families," said Bunting. "I knew you'd be here, these Soldiers knew you'd be here, that this community would come... that the Patriot Guard would be here."

"We owe you a debt of gratitude that we can never repay," he continued, "but I want



With his troops solidly behind him, Maj. Brad Burns addresses families and friends that welcomed the 731st Transportation Company home from a year-long tour of duty in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo by Jane Welch)

you to know that it is for you that we serve. No one is more important to us than you."

Bunting reminded the families that they still needed to keep their Soldiers safe. "Don't let them unwind too fast at home," he said. "I need you and them to be safe."

"But the most important thing they need to be today is home with you," said Bunting, "and that's a very easy thing to accomplish."

1st Sgt. Darrell Keller called the troops

to attention and with a quick "Dismissed" from Bunting, the Soldiers rushed off of the stage to find their families, some not even bothering with the formality of using the aisles, but taking a more direct route over the rows of seats to waiting arms.

In the nearby convention hall, the Soldiers searched the piles of duffel bags to find their gear, then headed home for much-anticipated time with their families.

Mission accomplished.

73rd Civil Support Team trains at Fort Leavenworth



Personnel of the 73rd Civil Support Team go through dry decontamination during a training exercise at Fort Leavenworth. (Photo by Maj. Shelly Bausch)

By Maj. Shelly Bausch, UPAR

The 73rd Civil Support Team that responds with local civil authorities to domestic attacks involving weapons of mass destruction conducted a training exercise Dec. 4-7 at Sherman Army Airfield, Fort Leavenworth. The training exercise was contracted by Davis Defense Group.

The 73rd Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) responds to terrorist attacks involving nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical weapons. Its 22 active-duty Army and Air National Guardsmen are responsible for all of

Kansas, as well as working in partnerships with neighboring states. They may also be tasked to help with federal missions.

The team conducts and participates in at least 12 collective training events per year. Most events are with local responders, some with neighboring states' CSTs and at least one at a national training site.

The 73rd CST worked with Fort Leavenworth and Leavenworth first responders in this December exercise. The CST conducted numerous site recon and sampling missions and analyzed several samples in the analytical lab.

Regional training centers will enhance homeland security

By Tech. Sgt. Jami Perusich

On March 19, the Adjutant General's Department will unveil new training capabilities at the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center in Salina.

In April 2007, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting announced a proposal to develop regional training centers focused on enhancing the state's capabilities

to defend against terrorism and respond to disasters and emergencies. The regional training centers concept resulted from The Adjutant General's Department working with numerous state and local government agencies and public safety professional organizations to determine how best to integrate the needs of emergency responders, public

(Continued on Page 2)



The 242nd Engineering Company, based in Coffeyville and Winfield, Kan., recently sent seven Soldiers to Crisis City at the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center to complete a construction project. The Soldiers are building a rail bed that measures 400 feet long by 32 feet wide. Tracks will be laid on the rail bed and a train engine and several cars will be placed at the site to simulate a derailment. This completed project will give vital training on hazardous material spills and other disasters to civilian and military first responders. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jami Perusich)

Four Guardsmen honored for exemplary actions in Iraq

By Steve Larson

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius presented military awards to four Kansas National Guardsmen of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation and 714th Maintenance Company for actions taken while serving in Iraq. As governor, Sebelius is commander-in-chief of the Kansas National Guard.

The presentations were made during a special ceremony Jan. 22 in the rotunda of the Kansas Statehouse.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert N. Hammon received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions during an incident that occurred on June 2, 2007, when the UH-60 Black Hawk he was piloting came under fire from enemy forces on the ground. The helicopter was hit by several tracer rounds, which severely damaged the tail rotor. Hammon was able to pilot the aircraft three-quarters of a mile to a safer area and land. Hammon was awarded the Combat Action Badge in an earlier ceremony.

Sgt. 1st Class David Edington and Pfc.

Dave Fisher each were awarded a Bronze Star Medal for actions involving a mortar and rocket attack on the unit's base of operations. After sustaining multiple injuries to his left arm and leg from nearby mortar explosions, Edington risked further injury and his own safety to assist other wounded Soldiers in the platoon with medical treatment and evacuation from the area. Fisher risked personal injury during the attack to render medical assistance to four local national citizens who had received life threatening injuries. Despite the threat of more incoming mortars, Fisher carried the wounded citizens to bunkers, continued to provide them medical aide and searched for additional casualties in the nearby housing area.

Both men also received the Combat Action Badge for this incident.

The 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation was deployed to Iraq from Sept. 28, 2006, to Sept. 8, 2007, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Four Kansas National Guardsmen received military awards from Gov. Kathleen Sebelius during a special ceremony in the Kansas Statehouse on Jan. 22 for actions performed during their service in Iraq. From the left are Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Hammon, Pfc. David Fisher, Sgt. 1st Class David Edington and 1st Lt. Pete Barrett. Hammon, Fisher and Edington are members of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation; Barrett is with the 714th Maintenance Company. (Photo by Larry Howell)

1st Lt. Pete Barrett, 714th Maintenance Company, was presented with the Bronze Star Medal for exemplary service during his unit's deployment to Iraq. Barrett was cited for his "outstanding dedication to

duty during combat operations in Iraq" which "contributed to the overwhelming success of the command's mission." Barrett was deployed to Iraq from Sept. 12, 2006, to Aug. 17, 2007.

Embedded Training Team deploys to Afghanistan



Members of the Embedded Training Team 4 wait for the start of the deployment ceremony honoring them as they prepare to deploy to Afghanistan (Photo by Steve Larson)

Sixteen Kansas National Guardsmen were honored in a departure ceremony on Tuesday, Jan. 22 as they prepared to deploy to Afghanistan. The ceremony took place in the Topeka South Armory at Forbes Field.

"Embedded Training Teams are a vital part of the strategy for stabilizing Afghanistan," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general. "By assisting the Afghan people to sustain their own military forces, we are helping to make their nation and the world a more secure place to live."

The Soldiers, under the command of Maj. Robert Wood, mobilized to Fort Riley

for additional training before deploying to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. There, they will serve as military advisors to the Afghan National Army to train, advise and assist in combat operations, including maneuver and tactics, logistics and administrative functions.

The Guardsmen were drawn from several units across the state, including Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas; 69th Troop Command; 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery; 1st Battalion, 635th Armor; Detachment 2, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery; 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry and 714th Maintenance Company.

Moser earns "Gold Badge" Award

By Staff Sgt. Emily Alley

Retention Office Manager Master Sgt.

Scott Moser counsels almost a thousand people and manages a budget of several million dollars. It's a hard job, but Moser is officially one of the best in the nation.

Moser recently won the regional Outstanding Rookie Retention Office Manager of the Year award and is now authorized to wear the Gold Badge, an accouterment signifying the award.

"It's hard competition," Moser said. "I won because the base allowed me to do



Master Sgt. Scott Moser

my job. I get a lot of good backing."

He competed regionally with nine other states that entered nominees, including Moser's instructor from his retention office manager's course.

Moser's work with Unit Career Advisors improved unit retention rates, which has kept the 190th Air Refueling Wing fully staffed over the past year and reduced retraining costs. He also created a Retention Office and Unit Career Advisor portal, a comprehensive retention website.

Moser thrives on the ability to be creative, and develop programs to encourage unit members to continue to reenlist. His innovation has been emulated by his colleagues.

"We feed off each other," said Moser. "We share things."

Moser says that being copied has been his greatest complement. More than 70 of his peers are using programs he developed.

Infantry company keeping on top of warrior skills

By Sgt. 1st Class Eric Page

In February, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry took the first steps in the gunnery process while concurrently training dismount troops. The battalion was at Fort Riley, using the bivouac site, Maneuver and Training Equipment Site bays and dismount training areas. There were several tasks to be accomplished, but the company worked together and had a safe training weekend.

Staff Sgt. Dwane Clifford, a company squad leader, planned and executed training lanes for the dismounted squads. The Soldiers moved down pre-planned squad lanes and reacted to contact. Each squad

encountered three ambushes and had to perform a different battle drill at each to survive. On Sunday, the troops went on a three-mile ruck march.

The crews also performed maintenance and service checks on their Bradley Fighting Vehicles. The noncommissioned officers started Bradley gunnery skills tests so they can evaluate the remainder of the crews next month. It has been a long time since these Soldiers have worked with the Bradley Fighting Vehicles, but they found the skills came back rapidly. Many Soldiers with no previous Bradley experience were given some hands-on time with the weapons system.

Regional training centers

Continued from Page 1

safety and the National Guard into realistic training and exercise facilities. The 2007 Kansas legislature approved funding to begin the project with the first year's resources dedicated to building the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center.

The Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center will offer training to military units, as well as state and local first responders. The goal of the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center is to provide "Real Training for the Real World." Headquartered in Salina, the center will bring together the Kansas Air National Guard's Smoky Hill Range, 284th Air Support Operations Squadron, the Kansas Regional Training Institute, a Kansas Army Guard Pre-mobilization Training Assistance Team and a newly created "Crisis City."

Each component of the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center brings a unique training/support element to the mix. The Smoky Hill Range provides training for Kansas Guardsmen, as well as active-duty, Guard and Reserve Airmen and Soldiers from other states. In addition, the 284th Air Support Operations Squadron, which will be located at Smoky Hill Range, will offer Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle training to Air National Guard Air Support personnel from around the nation. The Air Support Operations

Squadron will not be fully operational until October 2009, but an interim detachment has already been stood up at the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center headquarters.

Two other members of the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center, the Kansas Regional Training Institute and the Pre-Mobilization Training Assistance Element, will provide Kansas units the opportunity to "deploy" to Salina for real-world training. Having those pre-mobilization capabilities in Salina will eliminate the need for lengthy pre-deployment time away from home. It will also ensure Kansas troops are getting their needs met at a critical time for both them and their families.

Lastly, the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center Crisis City will offer homeland security training for civilian and military first responders. Crisis City is poised to be an asset beyond compare for the men and women of Kansas who we depend on for state and local emergencies. Crisis City will also fill the need for a realistic training environment for Kansas National Guardsmen to hone their Defense Support to Civil Authority mission critical skills.

Col. Randy Roebuck, currently the commander of the Air National Guard's 184th Intelligence Wing at McConnell Air Force Base, will assume command of the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center.

108th command passes to Leger



Lt. Col. Dave Leger (left), incoming commander for the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation, accepts the battalion colors from Col. Vic Braden, commander, 69th Troop Command, in a change of command ceremony on Jan. 6, 2008. (Photo by Jane Welch)

Lt. Col. David Leger, Salina, took command of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment (Air Assault), Kansas Army National Guard, in a change of command ceremony in Topeka on Jan. 6.

Leger, 50, began his military career on May 12, 1980. He received basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and immediately entered Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Flight Training at Fort Rucker, Ala. After flight school graduation he was assigned as an OH-58A and UH-1H helicopter pilot in Company B, 2nd Aviation Battalion at Camp Casey, South Korea. His last assignment on active duty was the aviation maintenance officer for the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry at Fort Riley. He left active duty in 1985 to pursue a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering at Kansas State University.

He went to work full time for the Kansas National Guard in 1987 as the supervisory maintenance test pilot at the Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Salina. He currently holds the position of Army Air Support Facility commander. He received his commission as a second lieutenant from the Kansas Military Academy in 1988.

He has held numerous positions including Aviation Unit Maintenance Platoon Leader, Company Operations Officer, Commander of Company D, 135th Aviation, Commander of Company D, 108th Aviation, 108th Aviation logistics officer, 35th Division aviation officer, 108th Aviation battalion executive officer and Kansas state Army aviation officer.

He has participated in several overseas deployments and training exercises including Operation New Horizons as the

aviation officer in charge to Belize in 2001 and to Panama in 2005. In 2003 he deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina as the executive officer of the 108th Aviation.

Leger has attended numerous military schools including the Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Aviator Course, NBC Officer Defense Course, Aviation Maintenance Officer Course, Aviation Basic Course, Aviation Officer Advanced Course, Combined Arms and Services Staff School, UH-60 Aircraft Qualification Course, and the Command and General Staff Officer Course.

He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 2005. He is currently assigned to the Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas – Land Component as the aviation branch chief.

Leger's military awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Force Expeditionary Medal, Armed Force Reserve Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon, NATO Medal (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the Master Army Aviator Badge. His state awards include the Kansas Emergency Duty Ribbon with six sunflower devices, Kansas Homeland Defense Service Ribbon and the Kansas National Guard Service Medal.

Leger resides in Salina, Kan. He is married to the former Jettie Adams of Kentucky. They have five children; William, Zachary, Ella, Christopher and Laura.

Battery C supports local Recruit Sustainment Program

By Sgt. 1st Class Steve Ahlstedt, UPAR

Newly enlisted Soldiers attached to the Recruit Sustainment Program in Salina got some hands-on training with several crew-served weapons during February drill.

"The new recruits were very eager for some hands-on learning with a variety of crew served weapons," said Spc. Shane Brown, unit armorer for Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery in Abilene. Brown performed preliminary marksmanship instruction on the M2HB, the M249 squad automatic weapon, MK19 40MM grenade launcher, M16A2 rifle and M203 grenade launcher.

"The new warriors received top quality weapons training from Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans like Specialist Shane

Brown and Staff Sergeant James Surber," said Master Sgt. Roger Sinclair, acting first sergeant for the RSP site in Salina. "Beyond basic M16 weapons skills, these Soldiers are being challenged with squad and crew served weapons. They now have basic knowledge of how to disassemble, reassemble, fire and employ these weapon systems."

During February drill they also received classes on how to identify Improvised Explosive Devices. This class was instructed by Spc. Pete Richert, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. All the instruction was well received by the young warriors.

"First-hand combat experiences are valuable to Soldiers who will be faced with it in the future," said Sinclair.

International Officers make annual visit to Kansas capital

Forty-one military officers from 39 nations visited Topeka Jan. 25 to learn about state government and the state judicial system. The international officers are enrolled in a year-long course of study at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth.

"These officers are the future leaders of their nations," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general. "Each year, we give these officers an overview of how our Kansas government works and how our National Guard serves the people of the state. This information helps them understand who we are as a state and a nation and how we can work together for our mutual benefit."

The officers arrived at the Memorial Hall Building at approximately 8 a.m. Brig. Gen. Deborah Rose, director of Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas, Kansas National Guard, gave the officers an overview of the Kansas National Guard's history.

Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh also spoke to the officers, giving them a short lecture on the workings of Kansas government.

The officers then took a short walk to the Kansas Statehouse, where they met briefly with Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson and some officers spoke with news reporters and film crews.

Following a tour of the Statehouse, the officers walked to the Judicial Building where the Honorable Lawton R. Nuss, justice of the Kansas Supreme Court, gave an overview of the Kansas court system.

The officers were treated to lunch at the Kansas Museum of History, where they also saw a presentation on Native Americans and toured the museum.

This year marks the 48th annual visit to Topeka and the 114th year that international officers have been attending the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth.



Brig. Gen. Deborah Rose chats with Maj. Sholto Stephens from New Zealand during a visit to Topeka by International Officers studying at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. (Photo by Jane Welch)

Guardsmen hone gunnery skills during drill weekend

By Spc. Joseph Andaverde, UPAR

1st Battalion, 635th Armor conducted its first three-day Multiple Unit Training Assembly in many years Feb. 1-3. Soldiers were busy throughout the weekend performing gunnery skills training in preparation for tank gunnery in the upcoming annual training. Soldiers also conducted pre-marksmanship instruction in preparation for weapons ranges in March at

Kansas Regional Training Center.

Soldiers conducted the tank and humvee gunnery training at the Maneuver and Training Equipment Site at Fort Riley. The training serves as required safety certification in order to conduct live fire training in coming months. Soldiers train and test on ability to assemble and disassemble machine guns, mount and employ weapons systems and identification of armored vehicles.



Maj. Jason Nelson is tested on assembly and disassembly of an M2 .50 caliber machine gun. (Photo by Spc. Joseph Andaverde, UPAR)

2007 was a year of challenges; more lie ahead

By Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting

Each new year brings many changes for the Kansas Adjutant General's Department and 2008 will be no different. We will continue to transform to new missions, new operating systems and face budget challenges at all levels – this has been true for more than 150 years.



Maj. Gen.
Tod M. Bunting

We will find our way through the challenges and difficulties. After all, 2007 taught us a little about weathering storms with four record breaking ones touching every county in the state.

To succeed in our major role of public safety, we will seek partnerships with industry and the private sector and our citizens. We will continue to recruit the most talented to join our department, the National Guard, and our vision for a better future.

Change is ever present and the key is to manage it in such a way that we emerge better than we were before. People often resist the good change almost as much as the change they do not want. But change is inevitable and many good changes make us the great organization we are today.

I've seen change personally as I started my service at the 190th ARW in 1978. Change is something that I once saw as forced upon me, but I now embrace it. We all must embrace it if we are to improve, to move forward, to make a difference.

Five years ago the 190th Air Refueling Wing was not involved much with military support of civilian authority, and few had heard of an EMEDS (Expeditionary Medical Support System). Now we are known nationwide for our EMEDS mission to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina, and our ongoing EMEDS mission that still today provides a hospital for the town of Greensburg. During an ice storm or any pandemic the 190th ARW is a key strategic location in Kansas. The basic mission of this Wing has not changed for more than 30 years, but its impact on the state

Soldier to Soldier

Reflections on 39+ years of service

By Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Romans

As I prepare for the last deployment of my career and enter my last year of service, I want to share a few thoughts with you. It was 4 a.m. on a cold day in 1969 when I said goodbye to Mom at home. Dad drove me to the recruiting station to ship out for boot camp. It was five days after my 18th birthday. My mother cried. At the recruiting depot, my dad gave me a solemn handshake and looked me in the eye. Without a word he turned around and walked back out into the cold to his car. I realized my life would never be the same again. That was 39 years ago and I remember it like it was yesterday.



Command Sgt. Maj.
Joe Romans

The final chapter of that journey has yet to be written as I deploy. But something I will carry with me is a lifetime of memories and experiences.

Families: Those that stay behind also serve. Husbands and wives that take over the heavy burden of both parents while those they love deploy. Parents who send their greatest treasure, (their sons and daughters) into foreign lands to do their

has grown dramatically.

The 184th Intel Wing once held the name Bomb Wing, then Air Refueling Wing, and with the Base Realignment and Closure movement, now it's newest mission is a very different one, but its role is still as significant as ever as it provides the nation's warriors with intelligence needed to be successful, including providing xxx for the entire U.S. Air Force.

In the Army Guard we have changed many units, including standing down two Artillery Brigade size units and mobilizing a new unit within 120 days of creating it.

Let's focus for a moment on the changes we've made for the people in this organization starting with the members of the Kansas National Guard and their families who serve and sacrifice so that our nation's rights and freedoms are protected.

We saw the passage of the Military Bill of Rights in recent years which provides many additional benefits for our service members and families. We've added Family Support staffing to ensure those families of our deployed Soldiers and Airmen have the help they need. We've also enhanced staffing in our Chaplain office, JAG office and Inspector General Office.

We helped military families through the creation of the Kansas Military Emergency Relief Fund, which brought in more than \$84,000 in 2006 when Kansans made donations through by checking a box on their state income taxes. The Kansas National Guard Foundation was also formed to help Soldiers and their families in need. We have a 60 day rehire policy, a one year dwell policy, and we ensure our wounded troops are visited frequently and their needs are met. We've set a priority on traditional guard mentoring and senior staff assignments.

We have provided diversity training and equal opportunity briefings annually for our department and Guard members. We've worked to increase new opportunities for feedback through surveys and town hall meetings. And we've recognized many for their years of military service as well as outstanding service in disaster response.

The Great Plains Regional Training

duty. Children, who miss having Dad or Mom at birthdays, school recitals or just reading a story at bedtime. In the end, a big part of why we serve is to protect those we love. We couldn't do it without them and we are compelled to do it for them. Thanks to the families for being the rock. You enable us to do the tough job we must do.

Soldiers: What does "volunteer Army" really mean? It means that young men and women who have about a million other choices decide to serve their country and put themselves in harm's way. They do this because they believe in something greater than themselves. That's why we will win this war on terror and any other war we have to fight. These young Americans believe! They believe that what we have is worth defending. When other nation's Soldiers are looking for a way out, Americans will head toward the sound of the guns. They execute their missions, day after day, to the very best of their abilities. They are the unbreakable wall that protects this nation.

Noncommissioned officers: We live in a world today where NCOs make decisions that can affect foreign policy and world opinion. More than ever, NCOs are the backbone of our Armed Forces. It all rides on their shoulders. It's not even a one block war now, it's a room-to-room war. A war

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Center, announced last year, will soon be ready to provide first responders a place to train with each other and the National Guard in a hands-on training venue to improve homeland disaster response. Through this initiative we've also improved training opportunities for the Guard where the 161st Field Artillery recently received the majority of its pre-mobilization training in state for the first time ever.

We've opened the Eisenhower Center for Homeland Security Studies in the Nickell Armory in Topeka to provide more classroom training opportunities teaching courses in homeland security, emergency management and crisis management not currently provided in the state. The Kansas Intelligence Fusion Center is slated to open later this year to better coordinate multi-agency intelligence analysis for the production of tactical and strategic intelligence products.

Our department will be the first in the nation to create a Resiliency Center. This center is in its early stages of development and will include research and services for those in the military suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

We've taken many steps to reach out to the private sector with the expansion of the Committee on Emergency Preparedness Response. This group provides guidance and feedback to the department in areas of preparedness and disaster response.

We've improved armory conditions and added fitness centers at armories throughout the state. We created an infrastructure committee for the entire National Guard

and as a result developed a master plan for all future needs of our facilities across the state. This has resulted in some unique partnerships including the opening of an armory in Manhattan, and at Pittsburg State University.

We've enhanced our capabilities for disaster response including the remodeling of the State Emergency Operations Center to a much more technologically advanced location; the purchase of the Incident Response Vehicle which was deployed to Greensburg for its first mission; and the enhancement of our alternate disaster operations location in Salina.

We're looking for opportunities to make our agency more joint as both Army and Air use the Smoky Hill Range and the Great Plains Regional Training Center. We're continuing to review other such joint efforts including the possibility of moving a portion of the Army National Guard 108th Aviation Unit to Wichita's McConnell Air Force Base. This is still in the preliminary stages of study.

Often we focus on what difficulties change will bring and why it won't work. But we must look at the many positive things the changes referenced above have brought us, realizing some of the changes were forced by legislation or regulation, but still we made the best of what we could and the results are positive.

Challenging times require creative and strategic thinking. This year, we'll do our best to continue the great work we've started in the past couple of years and in doing so we'll continue to make a difference for our troops, their families and every Kansan counting on this department.

Town hall meetings keep warrant officers informed

By Command Chief Warrant Officer 5 Mark Jensen

On Jan. 31, 2008, we held the first Warrant Officer Town Hall meeting in Topeka.

These meetings are designed to keep warrant officers informed and provide an opportunity for direct interaction with the command chief to voice issues, ask and answer questions and identify topics for consideration by the senior leadership regarding warrant officer personnel actions, accessions and process specific to Kansas.



Command Chief
Warrant Officer 5
Mark Jensen

The first meeting was held during the week and therefore was a bit light on attendance, but the energy of those present indicated a desire to continue these town hall meetings on a quarterly basis. The next meeting will tentatively be scheduled on a Saturday in May to provide traditional warrant officers a better opportunity to attend.

I would suggest that M-day Soldiers wishing to attend may approach their unit commander to participate in an RMA or rescheduled unit training status. The date will be announced by the end of March and I encourage each of you to plan on being there.

Bring your questions, concerns and a positive attitude toward refining the culture and enhancing the role of the Warrant Officer Corps in Kansas. Thanks to each of you for your contributions in keeping our Soldiers, families and Nation safe.

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@us.army.mil).

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

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The Plains Guardian may be read online at
http://www.Kansas.gov/ksadjutantgeneral/Library/Plains_Guardian_current_issue.pdf
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Ask the TAG



New column will provide answers to your questions

Do you have a question you'd like to ask Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general? A new question and answer column in the Plains Guardian will give you that opportunity. Questions may be submitted anonymously, if desired.

Please send your question(s) via e-mail to Tagquestions@us.army.mil or by mail to the Adjutant General's Department Public Affairs Office, Room 108, Attention Sharon Watson, 2722 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, KS 66611.

Maj. Gen. Bunting will review the questions and provide answers to as many questions as possible in the TAG Q&A column in the next edition of the Plains Guardian.

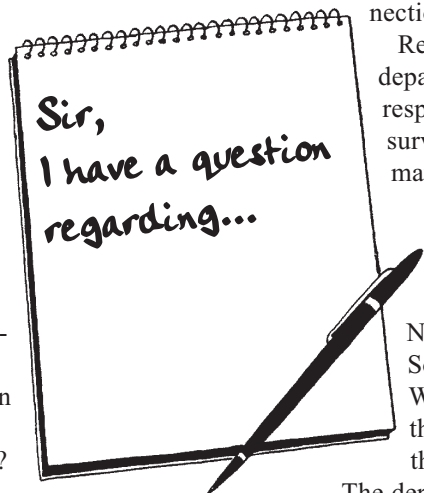
Why are we doing this? This column will provide another avenue for The Adjutant General's Department staff and Kansas Guard members to ask questions which may be on the minds of several people.

In the future, you'll be hearing more

about the Connected Campaign, which is about making the organization stronger by increasing and strengthening ties among Guard members, stakeholders, communities and more. We will look at some pilot projects for certain areas of the organization to improve communication and connections.

Recently, some of our department staff responded to a climate survey. Additional climate surveys are planned for both wings of the Kansas Air Guard, and for traditional National Guard Soldiers and Airmen. We hope you'll take the time to answer these questions.

The department recently hired Bruce Stewart, formerly with the National Guard Bureau, to assist in some of the above projects. Stewart will be involved in a number of areas and plans to write a column in future editions of the Plains Guardian.



Newton recruiter takes top honor

By Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke

The Kansas Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention force recently held its annual dining out and awards ceremony where Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Kirk was named the Chief's 54 award recipient as the top enlisted recruiter for Kansas.

Kirk, a recruiter in Newton, attained 170 percent of his assigned mission by enlisting 39 new Soldiers in the Kansas Army National Guard to take the top honor.

In one of the most highly contested races in recent years, Kirk led for the whole of the fiscal year, but it wasn't until August and September that he really began to pull away. Kirk says he wasn't really concerned with trying to earn the award until late in the year. When he realized that the top spot was within his grasp, he enlisted 10 recruits in August and another eight in September to solidify the top honor.

"I led from Oct. 1," Kirk said, "but I really wasn't going for Chief's 54 until Master Sgt. (Roger) Sinclair told me to go for it. I had taken time off in July and was still a couple ahead."

"It was tight all year," Kirk continued.

"You never knew if another recruiter was going to enlist four or five in a month. So I did everything I could those last two months to try to win."

Earning the honor of Chief's 54 takes exceptional effort and sacrifice and represents the highest award a Soldier can earn in recruiting.

"Earning Chief's 54 means you have accomplished the highest award in recruiting," said Kirk. "It is really the pinnacle of this career. But it takes a lot of lost family time and sacrifice on everybody's part. It wasn't just me."

Also honored during the ceremonies was Sgt. 1st Class Richard Haney as The Adjutant General's Award for Chief's 54 runner-up. Haney enlisted 33 Soldiers, 32 of which were non-prior service.

The Recruiting and Retention Commander's Award for third overall percentage of mission was tied with Sgt. 1st Class Ralph Coy and Sgt. 1st Class John Kilpatrick earning the award.

Achieving the Rookie of the Year award was Sgt. Justinn Doby. In his first full year as a recruiter, Doby enlisted 24 new Soldiers.

Reflections on 39+ years of service

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where you can't distinguish enemy from friend. Where one day you must be a warrior, the next an ambassador of good will. Where you hand out school supplies to children while keeping an eye on the rooftops for insurgents. I have been privileged to see these young NCOs come through the Regional Training Institute. They are solid, quiet professionals. They are the best of this nation. As my son and daughter move towards their 18th birthdays and enlistment day, I'm comforted knowing these young capable NCOs will be there to train them and take care of them.

Officers and Senior NCOs: I have had the honor to serve under some of the finest leaders in the Kansas Guard. There are many outstanding leaders in the Guard, but these leaders were my mentors. They were always out front. They were always setting the example for what duty, honor, country really mean. They were always taking care of Soldiers, getting us ready for the day when the call would come. And the call did come and we were ready because of them. I want to thank you all for taking a stand. It has been my distinct honor to be a part of this "Band of Brothers." God bless you all and God Bless America.

Kuntz takes command of the Area Medical Detachment



Col. Gordon Kuntz assumes command of the Kansas Area Medical Detachment during a ceremony in Salina on July 8, 2007. (Photo by 1st Lt. John Rule, UPAR)

By 1st Lt. John Rule, UPAR

The command of the Kansas Area Medical Detachment changed hands in a ceremony held at the Kansas Regional Training Institute in Salina on July 8, 2007.

Col. Avon Coffman relinquished the reigns of command by transferring the company guidon from Master Sgt. Matthew Birney to Col. Gordon Kuntz. Prior to the ceremony, Callahan was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for service as the Kansas National Guard state surgeon from Jan. 9, 2005, to July 7, 2007.

During the ceremony, Coffman was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for serving as the commander of the Kansas Area Medical Detachment from July 8, 2006, through July 7, 2007.

Coffman's wife, Linda, received a bouquet of open red roses, symbolic of the many sacrifices, memories, and friendships that have been made over the course of the last year. Kara Kuntz, wife of the incoming commander, was presented a bouquet of closed red roses, symbolic of that, which is yet to come.

The urgency of Line of Duties

By Sgt. C.J. Tustin, LOD Manager

What is a Line of Duty?

A line of duty is an administrative process used to determine if a Soldier's injury, disease, or illness had occurred while the Soldier was in a duty status and was not due to the negligence of the Soldier's actions.

Why do I need an LOD completed?

When treated for an injury, illness or disease, an LOD must be completed for payment of bills and any possible follow-up care. Until an LOD is approved, the Soldier is responsible for any incurred bill. Also, the LOD can be used to process a claim through the VA for disability.

What is the difference between an informal and formal LOD?

An informal LOD is the most common LOD. An informal is done when there is clear supporting evidence to process the claim. A formal LOD is done when there is a vehicle accident, a life long disability or disease is evident, or due to possibility of the Soldier's personal negligence.

How long does it take to process a LOD?

An informal LOD should not take more than 40 days to process. A formal LOD should not take more than 75 days.

How do my bills get paid?

Your bills will be processed after your LOD has been approved. When your bills are submitted for payment it takes two to four weeks for the payment to be made.

Where do I send my bills and who is paying my bills?

Your bills are paid through Tricare, West Regions Claims.

Your bills should be sent to:
Sgt. C.J. Tustin
Line of Duty Manager
Office of the State Surgeon
2850 Scanlan Ave
Salina, KS 67401
Office 785-822-6673
Fax 785-822-6672

How do my prescriptions get paid?

The Soldier needs to send a copy of the

LOD approved with MMSO Form 01 (available at <http://www.tricare.mil/MMSO/forms.cfm>), a receipt for the prescriptions, and the DD2642 (available at http://www.apd.army.mil/usapa_home.asp) to the Military Medical Support Office.

What to do if you have an approved LOD and still have medical bills that have not been paid?

Please contact the Debt Collection Assistance Officer at 1-888-647-6676 extension 6649. You will also need a copy of your approved LOD and a final notice letter from the collection agency.

Who does my LOD investigation?

Your unit and chain of command process your LOD.

Whose responsibility is it to get my paperwork done?

You, the Soldier, have the responsibility to fill out and provide all the required documentation and provide supporting evidence for your LOD to your unit.

What if I need multiple follow-up visits for additional medical care as a result of the initial injury?

You will need pre-authorization for all follow-up care. Find a TRICARE approved treatment facility and physician then contact the appropriate personnel listed below no later than seven days before your appointment. You should keep your chain of command informed of your condition at all times.

If I need follow up care who do I contact?

Soldiers on traditional or technician status who lives outside a 50-mile radius of a Military Treatment Facility should contact:

Sgt. C. J. Tustin
Line of Duty Manager
Office of the State Surgeon
2850 Scanlan Ave
Salina, KS 67401
Office 785-822-6673
Fax 785-822-6672

Soldiers on traditional status, who live within a 50-mile radius of a Military

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Cub Scouts visit Kansas Army National Guard flight facility

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR
Saturday, Feb. 2 was Groundhog's Day. In Pennsylvania, Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow, thus forecasting six more weeks of winter.

True to this prediction, Feb. 3 dawned cold and overcast. By noon it had rained, snowed, sleeted followed by more rain. Braving this weather were the Cub Scouts of Pack 175 in Topeka. The scouts, along with their parents and siblings, traveled to the Armed Forces Reserve Center at Forbes Field in Topeka. There the scouts were the guests of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment and Detachment 1, Company C, 1st Battalion, 171st General Support Aviation Brigade.

As the scouts arrived they met in the flight planning room. There they were surrounded by the maps and the numerous flight publications and manuals used for flight planning. While waiting for all of the scouts to arrive, Sgt. Brian Harvey, a flight medic from Detachment 1, Company C, 1st Battalion, 171st General Support Aviation Brigade, gave a briefing on what a flight crew would do at the start of a mission.

When everyone arrived, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Matt Jessop, a pilot from the detachment, led the group to the classroom the flight crews use for their training. Jessop showed the scouts the flight crew survival gear by using one of the older scouts as his assistant instructor. Jessop soon had the scout weighed down with the gear the flight crews wear on every mission. The hit of this part of the briefing was night vision goggles. In a pitch black room, the scouts were able to see an infrared survival beacon that was invisible to the naked eye. They were also able to see each other in the instrument's shades of green and black.

The group then moved from the flight operations building to the hangar, where the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters are

stored. Jessop, a former Boy Scout, explained the operations of the Black Hawk and the types of missions that the helicopter flies. The Black Hawks carried the marking of an air ambulance, but they can be configured for other missions. All the scouts were aware that last year the helicopters had flown hay out to snow stranded cattle in western Kansas. Jessop explained how the main rotor lifted the helicopter and moved it forward in flight, while the tail rotor kept it flying straight.

With Harvey's assistance, the Scouts climbed into the helicopter. Jessop showed the scouts the cargo hook and how the crew chief had to lie on the floor of the helicopter to direct the pilots when they are picking up a sling load. As with all kids of all ages, the scouts enjoyed sitting in both the pilot's and crew chief's positions. Many liked the side facing crew chief seats. The seatbelts allowed them to lean out of the Black Hawk "just like Superman," as one of the scouts observed. The belt's movements allow the crew chiefs the visibility to clear the helicopter for takeoff and landings.

"One of you here today may be my replacement," said Jessop, noting that the scouts would be of the right age to be pilots about the time he will be ready to retire. After answering all the questions from the scouts and their parents, each scout was given a chem light stick and a playing card sized picture of a Black Hawk.

The visit and tour gained credits for the scouts toward earning additional belt loops and merit badges for their uniforms while teaching the importance of education and service to one's community, state and nation and the value of the men and women of the National Guard. Now, when they see a Black Hawk flying overhead, they can say "I have been in one of those. I wonder if Chief Jessop and Sergeant Harvey are flying today."



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Matt Jessop, a pilot from Detachment 1, Company C, 1st Battalion, 171st General Support Aviation Brigade explains the operation of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to a group of Cub Scouts from Pack 175 in Topeka. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR)

Operation Tribute to Freedom wants you

Operation Tribute to Freedom is seeking recently returned OIF/OEF Soldiers who participate heavily in alternative sports such as skateboarding, snowboarding, wakeboarding, surfing, or BMX and are willing to share their story through potential speaking or recognition engagements, or through select media outlets.

Operation Tribute to Freedom is a Department of the Army program that recognizes and honors Soldiers returning from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan through speaking and recognition events in communities across the country.

OTF is seeking OIF/OEF Soldiers who have recently returned from extended deployments in support of operations in

Iraq and Afghanistan to share their stories. OTF is seeking OIF/OEF Soldiers who have occupations in the engineering, medical or technical field to share their stories at events.

While OTF is Army-specific, the Plains Guardian is interested in telling the stories of both Soldiers and Airmen. Please contact Lt. Col. Rick Peat, Joint Forces Headquarters Public Affairs, at rick.peat@us.army.mil or 785-806-3186 if you or someone you know would be interested in participating in Operation Tribute to Freedom or being the subject of an article in the Plains Guardian.

For more information, visit www.army.mil/otf.

Guard presence adds special touch to grand opening

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR

Recruits are the life blood of the Kansas Army National Guard. They are needed to replace the Soldiers that have reached 20, 30 or more years of service. Senior Soldiers have years of experience, but the new Soldier brings in an understanding of today's technologies and easily adapts to the changing nature of the Guard. Many young people have not been exposed to information about the Guard. That is why Soldiers from the 35th Military Police Company, Kansas Army National Guard, spent one Saturday meeting the public face to face.

The recruiting event was conducted in conjunction with the grand opening of the Hobby Depot, 5628 SW 29th Street, Topeka. Co-owners Timothy Paslay and Alan Meyer contacted the 35th Military Police Company for a display for their grand opening. 1st Lt. Christopher Coco, company commander, agreed, as long as the MPs could share their experiences with the public. Paslay and Meyer agreed.

The MPs placed their M1026 HMMWV in the parking lot and their printed materials and giveaways inside the store. Inside

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Adults and kids alike enjoyed the chance to sit in a real military humvee during a recruiting event in Topeka by the 35th Military Police Company. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR)

Valentine's Day cards headed to Iraq

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR

The Soldiers of the 35th Military Police Company were completing their drill weekend on Feb. 3. Saturday had been long and hard. They had traveled to Manhattan, where they conducted training on firing M2 .50 cal and M240B 7.62 machine guns. They were now back in their Topeka Armory. Their equipment and the Armory had been cleaned and stored and they were getting a briefing from Master Sgt. Gregory Cochran, the unit's first sergeant, when they had a visitor.

It was a young man with a gift for the company's Soldiers. He was a first grader representing all of the Wanamaker Elementary First Grade classes. The six and seven year olds had hand-made Valentine's Day cards for the Company's Soldiers deployed overseas. The classes

had made Christmas decorations for the same Soldiers a few months before.

A little shy, the young man did not say very much when he handed the colorful pieces of paper to Cochran. Kneeling to the young man's eye level, Cochran thanked him and his classmates by saying "I cannot tell you how important things like this were to me when I was in Iraq and I know these will be just as appreciated."

Once Cochran took the cards the young man ran to the protection of his mother's arms. As the MPs applauded, the young man peeked at the Soldiers and smiled. The cards are on their way to men and women who will enjoy something from the hearts and made by the hands of young Kansans. Thank you to the staff and students of Wanamaker Elementary.



Two men in uniform see eye to eye as Master Sgt. Gregory Cochran accepts a batch of Valentine's Day cards from a student representing the first grade classes at Wanamaker Elementary School. Cochran received the cards on behalf of the Soldiers of the 35th Military Police Company and assured the youngster that they would be sent to the unit's Soldiers currently on duty in Iraq. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR)

Soldiers practice military skills in the classroom and drill floor

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR

Many of the jobs or military specialties of the Kansas Army National Guard take many years to develop. After completing Basic Training, young Soldiers spend weeks or months of Advance Individual Training before going to their units. There they develop their skills through working their jobs, correspondence courses and attending advance specialty related courses. However, many of the missions that Soldiers will perform while deployed overseas have little to do with their jobs.

Many deployed Soldiers will find themselves involved in force protection. This often means conducting convoy escort in up armored humvee or the new M1117 armored vehicle. With this in mind, Lt. Col. Howard Wheeler, commander of the 1st Battalion, 635th Armor, has directed his tankers and attached military police company to conduct "gun truck" training. The 35th Military Police Company started gun truck training in the Manhattan armory during their February drill. The MPs started their training using the crawl, walk and run concept.

The crawl phase started in a classroom environment with a slide presentation of the commands needed to direct M2 .50 caliber or M240B 7.62 mm machinegun fire on to a target. Still in the classroom, the MPs divided up into their vehicle teams. Sitting in chairs, the vehicle commander, driver and gunner all practiced giving and receiving commands. At first the teams were a little self-conscious, joking around until they settled into the training.

Pvt. 2 Steffane Douglas said "I am a dri-

ver and I am looking forward to driving. Before today, I had no idea about all the things the driver has to do. I have to listen to the vehicle commander, watch the road and if I see a target, call for fire."

"This was my first drill with the Company and I never thought that I would be firing a machinegun from a moving vehicle," said Pfc. Cera Sample. "I am glad that we are taking one step at a time. That will make it much easier for me to learn."

As the MPs advanced through the crawl phase, they moved to a M1025 humvee, where they started the walk phase.

On the floor of the armory, the teams rotated through one of the company's M1025. The first thing the Soldiers discovered was how loud they had to talk or even yell to be heard, even without the sounds of the engine, radios and other vehicles.

"It was harder than I thought it would be to move the turret," said Sample. "Even with the truck standing still, it was hard moving around inside. I am not sure what I will do when we are moving on the range."

The walk phase will continue every drill until this summer's annual training. The run phase will involve the teams going through the Cavalry Scout Gunnery Qualification tables. This involves the crews firing their weapons from a moving vehicle at stationary and pop up targets on Fort Riley's tank gunnery range. During annual training, there will be an intense walk phase before the teams move onto the run phase of the range. Sgt. Buddy Oppelt, who will serve as a Truck Commander, said "This training will really have us ready to go should we be called to action."



Soldiers of the 35th Military Police Company conduct a classroom truck gunnery exercise, practicing commands and gaining experience in their respective positions: Sgt. William Fisk, vehicle commander; Pfc. Timothy Melkus, driver and Pfc. Cera Sample, gunner. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR)



Staff Sgt. Diana Wilbert gives Sgt. Buddy Oppelt and his crew, Pfc. Phillip Hummer, driver and Spc. Krystal Jolly, gunner, guidance on how to improve their crew interaction and communication. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR)



Sgt. Buddy Oppelt, vehicle commander; Pfc. Phillip Hummer, driver and Spc. Krystal Jolly, gunner, practice skills they learned in the classroom on a M1025 HMMWV. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR)

Armor, infantry heavy mortar platoons integrate training

By 1st Lt. Bryan Gregory

Exciting things are happening in the Kansas Army National Guard. On Oct. 1, 2008, the Tactical Combat Force will complete its transformation. The TCF, formally known as the Combined Arms Brigade or CAB, will be comprised of the 1st Battalion, 635th Armor and the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry. With their M1A1 Abrams tanks and M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, this combination of forces will have the capability to produce combat power never seen before in the state of Kansas. Two elements located in Kansas City, Kan. and Manhattan are not waiting for October and are taking every opportunity to forge this partnership early.

Members of the Heavy Mortar Platoon from the armor and infantry battalions, with their M121, mortars capable of raining down indirect fire on any enemy up to 7,200

meters, are integrating their training at Fort Riley in Junction City. In recent months, the units have come together to share the equipment, tactics, and experiences. Morale is high and Soldiers are excited to attend each upcoming drill period.

"I want to stay in the Guard if we can do things like this," said Sgt. Joseph Kumor.

"I am glad we got to drive the tracks and do the things we signed up to do," said Pfc. Nicholas Sheridan.

This combined training will continue throughout the year and will culminate with a mortar live fire exercise at this year's annual training. The exercise is a crowd favorite, with everyone wanting to see the "fireworks." This sort of unit cohesion is being taken to the next level when at the end of February both battalions will celebrate the union of these historic units at a formal dining out.

Armor battalion focusing on Warrior Skills training

By Spc. Joseph Andaverde

The Kansas National Guard's 1st Battalion, 635th Armor welcomed the New Year in the Army way, performing a multitude of tasks for the annual Warrior Skills Training. In addition, Soldiers were taken to the M9 range at Fort Riley to conduct

live fire exercises.

Master Sgt. Jimmy Breese developed a series of training lanes that incorporated several Warrior Skills Tasks, which allowed the squads to focus on their teamwork. Sgt. Ryan Pierce and Sgt. Daniel

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Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 635th Armor practice maneuvering through an Urban Combat Lane (Photo by Pvt. 2 John Rumpson)

Kansans donate more than \$84,000 to Military Emergency Relief Fund

By Steve Larson

Kansans appreciate their National Guard and Reserve families and opened their wallets to support them when they filled out their state income tax forms in 2006 and donated \$84,894 to the Kansas Military Emergency Relief Fund.

"This is an inspiring example demonstrating how much Kansans care about and support their Guard and Reserve families," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general. "They know the sacrifices these families must make when their Soldier or Airman is deployed and these donations let the families know they're not alone. It's a wonderful way to say 'thank you' for what these families and Guard members do."

Kansans will have another opportunity to donate to the military emergency relief fund on their 2007 income tax forms.

Individuals may check the box to donate a dollar, \$5, \$10 or fill in any amount they wish to donate.

The Kansas Military Emergency Relief Fund was started July 1, 2004, and is administered by The Adjutant General's Department. The fund provides conditional emergency assistance to qualified members of the Kansas Army and Air National Guard and Army Reserve and their dependents during the period preceding, during and after mobilization. The funds are made available through grants and interest free loans. Such assistance may include but not be limited to medical, funeral, emergency travel, rent, utilities, child care, food expenses and other unanticipated emergencies.

Since the program began, funds have been used to help more than 200 military members and their families.

35th Division stands watch as Kosovo declares independence

By Sharon Watson

The 35th Infantry Division, headquartered in Leavenworth, Kan., stood guard in Kosovo Feb. 17 as the country declared its independence from Serbia. Approximately 200 Kansas National Guard Soldiers of the 35th Division are involved in the peacekeeping mission, along with Guardsmen from Missouri and Illinois who also make up the division. The division is the headquarters unit for Task Force Falcon, the multinational peacekeeping force that includes approximately 1,500 Soldiers from 25 states and territories.

"There was celebratory fire last evening with some civilians receiving minor injuries and today we've had some protests, but they've been peaceful," said Brig. Gen. John Davoren, commander of the 35th ID and Task Force Falcon. "Overall, during the first

24 hours of Kosovo's independence, we've had no significant problems."

"Our troops have a very visible presence in Kosovo," Davoren said. "Despite concerns of violence and rioting, it's been calm and people have behaved well."

Six states make up most of Davoren's troops in Task Force Falcon: Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Mississippi and Tennessee.

"We're proud to have Kansas troops take part in this critical peacekeeping mission as history is made once again in the Balkans," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, Kansas adjutant general. "While Kosovo has remained peaceful for some time, it's long been recognized as an area that could quickly become volatile for our troops, especially now."

The 35th ID deployed to Kosovo late last summer for the year-long mission.

Cargill employees donate to Kansas National Guard Foundation



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Viviano Reveles, a member of the Kansas National Guard Foundation board of directors, accepts donations totaling more than \$1,900 from retired Col. Lyn Smith, IT Sourcing Manager for Cargill in Wichita. The money was raised by employees who paid \$5 for the privilege of wearing jeans and tennis shoes to work on Fridays. (Photo by Steve Larson)

Employees of Cargill, Inc., in Wichita like casual Fridays and were willing to pay for the privilege of wearing jeans and tennis shoes to work by donating \$5. Their efforts raised more than \$1,900, which was donated to the Kansas National Guard Foundation.

Representatives of Cargill employees presented the money to retired Command Sgt. Maj. Viviano Reveles, a member of the foundation's board of directors, on Jan. 30, at the company's facility at 151 N. Main Street.

The board was recently the recipient of more than \$150,000 donated by Kansans to bring Kansas National Guard troops home for Christmas from Fort Bliss, Texas, where they were training for a deployment to Iraq, as well as some Soldiers who were on medical hold at other locations in the United States.

The Kansas National Guard Foundation is a non profit 501(c)3 organization which supports a variety of programs that benefit Kansas National Guardsmen and their families.

U.S. provides equipment to Armenian demining unit



U.S. Army Sgts. Charles Boyles and Travis Eichhorn of the Kansas National Guard assist an Armenian humanitarian deminer fit his new protective suit here Jan. 23. (Department of Defense photo by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Doug Peterson)

Mine detection and disposal equipment provided by the United States arrived at the Armenian Humanitarian Demining Unit Jan. 22, timed to correspond with the arrival of Kansas National Guard Soldiers who are working to familiarize the Armenian unit with their new equipment.

The mine detection and explosive protective equipment, valued at about \$300,000, will be used by the Armenian unit to support their humanitarian demining mission in Armenia. The equipment will also support their deminers that deploy from Armenia to work with the Coalition Forces in Iraq, where they conduct demining and mine disposal missions.

The delivery of the mine detection and disposal equipment marks the start of a larger program of U.S. assistance to the

Armenian Humanitarian Demining Unit in 2008. The unit, which was initially funded in 2003 through a USAID program, will receive additional training and equipment to enhance their capability, through the U.S. Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation. The ODC will team up with the U.S. Humanitarian Mine Action office based at the U.S. European Command in Germany to provide the training in March 2008, while the additional equipment will be provided throughout this year.

The U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation in Armenia works to foster U.S. government and industry assistance to Armenia in the defense sphere. The office operates under the authority of the U.S. Chief of Mission in Armenia and the U.S. European Command, located in Stuttgart, Germany.

Counterdrug efforts get a boost from Kansas National Guard

By Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Romans

The Kansas National Guard Counterdrug office assisted Kansas law enforcement authorities in striking a heavy blow against Kansas drug traffickers and criminal gangs in January 2008, when a four-year drug investigation by Drug Enforcement Administration, Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office and Wichita Police Department culminated in Wichita. The Kansas National Guard Counterdrug Special Operations Group Criminal Analyst Section was a key component of that investigation.

Kansas Guard analysts performed hundreds of hours of criminal case support and analysis. This included identification of criminal suspects, identification of narcotics trafficking locations and developing information on crime organizations and other valuable case information. The scope of the investigation expanded to include international criminal enterprises, as well as multi-state involvement in the United States.

The result of the operation was 27 crimi-

nal arrests. One of the indictments was 30 pages long with 94 counts, naming 20 of the suspects. Seizures included three pounds of cocaine, 11.5 pounds of marijuana, \$22,927 in U.S. currency, four handguns, two sniper rifles, two assault rifles and two vehicles. A press release was issued by the United States Attorney's Office Kansas District on Jan. 25 titled "27 Charged in Federal Drug Probe in Wichita," concerning the investigation and subsequent indictments. The release credited the law enforcement agencies involved, including the Kansas National Guard Counterdrug Program.

Kansas National Guard Counterdrug analysts free up law enforcement investigators by enabling them to spend more time on the streets coordinating sources and leads. The backbone of criminal case support starts with the valuable analysis and information developed by these Guardsmen. Citizens of Kansas are safer today because of their dedication helping to eliminate drugs and criminal organizations from our communities.

Warrior Skills training

Continued from Page 7

Mather were responsible for training on the Urban Combat lane. This lane incorporated many important Warrior Skills including nine-line Medivac, evaluating a casualty and tactical movements.

"[Soldiers] are receiving good training; they are learning as they go through," said Pierce.

Pierce explained their strategy for teaching is to have the Soldiers go through a dry run to discover their knowledge level.

After the dry run, he would go through each step with the Soldiers, teaching important skills real-time.

Sgt. George Savage Jr. praised the effectiveness of the training.

"The out-of-the-box thinking during the development of this training made this a valuable experience for our Soldiers," said Savage. "There is no doubt that the Soldiers of 635th Armor and 35th Military Police Company are much more prepared for combat after this experience."

Validation complete: Kansas Guardsmen ready for deployment

By Sgt. Sarah B. Patterson, UPAR

The Kansas National Guard has sent one of its field artillery battalions to Iraq as part of the Oklahoma National Guard's 45th Brigade Combat Team. Deploying to Iraq demands that units face tough, realistic training that focuses on the core missions they will conduct in the operational theater. For the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, the two and a half months of intense mobilization training made them ready to take the next step forward and go to Iraq.

The 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery is a unique and diverse group of service men and women. The unit consists of the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Battery A and Battery C, along with the 1161st Forward Support Company and numerous volunteers from more than 36 Kansas Army National Guard units.

The unit mobilized Oct. 15, 2007, to the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center in Salina, Kan. They did this in an effort to keep Soldiers close to home for as much time as possible. This was the first time in the history of the Kansas National Guard that a unit completed the 40 warrior tasks and 11 battle drills for validation in Kansas before getting to the mobilization station.

The rigorous training schedule in Salina created challenges for the battalion to overcome with being the first to try home-station training for validation. For example, the unit used ranges at Fort Riley for qualification on assigned weapon systems with exception of the shotgun and the M203 40 mm grenade launcher.

"Fort Riley has great ranges for qualification," said Sgt. Dennis Dinkel, mechan-

ic, Battery C. "We have a big advantage of having Fort Riley so close and it worked out perfect for us to use the ranges."

The Kansas Regional Training Institute has ranges for the M9 pistol and M4 carbine, but they were not operational at the time the battalion trained in Salina.

"Future units will only have to go to Fort Riley to qualify on crew serve weapons," said Col. Michael P. Dittamo, commander, 635th Regional Support Group. "This will allow them to spend less time on the road driving and more time to train on warrior tasks and battle drills."

Maintaining accurate documentation of each training exercise to validate at the mobilization station posed another challenge for each unit in the battalion.

"Training that's not documented isn't training," Dittamo said. "This battalion was able to accomplish a whole lot more in less time because they maintained focus on the training and properly documented each task."

By validating and training at the Kansas Regional Training Institute in Salina, the Soldiers were afforded two passes to return home before mobilization. The two breaks in training — one in late October, the other during Thanksgiving — allowed the Soldiers to see their families.

Upon their return from Thanksgiving, the unit transitioned to Title 10 active duty orders and mobilized to Fort Bliss, Texas. At Fort Bliss, the Kansas Guardsmen began to sharpen the skills needed to perform their jobs in Iraq.

The battalion completed the Short Range Marksmanship range first. Here, the



Pfc. Craig Haley, Spc. Janet Simpson, Staff Sgt. Wesley Naegele and Spc. Corey Merrill of the 1161st Forward Support Company practice a four-man move during Forward Operating Base defense exercises in December as part of their pre-mobilization training for Iraq at Fort Bliss, Texas. (Photo by Sgt. Sarah B. Patterson, UPAR)

Soldiers fine tuned their skills to instinctively fire their M4 carbine and to transition to their M9 mm pistol at short distances of less than 25 meters with proper target identification. This range was followed by Advanced Rifle Marksmanship.

At the Advanced Rifle Marksmanship range, Soldiers learned to effectively clear rooms, fire through windows, tactically move in battle teams, fire from behind a wall and fire from the hood of a vehicle.

The combination of short range and advance rifle marksmanship training lead to Close Quarters Combat. Clearing multiple rooms and buildings by use of squads was the main focus of this training. The squad worked together collectively to clear a village of possible insurgents.

These three ranges were not the only focus before the Christmas pass. Each Soldier in the battalion had to complete a five mile road march and Forward Operating Base exercises.

Each Forward Operating Base exercise was imperative in teaching how to set up and maintain an entry control point, properly conduct vehicle and personnel searches, maintain use of towers, casualty collection points and deployment of the quick reaction force.

By having the majority of the ranges completed, the battalion started the detainee management operations section of training. This block of instruction taught respectful ways of working with detainees and how to keep the Soldiers and detainees safe in various situations.

In December, the battalion granted a 10-day pass for Christmas. Donations from many Kansans to the Kansas National Guard Foundation paid for the Soldiers to take buses home to spend the much needed time with their families.

"The pass gave me time to finish any loose ends I had, which will let me focus better on the mission while I'm away," said Pfc. Corey Russell, medic, Battery A. "Nothing means more to me than spending time with my wife and two girls. I really enjoyed spending Christmas with them."

On Jan. 2, the buses took the Soldiers back to Fort Bliss to finish their training.

"We are all very thankful for the generosity of our fellow Kansans that allowed us to return home for the holidays," said Lt. Col. Dave Johnson, battalion commander. "We are now at full stride, completing all remaining tasks to make the big journey. The New Year finds our Soldiers busy sharpening the skills they'll need to perform their jobs when deployed."

Three main areas of training remained: convoy live fire, area security operations and staff training.

During the convoy live fire exercises, the Soldiers conducted combat patrols, which required them to react to near and far ambushes. These exercises built up to the training in area security operations.

The battalion conducted area security operations combat patrols and increasingly the tasks became more difficult. Soldiers set up traffic control points, single-file traffic

(Continued on Page 12)



Sgt. Darrell Justice, 1161st Forward Support Company, loads an M240B machine gun with blanks during Forward Operating Base defense exercises. (Photo by Sgt. Sarah B. Patterson, UPAR)



Two Soldiers of the 1161st Forward Support Company fire their M4 carbines through a window in a battle team at the Advanced Rifle Marksmanship Range. (Photo by Sgt. Sarah B. Patterson, UPAR)



Pfc. Britney Stewart, medic, initiates a saline lock into Pvt. 2 Shawn Jones during Forward Operating Base defense exercises. Both are members of the 1161st Forward Support Company. (Photo by Sgt. Sarah B. Patterson, UPAR)

Two Guardsmen honored by Topeka Military Relations Committee

A Soldier and Airman from the Kansas National Guard were among five military personnel honored by the Topeka Military Relations Committee during the Topeka City Council meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 5.

Sgt. Michael Fellman, Silver Lake, 731st Transportation Company, Kansas Army National Guard and Master Sgt. Kristina Perkins, Tecumseh, 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas Air National Guard, were selected by their respective military branches to receive the Military Personnel of the Year Award from the Topeka Military Relations Committee. The com-

mittee was formed in 2003 by a group of Topeka businessmen to promote the military within the community.

Fellman and his unit were welcomed home to Kansas on Feb. 7 as they returned from their deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Perkins is the chief host aviation resource manager assigned to the Operations Support Flight at the 190th Air Refueling Wing.

Each honoree received a plaque that includes a likeness of the statue atop the Kansas Statehouse dome.



Master Sgt. Kristina Perkins, 190th Air Refueling Wing, receives a plaque naming her one of the Topeka's Military Personnel of the Year from Topeka Mayor Bill Bunten. (Photo by Master Sgt. Allen Pickert)

Holle recognized as battalion's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year

Sgt. William Holle, formerly of Marysville, was recognized as the battalion's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year in a ceremony held at the Prairie Band Convention Center on Dec. 1, 2007. Holle is a gunner in a Multiple Launch Rocket System firing section in Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, Kansas Army National Guard in Marysville. Holle has been a member of the Kansas Army National Guard for 14 years, including a combat tour with the battalion in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004-2005.

"Sergeant Holle was instrumental in the

section's success during the battery's section level certifications and in dealing with a section composed of new Soldiers," said Sgt. 1st Class Chris Foster, platoon sergeant and full-time readiness NCO for the battery.

Holle's awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, The Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M device, and the Army Service Ribbon.

Rewarding good work



Spec. David Halsey a member of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, receives a general's coin from Brig. Gen. Jonathan Small in recognition of his exemplary work during the unit's pre-mobilization training at Fort Bliss, Texas. Small paid a command visit to the unit at Fort Bliss on Jan. 12 and 13. The unit is deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo by Jane Welch)



Sgt. Michael Fellman receives congratulations from State Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Rodina (left) and Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting prior to a welcome home ceremony for the 731st Transportation Company on Feb. 7. Fellman was deployed with his unit to Iraq and did not get back to Kansas until two days after the recognition ceremony in Topeka. (Photo by Jane Welch)

Soldiers cash in on Guard Recruiter Assistance Program



Pfc. Justin Smith holds a check for \$4,000 from Docupak, the GRAP contractor for the Army National Guard. Smith helped enlist two of his friends to earn the check. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke)

By Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke, 105th MPAD

Some Topeka area Soldiers are cashing in through the Guard Recruiter Assistance Program.

Pfc. Justin Smith and Pfc. Josh Joynt are making their passion for serving in the Army National Guard pay big dividends through the Guard Recruiter Assistant Program. By helping to get their friends in the Army National Guard, both have been able to earn some big paydays.

A Washburn University student, Smith has earned \$4,000 so far and Joynt, a recent graduate of Shawnee Heights High School, has earned \$2,000.

"I got my first enlistment in September," said Smith. "I was going home from drill and some guys I knew saw me in uniform. They asked me about some of the benefits and I showed them how it (the Army National Guard) would set them up for life," he said.

"I just talked to some guys I already knew that had an interest," said Joynt. "I got him to talk to the recruiter with me. It's that easy."

The Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP) is a contracted program designed for individuals who voluntarily apply online at www.GuardRecruitingAssistant.com to become eligible to serve as a part-time

recruiter assistant. The recruiter assistant applicant is verified and hired by a contractor, not the Army National Guard. GRAP is open to individuals who successfully complete the short online application and training process. Once completed, they are eligible for certification.

Some of the responsibilities a GRAP has are developing potential recruits within his sphere of influence, inputting potential Soldiers profile data into the GRAP web site and arranging meetings between the potential Soldier and the recruiter, as well as accompanying the potential new team member to the meeting.

Once the contractor, Docupak, receives verification that one of the potential Soldiers has completed the Military Entrance Processing Station and enlisted, \$1,000 will be paid via debit card or direct deposit. The final \$1,000 will be paid once Docupak receives verification that the new recruit has shipped to Basic Training. Soldiers are not limited on how many individuals they can successfully enlist.

"I would talk to people about how much I like the Guard without being paid," said Smith. "The money is just a plus."

"And," added Joynt, "the way the program is set up it makes it too easy."

For information about the GRAP program visit www.guardrecruitingassistant.com.

Guardsmen essential during December snow storms

By Staff Sgt. Emily Alley

Some Kansans lost power, heat and water when the ice storm hit in December 2007. The swath of snow that followed didn't help boost morale, but Kansas Guardsmen did.

Several thousand Kansans lost power during the severe weather in mid-December, said Lt. Col. Rus Curtis. "That created other problems for obvious reasons."

The Joint Operations Center coordinated efforts among all Kansas Guard units to help citizens who were affected by the hazardous conditions. Both the Army and Air National Guard aggressively pursued humanitarian missions, jointly, throughout the state.

"When this started, the JOC went to 24/7 operations," said Curtis. "We went to expanded operations as well, 6 a.m. to midnight daily through the weekend."

Volunteers from the 190th Air Refueling Wing and other Kansas Guard units served at the JOC. These units included Emergency Management, Operations, Communication Flight, Readiness Flight and the 127th Weather Flight.

Only about 30 weather units exist in the country and the 127th Weather Flight is the only such organization in Kansas. The advantage of the flight is the ability to analyze a specific area in detail, rather than a generic forecast for the region. Volunteers from the Weather Flight worked 24 hours a day for a week to provide continuous weather updates to the JOC.

"If we weren't here, they would have turned on the weather channel," said Tech. Sgt. Tony Snyder, a meteorological technician who coordinated forecasting during the storms.

Unfortunately, most civilian broadcasts during that time were too general. Units within the state required precise details on how the storms would affect their missions.

The Weather Flight provided continuous updates to all levels of command within Kansas during the hazardous conditions. Snyder has continued providing updates to the JOC while emergency conditions are possible.

"Commanders were aware of the impending snow storm," said Snyder. "We played a really big role in forecasting."

The units' reaction to joint operations was to stay flexible. When representatives from FEMA arrived several days ahead of schedule, the 190ARW adapted to the situation.

"We were able to blend together and didn't lose response time," said Maj. Michael Robinson, 190th Logistics Readiness Operations Officer.

Starting on Dec. 13, the 190th ARW was assigned missions, through the JOC, to maintain disaster relief. The base served as a FEMA staging point, storing and distributing cots, generators and water. Guardsmen worked jointly, both Army and Air Force members, to distribute and maintain support. Some volunteers cleared debris so utility crews could restore infrastructure. The Services Flight provided accommodations for Army Guard troops while they waited for missions at Forbes Field.

The disaster gave the Medical Group an opportunity to use the Expeditionary Medical Support System, which was deployed earlier in the year during missions in Greensburg.

"This falls squarely in that peg for state-duty," said Curtis.

Kansas receives emergency preparedness grants

By Sharon Watson

The Department of Homeland Security announced allocation of federal homeland security funding Feb. 1 including more than \$291 million in Emergency Management Preparedness Grants (EMPG) to support state and local emergency management programs across the nation. Of those funds, Kansas has been allocated more than \$3.7 million. The state must submit an application by March 1, 2008 to receive the federal grant funds designed to sustain and enhance all-hazards emergency management capabilities.

"These funds are critical to the state and the county governments to ensure we continue to enhance our capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond to any natural and manmade disasters or terrorist attacks in Kansas," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, director of Kansas Homeland Security and Kansas adjutant general.

The EMPG allocations are authorized by the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007. Each state receives a base amount of .75 percent of

the total funding, and the remainder is based on population. The \$3,770,758 allocated to Kansas is significantly higher than funds received last year.

"This increase in funds makes it clear the federal government recognizes the needs of Kansas and the local governments regarding emergency management capabilities," Bunting said.

Key changes in this year's EMPG include using a minimum of 25 percent of funds toward planning activities, and states must submit a work plan to FEMA regional offices outlining enhancement and sustainment efforts. To be eligible for the funding, the state and local governments must be using the National Incident Management System. In addition, the funding has a 50 percent federal and 50 percent state cost share cash or in-kind match requirement.

DHS (FY) 2008 grant programs provide \$376.3 million more than last year to enhance the nation's ability to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies.

Patriot Guard picks up emergency travel tab for 190th family members

By Master Sgt. Greg Burnetta

A local patriotic organization helped a Coyote member and his family visit his combat wounded and hospitalized son over the recent holiday.

On Nov. 14, 2007, a road-side bomb exploded in Iraq, wounding Army Pfc. Gage Skrdla, 23-year-old stepson of 190th Air Refueling Wing member, Tech. Sgt. Bart Steele. Four of Skrdla's friends were wounded with him and their lieutenant was killed in the explosion. Gage enlisted into the active duty Army in 2004.

Two hours and 45 minutes following the explosion, Steele and his wife were notified of the incident by the Army. Throughout the next 10 hours, they received phone calls from the Army, their son's doctor and nurse in Iraq and one from Gage, himself.

"He was doped up from the anesthetic medicine and disoriented, but it was still great to speak with him," said Steele.

Steele said the Army was magnificent in the way they kept him and his family advised of the updates associated with his son's medical condition.

Skrdla had sustained severe wounds from more than 200 pieces of shrapnel in his body which initially blinded him and almost severed his hand from his arm. "His body armor worked," said Steele.

"It protected his vital organs and his head."

The Army began Skrdla's medical treatment in Iraq before transporting him to Germany. The Steele family was then informed that he would be transferred to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C., for Thanksgiving.

The Army placed Mrs. Steele and their 14-year-old son, Jack, on invitational travel orders – documents not only authorizing, but paying for them to come to Washington to include providing their hotel room and transportation.

However, because an oversight in Skrdla's enlistment papers, Steele wasn't listed as his stepfather, so the invitational orders didn't include him.

Steele contacted 190th ARW Family Coordinator, Denise Winton, and requested assistance in getting him to Washington.

"Actually, I asked Denise to help the entire family get to Washington before I learned the Army was covering my wife and son, Jack, on the invitational orders," said Steele.

Once she received Steele's request, Winton immediately began a series of phone calls to solicit assistance from organizations such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, local and national Red Cross offices, a group of pilots known as Air Compassion for Veterans and the Kansas Emergency Relief Fund.

Most of those organizations were unable to provide the assistance she was requesting however, they did tell her to call back if she didn't locate assistance elsewhere.

Winton was attending a meeting of Kansas National Guard Readiness Program Managers at state headquarters where she asked her peers if any of them had any suggestions. One of the attendees had an idea.

D.C. Hannah of Joint Forces Headquarters' Human Resource Office called a member of the Patriot Guard and explained the situation. With just one phone call, the Patriot Guard had agreed to pay for the tickets to Washington for the Steele family. Ultimately, the Patriot Guard only needed to pay for one ticket because of the invitational orders.

Steele said when they flew into Washington, the Army picked them up at the airport and saw to their billeting and transportation needs.

"The Army rolled out the red carpet for the Steele family – and many others," said Steele.

The Steele family spent Thanksgiving with their son. Doctors were

able to save one eye and reconnected Skrdla's partially severed hand, but his recovery will take several more months. "He can use his hand, but does not have any feeling in it or his face at this time," said Steele.

Steele said he is very grateful to every one who assisted his family. He is particularly grateful to the Army for keeping his family informed as to the condition of his son as well as Winton and the Patriot Guard. "I am also thankful for all of the Coyote members who went out of their way to stop by our home to express their feelings to our family," said Steele.

"I was honored to assist Bart Steele and his family," said Winton. "I would like to give my profound thanks to the Steele family and especially Gage for the tremendous sacrifice they have made for my family and our country's freedom and to all the men and women in the military that sacrifice daily for our freedom."



Members of the 190th Civil Engineering Squadron and the 190th Logistics Readiness Squadron load a 100kW generator to support the community health center in Holton, Kan. (Photo by Col. Chris Stratmann)

190th Medical Group named ANG's outstanding unit

By 1st Lt. Joe Blubaugh

The 190th Medical Group has been awarded the 2007 Theodore C. Marris Award as the outstanding medical unit in the Air National Guard. The award is presented to the top ANG medical unit for their contributions to the ANG Medical Services. The 190th last won the award in 1984.

Chief Master Sgt. Howard Steanson says the Medical Group has a variety of strengths, but the unique EMEDS mission and the unit's involvement with replacing the Greensburg hospital after a devastating tornado has helped differentiate them from the other 87 medical groups in the ANG.

However, Medical Group leadership is quick to point out that the EMEDS mission is not just their effort. "We receive an

immense amount of support from other members of the 190th," said Lt. Col. Tim Stevens. "The Wing and Civil Engineering are key players in the EMEDS success."

Medical Group Commander Lt. Col. Janet Hanson says the unit's reputation played a significant roll in receiving the award.

"We are well respected throughout the ANG and are always one of the leaders in medical readiness." Having eight individuals recognized at the national level over the last several years has also elevated the unit's reputation added Hanson.

"We've always known how much hard work we do, but it is nice to be recognized by the Air National Guard," said Hanson. "But it is a base effort and it is great to have the support of the base to help us."



Guardsmen join in celebrity pheasant hunt and trap shoot

By Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales, 105th MPAD

On the weekend of Nov. 16, 2007, in Glen Elder, Sgt. Shane Keene and Sgt. Justin Kaub, Company A, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation, joined a small group of celebrities, representatives of the Department of Wildlife and Parks along with Pass It On-Outdoor Mentors in the annual Pheasant Hunt and Trap Shoot. During this three day event, the Soldiers received the title of "Hero Celebrities" in recognition of their military service and completion of their recent duty assignment in Iraq.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has hosted this special hunt for nine years, but this is the first time that celebrities have come out to join the program in five years. This is a statewide project and applications for it must be submitted by July of each year. Once the applications are submitted, special permits are issued to selected individuals. This permit allows for limited hunting within the state park refuges.

"Just because it is called a refuge doesn't mean that you can't have activity out there," said Mike Nyhoff, manager of the Glen Elder Wildlife Area. "Our intention is not to scare away the wildlife in the park, but to offer an opportunity for youth to come out and have a good experience in the hunt."

Each of these permits allows the holder of the permit and five others to go on one pheasant hunt per week. The Glen Elder State Park is an area that is home to a lot of water fowl, deer and other wildlife.

Throughout the history of the program, Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations from local communities have brought out kids from the surrounding areas to join in



Sgt. Shane Keene and Sgt. Justin Kaub (at left) of Company A, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation, joined other hunters during a celebrity pheasant hunt in November. (Photo by Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

the hunts. Mike Christensen, president of the Pass It On-Outdoor Mentors program, brings his "Little Brother" along with other members of his organization out to join the hunt each year.

"This is an outdoor mentoring program that works with Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations all around the country," said Christensen about the Pass It On program. "We want to reach out to the outdoor community because a lot of these kids don't get the experience of being outdoors and what it is all about."

"We want kids to have a connection with

nature and they may learn an awful lot," Christensen continued. "We believe that with this extra knowledge the kids get from this experience, it may help them have a better understanding and respect for the environment, when they get older and begin to take on issues in the future as adults."

The overall focus of this program is to expose the younger generation to the outdoors by introducing them to the activities that the Department of Wildlife and Parks has to offer. This also gives the kids a chance to meet some individuals from other aspects of life that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to meet.

Once Wayne Hubbard, executive producer and host of Urban American Outdoors, a hunting and fishing show, heard about this program and that Soldiers were coming out to hunt with the kids he wanted to work with Mike Nyhoff.

"It meant a lot for me to be a part of that whole piece...to me, it was very personal because I've had family over there (Iraq and Afghanistan)," Hubbard said. "In the past, I have sent the Soldiers in those regions some DVDs of the show and other things."

On Saturday evening, a banquet that was held to recognize the different organizations that had taken part in the whole weekend. This banquet also gave the kids an opportunity to socialize and get autographs from the celebrities. Some other celebrities attending this year were retired

professional football players Ricky Ciglar, Mike Senisbaugh and Guy Caster a former professional Top Fuel drag racer.

Caster has joined Mike and his hunting group for the past four years and has coordinated getting celebrities involved in coming out to the hunt.

"I have joined Mike on several of his regular youth hunts in the past and then one day I thought that it would be good to have some celebrities come out and join us...it gets more kids interested in coming out to these events" said Caster.

When Keene, Kaub and other military members were introduced at the banquet, they received a standing ovation from the crowd.

"It was nice to have everyone honor us, it shows that there are people out there that care about what we are doing," recalled Kaub.

"It was nice that everyone made a big deal out of the military presence there but there were also other unsung heroes present like the firefighter group," said Keene.

The kids seemed a little shy about going to military representatives, but once they began speaking they all exchanged some good stories of all their experiences in past hunts and military assignments.

"It was an excellent experience," said Keene. "I had a real good time the whole weekend and at the banquet."

"Overall I had a great time," agreed Kaub. "It was neat to see all of the kids out there learning to shoot and all about hunting."

"I am looking forward to going out again next year with the group," said Keene.

Next year, Nyhoff and his group are looking forward to having more celebrities come out and join the group and hopes that more military personnel apply for the permits.

"We have several military people who have been drawn to receive one of these permits and then have to call and cancel the hunt because they have been deployed," continued Nyhoff. "This is a very patriotic community and we believe it is a good way to say thanks for their service."

By Sunday afternoon the four groups of hunters had amassed a total of 27 birds. For many of the participants this was the first time that they had hunted at all, others had hunted in the past but had very little hunting experience. With each group of hunters were three well experienced hunters that went out on each trip. At the end of the trip, Mike Nyhoff and Wayne Hubbard demonstrated the proper cleaning and packing techniques for the game.

December 2007 ice storm damage expected to exceed \$400 million

By Sharon Watson

Damage assessments for the December 2007 ice storm which impacted 65 Kansas counties have increased to approximately \$381 million and are expected to exceed \$400 million. These damages are expected to make it the most expensive disaster in Kansas history and exceed the damages of the western Kansas storm in January 2007.

Initial assessments placed damages in the most recent storm at approximately \$170,988,000 with \$138 million of that total to Kansas Rural Electric Cooperatives and municipal utility infrastructures.

"Initial joint damage assessments calculated the costs to get the power back up as soon as possible to the effected residents," said Tom Hall, Federal Coordinating Officer (FEMA). "A more in-depth expert analysis to affect permanent repair increased the total cost estimates."

"The damage was not as visible early on in this storm as it was in the western Kansas storm where 21 transmission towers were knocked down," said Maj Gen Tod Bunting, Director of Kansas Division of Emergency Management and the Adjutant General. "In this storm, 59,000 meters, thousands of miles of electrical lines were brought down over a much larger area than before and as crews began the work to replace them it was determined there was a much greater impact than previously estimated by preliminary damage assessments."

"In addition, many of the lines were made of materials which are no longer available. While the new lines will be of better quality and provide more resistance to storms, they are a lot more expensive to replace, which accounts for much of the increase in the storm's costs," Bunting added.

"As we worked, we discovered more and more poles on the ground," said Bob Hall, general manager of the Ark Valley Electric Cooperative, Association, Inc., the hardest hit co-op in the state, with more than \$50 million in losses and 998 miles of

lines down. "As we found more and more miles of lines down, we kept calling for more help."

As utilities conducted initial damage assessments, they looked at the cost to turn on the power, but that did not incorporate the cost to restore the system to its original state. Many of the lines were built in the 1940s and to restore them to today's codes and standards will require new poles and new lines at a much greater expense.

"The new lines will be built to today's standards; therefore, it will be a more modern day system when it's done, one better able to withstand storms than before," Hall said. "In addition, rebuilding will result in contracts that bring an influx to the local economy."

Prior to the December 2007 ice storm, Kansas had already experienced three federally-declared disasters resulting in a total of more than \$480 million in damages. The winter storm of January 2007 affected 44 western Kansas counties and resulted in \$386 million dollars in expenses, while the Greensburg tornado in May and the northeast/north central flooding at the same time resulted in \$70 million in reimbursable losses. Then the June 29 southeast Kansas flooding left more than \$26 million in expenses. That leaves the state with more than \$860 million in reimbursable losses in 2007, and the total could increase as the damage claims continue to be processed.

The storm, which began Dec. 6 and continued through Dec. 19, caused six deaths. Two people were hospitalized due to contact with downed power lines, 11 others injured and more than 183,000 customers were without power at the height of the storms.

Shortly after the storm hit, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius issued a state disaster declaration which included all 105 counties. On Feb. 1, President George W. Bush approved Sebelius' request for a federal disaster declaration for counties impacted by the severe ice storms.

Smoky Hill Range will host "Hawgsmoke" competition

By Staff Sgt. Jami Perusich

The 442nd Fighter Wing, located at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., has been using the Kansas Air National Guard's Smoky Hill Range near Salina for training since 1982 and plans to hold their annual "Hawgsmoke" competition at the range in October of this year.

Hawgsmoke is a gunnery and bombing competition for A-10 aircraft teams from around the world and is expected to bring about 80 A-10 aircraft and 700 crew members and other military personnel to Salina.

"The Smoky Hill Range is one of the best in the United States," said Col. James

Mackey, commander of the Air Force Reserve's 442nd Fighter Wing Operations Group, "and we started feeling around Salina as a host city."

Smoky Hill Weapons Range is the largest and busiest range in the Air National Guard and also hosts training for active duty and Reserve units from all over the United States.

When discussing the competition, Mackey said that the community donations and support are "by far the best of any Hawgsmoke I've ever seen."

More information can be found online at www.hawgsmoke.com

Training validation complete

Continued from Page 9

around sensitive areas, managed a crash site and negotiated a large crowd in a village.

Once all the validation training was complete, each unit then focused on staff training and preparing the Soldiers for their specific tasks while deployed.

"We're trained, Army Training Evaluation Program tested and battle ready," said Command Sgt. Maj. Harold R.

Whitley, command sergeant major for the battalion. "Our (Guardsmen) received top notch pre-mobilization training ran by our own combat veterans. Coming to Fort Bliss iced the cake and allowed us to meld our individual skills into collective battle drills. Team Bliss provided a real time climate, skilled trainers and the right resources to prepare us for our near term future."

Annual memorial fishing tournament planned for April 26

1. Participants and Eligibility:

Participation in this event is open. The first 70 teams (maximum allowed on Coffey County Lake) to register for this event will be allowed in the tournament. Contestants must possess a valid Kansas State Fishing License if required by law. Contestants under the age of 18 may enter and fish with a parent or legal guardian providing both the minor and parent/legal guardian read, understand and sign an entry/waiver form (provided upon request). This is a boat tournament— we will not be matching boaters with non-boaters, your fishing partner is up to you, but you will have to have a partner. Tournament starting order will be determined by the arrival time of the boat.

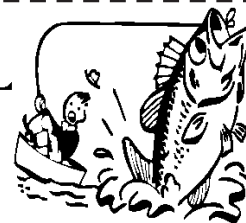
2. Lake Closure: The lake is subject to being closed to boat access under certain wind or other conditions. Beepers and instructions are issued at the gatehouse upon arrival. If the tournament starts on Coffey County Lake and wind conditions cause anglers to leave the lake, the weigh in will be conducted at that time. In the event the lake is closed for other reasons than weather prior to the tournament date (i.e.; elevated threat condition) the tournament will be moved to Eisenhower State Park at Melvern Reservoir. If this happens, you will be contacted prior to the tournament date. There is a \$6.50 daily vehicle permit required to enter the state park. This fee is the responsibility of each entrant/team. In the event the tournament has to be conducted at Melvern Reservoir, all boating and fishing regulations, lake and creel limits for black bass on Melvern Reservoir take affect.

3. Boats, Motor and Safety: Any boat 15 feet or longer, if powered by a motor of 25hp or more, may be utilized if it meets all state, federal and local laws. All boats must meet Coast Guard requirements. Each boat must be equipped with a aerated live-well. Fish baskets or stringers are not allowed. Each boat must be equipped with a kill switch attached by lanyard and must be attached to the operator anytime the combustion engine is running. All persons in a boat on the lake are required to wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved (Type I, II, III or V) personal flotation device at all times. (Failure to do so may result in you being fined). Coffey County Lake (Wolf Creek) is subject to being closed to boat access under certain wind or other conditions. Beepers and instructions will be issued at the pre-tournament meeting. Each contestant is solely responsible for his/her actions, including situations due to inclement weather. It is your personal decision to travel to and/or fish in this tournament regardless of weather conditions. *There is absolutely no use of alcohol during the tournament.*

4. Scoring: The daily limit is based upon creel limits of Coffey County Lake. Only species in the Bass family will be counted during weigh in. The creel limit for a TEAM is five fish; They must meet all state and Coffey County Lake Limits. Two largemouth bass (21 inches or longer) and four smallmouth bass (15" or smaller or 21" or larger. 16-20 inch smallmouth are protected) and all the white bass. Total weight of five fish will determine a teams standing. In the event of a tie for first place, the following tie breakers will be used in order; (1) the team with the largest number of legal fish, (2) the team with the largest number of LIVE legal fish, (3) the team with the largest weight of largemouth bass. Any team presenting fish that fall into the protected length limit will be disqualified and may be subject to fines imposed by Coffey County or Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. All fish weighed will be returned to the water upon completion of weighing. Disposition of dead fish will be up to tournament officials.

5. Sportsmanship, Tackle and Equipment: You may not fish within 50 yards of another competitor if

KANSAS VETERAN'S MEMORIAL BASS TOURNAMENT



The **Fourth Annual Veteran's Memorial Bass Tournament** in memory of all fallen Kansas service men and women will be held on April 26, 2008, at the Coffey County Lake near Wolf Creek Generating Station. This tournament is to celebrate the freedom and pursuit of happiness that we enjoy as Americans. So join us in recognizing the fallen heroes of Kansas that gave the ultimate sacrifice for our American Freedom.

This is a boat tournament, so bring your own boat and fill it with as many participants as the boat can legally hold. Top 5 places will receive prizes. 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery Family Support Group is hosting this tournament. This is a fun tournament you can start between the hours of 6-8:30 a.m. and ends at 12 p.m. or earlier if you need. Prizes will be awarded after the final boat returns or 12:30 p.m. whichever is the earliest. There is "NO" entry fee for this tournament.

Prizes and trophies will be awarded.

Bratwurst, hamburgers and side dishes will be served at the end of the event. A \$5 donation per person would be appreciated.

**Date: April 26, 2008 at Coffey County Lake (near Wolf Creek)
Alternate location; Eisenhower State Park at Melvern Reservoir**

Schedule of Events

Time	Event
6:00 a.m. till 8:30 a.m.	Check in and Pre-Tournament Announcements
6:00 a.m. till 8:30 a.m.	Tournament begins
12:30 p.m.	Tournament Ends/Weigh In/Lunch and Awards

Official Entry Form

Boater Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

Work Phone: _____

Boat Registration Number: _____ **State:** _____

Year & Model of Boat: _____ **Boat Motor HP:** _____

I have read and will comply with the above stated tournament rules and regulations;

Boater's Signature _____

**Send form to: 2nd Battalion, 130th FA
Attn: Family Support Group
108 North 1st Street
Hiawatha, Kansas 66434**

See reverse for entry fee and mailing instructions. Point of contact for this tournament is Eric Thompson, 785-742-5636.

anchored or secured in a fixed position with the trolling motor out of water. All angling must be done from the boat. Only artificial lures may be used, no "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted with the exception of pork rinds, etc. Only one rod/reel combination may be used at one time. Trolling with a combustion engine as a method of fishing is prohibited. Anyone displaying poor sportsmanship, breaking local, state or federal laws or violating any of the rules of this tournament will be subject to disqualification. Tournament officials on-site will make any decisions concerning disqualification. Protests must be received at time of weigh in, no exceptions.

6. Pre-tournament meeting and weigh-in: Last minute tournament information will be given to the boat captain upon sign-in. Sign-in will be conducted at the shelter located by the boat ramp. All contestants are required to sign in. Numbered tags will be issued during sign-in. The tournament will begin at 6 a.m. or first safe light (dependent on inclement weather or fog). The tournament will end at 12 p.m. Competitors that do not meet the 12 p.m. time for turn in are disqualified from weigh-in. LATE IS LATE. For information, please call Eric Thompson at 785-742-5636.
Send Registration form to:
2nd Battalion 130th Field Artillery
Attn: Family Support Group
108 North 1st Street
Hiawatha, KS 66434

Joint State Conference to bring two-star admiral, other dynamic speakers

By Sharon Watson

Three dynamic speakers will be at this year's Joint State Conference April 11-13 at the Ramada Inn Downtown in Topeka. The National Guard Association of Kansas, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and Kansas National Guard Family Program are hosting the conference. The Honorable Thomas F. Hall will be keynote speaker for the conference. Jacey Eckhart is the Family Program's speaker and L. Gordon Sumner Jr., Ph.D., is the speaker for the ESGR.

Hall, a retired two-star rear admiral, is the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, a position he has held since 2002. Hall serves as the principal staff assistant to the Secretary of Defense on matters involving the 1.2 million members of the U.S. Armed Forces Reserve Components. He is responsible for overall supervision of Reserve Component affairs of the Department of Defense. He served nearly 34 years in the U.S. Navy, and is a distinguished and decorated Naval Aviator, who served in Vietnam.

Eckhart is a syndicated columnist, radio host and author who knows the military well. She wrote "The Homefront Club: The Hardheaded Woman's Guide to Raising a Military Family." She was born

while her dad was deployed and her husband of 17 years served in the military. He deployed five times requiring 13 moves and they have three children. Eckhart has written more than 400 columns about it all in a column called "The Homefront" which has run in The Virginian Pilot since 1998. She also hosts "The Jacey Eckhart Show" which airs on radio stations across the country and on podcast.

Sumner is executive director of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and serves as an advisor to Hall. A combat-decorated veteran, Ranger and Master Army Aviator, Sumner has had successful careers as a civilian leader in the business community and has served in key leadership positions with several national volunteer organizations. Sumner has had a successful military career serving a variety of Infantry, Air Defense, and Aviation command and state positions worldwide.

In addition to business sessions, the three day-event will include a skeet shoot tournament, golf tournament, a concert by the 35th Division Band, exhibitors and a visit by the Kansas City Chiefs cheerleaders.

For information and registration, go the NGAKS website <http://ngaks.org> or to the <http://www.kansas.gov/ksadjutantgeneral>.

IN RECOGNITION Awards and Decorations

Kansas Army National Guard

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL



Lt. Col. David A. Leger, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Maj. Kurt R. Bruggemeyer, HHC, 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Topeka, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Maj. Steven P. O'Neil, HHC, 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Topeka
Maj. Matthew W. Twombly, HHD, 69th TC, Topeka
Maj. Monte C. Weathers, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steven E. Kientz, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Master Sgt. Donald W. Marchant, 287th Sustainment Bde, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Sgt. 1st Class Robert D. Herlinger, HHC (-), 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Hiawatha
Sgt. 1st Class Luis A. Vazquez Jr., HHC, 1st Bn, 635th Ar, Manhattan
Sgt. Penelope J. Hudgins, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City

ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL



Spc. Christy M. Bulman, HHC (-), 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Topeka
Spc. Edmund A. Szuwalski, HHD, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster

Kansas Air National Guard

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL



Lt. Col. Peter Austin, 184th IW, Wichita
Lt. Col. Curtis Coln, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Lt. Col. Francis Froncek, 184th IW, Wichita, 5th Oak Leaf Cluster
Lt. Col. Anthony Mahoney, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Lt. Col. Charles Morris, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Maj. Gregory Bowman, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Jason Knobbe, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Rip Lee, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Gary Nash, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Michael O'Brien, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Kyle Smith, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Maj. Michael Venerdi, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Capt. Todd Rieger, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Michael Hamilton, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Edwin Kramer, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Gene Mohr, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Willard Morris, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Richard Ramsey, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Jack Solter, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Williams Stacey, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Master Sgt. David Wilson, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Harold Brotemarke, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Hervey Carraway, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. David Clappitt, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Kristine Clarke, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Brian Dillon, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Gregory Hennes, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Debora Hooper, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Curtis Kolb, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Jerry Lucas, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. John McCalla, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Lisa Price, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Eugene Turner, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Clark Aiken, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Larry Andrews, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Kevin Bante, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Paul Bliss, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Anthony Bowmaker, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Amy Buchanan, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Timmy Burget, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Anna Chappell, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Brian Clifford, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Frank Cook, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Willie Daniels, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Steven Dearmond, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Kim Eck, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Jammie Frakes, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Timothy Greenlee, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Jason Haecker, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Christina Hamel, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Stephen Hamel, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Mary Hansen, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. James Hunter, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Chad Johnson, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Shawn Jones, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Brian Kinderknecht, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Wayne King, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Kelly Longacre, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Martin Maes, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Randy Mark, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Daryl Mosier, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Danny Park, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Floyd Parks, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Lanning Pike, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Kenneth Steadman, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Ross Vermillion, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Roxann Vermillion, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Steven Williams, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Kevin Boddy, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Richard Brack, 184th IW, Wichita

Tech. Sgt. Tona Diekhoff, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Richard Dudley, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. William Gardenhire, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Timothy Green, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Charles Legrande, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Stephen Munn, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Marvin Weber, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Morgan Stolp, 184th IW, Wichita

AIR FORCE COMMENDATION MEDAL

Lt. Col. Lloyd Hatfield, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf



Cluster
Maj. Jamie Hutchinson, 184th IW, Wichita
Capt. Robert Sanders, 184th IW, Wichita
Capt. Kathryn Wattsharkness, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Sharon Clark, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Carolyn Crabb, 184th IW, Wichita, 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Evan Oaks, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Russell Sims, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Eugene Turner, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Andrea Banning, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Richard Champagne, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Sidney Colliatie, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Kevin Foster, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Tamara Goodrum, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Randi Hill, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Jack Kortkamp, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Richard Land, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Misty Pike, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Cynthia Price, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Glen Probst, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Stacie Smith, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Lenice Turner, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Jack Webber, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Conrad Youngblom, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Jodee Dalton, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. James Gregg, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Lilianna Habtemariam, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Steven Haley, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Ronnie Hites, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Randall Hutcherson, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Dustin Land, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Garrett Metcalf, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Bobbi Miller, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Norris, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Glen Pearson, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Michael Quimby, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Michael Shields, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Ryan Voss, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Mark Wall, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Joel Willis, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Joshua Wisner, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. John Chorn, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. William Cox, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Michael Fear, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. David Kenny, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Christopher Pagels, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Karen Riley, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Timothy Shifflett, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Daniel Stiner, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Matthew Thomas, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Derick Tibbetts, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Airman Ashley Carpenter, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jennifer Wheeler, 184th IW, Wichita

AIR FORCE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

Master Sgt. Daniel Arnold, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf



Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Justin Christman, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Henry Devader, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Emily Halderson, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Nesia McGowin, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Seth Mecum, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. David Steele, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Maurice Balance, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Justin Davis, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Cheryl Dickinson, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Gregg Finney, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Dearlyn Gary, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Pedro Gonsalves, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Brett Kaul, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Kristen Love, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Quentin Morris, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. David Riddel, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Philip Daley, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jennifer Lyne, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Phuong Nguyen, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Steffan Smith, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Brian Stiner, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Matthew Sutherland, 184th IW, Wichita

Airman retires after four decades of military service

By 1st Lt. Alyson Stockton

A lot has changed since Command Chief Master Sgt. Willard Morris took the oath of enlistment almost 39 years ago.

He entered an Air Force that was embroiled in the Vietnam conflict and saturated with draftees who were listening to the Beatles.

Morris, the enlisted force and the Air Force as a whole have come a long way since 1966.

The introduction of the computer into every military mission has changed the way the Air Force trains, communicates, and even changed the primary mission of the 184th, but it hasn't changed its pioneering spirit.

"We were the Star Trek of the Guard before we ever got this cyber mission," the chief said. "The 184th has been going where no Guard unit has gone before since we started F-4 training."

As the wing's top enlisted member, Morris served as the advisor to the commander regarding the welfare, readiness, morale and proper utilization and progress of the wing's enlisted force from April 17, 2006, to Nov. 3, 2007. The 37-year veteran said he's

proud to be associated with the prestigious noncommissioned officer corps of today. He thinks the all-volunteer military has produced enlisted personnel who join at an older age, are better educated, have more freedom and make better choices.

Staying true to his heritage, cowboy paraphernalia and photos of the wing's past command chiefs hang on the walls of his office and he says he tries to stay true to the legacy they left. Each one dealt with the challenge of his time, he said, and he was no exception, facing countless retirements from the enlisted force during the tanker-to-intel conversion.

"The number one thing I'm proudest of about this wing is that our people are not afraid to learn something new, which is at the heart of every change."

Morris served the 184th as a jet engine mechanic for 24 years, leading the Engine Regional Repair Center to two Maintenance Effectiveness Awards.

Morris was honored at a retirement ceremony in Wichita Nov. 4 and responsibility for the wing's enlisted force was passed to Command Chief Master Sgt. Kenneth Emerson.



Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting pins the Meritorious Service Medal on Command Chief Master Sgt. Morris. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Vsetecka)

Retirements

Kansas Army National Guard

Lt. Col. Jane Layden, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Maj. Steven Hardin, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Maj. Tadd Sandstrom, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Master Sgt. Steven James, HHC, 35th Inf Div, Fort Leavenworth
Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Achten, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class George Harris Jr., Det 2, 226th Engr Co, Cherryvale
Sgt. 1st Class Robert Herlinger Jr., HHS (-), 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Hiawatha
Sgt. 1st Class John Hoban, HHC, 130th FA Bde, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Dale Lawson, HHS (-), 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Hiawatha
Sgt. 1st Class James Mueller, Btry A (-), 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Marysville
Staff Sgt. Rogelio Flores, HHC, 1st Bn, 635th Ar, Manhattan
Staff Sgt. Clarence Meyer, Co B, 2nd Bn, 137th Inf, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Terry Schaefer, 1161st FSC, Hutchinson
Staff Sgt. Darren Simpson, Btry B, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Dodge City
Staff Sgt. John Thornbro, HHD, 635th Support Group, Hutchinson

Staff Sgt. Darryl Tipton, Det 1, 995th Maint Co, Mankato
Staff Sgt. Michael Tracy, Co B, 2nd Bn, 137th Inf, Wichita
Sgt. Daniel Meyer, 772nd Eng Co, Pittsburg
Sgt. Timothy Schafer, 242nd Eng Co, Coffeyville
Sgt. Terry Sharts, HHC (-), 2nd Bn, 137th Inf, Kansas City
Spc. Charles Page, 995th Maint Co (-), Smith Center

Kansas Air National Guard

Maj. Gregory Bowman, 184th IW, Wichita
Capt. Todd Rieger, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Michael Ebenkamp, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Michael Hamilton, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Willard Morris, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Gregory Hennes, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. John McCalla, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Larry Andrews, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Rickey Baker, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Patrick Engstrom, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Brian Kinderknecht, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Martin Maes, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Randy Mark, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Daryl Mosier, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Dean Tuinstra, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Steven Williams, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Kevin Boddy, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Timothy Green, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Stephen Navrotsky, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Marvin Weber, 184th IW, Wichita

We Remember...

Retired Sgt. 1st Class John G. Pfeffer III

Retired Sgt. 1st Class John G. Pfeffer III, 62, died Dec. 9, 2007.

He was born Oct. 17, 1945.

Pfeffer was a member of the Kansas Army National Guard, where he was a construction engineer supervisor assigned to Detachment 1, Company C,

891st Engineer Battalion, Winfield.

He retired with over 39 years of service.

Susan M. Garcia

Susan M. Garcia, 47, Lawrence, died Dec. 27, 2007.

She was born Aug. 7, 1960, in Topeka.

Sgt. Garcia was a member of the Kansas Army National Guard where she was a human resources specialist assigned to Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas – Land Component, Topeka.

LOYALTY * DUTY * RESPECT * SELFLESS SERVICE * HONOR * INTEGRITY * PERSONAL COURAGE

**NATIONAL
GUARD**

Army National Guard presents award to Garden Plain High School

By Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke,
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

"We have always had great community support," said Lance Gordon, Garden Plain assistant football coach. "From their influence coaching these kids throughout the years to the support of this team; this is a community award."

The support of the community was evident Jan. 29. The basketball stands at Garden Plain High School were packed as the 2A state champion football team and head coach Todd Puetz received the MaxPreps and Army National Guard Tour of Champions trophy.

The championship award capped a perfect 14-0 season for the Garden Plain Owls. It was also the first title in program history after runner-up finishes four previous times. The team, finishing 28th in the national rankings, beat out some 16,000 other teams nationally and is the only Kansas team to earn the prestigious award.

The MaxPreps Tour of Champions is presented by the Army National Guard and recognizes the finest high school football teams in the country through various celebrations and formal ceremonies. The Tour was inaugurated in 2005 and honored 10 premier football programs. In 2008 the Tour of Champions expanded to 30 schools, bringing together athletes, coaches, student-body, parents and fans. Representatives from the Army National



Deputy Chief of Staff for Strength Maintenance, Col. Jim Trafton, presents the Army National Guard and MaxPreps Tour of Champions trophy to Todd Puetz, Garden Plain athletic director and head football coach. Garden Plain finished their football season as undefeated state champions and ranked 28th nationally from field of more than 16,000. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Guard presented each team with the MaxPreps Tour of Champions National Rankings trophy in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments throughout

the 2007 football season.

Col. Jim Trafton, deputy chief of staff for strength management, presented the trophy to the Garden Plain team.

"This is a tremendous accomplishment," he said. "It is exceptional to see a small town team win an award of this stature. Your hard work has paid off and you truly deserve this award."

Jayhawk answers the call

By Maj. DeAnn Barr

Master Sgt. Steve Williams recently returned from a 120-day deployment to Baghdad International Airport, Sather Air Base, Iraq, as the first sergeant of the 447th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron. The squadron was composed of 60 personnel which encompassed, weather, intelligence, airfield management, air traffic control, and transient alert.

"The 184th prepared me very well and two 184th troops arrived before me and that helped, as well," said Williams. "The first sergeant job was trial by fire. I had no prior experience in that. I had a two and a half day turnover."

"I enjoyed my tour," he continued. "It

MaxPreps uses an intricate computer program to determine team rank. Prior season history, school size, and comments on message boards are not considered in the MaxPreps rankings. The system utilizes the huge number of game results stored in the MaxPreps database. Generally, the more a team wins, the higher the ranking, but the system also takes into account quality wins against other highly ranked opponents and strength of schedule. For example, a team's ranking is hurt more by losing to a team that is ranked below them verses a team ranked ahead. Playoff games are weighed 2.1 times what a regular season game is. Football rankings are updated twice a week.

Honored teams must win their state championship and be highly ranked. Though not limited to the numeric "top 30" rankings on MaxPreps.com, the Tour aims to honor the best of the best in America.

"Athletes and National Guard Soldiers have a lot in common. Through discipline, hard work and sacrifice, they become a team and work together to achieve honor, excellence and victory," said Maj. Michael Baptista, National Guard Bureau. "The coaches and athletes of Garden Plain High School exemplify these qualities right in your local community."

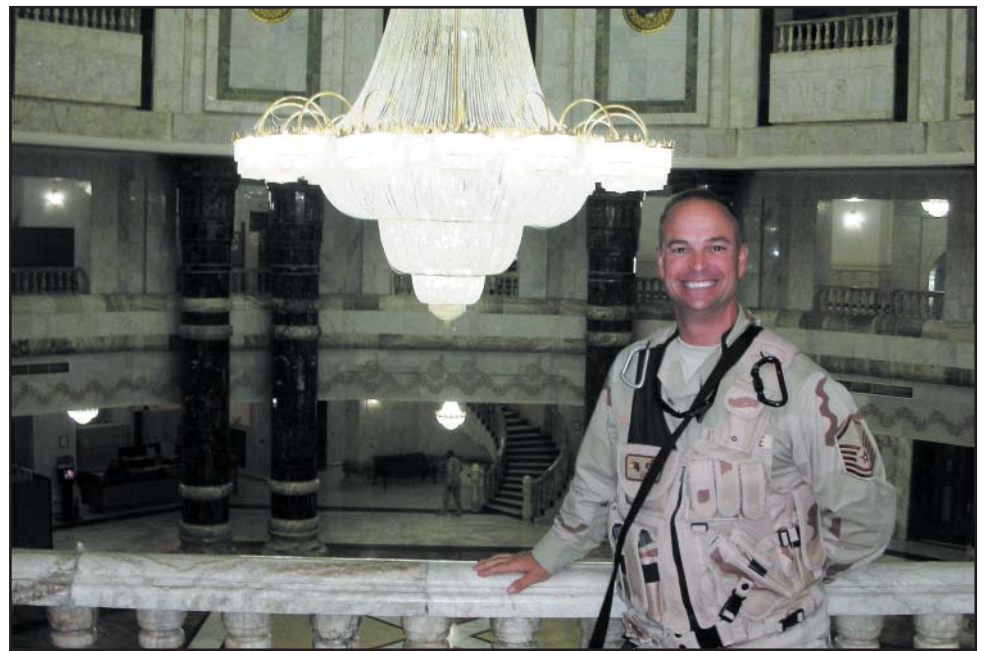
"Out of thousands of teams, the National Guard recognizes this team as one of the very best in the country. Like National Guard Soldiers, they are your friends and neighbors and they are champions. We congratulate them for their incredible achievement and hope that one day they will consider joining our team."

was rewarding and challenging at the same time and I made a lot of friends."

Williams lived in an air-conditioned tent with seven of his new "best friends" and learned to appreciate simple pleasures.

"You could go outside the wire, but only over to the other side of the airport," said Williams. "Before I went I think I took the freedom we have in the U.S. for granted. It made me appreciate the simple things in life. If I were called upon again I would go, it was very rewarding. What we are doing over there is well worth the effort."

Williams deployed as a member of the 184th Maintenance Squadron, but has since transitioned to the 161st Intelligence Squadron.



Master Sgt. Steve Williams poses in front of a chandelier at Al Faw Palace in Baghdad. (Photo provided)

The urgency of Line of Duty

Continued from Page 5

Treatment Facility should contact:

Laura Webb R.N., B.S.N
Medical Case Manager
Office of the State Surgeon
State Defense Building
2800 SW Topeka Blvd
Topeka KS 66611
Office 785-274-1072

Fax 785-274-1685

Soldiers on active duty orders such as AGR, ADSW or Title 10, please contact:
Master Sgt. Terry Spangler
Human Resource Specialist
State Defense Building
2800 SW Topeka Blvd
Topeka KS 66611
Office 785-274-1206

Guardsmen join parade for presentation of custom motorcycle to Wichita company

Some high-profile stars in reality television paid a visit to Wichita on Wednesday, Feb. 6. The crew of Orange County Choppers delivered a custom-built motorcycle to Viega Corporation. Looking for another chance to get the Kansas Army National Guard into the public eye, Sgt. 1st Class Chris Baker, and Staff Sgt. Jason Williamson from Company B, 2nd battalion, 137th Infantry located in Wichita, Kan., decided to contact Viega Corporation and ask if they would be interested in adding a military touch to the day's activities. The official from Viega Corporation thought it was a great idea and Company B was asked to join the city parade.

At the event, the Soldiers were invited inside along with employees of Viega and Wichita city leaders to enjoy a private viewing of the custom bike that Orange County Choppers built for Viega. The Soldiers got to shake hands with the mayor of Wichita, community leaders and employees of Viega, including the president and CEO of Viega North America, Dan Schmierer.

Paul Teutul Sr., Paul Teutul Jr. and Mikey Teutul, stars of the popular TLC show "American Chopper," made the presentation to a packed crowd at a fire station in downtown Wichita.

The Teutuls arrived and entered the

room with much fanfare, spoke for a few minutes about the process of building the custom bike and all of the unique features. After this description they proceeded to pull the sheet off of the bike for everyone to see the black-and-yellow custom bike.

Immediately following the unveiling of the new bike, the Teutuls signed hats and shirts and took pictures with everyone present and made sure that the Soldiers got their pictures and hats signed by all three Teutuls before proceeding outside to drive down Main Street to the Viega headquarters.

The Soldiers from 2-137th Infantry fell in behind the Teutuls and the Kansas chapter of the Freedom Riders in their M2A2 ODS Bradley Fighting Vehicle. The parade made its way down Main Street even though the weather outside was quite cold. The Soldiers had a great time in the parade passing out key chains and KSARNG basketballs to as many people as they could. They received an ovation from the crowds lining the street.

When the event concluded, OCC parked three custom choppers in front of the M2A2 ODS Bradley Fighting Vehicle allowing the Soldiers to take pictures and talk with the OCC crew.

The whole episode will air March 20, 2008, on The Learning Channel.

Guard presence adds special touch to grand opening

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the store, Paslay and Meyer allowed the Soldiers the use of the display counter next to the front door. So, when a customer walked into the store the first thing they saw was the unit's guidon and a laptop computer showing pictures of Guardsmen in action with patriotic music in the background. A smiling Soldier greeted everyone who came in the door.

Spc. Jason Colobong said "It was great to be able to talk to so many people of all ages. Many customers had their stories of life in the service. The younger ones were just fun to talk to."

Outside, on the vehicle, people were allowed to sit in the driver's seat. Younger ones climbed inside and sat in the gunner's turret. Many people said they had heard

about the HMMWV, but few had seen one up close.

Sgt. Michael Cochran said "It was fun dealing with the public, letting them know who we are and what we do."

"I was a little shy talking to people at first," said Pfc. Cera Sample, "but the sergeant worked with me and it became much easier. I had so much fun showing people the HMMWV, which I got to drive!"

"It is great having the Guard here," said Paslay. "Not only did they add a lot to our opening, but it is Alan's and my deep pleasure to host the MPs and their recruiting event."

"I have always had respect for the military," he continued, "but even more so now that I have met so many outstanding young men and women."

Foyer of South Topeka Armory dedicated to Lt. Col. Ron Rousser

A ceremony was held on Jan. 19 to dedicate the foyer of the Topeka South Armory at Forbes Field to the memory of Lt. Col. (Kansas) Ronald Rousser, who died unexpectedly in February 2006. Rousser was a project manager for the Kansas Army National Guard's Directorate of Facilities Engineering and was responsible for the successful construction of the multi-million dollar facility.

"Ron was many things to many people: a husband, a father, a son, a brother and a Soldier, a colleague and our friend," said Col. Cliff Silsby, Construction and Facilities Management Officer for the Kansas National Guard. "His life was cut tragically short but his legacy lives on in many ways, including this building... It is to his legacy that we dedicate this foyer today."

"This is an important day and a difficult day," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general. "We're sad today; we're sad every day when we think about Ron. But one of the things I think we can cherish is that, especially as an engineer and as a man of vision is that we have a living memorial to him here and throughout the state."

Bunting told the audience that Rousser was responsible for managing many of the armory construction projects in the state in recent years.

"There are 8,000 people in the Kansas National Guard and many come and go," Bunting continued. "A few reach the point of having such high regard and esteem, being so well known and well thought of that their name automatically brings a sense of pride and a smile. People know who you're talking about and Ron was one

of those people."

"It's a cold day outside," Bunting concluded, touching his heart, "but it's a warm day for us to dedicate this foyer."

Rousser enlisted in the Army after high school and was later selected to attend Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a second lieutenant upon his graduation. He served as a signal officer and a battery commander in the 1st Battalion, 127th Field Artillery and also as the signal officer for the 35th Division Artillery. At the time of his death from an aneurysm, Rousser was serving as the signal officer for the 635th Regional Support Group and had been selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel. He received a posthumous promotion to that rank under the authority of the adjutant general.

He received numerous military awards and recognitions, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, induction into the Order of Saint Barbara and a saber recognizing his successful service as a battery commander.

In his civilian career, Rousser worked for Hoss and Brown Engineering in Topeka and for the Kansas Division of Facilities Management as an architectural engineer. He was later a project manager in the Kansas Army National Guard's Directorate of Facilities Engineering, where he supervised a number of important projects across the state.

He and his wife Christina were married in 1994, and they had one daughter, Kaitlyn. In addition to his parents, he is also survived by three brothers and one sister.



Christina Rousser, widow of Lt. Col. (Kansas) Ron Rousser, lifts the cover from the plaque dedicating the foyer of the Topeka South Armory to Rousser's memory. At left is Ron Rousser's brother, Don. Also shown are Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general; Rousser's daughter, Kaitlyn, and Linda Rousser, Ron's mother. (Photo by Steve Larson)

Armory renovations continuing



In January 2008, Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general, paid a visit to the Pratt armory to check on the progress of renovations. The Kansas National Guard has 56 armories across the state. Many were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s and are in need of repair and updating. (Photo by Sharon Watson)

Volunteer organization seeks to help Soldiers with mental health concerns

In order to address the mental health needs of U.S. troops returning from overseas deployments, a new mental health organization has been formed.

Give An Hour is a nonprofit organization currently establishing a national network of mental health professionals and reaching out to its first target population, the U.S. troops and families affected by the current military conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. The mental health professionals who join give an hour of

their time each week to provide free mental health services to military personnel and their families. Those who receive services from the Give an Hour network will be given the opportunity to give back to their own communities.

Visitors can log on at www.giveanhour.org and enter their zip-code to locate the counselor nearest them. Licensed mental health professionals who wish to participate can also go online to register.

The gift of life



Col. Mike Foster of Derby, Kan., commander of the Kansas National Guard's 184th Intelligence Wing, challenged unit members to donate blood on Feb. 1 during the Red Cross Blood Drive held at McConnell Air Base, Wichita. "To be honest, this is my first time to donate and I'm not proud of that fact," said Foster. "Chalk it up to apathy and the 'I'm too busy' syndrome, but this year due to a bit of education, a little persuasion and a dose of reflection, the choice was easy. Think of our deployed service men and women, think of the young mother or child whose life you could save. It's really a 'no brainer.'" (Photo by Maj. DeAnn Barr)

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