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# PLAINS GUARDIAN

VOLUME 58 No. 5      *Serving the Kansas Army and Air National Guard, Kansas Emergency Management, Kansas Homeland Security and Civil Air Patrol*      OCTOBER 2014

## Kansas National Guard Soldiers deploying to Kosovo

By Sgt. Zach Sheely  
Public Affairs Office

Approximately 16 Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers with the 35th Division, headquartered in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, deployed to Kosovo in waves, as part of a larger mission that the 35th is augmenting in support of the NATO mission there. The Soldiers were honored in two separate departure ceremonies with family, friends and community members present at the 35th headquarters Sept. 12 and Oct 3.

The Soldiers deployed to Fort Bliss, Texas, for premobilization training before deploying to Kosovo. In Kosovo, the Soldiers will fill key positions in the headquarters for Multi-National Battle Group - East, a multinational peacekeeping force.

These Soldiers represent Kansas in what Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, Kansas adjutant general, called a vitally important mission.

“Everyone realizes when you look at how dangerous the world is today, what a critical importance it is for us to be able to send these 35th Division Soldiers to represent us and help keep that peace and stability in that fragile part of the world,” said Tafanelli.

Maj. Gen. Michael D. Navrkal, commander of the 35th, referred to the division’s long history, dating back nearly a century, and its multiple peacekeeping missions.

“Peace is something that can be hard fought for,” said Navrkal. “Our division

played an integral role in two world wars and we’ve had an enduring interest in helping keep peace in the Balkans. One of the greatest missions Soldiers can do is help keep peace. These Soldiers trained hard and are well prepared to do this mission.”

In 2003, the 35th conducted a similar peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. In 2007-2008, the division served as the Task Force Falcon, headquarters in Kosovo. In 2013-2014, the division deployed Soldiers in support of KFOR 18. The headquarters designation has recently changed to Multi-National Battle Group-East to reflect NATO’s involvement.

Living in a different country and working alongside counterparts from other nations offers valuable cultural experiences for deploying members of the 35th.

“We learn a lot from each other,” Sgt. Maj. Dereck Thomas, logistics noncommissioned officer in charge, said of his colleagues and multinational counterparts.

“We all have stereotypes of what other groups are like, but when you get to a different nation and interact with people, stereotypes tend to fade. We’re all the same no matter where we’re from. We all want the same things – happiness, freedom and the ability to raise our family in peace.”

Thomas, a veteran of multiple overseas deployments, offered some advice to his Soldiers who haven’t deployed yet.



**Maj. Gen. Michael Navrkal, commanding general of the 35th Infantry Division, addresses deploying Soldiers and their guests at a departure ceremony Sept. 12. The Kansas National Guardsmen are deploying to Kosovo as part of a multinational peacekeeping force. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson, Public Affairs Office)**

“Get involved with the locals and learn about the culture and diversity,” he said. “Take advantage of this and use it as a learning experience.”

Thomas’ wife, Connie Thomas, had some tips for family members of deployed

Soldiers. “Hold your family close,” she said. “Keep busy and make sure you take care of yourself and your own well-being also.” “Without the family members we couldn’t do this,” said Sgt. Maj. Thomas.

## Brig. Gen. Bradley Link retires Selanders is new commander of the Kansas Air National Guard

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

The Kansas National Guard bid farewell to Brig. Gen. Bradley Link during a ceremony at the Kansas Joint Force Headquarters in Topeka Oct. 5.

Link, a veteran of multiple deployments, retired after more than 30 years of service, most recently serving as the assistant adjutant general - Air and commander of the Kansas Air National Guard.

“From General Link’s first day, he charged forward with his mantra that we are one team, one fight,” said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of

Kansas. “He took time to express gratitude to each and every Airman for their efforts, and helped us all be better leaders. ‘If you want to go far, go together’ – he embodied that philosophy every day.”

Link was showered with gifts as tokens of appreciation.

“I don’t own the successes; all of you own the successes,” said Link. “The failures, I own. It has been a great honor and

privilege in trying to lead this great organization forward.”

Prior to the ceremony, Col. Jay Selanders accepted command of the Kansas Air National Guard from Tafanelli.

“Let me be the first to welcome you,” Tafanelli said to Selanders. “I have the utmost confidence you will serve the Kansas Air National Guard well.”

Link echoed this sentiment, noting his excitement for Selanders.

“I’m extremely excited for Colonel Selanders as he assumes command of the Kansas Air National Guard,” said Link. “Jay is the absolute right person to help guide us through these difficult times our state and nation are facing.”

Selanders joins the JFHQ team having most recently served as the 190th Air Refueling Wing vice wing commander. He joined the Air National Guard in 1984, and has flown more than 3,000 combined flight hours in the T-37, T-38 and KC-135. Selanders’ first words as commander focused on the need for leaders to take care of Airmen, and for Airmen to be ready to serve.

“It is a privilege to serve on this leadership team,” he said. “Everything about this leadership team is about the Airmen, about you.”

“As threats against the United States continue and as we have fewer resources, the challenging times will continue. I know we will rise above it,” he continued. “Tell your Airman to be prepared, physically and mentally. Let’s sharpen the focus of the Air National Guard and remember that we are here to support and defend the warfighters on the ground.”



**Col. Jay Selanders (right) accepts the command flag of the Kansas Air National Guard from Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, during a change of command ceremony Oct. 5 at Nickell Armory, Topeka. The change of command was followed by a retirement ceremony for the former commander, Brig. Gen. Bradley Link. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Angela Brees, 190th Air Refueling Wing)**

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# 995th supports maintenance units for annual training



**Spc. Jason Vculek and Pfc. Davion Bowens, 995th Support Maintenance Company, conduct services on a HET M1000 trailer at the Maneuver and Training Equipment Site facility at Fort Riley as part of their unit’s annual training. (Photo by Pfc. Katrina Hargraves, Detachment 1, 995th Maintenance Company)**

**By Spc. Justin Moore-Daniels UPAR**  
**995th Support Maintenance Company**  
Soldiers of the 995th Support Maintenance Company received quality training while improving equipment readiness for the Kansas Army National Guard during the unit’s annual training July 12-26. The 995th SMC conducted maintenance missions at the Unit Training Equipment Site in Salina, and Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site, Fort Riley.

The mission was to support these facilities with their backlog of maintenance requirements. The Soldiers also conducted driver’s training along with doing services on several of the unit’s vehicles.

“Our company is happy to support the different maintenance shops in Kansas,” said Capt. Brent Jennings, 995th SMC commander.

Jennings separated his unit to support each location with approximately 66 Soldiers. 1st Lt. Ronny Adorno, company executive officer, and Sgt. 1st Class Randy Kohlman, platoon sergeant for the unit’s Ground Support Equipment Platoon, provided a team that supported MATES and worked on several major projects. These projects included engine replacement, services on M1000 (Heavy Equipment Transporter) trailers,

electronics repair, armament services and support of the Combined Support Maintenance Shop support in Topeka. The platoon completed one HET M1000 trailer service and worked on two more HET trailers, each requiring 300 man hours. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Stuart Stupka, automotive maintenance warrant officer, and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Swiercinsky, support maintenance section sergeant, supervised a team that supported UTES. Their team helped perform services and put parts on a variety of equipment for the 891st Engineers Battalion, as well as performing services on generators, trucks, trailers and heaters. The Salina team performed 359 hours of services to support the mission at UTES, resulting in increased equipment readiness for the units that the UTES facility supports around Kansas. The 995th SMC also had a small group from the unit’s Allied Trades section complete several projects in Concordia. One of these projects included building parts racks to be used at the National Guard’s Advanced Turbine Engine Army Maintenance at Fort Riley. The 995th Maintenance Company is based in Smith Center with a detachment in Concordia.

# Aviation Soldiers welcomed home

**By Sgt. Zach Sheely**  
**Kansas National Guard Public Affairs**  
Approximately 45 Kansas National Guard Soldiers of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Regiment, were welcomed home with raucous music and cheers from friends and family members inside Hangar 680 at Forbes Field, Topeka, Sept. 7.

“They accomplished many great achievements during their deployment,” said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. “This is a great day in Kansas. We have Golf Company back home.” The Soldiers were deployed to Afghanistan in November 2013 to provide aeromedical support to troops in that area. For some Soldiers, returning home meant meeting family members for the first time. Chief Warrant Officer 2 John Fulks, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot, finally met the newest addition to his family. John’s wife, Julia Fulks, gave birth to daughter, Alyssa, in March while John was still overseas. John, a veteran of multiple deployments, had previously interacted with his newborn baby girl only via electronic video calls. “Being away while she was born was probably the one of the most difficult things I’ve ever had to do,” said Fulks. “Finally being able to meet her was a sur-

real experience.” The Soldiers’ sacrifices in being away from home were well worth it, as they evacuated more than 300 patients off the battlefield in 135 missions, according to the commander of Company G, Maj. Kevin Kennedy. The Soldiers’ primary mission was to provide aeromedical evacuation support within the division and corps under the command and control of the General Support Aviation Battalion. They also provided the rapid evacuation and movement of patients while providing en-route care to higher echelons of medical treatment, movement of medical personnel and accompanying medical equipment and supplies to and from points are far forward as possible. “There were challenges to overcome and sacrifices made,” said Kennedy. “If you need us, we will be ready. If you call, we will come get you.” After his remarks, Kennedy dismissed his troops for the first time in nearly a year to loud cheering, tears and hugs as the Soldiers threaded their way through the crowd to reunite with their families. “This is what life’s all about,” said Fulks’ grandmother, Alberta Pyle of Eudora. “We prayed so hard for their safe return.”



**Approximately 45 Soldiers of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, Kansas Army National Guard, were greeted with a heroes’ welcome by friends and family members in Hangar 680 at Forbes Field in Topeka, Kansas, Sept. 7. The Soldiers were deployed to Afghanistan in November 2013 to provide aerial evacuation and movement of patients. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)**

# 731st Transportation Company hauls trailers for RSMS facilities

**By Spc. Melissa Herren**  
**731st Transportation Company**  
The 731st Transportation Company was tasked with the mission to transport 357 trailers from the Readiness Sustainment Maintenance Shop in Salina to the RSMS located at Fort Riley during their 2014 annual training May 31 - June 14. The trailers being moved are part of the rebuild program that is supported by the RSMS. The 731st Transportation Company had 95 Soldiers on the ground in support of this operation from the company’s truck platoons in Hays, Liberal, and Wichita and the headquarters platoon from Great Bend. Thirty M915A5 line-haul tractor trucks and 28 M872 flatbed trailers were used to transport the trailers.

During the same period, the 731st TC also completed weapons qualification at the Kansas National Guard firing range near Salina. “It isn’t simply that they all are required to do this,” said Capt. Jay Simecka, company commander. “These Soldiers are eager to shoot and always want more of it. Whatever the training event entails, you want Soldiers to care about it. What we leaders emphasize and make important, then becomes important to our Soldiers.



**Sgt. Diego Arazia, Detachment 1, 731st Transportation Company, Liberal, and Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Rathbun, platoon sergeant of Detachment 2, observe as Sgt. Vickie Vandenburg uses chains and binders to secure a M872 trailer in preparation to haul it from the Regional Sustainment Maintenance Site in Salina to the RSMS at Fort Riley during annual training. (Photo by Spc. Melissa Herren, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 731st Transportation Company)**

“The opportunity to conduct line-haul missions and unit equipment maintenance is vital to the progressive success of this unit and the readiness of our Soldiers,” said Simecka. “This MOS (Military Occupational Specialty)-specific training provides the necessary elements to staying tactically and technically proficient. Our Soldiers displayed their mettle in completing each mission with skill and professionalism.” “Throughout the annual training period, I have seen every Soldier working hard to accomplish the mission,” said 1st Lt. David Atkins, incoming commander of the 731st. “Due to the diligence of our senior truck master and the hard work from the Soldiers, we were able to accomplish the mission ahead of schedule.” Putting vehicles on the road means they will inevitably encounter maintenance issues. The annual training period the maintenance section had the opportunity to conduct real-time maintenance missions, including the replacement of a triple axle, which Atkins said was excellent training for the Soldiers. The mission was good for the Soldiers and also benefited Kansas taxpayers. “All the old trailers had to be loaded on  
**(Continued on Page 3)**



# 731st Transportation Company conducts change of command



Capt. Jay Simecka passes the guidon of the 731st Transportation Company to Lt. Col. Dana Duggins, commander of the 287th Special Troops Battatalion, signifying that he relinquishes command of the unit. Duggins, in turn, passed the guidon to 1st Lt. David Atkins (center), the incoming commander. (Photo by Spc. Melissa Herren, 731st Transportation Company)

**By Spc. Melissa Herren**  
**731st Transportation Company**

The 731st Transportation Company conducted a change of command ceremony June 8 at the Unit Training Equipment Site in Salina. The 731st TC is headquartered in Great Bend, with detachments in Wichita, Hays and Liberal. During the ceremony, Capt. Jay Simecka, who had been commander for 39 months, turned over command to 1st Lt. David Atkins.

Lt. Col. Dana Duggins, commander of the 287th Special Troops Battalion, presided over the ceremony to symbolically pass responsibility for the welfare and training of the 165 Soldiers assigned to the 731st from Simecka to Atkins.

“The 731st Transportation Company is an outstanding organization due to the efforts and professionalism of our Soldiers, and the support of their families and loved ones,” said Simecka. “It has been an honor and privilege to command this company.”

“I am very honored and excited to take command of the 731st Transportation Company,” said Atkins. “I have seen a lot of hard work and dedication throughout annual training and I am excited to see what the future holds for the 731st Transportation Company.”

**1st Lt. David W. Atkins**

1st Lt. David Atkins Atkins enlisted into the Kansas Army National Guard in November 2006. He served as a wheeled vehicle mechanic in the 170th Maintenance Company from 2006 until 2008. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in ordnance Aug. 23, 2008. Atkins’ key assignments include platoon leader in the 170th Maintenance Company, platoon

*“I am excited to see what the future holds for the 731st Transportation Company.”*  
*1st Lt. David Atkins*

leader in the 778th Transportation Company and maintenance control officer in the 995th Maintenance Company.

Among Atkins’ awards and decorations are the Bronze Star, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M Device.

Atkins has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Fort Hays State University. His military education includes Army Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training, Accelerated Officer Candidate School, Basic Officer Leadership Course, and Company Level Pre-Command Course.

In his civilian career, he is an officer with the Wichita Police Department.  
**Capt. Gerald (Jay) R. Simecka II**

Captain Jay Simecka enlisted into the U.S. Marines Corps in 1988, serving eight years in the Marine Corps Reserve from 1988-1996. He enlisted into the Kansas Army National Guard in 2005.

He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in transportation Sept. 23, 2006. His key assignments include platoon leader and executive officer in the 137th Transporta-  
**(Continued on Page 13)**

## Open house showcases Wichita unit

The 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment and the Recruiting and Retention Battalion hosted an open house Sept. 12-13, at the Wichita South army.

The 2-137th deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2005 to 2006 and to Djibouti, Africa in 2010 to 2011 to help train native military forces. Elements from the unit also deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Endur-

ing Freedom as members the Kansas Agribusiness Development Teams 1 and 2 from 2009 to 2011.

The open house consisted of multiple vehicle and equipment displays around the facility. Soldiers were available to explain the functions and capabilities of the vehicles and equipment. Local recruiters answered questions for those considering joining the Kansas Army National Guard.

## 731st Transportation Company

**Continued from Page 2**

731st equipment, boomed down and hauled for safety reasons,” said Master Sgt. Randy McCall, company truck master. “It’s my understanding we saved the state approximately \$100,000 by us moving RSMS rather than contracting it out and we got some fantastic training for our Soldiers.”

The 731st also hauled equipment from

Smith Center and Concordia for the 995th Maintenance Company in preparation for their annual training and made a trip to Topeka to pick up 12 new 872 trailers.

McCall said the Soldiers were motivated and morale was high during the mission. “It just doesn’t get much better,” said McCall. “We were glad to be given the opportunity to do our mission.”

# OCS Class 58 graduates 17



Graduates of Officer Candidate School Class 58 swear their oath as officers during a graduation ceremony Aug. 16. The ceremony was conducted at the Kansas Highway Patrol Academy in Salina. (Photo by Master Sgt. Brent Anders, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**By Master Sgt. Brent Anders**  
**105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

To the applause and cheers of proud family, friends and other Soldiers, officer candidates of Officer Candidate School Class 58, 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment, received their commissions as second lieutenants during a graduation ceremony Aug. 16 at the Kansas Highway Patrol Academy, Salina.

The graduating OCS Soldiers honored with a commission were Joshua Anderson, Salina; Douglas Boland, Shawnee; Robert Chandler, Wakefield; Amanda Frost, Junction City; Lyle Hawthorne, Wakefield; Gregory Kreek, Kansas City; Spencer Krupp, Overland Park; Charles Leistner III, Lawrence; Joshua Loreman, Topeka; Robert Razo, Topeka; Brian Reeves, Wichita; Sandra Robinson, Overland Park; Ronald Rousseau, Lawrence; Mandy Shobe, Kansas City, Missouri; Hans Stephenson, Leavenworth; Matthew Vanderpool, Topeka; and Travis Wickham, Topeka.

Near the beginning of the ceremony, OCS candidates presented a token of appreciation for the efforts of the cadre and staff.

“I would like to present our class gift to the battalion,” said OCS candidate Douglas Boland. “It is a memorial to the graduates of the Kansas Army National Guard who have fallen in battle.”

The inscription on the plaque read “In memory of those who went before us and gave all while leading the Soldiers of the state of Kansas. Kansas Army National Guard officer candidate school graduates killed in action: 1st Lt. Milbrate, Dale L.

class 09, KIA, April 11, 1969; Van hoa province Vietnam. 1st Lt. Hess, Kerry E. class 12, KIA; June 5, 1969, Tai Nam province, Vietnam; 1st Lt. Richardson, Arlend D. class 12, KIA, Feb. 17, 1970, Kwong Ngai province, Vietnam. Presented by class 58.”

Another special part of the OCS graduation was the Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Developed in 2003 by retired Col. Robert Bloomquist, former commander of the 235th Regiment, the OCS Hall of Fame was created to pay special tribute to outstanding officers who graduated from the OCS program. Additionally, these outstanding officers have attained the rank of colonel or higher, been awarded the Medal of Honor, were killed in action or died in a combat zone. This year’s honored inductees were retired Kansas Army National Guard officers Col. George Lind and Col. Bob Mallams. OCS candidates assisted in the Hall of Fame induction ceremony by reading biographies of each inductee.

Lind joined the military in 1960 at the age of 17 as an infantryman in the Kansas Army National Guard. After achieving the rank of staff sergeant, Lind attended the Kansas Military Academy Officer Candidate School, Class 10, and received his commission as a second lieutenant in 1967.

Lind served in a multiple of leadership roles during his career, including director of resource management of the Army Reserve Personnel Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Lind served in this role during the Gulf War Desert Shield/Desert Storm operations,  
**(Continued on Page 15)**

## Rain? What rain? Play ball!



A little rain didn’t dampen the spirits of Kansas National Guard members as they played a friendly game of softball with residents from Sheltered Living on Sept. 5 at Gage Park. The softball game was done in conjunction with an observance of Sept. 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance being promoted by the Kansas Volunteerism Commission. After the softball game, everyone enjoyed a cookout with hamburgers and hot dogs. (Photo by Jane Welch, Public Affairs Office)



# 2014 has been a year of changes and achievements

By Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli  
The Adjutant General

Another year is drawing to a close and our agency’s state and federal fiscal years are now behind us, so it’s a great time to assess the many things we’ve accomplished together in 2014.

One of our priorities in this agency, military and civilian, is preparing for a worst-case scenario, whether disaster or war, and we have kept very busy this year on preparedness. We started 2014 focused on our large-scale disaster exercise, Vigilant Guard. In August, the exercise sponsored by National Guard Bureau and Department of Defense’s Northern Command, tested



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli

our state’s capabilities for responding to a major disaster. More than 2,000 local, state and federal partners participated. The 35th Infantry Division served as the Joint Task Force headquarters for Vigilant Guard and deployed with their mobile command post equipment and personnel to Salina. This validated that a division headquarters is the domestic operations deployable command post of choice. It also tested our ability to work closely with numerous partners in a multi-city disaster response.

We have focused significant effort on improving our training resources in the state to enhance readiness of responders and military. Our Crisis City training center in Salina proved itself again as an invaluable resource

during the Vigilant Guard exercise, with its growing number of training venues.

The 235th Regiment (Kansas Regional Training Institute) and subordinate elements earned the TRADOC "Learning Institution of Excellence" and an unprecedented 100 percent rating in all courses during a recent accreditation rating process. The Kansas Regional Training Institute provides a variety of training to National Guard members in a nine-state area.

Earlier this year, we dedicated the new Heartland Preparedness Center in Wichita, a state of the art facility and training location for military and civilian first responders in Wichita and Sedgwick County. Negotiations with potential civilian partners are ongoing.

Our Regional Training Site - Maintenance was rated the number one RTSM out of 13 nationally, and has two instructors who earned the Automotive Service Excellence - ASE certification; a first in all Army components.

In addition to ensuring we have excellent training programs in Kansas, we have also been working with our State Partnership country, Armenia, in the development of a deployable Peacekeeping Brigade, mobile medical capability, humanitarian demining, noncommissioned officer development, and civil military emergency planning. The 287th Sustainment Brigade sent two teams to Armenia to assist with their certification to meet NATO standards and participate in peacekeeping operations around the world, just one of many exchanges throughout the year.

This past year has brought some structural changes to the Kansas Army National Guard, including the activation of a new

brigade in Manhattan. The 130th Field Artillery Brigade began operations in July in Manhattan and held its activation ceremony in October. It brings with it 15 new full time jobs and 163 part-time (traditional military) jobs to Manhattan.

The 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation was selected for fielding of the UH-60 M helicopter, the latest and most advanced version of the Black Hawk helicopter. The new aircraft will start arriving next fall and a large number of pilots, crew chiefs, and mechanics will receive training on the new aircraft over the next several months.

Companies C and D of the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment were selected to receive the M1A2SEPV2 Abrams Tanks; a total of 29 new tanks arrived at Fort Riley in April and September. The 2-137th is the first National Guard unit to receive these tanks which provide the unit improved capabilities with newer technology.

The 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery conducted several force structure and armory consolidation actions during 2014. The consolidation was an effort to better align Kansas Army National Guard force structure in a manner that enhances readiness, mission command and domestic support.

Congratulations are in order for the Kansas National Guard’s Service Member and Dependent Support Team/Family Programs, which achieved accreditation on Feb. 28. Kansas was the first state in the National Guard to accomplish accreditation at a national level with international standards.

Our Kansas Air National Guard has also had a busy and productive year.

The 190th Air Refueling Wing transferred more than two million gallons of fuel and transported nearly 1,700 passengers while flying nearly 3,500 hours during fiscal year 2014. The 190th supported the war fight as the lead Air National Guard tanker unit for the Air Expeditionary Force as part of the Pacific Command Theater Support Package, as well as providing air crews, tankers, maintenance and support staff to the Central Command theater in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The wing also deployed more than 300 Airmen around the world in support of military operations through Air Expeditionary Force and Expeditionary Combat Support deployments.

Aircraft and personnel from the 190th supported the largest international maritime exercise in July 2014. The exercise, called Rim of the Pacific, is a bi-yearly event based primarily around the Hawaiian Islands. The 190th Airmen joined 25,000 participants from 25 nations with more than 50 naval vessels and 200 aircraft in the exercise.

The Guardsmen at the 184th Intelligence Wing, Wichita, have contributed daily to overseas contingency operations. The 184th conducted 24/7/365 intelligence sur-

veillance and reconnaissance operations for Central Command, capturing thousands of hours of video and producing intelligence products for use by combat forces. The wing also upgraded its Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communication System suite to provide state of the art capabilities to support war fighters down range.

The 184th’s Weapon’s Range, Smoky Hill, continues to be the busiest air-to-ground range in the Air National Guard; and for the second year in a row, hosted U.S. Southern Command’s premier Joint Fires Exercise Jaded Thunder, bringing active duty and Guard resources together over the skies of Salina.

During the past year, our agency’s Kansas Intelligence Fusion Center has garnered significant praise from homeland security officials around the country. The KIFC’s cyber security intelligence analysis operations were recognized by Eric Rosenbach, assistant secretary of Defense, Homeland Defense and Global Security, as a leading example of cyber capabilities in the nation. KIFC has been recognized as a model for the nation by National Guard Bureau and U.S. Northern Command leadership and, in fact, 15 other states are working to emulate the model for collaboration that excels at filling previously unaddressed homeland security intelligence analysis gaps.

The Kansas Division of Emergency Management is constantly preparing for the next challenging situation facing Kansas, whether it’s from tornadoes, winter weather, or the recent threat of Ebola. KDEM staff has been working closely with the Governor’s Office, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and other state agencies to ensure close coordination of resources and messages on the Ebola issue.

During the past year, KDEM worked with KDHE and the Kansas Corporation Commission to assist local and state partners with an improved notification system for hazardous spills. This involved the establishment of a one-call spill reporting process which allows anyone reporting a hazardous spill to notify the state with only one phone call rather than contacting multiple agencies as was previously required. This new process will decrease spillover notification times, increase notification compliance and increase visibility of all spill events across the state without duplicating efforts. The process ties in with a new spill reporting database which multiple agencies can access to track hazardous spills and responses.

In addition, KDEM has been raising awareness about its Comprehensive Resource Management and Credentialing System in which county and state officials can list their credentialed emergency response personnel in Kansas. This allows identification of people with specific skills and

(Continued on Page 5)

## Looking for a few good warrant officer candidates

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector Vasquez  
State Chief Warrant Officer

This past fiscal year we have seen many changes and will continue to see more changes that have the potential to adversely affect our readiness, budget, and training.

Throughout my 35 years in boots, I’ve seen the Army change and evolve numerous times. For us to be successful and remain relevant, we must be able to adapt. We must vigilantly prepare for the challenges ahead as best we can and we must be ready to seize opportunities as they present themselves.



Command Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector Vasquez

Given the current fiscal state of the Kansas National Guard, we cannot afford to miss opportunities as a result of Soldiers not being adequately prepared. For example, each year we have Soldiers sent home from courses for failing an Army Physical Fitness Test or height/weight. That is simply unacceptable and not only adversely affects the Soldier, but our entire organization.

During fiscal year 2014, the state reached a major milestone in its warrant officer strength, reaching over 80 percent for the first time ever. Since my appointment in 2010, we’ve reduced our warrant officer vacancies from around 90 to fewer than 30. We hope to continue our efforts throughout fiscal year 2015 and bring the state’s warrant officer strength close to 90 percent. To accomplish this, we still need high-quality noncommissioned officers who display a good deal of technical proficiency to be willing to take the step towards becoming the technical expert within their branch. Although our vacancies are filling up, we still need applicants, especially within the field

artillery and engineering branches. If you’re interested in becoming a warrant officer or you know of someone who might be a good fit, please contact Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sam Bonham at (785) 274-1823 or samual.c.bonham.mil@mail.mil so we can get their application process started.

The Kansas Regional Training Institute had its Warrant Officer Candidate School accreditation review this past June and once again it not only passed, but it received the highest rating of the 26 state WOCS programs. Several of the processes which Kansas developed are being recommended for implementation into the federal WOCS protocol.

After visiting warrant officers throughout the state, a predominate issue that keeps coming up is Officer Evaluation Reviews. As a warrant officer, you must take responsibility for ensuring that your rater knows and understands what benefits you provide your organization. It is important that you visit with your rater and make sure he/she knows what your professional goals are. By doing so, you then ensure your rater has a good understanding of what you do and where you eventually want to be.

If you are a rater of warrant officer, I ask that you rate your Soldiers accurately. If they did an exceptional job for you, then please take the time and effort to ensure their OER accurately reflects their duty performance. You owe it to your Soldiers to rate them the way you would want to be rated – honestly and fairly.

I will have my last “Warrant Officer’s Call” for the year sometime in November in the Wichita area. Once a location and time are pinned down, I will send out the details. If you are a warrant officer and are not on my distribution list, please let me know and I will get you added. My email is hector.a.vasquez4.mil@mail.mil

Finally, if you know of any warrant officer news or changes, please send them to me. Thanks for your service and all you do!

## PLAINS GUARDIAN

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# Kansas Air National Guard Coyotes refuel Spangdahlem fighters

By Airman 1st Class Luke J. Kitterman  
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

At more than 28,000 feet above ground, a U.S. Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker and its crew assigned to the 117th Air Refueling Squadron, 190th Air Refueling Wing, in Topeka, Kansas, executed an aerial refueling mission with 52nd Fighter Wing F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter aircraft Sept. 18 at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.

Aerial refueling is the process of transferring fuel from one aircraft to another during flight to allow aircraft to be air-borne longer, extending its range and mission capabilities.

“The F-16 usually has a mission time of about an hour to an hour and a half,” said 1st Lt. Andrew J. Taylor, a 52nd FW F-16 pilot. “Being able to use the tankers and refuel in the air is awesome for us. It allows us to do longer missions. We can set up a scenario, go fight and then go get fuel in the air to go back and fight again.”

During the refueling process, the aircraft receiving the fuel is within about 30 feet of the tanker. The fuel is transferred through the flying boom, a telescoping tube with movable flight control surfaces that an operator on the tanker aircraft extends and inserts into a receptacle on the receiving aircraft.

For one Airman, operating the flying boom is as rewarding as it gets.

“Getting to do this for a living is amazing,” said Tech. Sgt. Ben Tressler, an in-flight refueling specialist from the 117th Air Refueling Squadron. “I joined the Air Force to travel and I’ve been to 29 different countries because of this job. To me, there’s not a better gig in the world.”

Since the KC-135 was from the Kansas Air National Guard and was taking off from Spangdahlem runway for their training, it gave a small group of Spangdahlem Airmen the opportunity to fly with the crew and observe in-air refueling operations.

“Most of the time, it’s routine training,” Taylor said. “This time it’s a little more exciting because it allowed some of our maintenance Airmen, the people who take care of our jets, to get a front row seat to what we do up there. It shows them how their work on the ground enables us to do our work in the air.”

For many Airmen on board, it was their first time seeing the refueling process.

“Seeing the boom hook up with the F-16s was awesome,” said Senior Airman Francisco J. Bautista, a 480th Air Maintenance Squadron electrician. “We work with the F-16s every day and to get to see them in action from the tanker was a great experience.”

## A year of changes and achievements

Continued from Page 4

knowledge to assist during a disaster response. The system also tracks emergency response equipment and other resources available in each county that might be needed for an emergency. All 105 counties have submitted information to date, and the system is continually being updated.

KDEM recently developed and launched the Kansas Exercise Tracking System, helping state and local emergency management personnel with a better overall picture of exercises being conducted statewide. To date, more than 60 counties have reported their information for exercises funded by the Emergency Management Performance Grant and nearly 5,000 participants are involved.

Meanwhile, KDEM continues to provide ongoing emergency management training, as well as support for local, regional, and state-level exercises helping to ensure local and state officials have the tools they need to succeed in emergency management and response.

KDEM’s establishment of Regional Hazard Mitigation planning has resulted in significant savings to the state of Kansas this year. By taking a regional approach to mitigation projects, such as safe rooms, counties in the state’s seven regions can work together to determine which grants to apply for. Better planning and coordination results in more savings for Kansas. The savings to date are \$2,784,000.

KDEM has been working hard to increase individual and community preparedness through the Kansas Citizen Corps campaign. In 2014, the program enjoyed a steady growth in programs, volunteers, and the scope and level of the activities and services provided by an estimated 3,780 trained volunteers and leaders. By teaching Kansans about disaster preparedness, Citizen Corps helps communities and individuals become better prepared. Together, the corps members provide local support, public outreach and services during times of disaster.

2015 is almost here and a lot of important work remains to be done. As a team, we can accomplish much just as we have so far in 2014! Thank you for all of your hard work!



Senior Airman Francisco J. Bautista, a 480th Air Maintenance Squadron electrician, watches as Tech. Sgt. Ben Tressler, an in-flight refueling specialist from the 117th Air Refueling Squadron, operates the boom of a KC-135 Stratotanker to refuel a U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter aircraft during a refueling mission at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, Sept. 18. Bautista, along with other Airmen from Spangdahlem, went on the flight to see firsthand how a refueling mission operates in the air. (Photo by Airman 1st Class Luke J. Kitterman)



## ENLISTED PROMOTION SYSTEM

### STATE WIDE VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*What are State Wide Vacancy Announcements? How do they work?*

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

*What does this mean for you?*

These positions could potentially give you an opportunity to get a new Military Occupational Skill, a new unit, and as many as two promotions.

*How do I apply?*

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

### IMPORTANT FY 2015 EPS INFORMATION

#### RECENT CHANGES TO EPS

Supplemental Board- Soldiers who become promotable for E5, E6, and E7 after Feb. 1 will be boarded in August and added to the bottom of the EPS list

There will be no Stand by Advisory Boards (STAB) for 1SG

SSD 1 or WLC are required for promotion to E5 but not required to be boarded

SSD 2 replaced ALC Common Core and is required to be promoted to E6

SSD 3 is required to be boarded and promoted to E7

SSD 4 is required to be boarded and promoted to E8

#### What do I have to do?

Review your iPerms file and ensure everything is up to date. If you have something in your file that may require further explanation to the board, you might write a letter to the board, which will be added to your board file.

It is highly recommended that you have a DA Photo. EPS boards are not appearance boards, so a photo can mean a big difference.

All Soldiers being boarded must sign a 4100 online. <http://ngksc2-intraweb/ks4100/>

Commanders must sign 4100s for Soldiers boarding for E7 and above

E8s and promotable E7s who wish to be boarded for 1SG must submit a 4187 through channels requesting to be boarded

Soldiers boarding for E5 must have three 4101s completed by their leadership

#### IMPORTANT DATES

October 31 - EPS MOI is Published. The MOI can be found on the 4100 Website under the Help Tab

#### EPS BOARD

Oct. 3 - EPS 4100s are available online  
Dec. 31 - All documents are due in iPERMS  
Dec. 31 - 4101 Packets and 1SG Requests due to G1  
Feb. 1 - Effective date of board (TIG,TIS,NCOES,SSD)  
Feb. 1 - 4100s completed  
March 13 - List is Published

POC: Staff Sgt. Phim Khamphouvong (785) 274-1113  
Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kristina Griffin (785) 274-1069

#### SUPPLEMENTAL BOARD

June 30 - 4100s are available online  
June 30 - All documents are due in iPERMS  
Aug. 1 - 4101 Packets due  
Aug. 1 - Effective date of board (TIG, TIS, NCOES, SSD)  
Aug. 1 - 4100s completed  
Aug. 7 - List is Published



# “King of Battle”: 130th Field Artillery Brigade reactivated

By Sgt. Zach Sheely  
Public Affairs Office

The thunderous boom of three 75mm Pack Howitzers firing shook the ground and filled the air with smoke, officially signifying the return of a historic Kansas National Guard unit, as the 130th Field Artillery Brigade was reactivated during a ceremony at Frank Anneberg Park in Manhattan, Kansas, Oct. 19.

The new brigade brings 15 new full-time National Guard jobs and 163 part-time National Guard positions. The part-time jobs are traditional National Guard positions in which individuals train one weekend a month and two weeks a year.

“The reactivation, one more time, of the 130th Field Artillery Brigade is a long-awaited event that returns a storied and treasured unit to the inventory and a powerful asset to the state and nation,” said Brig. Gen. Robert Windham, commander, Kansas Army National Guard. “The 130th is a decorated unit with a long history and rich lineage.”

The Soldiers of the 130th stood in formation as the 35th Division Band played, and the ceremony was marked by the uncasing of the red and yellow flag of the 130th for the first time since 2007. Windham ceremonially passed the flag to the new commander of the 130th, Col. John Rueger, symbolizing the activation.



**Brig. Gen. Robert Windham, center, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard, passes the flag of the 130th Field Artillery Brigade to Col. John Rueger, commander of the 130th, to signify the reactivation of the 130th during a ceremony at Frank Anneberg Park, Manhattan, Kansas, Oct. 19, 2014. (Photo by Army Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)**

“It’s a great honor for me to command the newest field artillery brigade in the Army National Guard,” said Rueger. “We’re bringing such a tremendous history

forward. With the unfurling of the colors, this brigade is starting a new chapter in the Kansas Army National Guard and brings much capability and much to the fight.”

The 130th Field Artillery history in the Kansas Army National Guard dates back to

1917, where its lineage can be traced through both world wars as part of the 35th Infantry Division, the Korean conflict and, most recently, Operation Iraqi Freedom. Following its deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the brigade was inactivated on Nov. 10, 2007.

The Field Artillery Corps is known as the “King of Battle” and the 130th is the eighth such unit in the National Guard. The close proximity of the 130th headquarters to Fort Riley and the 1st Army Division is mutually beneficial, said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, adjutant general of Kansas.

“We want to find ways to bring the National Guard and our active duty counterparts together, so we find a host of opportunities where we can work and train together as one fighting force,” said Tafanelli.

The 130th headquarters will provide command and control to subordinate field artillery units in the Kansas National Guard. These include the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery in Hutchinson and the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery in Hiawatha. The field artillery units provide indirect fire in support of Army maneuvers. The brigade’s subordinate battalions are fielded with the 155mm Paladin self-propelled howitzer and equipped with the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System.

“With the standup of the 130th today, our Army is stronger and the enemies of our nation and the people who threaten our way of life are more at risk,” said Windham.

## 35th Infantry Division Soldiers receive “Spartan” welcome

By Sgt. Melissa C. Parrish  
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Members of the 35th Infantry Division from the Kansas and Missouri Army National Guard were formally received as members of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division during a shoulder sleeve insignia ceremony held at the Joint Multinational Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, Oct. 4.

The guardsmen will join the 4-25th IBCT in Kosovo as elements of the brigade assume command and control of NATO’s Multinational Battle Group-East in support ongoing peace support operations later this month.

Lt. Col. Clint Baker, the incoming commander of MNBG-E and a native of Hamilton, Texas, gave the Soldiers a “Spartan” greeting.

“We are proud to welcome our brothers and sisters from the 35th Infantry Division as they join us for our Kosovo Force 19 mission,” said Baker. “There is no stronger

bond than the bond of those that serve and strive together to accomplish a mission that is greater than ourselves.”

Baker was the first to place a patch on a guardsman’s shoulder – that of Maj. John Plaster, a native of Moberly, Mo. The 35th ID Soldiers followed suit and went one-by-one placing the 4/25th IBCT (ABN) patch on their Soldiers’ left arm.

Sgt. Patrick Finley, a human resources specialist with the Kansas Army National Guard, volunteered for this deployment and said he was excited to wear the Spartan patch.

“I really liked how we were initiated into the unit by the patch ceremony,” said Finley. “I am ready for the mission in Kosovo and I am ready to support 4/25 any way I can.”

Home stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, the 4/25 IBCT and its subordinate 1st Squadron (Airborne), 40th Cavalry Regiment will conduct peace support operations in Kosovo as part of a nine-month rotation.



**Soldiers of the 130th Field Artillery Brigade, Kansas National Guard, stand at attention as the 130th is officially reactivated during a ceremony at Frank Anneberg Park, Manhattan, Kansas, Oct. 19, 2014. The new brigade brings 15 new full-time National Guard jobs to Manhattan and 163 part-time National Guard positions with it. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)**



**Members of the 35th Infantry Division from the Kansas and Missouri Army National Guard receive the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division patch at the insignia and welcoming ceremony held at Hohenfels, Germany, Oct. 4. The guardsmen will head to Kosovo with the 4/25th IBCT (ABN) in support of ongoing peace support operations. (Photo by Sgt. Melissa Parrish, 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)**


## 369th Signal Company holds change of command ceremony

The 369th Signal Company held a change of command ceremony Aug. 16, where Capt. Gabriel Brockman relinquished command to 1st Lt. Nicholas Brownlee.

Brockman had been in charge of the 369th Signal Company since July 2012. As the first signal company commander, he was responsible for building the unit from the ground up. He commanded the number one signal company in the Great Plains region, three annual training events, and even scored a 99.6 percent

on the unit’s first Command Maintenance Evaluation Team inspection in February 2014, earning the COMET Achievement Award.

Brownlee has also been with the unit since its activation. Brownlee started out as a cadet in Reserve Officer Training Corps at Pittsburg State University. He was assigned to the 772nd Engineering Battalion in Pittsburg and later came into the 369th Signal Company as a second lieutenant. He took on the role of being the unit executive officer in April 2013.



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# Armenian village benefits from Kansas National Guard visit

By Master Sgt. Allen Pickert  
190th ARW Public Affairs

“Reserve all judgments until after you’ve had at least a few hours of sleep.”

That is how Lt. Col. Jacob Salmond started the 190th Civil Engineering Squadron’s time in Darbas, Armenia. At 3 a.m., after a six-hour ride on rough roads, the group arrived at the schoolhouse they would spend the next two weeks renovating.

The schoolhouse was a crumbling concrete, Soviet-era building that contained more birds, bats and mice than electric lights or water fixtures. The dreary first impression was compounded by the fact that their first night’s sleep would be spent on its dirty floors as the cots were still being held by Armenian customs.

With the first day’s light, the CES crew was able to gauge their task and start organizing their efforts. Not only were classrooms to be renovated at the schoolhouse, but there was also a health clinic that would get a new roof and have a bathroom replaced.

The buildings and the projects were in worse shape than most expected. Senior Master Sgt. John Evans described Armenia as a “great opportunity for the younger Airmen to function at a high level in less than optimum conditions.”

And operate at a high level they did. The classroom windows and floors had to be re-

moved and the concrete sub flooring had to be smoothed and leveled before any new materials could go in.

Though Darbas sits among picturesque mountains it is remote and primitive. When supplies ran low or needed tools were not available, substitutes had to be found. Keeping the projects on track fell on the shoulders of Maj. Don Harper, CES operations officer, and Chief Master Sgt. Brian Wohlerzt.

“We had to repurpose some material we removed from the school,” said Harper. “It really is a testament to the creativity and innovation of our Airmen.”

“This deployment is real, not just training,” said Master Sgt. Shawnna Hartford, CES first sergeant. “This is not the type of deployment that people sign up for. This is a rough place.”

While the conditions in the decrepit schoolhouse were rough, everyone in the CES crew was ready to work every day without exception.

“The squadron has the best attitude,” Hartford said. “Despite the rough conditions, they help each other through tough times and ... do good work.”

The work at the health clinic went so well the local doctor, Anush Nersisyan, and her husband, Tigren, practically adopted the clinic work supervisor, Master Sgt. Michael Martin, and his crew. During an appreciation

dinner held at the doctor’s house, the Kansas Airmen were showered with gifts, good food and Armenian culture. The doctor’s hospital-

ity was so warm and gracious that Martin claimed that the evening was “the best hours of my entire military life.”



1st Lt. Jarrod Brunkow welds parts to repair the schoolyard fence and gate. (Photo by Master Sgt. Allen Pickert, 190th ARW Public Affairs)

## Medical house call to Armenia

By Master Sgt. Allen Pickert  
190th ARW Public Affairs

Kansas sent a care package to the Armenian village of Darbas in the form of two medical specialists from the 184th Intelligence Wing, Medical Group, from Wichita. Lt. Col. (Dr.) Linda Goodson and Capt. Kerri Kavouras, a nurse practitioner, hitched a ride to Armenia with the 190th Civil Engineering Squadron.

While the 190th CES performed some vital physical repairs to the Darbas health clinic, this Air Guard medical team came to help the local doctor, Anush Nersisyan, bridge the gaps between her limited resources and effective treatment. Nersisyan is the only doctor in Darbas and

her clinics are the only health resources available to six surrounding villages. The closest full medical facility to Darbas is in Yeravan, a six-hour car ride away.

“She is very bright and resourceful,” said Goodson. “She is a trained pediatrician, but has taught herself to be a general practitioner.”

Helping Nersisyan become a better general practitioner was the task at hand for Goodson and Kavouras, who brought as much training material as they could carry and more.

“She wanted every textbook and resource we could get our hands on,” said Kavouras.

(Continued on Page 13)



(From the left) Capt. Kerri Kavouras, Dr. Anush Nersisyan and Lt. Col. Linda Goodson meet to discuss medical matters outside one of Nersisyan’s clinics in Armenia. (Photo by Master Sgt. Allen Pickert, 190th ARW Public Affairs)

## 190th Civil Engineers refurbish buildings, build friendships

By Master Sgt. Allen Pickert  
190th ARW Public Affairs

Stony stares from the local populous met members of the 190th Civil Engineering Squadron on their first morning in Darbas, Armenia. The Armenians were not sure what to think of this group of “soldiers” that had descended upon their town. CES members met the stares with a smile, a wave and a “Good morning,” or a “Hi” every time.

Maj. Noah Diehl, engineering officer for the 190th, knew from previous deployments that to have a more lasting impact on Darbas they needed to work with the people as much as the village buildings they were there to refurbish.

“When I arrived for the site survey, I saw a financially struggling farm community,” said Diehl. “They had food we could buy to supplement our Meals, Ready to Eat. Buying their food broke the ice.”

“We got better food, they made some money and we established an interactive relationship,” he continued.

By the end of the first day in Darbas, children were hanging around the school soccer field. Not having enough players for a soccer match, an Armenian child gestured to some 190th members that they should come and play with them. They did and the laughter and camaraderie began.

CES leadership handled several special projects, which included a volleyball net, repairing basketball goals and bean bag

*“This deployment was the best, most useful real world thing I’ve been involved with in my military career.”*

**Master Sgt. Robert Ogan**

toss equipment. By the second day in Darbas, the Airmen’s smiles and greetings were enthusiastically reciprocated, often with English language attempts.

Master Sgt. Shawnna Hartford, CES first sergeant, was primarily responsible for shepherding other community relation efforts, including hugely successful clothes, books and toy give-aways and a town movie night, which drew as many as 60 villagers.

Though the living conditions were difficult, even by CE standards, the mission was a great success. Darbas received renovated classrooms and an improved health clinic, but as Diehl noted, “Our impact went beyond brick and mortar to the true future of Armenia, their children.”

The Darbas mission was the last deployment for Master Sgt. Robert Ogan, Structures Shop superintendent, before his retirement, one that made a lasting impression.

“This deployment was the best, most useful real world thing I’ve been involved with in my military career,” said Ogan.



Members of the 190th Air Refueling Wing Civil Engineering Squadron enjoy a game of volleyball with a group of Armenian children. The Airmen were in Armenia to refurbish some buildings in the village of Darbas. The visit was arranged through the National Guard State Partnership Program. (Photo by Master Sgt. Allen Pickert, 190th ARW Public Affairs)



# Father, sons deploy together for the first time

By Staff Sgt. Ciara Wymbs  
379th Air Expeditionary Wing  
Public Affairs

Being deployed can be difficult on families. Someone is always missing something important in their life back home – holidays, birthdays, soccer games or even being there when a child loses their first tooth.

For U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Brian Dillon, 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron boom operator, this time around on his deployment, to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, he got lucky: two of his three boys are right by his side.

Dillon joined the Air Force in 1981; he has traveled across the world and has had a part in every major operation the USAF has taken part in since that time. His father, a Korea and Vietnam War veteran, served 25 years in the Air Force.

After graduating basic training in 1982, and being on active duty for four years as a crew chief, Dillon transitioned to the Air National Guard.

In his early years, Dillon remembers coming home to curious children, anxious to know what their father had been away doing.

“It would be a three against me wrestling match. My daughter would wedge herself in between them and hug me until she was satisfied,” said Dillon. “Then, they would pile on me and want to hear everything I had done.”

In 1996, he decided he needed a career change.



**Staff Sgt. Matthew Dillon, 379th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, pulls a pen from the pocket of Senior Master Sgt. Brian Dillon, 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron boom operator, while Airman 1st Class Adam Dillon, 379th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, holds a pre-flight checklist at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, Sept. 20. Brian Dillon and his sons, Matthew and Adam, have more than 40 years of service together and are deployed together for the first time. The Dillons are deployed from the 190th Air Refueling Wing in Topeka. (Photo by Senior Airman Colin Cates)**

Dillon became a boom operator. He says that is where he felt he belonged all along.

“I have been in every conflict since Grenada,” Dillon recalls. “In 2001, I was on the first New York ANG tanker that

launched on alert over the World Trade Center.”

In 2007, Dillon rounded up his family and they moved to Topeka, Kansas, where he is part of the 190th Air Refueling Wing.

That is where his three sons also joined the Air Force.

For one of his boys, he says all he knows is that his dad is in the military.

“Him being gone for a few months at a time was just a part of growing up,” says Staff Sgt. Matthew Dillon, 340th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief. “He would bring home a T-shirt for me and my brothers and the spicy cinnamon smell of Big Red™ chewing gum.”

This isn’t the first deployment Matthew has shared with his dad, but for his baby brother, Adam, it is.

“It’s beneficial being deployed with family,” said Airman 1st Class Adam Dillon, 340th EAMXS crew chief. “Especially because they know the ins and outs of the places I go, which makes things easier to get used to.”

The Dillons agree they have always been very tight-knit. All work crazy hours, but find time to hang out in their free time.

“I, my dad and my brother have always been close,” said Matthew. “It’s kind of like having my best friends here while deployed.”

At the end of the day, being able to catch up face to face while deployed is priceless.

“As many birthdays and Christmases I have missed over the years, getting to spend time on a deployment with my sons is indescribable,” said the eldest Dillon. “And going out to fly and one of my sons is there to recover me, is definitely a proud father moment.”

## Silver Flag exercise tests the skills of 184th Civil Engineers

By Tech. Sgt. Maria A. Ruiz  
184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs

Ready anytime, anywhere. This proved to be the response the 184th Civil Engineer Squadron exemplified during the seven-day Silver Flag training exercise at Detachment 1, 823rd Red Horse Squadron, Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, Aug. 9-15.

Fifty-one members from the 184th CES participated in the exercise. The units included operations management, engineering; command and control; emergency management; heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration; electrical power production; electrical systems; water and fuel system maintenance; pavements and construction equipment; and structures shop.

Silver Flag is mandatory training for CES Airmen, which is required every 36-48 months depending on their job title, and helps measure a unit’s deployable readiness.

A total of 190 Reserve, National Guard and active-duty Airmen, representing 38 bases worldwide, trained in a joint mission to build and maintain a bare-base operation at a forward-deployed location.

Supporting units included manpower, personnel support

for contingency operations, services and comptroller. Other CE units were fire protection and pest management.

“The more we train, the better we get,” said Airman Khanh Phung, 184th CES electrical systems, a first-time Silver Flag participant. “If I get deployed next year, I have an idea of what I’m supposed to do.”

Silver Flag participants operated in a bare-base training environment with housing in Alaskan small shelter system tents and meals cooked by services or ate Meals, Ready-to-Eat.

Airmen used a variety of combat and survival skills, such as repairing bomb-damaged runways and responding to bio-hazard contaminations. Additional Air Force specialty code specific training was given to units to supply the combatant commander with expeditionary emergency responses.

Many of the noncommissioned officers had gone through Silver Flag and were able to guide first-time Airmen through the training and exercise.

“A lot of the equipment here is not available at home station or is not seen very often except for special temporary duty assignments like this one,” said Tech. Sgt. Adrian

Arzate, 184th CES structural engineer. “It is really good hands-on training for the young Airmen. It is vital information to know for deployments and NCOs can guide the Airmen and keep a positive attitude.”

After five days of training, participants tested their knowledge during a one-day simulated deployment scenario to a forward operating base, where they opened an airfield surrounded by insurgent dangers.

“We were unloading the fiberglass mat and saw two canisters come flying out of nowhere with purple smoke, then the explosions started,” said Airman 1st Class Bryce Schroeder, 184th CES structural engineer. “Adding the pressure of focusing on more than just our job helps us get ready for those surprises through a deployment.”

The 17-hour exercise tested participant’s resiliency through different scenarios such as an in-flight emergency landing, fire suppressions, insurgent attacks and equipment malfunctions.

“Spirits were kept high and everybody was doing their jobs while still having fun,” summarized Master Sgt. Mark Rush, first sergeant, 184th CES. “It was a challenge but, it was also rewarding.”



**Airmen with the 184th Civil Engineering experience the stress of working in a simulated deployed combat environment during the Silver Flag exercise at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, Aug. 9-15. As they worked on equipment, they also focused on hostile threats and safety measures. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Maria Ruiz, 184th IW Public Affairs)**



# Prison riot scenario tests Black Hawk crews, Ellsworth officers

By Sgt. Zach Sheely  
Public Affairs Office

Clad in gas masks, helmets and riot vests, and armed with three-foot riot batons and shotguns loaded with blank ammunition, Ellsworth Correctional Facility officers trained with the Kansas Army National Guard to quell a simulated inmate uprising at the prison in Ellsworth, Kansas, during an exercise Sept. 24.

The exercise, sponsored by the Kansas Department of Corrections, was to practice the airborne tactical response to a crisis within prison grounds. Improving communication and teamwork between the command structure – from the prison warden to the secretary of corrections, the governor and adjutant general, down to the local agencies – was the goal of the exercise.

Two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, piloted by Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, flew from the Army Aviation Support Facility 2 in Salina to Ellsworth to pick up and then aerially insert the Special Operations Response Teams, comprised of approximately 36 Ellsworth corrections officers, into the Ellsworth prison facility to suppress a crowd of unruly inmates, played by prison staff.

It wasn't the first time the Kansas National Guard and Ellsworth Correctional Facility have worked together. There have been additional coordination and training events, including other full-scale exercises like this.

“Over the last 20 years, we’ve developed a good working relationship with the Guard,” said Capt. Troy Frimmel, commander of the SORT. “We’re the only (correctional) special operations team in Kansas that works with the military.”

This kind of joint effort provides beneficial training for all involved, said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jason Garr, standardization instructor pilot, AASF#2.

“Tactical insertion of specialized teams into areas that can only be accessed by helicopter is the primary role of an aviation air assault unit,” said Garr. “Any opportunity to



**Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, Kansas National Guard, and officers of the Ellsworth Correctional Facility teamed up to conduct a prison riot suppression exercise at the facility Sept. 24. The exercise, sponsored by the Kansas Department of Corrections, was conducted to practice airborne tactical response to a crisis situation inside a prison. (Photo by Jane Welch, Public Affairs Office)**

practice that mission in a realistic scenario results in the highest level of training we can accomplish.”

Putting boots on the ground as fast as possible is the objective and response time is greatly reduced with the use of the helicopters. Frimmel said aircraft may provide the only access inside a compromised facility once the entry and exit points are overtaken.

“This type of training is extremely important because

you always find your weaknesses,” Frimmel acknowledged. “Unless you really go out and actually do it, you don’t know how to improve or what to expect. It’s critical in getting all the agencies involved.”

Interagency training provides a familiarization between personnel, procedures and equipment.

“There are some things you just can’t simulate, like how long it takes someone in full riot gear to buckle their seat belt,” Garr said. “Events like this provide learning experiences that are used in future events.”

The Ellsworth Correctional Facility and Kansas Guard conducted a similar exercise in 2009, but this type of airborne mission was a first for many members of the SORT.

Chris Dean, a staff sergeant at the prison, had never flown in a helicopter before.

“I was a little nervous,” said Dean. “But this exercise is something most SORT members look forward to and once I got up in the air all the butterflies were out.”

Marty Sauers, deputy warden of the Ellsworth Correctional Facility, stressed the importance of the partnership with his facility and the Kansas National Guard.

“It’s valuable to be able to know that the National Guard is available if we have a really bad situation,” said Sauers. “The partnership is really good experience for our SORT team members to understand the capabilities the Guard provides.”

Among these capabilities is the capacity to serve a dual mission, Garr said.

“The Kansas National Guard has not only a federal mission to the commander in chief, but a state mission to protect the citizens of Kansas,” said Garr. “Working along with other protection agencies only enhances the state’s reaction capability, creating a safer environment for everyone.”

Once control of the prison had been reclaimed, Dean and the other members of the SORT were picked up and flown to safety by the choppers.

“It was a thrill,” said Dean. “I was more excited to get back on and do it again.”



**A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, flown by Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, Kansas National Guard, approaches the Ellsworth Correctional Facility in Ellsworth, Kansas, to insert a Special Operations Response Team from the prison. The flight was part of a joint exercise conducted by the Ellsworth facility and the Kansas National Guard Sept. 24. (Photo by Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)**

## Flight facility supports everything from combat missions to rescue runs

By David Clouston  
Reprint courtesy Sunflower Living magazine/ Sunflower Publishing and Salina Journal

In the faint light, the fleet of snub-nosed, bus-sized rotary aircraft parked on the hangar floor resembles a passive swarm of hornets, waiting out the chill of a dewy morning before sunrise until their leader signals liftoff.

Better known as Black Hawks, these UH-60 helicopters at Army Aviation Support Facility No. 2 in the Salina Regional Airport are here to serve the Kansas Army National Guard’s mission, whether it is hauling something or someone -- troops, equipment, food for stranded livestock, water for dousing wildfires, etc. -- or making a rescue run delivering medical supplies, food or water; or retrieving soldiers wounded in combat, civilians stranded by floods, heavy snow or other disasters, and those trapped or injured in extreme locations such as mountainsides. Each craft has a cargo-carrying capacity of about three tons and can carry up to 11 passengers.

“We’re a utility helicopter,” says Chief Warrant Officer Jason Garr. “We’re a flying truck.”

Garr reports to Maj. Patrik W. Goss, the facility commander whose fleet serves both the air assault mission of Kansas Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, which includes air assault companies such as the “Shadow Riders,” and the 2nd Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, whose mission is military air-ambulance operations. The number of helicopters based in Salina and under Goss’ command at any given time varies according to military defense/civilian needs and missions, as does the number of personnel needed to crew the birds. But the Salina facility and the base in the state capital are the key components of Kansas’ air fleet.

“Between us and the folks in Topeka, we cover the state,” says Goss, who is also a pilot.

And while unit personnel train pilots and maintain the helicopters in Salina, they and the Black Hawks may be deployed in support of both civilian and military authori-

ties inside and outside the state’s boundaries. Salina UH-60 helicopter crews have assisted fighting wildfires in places like Colorado and California, and have been supporting troops involved in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“Almost everyone in the building has been on two or more deployments,” says Goss. “From 2006 to 2007 in Iraq, our battalion had eight aircraft shot at or engaged by the enemy. Two were actual shoot-downs; the aircraft had to be recovered.”

The helicopters usually deploy with four crew members, but a crew of two is the minimum required. Goss, as a pilot-in-command, is joined by another pilot, such as Garr, who serves as the unit’s operations officer and senior instructor pilot. They are most often joined by two crew chiefs, whose roles may include aircraft maintenance and/or flight instruction; in an air-ambulance mission, there is a flight medic and a crew chief aboard.

Crew chiefs, Goss explains, “turn wrenches on our aircraft; they fix things that we break. ... They live and die by their

level of work because they fly with us. It’s nice when the guy riding in back with you has a little stake in your success.”

The military describes the UH-60 as a four-bladed, twin-engine, medium-lift utility helicopter. Its all-weather capable, has a 300-mile range and can stay airborne for about 2 1/2 hours at a normal cruising height of at or below 500 feet. The Black Hawk can fly at low levels as well, a trait the crews test to the limit at the Smoky Hill Weapons Range, 10 miles west of Salina. This area, says Garr, “is an exceptional training area for us because we can get right down to the weeds to do the tactical flying we need to do.”

Horsepower lets the UH-60 perform. A standard passenger car has about 250 horsepower; the UH-60 has two engines, and each one puts out approximately 1,500 shaft horsepower, meaning Goss controls the equivalent power of about six cars on each side of the aircraft. It’s a statistic that impresses kids when he addresses school audiences.

This flying power demands highly  
(Continued on Page 12)





# Emergency managers gather for annual statewide conference

By Sgt. Zach Sheely  
Public Affairs Office

Emergency management professionals from local, state and federal entities came together Sept. 9-12 in Junction City for the annual Kansas Emergency Management Association Conference to network with one another and discuss best practices and procedures in preparing their communities for an emergency.

Personnel from the emergency management offices in the 105 Kansas counties were invited, along with the National Guard and the U.S. Army.

“Emergency management is important because we want to have people prepared before a storm,” said Garry Berges, Geary County Emergency Management director and KEMA president. “It’s about being proactive in preparing people in our communities to plan for and react to a disaster.”

Waiting until after a storm has hit to start thinking about how to keep your family safe is too late, Berges stressed.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, adjutant general of Kansas, noted the constant change in emergency response from year to year and the need to stay ahead of the curve.

“It’s one of those fields where there is

continual change,” said Tafanelli. “Better planning equals better response and when everybody is on the same page it’s a good thing.”

The conference featured demonstrations, breakout sessions where emergency managers interacted face to face in smaller classrooms and vendor presentations. There were also presentations from keynote speakers including Dr. Tom Phelan of Dr. Tom Phelan Consulting, Vernon Center, New York and Jeb Lacey, director of the Office of Emergency Management, Victoria, Texas.

Included in the vendor products on display were emergency warning sirens, public service radios and advanced notification systems, all with the capabilities of warning and informing the public, before a disaster strikes.

“There are several key points to the KEMA Conference,” said Tafanelli. “There is a focus on networking with one another. It’s also a great opportunity to go through many of the breakout sessions with experts and demonstrations to get the latest info.

The conference provides a venue for emergency managers to work on partnerships and relations that are so critical in a disaster.”

Other than after an actual disaster, the



Emergency management professionals from across the state met in Junction City Sept. 9-12 for the annual Kansas Emergency Management Association Conference. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

KEMA conference is one of the only opportunities all year for emergency managers to meet and discuss their jobs.

“When a disaster happens, it’s better to know your partners’ faces,” said Berges. “It’s a chance to see how we can help each other in a disaster.”

There are new faces at the conference every year, according to Dave Sterbenz, director of Shawnee County Emergency Management. “It’s nice to meet some of the

new emergency managers. Listening to concerns, ideas and questions and being able to share experiences is good for the new and experienced.”

Sterbenz has seen an improvement in emergency response that he relates directly to the KEMA conference.

“I’ve seen an improvement in response compared to five years or 10 years ago,” said Sterbenz. “We are more trained and coordinated.”

## Annual school conference emphasizes student safety

By Sgt. Zach Sheely  
Public Affairs Office

The Kansas State Department of Education hosted the seventh annual Safe, Healthy and Prepared Schools Conference in Manhattan Sept. 22-23. The conference is sponsored by the Kansas Center for Safe and Prepared Schools, Kansas Department of Homeland Security, Kansas Attorney General’s Office, Kansas Department of Education and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

More than 400 people, including educators, administrators, counselors, social workers and law enforcement agents, attended to view keynote presentations from Dr. Dorothy Espelage, University of Illinois and Dr. John Moore, Response Law, LLC, and to participate in breakout sessions to learn more about topics such as active shooter response and restorative teaching practices.

“We all share common ground and that is the welfare of kids,” said Kent Reed, KSDE. “How can we help schools be safer, healthier and better prepared to respond to

an emergency?”

According to Reed, the conference is the only event that includes participation from the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, KSDE, the Adjutant General’s Department and Attorney General.

Dr. Bob Diepenbrock, superintendent of USD 331 Kingman-Norwich, has attended the conference each year, but noted that there is always something new to take away.

“Every year there is fresh material and new people,” Diepenbrock said. “It helps to build relationships and make emergency operation plans better.”

Diepenbrock, who works for a rural district, said that regardless of whether a school district is located in an urban, suburban or rural area, kids are kids and the issues facing administrators aren’t that different.

“It’s vitally important to bring these different entities together so we know them by first name and know what their response will be,” said Diepenbrock. “But ultimately, schools themselves are going to be the real first responders in a crisis situation.”

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Dr. John Moore of Response Law, LLC, presents his keynote address to the more than 400 educators, administrators, counselors, social workers and law enforcement agents who attended the seventh annual Kansas Safe, Healthy and Prepared Schools Conference, hosted by the Kansas State Department of Education in Manhattan Sept. 22-23. The conference is sponsored by the Kansas Center for Safe and Prepared Schools, Kansas Department of Homeland Security, Kansas Attorney General’s Office, Kansas Department of Education and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

## Emergency preparedness served up at Kansas State Fair



Emergency preparedness information of all types was distributed to patrons of the Kansas State Fair Sept. 8 during “Kansas Preparedness Day.” The event also included displays of emergency response vehicles and demonstrations by the Kansas Search and Rescue Dog Association.

By Sgt. Zach Sheely  
Public Affairs Office

Thousands of people turned out to the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson Sept. 8 intending to enjoy all manner of fried food, live performances and rides.

They may not have been expecting to learn about how to protect their families in an emergency situation, but that was the purpose of Kansas Preparedness Day, hosted at the State Fair by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management and their partner first responder agencies from across the state.

There were disaster preparedness and public safety information displays with experts on hand to answer questions and provide advice. There was also a show and tell

of emergency response equipment.

“Planning is one of the things people don’t always think about,” said Harry Heintzelman, local emergency planning committee coordinator with KDEM. “We want to bring it more to the forefront.”

Waiting until after a disaster has struck is too late to plan your course of action, Heintzelman stressed. “Being prepared gives you a head start on how to react in an emergency.”

Showing the public the partnership among agencies is another important facet of Preparedness Day. Among the equipment on display were a ladder truck from the Hutchinson Fire Department and a patrol vehicle from the Kansas Highway Patrol. (Continued on Page 11)





# Search and rescue teams hone skills at Technical Rescue Conference

By Steve Larson  
Public Affairs Office

When a disaster strikes – a tornado hits a town, an earthquake rocks a region, a flood sweeps across the countryside – that’s when the search and rescue teams go to work, carefully and strategically working their way through the rubble of buildings to locate and rescue victims.

More than 150 members of Kansas search and rescue teams met at Crisis City near Salina Sept. 17-19 for the seventh an-

minute it transitions to where they’ve gained access to a vehicle, now they have to do vehicle extrication or stabilization. The next thing you know they’ve gained access and we’re putting them into a confined space to do a rope rescue.”

Shon Price, Coffeyville Fire Department, is a member of Task Force 4, the southeast Kansas urban search and rescue team. Acting as squad leader, Price oversaw his team’s activity on the rubble pile as they sought to locate and rescue a simulated vic-

they just can’t go in and start yanking stuff out because one piece is dependent on another piece, on another piece, and if they just start yanking, they can cause a secondary collapse, which is going to further injure the patient.

“They can see their objective, but sometimes it may take two or three hours for them to get to where they can actually touch that victim.”

Brad Wagoner, a four-year member of the Quinter Fire Department, was attending the conference to learn the ins and outs of rope rescue.

“We’re trying to start a high-angle rescue team in Gove County,” said Wagoner. “We’re going to rappel down the tower today and they’re going to go over anchor points, how to properly set up the ropes and pulley systems. Then we’ll get into more advanced training where we’ll go down and they’ll get us to come back up.

“This is my first time to rappel, so I’m a newbie,” Wagoner admitted.

A first-time conference participant, Wagoner was impressed with the facilities at Crisis City.

“It’s wonderful. They have a lot of training stuff here, with the canine and the structure collapse. It’s a pretty neat place,” said Wagoner.

As much as brushing up on their skills, the conference was an opportunity to meet with other search and rescue teams to share ideas.

“It gives them a chance to work together with other team members so their training and their equipment is consistent and compatible with other teams when they get called to a disaster,” said Dennis Colsden, regional emergency management coordinator for North Central Kansas.

“It creates a lot of opportunity for us to meet and greet and understand how everyone works,” said Price. “It creates a better environment for interoperability so that we can all work together, especially when there’s something going on outside of our regular jurisdiction.”

“Hopefully we can get more people from our fire department and our area to come out here for the rope and even structural collapse and confined space,” said Wagoner. “We need a lot of training and this is a pretty good venue.”



Using a crane, a search and rescue team carefully removes debris to reach a simulated victim trapped in the collapsed building rubble pile at Crisis City. The team was taking part in the seventh annual Technical Rescue Conference, hosted by the Kansas Search and Rescue Working Group. The Crisis City training facility, located southwest of Salina, is operated by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

nual Kansas Technical Rescue Conference to practice the skills they need to carry out that mission.

“This is my seventh conference,” said Scott Kleinschmidt, Wichita Fire Department. “It’s a great venue. It gives you a lot of real-world scenarios you just can’t get anywhere else in the state.

“We’re spending the next two days working on the collapsed rubble pile doing different real-time scenarios,” said Kleinschmidt. “The great thing about working with the rubble pile is, we have the different venues where we have the rope venue, the confined space and vehicle extrication. What we have in this venue is all of those rolled into one.

“One minute these guys will be lifting with a crane,” he explained. “The next

tim trapped below tons of concrete and twisted metal.

“This is almost exactly what it would look like in a situation,” said Price. “We’ve taken off three cars so far and it looks like it was a mobile home frame I-beam support system. They just took an ammonia tank that was sitting on top of this pile. Then we’ll be taking off the rest of the frame. They’re cutting right now.”

When minutes may make the difference as to whether a victim lives or dies, the careful, painstaking work can be frustrating, said Kleinschmidt.

“In certain scenarios they actually have eyes on the victim,” said Kleinschmidt. “They can see him; they just can’t safely get down to where they’re at until they remove debris. The thing about the debris is

## Tornado scenario exercise tests Nebraska task force at Crisis City

Nebraska Task Force 1, the urban search and rescue team based at Lincoln Fire and Rescue, conducted a 36-hour joint training exercise Oct. 4-5 at Crisis City near Salina. The realistic full-scale urban search and rescue exercise simulated the aftermath of an F5 tornado touching down in Salina, causing widespread damage approximately 1/2 mile wide, including to the city of Salina. Multiple houses were damaged or destroyed, a freight train derailed with multiple rail cars on their side and there was major damage to the local hospital. Several housing complexes were leveled. Many fatalities were initially reported along with a number of seriously injured and missing.

About 90 people from NETF1 were involved in various components, including task force command, communications, medical, search, rescue, hazardous materials and logistics. NETF1 participants included members of Lincoln Fire and Rescue as well as the Omaha and Papillion Fire Departments; physicians from Nebraska Emergency Medicine PC; heavy rigging specialists with Ayars and Ayars; and civilians including canine handlers, structural engineers and communications specialists.

Dan Wright, NETF1 program manager, said the exercise was designed to test and evaluate many aspects of two national

USAR teams and an Incident Support Team. Rescue scenarios also included simulations of an apartment building and parking garage collapse with people trapped inside an elevator, a train derailment and tanker leak, a hospital collapse with contaminants, and a wide-area search for victims at Lake Kanopolis. Each task force was engaged in operations to assess, identify and locate victims and hazards; to search for and rescue simulated victims using specialized tools and equipment; and to provide members the opportunity to work and communicate with other local and federal agencies.

Other agencies participating include the Missouri Task Force from Columbia; the U.S. Army Reserve Aviation unit; the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism; Texas Task Force 1 Incident Support Cache; Colorado Task Force 1 Hazardous Equipment Push Package; the White FEMA Incident Support Team; FEMA Region VII and Region VIII representatives; and representatives from the Salina Fire Department and other local agencies and volunteers.

More than 225 participants were on the grounds of Crisis City for the exercise, including personnel from California, Florida Tennessee, and Utah.

## Kansas Preparedness Day

Continued from Page 10

trol with doors open to show the public their gear and capabilities.

“It’s important to show the public the equipment we carry each day,” said Trooper Gary Warner, Kansas Highway Patrol.

“All the resources work together when there’s a catastrophe. We’re there to help bring a sense of normalcy after a disaster.”

Edith Wiley, one of the dog handlers with Kansas Search and Rescue Dog Association, said that the State Fair is the perfect venue to educate people of the available resources and their capabilities.

“Part of being prepared is knowing what kind of resources are available,” said Wiley. “We love to work shoulder to shoulder with all these emergency response people.”

Other agencies represented at Kansas Preparedness Day were the Adjutant General’s Department/Kansas Division of Emergency Management/Kansas National Guard, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Department of Transportation, State Fire Marshal, Citizen Corps,

*“Being prepared gives you a head start on how to react in an emergency.”*

**Harry Heintzelman,**  
**Kansas Division of**  
**Emergency Management**

American Red Cross, Hutchinson Police Department, Community Emergency Response Team, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services, Reno County Emergency Management, Reno County Health Department, Reno County Sheriff’s Department, National Weather Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

KDEM also reminded people to take part in its monthly online “preparedness challenge” at [www.ksready.gov](http://www.ksready.gov). If you missed preparedness day at the State Fair, additional information on emergency kits and family preparedness can be found at [www.ksready.gov](http://www.ksready.gov), [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) and [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).



Members of Nebraska Task Force 1 disembark from a Chinook helicopter at Crisis City. The team was taking part in a 36-hour joint training exercise with a number of local, state and federal emergency response agencies, as well as participants from four other states. (Photo provided)



# Fighting Jayhawk earns spot on Air Force Rugby team

**By Tech. Sgt. Justin Jacobs  
184th IW Public Affairs**

Staff Sgt. Anthony George, a traditional Guardsman with the 184th Intelligence Wing Support Squadron, has gone from being a communications support specialist to a “man of the match” on the rugby field.

George started playing rugby when he was in the Navy in 2004. When he joined the 184th Intelligence Wing in 2008, he also began playing for a Wichita rugby team. He stayed with that team for three years until he learned about the Armed Forces Rugby League through an advertisement at the gym.

“I saw a poster in the base gym about the Air Force rugby team and decided to email the contact,” said George.

The Armed Forces Rugby League consists of five, seven-man teams. The teams include Air Force 7s, Army 7s, Navy 7s, Marine 7s and Coast Guard 7s. A rugby 7s

match is shorter with teams made up of seven players, compared to a traditional rugby team with 15 players.

George was invited to try out and headed to Aspen, Colorado, where his exceptional play earned him the status of Man of the Match for one of the games and, ultimately, for the tournament.

After the successful tryout, George was invited to play on the All Armed Forces team against an all-star team from New Zealand where he won Man of the Match again.

George has played in various tournaments with the Air Force 7s team. He earned Man of the Match in one of the largest Rugby 7s tournaments in the world held in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Due to his exceptional performance, George has drawn some attention about the possibility of training with the Rugby 7s Olympic team. That team will be competing in the 2016 Olympics in Brazil.



Staff Sgt. Anthony George, carries the ball through traffic while playing in a rugby match for the Air Force rugby team. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Anthony George)

## ESGR award presented to Boy Scout leader

Wayne Pancoast of the Jayhawk Area Council Boy Scouts of America was honored with a Patriot Award by Kansas Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense office, in recognition of extraordinary support of its employee serving in the Kansas Army National Guard.

Pancoast was nominated for the award by his employee, Staff Sgt. Ty T. Roberts.

According to Walt Frederick, Kansas ESGR state chair, “The Patriot Award was created by ESGR to publicly recognize individuals who provide outstanding patriotic support and cooperation to their employees, who like the citizen warriors before them, have answered their nation’s call to serve. Supportive supervisors are critical to maintaining the strength and readiness of the nation’s Guard and Reserve units.”

“After an approximately nine year break in military service after successful completion of my initial eight year enlistment, I was not sure of the support I could readily expect from my current work environment,” said Roberts. “I can confidently say I am very pleased with the outstanding support I have received, both through the Army National Guard and my employer, upon enlisting as a commissioned officer candidate.

“Wayne Pancoast has publicly recognized my continued service in the military by commending my decision to enlist and announcing it to attendees of a recent Jayhawk Area Council BSA executive board meeting,” said Roberts. “I

was also paid my complete salary and benefits while on annual training orders. Mr. Pancoast further supported the organization and me while I was at training by essentially taking on my role as chief operations officer, in addition to handling his own role, to insure council operations were not interrupted.”

Kansas ESGR Area Chair Greg Sims was on hand to give an ESGR briefing to Jayhawk Area Council BSA and to assist Roberts with the presentation of the award to Pancoast.

ESGR, a Department of Defense office, seeks to foster a culture in which all employers support and value the employment and military service of members of the National Guard and Reserve in the United States. ESGR facilitates and promotes a cooperative culture of employer support for National Guard and Reserve service by developing and advocating mutually beneficial initiatives, recognizing outstanding employer support, increasing awareness of applicable laws and policies, resolving potential conflicts between employers and their service members, and acting as the employers’ principal advocate within DoD.

Paramount to ESGR’s mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce.

For more information about ESGR Outreach Programs, or ESGR volunteer opportunities, please call 1-800-336-4590 or visit [www.ESGR.mil](http://www.ESGR.mil).

# Names changes require proof

Name changes frequently occur as a result of marriage, divorce, or as a matter of personal preference. To change a name in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, commonly known as DEERS, a card applicant or cardholder must present the verifying official with official documentation supporting a formal name change, such as a marriage certificate, a divorce decree, or other mechanism permitted by state law or regulation. Service members and Department of Defense civilian employees should also notify their personnel office of the name change.

For initial card issuance and for card renewal, verifying officials must review, verify, and scan two forms of ID from the Form I-9, Lists of Acceptable Identity Documents, one of which must be a valid state or federal government-issued picture ID.

Official documentation supporting a formal name change must be provided if:

- (1) The names on the two forms of ID do not match each other.
- (2) The name on the two forms of ID does not match what is in DEERS.

- (3) The name on the two forms of ID does not match what the card applicant or cardholder would like in DEERS.
- Primary acceptable forms of identification include:
- Unexpired driver’s license or state ID
  - Unexpired military ID
  - Unexpired U.S. passport
  - Current school ID
  - Current Native American tribal documentation
- Secondary forms of acceptable identification include:
- U.S. Social Security card
  - Certification of birth issued by the Department of State
  - Original or certified copy of birth certificate issued by the state, county, municipal court authority or outlying possession of the United States bearing official seal
  - Native American tribal documentation
  - U.S. citizen ID card (Form I-197)
  - ID card for use of resident citizen in the United States (Form I-179)

## From combat missions to rescue runs

**Continued from Page 9**

trained pilots. Garr, 46, has served in the military for 27 years and has more than 3,800 hours of helicopter flight time; Goss, 43, has 26 years of military service and 2,000 flight hours as a helicopter pilot.

Goss says his favorite days are when he takes the pilot’s seat.

“There are days you come to work and cannot believe you get paid to do this,” he says.

“Something we always hear is that the military in the U.S. is less than one percent of the population,” says Garr. “To be a helicopter pilot in that one percent means that you’re a very small percentage of the rest, so I guess you feel a little special that way. It’s an extremely demanding job, but it’s very rewarding.”

Goss says any successful UH-60 pilot must navigate three crucial parameters: “high, hot and heavy”—watching out for high altitude, hot temperatures and heavy payloads. Any of the three may rob the helicopter engines of power.

In hostile territory, a pilot must account for these factors while pushing his craft through extreme maneuvers. Black Hawks often speed along at 120 knots, or almost 140 miles an hour, and flying involves zigzagging, dipping and climbing to avoid threats.

Hollywood films have depicted the UH-60 at moments of crisis, but the truth is that the UH-60 is sturdy, maneuverable and

very capable, Garr says.

“The majority of our losses over the last decade have come from combat operations. That is what it is—it’s self-explanatory,” adds crew chief Sgt. Tim Coleman.

Material failure is “a very, very small percentage” of downed Black Hawks, adds Garr. “A lot of times big factors are the environment we’re operating in, whether it’s combat or just bad weather.”

To avoid mechanical failure, the crews conduct an in-depth physical inspection of their Black Hawk every 360 flight hours.

“We find faulty and worn pieces and rebuild them,” says Coleman. “It’s like the once-a-year equivalent of taking your own personal car and tearing it all the way apart, pulling out the engine, taking the transmission out, the axles off and at least putting [a camera] inside looking for wear and tear, and putting it all back together.”

This regular and intensive maintenance “drives the train,” Goss says. “If you have a good maintenance team, they keep the aircraft flying and you can do what you need to do.”

And Goss, as the commander, says he’s always looking for new talent in his ranks.

“We’re always looking for people who are willing to work,” said Goss, “willing to accept responsibilities almost greater than anything you’ll have in the civilian world—millions of dollars in equipment and the lives of your colleagues.”



Fire suppression using a 660 gallon water bucket is just one of the many missions Black Hawk crews can perform out of the Army Aviation Flight Facility in Salina. (Photo by Larry Harwood, Sunflower Living magazine)



# Social Media: Unwary postings can make you a target

By Chief Warant Officer 3 Scott Sackrider  
Cybersecurity Office

First, a few definitions. Wikipedia defines social media as “The social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.” Wikipedia then defines data aggregation as dramatically “reducing the time to query large sets of data.” This means the more we know about you, the easier we can target you.

The Kansas National Guard’s Computer Network Defense Team has been challenged a few times on proving how dangerous social media can be. Last year, we met a person in a restaurant in Vermont where we attended a training exercise. She challenged us to find her on Facebook, knowing only her first name, and that she was a local citizen. It took us only 10 minutes to send her a friend request.

A similar challenge from a person in Topeka revealed not only their name, but relatives, address (with a nice picture and value of the house), and pets. We then found income information, and every legal issue. By the time we compiled all the data

*She challenged us to find her on Facebook, knowing only her first name, and that she was a local citizen. It took us only 10 minutes to send her a friend request.*



(which brings us back to aggregation), we had a multipage narrative of history, habits, and even a personality profile. We know when they were at home, at work, or out socially, and could guess with great accuracy where they would be on any given night, simply due to people being pattern-based. Needless to say, showing what we learned just from a name and the Internet shook them quite a bit.

Answering one question (such as last name), will usually lead to two more questions, and the cycle of researching, aggregating data, and revealing more questions usually ends with more than enough information on a person to make them a target of any crime.

So how do we protect ourselves? Or

more importantly, how do we shield our kids? This article is too short to delve into all aspects, but we will continue this concern in upcoming issues.

To protect ourselves, try to find out what you can, or better yet, get with a friend to see how much you can dig up on each other. Then see what you can find on each other’s children. It is amazing how little kids (and adults) think about security. According to the Journal of Adolescent Health, in 82 percent of online sex crimes

against minors, the offender used the victim’s social media data to gather likes and dislikes to gain trust.

We must protect our kids through multiple layers and tactics. We cannot be draconian and simply monitor and control everything they do, nor can we simply let them post, follow or interact with anyone. The best two approaches are trust and awareness training.

Talk to your kids about how dangerous the Internet can be (and is), and how to look for signs and indicators that someone could be a predator. Assure them they can come to you with any concerns without fear of reprisal. It is also a good idea to be in some of their social circles and, as a parent, don’t post anything less secure or mature than your children would post. Many kids think adults are dumb anyway, we don’t need to assist.

## Kansas Army National Guard Suicide Prevention Program

The strategy and supporting elements of the Suicide Prevention Program are based on the premise that suicide prevention will be accomplished through the positive action of unit leaders and implementation of command policy. The key to the prevention of suicide is positive leadership and honest concern by supervisors for military personnel who are at risk of suicide and appropriate intervention for all such personnel.

The Kansas National Guard Suicide Prevention Program provides the framework for a valuable program that will assist commanders and supervisors to work on lowering the risk of suicide for service members, family members, and civilian employees.

Each unit is to ensure that 10 percent of its Soldiers are certified in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training and the Ask Care Escort program. Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training classes are offered, certified, and tracked by the State Suicide Prevention program. Service members of any rank can attend ASIST and ACE courses.

### Reporting process

- a. Once identified as being at risk, military personnel will be referred to appropriate helping agencies and tracked by the unitcommander to ensure problem resolution.

- b. Civilian employees identified as at risk will first be referred to the Employee Assistance Program for evaluation and referral to the appropriate health care provider or civilian agencies in the surrounding community.

### Organizations

- NAMI Kansas  
Phone: (800) 539-2660
- Headquarters Counseling Center  
Phone: (785) 841-2345
- ANSWER/Mental Health Association of the Heartland  
Phone: (913) 281-2221

### Free Counseling 24/7

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800.273.TALK (8255) or 800.SUICIDE (784.2433), no charge, 24/7  
Note: Spanish language counselors through Option 2, and conferencing in Tele-Interpreters for other languages is available when needed.
- NSPL TDD, 800.799.4889  
NSPL chat through [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- Veterans Crisis Line chat or text, through website: <http://veteranscrisisline.net>

## 731st TC change of command

Continued from Page 3  
tion Company and commander of the 731st Transportation Company.

Among Simecka’s awards and decorations are the Army Commendation Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal (with bronze star device), Humanitarian Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Kansas National Guard Achievement Ribbon, Kansas National Guard Service Medal, Kansas National Guard Emergency Duty Ribbon, Navy Achievement Medal, Marine Corps Meritorious Unit Citation, Select Marine Corps Reserve Medal.

Simecka has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and a Master of Arts degree in education. His military education includes Marine Corps Basic Training, Marine Corps Noncommissioned Officer Course, Marine Corps Officer Candidates School, Transportation Officer Basic Course and Transportation Officer Captain’s Career Course Phase I & II.

In his civilian career he is a lieutenant with the Shawnee County Sheriff’s Office and has served the citizens of Shawnee County for more than 22 years. Simecka and his wife, Monica, have three children, Creighton, Claudia, and Crew.

## Medical house call to Armenia

Continued from Page 7

Darbas’ limited resources are the never-ending obstacle.

“She needs ways to help prevent and treat common chronic conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes and do so with her limited resources,” said Goodson.

“I’m surprised at how resourceful they are with what little they have,” said Kavouras.

“I’m surprised at the level of poverty and

yet they are content with what they have and their family really comes before work,” added Goodson.

Nersisyan and her husband could not have been more gracious with their visitors, showering them with thanks, praise and gifts for all of their work and assistance. The Wichita medical team even visited the local doctor’s home to share in Armenian cuisine and culture and to cement the friendship they had begun.

## Retired Guardsman and wife write, illustrate children’s book

By Sgt. Zach Sheely  
Public Affairs Office

Keith Kraushaar, a Kansas native and retired staff sergeant in the Kansas National Guard, has written a book dedicated to the United States military.

“Tales of Saint Nicholas,” dubbed by Keith as an “all-ages” book, is a compilation of true stories of the deeds and miracles Saint Nicholas performed, with a portion of the proceeds going to help the military, their families and other non-profit organizations.

“The basic message of the book is to help other people, because that’s what Saint Nicholas did,” said Keith.

Keith served 24 years in the Air Force Reserve, Army Reserve and National Guard, spending time overseas and in active duty. He cited his time spent in the service and with veterans at hospitals as his inspiration for writing the book.

Keith’s wife, Rita, an artist and scrapbook paper designer, illustrated each page of the book. Rita has illustrated other books, al-

though this is the Kraushaar’s first collaborative book effort. It’s not, however, the first time they’ve collaborated creatively. Keith designed a board game which he needed illustrations for. He enlisted the help of Rita, and not long after they met, they wed. They have been married for nearly 24 years.

The couple also founded the Arts and Memories Museum in Riley, Kansas. The Enchanted Cottage Gift Shop, located just behind the museum, features some of Rita’s art work.

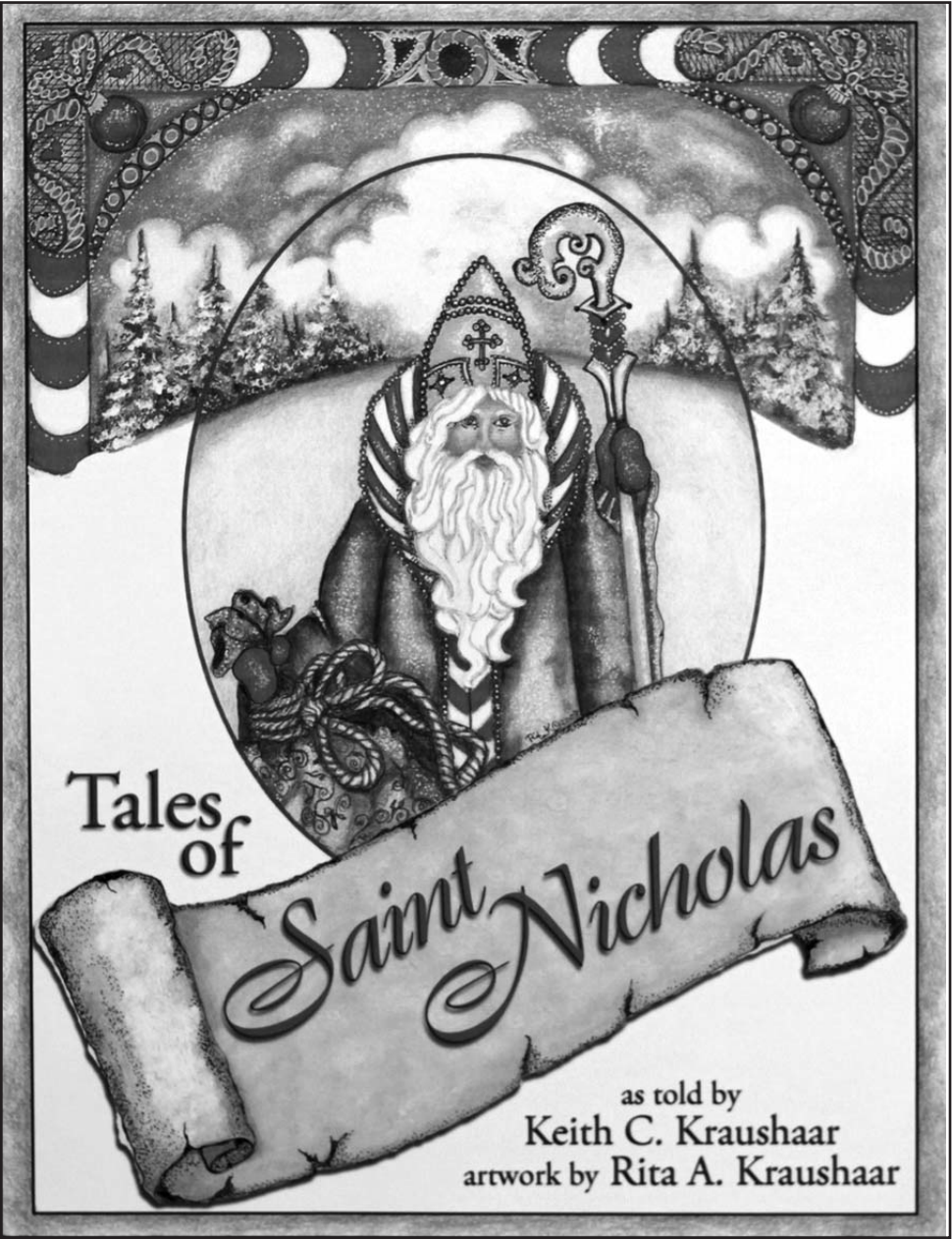
“Tales of Saint Nicholas” is the product of more than a year of effort, but Rita hardly considered it work.

“Art is what I do and who I am,” said Rita. “And it’s been that way since I can remember.”

However, Keith doesn’t plan to write any more books.

“That’s it for me,” Keith said. “I’m retired.”

“Tales of Saint Nicholas” is available in paperback and as an ebook at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



“Tales of Saint Nicholas” is a collaborative effort of retired Kansas National Guardsman Keith Kraushaar and his wife, Rita. The book is Keith’s first -- and, according to Kraushaar -- last book. (Photo submitted)



# Take the gray out of gray area retirement for Drill Status Guardsmen

By Staff Sgt. Ryan Smith and Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th IW Public Affairs

Every member of the Guard family had a valid reason for joining, whether for education benefits, on-the-job training or the opportunity to carry on a family legacy by serving their country. As Airmen are faced with the decision to continue in their career or separate from service, they may lose the ambition or direction that initially attracted them to the Guard.

The Air National Guard does a great job in communicating the benefits of joining during the recruitment process, but even the most experienced Airmen find it difficult to locate information about the benefits afforded to retired Drill Status Guardsmen. “One of our primary responsibilities is to ensure that our Airmen have all the in-

formation they need to make the best decision possible,” said Chief Master Sgt. Russ Brotsky, command chief of the 184th Intelligence Wing. Many Airmen experience frustration throughout their career, often times leading that person to consider separation.

“Some who separated wish they would have worked through the frustrations of military life to have had the chance to retire,” said Brotsky. “Others who have retired say that, as they look back, those years served went by so fast they wished they would have devoted more energy during that time to making a bigger difference.”

The first step for any member is to understand the minimum requirements to be eligible for retirement. All members must

complete 20 years of qualifying service with a minimum of 50 points per year, often referred to as a “good year.” The time frame to earn points begins and ends on the Airman’s anniversary date, also called the retention/retirement date. Retirement points are earned through types of duty that an Airman performs. For example, a unit training assembly, or UTA, earns one point per four hour period, giving Airmen the opportunity to receive four points per UTA weekend. Most other duty, such as annual training and active service, provides one point per eight-hour period. The more days an Airman performs, the more retirement points he or she receives that year. Retirement points affect the amount of pay that retirees receive, more points equal more pay. Point summaries can be found for all members on their virtual Military Personnel Flight application.

“We want to make sure they understand the financial and education benefits, and differences a separation brings for them and their family versus a retirement,” said Brotsky. Educating Airmen about the benefits of a long-term career is a key factor in the wing’s retention efforts. Supervisors, unit career advisors and leaders throughout the wing are great resources for information. Another great, one-stop shop for information is the Air Reserve Personnel Center Personnel Fact Sheets, which can be found online at [www.arpc.afrc.af.mil](http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil). According to the ARPC Personnel Fact Sheets, “Upon receipt of retired pay, normally at age 60, persons receive the same benefits allocated for retired members of the active Air Force.” Once a Drill Status Guardsman retires **(Continued on Page 15)**


ANG/Reservist Retirement Benefits Table				
Air Force Reserve Retiree Awaiting Reserve Retired Pay, Normally at Age 60				
Air Force Retiree (Blue ID Card)				
1.	Retired pay	AFI 36-3203*	Yes	None
2.	Clothing Sales Store	AFI 36-2914	Yes	Yes
3.	Commissary	DODI 1330.17-R	Yes	Yes
4.	Tricare Retiree Dental Program*	#	#	#
5.	Education services	AFI 36-2306	None	None
6.	Exchange services	AFJI 34-210	Yes	Yes
7.	Family Services Program	AFI 36-3009	Yes	None
8.	Legal assistance	AFI 51-504	Yes	Yes
9.	Military Affiliated Radio	AFI 33-106	Yes	Yes

Many charts found in the ARPC Personnel Fact Sheets show the benefits to retired drill status Guardsmen. You may download the document at [www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-140210-094.pdf](http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-140210-094.pdf) (Graphic courtesy ARPC)

## Awards and Decorations

KANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD


Meritorious Service Medal



Lt. Col. Martin Fries, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Hutchinson, with four oak leaf clusters  
Lt. Col. Anthony Randall, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster  
Lt. Col. Deborah Wilson, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka, with four oak leaf clusters  
Maj. Adam Krein, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Wichita  
Sgt. 1st Class Scott Carlin, HHD, 635th RSG, Topeka  
Staff Sgt. Robert Botkin, HHD, 635th RSG, Topeka  
Sgt. Michael Mathewson, 105th MPAD, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster

Master Sgt. Jerry Gardinier, 184th IW, Wichita  
Master Sgt. Wesley Shockey, 184th IW, Wichita  
Master Sgt. Topanga Stanton, 184th IW, Wichita


Air Force Commendation Medal



Senior Master Sgt. Christina Hamel, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters  
Senior Master Sgt. Susan McCullers, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters  
Master Sgt. Maurice Balance, 184th IW, Wichita  
Master Sgt. Clinton Brown, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster  
Master Sgt. Kenny Everett, 184th IW, Wichita  
Master Sgt. Levi Vincent, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster  
Tech. Sgt. Jeremiah Afsharpour, 184th IW, Wichita  
Staff Sgt. Souraphon Keodouangkham, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster  
Senior Airman Frederick Leon, 184th IW, Wichita  
Senior Airman Jameson Williams, 184th IW, Wichita


KANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Meritorious Service Medal



Lt. Col. Michael Robinson, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster  
Maj. Julia Burns, JFHQ KS-Air, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters  
Senior Master Sgt. Christina Hamel, 184th IW, Wichita, with four oak leaf clusters

Air Force Achievement Medal



Lt. Col. Steven Thomas, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters  
Master Sgt. Alike Peterson, 190th ARW, Topeka  
Tech. Sgt. Matthew Leonard, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters  
Staff Sgt. Justin Kruger, 190th ARW, Topeka  
Senior Airman Joshua Hahn, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf clusters  
Senior Airman Austin Lee, 190th ARW, Topeka  
Airman 1st Class Joshua Taylor, 190th ARW, Topeka

## Retirements

Kansas Army National Guard

Brig. Gen. Eric Peck, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka  
Col. Barry Adams, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka  
Col. Clinton Moyer, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka  
Lt. Col. Andy Price, KSARNG Med Det, Lenexa  
Lt. Col. Deborah Wilson, KSARNG Med Det, Lenexa  
Sgt. Maj. Gary Peterman, HHB, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Hutchinson  
Master Sgt. Jerrold Lyne, KSARNG Training Ctr, Salina  
Master Sgt. Montie Stewart, HHD, 635th RSG, Topeka  
Sgt. 1st Class Darryl Blocker, Det 1, 170th Maint Co, Colby  
Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Carriger, 772nd Eng Co (MAC), Pittsburg  
Sgt. 1st Class Norman Doughty, HHD, 635th RSG, Topeka  
Sgt. 1st Class David Johnson, Det 1, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka  
Sgt. 1st Class Julie Kempel, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka  
Sgt. 1st Class Gene McCreight, HHB, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Hutchinson  
Sgt. 1st Class Aimee Plankinton, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka  
Sgt. 1st Class Darrell Wilkerson, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth  
Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke, 105th MPAD, Topeka  
Sgt. 1st Class William Witzke, Btry A, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Dodge City  
Staff Sgt. Matthew Bonner, 778th Trans Co (-), Kansas City  
Staff Sgt. Markus Chamberlin, 226th (-) Eng Co (Vert), Augusta  
Staff Sgt. Christopher Day, Det 1, HHC, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Junction City  
Staff Sgt. Julian Delacruz, 170th Maint Co, Norton  
Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Foston, HHC, 169th CSSB, Olathe  
Staff Sgt. Samuel Lyle, 35th ID Band, Olathe

Staff Sgt. Bruce Maschmeier, Det 1, Btry A, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Marysville  
Staff Sgt. Gary Merrick, 35th MP Co, Topeka  
Staff Sgt. Elisa Montoya, 287th SB, Wichita  
Staff Sgt. Edward Nearing Jr., Det 1, 778th Trans Co, Manhattan  
Staff Sgt. James Veasey, Det 2, 731st Trans Co, Salina  
Sgt. Marvin Bunting, 778th Trans Co (-), Kansas City  
Sgt. Jenifer Butler, HQ, 235th Regt (RTI), Salina  
Sgt. Jack Elliston, HHC (-), 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Kansas City  
Sgt. Richard Freel Jr., 242nd Engr Co (Horz), Coffeyville  
Sgt. Michael Hensley, Det 1, 778th Trans Co, Manhattan  
Sgt. William Levitt, Btry A (-), 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Holton  
Sgt. Chuck Lowe, HHB(-), 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Hiawatha  
Sgt. Michael Mann, HSC (-), 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth  
Sgt. Charles Quigley, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth  
Sgt. James Schildman, 35th MP Co, Topeka  
Sgt. Edward Wheeler, Det 3, 731st Trans Co, Hays  
Sgt. Michael Willard, 2137th FSC, Manhattan  
Spc. Koi Law, 1161st FSC, Hutchinson  
Spc. Christopher Voeller, Det 1, 1161st FSC, Pratt

Kansas Air National Guard

Brig. Gen. Bradley Link, JFHQ KS-Air, Topeka  
Lt. Col. Brian Riniker, 190th ARW, Topeka  
Chief Master Sgt. Russ Brotsky, 184th IW, Wichita  
Senior Master Sgt. Keith Dailey, 184th IW, Wichita  
Senior Master Sgt. Tiyonna Evans, 184th IW, Wichita  
Master Sgt. Will Baldwin, 190th ARW, Topeka  
Master Sgt. Mike Hill, 184th IW, Wichita  
Master Sgt. Fred Johnson, 184th IW, Wichita  
Master Sgt. Marvin Nice, 184th IW, Wichita  
Master Sgt. Robert Ogan, 190th ARW, Topeka  
Master Sgt. Deborah Selby, 190th ARW, Topeka



Barry Grissom, U.S. attorney for Kansas, addresses attendees at the Kansas National Guard’s annual Continuing Legal Education conference in Topeka Sept. 13-14. (Photo by Capt. Kevin D. Anderson, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Department)



# Kayaking hobby becomes business venture for Air Guard buddies



Brian Dillon, Emily Dillon and Rob Sanders paddle their kayaks on Lake Shawnee, Topeka. Brian and Rob, members of the 190th Air Refueling Wing, make custom kayaks as a civilian business venture. (Photo by Jason Daily)

By Kim Gronniger  
Reprint courtesy of  
Topeka Magazine/Sunflower Publishing

Adventure enthusiasts and longtime friends who travel the globe with the Kansas National Guard, Rob Sanders and Brian Dillon recently embarked on an entrepreneurial quest close to home—Custom Kayaks at 925 North Kansas Ave. in Topeka.

Their new venture features kayaks with intricate designs and functional space for storage to accommodate an afternoon outing or a five-day trip. The one-of-a-kind kayaks are handmade with high-tech carbon fiber and strips of Alaskan yellow cedar, redwood and other lumber obtained from an area supplier of exotic woods.

Sanders, a pilot for KC-135 Stratotankers, and Dillon, a boom operator, also use downtime during trips and deployments to shop in wood stores in America and abroad, often accompanied by other members of their crew who are intrigued about their burgeoning business venture.

Friends since 2007, Sanders and Dillon have pursued numerous pastimes together—fly-fishing, cycling, scuba diving—and together built their first kayaks, which they often put in the water at Lake Shawnee for sunrise or sunset floats, even on weekdays.

“After working all day, I get a sense of accomplishment from working on a boat or taking one out to enjoy the big canvas of the outdoors,” says Sanders. “It’s pretty awesome.”

The impetus for the storefront began a few years ago when Dillon asked Sanders, who was considering purchasing a plastic kayak, to come see the one he was building at his home.

“I resisted for a couple of weeks because I knew I didn’t have time to build a kayak,” Sanders says. “But then after I saw what he was doing, I fell in love with the idea and ordered plans that night.” Despite having no woodworking skills at the time, Sanders was undaunted.

“I’m a very good salesman,” says Dillon, laughing. “And Rob never backs away from tackling anything.”

Dillon says setting up the kayaks in the new shop has the same calming effect as kayaking.

“We fly and refuel in the air for a living,

and it’s stressful. To be able to come here and create something that people like to look at and can take out and enjoy is fulfilling.”

The price tag for a custom kayak, whose construction requires about 350-400 hours of labor, can range from \$6,500 to \$11,000. Dillon and Sanders say they are exploring other, more accessible options such as allowing people to rent space in their building with access to all the necessary tools for making their own kayak.

“Renting space allows them to learn from us and other woodworkers,” Dillon says. “A lot of the effort that goes into building a kayak comes from building the jig. They can use one of Rob’s and knock off a month of production time.”

The wooden kayaks follow the same dimensions as most other standard kayaks—a single kayak is typically 16 to 19 feet, and a double kayak is about 23 feet in length. The wooden strips that form the shell, divided into an upper and lower section that are then combined and covered in a layer of fiberglass, range in size from a quarter of an inch to three quarters of an inch, the different wood colors optimally stacked to resemble a deck of cards, Dillon says.

“Once they get three strips on both sides of that jig, they’re calling their buddies and sending them photos of the boat they’re building,” says Sanders, laughing. “If they want to add a cooler or mount a depth finder or have another idea they want to try, we can help. Our goal is to enable people to design a boat that expresses their personality.”

Dillon built one of the boats on display for his daughter as a delayed high school graduation present. The craft, which has an arrow motif to depict her hobby, won the People’s Choice and Educators’ Choice awards at a competition sponsored by The Woodworking Shows in Kansas City.

“This was the first time in my life I felt like an artist,” Dillon says.

Both Sanders and Dillon are about five years away from retirement and hope one day to expand the custom-kayak concept to Hawaii, Guam, Belize, Thailand or other favorite locales. But for now, they are in the landlocked Heartland—doing their best to promote a water sport, and seemingly enjoying every minute of it.

“What can we say?” jokes Sanders. “We’ve got issues.”

## Teen Council announces members

The Kansas National Guard Teen Council has announced its members for the 2014-2015 year.

The council members are Taylor Dunbar, Jacob Goscha, Caitlin Henry, Cashe McVey, Ramsey McVey, Austin Metz, Annie Miller, Sydney Monteith, Chase Perkins, Trystan Pringle, Elizabeth Roach, Kasey Seaba, Kassidy Seaba, Jessica Vanstory, Jonathan Vore and Allison Wheeler.

The KSNG Teen Council is a nominated group comprised of young individuals ranging from 13 to 18 years old who have family members enlisted in the Kansas Air and Army National Guard. The mission of this council is to develop leadership skills and enhance life for mil-

itary children in Kansas.

The intention of the council is to provide a forum for military teens to discuss ideas and offer suggestions that will positively impact the Kansas National Guard Child and Youth Program. The Teen Council’s role is to assist the state youth coordinator and act as a collective voice for the children and youth of the Kansas National Guard.

To be involved in the Teen Council, participants must fill out and submit an application to the state youth coordinator. Council members hold a term of appointment for one full year. The Teen Council consists of president, vice president, secretary, two historians and up to 10 council member positions.



## Officer Candidate School graduation

Continued from Page 3

which marked the largest call-up of Reserve Component personnel since the Berlin Crisis of 1961. Additionally, Lind completed two Army studies for the Army Reserve. The first was on Army Reserve Training Divisions, published by the Army. The second was the Army Reserve Command Study, which led to the restructuring of the United States Army Reserve into Regional Support Commands. Lind retired in 1997.

“What a great honor and a privilege this is for both myself and my dear wife Sharon and our children, Elizabeth and Mike Jr., Rebecca Rachel, Thomas, Nathan,” said Lind, after receiving his award from Col. Judith Martin, commander of the 235th Regiment. “We all know what the family faces when the breadwinner is in the Army. It is with humble gratitude that we share this day with class 58 graduates and fellow inductee... Now go forward to the sound of the guns and be a good example for those you lead and thank you, thank you from our hearts.”

Mallams began his military career in 1970 as an enlisted Soldier with the combat engineers. He graduated from the Kansas Military Academy Officer Candidate School, Class 16, in 1972.

Mallams served in a variety of leadership rolls including secretary for the general staff and a follow-on assignment as an assistant plans officer, general’s operations cell, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 35th Infantry Division. Mallams also served on a three-year tour as an assistant professor of military science, MS-II instructor for Reserve Officer’s Training Corps Cadets at Missouri Western State University and the University of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri. Mallams retired in 1997.

“This is a wonderful honor. I want to thank each one of you,” said Mallams. “To my wife, my lovely wife, thank you for your patience and your understanding. I can blame it on the military. To my beautiful daughters who are with me today, thank you. To my sons-in-law, to my grandchildren, this is a very special day... I feel very honored and very appreciative of the award ... Thank you.”

The guest speaker for this event was Kansas Governor Sam Brownback.

“You that are going into duty as officers, you’re likely to be in a lot of different places in your military career,” said Brownback. “Most of it is going to be probably pretty gritty and pretty dirty in a far away place in the world that you’re looking at saying ‘How on earth did I get from Kansas to the middle of here?’ Well, you signed up for it. But you had a calling to do that too. You lead your troops, your men and women, not out of authority; you lead them out of respect. They respect you. They respect what you stand for, they respect who you are.”

Brownback assisted in the ceremony by handing out awards to several Soldiers who excelled in the 13-month-long OCS program. Officer Candidate Mandy Shobe received two awards, the Physical Fitness and Tactical Proficiency award. Officer Candidate Travis Wickham received two awards, the Nobel W. Drake Academic Achievement and the Erickson Distinguished Graduate award. Officer Candidate Douglas Boland also received two awards, the Association of the United States Army Kansas Heartland Chapter Follow Me Leadership and the National Guard Associate of Kansas OCS Distinguished Graduate award.

## Take the gray out of gray area retirement for Drill Status Guardsmen

Continued from Page 14

they become retired reserve, also known as a “gray area retiree.” The time frame between a member’s retirement date and 60th birthday is considered the gray area.

There are quite a few benefits that are available during the gray area. Most services provided on base, including commissary and Base Exchange access, are available to gray area retirees. However, benefits such as medical services may not be available until age 60. No TRICARE medical benefits are available before age 60 for Air Force retirees. TRICARE Retired Reserve may be purchased for those members under age 60, according to the ARPC Personnel Fact Sheets.

With medical and prescription costs on the rise, Airmen may consider medical benefits after age 60 as a key factor in their decision to earn a retirement.

Travel benefits are also available to gray area retirees. Base lodging facilities are accessible to all Air Force retirees and their family members. However, Space

Available Travel on military aircraft has limitations.

“Reserve retirees before age 60 are restricted to flights in the continental United States, and to, from and within Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Puerto Rico, Samoa and the Virgin Islands. At age 60, the Airman and family members are eligible to travel to overseas locations,” according to the ARPC Personnel Fact Sheets.

Getting familiar with the ARPC Personnel Fact Sheets will equip Drill Status Guardsmen, supervisors and commanders with the answers they need when the question arises, “How does it benefit me in the long-term to stay in as a Drill Status Guardsman until I can retire?”

“As I visit with the men and women I’ve served with in our wing from years past, it’s often stated that they just didn’t understand how quick that time goes,” said Brotsky. “Twenty years is an eternity to an Airman in their 20s or 30s, but it really isn’t that long compared to life’s standards. And it’s hard to wrap your head around that idea.”

## Safe and Prepared Schools

Continued from Page 10

That responsibility doesn’t fall solely on school administrators, but students as well, according to Dr. Jan Petersen, school psychologist with Wichita Public Schools. Petersen presented her restorative practices teaching philosophy, which emphasizes conversation, and building relationships and community within the school.

“The more knowledge the staff gains about safety and what creates a positive school climate, the better their students are

going to be doing,” Petersen said.

Alan Hageman, principal of Pauline Central Elementary School in Topeka, noted the constantly evolving education principles and the need to stay ahead of the curve.

“We were so academic driven for years,” said Hageman, who attended the conference for the first time. “Now we’re realizing that the social and emotional learning is important too. We need to teach kids how to have empathy and how to show kids how to react in social situations.”



# PLAINS GUARDIAN

## HHC, 287th Sustainment Brigade has new commander

By Sgt. Kyle Galvin  
287th Sustainment Brigade

The 287th Sustainment Brigade bid farewell to Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander Capt. Bradley Webster and welcomed new commander 1st Lt. Lynette Ham Oct. 4 at the Heartland Preparedness Center in Wichita.

The ceremonial passing of the guidon, which signifies the transfer of responsibility of the unit between the two commanders, was overseen by Lt. Col. Dana Duggins, 287th Battalion commander. The ceremony ended with remarks by Webster and Ham.

Webster recalled his time as the HHC commander fondly and remembered two

times specifically where he was proudest.

“On two occasions, Soldiers from the 287th saved other Soldier’s lives with timely and appropriate first aid,” Webster said. “We look out for each other.”

Webster will be taking on his new assignment at Joint Forces Headquarters in Topeka as the Selective Service officer. His responsibilities include the coordination between the military and communities in the unlikely event of a draft.

In his final remarks, Webster said, “Drive on and continue the mission.”

“I’ve got some big shoes to fill,” said Ham. “Captain Webster has made an impression on the Soldiers here and I’d like us to continue and work as a family and a team.”



1st Lt. Lynette Ham, new commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 287th Sustainment Brigade, speaks to her troops at the Oct. 4 change of command ceremony at the Heartland Preparedness Center in Wichita. (Photo by Sgt. Kyle Galvin, 287th Sustainment Brigade)

## RSMS celebrates service



Members of the Kansas National Guard’s Readiness Sustainment Maintenance Program gathered at Camp Moon Lake, Fort Riley, Kansas, for an employee recognition ceremony Sept. 26. Federal funding cutbacks have forced staff reduction of the program, which refurbishes National Guard equipment for the Department of Defense. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

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

# NATIONAL GUARD

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

## Support company units hold simultaneous open house events



Soldiers of the 250th Forward Support Company show off some of their weaponry during an open house event July 19. Three units of the company held simultaneous events in Clay Center, Hiawatha, and Ottawa. (Photo provided)

The 250th Forward Support Company, with units in Clay Center, Hiawatha and Ottawa, held their second annual open house recruiting event July 19. The 250th FSC provides maintenance, field feeding, supply and distribution support to other Kansas National Guard units. The open house events were planned in conjunction with county fairs located in Ottawa and Clay Center where the armories are co-located with the county fairgrounds.

The 250th FSC provided static displays of primary equipment used to perform their missions stationed outside of the armories. Unit personnel qualified and proficient at operating the equipment were present to answer any questions community members or potential recruits had. Recruiters were present providing recruiting support, answering questions and providing informa-

tion, free materials, and displays as well as supervising the inflatable jousting pit. The armory was opened up for all community members to visit with Soldiers, ask questions and see displays.

Weapon displays were available for the public to have the opportunity to handle and ask questions about their capabilities. A projector and screen was stationed presenting photos of training events during drill weekends and annual training, capturing unit Soldiers in action performing training missions. A Fire Arms Training Simulator system and Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 machine were available for the public to try out, showing the digital capabilities afforded to the Kansas National Guard to expand or enhance training. The events proved to be very successful, generating eight potential leads for the 250th FSC.

## Strong Bonds events strengthen Kansas Guardsmen and families

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

Strong Bonds is a chaplain-led program which builds relationship resiliency for Soldiers and families in the Kansas Army National Guard. Programs are offered for single Soldiers, married Soldiers, and Guard families. Weekend events are offered for all three programs throughout the year.

The Strong Bonds Single Soldier program is designed to help Soldiers establish relationship goals, provide learning on healthy relationships and gain essential skills in selecting the right person for a

lifelong relationship.

The Strong Bonds Couples program is designed to help married couples strengthen existing relationships, inspire hope, improve common trouble spots and rekindle the spark in a marriage. Ninety-three percent of couples who participated in a weekend getaway report an increase in the quality of their relationships.

Seven weekend events are scheduled in Kansas this training year. Chaplains will conduct five couple events and two single events. Find an event that is close to you and register online at [www.strongbonds.org](http://www.strongbonds.org).

### Join the Civil Air Patrol

The Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol is looking for individuals with valid FAA private, commercial or airline transport pilot certificate. The Kansas Wing has three Cessna 182’s and one Cessna 172 waiting for you to fly.

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

- Aerospace education
- Cadet programs
- Emergency services

Go to [www.kswg.cap.gov](http://www.kswg.cap.gov) for a Civil Air Patrol Squadron near you

