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PLAINS GUARDIAN

184th Civil Engineers head to North Dakota for training

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht
184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs

When Airmen need to train on weapons, they get on the firing line, but when military engineers need training on the newest equipment, they travel to North Dakota. Approximately 65 members of the 184th Civil Engineer Squadron loaded on to a KC-135 and flew to the 119th Regional Training Site, Fargo, North Dakota, for equipment familiarization training May 1-4.

“Training that you get here is training that you don’t get at the wing,” said Lt. Col. Brock Sissel, commander, 184th CE. “All the equipment is prepositioned at several regional training sites across the United States and civil engineering squadrons come up and train on that equipment and they get the hands-on training that they need.”

The 119th RTS has the newest equipment and knowledgeable cadres for every career field of the engineering squadron. With more than 40 Airmen in level three and five upgrade training, leadership took the opportunity to get as much hands-on training as possible. This training enabled everyone to, at the very least, get familiar with equipment they may see on deployment.

“We are allowing them to skim the top,” said Chief Master Sgt. Eric Montgomery, manager,



Airman 1st Class Rene Guadarrama, structural technician, 184th CE Squadron, practices cutting sheet metal at the 119th Regional Training Site in Fargo, North Dakota, May 2. The engineers spent four days using equipment that isn’t available to them at home station. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, 184th IW Public Affairs)

184th CE. “When they skim the top and we say that we are ready to deploy and we get the call from our governor or our president saying, ‘We have a mission for you,’ we show up and we aren’t seeing the equipment for the first time.”
For Staff Sgt. Grant Simpson, heating, venti-

lation and air conditioning technician, who was promoted while in Fargo, it not only gave him time to work on the equipment, he also honed his leadership skills.
“Learning how to be a leader instead of a follower, even though being a leader is being a

follower, switching from student to teacher is something different for me,” said Simpson.

Hands-on training and leadership development were the main purpose for the training, but leadership knew that getting out in the field and preparing for a mission would have other positive effects.

“It brings the shops closer together,” said Airman 1st Class Benjamin Rivera, heavy equipment operator. “We are all getting together more now and we are all talking and having fun.”

“When we come together as a group like this, we come together as a family,” said Montgomery. “We’re all friends and we are family and we take care of each other, but you have to have those times that you can relax.”

According to Sissel, the camaraderie improves performance and allows the teams to tackle the missions they are tasked with.

“It is a great opportunity over a four-day training,” said Sissel. “Combine a couple of unit training assembles and focus on that training and focus on the squadron and the things that they will need to do when they deploy.”



Scan the code with your mobile device to view a video on the 184th Engineers in action

James Brown to become command senior enlisted leader of the Kansas Guard

Public Affairs Office

Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown has been selected as the next command senior enlisted leader for the Kansas National Guard, according to Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, Kansas adjutant general. He will succeed Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Hawthorth, who is retiring Aug. 1.

“Chief Brown brings substantial institutional, operational and functional experience as well as strong leadership skills with him to this position,” said Tafanelli.



Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown

Brown will assume his new position during a formal change of responsibility ceremony Aug. 1 at 2 p.m. on the drill floor of Nickell Armory in Topeka.

“It is an honor and privilege to have been selected to this very prestigious position,” said Brown. “I will continue to serve this world-class organization in my new role with dedication and devotion to duty.”

In this position, Brown will manage the enlisted force and represent their interests at all levels of local and state government and to the Kansas public. Brown will be the personal advisor to the Kansas adjutant general on issues regarding the professional development, readiness, training, utilization, health, morale and welfare of the nearly 6,500 enlisted members of the Kansas Army and Air National Guard.

Brown is an Air Force veteran of nearly 30 years and has served as the state command chief for the Kansas Air National Guard since 2011.

He is the recipient of numerous awards and decorations for leadership, distinctive accomplishments in support of security forces activities world-wide, and for joint civil-military operations. He currently serves as the chief of police for the Topeka Police Department.

Selanders promoted to brigadier general

Public Affairs Office

Col. Jay Selanders, assistant adjutant general – Air and commander of the Kansas Air National Guard, was promoted to brigadier general during a May 3 ceremony at Nickell Armory, Topeka. Selanders was named ATAG last October and recently received federal recognition as brigadier general.

Selanders joined the Kansas Air National Guard in June 1984 and earned his commission through the Academy of Military Science later that year as a distinguished graduate. He attended Undergraduate Pilot Training at Laughlin Air Force Base and Combat Crew Training at Castle AFB, California. Selanders flew in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, where he received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions in recovering a badly damaged aircraft. He has flown in support of numerous other operations, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Since 1993, Selanders has acted as a liaison officer for the U.S. Air Force Academy, working with high school students and counselors that are interested in the Academy and ROTC officer accession programs.

Prior to his new position, Selanders was vice commander, 190th Air Refueling Wing, Forbes Field, Topeka. His previous assignments include Undergraduate Pilot Training-Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas; 117th Air Refueling Squadron, 190th Operations Group, Forbes Field, Kansas; liaison officer, United States Air Force Academy, Colorado; commander, Tanker Strategic Aircraft Regeneration Team; and commander, A Flight.

Selanders lives and works in Kansas City, Kansas, where he is a partner in a national law firm.



Col. Jay Selanders, assistant adjutant general – Air, Kansas National Guard, and his family celebrate his promotion to the rank of brigadier general during a ceremony May 3 at Nickell Armory in Topeka. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)



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Part two of a two-part series

Guardsman with PTSD soldiers on with help from a friend

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

“It takes the courage and strength of a warrior to ask for help”
Veterans Affairs motto

Master Sgt. Lyle Babcock is a combat veteran who’s served more than 30 years in the Army. He is an avid fisherman. He loves to kayak.

He also suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. Fortunately, he has help from a four-legged friend.

Gunther, a two-and-a-half year old, 100-pound yellow Labrador retriever, is Babcock’s service dog. His duty is to be at Babcock’s side at all times, allowing Babcock to live and work through his PTSD.

“He’s been a godsend to me,” Babcock said of Gunther. “He’s allowed me freedom from my own prison.”

Internal Battle

Babcock was deployed nearly 15 months to Afghanistan as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 102nd Military History Detachment, Kansas National Guard. He returned home to Topeka, Kansas, to his wife Traci and went back to work at Joint Forces Headquarters as the management analyst of the Human Resources Office, Kansas Adjutant General’s Department.

On the surface it was business as usual, but internally, the battle was still raging.

He struggled to reintegrate with society. He suffered from anxiety, problems sleeping and concentrating. He had panic attacks. His immediate instinct, however, was not to seek help out of fear of a stigma he thought people may place on him. Not until he started volunteering in the PTSD clinic at the Colmery-O’Neil Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Topeka did Babcock realize he wasn’t alone—others were struggling with the same inner turmoil.

“It was good to just sit down and talk with other vets and realize we’re all dealing with the same stuff,” Babcock said.

Another way Babcock relieved stress was through his love of being on the water. While researching kayaks to purchase, he discovered a group called Heroes on the Water, a nonprofit organization that helps service members and veterans relax, rehabilitate and reintegrate through kayaking and fishing.

Discovering Service Dogs

A few months later, Babcock, along with a group of volunteers, started the Kansas chapter of Heroes on the Water. Through HOW, Babcock learned of a group that provides service dogs to veterans and service members struggling with PTSD and/or a traumatic brain injury.

Joe Jeffers founded Warrior’s Best Friend, Kansas City, Missouri, with the goal of pairing (a term used when a service dog is assigned to an eligible veteran) wounded warriors with trained service



Master Sgt. Lyle Babcock and his service dog, Gunther, enjoy a trip on Babcock’s kayak at Lake Shawnee in Topeka. Gunther, counseling and kayaking are tools Babcock uses to overcome his post-traumatic stress disorder. (Photo by Jane Welch, Public Affairs Office)

dogs rescued from animal shelters throughout the United States. Jeffers contacted Babcock about the possibility of pairing an interested veteran from Heroes on the Water with a trained yellow Labrador.

As Babcock learned more about Warrior’s Best Friend and the service dog available, he realized that he might be interested in being paired with the dog himself. After discussing it with family, friends and a Veterans Affairs counselor, Babcock decided to take a leap of faith and filled out the application to be paired with Gunther.

A Hard, But Necessary Step

“Our pairing was quite unique,” said Babcock. “Gunther had never been around water, so the first time I took him to the lake, of course it was like glass. He stepped right off the dock, headfirst into the water. His eyes were huge. I was right down there encouraging him and pulled him out of the water. That was the instant we connected.”

The two go everywhere together—restaurants, the grocery store, the lake and even to work.

However, gaining clearance to bring Gunther to the office was a lengthy process for Babcock. The most difficult part was disclosing to his leadership that he needed help.

Extended Family

“You want me to admit to you that I’m broken and that I want to start bringing a service dog in,” Babcock said. “That was a

road block. That took me a long time to write that request and actually send it in. Looking back, it was a hard, but a necessary step.”

Babcock said that there are other service members in the Kansas National Guard that are living with PTSD, trying to fight it on their own, afraid, as he was, to admit they need help.

“The first thing is coming to grips with recognition that you do need some help and there’s no shame or embarrassment in that,” said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafarielli, Kansas adjutant general. “We all find ourselves at

points in our lives where we do need somebody to lean on and do need the ability to reach out.”

Tafarielli said the Kansas National Guard is an “extended family” and that the first step to getting better is recognizing that you have a problem.

“We owe it to all of our Soldiers and Airmen to look out for their well-being,” he said. “It really isn’t a weakness. In many cases, these traumatic events have had a lasting impact,” – an impact that Babcock and Gunther outwardly embody.

Gunther wears a service vest akin to a uniform while he’s on duty. A patch on it reads “PTSD service dog – ask to pet.” Babcock does allow people to pet Gunther, if they ask which, according to Jeffers is not the case with most service dogs. Jeffers compared service dogs to other medical tools, like a wheelchair or crutches—their purpose is to help their user to live as normal a life as possible.

“He’s right there”

“This is something I spoke to the trainer about during the pairing process,” said Babcock. “I decided that as long as Gunther would maintain focus on me, I would allow others to pet him with my permission. He has always got an eye on me. When I say something, he’s up and moving and he’s focused strictly on me. If I start getting nervous, or anxious, or loud, he’s right there.”

At work, Gunther soon became one of the “employees.”

“I know my co-workers had some apprehensions about me bringing a service dog into the work area,” said Babcock. “Most of them had never been around a service dog before. I think some of them thought that Gunther would be like their pets at home—constantly seeking attention or being a distraction at work. I think they were shocked at how well trained Gunther is and most of the time they don’t even realize he’s there with me.

“When Gunther walks into the office with me, my co-workers greet him and tell

him good morning. They look after him the way they look after me. I understood that by taking this step there was a chance it would have a negative impact on others around me, which is the last thing I wanted. But the opposite has been true. They have been very accepting of Gunther and of the fact that I am receiving counseling for PTSD.”

Gunther didn’t only have to integrate at work, but also at home with Traci, the family’s Pomeranian, Pookie and their three cats.

Ground Rules

“We laid a few ground rules,” Traci said. “I don’t need the added work. It’s his dog, but Gunther is definitely part of the family. He’s really grown on me. He’s a real likable dog. He’s well-mannered and well-trained.”

“I learned, during the pairing process, that having a service dog is a lot of work and responsibility,” Babcock said. “They are 100 percent dependent on you, from feeding to cleaning up. They become dependent on you as much as you become dependent on them. A service dog is not for every service member or veteran dealing with PTSD, but he’s changed my life for the better.”

Gunther’s training was provided by Warrior’s Best Friend. Jeffers said the organization looks at 200-300 dogs to every one dog that they deem a service dog candidate. The dog has to demonstrate a certain level of focus and eagerness to learn in order to be considered for service. The dog’s training alone can take up to 14 months.

“It’s important that we get the dogs as early as possible,” said Jeffers. “The dog must be able to work in a minimum of three-hour segments and respond to roughly 25 commands, including block, wait and release.”

Once trained, an eligible veteran applicant is selected and is put through a familiarization process with the dog, which can take three to six months.

One of Many Treatment Options

“When you think about PTSD in terms of the symptom clusters (avoidance, intrusive, negative thoughts/emotions and hyper arousal) the ways in which a dog can help are many,” said Dr. Chalisa Gadt-Johnson, licensed psychologist, Topeka VA Medical Center. “The companionship is great for those who feel a sense of isolation, along with helping with those who may be avoiding people and/or places.”

While Gunther has helped him, Babcock acknowledged that a service dog may not be the best treatment option for all. Gadt-Johnson said there are other treatment options including peer-to-peer, group and peer-to-counselor counseling which can teach better coping strategies. The VA Hospital in Topeka offers many education groups and treatment programs for substance abuse, addiction and psychiatric disorders, including a seven-week inpatient stress disorder treatment program, open to affected service members and veterans from around the country.

PTSD is not a new affliction, nor is it new to the Kansas National Guard, but for those suffering in silence Babcock shared this advice.

“The first step in reclaiming your quality of life is to seek out help,” he said. “There are a lot of veterans and service members struggling with PTSD every day. We think the only solution is avoidance, isolation, drinking, drugs or even suicide. Sometimes the biggest step is admitting to ourselves that we can’t do it on our own, putting our pride aside and asking others for help.

“I was afraid to take that first step,” Babcock admitted. “But now that I have, I wish I’d done it sooner. I’m starting to feel more in control of my life. My battle buddy, Gunther, is by my side, helping me get through the rough spots in my day. I don’t know what I’d do without him, but it took admitting that I needed help in order to get where I am today.”

For information, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/veterans.asp.



Gunther accompanies Babcock everywhere, including to work at Joint Forces Headquarters in Topeka, where Babcock serves as management analyst for the Human Resources Office of the Kansas National Guard. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

Chaplains balance military duty with service to God

Story and photos by Stephen D. Larson
Public Affairs Office

Like most ministers of the Christian gospel, John Potter thinks a lot about his “flock.”

“I’ve got a rather unique parish,” said Potter. “It’s about 5,300 people. They all dress the same on Sundays, they know how to use an M16 just like a spoon.”

Potter, a major in the Kansas Army National Guard, is the deputy command chaplain for Joint Forces Headquarters in Topeka. As such, he is one of a handful of chaplains in the Kansas National Guard and the only full-time chaplain.

“Every battalion and every major command has a chaplain,” said Potter. “If we were full up, we would have 16 chaplains.”

To be a military chaplain, Potter explained, candidates must be ordained by their own faith group.

“On the Christian side of the house, you have to have a Master of Divinity degree,” said Potter, who received his degree from Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. “That will vary from those other categories of chaplain, but they would have to have something that is equivalent to a Master of Divinity.

“We have Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jewish chaplains, and Muslim chaplains. It doesn’t matter if you’re a rabbi or imam, they still have to follow those same rules.

“I actually came in the Army as an E-4, as a specialist,” said Potter. “I was a chaplain’s assistant. I was very happy with that role. In time, I felt that God was calling me, kind of nudging me to do more with that. I had already graduated from K-State, already had my undergrad and I never wanted to go to school again in my life.

“But God kept nudging,” he continued. “I found out the National Guard would help pay for that, so I started seminary, became a chaplain-candidate.”

Potter explained that once a Soldier has his religious credentials, they can go to Chaplain Officer Basic Course at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

“You learn how to first, be a Soldier,” he said. “You do everything that would happen to any Soldier at basic training except we don’t fire a weapon because we’re not combatants. The last half of the program is focusing on your role as a chaplain. Not just being an officer, not just how to salute, how to wear the uniform, but how do you actually perform and how do you become a chaplain. They’re not teaching you how to be a minister – that already happened at seminary – but how can you be a counselor.”

Prior to becoming a chaplain, Chaplain (Capt.) Dan Pempin, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, already knew how to be a Soldier.

“I was commissioned in the infantry in 2000,” said Pempin, “so I started off my career as an infantry officer on active duty and did that for the first four years of my career. Then I went into an inactive reserve status for about two and a half years before I rejoined in the reserves and served in a training support battalion out of Leavenworth, Kansas. During that time I felt the calling to become a chaplain and started the process of seminary.

“When you become a chaplain, you have two routes you can take, a federal or a state. I chose to go the state route because I wanted to serve Kansas as a chaplain.”

Potter said a military chaplain has two primary responsibilities – to perform religious services and provide religious and other support.

“The big thing that we provide is counseling,” he said. “The unique thing with that is it’s confidential. Any time somebody wants to talk to a chaplain, it’s always going to be private, it’s going to be off-record. It doesn’t go up the chain of command, it’s not shared with individuals unless that Soldier gives you a release to share that information.”

“We, as chaplains, have privileged communication,” explained Pempin, “which means I have no requirements to provide any information they’ve given to me outside of that relationship that I’ve established.”

Although counseling may involve a variety of issues, relationships, financial problems and substance abuse generally head the list for Soldiers.

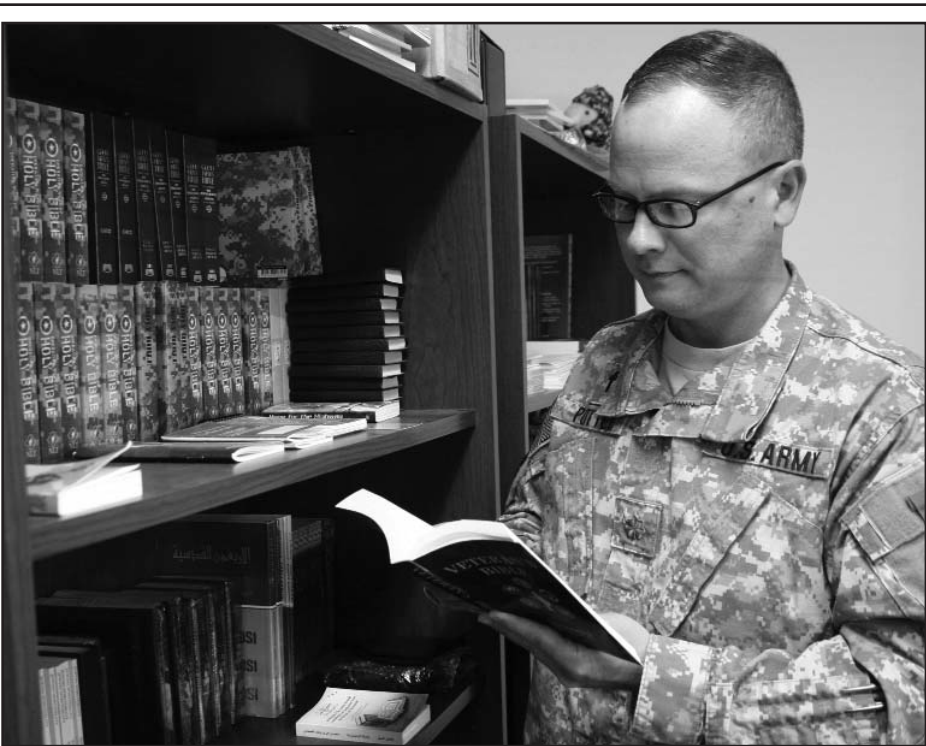
“There are a lot of challenges for anyone who’s married,” said Potter. “Military couples have a higher rate of divorce, they have more risk factors because they’re frequently separated. All these things can add to some difficulty in military life.”

“When I was in Southeast Kansas with the 891st Engineer Battalion, employment was a big deal,” said Pempin. “There are just not a lot of jobs out there for Soldiers or we weren’t getting Soldiers correctly linked up. So, there are financial problems. ‘Hey, I can’t pay this bill’ or ‘I need help here.’

“When you come to the chaplain, it’s always on the lowest level,” said Pempin. “I think a lot of Soldiers try to self-cure themselves or to go as far as they can by themselves. So, normally, when they come to see me, it’s moments when they’re very depressed or they have a lot of issues. Luckily, we chaplains have this reputation out there that says we’re approachable. People can come and see us when they need help with things the average person may not be able to fix.

“What’s good for me, as a chaplain,” Pempin said, “is here in Kansas, we have a lot of family programs, we have a lot of assistance, other things in place.”

“One of the great things we do is the Strong Bonds pro-



“Ministry can be messy. It can be dirty, it can get sweaty. It can get nasty at times. But that’s when you have closeness, that’s when you can share that there’s compassion.”

***Chaplain (Maj.) John Potter,
Deputy command chaplain, Joint Forces Headquarters***

gram,” said Potter. “We do these marriage retreats or marriage enrichment programs. That’s one of the best parts of my job, it really is. Just helping couples focus on their marriage, keep it strong, keep it vibrant. A relationship can kind of wither on the vine if we’re not feeding it in the right way. It reminds us of how we need to connect as husband and wife. How we need to connect as a couple and work on our family.”

Potter and Pempin agreed that building relationships with the Soldiers is vital to their ministry.

“I’m a chaplain who believes you earn the relationships you have with the Soldiers, so I want Soldiers to see me doing the things that they do,” said Pempin. “Being a prior-service guy, being in the infantry, I understand soldiering. I believe Soldiers should see their chaplain being a Soldier as well, being able to perform a lot of the skills they have the ability to do. To build that unit relationship, those are things that are important to me and I believe they’re important to the Soldiers.”

“Where your unit goes, you go,” said Potter. “A chaplain will go to the range. I’m not going to go shoot, but that’s where your unit is, that’s where the Soldiers go.

“There’s a real beauty in being a chaplain at the battalion level because you really are doing relational ministry,” he continued. “You’re going out to the motor pool and you find

(Continued on Page 11)

Kansas Guard units unveil new patch

Public Affairs Office

Companies of the 997th Brigade Support Battalion unveiled a new patch during ceremonies May 2-3. The BSB became part of the 130th Field Artillery Brigade, Manhattan, on April 1. The BSB and its subordinate units, the 995th Support Maintenance Company and the 1077th Ground Ambulance Company, will also be wearing the shoulder patch of the 130th FA.

The patch illustrates a scarlet shield arched at the top and bottom. A yellow cannon is vertically mounted and centered. Behind it is a sunflower with a black can-

non ball at its center, all within a blue border. The red background and yellow cannon are significant as they are the standard colors of Army field artillery regiments. The cannon and the ball symbolize the basic mission of the organization, while the blue border alludes to the support of the infantry.

The current 130th Field Artillery Brigade Patch was initially authorized for wear on Jan. 25, 1979. When the 130th Field Artillery Brigade was reactivated in 1997, the patch was reinstated for wear by unit personnel.



Soldiers of the 1077th Ground Ambulance Company replace the patch of the 287th Sustainment Brigade with the patch of the 130th Field Artillery Brigade during separate ceremonies May 2 and 3 in Olathe. (Photo by Spc. Anna Laurin, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Chaplain’s Corner Remembering Mr. Resiliency

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

On May 30, current and former Army and Air Guardsmen gathered for the funeral of retired Lt. Col. Steve Rexer, aka Mr. Resiliency.

The eulogy given by his daughter and messages shared by his pastors and friends emphasized how the resiliency program was far more than just a job for Steve.

Back before the Army’s official resiliency program, the Kansas National Guard was on the cutting edge of helping Guardsmen have the tools to cope with traumatic stress, minimizing and mitigating the effects of post-traumatic stress injury.

Over the last two years, Steve fought a personal battle with leukemia. He was not bashful to tell others that what he learned in the resiliency classes he helped to create and disseminate to the Kansas National

Guard were a large part of his ability to cope, along with his faith in God.

Resiliency matters because it works, whether we are wearing the uniform as part of a mission here at home or overseas, or dealing with the stresses of everyday life. The skills that we learn in the mandatory resiliency training are life lessons that can help us, but we have to do

more than just “check the box.” Resiliency skills have to be used to be retained so that they will be there for us when those stressors come to help us cope.

Steve Rexer believed in resiliency, he practiced resiliency. It made a real difference.

To learn more about the resiliency program, scan the Q code with your smartphone



**Chaplain (Col.)
William Jenkins**



**Retired Lt. Col.
Steve Rexer
1951-2015**

Joint Forces Headquarters moving to Forbes Field

By Maj. Gen. Lee Tafarielli
The Adjutant General

Ongoing funding changes and the overall reduction in Department of Defense funding affects every aspect of the Kansas National Guard. Unfortunately, we expect these challenges to increase significantly in the years ahead.

In an effort to adjust to these new realities and to better position the Kansas National Guard for the future, we conducted a comprehensive review of our organizational structure, our facilities and our operations.

As we looked at our facilities and how we use allocated space, we found that Kansas Army National Guard facilities were approximately 900,000 square feet “short” on space! However, the Kansas Air National Guard has nearly 400,000 square feet of underutilized space statewide, with approximately 110,000 square feet of that space at the 190th Air Refueling Wing at Forbes Field in Topeka.

After reviewing all of our options for improving operations, communication and efficiency, it became clear that joint operations at Forbes Field would help to mitigate future funding challenges, improve how we do business and provide a collaborative environment for all agency personnel. After careful consideration and thorough study, a request was submitted to the Department of the Air Force seeking formal approval for the move. That request has now been approved.

By repurposing underutilized Air Guard space for both Army and Air operations, we will avoid demolition of high quality Air Guard facilities, and resolve some of the space needs that currently exist in the Kansas National Guard. By relocating the Joint Forces Headquarters to Forbes Field, our agency will see significant operational cost savings over the next 10 years.

The employees of this agency are the most important asset in we have. Co-locating headquarters and the 190th



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafarielli

ARW offers a number of benefits for the headquarters staff, wing staff and our state employees. Having Army and Air staff in close proximity will facilitate improved communication and collaboration. This move will allow us to create an environment where our Soldiers and Airmen can work together on a daily basis and better understand and leverage the unique capabilities of each service. We are also exploring potential enhancements the move might bring, like a large-scale fitness center, and the possibility of providing weekday lunch services at the dining facility.

A strategic partnership at Forbes puts the Kansas National Guard in a much better position to meet the requirements of both our state and federal missions, and to manage future reductions in spending. In addition, it gives our headquarters access to Topeka's largest airport and positions it closer to a major highway.

All of these considerations make Forbes Field a strategically valuable option for the new headquarters location and increases the viability of the base in an incredibly fast-paced, changing environment with significant budgetary constraints.

The timeline for the move is comprised of three phases. The first phase, beginning this fall, will use the existing identified space with some renovation taking place.

Some parts of the organization, including many of our state employees and state emergency operations, aren't expected to move until the second phase of the plan, scheduled to occur in 2017. Funding needed for the move will come from both federal and state sources. Additional details will be made available over the next several months.

I know that any change can cause some concern and anxiety. Please know that my staff and I will work to keep everyone informed of any changes as we progress. I ask each of you to focus on the many new opportunities this plan provides, and please continue to work together for the good of our state and nation.



The front entry gate of Forbes Field in Topeka, current home of the 190th Air Refueling Wing. (Photo by Master Sgt. Allen Pickert, 190th Air Refueling Wing)

Warrior to Warrior Safety guidelines, regardless of rank

By Command Sgt. Maj. James Moberly
KSARNG command sergeant major

The commander of the Kansas Army National Guard recently published a memorandum for all commanders emphasizing safety during the 2015 annual training period. I remind all of our warriors, regardless of rank, of their critical role enforcing safety within our formations.



Command Sgt. Maj. James Moberly

Our goal for the Kansas National Guard is zero accidents resulting in injuries. Our commitment to safeguarding soldiers must be understood, emphasized, and visible at every level of the leadership chain. We must always challenge our warriors while at the same time understanding the hazards associated with the training environment and how to mitigate and control those hazards.

Always ensure that the appropriate deliberate risk management process is being used for all missions, no matter how routine or complex. Risk management is a continuous process including constant reassessment to identify controls that may not be effective or need adapting based on changing conditions.

Here are three areas of emphasis for our summer training months ahead.

Sleeping Areas: Ensure that safe sleeping areas are established in the tactical environment. This includes the proper marking of day and night areas along with known established traffic control areas. Establish procedures to ensure constant situational awareness for antiterrorism force protection operational security, severe weather and fire, whether in a tactical or barracks environment and make sure it is known by all personnel. Ensure 100 per-

cent personnel accountability at all times.

Vehicle Operation: All operators must be fully trained and qualified for the vehicle they are operating. Leaders will ensure that the vehicle is properly maintained, dispatched and that all required safety equipment is available and serviceable.

All personnel will use seatbelts or other restraint systems, if equipped. All personnel, operators and passengers, will wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including eye protection for vehicles without windcreens or shields.

All operators and passengers of tactical vehicles will wear their issued advanced combat helmet while the vehicle is in operation at all times on public roads and military installations. This is an Army standard and my standard and is non-negotiable. The only exception is for the wear of the issued combat vehicle crewman helmet.

Live Fire Training: Ensure all personnel are properly trained on loading, unloading, clearing and performing malfunction procedures in accordance with published standards, technical manuals and range regulations. Weapons handling must be conducted to standard all of the time, every time, without exception. This is a critical noncommissioned officer responsibility enforcing weapons safety standards.

Ensure personnel are wearing the required personal protective equipment, especially approved ballistic eye protection, hearing protection, and gloves. The number of warriors I see operating weapons without their assigned gloves is unacceptable. Weapons and expended brass get extremely hot, especially when operated at a high rate of fire or for extended periods of time, and will cause immediate danger burns. Wear your issued gloves. Protect your eyes, hearing and fingers.

If you think something is unsafe, question it immediately, regardless of rank. If you know something is unsafe, stop the action immediately. Have a safe and successful summer, in uniform and out.

Become a warrant officer

By Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector Vasquez
State Chief Warrant Officer

This year has been really busy as far as Warrant Officer

Strength. So far, our State has been able to stay in the green, but soon new additional Warrant Officer slots will be turned on and our Warrant Officer strength

could go down from green to amber and possibly red. We currently have 23 vacancies in various MOS categories. We already have names in some of the new



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector Vasquez

slots, but still will have vacancies. If you know of anyone interested in becoming a warrant officer, please contact me or Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sam Bonham, (785) 274-1823.

The Warrant Officer Advisory Council will conduct a Career Management Review in June which will also determine who has priority in attending Professional Military Education. As warrant officers, it is your responsibility to verify that you have all of your records updated. Don't let an outdated flag, failed Army Physical Fitness Test or height/weight violations prevent you from attending your PME.

On July 10, starting at 6:30 p.m., I will have a “Warrant Officer Call” in Salina at Martinelli's, This is a meet and greet for current and past warrant officers and the warrant officer candidates. If you are in the Salina area please stop by and share some esprit de corps.

PLAINS GUARDIAN

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

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Command team takes up-close look at 2015 annual training

By Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Three units of the Kansas Army National Guard were visited by senior leaders during their annual training June 7 at Fort Riley and Salina.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, adjutant general of Kansas; Brig. Gen. Robert Windham, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard; Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown, incoming command senior enlisted advisor of the Kansas National Guard and Command Sgt. Maj. James Moberly, command sergeant major of the Kansas Army National Guard, observed Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery; 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery; and 35th Military Police Company as they conducted unit-specific collective training.

The day started out in the field of Fort Riley observing the 1-161st FA fire 155 mm howitzer rounds, followed by a visit to the forward operating base of the 2-130th FA at the Smoky Hill Range of the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina.

"We are in day four of our live fire exercise," said Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Spencer, battalion master gunner, 1-161st FA. "It's a lot of fun. It means a lot to our regiment to showcase our ability to the leadership, to see that they actual care. Seeing them puts a smile on the Soldiers' faces."

During their visit, the senior leaders

talked with troops and listened to issues and concerns the Soldiers have, along with ideas for improving and increasing training opportunities to meet their units' objectives. Tafanelli also took the time to ask Soldiers about their civilian life, progress on Structured Self Development courses and about their day-to-day annual training experiences.

"What is reinvigorating for me is to watch the great training that is going on with our Soldiers," said Tafanelli. "A lot of times we don't have that opportunity to see those Soldiers work on their collective training requirements. To be able to come out to Fort Riley and Salina and watch them do that is really special for me and the other senior leaders."

During the visit, Tafanelli recognized individual Soldiers by calling them out in front of their unit and presenting them with an adjutant general's challenge coin for going above and beyond and making a difference in their unit.

"We always try to come out and recognize all the Soldiers," said Tafanelli, "but it is just not possible, so we try to find one or two Soldiers that are really going above and beyond and making their unit a better place and improving training for our Soldiers."

Capt. Nicky Inskeep, commander of the 35th Military Police, was happy with her

(Continued on Page 7)



Staff Sgt. Kevin Fischer (left) acting platoon leader with the 35th Military Police Company, receives a coin for his hard work and dedication from Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, adjutant general of Kansas. Tafanelli, and other leaders visited various units conducting annual training at Fort Riley and in Salina June 7. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Brig. Gen. Robert Windham (right) commander, Kansas Army National Guard, speaks with Spc. Alex Ford, field artillery automated tactical data system specialist with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, while on an annual training visit at Fort Riley, Kansas, June 7. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

House bill benefits service members, families

Public Affairs Office

A bill signed May 29 by Gov. Sam Brownback will improve the private-sector employment outlook for military family members.



Gov. Sam Brownback signs House Bill 2154 May 29 at the Capitol in Topeka. The bill goes into effect July 1, 2015. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

A provision in House Bill 2154 makes armed forces service members and military veterans eligible for in-state tuition rates at 32 public colleges and universities in Kansas beginning July 1. This provision also matches federal law extending tuition benefits to spouses and dependent children of veterans and service members.

"This bill reflects our commitment to those who served and continue to serve our nation," said Brownback. "This bill will help veterans and their families more easily make the transition to the private workforce."

The legislation gives veteran hiring preferences in the private sector and offers job protections to Kansas National Guard members who are called to active duty. It also speeds up approval of professional certifications for a military member or spouse.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, Kansas adjutant general, said the changes benefit military families and support the state's case when discussing proposed troop reductions with federal officials.

"It does go a long way in terms of competing with the other bases around the country," he said.

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The party will start at 4 p.m. with the meal served around 6 p.m. Bring your lawn chairs – everything else will be provided!

RSVP by email to mommahay@sbcglobal.net
or 620-625-2624.



Governor issues disaster proclamation for spring storms and floods

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

A series of strong thunderstorms pummeled Kansas beginning in early May, causing Gov. Sam Brownback signed a state of disaster emergency proclamation May 29 for 44 Kansas counties due to damages to public infrastructure caused by recent storms and flooding.

The proclamation cites thunderstorms accompanied by isolated tornadoes, high winds, large hail, lightning, and torrential rains moved across the state resulting in wind damage, flooding and flash flooding to public infrastructure and critical services.

The proclamation period began May 4 and continues as long as severe thunderstorms and flooding conditions are occurring.

“We are fortunate there has been no loss of life from these storms,” said Brownback. “This proclamation will begin the process of helping the counties affected by severe weather to identify damages and begin restoring vital infrastructure.”

Named in the declaration were Allen, Anderson, Barton, Butler, Chase, Cheyenne, Cherokee, Clay, Coffey, Cowley, Doniphan, Edwards, Elk, Gray, Franklin, Greenwood, Harper, Harvey, Haskell, Hodgeman, Jefferson, Labette,

“We are fortunate there has been no loss of life from these storms.”
Gov. Sam Brownback

Leavenworth, Lyon, Marion, Marshall, McPherson, Marion, Meade, Miami, Nemaha, Osage, Rawlins, Reno, Rice, Republic, Saline, Sherman, Stafford, Seward, Stevens, Sumner, Wabaunsee and Washington counties.

Brownback also formally requested joint Preliminary Damage Assessments be conducted with the Federal Emergency Management Agency once conditions are safe to determine eligibility for the federal public assistance program. The Public Assistance Program provides grants to state, territorial, local, and federally recognized tribal governments and certain private non-profit entities to assist them with the response to and recovery from disasters.

Specifically, the program provides assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and permanent restoration of infrastructure. Individuals, homeowners, renters, and business owners are not eligible applicants under the program.



Gov. Sam Brownback signs a disaster proclamation May 29 at the Capitol in Topeka for 44 Kansas counties due to damages to public infrastructure caused by storms and flooding as Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, Kansas adjutant general, briefs him. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

Don’t get caught downstream without a paddle or a plan



Spring storms and heavy rains often result in flooded fields across Kansas. (Archive photo)
Public Affairs Office

Recent flooding in Texas and Oklahoma are a stark reminder of the dangers of floods and flash floods.

Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States. Some will develop over the course of several days, while flash floods can strike in minutes, even without visible signs of rain. Floods may be localized in a neighborhood or community or they may affect entire river basins over many states. In 2011, heavy snowfalls in the north and excessive rains resulted in floods all along the Missouri River Basin, including several Kansas counties bordering the Missouri River.

Flash floods can occur within a few minutes or hours of heavy rainfall or the failure of a dam or levee. Flash floods often carry rocks, mud and other debris.

Overland floods, the most common type of flooding, generally occurs when rivers or streams overflow their banks. It can also occur when rainfall or snowmelt exceeds the capacity of underground pipes or the capacity of streets and drains to carry flood water away from urban areas.

It is vital for everyone to be aware of flood hazards, especially in low-lying areas, near water, behind a levee or downstream from a dam. Even very small streams, gullies, creeks, culverts, dry streambeds or low-lying ground can flood.

- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling. A foot of water will float many vehicles.
- Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles and pick-ups.
- Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road. The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped.
- Do not drive around a barricade. Barricades are there for your protection. Turn around and go the other way.
- Do not try to take short cuts. They may be blocked. Stick to designated evacuation routes.
- Be especially cautious driving at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

Always be aware of the weather forecast for your area and the possibility of flooding. Be prepared to leave the area, if necessary.

If you need to evacuate you should bring your purse/wallet with identification, credit cards, check book and cash; important documents such as birth/marriage certificates, insurance policies, bank records and other identification records; an emergency contact list; medication; specific/comfort items for family members such as a diaper bag, favorite toy, etc.

Prior to evacuating a home:

- Shut off water, gas and electricity if instructed to do so by emergency officials
- Fill your car’s tank with gas
- Lock your house
- Let family members know where you will be going
- Register family members with special needs at Helpmekansas.org

A few other things to consider when evacuating:

- If staying in a shelter, it may be more comfortable to bring your own pillows and bedding.
- If you have enough warning, you may consider bringing items that are irreplaceable such as photo albums, essential computer files backed up on a flash drive or CDs, etc.

- If time allows, take photographs of items remaining in your home and create a content list to help with possible insurance claims.

Livestock and Pets:

People who manage livestock and pet owners should also take the time to make preparations for their animals.

Livestock owners should move their animals to high ground with adequate feed or make arrangements to transport them to areas that will not flood.

If you have small pets, make arrangements for pet care outside of the evacuation zone. If you are evacuating to a shelter, check to see if the shelter has accommodations for pets. Make sure your pet has identification (collar tag, microchip, etc.) and all veterinary records of vaccinations, medicines and other essentials. Bring a leash/harness and a collapsible cage with bedding. Bring food and water dishes and be sure to bring a two week supply of food, as well as water for your pet. (Remember, potable water may not be available).

For more information and suggestions on evacuating from flood areas, visit

www.ksready.gov



BE PREPARED BEFORE A FLOOD

Floods can happen anytime and anywhere. And they can happen fast:

- If you don't have a flood insurance policy, contact your insurance agent today. If you have purchased a policy, review your policy with your agent and ask questions to make sure you have the proper amount of coverage.
- Keep your flood insurance policy and insurance agent's contact information on hand in the event you need to file a claim.
- Copy important documents (mortgage papers, deed, passport, bank information, etc.). Keep copies in your home and store originals in a secure place outside the home, such as a bank safe deposit box.
- Take photos of your possessions (furniture, antiques and collectibles, musical instruments, electronic equipment, etc.). Store copies with your other important documents.
- Save receipts for expensive household items (appliances, electronic equipment, etc.) as proof of original cost.
- Make an itemized list of other possessions, such as clothing, books, and small kitchen appliances. The more comprehensive your list, the better.

HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Emergency plans are a critical component of flood preparation:

- Give your emergency contact information to your insurance agent, employer, and family.
- Put aside an emergency kit with a flashlight, a battery-powered or handcrank radio, additional batteries, candles, and waterproof matches.
- Keep a minimum 3-day supply of nonperishable food and bottled water on hand.
- Visit Ready.gov for more information.

WHAT TO DO AFTER A FLOOD

If you experience a flood, here are some steps to take once the waters have receded:

- Check for structural damage before entering your home. If you suspect damage to water, gas, electric, or sewer lines, contact authorities.
- Remove wet contents like carpeting, furniture, and bedding immediately but keep swatches for the adjuster. Mold can develop within 24 to 48 hours. Use dehumidifiers and air-conditioners to dry out the building.
- Photograph and list all damaged or lost items including their age and value where possible. Take photos of water in the house. Adjusters need evidence of the damage to prepare your estimate.
- Plan before you repair. Contact your local building inspections, planning office, or clerk's office to get information on local building requirements.

BE PREPARED DURING A FLOOD

If you are affected by a flood, here are things you can do to stay safe:

- Heed official instructions. Monitor potential flood hazards on NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards or on the Internet at NOAAwatch.gov/floods.php.
- Don't walk through a flooded area. Just 6 inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- Don't drive through a flooded area. A car can be carried away by just 2 feet of water.
- Keep away from downed power lines and any other electrical wires.
- Animals that lost their homes during a flood may seek shelter in your home and aggressively defend themselves.



Extremes of heat pose a danger to health and safety

Public Affairs Office

Most Kansans are probably familiar with the saying, “It’s not the heat; it’s the humidity.”

The problem is, in Kansas, we usually get both. As a result, when summer is here, it gets pretty uncomfortable. Extremes of heat even pose a danger to health and safety.

From 1999-2003, there were 3,442 deaths reported nationwide that were caused by exposure to extreme heat, an annual average of 688. Of those for whom age information was available, seven percent were younger than 15, 53 percent were between 15-64 years old, and 40 percent were 65 years or older.

As temperatures begin to rise this summer, Kansas Division of Emergency Management is urging all Kansans to use common sense. Be aware of weather forecasts, particularly when they indicate a heat emergency, particularly the heat index. Similar in nature to the winter Wind Chill factor, the heat index, given in degrees Fahrenheit, is an accurate measurement of how hot it really feels when relative humidity is added to the actual air temperature. A heat index of 105 to 130 degrees means prolonged exposure or physical activity may result in sunstroke, heat cramps, heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

As conditions warrant, each National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office may issue the following heat-related warnings for their forecast area:

- Excessive Heat Outlook:** Issued when the potential exists for an excessive heat event in the next 3-7 days. An *Outlook* provides information to those who need considerable lead time to prepare for the event, such as public utilities, emergency management, and public health officials.
- Excessive Heat Watch:** Issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 12 to 48 hours. A *Watch* is used when the risk of a heat wave has increased, but its occurrence and timing is still uncertain. A *Watch* provides enough lead time so those who need to prepare can do so, such as cities who have excessive heat event mitigation plans.

Excessive Heat Warning / Advisory: Issued when an excessive heat event is expected in the next 36 hours. These products are issued when an excessive heat event is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. The *Warning* is used for conditions posing a threat to life or property. An *Advisory* is for less serious conditions that cause significant discomfort or inconvenience and, if caution is not taken, could lead to a threat to life and/or property.

Here are some guidelines to follow when a heat emergency is declared:

- Stay indoors as much as possible and limit exposure to the sun;

Heat Facts

- The highest air temperature ever certified in the United States was 134 degrees F, Death Valley, California, on July 10, 1913. That is also the certified world record for the highest recorded temperature.
- The most consecutive days above 100 degrees F was 160 days, set at Marble Bar, Western Australia, from Oct. 31, 1923, to April 7, 1924.
- The highest temperature ever recorded in Kansas was 121 degrees F, July 24, 1936, near Alton. This was during the most severe heat wave in the modern history of North America. It was followed by one of the coldest winters on record in the U.S.

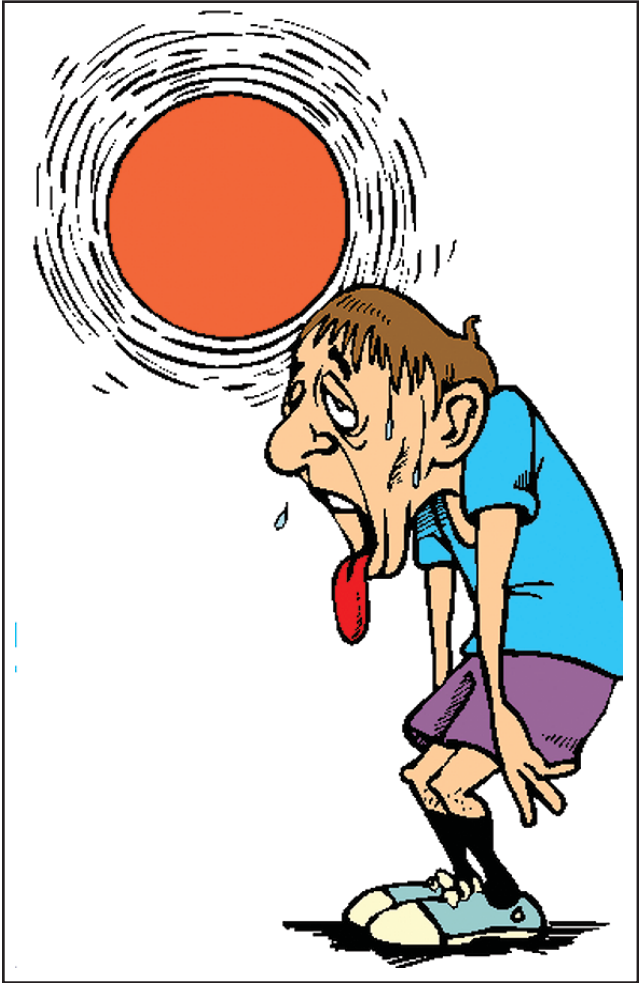
2015 annual training

Continued from Page 5

Soldier's progress during annual training and that the adjutant general and senior leadership could come out to observe their hard work.

"They work hard sun up to sun down and they are an outstanding group of Soldiers," said Inskeep. "I know it means a lot to them that he takes the time to come out and see their training, to see all that they have been learning."

"This is why they joined the National Guard," said Windham, "to go out and Soldier and be out here. Even though it is really humid today, there is no lack of mosquitoes and there hasn't been a lack of rain, not a one of them commented about that and they were out here doing what they love to do. So, it is a real pleasure to be here and see them in their element."



- Stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine if air conditioning is not available;
- Consider spending the warmest part of the day in public buildings such as libraries, schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, and other community facilities. Circulating air can cool the body by increasing the perspiration rate of evaporation;
- Eat well-balanced, light, regular meals;
- Drink plenty of water. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease, are on fluid-restricted diets, or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake;
- Limit intake of alcoholic beverages;
- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothing that covers as much skin as possible;
- Protect head and face by wearing a wide-brimmed hat;
- Check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, and who spend much of their time alone;
- Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles;
- Avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day. Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat, and take frequent breaks.

Know These Heat Disorder Symptoms!

Sunburn: Redness and pain. In severe cases, swelling of skin, blisters, fever and headaches.

First aid: Ointments for mild cases if blisters appear and do not break. If breaking occurs, apply sterile dressing. Serious, extensive cases should be seen by a physician.

Heat Cramps: Painful spasms usually in muscles of the legs and abdomen possible. Heavy sweating.

First Aid: Firm pressure on cramping muscles, or gentle massage to relieve spasm. Give sips of water. If nausea occurs, stop giving water.

Heat Exhaustion: Heavy sweating, weakness, skin that is cold, clammy and pale. Pulse thready. Normal temperature is possible. Fainting and vomiting.

First Aid: Get victim out of the sun. Lie down and loosen clothing. Apply wet, cool cloths. Fan or move victim to air conditioned room. Give sips of water. If nausea occurs, stop giving water. If vomiting continues, seek immediate attention.

Heat Stroke (or sunstroke): High body temperature (106 degrees or higher). Hot, dry skin. Rapid and strong pulse. Possible unconsciousness.

Don't forget Fido and Fluffy

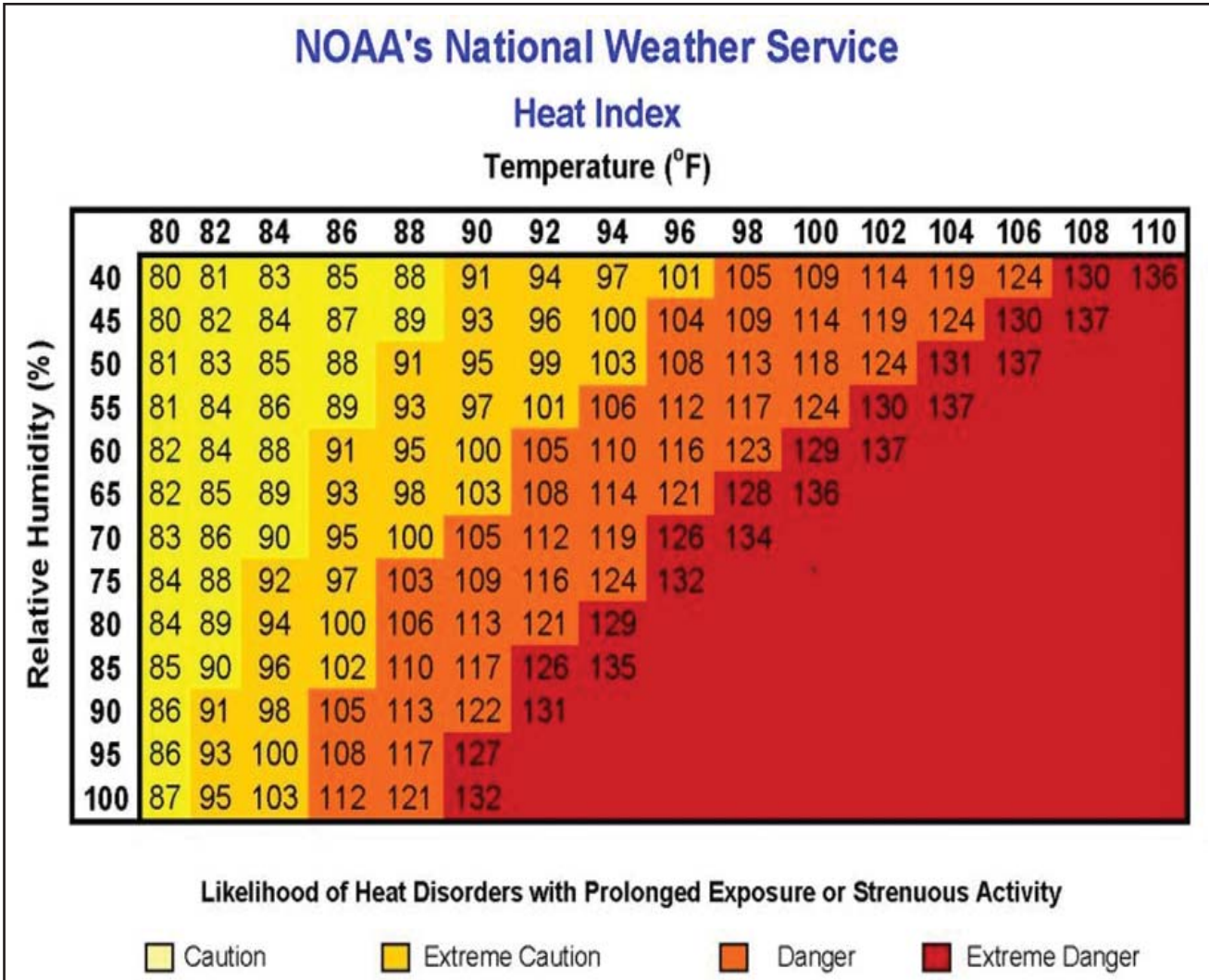
KDEM also reminds the public to remember their pets during heat emergencies. The Humane Society of the United States offers these safety suggestions for pets:

- Never leave a pet unattended in the car on a warm or sunny day;
- When taking a dog for a walk on a hot day, plan for shorter walks midday when temperatures peak, and longer walks in the morning and evening when it's cooler. Hot sidewalks can burn the pads on a dog's paws, so walk on the grass when possible;
- Pet rabbits should be kept indoors because they don't tolerate heat well.
- Shade and water are a must. Anytime your pet is outside, make sure he or she has protection from heat and sun (a doghouse does not provide relief from heat), and plenty of fresh, cool water. Heat stroke can be fatal for pets as well as people.

In case of an emergency, it's important to be able to identify the symptoms of heat stress caused by exposure to extreme temperatures. When in doubt, contact your veterinarian immediately. Some signs of heatstroke are:

- Heavy panting;
- Glazed eyes;
- A rapid heartbeat;
- Restlessness;
- Excessive thirst;
- Lethargy;
- Fever;
- Dizziness;
- Lack of coordination;
- Profuse salivation;
- Vomiting;
- A deep red or purple tongue;
- Unconsciousness.

If the animal shows symptoms of heatstroke, take steps immediately to gradually lower the body temperature and contact your veterinarian as soon as possible.



Kansas Guard goes above and beyond



Troops from the 891st Engineer Battalion, Iola, and Salvadoran engineers pour concrete into forms to make a sidewalk May 27 at a school building project in Sitio Del Niño, El Salvador, during Beyond the Horizon 2015. BTH15 is a joint humanitarian and civic engineering exercise sponsored by U.S. Southern Command and the government of El Salvador to show support for the country of El Salvador.

891st Engineers help rebuild school in El Salvador

Story and photos by Sgt. Jeff Daniels
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment,
U.S. Army Reserve

Soldiers from the Kansas National Guard’s 891st Engineering Battalion and Salvadoran army engineers from Batallion Enginero Centra out of Comando de Ingenieros de la Fuerza Armada wrestle with the concrete pump house as the weight bears down on them under the Salvadoran sun.

The joint effort to place concrete into sidewalk forms on May 27 signals the schoolhouse in Sitio Del Niño, El Salvador, is almost ready to be handed over to the local school children, who currently have only tin roofs and dirt floors.

This and several other projects throughout El Salvador are part of Beyond the Horizon 2015, a joint humanitarian and civic engineering exercise sponsored by U.S. Southern Command and the government of El Salvador to show support for the country of El Salvador.

To help fulfill the mission in El Salvador, Soldiers from the 226th Engineer Company, augmented by personnel from the battalion’s Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Forward Support Company, 242nd Engineer Company, and the 772nd Engineer Company, were tasked with three two-week rotations at the schoolhouse site. Earlier rotations had completed several walls of the schoolhouse using concrete blocks and work on the roof of the twin-building schoolhouse. The current group of Guardsmen was tasked to complete the last concrete placement to create sidewalks and a foundation for a future kitchen area. They will also place primer and paint on the walls.

Many of the Guardsmen have never traveled out of the country prior to this two-week mission.

“Google is your friend when it comes to getting everyone ready for the culture,” said Sgt. 1st Class William Kerby, noncommissioned officer in charge with the 226th.



Sgt. Richard Swink, a heavy equipment operator with the 242nd Engineer Company, Coffeyville, Kansas, plays a game of tag with students at a school building project in Sitio Del Niño on May 28 during Beyond the Horizon 2015.

“But there is nothing like the real thing and being on CIFA (Counterintelligence Field Activity) and being around the El Salvadoran army, especially the engineers and with having to compliment the El Salvadoran engineers here, it has been a big eye opener for several of them.”

Spc. Dana Sisler, Hutchinson, a masonry and carpentry specialist with the 226th Engineer Company, said this was her first time out of the country and her experience is better than expected.

“I thought it would be a little bit worse. I thought the humidity would be worse,” she said.

Working alongside the Salvadoran engineers proved to be a successful challenge.

“The first few days we didn’t have interpreters, so we had to show them what to do and couldn’t really put them to good use,” said 1st Lt. Michael Bryant, platoon leader and officer in charge for the project. “Today we had interpreters so they were helping us pour concrete and they did a great job.”

Kerby said communicating with the Salvadoran engineers has been decent.

“I only know how to read a little Spanish,” Sisler said, “and I had to use a lot of hand gestures to map out what needs to be done.”

The Kansas Guard will take home lessons and memories as they complete the mission. BTH15 gave them the opportunity to work with engineers from abroad, eat different types of food and meet their customers. During their rotation, a group of school children had the opportunity to visit the new buildings.

“My Soldiers can actually see who they are building for,” said Kerby.

“This experience has shown me how we in the U.S. are spoiled compared to other countries,” said Sisler. “I feel like they don’t have as much as we do.”

“Doing this project here, we are surrounded by poverty and we can tell we are making a difference,” said Bryant. “On the ground level, we are here to support this community. At a much higher level we are here to build relationships with the United States and El Salvador and to support this bond between two countries that, hopefully, will bear a lot of fruit down the road.”

According to Sisler, the whole experience was “Amazing.”

“Soldiers can actually see who they’re building for.”
Sgt. 1st Class William Kerby,
226th Engineer Company

Guard youth forge lasting friendships at annual Operation: Kids Camp

By Sgt. Brandon Jacobs
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Guidons flap in the wind as children dressed in brightly colored shirts march in formation, echoing their leaders’ cadence.

This scene is repeated every year at the Kansas National Guard Youth Program’s Operation: Kids Camp. The weeklong event was held May 25-29 at the Great Plains Joint Training Center, Salina, Kansas, and hosted children of service members ages eight to 12.

“This program is to show kids what their parents do during annual training or drill,” said Michelle Jones, Kids Camp volunteer camp director. “It gives Guard kids a chance to network with other military kids.”

Over the course of the week, the campers build lasting friendships while exploring their parents’ day-to-day military experiences. Teambuilding starts on day one, when campers are assigned to squads. The first mission of the week is to decorate their squad’s guidon and get to know their squad mates.

Soldiers and Airmen of the Kansas National Guard volunteer their time to run stations and events for the campers, such as the Virtual Battle Simulator, a computer based training system for infantry Soldiers; the Engagement Skills Trainer, a rifle simulator that mimics a rifle range; and a football field full of inflatable playground equipment.

“We just couldn’t do it without our team of volunteer service members,” said Jones. “They are a great team of dedicated people.”

Other organizations donated time and resources as well. Kansas State University - Salina gave tours of their engineering and aeronautical training facilities, including a tour of the active flight line. Deidra Stanley and her Australian Sheepdog, Ally Rose, came out from the Kansas Search and Rescue Dog Association to give a demonstration of how a search operation is conducted.

After a jam-packed day of events and educational trips, campers report to their open bay barracks for squad time.

“Squad time is my favorite,” said Justice Dunbar, age 12 of Eskridge, Kansas. “We hang out in the bay or sometimes go outside and play soccer. It’s really fun.”

“It’s good for the kids to intermingle and play,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Tina Perkins, a volunteer squad leader. “It encourages teamwork and networking.”

Teamwork is a continuing theme throughout the week, finishing with a parade ground ceremony that displays the campers’ hard work and teambuilding as they march in formation and call cadence.

By the end of the week, the 89 campers had gained valuable insight into their parents’ Guard lives and built lasting friendships.

“This is my favorite summer camp,” said Ann Hess, age 11 of Manhattan, Kansas. “I wish I could stay longer.”



Children of Kansas Guard members march to cadence at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina for the annual Operation: Kids Camp May 25-29. (Photo by Sgt. Brandon Jacobs, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Military escort reflects on sacrifice of fallen warrior

By Capt. Kyle Keys
National Guard Bureau

It would be the most difficult duty she ever completed in the military, but yet the most honorable and solemn act of respect she could give to her family and country.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Lisa Bryan received a call military families fear when a loved one is deployed to a combat zone. Her cousin, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Hatak-Yuka-Keya Martin “Sonny” Yearby was killed in action Sunday, May 14, 2006, while conducting combat operations in Anbar Province, Iraq.

Bryan, a member of the Kansas Army National Guard, is currently serving on active duty as a new media integrator for the Guard Strength Division at the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Virginia.

It was Mother’s Day. Two Marines in full dress delivered the shattering news to his parents Justin and Mary Yearby. Hatak’s father turned to the one person in the family who could relate as a warrior, intimately familiar with the culture of the Mvskoke (Muskogee) Creek and Choctaw tribes and their tradition of service.

“When my cousin Justin called with the unbelievable news of Hatak’s death, I asked if I could go to Dover Air Force Base and bring him home,” Bryan said. “As a Native American, it is important to us that the body is not left alone. Having a family member there to bring him home meant a lot and was very important to me as well.”

Serving as an escort is a difficult and emotional task even for a service member with no familial ties to a fallen Soldier. The cascading range of emotions began when Bryan received Sonny’s personal effects and a flag from a casualty assistance officer at the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operation Center. The following morning, she escorted his body to Philadelphia and flew to Houston where she spent a seven-hour layover in a hot and humid airport cargo warehouse. Bryan stood in her Army Class A uniform for nearly the entire time, never leaving his side.

“I could feel Hatak’s presence,” she said. “I prayed with him, for him and just talked. We were close.”

They departed Houston that evening and arrived in Oklahoma City just after midnight.

A garage door slowly rose at the cargo warehouse dock where Sonny would make his final journey home. The light pierced through the darkness on a crowd of more than 200 family members and friends waiting to receive their fallen warrior. Solemnly, an honor guard detail from the U.S. Marine Corps draped an American flag over Hatak’s casket.

“That was when it was the hardest for me,” said Bryan. “When the door was raised and I saw how many people showed up at two in the morning from Marietta and Overbrook to honor him.”

Hatak was a citizen of the Choctaw Indian Nation and was an accomplished Native American dancer. Traditional dance is significant to Native Americans, culturally rooted and expressed for rituals, ceremonies, going to battle and honoring fallen warriors, she said. It was a part of Sonny’s way of life that he fully embraced.

“Hatak loved to dance, to compete and let the spirit take over,” Bryan said with a grin. “He was a great kid and always made you smile and laugh.”

Though it was difficult losing her young cousin, Bryan said there is still so much to be thankful for.

“Native Americans are all very grateful for sacrifices made by our military members and all the great freedoms we have in our country as a result of their service,” she said. “It’s always important to know your history, but more importantly to remember those who have gone before you. I think we look at Memorial Day as a day of remembrance and celebration of our warriors and what they’ve accomplished.”



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Lisa Bryan of the Kansas Army National Guard holds a photo of her cousin Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Hatak-Yuka-Keya Martin Yearby who was killed in action May 14, 2006, while conducting combat operations in Anbar province, Iraq. Bryan escorted his body from the Air Mortuary at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, to Yearby’s hometown in Overbrook, Oklahoma (Photo by Capt. Kyle Key, National Guard Bureau)

“It’s always important to know your history, but more importantly to remember those who have gone before you.”
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Lisa Bryan

Bryan is a citizen of the Mvskoke (Muskogee) Creek Indian Nation, a tribe that boasts a rich history of service to include one Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, 2nd Lt. Ernest L. Childers for his heroism in World War II. According to the Department of Defense, Native Americans have the highest number per capita serving in the military of any ethnic group. Bryan’s family tradition of service is no exception.

“My Aunt Rachel served in the Women’s Army Corps for the 555th Army Air Force at Love Field in Dallas, Texas during World War II,” Bryan said. “She’s one of five women in my life who have been great mentors. Last November, she attended the unveiling ceremony for the Women’s Veterans Memorial in Del City, Oklahoma. She is 91 and still sparky!”

Her uncle, Phillip Coon, was a decorated WWII veteran who survived the Bataan Death March and persevered through three agonizing years as a Japanese prisoner of war. He passed away in June 2014.

Kansas fosters partnership with Armenia

Public Affairs Office

Kansas Lt. Gov. Jeff Colyer, M.D. and Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, led a small group of Kansans to the Republic of Armenia to attend a commemoration ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Colyer and Tafanelli were joined by Lt. Col. Fran Oleen, Kansas director, State Partnership Program; Maj. Don Harper, Kansas coordinator, State Partnership Program; and Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown, Kansas Air National Guard.

The visit was arranged as part of the State Partnership Program, a National Guard Bureau program that partners developing nations with state National Guards to foster military and civilian relationships.

The Kansas group joined other U.S. and foreign government officials in observing the 100th anniversary memorial ceremony at the Armenia Genocide Museum and a memorial ceremony in Republic Square in Yerevan.

At a meeting with Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan, Colyer and Tafanelli presented a framed copy of Gov. Sam Brownback’s proclamation declaring April 24 Genocide Remembrance Day.

“The people of Armenia have overcome many challenges throughout history, none greater than the genocide of a century ago,” Colyer said. “Kansas is proud to stand beside our friends in commemoration of this tragic event.”

At the end of World War I, the government of the Ottoman Empire began deporting, arresting and killing ethnic Armenians within its borders. By the time Russia invaded, approximately 1.5 million Armenians had died and millions others had fled.

Colyer and Tafanelli also received briefings by members of the Armenian Office of Defense Cooperation, and met with the U.S. ambassador to Armenia and leadership of the U.S. Embassy, the Armenian Peace-keeping Brigade commander, first deputy minister of Defense and the chief of the General Staff of the Republic of Armenia.



Left to right, Kansas Lt. Gov. Jeff Colyer, M.D., Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan and Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. (Photo provided)

In memoriam to the fallen...



Chaplain (Maj.) John Potter (left), deputy command chaplain, Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas, reads the names of Kansas National Guardsmen who gave their lives in the service of their country in the Vietnam War and Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom during a memorial service at the State Defense Building, Topeka, May 22. (Photo by Jane Welch, Public Affairs Office)

ESGR recognizes civilian employers

By Sgt. Brandon Jacobs
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Employers from nine different organizations were recognized April 25 for going above and beyond what is required by law to support their Citizen-Soldiers during a banquet at the Marriott Hotel in Wichita, Kansas, hosted by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

“Tonight is a celebration of employers and Soldiers,” said David White, ESGR ombudsmen. “We are recognizing employers who take care of their Citizen Soldiers.”

The ESGR handed out six Above and Beyond awards to organizations throughout the state. The Above and Beyond Award recognizes employers that do more to care for their Soldiers than is usually required of them.

“In my eyes these people are twice the citizen,” said White. “They share a burden with their employee and we are here to celebrate the special employers that go above and beyond.”

Among the organizations honored with the Above and Beyond Award was the Olathe Police Department.

“It’s great to receive recognition for the support our agency gives,” said Maj. Jack Fahrnow, support staff commander for the Olathe Police. “It is a big endeavor to lose personnel, but our support for our employees will never cease. They are still a part of our family.”

Although civilian employers must make sacrifices to accommodate the duties of their Citizen Soldiers, they gain a great deal more when they choose to hire a guardsmen or reservist.

“You get someone with confidence, social skills and good morals,” said Fahrnow. “It is a small sacrifice to help them fulfill their obligation.”

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve has a three-part mission: to educate the Soldier, educate the employer, and assist Guard members and reservists in finding employment with a military-friendly employer.

“We help the Soldier tell their story, what it means to hire a Guardsman,” said Paul Swanson, program support technician with the ESGR. “The ESGR works with the Soldier and the employer to educate and support our troops.”

2015 Kansas Air National Guard Outstanding Airmen of the Year

The Kansas Air National Guard 2015 Outstanding Airmen of the Year review board took place earlier this year to select this year’s recipients.

The Outstanding Airmen of the Year program recognizes the very best Airmen in the state. The board members reviewed the leadership, job performance, community involvement and personal achievements of the candidate’s nomination packages from the 190th Air Refueling Wing and the 184th Intelligence Wing.

The following Airmen were selected by Col. Jay Selanders as this year’s award recipients after receiving recommendations from the board members: Staff Sgt. Kevin Smith, 184th IW, Airman of the Year;


Tech. Sgt. Brandon Terhune, 190th ARW, Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; Master Sgt. Steven Peyton, 184th IW, Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; Senior Master Sgt. Louis Locke, 184th IW, First Sergeant of the Year; Tech. Sgt. Daniel Berends, 190th ARW, Honor Guard Member of the Year; Master Sgt. Jerry Gardinier, 184th IW, Honor Guard Manager of the Year; Staff Sgt. Kevin Smith, 184th IW, Overall Airman of the Year.

This year’s board members were Chief Master Sgt. Chad Bellquist, Chief Master Sgt. Pat Moore, Chief Master Sgt. William Stacey, Chief Master Sgt. Carolyn Crabb and Senior Master Sgt. Terry Spangler.

Awards and Decorations


KANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Meritorious Service Medal




Lt. Col. Thomas Barnett, 69th TC, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Lt. Col. John Clark 1st Bn (OCS/WOCS), 235th Rgmt, Salina, with two oak leaf clusters
Lt. Col. Daniel Jones, HHB, 130th FA Bde, Manhattan
Lt. Col. Kirk Pederson, HHC, 635th RSG, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Lt. Col. Kenneth Weishaar, Rec and Ret Bn, Topeka, with five oak leaf clusters
Maj. Richard Dunn, 287th SB, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Capt. Eric Hollingsworth, Co B, Rec and Ret Bn, Wichita
1st Sgt. Dwane Clifford, Co B, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Wichita
1st Sgt. Timothy Prine, Btry B, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Paola
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Smith, 1st Bn, (OCS/WOCS), 235th Rgmt, Salina
Command Sgt. Maj. Craig Tunheim, HHC, 169th CSSB, Olathe, with two oak leaf clusters
Sgt. Maj. Janet Blunt, 287th SB, Wichita
Master Sgt. Joseph Alaniz, Rec and Ret Bn, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. John Meyer, Rec and Ret Bn, Topeka
Master Sgt. Monica Probst, KSARNG Training Center, Salina
Sgt. 1st Class Charles Becher, HQ, 891st Eng Bn, Iola, with two oak leaf clusters
Sgt. 1st Class Steven Griffin, Rec and Ret Bn, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Morton Griggs, Co C (Ord), 2nd Bn, 235th Rgmt, Salina
Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Hansen, Btry C, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Newton
Sgt. 1st Class Brian Martin, 2nd Bn, 235th Rgmt, Salina
Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Russell, Co C (Ord), 2nd Bn, 235th Rgmt, Salina
Staff Sgt. Gary Galbraith, Btry B, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Abilene
Staff Sgt. Robert James, HHD, 635th RSG, Hutchinson, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Kerry Rose, Det 1, 995th Maint Co, Concordia
Staff Sgt. Kyle Tillery, 731st Trans Co, Great Bend
Staff Sgt. Darryl Tyner, Co B, 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Salina, with oak leaf cluster
Sgt. Sarah Cowell, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka

Army Commendation Medal



Lt. Col. Timothy Stevens, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Maj. Trent Miller, Rec and Ret Bn, Topeka, with four oak leaf clusters
Maj. Tanya Wehrli, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Brian Muir, Great Plains Joint Training Center, Salina


Kansas Achievement Ribbon



Sgt. 1st Class Donald Dickey, Btry B, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Abilene, with oak leaf cluster

KANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Meritorious Service Medal




Col. Jarrod Frantz, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Lt. Col. Cody Jacobs, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Maj. Reese Hays, 190th ARW, Topeka
1st Lt. Joshua Thomas, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Jill Jantz, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Chad Johnson, 184th IW, Wichita, with

three oak leaf clusters


Senior Master Sgt. Jason Kenney, 184th IW, Wichita, with one oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Anthony Snyder, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Wagner, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Douglas Zerger, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Jeffrey Brown, 184th IW, Wichita, with one oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Barbara Dipoli, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Pedro Gonsalves, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Mark Gruenewald, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Troy Hultgren 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Nathan Neidhardt, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Steven Nicely, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Floyd Parks, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster

Air Force Commendation Medal



Master Sgt. King Dixon, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Robert Taylor, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Jonathan Burke, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Sean Conyers, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Bradley Weaver, 184th IW, Wichita

Air Force Achievement Medal



Maj. Mark Wilkes, 190th ARW, Topeka
1st Lt. Francis Nguyen, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Senior Master Sgt. Sherry Willard, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Anna Bailey, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Michael Baker, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Brian Castillo, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Ross Chappell, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Darla Griffin, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Stacy Harvey, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Douglas Hickman, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Eric Stanley, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Brian Wockenfuss, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Cody Criqui, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Juana Hernandez, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. James Mayfield, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Jared Petefish, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Christopher Schulte, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. David Tomeczek, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Andrew Appelhantz, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Anthony Blubaugh, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Keith Eccles, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Benjamin Hanke, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Kevin Smith, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Tyler Vaughn, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Ross Ackley, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Tara Campbell, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Bridget Cooney, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Neal Douglas, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Travis Fulghum, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Joseph Hamilton, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Joshua Hobbs, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Nicholas Sester, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Trenton Snowbarger, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster

Staff Sgt. Anthony Boone, Co B, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Robert Flynn Jr., Co E (-), 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Gary Galbraith, Btry B, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Abilene
Staff Sgt. Darryl Tyner, Co B (-), 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Salina
Staff Sgt. Trudy Vanderhall, 35th MP Co, Topeka
Sgt. Kevin Wilcox, FSC, 891st Eng Bn, Iola
Spc. Timothy Nichols, HHB, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Hutchinson

Kansas Air National Guard

Chief Master Sgt. Bill Angstadt, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Jill Jantz, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Chad Johnson, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Tom Gattis, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Jason Kenney, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Joe McElfresh, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Russell Sims, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Steve Cussins, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Troy Hultgren, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Neil Wallert, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Glenn Ludwig, 184th IW, Wichita

Fishing tournament honors fallen Kansas warriors



A boatload of anglers test their luck at the 11th Kansas Veterans Memorial Fishing Tournament at Coffey County Lake near Burlington, Kansas, April 25. The event is hosted annually by the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery. (Photo by Capt. Michael Sullivan, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

By Capt. Michael Sullivan
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Anglers from across Kansas narrowly missed strong early morning storms to participate in the 11th annual Kansas Veterans Memorial Fishing Tournament at Coffey County Lake near Burlington, Kansas, April 25.

The event, hosted by the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery and supported by Wolf Creek Generating Station, is held in memory of the fallen heroes of Kansas who gave the ultimate sacrifice for the American way of life.

Retired Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, former adjutant general of Kansas, and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Rodina have been part of the fishing tournament since its inception 11 years ago. They see it as an important way to remember members of the Kansas National Guard who lost their lives.

“We believe in tradition,” Bunting said during the post-tournament ceremony. “We started this for our first two Soldiers that we lost after 9/11. One of them was an avid fisherman. His dad told us that it’s what he loved to do. We started it for that reason.”

Following their retirement four years ago, Bunting and Rodina were hopeful that the tradition would continue.

“The 2-130th folks share our passion for this,” said Bunting. “I don’t think it is ever going to go away. And the people from Wolf Creek have been here all along. We love this

tournament. We aren’t fishermen. We only come down to cheer you on and give the awards you deserve.”

Wolf Creek, which contributes both financially and with hundreds of volunteer hours to make the tournament happen, has about 1,000 full-time employees and roughly 20 to 25 percent of that work force are veterans.

“With that many veterans in our work force it is a natural extension to support the National Guard and veterans groups in our state,” said Adam Heflin, CEO of Wolf Creek. “Having something like this that supports the veterans and having it out on the lake ... this is a great match for community outreach for us.”

The tournament saw 15 of the 19 registered boats actually hit the water to compete. Only the top five fish were weighed as part of the final contest.

The winning team was a father and son pair – George Fisher from Wichita, Kansas, and Jack Fisher, from Atlanta, Kansas. The duo hauled in 8 pounds, 7 ounces of fish.

George retired from the Army after 26 years of service and enjoys helping out the troops.

“I’m a veteran myself,” said George. “I look to come and support anything to do with the veterans.”

His son, Jack, enjoys the time fishing with his father noting that they are great “fishing buddies.”

State employee of the quarter



State employee Lyle Babcock Sr. (left-center) was recognized by Gov. Sam Brownback as the employee of the quarter for the Adjutant General’s Department. Babcock has worked for the agency since July 2008. Babcock was joined by (left to right) daughter Kristie and her son, Chaz; son, Master Sgt. Lyle Babcock Jr. and his service dog, Gunther; Leah Babcock; daughter-in-law Traci Babcock; and Maj. Gen. Lee Tafenelli, Kansas adjutant general. Leah and Lyle Babcock Jr. are also employees of the Adjutant General’s Department. (Photo provided)

Firefighting, a family tradition

**By Staff Sgt. Kayla Kohn
190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs**

It’s not unusual for military service to be a family tradition. The same can be said about following any career path. Different career fields, such as firefighters, pilots and police officers, have family legacies.

For two Airmen of the 190th Air Refueling Wing, following family tradition is just part of their story.

Airman 1st Class Page Calvin transferred to the 190th Air Refueling Wing in December from Frost, Texas. Student flight member Cassie McCurdy, currently a high school senior from Melvern, Kansas, enlisted Feb. 8 before she even graduated. Both women joined the firefighting career field, following family members who are also firefighters.

For Calvin, a family tragedy convinced her to switch career fields.

“My brother was one of the 12 firefighters who lost their lives in the West fertilizer explosion,” said Calvin. Her brother, Perry Calvin, a volunteer firefighter with the Navarro Mills county volunteer fire

department, lost his life when he responded to the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas, April 17, 2013.

Page Calvin said she and her brother planned to go to a firefighting academy together, but Page had already joined the Air Force, so she couldn’t. Her brother passed away three weeks prior to his fire academy graduation.

“I had been on the volunteer department back at home with my father and brother. That’s what I’ve been doing since I’ve been old enough,” Calvin said. “When my brother passed, it was even more motivation to just do what I wanted to do and what my passion is – firefighting.”

Calvin attended the Department of Defense Fire Academy at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, and will soon be fully trained.

McCurdy, currently on a volunteer fire department with her father, has been going to fire department meetings with her father even before she was old enough to be a volunteer. She leaves for basic training this year and is awaiting technical school dates.



Cassie McCurdy (left) and Airman 1st Class Page Calvin, 190th Air Refueling Wing, share a passion for firefighting. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Kayla Kohn, 190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs)

Notes from the field desk June often brings a call to war

**By Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Byers
Command Historian**

June is here.

Historically speaking, June was the beginning of the military campaign season, that period of time when farmers, freed from the burden of planting their crops, were inducted into military service and sent out to war. Military operations prior to the 20th century were conducted with this in mind. Once the labor intensive spring planting was completed, nations would marshal their strength and go to war, concluding operations before the equally labor intensive harvest began.



Sgt. 1st Class
Jeremy Byers

More relevantly for the Kansas National Guard, this month has seen thousands of Soldiers, me included, deploy to far away lands in preparation for offensive or stability operations.

Militia Heritage:

During the Civil War, the First and Second Kansas Volunteer Infantry Regiments (the grandparent units for the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment) were mustered into federal service in June 1861 and began operations shortly thereafter. In 1916, the Kansas Guard mobilized in June for operations in Mexico.

Federal Heritage:

June 1918 witnessed the newly created 35th Infantry Division moving into the front lines in France in preparation for offensive operations in the late summer.

In June 1941, the 35th Infantry Division participated in the “Louisiana Maneuvers,” an Army-level exercise testing the preparedness of the American Army for overseas operations. By June 1944, the 35th Infantry Division, including the 161st Field Artillery Battalion, the 35th Infantry Division Band and the 69th Infantry Brigade (commanding the 137th Infantry Regiment), were completing their training for European operations and embarking for France. Twenty-four years later, in June 1968, the 69th Infantry Brigade arrived in Fort Carson, Colorado, to complete their training for another war, Vietnam, while the 184th Tactical Fighter Group made final preparations for its deployment to South Korea during the USS Pueblo Incident.

More personally, my last three deployments began in June, continuing this legacy of summer mobilizations and service.

So, as the summer passes and you get a chance to relax after school is over, when annual training is complete and the summer sun lets you go outside and enjoy time with your friends and family, take a moment and think of the tens of thousands of Kansas service members who have answered the call to arms during this very season.

Make time and stop by the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, learn a little about the heritage of your unit and honor the service of the many who answered the call before us.

The Museum of the Kansas National Guard is open Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

<http://www.kansasguard-museum.org/>

Chaplains balance military duty with service to God

Continued from Page 3

out if someone’s been laid off. You help them, you pray for them, you offer support and help. You find out if somebody’s had a miscarriage, you go visit them at the hospital. You go help families when a family member dies. You go help when somebody’s at risk of suicide.

“Ministry can be messy. It can be dirty, it can get sweaty,” said Potter. “It can get nasty at times. But that’s when you have closeness, that’s when you can share that there’s compassion. That’s when you can talk about what grace really is and just how we’re supposed to function.

“My boss talks about loving one another. Those aren’t just words on a page. It’s tough to make that happen.”

Often, their ministry takes Potter and Pempin outside of the office and outside of regular business hours.

“Some days can be feast or famine,” said Potter. “Think of it like a fire department. They’re there, they’re ready. Some days you don’t have a fire. When you do, everything stops. Whatever you had planned and you go on the call because there’s a problem.

“The phone can ring and we may have a casualty assistance visit. We may have a couple that’s had a fight and someone got kicked out of the house and they want to talk,” he said. “We can meet here in the office. I can go meet them at a McDonald’s, not a problem. We’re always willing to talk and meet somebody.”

“We are chaplains 24-7,” said Pempin, whose workday job is alcohol and drug control officer for the Kansas Army National Guard managing the substance abuse program. “Lots of times we’re contacted throughout the week to help Soldiers with certain situations. We are to be used by the unit whenever they need us. If that’s during the week, that’s fine.

“I have emails this morning from Soldiers who need me to call them later on today,” said Pempin. “You’re always a chaplain, almost like you’re always a Soldier. If duty calls during certain times, you must answer that call.”

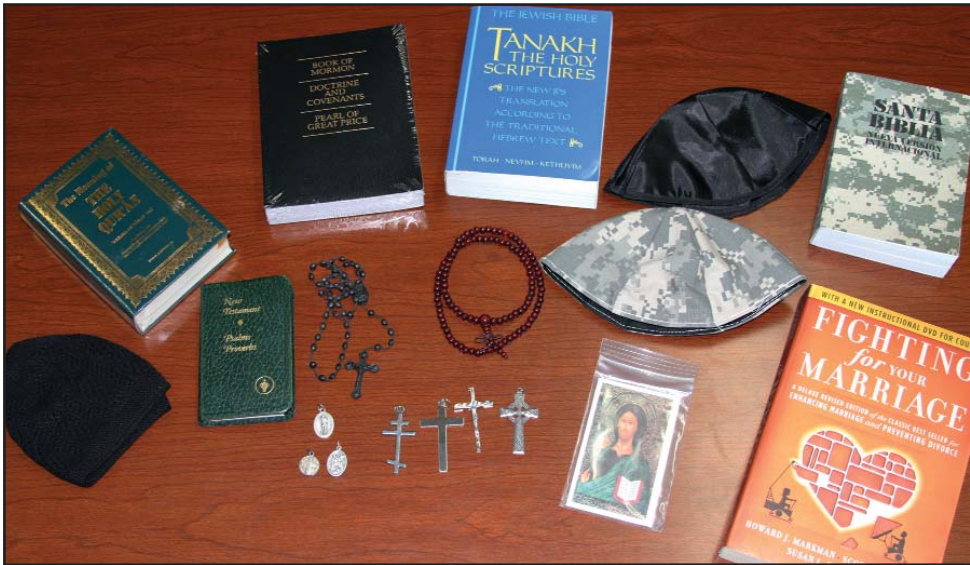
Being a chaplain also entails a balancing act between military duties and religious responsibilities, particularly when a Soldier is of a different faith.

“In Kansas, there are 78 different faith groups in the Kansas Army National Guard,” said Potter. “That’s a lot of religious diversity in our force. That’s not a bad thing. Everybody is entitled to the same constitutional right to worship as they see fit. That’s the beauty of America.

“I’m the caretaker for them,” he continued. “I’m not trying to sign people up for Sunday school classes. My mission is to protect their religious freedom. They have the right to worship as they see fit. So if I have a Wiccan in my battalion, I will find out what that person needs. If I have a Buddhist in my battalion, I will see if they need some Buddhist prayer beads. You could even have multiple Roman Catholic Soldiers. I can’t perform Mass, but ‘Do you need rosaries? Would you like a Saint Christopher medal? Would you like a Roman Catholic Bible?’”

“The military is a plural organization,” said Potter. “There are more atheists than Southern Baptists in the active Army. They’re all your Soldiers, though. It doesn’t matter what’s on their dog tags. Those are all my Soldiers. They are all my military family.”

“When I counsel a Soldier, the first thing that I let the Soldier know is the only counseling I can provide them is based upon my faith,” said Pempin. “So, if they want to ask a question, then my opinions or my thought process is always going to filter through my



Kansas National Guard chaplains can provide a variety of religious materials, confidential counseling, guidance and support to Soldiers of all faith or no faith day or night, any day they are needed. “We are chaplains 24-7,” said Chaplain (Capt.) Dan Pempin, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

own faith background. Most of them are absolutely fine with that. It doesn’t bother them because they have a question or they have the need for a solution and sometimes they don’t really care where that comes from. For me, I just try to be open with them.”

“As a Christian, I believe in relational evangelism,” said Potter. “I believe that a good Christian witness is demonstrating love and faith, just like Christ, to someone I may not agree with. It may open a door where we have a spiritual conversation down the road.”

“If a chaplain is going out there and trying to beat people over the head and get them into services, you might be a really good preacher, but how relational are you going to be with those people who are outside the Christian faith?” asked Potter. “How can you attract someone to your faith? Through your behavior and through your example, through the words you use.”

In building those relationships and protecting his Solders’ rights, Potter’s been rewarded with multiple ministry opportunities.

“I’ve had some of the most interesting Bible questions I’ve ever had on the firing range,” said Potter. “Everybody is shooting their M16s and someone just walks up and says, ‘I was reading the Book of Revelation last night and it says here in 19:16... did Jesus have a tattoo?’”

“What?”

“It says that Jesus had some marks on his leg. 19:16. Look it up.”

“Okay, let’s grab the Bible. Show me where you’re at. Let’s look at it together.”

“That’s the conversation I had,” said Potter. “That’s one of the greatest compliments, that somebody trusts you enough to come and ask you a spiritual question.”

“I had a group of Buddhists on my second deployment. I asked them ‘What do you need? What can I do to help?’ Because I went out and I sought them out, when there was some family emergencies, they came and talked to me. They asked me to pray for them.

“They asked a Christian minister to pray for them,” he repeated. “That’s powerful.”

Kansas National Guardsmen train Soldiers and civilians at Fort Sill

By Staff Sgt. Casey N. Flinn
Kansas Regional Training Site-Maintenance

Six Soldiers from the Kansas Regional Training Site-Maintenance and two from the Michigan RTS-M were at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, March 23-April 2 as a mobile training team to train 14 active duty Soldiers and six Department of the Army civilians in wheel-vehicle recovery operations.

The student Soldiers were from the 100th Brigade Support Battalion, 75th Field Artillery Brigade; 1st Battalion, 14th Field Artillery; 2nd Battalion, 4th Field Artillery Regiment and 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment. The civilian students represented Fleet Management Expansion, under the command of Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command.

Upon completion of the training the Soldiers were assigned the additional skill identifier of H8. After the training was completed the Soldiers and civilians could properly operate different recovery vehicles safely and to standard in order to make their companies be more viable assets to mission success.

Typical military training is Soldiers training other Soldiers, while training for civilians usually has civilians work together. This MTT had the opportunity to combine the two, as

teams were made up of both Soldiers and civilians. This allowed for the different aspects of experience to be shared amongst everyone. All of the civilians who participated in the class were veterans themselves and shared their knowledge and experiences with the Soldiers.

“Their (civilians) work approach was different than Soldiers, but in the end it accomplished the same mission,” said Pfc. Richaun Faulks, 100th Brigade Support Battalion, 75th Field Artillery Brigade.

The training taught the students the use of oxy-fuel welding operations, proper rigging techniques and methods, preventive maintenance checks and services of recovery vehicles, material handling crane operations, winching operations, under-lift and tow operations, the ability to recover vehicle from mired situations and how to properly overturn vehicles that have been flipped on their sides.

There were classroom, shop and field portions, which taught and reinforced the proper ways to conduct all of these operations safely and to the military standards. The students had to prove their knowledge of the information by passing multiple written tests and conduct hands-on practical exercises, preparing them to be viable assets to their units as wheel vehicle recovery operators.



A Soldier and a civilian from the Department of the Army slog through mud and water to reach a mired vehicle during the Recovery Operation (Wheel) Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Casey N. Flinn, Regional Training Site-Maintenance)

Safety Corner

Summer work and summer fun call for summer safety

By Chief Warrant Officer 4 Marvin Terhune
State Safety Officer

Summer is here! Everyone is outside enjoying the warmer weather. Summer is usually the “catch up” time when we work on our house or yard. It is always a busy time to try and keep up with the mowing as well as cleaning, painting and, of course, gardening.

As we line out all of the tools and equipment that we will use during our projects, it is important to remember to use the right equipment for the task at hand. Always use the right ladder of the correct size for the job. Don’t use a step ladder for a job that calls for an extendable ladder. The correct length of ladder extends at least three feet past the height you will be working at.

After all the projects are completed, it is time to head for the lake. I enjoy doing a little fishing when I have the opportunity. My youngest son gave me a call over the last holiday weekend to try our luck at a nearby lake. He had been working on a “project” boat and had just put the thing in the water a few days before.

We launched off the dock and my son had on his life jacket and offered one to me. Of course being an “old guy” I did not plan on going swimming so I put it under the console. My son put the seats up on the pedestals in the front and back of the boat and we were ready to start.

We baited up and started drifting for walleye. There was a little chop to the water so the boat was swaying a little. I cast out and leaned back in the seat. I do not have to tell you what happened next.

Falling back happens very fast and is impossible to stop once the motion starts. I hit the edge of the boat and ended up in the lake. I lost my fishing pole in the lake and, of course, I had my cell phone in my pocket. Our fishing expedition was over at that point and we headed home.

Things could have turned out different. I should have put on the life vest and examined the chair that I was going to sit on with my son’s project boat.

The lesson: Always observe safety measures when going out on a lake or it may be your time to go for a swim! Be safe!



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Marvin Terhune

Mullinax receives command of 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment



Lt. Col. John Clark (right center) passes the colors of the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment to Col. Judith Martin, regimental commander, during a change of command ceremony April 12 at the Kansas Regional Training Institute in Salina, signifying that he relinquishes command of the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment. Martin, in turn, passed the flag to incoming commander Lt. Col. Lisa Mullinax (left), giving her command authority over the battalion. (Photo provided)

Lt. Col. Lisa Mullinax received command of the Kansas National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment from outgoing commander Lt. Col. John D. Clark during an April 12 ceremony at the Kansas Regional Training Institute in Salina.

The 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment conducts the Officer Candidate School and Warrant Officer Candidate School for 13 states.

“I am honored to be selected as commander for the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment,” said Mullinax. “I attended Kansas OCS and feel privileged to be able to give back and look forward to influencing the leaders of tomorrow.”

“Commanding the 1st Battalion has been an amazing experience,” said Clark. “It is a rewarding assignment to be a part of a team that strives for excellence, that is committed to the development of future leaders, and that has roots deep in traditions.”

Mullinax is a 1996 graduate of the Officer Candidate School at the Kansas Re-

gional Training Institute. Her military education includes Ordnance Officer Basic Course at Fort Lee, Virginia; Combined Logistics Captains Career Course at Aberdeen, Maryland; Combined Arms and Services Staff School and Intermediate Level Education Common Core Course and Advanced Operations Course, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Her previous assignments include division chief, Surface Maintenance, Joint Forces Headquarters; operations officer, 287th Sustainment Brigade; support operations officer, 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion; and deputy support operations officer (Operation Iraqi Freedom), 287th Sustainment Brigade. She has also served in various command and staff positions at battalion and company level.

In her civilian career, Mullinax serves as a supervisory surface maintenance specialist at the Surface Maintenance Office, Kansas Army National Guard, Topeka.

Kansas National Guard takes part in Armed Forces Appreciation Day



Personnel from the Kansas National Guard participated in Kansas Armed Forces Appreciation Day at the Kansas Statehouse March 25. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Byers, Public Affairs Office)