



Holton bids
farewell to
Soldiers of
Battery A . . .2



Guardsmen
contend for
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1019

PLAINS GUARDIAN

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In their own words

KDEM, National Guard recount the “Battle of the Blaze”

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

When people think of emergencies in Kansas, floods and tornadoes may come to mind. However, that may be changing after a series of fires blackened more than 1,000 square miles of Northwest, Southwest and Central Kansas – all within a matter of 10 days in March.

Lives were at stake in the small communities that dot the map of America’s Heartland, and the first responders’ swift and calculated response was vital to protecting them.

An abundant growing season in 2016, followed by a dry winter, low relative humidity and high winds combined to form perfect conditions for a fast-moving, blistering fire. The numbers are staggering – one fatality, approximately 658,000 acres (roughly the size of Rhode Island) burned, thousands of livestock lost, and 40 homes destroyed. It’s the largest recorded fire event Kansas has ever seen.

The agencies of the Kansas Adjutant General’s Department, including the Kansas National Guard and Kansas Division of Emergency Management, partnered with numerous other local, state and federal agencies to safeguard the lives of Kansans and contain this conflagration.

Angee Morgan, deputy director, KDEM

“I’ve been in emergency management since 1987 and we’ve never had a day in Kansas when the threat of wildland fire was that great,” said Morgan.

FEMA granted a Fire Management Assistance Grant to the state of Kansas on March 6. The FMAG provides a 75 percent federal cost share while the state pays the remaining 25 percent of firefighting costs.



A Black Hawk helicopter from the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation drops water on one of the many wildfires that plagued the state in early March. The fires caused one death, destroyed 40 homes, killed thousands of livestock and left behind more than 650,000 acres of scorched farm and rangeland. (Photo by Eric Stites, Lacewing Photography)

“In our first phone call to FEMA, we had five fires that were not contained and were threatening cities that had evacuated,” said Morgan. “It’s extremely difficult to get the FMAG and we got it in record time. It was just unheard of.

“Our goal in emergency management is

to get the right resource to fit the need at the local level to protect lives, property and critical infrastructure.”

KDEM works closely with the Kansas National Guard under the Adjutant General’s Department umbrella, and it became apparent that the local fire responders

would need the aerial fire suppression help of the Kansas Army National Guard.

“The capability of fighting the fire from the air is critical because, as we saw in the Anderson Creek Fire in 2016, the terrain is different from other parts of the

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35th Division deploys for Operation Spartan Shield

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

The 35th Infantry Division will be chiseling out another chapter on the tablet of its rich, 100-year history this year, as the division deploys to Persian Gulf and the Levant Region in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

It’s the first time the 35th has mobilized its entire headquarters since World War II – 73 years ago.

This deployment is the culmination of nearly of year of strenuous preparation, and family and friends spent the afternoon of April 29 saying goodbye to their Soldiers during a deployment departure ceremony at Lansing High School in Lansing, Kansas.

“It’s hard work,” said Maj. Gen. Victor Braden, commanding general of the 35th. “We train like our lives depend on it. This is a great responsibility and it is taxing. But we have a responsibility that when the call to danger comes, we must be ready, and the 35th Infantry Division is ready.

“Our nation has called us to the ancient desert as a land force of strength,” said Braden. “It is a daunting challenge, but it is our heritage and our destiny to embrace the challenge and succeed in our mission.”

The division will be sending approximately 500 Soldiers to the Persian Gulf for nearly 10 months, where it will lead Sol-

diers from all Army components in the Central Command area of operations. In the short term, the Soldiers will be at Fort

Hood, Texas, conducting additional pre-mobilization training.

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Soldiers of the 35th Infantry Division stand at ease during their deployment ceremony April 29 at Lansing High School, Lansing, Kansas. The Soldiers will deploy to Southwest Asia and the Levant in support of Operation Spartan Shield. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

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Holton community turns out to say goodbye to their Soldiers

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

The high school gymnasium in Holton, Kansas, was packed the morning of April 14 as the community came together to bid farewell to Soldiers of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery as they prepared to deploy for a year-long mission to Kuwait.

“Your presence here today makes a very special occasion even more special,” said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. “What’s amazing to me is, as we look at the families, the friends and our community, that community is the special bond that the National Guard has.”

The battery will deploy to their mobilization station at Fort Bliss, Texas, for additional training before moving on to Kuwait in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

“I have every confidence that these Soldiers are... ready to perform the mission they’ve been asked to carry out in support of the defense of our great nation,” said Tafanelli. “They have taken all of their equipment and added sections from maintenance, logistics, communications, intel, as well as additional operational personnel, and have made one cohesive unit in nine months. They have done all of this while completing all the required mobilization and theater-specific training, continuing their field artillery core competencies and achieving section certification for 12 High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System crews, seven ammunition sections and five fire direction sections.”

Tafanelli thanked the Soldiers for their unyielding commitment to the state and nation.

“Your dedication and selfless service is the foundation of what makes our military the greatest military on the planet,” he said. “Thank you for your willingness to serve and your desire to make a difference. You represent the best of what our state and nation has to offer and each one of you is exceptional.”

Tafanelli also thanked the families and friends who came to honor their Soldiers. “The Kansas National Guard stands with you and is deeply invested in supporting you as you support your loved ones over



To the sound of thunderous applause from family and friends, Soldiers of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery file in to their seats for their April 14 deployment ceremony at Holton High School. The Guardsmen will deploy to Kuwait for a year-long mission in support of Operation Spartan Shield. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

this deployment,” said Tafanelli. “The strength of our military has been and will always be our people.”

In his remarks, Capt. Michael Sprigg, the battery commander, thanked the leadership of the Kansas National Guard for their confidence in him and the unit.

“Thank you for believing in us and our ability to accomplish the mission you have selected us for,” said Sprigg. “We appreciate the continued support we get from the battalion, brigade and the state. Without it, we would not have been as successful so far or had the smooth premobilization training we did.”

Sprigg said he was surprised by the community’s overwhelming turnout.

“Next time, we’re going to have to get a bigger gym, I think.”

Sprigg said that the unit’s mission is somewhat different than many of the Kansas Guard’s recent deployments.

“We’re sending field artillery soldiers downrange to do a field artillery mission,” Sprigg explained. “It’s a pretty big deal. It hasn’t happened in a very long time.”

“We’re pretty excited about this,” said Spc. Matthew Pyles. “We’re actually going over to do our job. We can’t wait. It is going to be a good deployment. We’re all pretty tight, we have a good group with us. We’ve got good leadership. We’re ready.”

Pyles said the mutual support the Soldiers give to each other will be key to their mission’s success.

“We’re responsible for each other. We watch each other’s back,” said Pyles. “That’s how we’re going to survive.”

Although Pyles has deployed before, he admitted it would be hard to leave his family for a year.

“But it’s something that we have to do. It’s our job,” he said, but added that serving in the military was something he had always wanted to do. “I’ve wanted to be in the military ever since I was young. My dad’s former military; so’s my step-father. I’ve got a lot of uncles that are former military, too. It’s a family tradition.

“I wouldn’t trade this for anything.”

73rd Civil Support Team passes recertification tests



Soldiers and Airmen of the Kansas National Guard’s 73rd Civil Support Team perform “man down” procedures as part of their Training Proficiency Evaluation recertification with Army North evaluators. The battle drill, conducted in Wichita, was intended to use and stress all critical team functions, including command and control, safety, communications, equipment functions and capabilities, hazardous material monitoring, hazardous material exposure, personnel decontamination and medical evacuation and treatment protocols. (Photos by Capt. Jason Davee, 73rd CST Unit Public Affairs Representative)

WOCS, NGAUS, and developing your career

By Chief Warrant Officer 5 Michael Smith
Command Chief Warrant Officer

The annual National Guard Association Conference was held April 28-30 in Wichita. Chief Warrant Officer 3 David Lockhart was recognized as the 2017 Warrant Officer of the Year. Lockhart entered the KSARNG in 2015 and is currently assigned as the WOCS course manager at the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment.



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Michael Smith

During the NGAUS Conference, attending warrant officers were given an opportunity to hear from Chief Warrant Officer 5 Richard Kunz, command chief warrant officer at Headquarters, Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, who spoke about changes within the warrant officer community, and warrant officer professional development and its curriculums and instruction.

A key discussion centered on recruiting talented Soldiers to become warrant officers. The warrant officer is one of the hardest positions to fill, primarily because of the amount of experience, technical expertise, and documented leadership that is required to even be able to apply for candidacy. Our goal is to identify those top-

performing noncommissioned officers within specific military occupational specialty and ask them to take a large step in their career to become a warrant officer. If you have recently thought about taking that next step, I strongly urge you to consider this opportunity.

With the arrival of spring came the start of the fiscal year 2017 State Warrant Officer Candidate School course in Salina. WOCS kicked off with a “Zero Phase” in March, which was designed to familiarize candidates with course expectations and information as they prepared to enter Phase II of training.

Phase II began on April 7 with nine candidates enrolled in the course. Once the candidates successfully complete Phase II, they will finish Phase III, the last portion of WOCS, at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Upon graduation of Phase III, candidates will be reintegrated into their units as the National Guard’s newest warrant officers.

Warrant officers need to understand the importance of Professional Military Education and need to make sure they stay on top of their future. If you are currently enrolled in a distance learning course and waiting to attend the residence course, I urge you complete the distance learning course as soon as you can. I’ve been receiving e-mails and phone calls from various school houses asking to see if any KSARNG Soldiers would be able to fill last-minute cancellations. By completing

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Kansas National Guard serves more than just our state

By Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli
The Adjutant General

Recently, Mother Nature has reminded Kansans of the need to be prepared for any type of disaster. We experienced blizzards, severe thunderstorms, flooding and fires, all in the last five months. During each of these events, the Soldiers and Airmen of the Kansas National Guard assisted in several different capacities, ensuring Kansans were safe. As I touched on this in my last article, this demonstrates how we, as Kansas National Guardsmen, are one team, many strengths. I couldn't be more proud of what they accomplished while they fulfilled what makes the National Guard unique, our state mission.

Just as we were prepared for our Kansas mission of storms, flooding and fires, several units of the Kansas National Guard are preparing to deploy all over the world to take on overseas missions.

Security for our military assets is an ongoing mission and Soldiers from the 35th Military



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli

I couldn't be more proud of what they accomplished while they fulfilled what makes the National Guard unique, our state mission.

tary Police Company have trained and are ready to answer our nation's call. I am confident that these Kansas Guardsmen will provide quality perimeter security in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The "King of Battle" has been called to support with Operation Spartan Shield. Battery A, 2-130 Field Artillery, along with other Soldiers and elements of the Kansas Army National Guard, will support regional partners with field artillery for operational missions, bilateral and multilateral military exercises, and theater security cooperation activities in Central Command.

The 35th Infantry Division held their deployment ceremony at Lansing High School as the headquarters deployed to the Persian Gulf and Levant regions. These Soldiers will be supporting Operation Spartan Shield to enhance the ongoing theatre security operations. The 35th Infantry Division had its origins during World War I and it is fitting that the United States recently



Gov. Sam Brownback addresses Soldiers of the 35th Military Police Company during their deployment ceremony March 18 at the Armed Forces Reserve Center, Topeka. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

marked the centennial of that war. Now, the 35th ID heads off to write another chapter in their honored history.

When a military member sustains injuries in a forward area or combat zone, getting them medical care within the "golden hour" is essential. Company G, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation will be providing that much needed medivac capability. Gov. Sam Brownback joined me and other Kansas National Guard leadership for Company G's recent deployment ceremony. It was a great opportunity for us to emphasize to the Soldiers and their families how important their mission is and how proud we are of them.

Just as important as getting medivac capabilities to the field, Kansas Air Guardsmen are providing fuel when and where it is most needed. The 190th Air Refueling Wing is providing fuel on both ends of the globe supporting Pacific Command and Central Command.

The 635th Regional Support Group will also be supporting continued operations

overseas. The Soldiers of the 635th have been preparing diligently for this deployment and I know we are sending our best to represent Kansas and the United States.

With adversaries constantly testing our cyber security, I am comforted by the fact that the 184th Intelligence Wing, Cyber Operations Group, is on duty to meet that threat. Kansas National Guard Airmen are currently conducting tailored defensive cyber operations for Air Force Cyber command.

These are just a few of the ways our Kansas Guardsmen are supporting not only our state mission, keeping Kansans safe, but also our federal missions overseas.

The strength of our military has been and will always be our people. I have had the opportunity to meet many of these Soldiers, Airmen and their families during their deployment ceremonies. I am proud to serve with each and every one of you, and thank you for your sacrifice. The Kansas National Guard stands with you and your family and is deeply invested in supporting you.



Report

Suspicious Activity



Indicators:

- People drawing or measuring important buildings.
- Strangers asking questions about security or building security procedures.
- Briefcase, suitcase, backpack, or package left behind.
- Cars or trucks left in No Parking zones in front of important buildings.
- Intruders in secure areas where they are not supposed to be.
- A person wearing clothes that are too big and too hot for the weather.
- Chemical smells or fumes that worry you.
- People asking questions about sensitive information such as building blueprints, security plans, or VIP travel schedules without a right or need to know.
- Purchasing supplies or equipment that can be used to make bombs or weapons or purchasing uniforms without having the proper credentials

Also Report Situations Where:

- Individuals have isolated themselves or are emotionally withdrawn from friends/community
- Individuals are absent from the workplace for seemingly no reason
- Individuals with apparent grievances

Primary Reporting Methods

- Law enforcement official or agency
- Security force or guard members

Alternative Reporting Methods

- DA Civilians/Soldiers: your chain of command
- Spouses: your military member/FRG Leader
- Children: your parents or teachers
- Contractors: contract agency or COTR

What to Report

• When did suspicious activity occur	• What type of activity
• Where did activity occur	• Describe what you saw
• How many people involved	• Provide pictures if you took any
• How many vehicles involved	

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Organized team or lone wolf, foreign or home-grown, targeting many places or just one, using available technology or weapons made with their own hands—the fluid, obscure nature of the terrorist threat demands that we know what to look for and where to look. Familiarize yourself with indicators of suspicious activity and be ready to report such activity to proper authorities.



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Warrior to Warrior Volunteering: An investment in our organization's future

By Chief Master Sgt. James L. Brown
Command Senior Enlisted Leader

As part of supporting the adjutant general's priorities, this office is heavily invested in building partnerships within local communities around the state. Reaching out and finding ways to add value to the communities in which we serve will help tell our story and raise awareness of the Kansas National Guard.



Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown

One of the focal points and opportunities that we have in strengthening our ties to the community is within youth organizations. Our enlisted members have the capabilities to provide a positive influence and make a difference in the youth of our communities. Our youth represent the future. They are who we will rely on in order to carry our organization forward.

Today's youth have a real-world need for mentors and role models. The Kansas National Guard possesses the exact type of individuals that can fulfill that need. We owe it to future generations and communities to start making a difference today.

Where would some of us be if we weren't able to find direction and guid-

ance when we were growing up? A majority of us were lucky to find purpose and guidance that we so desperately needed upon making the decision to join the military. The military has provided us with tremendous opportunity. To ensure those same opportunities are available for others, it's important to communicate what it is that the Kansas National Guard can provide.

Volunteering is a selfless act and something we value within our ranks. Working and assisting those in need throughout our community should not be viewed as an obligation, but as a tremendous opportunity. We have the ability to positively contribute to those around us.

Multiple partnerships around the state have already provided a benefit for all parties involved. I have no doubt that building partnerships with today's youth will be another step in the right direction as we continue to strengthen our organization.

Currently, we are working with the Boys and Girls Club and Big Brothers and Big Sisters. There are additional plans to support the OK Program and the Special Olympics.

We are looking for Soldiers and Airmen who want to get involved and make a difference in their communities. If you would like more information about the programs or to discuss ways in which you can help, please email Sgt. 1st Class "Chip" Cunningham at Charles.a.cunningham.mil@mail.mil.

Disaster leads to civilian career



SPC. Justin Boswell’s daily routine in his civilian career as a wind turbine technician affords him a bird’s-eye view of the Kansas countryside. (Photo provided)

By 2nd Lt. Blake Stokes, Joint Forces Headquarters; SPC. Chase Owen, Det. 1, 99th Maintenance Company; and Pv2 Victoria Williams, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Ten years ago, SPC. Justin Boswell almost lost his life. On May 4, 2007, Boswell and his family crouched in their neighbor’s basement and prayed as a mile-wide tornado went through Greensburg, Kansas. He recalls the event as sounding like a terrifying train roaring over his head. As part of the town’s recovery program, Greensburg worked toward becoming a green community, using solar panels, recycling, and other eco-friendly measures. Wind farms became staples around his home town. One day, while building fence in the country, Boswell saw a wind turbine farm and was instantly intrigued. Using the education benefits he receives as a member of the Kansas National Guard, Boswell attended Vatterott College in Wichita to pursue a vocation as a wind technician. Upon graduation, he received a job with a company whose operations include wind turbines. “I conduct maintenance and trouble shoot any issues on the turbines,” Boswell

explained. Although dealing with 300-foot heights and 32,000 volts of electricity are just part of the job. Boswell mitigates the risks by observing numerous safety precautions. One of these precautions is the inspection of watch where he conducts a 360-degree walk around of the turbine location, looking for any problems Boswell said that during the inspections he makes note of any birds or animals killed by the turbines. His company studies migration patterns of birds, such as the endangered whooping crane, and uses the data to better avoid injuring animals. “We would rather take a hit on our site being down to avoid harming these animals, than to keep the turbines operating,” said Boswell. Boswell said his military background actually helped him land his current job, adding that the company is very military friendly and enthusiastic about hiring military personnel. As with the Guard, the company values their employees’ well-being by providing equipment such as safety rescue kits to help protect their employees and help them do their job safely. “Safety is the most important thing, not only as a soldier, but as a wind technician in my civilian life.”

Kansas Guardsman enjoys high speed “me” time

By Sgt. Thomas Bane, Sgt. David Crawford and SPC. Kayleigh Schneider He grips the steering wheel until knuckles turn white. The sharp odor of gasoline and rubber fills the air. G-forces whip his body from side to side, his heart fires as fast as the pistons in his engine -- and a smile stretches from ear to ear. SPC. Steve Baumann, a small arms and artillery repairman in the Kansas National Guard, loves driving his race car. Baumann’s love for the sport began when he picked up a flier for a racing event at the Fort Riley airfield in 2012. “It was a thrill,” said Baumann “but I was not as good of a driver as I thought.

He had to learn racing wasn’t only about speed, but also driving technique.” “Thankfully, they have a practice day before each race where instructors can ride along with drivers and offer helpful advice for the aspiring race car drivers.” Baumann has participated in 12 races over the past four years using his personal vehicle, a 1997 Mazda Miata. Because he has to do the mechanical work on his car himself, Baumann attained the certifications needed to work on cars as a profession, which tied into his job at the time as an Army wheeled mechanic. Baumann said racing, for him, is not just

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The stories on this page were written by students of the Unit Public Affairs Representative course conducted by the Public Affairs Office March 5-6 at the Regional Training Institute in Salina. Course participants learned about writing, photography techniques and other skills that will help them tell the stories of their unit and the Kansas National Guard.

Soldier climbs the mountain of total personal fitness

By Maj. Arthur Grover, Kansas Civil Air Patrol Smoky Hill Squadron; 2nd Lt. Megan Reed, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment; and Sgt. Tracy Marble, Regional Training Site Maintenance

SPC. Meaghan Purdy felt she had officially reached rock bottom. “I did not have the motivation to work out,” said Purdy, a medic with the Kansas National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation. “I had gotten to the point where I gained 70 pounds -- I was out of shape.” In August 2015, Purdy, weighing 212 pounds, started her weight-loss journey with daily workouts out at the gym. “Someone introduced me to CrossFit,” said Purdy. CrossFit is a branded exercise program that incorporates exercises from interval training, weightlifting, jump training, powerlifting, gymnastics and other fitness regimens. “I was so against it; everyone hurts themselves doing CrossFit and that’s all you ever hear about it.” It didn’t take long for Purdy to change her mind. “I fell in love with it. That was really just how I got into it.” One year and many painful, sweat-filled sessions later, Purdy had completely changed the course of her life and improved herself in more than one way. “Since I started my weight-loss and CrossFit, I’ve definitely put on muscle mass, dropped body fat percentage, and I

am currently at 145 pounds and I just feel more confident as a person,” said Purdy.” I find I have more drive, I want to do better and be the best athlete I can be. “Before, I was running a 30-minute, two-mile APFT test; I couldn’t do a single push-up. At my most recent APFT, I have maxed my pushups and sit-ups and dropped more than 13 minutes off my run time.” Today, Purdy believes that because of CrossFit she is better in her professional life. “As a Soldier, CrossFit has kept me more physically fit and improved my APFT dramatically. I know it will only continue with that,” said Purdy. “It’s allowing me to spread awareness that Soldiers can find outlets other than the typical three events to gauge a Soldier’s toughness. “I also help other Soldiers by conducting 60-day weight-loss challenges on proper nutrient and foundations on proper exercise. There are so many other ways out there, and if they found their niche, working out would be fun. It’s helping me want to help people.” CrossFit is also helping in developing Purdy’s personal life. “I’m about to get my personal training and nutritional certification,” said Purdy. “I got my life-coaching certification. And, yes, I definitely want to get my level-1 certification in CrossFit.” Purdy gently folded her hands on the table and smiled. “I’m at that point in my life where CrossFit makes me want to be better every day and I hope that my journey helps others.”



SPC. Meaghan Purdy, a medic with the Kansas National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation, has invested countless hours of sweat and aches over the past two years transforming herself from an overweight, out-of-shape young woman into one who is fit and nearly 70 pounds lighter. (Photo provided)

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Commander-in-Chief Gov. Sam Brownback	Public Affairs Office Director Catherine Horner	785-646-1192
Adjutant General of Kansas Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli	Deputy Director - Administrative Jane Welch	785-646-1190
Editor Catherine Horner	FAX e-mail: jane.e.welch1.nfg@mail.mil	785-646-1622
Production/Graphics/Writer Stephen D. Larson Sgt. Zach Sheely	Deputy Director - Communications Capt. Matt Lucht	785-646-1195
Production Assistant Jane Welch	Chief Editor and Writer Stephen D. Larson	785-646-1194
	Multimedia Specialist Sgt. Zach Sheely	785-646-1191
	Command Historian Master Sgt. Jeremy Byers	785-646-1197

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Ten years later: Remembering the Greensburg tornado

By Jeff Guy
Dodge City Globe, used by permission

On the evening of May 4, 2007, then Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius was with her family at a jazz festival in Louisiana. She started getting calls saying a possible storm might hit in the region that included Kiowa County. And it would be bad, the callers said. Later, she heard a tornado had devastated the city of Greensburg.

“I think, like most people, I was pretty stunned when I began to understand the magnitude of the storm,” Sebelius said in a phone interview. Randy Mettner, who at the time was the executive officer for state Adjutant General Tod Bunting, was camped out with his wife in Council Grove that night. Suddenly his Blackberry “was white hot.” It was Sebelius telling him there had been a tornado in Greensburg and he needed to “get down there,” Mettner recalled.

Bunting, who as adjutant general was also director of emergency management and homeland security in the state, received a call from Southwest Kansas Security Coordinator Matt Mercer, saying, “This town is gone. Send everything and everybody.” Almost immediately after the tornado hit, emergency management, police, sheriff’s departments, the Kansas Highway Patrol arrived on the scene.

“Any discipline that was part of lifesaving was there that first day,” Bunting said. “Kansas all became Kiowa Countians on the spot. People came there throughout the night to help with search and recovery.” Joan Wagnon, then Kansas secretary of revenue, saw the devastation on the 10 o’clock news and called her friend Dennis McKinney of Greensburg, who then served as a state representative. She actually made contact with him. McKinney was anxious to let people know he and his family were okay, Wagnon said.

At sunrise the next morning, a Saturday, Bunting was flying from Topeka to Greensburg in a Black Hawk helicopter. Sharon Watson, public information officer for the adjutant general’s office, and Steve Harsha, director of public assistance for Kansas, were also on the flight. Sebelius also arrived in Greensburg. “This was a massive tornado,” she said. “It wiped out the whole town. I’d seen tornadoes before. I had never seen anything like Greensburg.”

“It was the most devastating thing I’d ever seen in terms of that much loss in one location,” said Watson. “As far as the eye could see, there wasn’t a house or tree in its normal state. It was difficult to tell where you were because there were no landmarks or signs. It was very eerie.” “The damages were horrific,” said Wagnon. “When I went out and saw the destruction, I thought, ‘My word, I can’t believe anybody survived.’”

Angee Morgan, then state coordinating officer, oversaw state response and recovery efforts. She coordinated volunteer, state and federal agencies to get resources into the community. She had worked the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center and been deployed to hurricanes in Florida. “There is something unique about each disaster I have worked, but the thing about Greensburg was I had never worked a disaster where there was virtually nothing left,” Morgan said in an email. “No phones, no businesses, no power, no water, no schools — nothing.”



Devastation as far as the eye can see was the scene in Greensburg, Kansas, after an EF5 tornado struck the town May 4, 2007. (Photo by Sharon Watson)

Sebelius arrived that morning and met with McKinney. “Dennis, who in spite of the fact that he’d lived there all his life, was so disoriented because of the lack of landmarks,” Sebelius said. “It was impossible to tell where the streets and houses were.” Sebelius appointed Steve Weatherford, then head of the Kansas Development and Finance Authority, to coordinate the state and federal response and to work with the Congressional delegation. Weatherford had also been regional director of Housing and Urban Development under President Bill Clinton.

“He was from Liberal and western Kansas,” Sebelius said. “We wanted someone who was very familiar with western Kansas and knew a lot about state and federal government. He knew where to get federal funds. People knew him, liked him and trusted him.”

Relief

The gymnasium at Barclay College in Haviland was set up with FEMA and other federal government agencies on one side and state agencies on the other side. Every state agency was represented. Wagnon introduced Mettner to Carmen Alldritt, then director of the vehicle division of the state Department of Revenue. Mettner made Alldritt his assistant in coordinating the Disaster Recovery Center. Alldritt recalled that the Haviland Telephone Company set up what they called a “T1 line” in the gymnasium to enable all the phones and technological equipment to be hooked up. “Without them, nothing would’ve happened,” Alldritt said. “No one would’ve had any communication without them.” Alldritt recalled that people from the federal agencies needed phone books. She told people from the phone company she needed 75 phone books. Within the hour, people from the phone company came in carrying laundry

baskets full of phone books. “They made the magic happen,” Alldritt said. Hundreds of people came through, needing help. They needed things like a copy of their driver’s licenses, titles for their vehicles, birth certificates, copies of personal tax records and more. “Some folks literally lost everything,” said Alldritt. “They were really in a pinch. We were there to help folks however we could.” Bunting had high praise for Alldritt. “You talk about someone who helped with paperwork and getting people back to their lives. She was a superstar.” Mettner said his “favorite Carmen story” is of a man in his 70s who arrived at the DRC with his daughter in a pickup truck. The man said, “I’m just too beat to get out of my truck.” Carmen said, “You know, we have a lot of curbside service.”

On another occasion, Mettner recalled, a woman wearing a cowboy hat had lost livestock in the tornado. She was angry because she could not get help from FEMA, and she was yelling at Alldritt, who just listened. The woman then broke into tears and they embraced. “After she vented and got it back together, she did well,” Mettner said. Later, the Department of Agriculture helped the woman. Many faith-based organizations, such as Mennonites, the Salvation Army, Baptists and even Scientologists were on hand. Mettner remembers a group from a Baptist church that came in from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. “I tried to give them some money,” Mettner said. “They wouldn’t take it. And they fed us — my heavens.” One day, a famous Scientologist and actress offered to help the relief effort. Alldritt got a call from a childhood friend — actress Kirstie Alley — asking how she could

(Continued on Page 9)

Family and friends give aviation Soldiers a warm send off



Capt. Andrew Webster, commander of Company G, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation, accepts a Kansas flag from Gov. Sam Brownback. The flag, which had flown over the Kansas statehouse, will go with the unit on its deployment to the Middle East in support of Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

Family, friends, and colleagues gathered at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Topeka April 21 to honor Soldiers of Company G, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation, Kansas National Guard. The Topeka-based helicopter unit is deploying in support of Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve, the U.S. military intervention against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Their primary mission will be aeromedical evacuation. “For those who may not know how important this mission is,” said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, Kansas adjutant general, “they are integral to what we call that golden hour when an individual may be wounded on a battlefield. “I have every confidence that these Soldiers are trained and ready to support the mission that they are being asked to carry out in support of the defense of our great nation.” Tafanelli said that this is the fifth overseas deployment of Kansas Army National Guard aeromedical evacuation aviation assets since

Sept. 11, 2001. Company G is the third of several units deploying in 2017. “Everyone is seeing an increase in operational tempo, and we’re feeling it here in Kansas,” said Kansas Governor Sam Brownback. “We’re seeing a more aggressive stance by the administration. Generally, things around the world are more stable when the United States takes a military stance. “The number of people that we’ve had wounded and then been saved has grown substantially because of what you do. I continue to constantly be in awe of the people who willingly sign up and be selfless and courageous in such a way.” Brownback presented an official Kansas state flag from Kris W. Kobach, Secretary of State of Kansas, to Capt. Andrew Webster, the commander of Company G, in support of the unit’s mission. “I especially want to thank the families that are here today,” said Webster. “I think too often we forget about the dedication and unhesitating service that our families provide to us while we’re gone. I hope you can find solace in the fact that the Soldiers’ mission in formation today is to save lives.”

Soldiers, Airmen contend for Best Warrior title

By Master Sgt. Matt McCoy
184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs
Airmen assigned to the 284th Air Support Operations Squadron competed with Soldiers from across the state in the Kansas National Guard’s Best Warrior Competition at the Great Plains Joint Training Center near Salina, March 10-12.

Airman 1st Class Broderic Peddicord and Staff Sgt. Jacob Mattern, both joint terminal attack controllers, 284th ASOS, took first place in the Soldier category and second place in the noncommissioned officer category, respectively.

The three-day competition included mostly field events, such as an Army physical fitness test, daytime and nighttime land navigation and weaponry tests. The tasks were centered on skills and knowledge used by Soldiers on the battlefield.

Though the Airmen stuck out a little, they stayed focused on the mission at hand. “We got a lot of interesting looks just based on what we’re wearing,”said Peddicord, “but it’s good to come show off our squadron and show what we can do.”

The Kansas weather added interesting twists to the event, especially with a snowstorm that occurred during a weaponry skills course. The course required contest-

ants to hike a few miles while stopping at scattered stations to disassemble, reassemble and troubleshoot various weapons. Just as the event kicked off, a winter storm blew in. However, it didn’t seem to affect the performance of the contestants. “My fingers were cold but it didn’t make me fail any tasks,” said Peddicord.

The games provided opportunities for the Airmen to bond with the Soldiers they could possibly deploy with at any time in the future.

“We support the Army, so it’s good to let them know what we do and what our capabilities are,” said Peddicord. “So if we do work with them down range in the future, they’ve already worked with us and we already have that mutual respect.”

In all, there were 13 competitors representing the Air and Army Guard. Cpl. Ryan Marsh, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, won the noncommissioned officer category. Spc. Zachary Seyferth-Davis, 169th Combat Sustainment Battalion, placed second in the Soldier category. Seyferth-Davis went on to compete in the Region V Best Warrior Competition in Pineville, Louisiana, May 23-26, along with Sgt. Matthew James Gillet, 242nd Engineering Company



Airman 1st Class Broderic Peddicord, joint terminal attack controller, 284th Air Support Operations Squadron, participates in the Kansas National Guard’s Best Warrior Competition, March 11. As part of the competition, Peddicord was required to disassemble and reassemble various weapons, and check them for malfunctions as quickly as possible. (Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th IW Public Affairs)

134th Air Control Squadron supports Jaded Thunder

By Master Sgt. Matt McCoy
184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs
The 134th Air Control Squadron, 184th Intelligence Wing, Wichita, deployed personnel and equipment to Salina Regional Airport in February to support air operations for the annual Jaded Thunder exercise.

Jaded Thunder is an interoperability and integration exercise that brings together special operations forces and conventional forces from all services, active duty, Guard and Reserve, to train in a setting similar to a combat environment. The exercise took place at the Smoky Hill Weapons Range near Salina, which provides 34,000 acres for aerial, ground and urban combat training.

The 134th ACS divided into two entities during the exercise -- a radar communications package at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, and a deployed air battle execution package at Salina Regional Airport. “Our main part is to link back to McConnell, where we’re considered the deployed radar,” said Staff Sgt. Brock Vizner, data maintenance specialist, 134th ACS. “We push information and links that connect the aircraft to [other] equipment which then sends it out to a satellite and back down to the distant end.”

The information at the distant end allowed operators, who communicate directly with aircrew, to direct traffic between various airplanes and helicopters.

Jaded Thunder closely resembled combat experience for the 134th ACS. The squadron provided the same services for the exercise as they did while deployed overseas just one year ago.

“We had eight different locations, and throughout the entire area of responsibility, we got planes where they needed to go,” said Vizner. “If they don’t have radar in certain places, or don’t have our radio communications, then the airplanes are flying blind and the operators can’t help them.”

The exercise also provided other learning opportunities. Drill-status Guardsmen, the part-time force that makes up the bulk of the Air National Guard, used the exercise to gain experience in leadership, job knowledge and project management.

“It’s definitely helping me with my communications skills,” said Staff Sgt. Chance Presson, radio frequency transmission specialist, 134th ACS.

Presson, now in his seventh year as an Air Guardsman, said Jaded Thunder helped him see how doing his military job affects the overall mission; something that could be easy to lose sight of as a part-time Guardsman.

“Seeing the bigger picture and setting up like this definitely helped me in knowing that what I do here will help warfighters accomplish the mission down the road,” said Presson.

184th Intelligence Wing hosts annual NGAUS conference

By Capt. Matt Lucht
184th IW Public Affairs
With the banging of a gavel, Maj. Jason Inskeep, president of the National Guard Association of Kansas, officially opened the 2017 Joint Conference. This year’s conference was hosted April 29 and 30 by the 184th Intelligence Wing with the theme of building partnerships for our future.

“It is truly a joint conference to allow all of these associations [National Guard Association of Kansas, Enlisted Association of National Guard of Kansas and Kansas National Guard Family Programs] to put on a quality event for its members, who are all members of the Guard, and families,” said Inskeep. “It is a time to come together and network with peers, get some professional development and participate in social activities.”

Planning a large scale joint conference doesn’t happen overnight, but Capt. Keith Marshall, chairman of the 2017 Joint Conference committee, started organizing months in advance with the help of approximately 70 members meeting at least monthly. Each host unit tries to make the conference experience better than the previous year. New this year was the awarding of the President’s Cup.

“We wanted to bring in some fun and competition into it and build some esprit decor,” said Marshall. “In the military, we

are all competitive, so this year we introduced the President’s Cup. So all throughout the weekend, people who attended or participated in events score points for their units. At the banquet, we award the top overall unit for the conference.”

Even though the conference business sessions were focused around military subjects, organizers also wanted to include families. Spouses and children were welcomed to participate in several activities such as a 5K fun run, zoo visit, spouse spa day and the awards banquet.

“I don’t think that we can be successful in our military career without our families,” said Col. David Weishaar, 184th Intelligence Wing commander. “The partnership starts at home and if you don’t have a great partnership there, in my mind, you won’t be successful.”

As the gavel struck to close the 2017 Joint Conference, Weishaar acknowledged the amount of work it took to host the event, but was happy to see all the participants come and enjoy their time in Wichita.

“I feel very fortunate to be the wing commander and this conference is tremendous amount of work,” said Weishaar. “People spend a lot of personal time putting this together and there is no way that I can thank them enough for what they have done. I think they will made us, the 184th, and the city of Wichita look great.”



Staff Sgt. Chance Presson, radio frequency specialist, and Staff Sgt. Brock Vizner, data maintenance specialist, 134th Air Control Squadron, check communications equipment during joint exercise Jaded Thunder at Salina Regional Airport, Feb. 21. (Photo by Senior Airman Lauren Penney, 184th IW Public Affairs)

35th Division deployment

(Continued from Page 1)
“The Soldiers of the 35th have worked tirelessly over the last several months to build your individual and collective readiness,” said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafari, Kansas adjutant general. “It is without question that several months, years and decades from now, we will look back on the investment that the Soldiers before you have made and will continue to make over the next several months.” Maj. Gen. Stephen L. Danner, adjutant general of the Missouri National Guard, said this is a unique opportunity for the National Guard to showcase its capabilities. “Soldiers of the 35th, today and for the next year, the eyes of the Army and the nation will be on you,” said Danner. “The Santa Fe Division is charting a new

course for the National Guard. You are the first National Guard division to be ordered to a full deployment as a division headquarters in support of Operation Spartan Shield. “Your mission is a ‘no fail’ mission.” Tafari acknowledged and thanked the Soldiers’ families for their sacrifice in his remarks. “For the last 100 years,” said Tafari, “the Santa Fe Division has set the standard for the Soldiers of our states and across the nation, but we could not do it without our families, friends or supporters here today. “The Kansas and Missouri National Guard(s) stands with you, and is deeply invested in supporting you. The strength of our military has been and will always be our people.”

Army, Air Guard dentists team up to get the job done

By 2nd Lt. Ryan Smith
Kansas Medical Detachment UPAR

In early November 2016, a joint effort between the Kansas Army and Air National

Guard marked the beginning of a future that seeks to create more effective, efficient, and cost-effective medical care for Soldiers and Airmen.



Maj. Bryan Shewanik, a dentist with the Kansas Army National Guard Medical Detachment, examines the teeth of a Kansas Army National Guardsman. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Ryan Smith, Kansas Medical Detachment UPAR)

Soldiers learn lifesaving skills at ACLS course

By 2nd Lt. Ryan Smith
Medical Detachment UPAR

During annual training, Soldiers of the Kansas Army National Guard’s Medical Detachment spent some time learning a new set of skills, skills that could spell the difference between life and death for the people they may have to treat.

Over the span of two days in June 2016, the Soldiers took part in an Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support course, learning how to diagnose and treat someone experiencing cardiac arrest.

“It gave me the opportunity to refresh my own skills as an ACLS instructor,” said Maj. Judee Herring, one of the instructors and organizers of the course. “I think it is always important to teach others and this was an opportunity to share knowledge I had gained through my experiences as a nurse and a nurse practitioner.”

In addition to Herring, course organizers included Staff Sgt. Clinton Mumbower, Staff Sgt. Daniel Buck, and Sgt. 1st Class

Vernon Perkins Jr., 2nd Battalion, 235th Regiment. Additional instruction was provided by the independent contractor, Lifeteam.

Instruction included interpreting electrocardiograms and basic life support methods such as CPR and the use of Automatic External Defibrillator. From there, the coursework progressed to more advanced techniques, such as use of oral and nasal airway devices, waveform capnography, water-soluble lubricants, and one-way valves.

As a recently graduated nurse practitioner, Herring appreciated the opportunity to provide training to other Soldiers of the unit.

“The ACLS course provided Soldiers the chance to receive quality training, which they may not have had the opportunity for in the civilian world. They can take this training into their civilian jobs and be better prepared to serve the patients they see. It also gave a few medics exposure to more advanced training than what they had experienced prior.”



Using a practice mannequin, Staff Sgt. David Owen instructs Soldiers of the Kansas National Guard Medical Detachment on endotracheal intubation. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Ryan Smith, Medical Detachment UPAR)

The collaborative effort was the result of the endeavors of the Medical Working Group formed by Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, and led by Lt. Col. Lee Norman, Kansas Army National Guard state surgeon and Col. Greg Kahrs, state surgeon for the Kansas Air National Guard. The working group included the commanders of the Air and Army Medical Detachments and key leaders in the Air and Army National Guard medical community.

In November 2016, Maj. Bryan Shewanick, a dentist with the Kansas Army National Guard Medical Detachment, was assigned to help support the physical assessments mission of the 190th Air Refueling Wing at Forbes Field, Topeka. This was the first planned mutual support mission between the Kansas Army and Air National Guard medical detachments.

After a tour of the 190th’s dental facilities and completion of several online training courses, Shewanick worked alongside Maj. Jeff Larkin, the 190th ARW dentist.

“I did not realize the Kansas Air Guardsmen were required to turn in a dental exam form from their dentist to remain in the Kansas Air Guard,” said Shewanick. “The Kansas Army National Guard does not have this requirement.

“I was surprised at how many Airmen had excellent dental health. At a recent Army PHA, the unit I assessed had only 25 percent class I (with no problems) and 25 percent class III (requiring dental treatment to be mission-capable.)”

Following a recent Army Physical Health Assessment mission, Shewanick estimated

the Kansas Army National Guard spent enough money on dental treatments to pay the monthly Tricare Reserve Dental premium for all Kansas Guardsmen.

“I would like to see what we can do to

...Shewanick estimated the Kansas Army National Guard spent enough money on dental treatments to pay the monthly Tricare Reserve Dental premium for all Kansas Guardsmen.

help improve the dental health of our Army National Guard Soldiers,” said Shewanick. “We would save a lot of time and money if Soldiers brushed and flossed their teeth.”

“Our (Army) PHA dental examinations often take longer as it takes time to document 15 cavities, or to scale thick plaque off teeth in order to exam them, not to mention the additional time spent counseling Soldiers,” said Maj. Robert Colt, a Kansas National Guard dentist.

“All too often we see Soldiers who we identify as dental class II who ignore the problem and do not seek dental care,” said Capt. Josh Davis, another Army dentist. “At their next PHA, they end up being dental class 3 and require more significant and invasive dental treatment.”

“We require our Soldiers to shave to maintain their facial hair,” noted Davis. “Perhaps we should require them to brush and floss their teeth.”

Training gets real-world test



Col. Robert Thompson had just finished the Lenexa Freedom Run in June 2016 when he had to put his recent medical training to use. (Photo provided)

By 2nd Lt. Ryan Smith
Medical Detachment UPAR

Although there’s a lot to be said for being in the right place at the right time, having the knowledge and skills you need at that moment are also important. Col. Robert Thompson had just crossed the finish line of the Lenexa Freedom Run in June 2016, when his moment came.

“My wife, Margaret, had just finished and joined me with the kids when someone shouted ‘Medic! Medic! Medic!’” said Thompson, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard’s Medical Detachment out of Lenexa.

About 15 yards past the finish line, another participant had collapsed and was laying on the ground, face down on one side and unmoving. Thompson rushed to the man’s side and was joined by off-duty firefighter and a nurse.

“We carefully rolled the victim onto his back,” said Thompson. “The lips were turning purple and the face had an ashen gray appearance. I checked for a pulse and observed the face and chest for breathing. I could not feel a pulse.”

Fortunately, Thompson had recently completed a two-day Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support course during his annual training. The course, facilitated by the Medical Detachment, taught participants how to accurately assess a patient in cardiac arrest and administer basic life support methods, including the use of CPR and auto defibrillation equipment.

“No pulse, start CPR,” I said,” Thompson recalled. “He did not appear to be breathing, but had some occasional agonal breathing efforts.”

While the off-duty firefighter followed Thompson’s instruction and began performing CPR, the nurse asked someone to call 911; Lenexa paramedics stationed in an ambulance 40 yards from the finish line were on their way.

The victim was defibrillated and oxygen was administered. Once stabilized, he was transported to a local emergency room, where he later died.

“Unfortunately, CPR survival rates are low, particularly for older individuals such as this person, who had prior
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Grassfires burn more than 650,000 acres across the state

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state,” said Morgan. “You cannot get fire trucks into some of these areas. There are no road systems in place. There are deep canyons. The ability of being able to attack from the air is vital.”

Morgan said that the communication between the civilian agencies and the Kansas Guard was seamless.

“The interaction goes very well because we work together daily,” she said. “It’s really important to have pre-disaster relationships established so we understand each other’s capabilities.”

Maj. Ryan Bernard, commander, Army Aviation Support Facility #2, Salina

“We tried to get an aircraft out the door as quickly as possible based on the request from KDEM to be available,” said Bernard.

At approximately 2 a.m. on March 6, Bernard received notification that UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters with accompanying Soldiers and Bambi buckets were needed to assist with fire suppression in Rooks County in Southwest Kansas.

Bernard, as with many Kansas National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, serves in multiple roles. He is the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment logistics officer, an experienced UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot, and the commander of Army Aviation Support Facility #2.

“At four o’clock in the morning,” said Bernard, “I notified the operations officer to start the alert roster and to give (the Soldiers) a 5 a.m. show time. Going into it, you have no idea how long the mission may last, so you have to pack a minimum of a three-day go bag.”

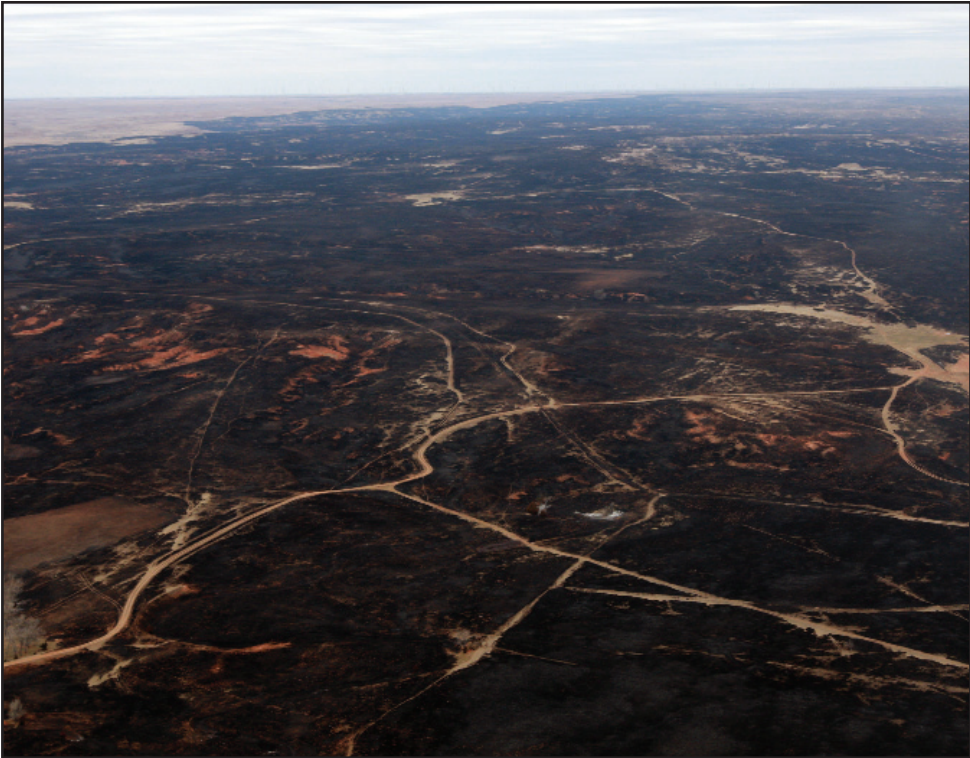
Initially, Bernard was the pilot in command of the lead aircraft from AASF #2 and remained the officer in charge of the fire suppression mission throughout its duration. The mission began with two Black Hawks on March 6, then grew to four with the addition of two additional birds out of Aviation Facility #1 in Topeka, to seven total aircraft by March 8, all equipped with Bambi buckets.

Bernard said the view from the air was unlike anything he had ever seen.

“Seeing the amount of land that burned from the air took my breath away,” said Bernard. “There were some areas where the landscape was black as far as the eye could see.”

Bernard said the Soldiers’ mission was to contain the fire and protect property.

Each Black Hawk is piloted by two Soldiers and there are two crew chiefs in the rear of the aircraft. For fire suppression missions, the helicopter uses a large bucket to dip water from a predetermined source, then



Dry conditions and high winds contributed to numerous wildfires that swept across multiple Kansas counties in March. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

haul the water to dump it where it is needed most. The Bambi bucket is affixed by a 30-foot line on the underside of the airframe and can hold up to 660 gallons of water.

The aviators of the Kansas Army National Guard gained valuable experience in aerial fire suppression during the Anderson Creek Fire of 2016 and this year, which Bernard said adds to their capability and readiness.

“From the time before Anderson Creek to now,” said Bernard, “we have a lot better idea of what we’re capable of in an emergency response. We’ve learned a great deal about ourselves and our readiness.”

The regiment fielded new UH-60M model Black Hawks in early 2016. The pilots – who often have civilian careers – have also had to train to fly the new models. National Guard helicopter pilots are required to fly a minimum of 96 hours per year, the same as their active-duty counterparts.

“We are blessed in Kansas to have the most competent, proficient and flexible aviators in the country,” said Bernard. “I truly believe that.”

Capt. Casey Atkins, operations officer, AASF #2, pilot in command of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter

“It’s special,” said Atkins, an experienced medevac and assault UH-60 helicopter pilot. “Being an aviator, you don’t get a lot of interaction with the people you’re helping, but being down in those communities and seeing their gratitude makes you feel like you are making a difference.

“That’s what you signed up to do, to be able to help people that are in need. It’s

very rewarding.”

Atkins also flew aerial fire suppression missions during the Anderson Creek Fire in Barber County, which, until this year’s blaze, was the largest in recorded Kansas history. He said teamwork is paramount when coordinating response to an emergency of this magnitude.

“It’s pretty spectacular watching the agencies from all the different backgrounds and training come together, with no previous experience working together, to determine the best course of action,” Atkins said. “The guys on the ground are the experts. They’re the ones who know what they need done.”

Along with the Kansas National Guard Soldiers, there were civilian-operated fixed-wing aircraft and three CH-47 Chinook helicopters from the 11th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, U.S. Army Reserve Aviation Command, Gardner, Kansas, assisting with aerial fire suppression.

It was the first-ever domestic air mission for the U.S. Army Reserve under the Immediate Response Authority, which authorizes local Army Reserve commanders, at the request of a local civil authority, to take action to save lives, prevent human suffering or mitigate great property damage in a situation of urgency.

The Chinook is a twin-rotor helicopter that can lift heavier loads than a Black Hawk, and can utilize a larger 2,000 gallon Bambi bucket. The pairing of USAR and KSNG aviation assets was a first for the state of Kansas in an emergency response.

“We actually teamed up a Chinook and a Black Hawk together, which gives you 2,660 gallons of water,” said Atkins. “The guys from the USAR were excellent and worked with us great. They were just like we were, ready to do whatever it took to get the situation under control. It was a complete team effort.”

Atkins also credits his fellow Kansas Guard pilots and crewmembers for their professionalism and resilience.

“It’s a testament to the type of people who are in the Kansas Guard,” he said. “They’re willing to give up their time to go on state active duty in a moment’s notice, no questions asked. It shows the type of character and the type of people we employ here at the facility, as well as the Kansas National Guard.

“It’s a privilege to work with people like that.”

Spc. Orin Meyer, UH-60 Black Hawk crew chief, Company A, 1-108th Aviation, Topeka

“I was glad to be able to do my job,” said Meyer. “It’s an incredible experience. I was happy to be a part of that.”

Meyer, who works on reconstructing bridges in Wichita, has served in the Guard for more than two years. This was his first real-world experience as a crew chief.

“I wasn’t nervous, I was excited,” said Meyer. “We train a lot and I have trust in my pilots. They have the utmost level of professionalism.”

The crew chief sits in the rear of the aircraft and is responsible for everything that happens in or to the helicopter and helps to maintain it. On a fire suppression mission, they are the eyes of the pilots while making water dips and drops.

“My job is to guide the pilots down to get the bucket filled,” Meyer said. “Once it’s filled, we get the location of where we need to drop. Once I have eyes on the target and once we’re over it, I hit the release and drop the bucket load on the fire.”

Meyer also captured photos and video of from above the fires. One photo he took of an unburned house surrounded by charred landscape was used widely by news outlets.

“That was pretty neat,” said Meyer. “I was kind of in shock that everything around it had burned, but the house. And there were a lot of other houses like that we and the crews on the ground helped save.”

Staff Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales, readiness noncommissioned officer, Company A, 1-108th Aviation, Topeka

“It’s a feeling of elation,” said Gonzales of being activated to help with an emergency. “You’re excited, you’re pumped. This is why people join the military and the Guard, to help their community. It’s a great sense of accomplishment and pride.

“These are the things they show you in the recruiting office.”

The seven Kansas Army National Guard helicopters dropped a combined total of 482 buckets of water, which equates to roughly 289,200 gallons of water. However, Gonzales said that most of the credit should go to the firefighters on the ground.

“I want to make sure that everybody understands the ground crews did a majority of the work,” said Gonzales. “We came in and we helped close things up, but the ground crews were working their butts off.”



A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation, Kansas National Guard, draws water into the collapsible 660-gallon bucket slung beneath it. The Black Hawk crew was assisting firefighters on the ground battling one of several grassfires in the state in early March. (Photo by Chris Irsik)

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD G1 PERSONNEL GATEWAY

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

**FEATURING
INFORMATION ON
ARNG SOLDIER &
FAMILY SUPPORT &
BENEFIT PROGRAMS**

- Financial Calculators
- Family Assistance Centers (FACs)
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- Family Readiness Groups
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Emergency Management 101
The Adjutant General



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, Kansas adjutant general and director of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, discusses grassfire suppression operations in Clark County with a member of the Ashland Fire Department March 10. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

This article is the first in a series about the roles and responsibilities of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management.

Tornadoes. Floods. Blizzards. Wildfires. These are just a few of the natural or man-made disasters that have plagued the people of Kansas since the days the pioneers first pushed west across the prairie. Back then, help – if it came at all – came from neighbors, who may live miles away. An expanding population soon required an expansion of resources to deal with widespread disasters.

Today, when such a disaster overwhelms the resources of one of the state’s 105 counties, emergency management officials in that county look to the Kansas Division of Emergency Management for support. Sitting at the helm of that division is the state’s adjutant general, who is also the leader of the Kansas National Guard, a state military position. The man in that position since 2011 is Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli.

“State statutes, specifically in Kansas Statutes Annotated 48-907, lays out the authority of the adjutant general to also be the director of emergency management,” explained Tafanelli. “The statutes outline the roles and responsibilities of the adjutant general as it relates to emergency management here in Kansas

“The adjutant general’s’ authorities are driven by statutes and those specific authorities granted by the governor,” said Tafanelli. “Many of the adjutants general across the nation have multiple duties. With some it’s emergency management; a number may have veteran’s affairs, homeland security or other public safety type responsibilities. Maybe a third of the adjutants general across the nation have emergency management in their portfolio.”

In Kansas, this dual-hat position was a result of the way the division came about. The State Civil Defense Agency was established in 1951 as a result of the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950. The State Civil Defense Agency was charged with providing civil defense to protect life and property in Kansas from nuclear attack, but did not address other disasters. In 1955, the State Civil Defense Agency became part of the Adjutant General’s Department. The agency’s name was changed in 1975 to Division of Emergency Preparedness to reflect its role in natural disaster response and pre-

paredness. It was redesignated as the Kansas Division of Emergency Management in 1993.

Since becoming adjutant general, Tafanelli has directed the state’s emergency response in numerous disasters – tornadoes, floods, winter storms, and, most recently, widespread wildfires that consumed more than 650,000 acres in multiple counties – acting as the governor’s agent to protect the people of Kansas. Tafanelli said the guiding document for emergency management practices and policies in the state is the Kansas Response Plan.

“...the ultimate responsibility for emergency response is at the local level. Our job is to provide the coordination and support necessary for the local level to be able to manage the response.”

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli
Kansas adjutant general

“The Kansas Response Plan is what drives emergency preparedness, response and recovery in the state of Kansas,” said Tafanelli. “It outlines the strategies, concepts, the assumptions and the practices for both the local level and the state level and how we interface with the federal level for emergency management and disaster planning in the state.

“It’s all built on the National Incident Management System framework,” he continued, “but the basic premise of the Kansas Response Plan – and this is very important for Kansas and probably most other places – is that the ultimate responsibility for emergency response is at the local level. Our job is to provide the coordination and support necessary for the local level to be able to manage the response.

“We take the necessary steps to coordinate and prioritize required resources, at the state level or federal level. But again, the local authorities are in command and control at their level for their disaster and we are here to provide them the support they need within all facets of emergency management.”

Tafanelli said that the division’s role does not begin and end with a disaster,
(Continued on Page 11)

Ten years later: Remembering the Greensburg tornado

(Continued from Page 5)

help. After talking on the phone with a veterinarian who was caring for virtually all the pets in town, Alley drove to Greensburg in a van loaded with dog and cat food.

“To this day, I regret I didn’t have a chance to visit her,” Mettner said.

Media, Presidential visit

Steve Hewitt, then city administrator for Greensburg, started doing media interviews almost immediately after the tornado. He was the primary spokesperson for the city.

But Watson said “It was hard for individuals who would normally be spokespersons to do that role because they were dealing with the loss of homes and locating neighbors and family members.”

Watson took calls from media outlets throughout the country and as far out as the United Kingdom, Australia and Japan. She gave out the numbers to two cell phones and they would both be ringing at the same time.

“The media calls came in so fast it was almost impossible to keep up with them,” she said. “The uniqueness of the tornado taking out an entire town and the number of deaths brought the story to the top of the news very quickly.”

Watson had taken the PIO job six months earlier and the Greensburg tornado was her first major disaster to work.

“It was completely overwhelming,” she said. “Early on, I didn’t think much about it. As the days grew into a week, it definitely took its toll on me and the emotional toll of what was going on around me was something I wasn’t expecting.”

The media attention reached its height when President George W. Bush arrived in Greensburg.

Alldritt remembers standing outside with a woman who worked for FEMA and seeing the president’s helicopter approaching Greensburg. The woman from FEMA said she had been to a lot of disaster sites and it was usually three or four weeks before the president would arrive at the scene.

However, the Greensburg tornado was the country’s first major disaster since the 2005 debacle of Hurricane Katrina in which Bush and the federal government were criticized for not responding soon enough

“We may have been the beneficiaries of lessons learned,” Sebelius said. “It became clear we’d have access to federal support. I think it was very gratifying for a lot of people to have the president of the United States arrive and say there would be federal help. He came armed with that promise and he delivered on that promise.”

Bunting was part of the team that briefed Bush when he arrived in Greensburg.

“He walked through most of the town,” Bunting said. “He walked to where all the

church leaders gathered. He prayed with them.”

Watson saw him shake hands with a lot of National Guard members.

“He also met with families and talked to them,” she said. “He was able to interact with a lot of the public.”

Morgan said it was an honor to meet Bush, whom she described as “kind” and “compassionate.” The president gave her daughter a handwritten note.

“He was very genuine and gave us all words of encouragement and hope,” Morgan said. “He was extremely gracious to me and it is something I will never forget. I felt like we were hanging out with a good fishing buddy, not the president of the United States.”

Bonding experience

After the president left, the many media outlets camped out in Greensburg started to leave as well. Around that time, another disaster hit in southeast Kansas — severe flooding — and the regional and national media chased that story.

The state and federal workers at Barclay College stayed for another week before leaving.

“Everyone gave it 150 percent every single day and beyond,” Alldritt said. “It was kind of a brothers-in-arms situation for a lot of people. We really had a bonding experience.”

Morgan remained in Greensburg the longest, staying there until December. She originally stayed in a motel in Dodge City, then moved into one of the small “boxes” FEMA constructed a few feet from the temporary office where she worked.

“I was working 16 to 18 hour days and it was much safer and certainly felt more like home to live right in the community,” she said. “I remember one night some months into the disaster, feeling very overwhelmed. We all had worked so hard and there was so much more to do. I wasn’t sure the debris would ever be gone so we could start the rebuilding.”

Morgan has maintained friendships with the people from Greensburg over the years. She called them survivors.

“My heart still aches when I think of what the people experienced the night of the tornadoes,” she said. “I’m proud to be a Kansan because of the resilience of the people of Greensburg.”

Bunting said the work that went into helping the people of Greensburg and the resolve of those people was one of the most incredible things he had ever seen.

“The credit goes to dozens and hundreds of people of every discipline,” he said. “We didn’t have anybody who didn’t do a good job. We worked our tails off. It’s something I’ll remember my whole life.”




Soldiers of the 891st Engineer Battalion help remove debris from the streets of Greensburg, Kansas, following the EF5 tornado that leveled much of the town May 4, 2007. (Archive photo)

Awards and Decorations


KANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Legion of Merit




Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Hall, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka

Meritorious Service Medal




Lt. Col. Lisa Mullinax, 1st Bn, (OCS/WOCS), 235th Rgmt, Salina
Lt. Col. Robert Wood, HQ, 235th Rgmt, with three oak leaf clusters
Maj. Shawn Miller, HHB, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Hiawatha, with three oak leaf clusters
Maj. Rodney Seaba, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Maj. Joshua Urban, HHC, 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Brandy Nichols, HHC, 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Topeka
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Stephen Patterson, 35th ID Band, Olathe
Senior Master Sgt. Michael Riblett, Counterdrug Task Force, Topeka
Master Sgt. Darin King, Co A, Rec & Ret, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Christopher Lucas, HHD, 635th RSG, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Jodi Melby, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Jennings, HHB, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Hiawatha
Sgt. 1st Class Karl Klamm, Co B, Rec & Ret, Wichita
Sgt. 1st Class Craig Laber, HHC, 169th CSSB, Olathe, with oak leaf cluster
Sgt. 1st Class Darin Leifried, Co D, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Emporia, with oak leaf cluster
Sgt. 1st Class Mark O’Brien, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Gary Woody, HHB, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Hutchinson
Sgt. 1st Class Kathy Zabel, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Dennis DeWitt, Det 1, 778th Trans Co, Manhattan
Staff Sgt. Shawn Evans, 235th Rgmt, Salina
Staff Sgt. Kerry Free, Det 1, 778th Trans Co, Manhattan
Staff Sgt. Bradley McDowell, Det 2, 731st Trans Co, Hutchinson
Staff Sgt. Patrick Stevens, Co B, Rec & Ret Bn, Wichita

Army Commendation Medal




Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Hernandez, Co A, Rec. & Ret, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters

Army Achievement Medal



Senior Master Sgt. Denton Stafford, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Kenny Everett, 184th IW, Wichita


Kansas Meritorious Service Ribbon



Col. Tony Divish, 69th TC, Topeka

KANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Meritorious Service Medal



Col. Thomas Turner, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Lt. Col. Peter Austin, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Lt. Col. Bradley Hilbert, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Lt. Col. Jacob Schwartz 184th IW, Wichita
Lt. Col. Marilee Smalley, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Amy Blow, 190th ARW, Topeka
Maj. Janet Dial, 190th ARW, Topeka
Capt. David Schonberg, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Jacob King, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Noe, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Chief Master Sgt. Michael Shields, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Thane Stauffer, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Senior Master Sgt. John Baxter, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Clinton Bradfield, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Keith Decker, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Joseph Ginzel, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Master Sgt. Bradley Hansen, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Senior Master Sgt. Douglas Latessa, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Alan Laub, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Joel Unger, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Emily Albers, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Maurice Balance, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Mack Beatty, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Michael Clark, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Brian Gigax, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. George Hart, 190th ARW, Topeka


Retirements

Kansas Army National Guard

Lt. Col. William Yanek II, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Maj. Luke Phillips, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Capt. Kraig Buffington, HHC (-), 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Kansas City
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Scott Davis, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Chief Warrant Officer 2 John Fulks, Co G, 1st Bn, 111th Avn, Topeka
1st Sgt. Travis Eichhorn, 772nd Eng Co, Pittsburg
Sgt. 1st Class Karl Klamm, Det 1, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Laiter, 35th MP Co, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Richard Myers, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Sgt. 1st Class Mark O’Brien, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Rock, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Sgt. 1st Class Brian Sollers, HHB, 1st Bn, 161st

Master Sgt. Brandon Lambert, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Richard Longberg 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Matthew McCoy, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Nathan Miles, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Brandon Murray, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Steven Peyton 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Eric Porterfield, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Curtis Rogers, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Travis Schuler, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Anisa Shinkle, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Daniel Strickland, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Stephen Vogt, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Heath Jones, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Rafael Marrero Rivera, 184th IW, Wichita

Air Force Commendation Medal



Maj. Seth Rundle, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Maj. Kevin Thomas, 184th IW, Wichita
Capt. Matthew Lucht, 184th IW, Wichita
1st Lt. Cameron Carlson, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters

1st Lt. Alex Porter, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. David Chirinos, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Elizabeth Damman, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Brett Peine, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Ricky Ramsey, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Ashley Grady, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Chris Guild, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Jerling Hodges, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Justin Jacobs, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Christopher McCarthy, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Danielle Peavler, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Maria Ruiz, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Levi Vincent, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Kalim Dausuel, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Blake Elliott, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Ramon Espana, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Joshua Hahn, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Shannon Johnston, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Cody Larson, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Jacob Mattern, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Abbie Moreno, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Christopher Seward, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Seth Sharpe, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. TJ Tasker, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Routh Whitford, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Adam Edwards, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Grant Saylorperkins, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Alyssa Elder, 184th IW, Wichita

Air Force Achievement Medal



Capt. Sterling Scales, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
1st Lt. Cameron Carlson, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. John Ives, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Michael Ragan, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Curtis Rogers, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Matthew Crawford, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Al Daniels, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Chad Ewertz, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Paul Jones, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Souphan Keodouangkham, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Joseph Kroulik, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Keith Melvin, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Douglas Parker, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. David Prosser, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Joshua Swilley, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Williams, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Heath Wilson, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Aaron Alexander, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Desirae Beason, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Jesse Boring, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Bradlee Brown, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Paul Grunden, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Shana Hagedorn, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Mark Hamlin, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Robert Hollar, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Adam Johnson, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Michael Kleymann, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Cole Melby, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Brandon Moberly, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Brandon Rhoten, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Anatheia Rivera, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Benjamin Roe, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Dajuan Smith, 184th IW, Wichita

FA, Hutchinson
Sgt. 1st Class David Strange, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Towson, HHC. 169th CSSB, Olathe
Staff Sgt. Kerry Free Jr., Det 1, 778th Trans Co, Manhattan
Staff Sgt. Darel Long, Co C, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lenexa
Sgt. Adrian Davis, Det 2, 778th Trans Co, Salina
Sgt. David Dewitt, 778th Trans Co (-), Kansas City
Sgt. Kenneth Horsley Jr., Det 2, 778th Trans Co, Salina
Sgt. Chadley Kuker, Btry A, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Dodge City
Sgt. Lee Smith, 778th Trans Co (-), Kansas City

Kansas Air National Guard

Col. Shelly Bausch, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka
Col. Chris Meyer, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Chris Noe, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Eli Shields, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Doug Latessa, 190th ARW, Topeka

Staff Sgt. Ryan Smith, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Kyle Swendson, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Paul Vernacchia, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. William Voss, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Cole Watts, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Cody Wirth, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Senior Airman Joseph Alberts, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Nicholas Allbritton, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Timothy Blake, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Travis Bryan, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Chynna Carey, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Ryan Crutchfield, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Patrick Demoe, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Christopher Fernandez, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Shane Fowler, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Robert Fry, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Mark Hallacy, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Christopher Harrington, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Benjamin Heiliger, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Dylan Honeycutt, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Scott Johnson, 184th IW, Wichita

Latitude 37 degrees north...



Kansas National Guardsmen Spc. Devin Ramsey (right), 731st Transportation Company, and Spc. Anthony Vandewiel, 35th Military Police Company, gather direction and distance data from a proposed survey point, which will be replaced with a permanent post once funding is approved. This information will be used in testing packets for Garden City National Guard Land Navigation Course. Garden City Boy Scouts, Garden City High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, and Garden City Community College ROTC have shown interest in using the course once completed. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jeromy Fisher)

WOCS, NGAUS, and developing your career

(Continued from Page 2)
your distance learning course sooner instead of later, you have greatly increased your chances to get to a school you need before it becomes a necessity and holds up your career.

As leaders, many warrant officers have been asked what makes them successful and how they positively influence other Soldiers to follow them. For me, a method that has been successful has been the “F-R-O-G” method -- Family, Recreation, Occupation, and Goals. As long as you keep these topics at the forefront of your mind as you’re working with Soldiers, it is easy to learn where their values lie and determine what gives them motivation. Ultimately, interacting with Soldiers using this method will ensure leaders know their Soldiers better, and by doing so, they will be enabled to practically apply

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Senior Airman Veronica Kellogg, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Patrick King, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Wesley Kubie, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Laken Meyer, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jordan Morgan, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Christopher Noe, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Lauren Penney, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Robert Phillips, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jon Potts, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Christopher Purdy, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jacob Rogers, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Christopher Ruhlén, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Aaron Slaughter, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Ariel Ward, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jim Xayavongsy, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Daniel Bequillard, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Steven Bohling, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Logan Borovetz, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Garrett Browne, 190th ARW, Topeka
Airman 1st Class Alexandria Brun, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Travis Gantt, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Chelsea Jellison, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Kole Johnsonhanna, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Alyssia Logan, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Robert Phillips, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Tyler Reich, 184th IW, Wichita

Soldier care on a daily basis.
On July 15, there will be a Warrant Officer Call in Salina at a location to be determined. This event will coincide with WOCS and our current candidates will be in attendance so they may meet some of their counterparts who are currently operating within their warrant officer MOS. The next morning, following the Warrant Officer Call, the candidates will formally be presenting their song and sign, and I would ask that you make every effort to be present. There is a great team building event and every effort placed into this presentation each has really done an outstanding job.
In closing, please remember that no matter where you’re at in your military career, you did not get to this point alone. Mentorship is one of the key factors for our success, so please don’t forget to pass it down.

Training gets real-world test

(Continued from Page 7)
bypass surgery,” said Thompson.
“It is important for first responders to note the low survival rate as they may feel bad or guilty for the person not surviving. Certainly, all of us had hoped the runner had survived and our thoughts and prayers go out to the runner and his family. The family noted that he died

doing what he loved.”
Thompson said there is room for improvement in CPR survival rates.
“Prompt action by first responders can help increase survival,” said Thompson.
“First responders quickly taking action can also help restore some circulation and reduce brain damage and brain death for those who do survive a cardiac arrest.”

Employers, National Guard balance soldier employment through ESGR

**By Capt. Margaret Ziffer
35th Infantry Division Public Affairs**

Leadership from the Kansas and Missouri National Guard met April 13 with civilian employers of their soldiers during an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve event at the Kansas City, Kansas, armory.

ESGR is an all-volunteer organization that acts as a liaison between soldiers in the National Guard and Reserve and their civilian employers. The group organized the event as part of ongoing efforts to recognize and thank civilian employers who value and employ military service members.

“We basically smooth things out so that there are no issues for the soldier and they can do both their civilian job and their military job,” said retired Lt. Col. Dave White, employer outreach representative volunteer.

Maj. Gen. Victor Braden, commanding general, 35th Infantry Division, has made working closely with ESGR a top readiness priority as the division prepares to go to the Levant and the Persian Gulf. That mission, which will support the national security goals of the United States and promote stability and security by maintaining readiness, will take Kansas and Missouri members of the division overseas and away from their civilian jobs for nine months.

Braden told the employers that the experiences soldiers gained from their civilian employment is an important asset to the National Guard.

“I had a staff sergeant who had a PhD,” said Braden. “I had captains who were school principles. I had privates who had extensive experience as plumbers and carpenters. Having soldiers with that breadth of knowledge and experience is an advantage unique to reserve component units.”

Although civilian-soldiers are an asset for the units, there are often some challenges associated with maintaining that civilian-military balance, both for the soldiers and for the employers.

“How many of you have gone on leave for a vacation for two weeks? When you come back, things might have changed, even in two weeks,” said Braden. “And so, when you are gone for a year, a lot of things can be different. Sometimes there are policy changes or personnel changes or the dynamics change. It can take a while to adjust.”

Shawn Reynolds, deputy chief of police with the Olathe Police Department, said his organization currently has three members deployed with a fourth preparing to deploy in May. Reynolds said it can sometimes be difficult because those soldiers are counted on as part of the organization’s workforce.

“Absolutely, there are challenges when you have folks that you are counting on for your work force who get deployed,” said Reynolds. “You know, I think it is just something that employers have to adapt to. For the past 10 or 15 years, we have been

involved in extended combat operations in one place or another. It is an important assignment, and we have to figure out ways to make that work. So that’s what we do.”

To reduce the stresses associated with transitioning from civilian employment to deployments and back again, Braden said it is essential for employers to stay engaged with their Soldiers, and that just knowing that they have a job to return to lessens the burdens on Soldiers while they are gone.

“These Soldiers will be gone for a year,” said Braden. “The last thing you want to have to worry about when you are deployed is what your next job is going to be.”

Braden suggested three strategies that employers with deploying soldiers can use to maintain communication during periods of extended soldier absence:

1. Ask for your soldier’s address and write to them. As a second option, even an occasional email will let soldiers know their employer is still thinking about them.
2. Engage in social media by taking advantage of platforms like the 35th Infantry Division Facebook and Twitter pages.
3. Stay connected with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. ESGR can help address employer-employee issues before they become larger problems. Employers of military service members can request ESGR representatives to come talk to their organizations or give briefings to management teams.

White also emphasized it is essential that civilian employers familiarize themselves with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, the federal law that establishes rights and responsibilities for uniformed Service members and their civilian employers.

“Make sure your HR (human resources), your personnel people are familiar with the law as it applies to reservists and guardsmen,” said White. “They are the best employees you are ever going to get. You should do your best to support them, because they are supporting your country.”

There are also strategies that soldiers can use to let their employers know they appreciate their support. If soldiers feel their employers have done an exceptional job supporting their military service, they can nominate them for one of four ESGR awards to recognize their efforts.

Soldiers and employers of soldiers can contact an ESGR representative for more information about employer briefings, soldier and employee rights and responsibilities, and employer award nominations.

“We are looking forward to working with ESGR as we continue to build on this innovative organization that we have,” said Braden.

More information about ESGR can be found online at <http://esgr.mil>.

John Rueger receives brigadier general star



The Kansas National Guard welcomed its newest general officer during a ceremony at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard April 21 as Carrie Rueger attached a brigadier general’s star to the uniform of her husband, Col. John Rueger. Rueger, who serves as the deputy commanding general of the 35th Infantry Division, entered the military in 1987 when he enlisted in the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, Kansas Army National Guard. He was commissioned as a field artillery second lieutenant in 1989 as a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program at Kansas State University. He has held several positions within the field artillery and Joint Forces Headquarters. He has served as commander at the company, battalion and brigade levels. A lifelong Kansan, Rueger is the son of former adjutant general the late Maj. Gen. James Rueger. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

Soldier enjoys high-speed “me” time

(Continued from Page 4)

about the competition with the other drivers, but also with himself. Baumann admitted one of his biggest hurdles was overcoming competitiveness and self-disappointment as he learned it was really about the fun.

“It’s my ‘me’ time,” he continued, “I get

to go talk to like-minded people, drive a car as fast as I can over the weekend and then go home.”

Although he is not giving up his racing, Baumann is looking toward a future working in small arms.

“The parts are cheaper and not as heavy.”



Spc. Steve Baumann can often be found competing on the race circuit in his personal vehicle, a 1997 Mazda Miata. (Photo by Sgt. David Crawford, UPAR)

Emergency Management 101

(Continued from Page 9)

but extends to all phases of emergency management, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

“Each county is required, by statute, to have a county emergency operation plan and we work with them on that plan,” said Tafanelli. “We also provide training and participate in exercises to test their response plans.”

Tafanelli added emergency management isn’t solely the province of local, state and federal officials.

“The public’s role is to be aware of their county emergency operation plan,” he noted. “As you see in a lot of our public service announcements, whether it’s Severe Weather Awareness Week or a

number of other proclamations that we do... is to get statewide exposure to emergency management.

“A lot of that is done through the local level for citizens – making sure they have an emergency kit or that they have emergency plans for their family, to make sure they have the necessary supplies that they can sustain themselves in the event that they are involved in a disaster.

“The more that the Kansans can do along those lines, really makes the overall response to a disaster at the local level or state level much, much easier on the community and allows us to flow the resources in when we need them and really ensures that we mitigate the impacts of the disaster to the best extent we can.”



Maj. Gen. Victor Braden, commanding general of the 35th Infantry Division, gives an overview of the 35th’s upcoming deployment to the Persian Gulf and the Levant during an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve event at the Kansas City, Kansas, armory April 13. (Photo by By Capt. Margaret Ziffer, 35th Infantry Division Public Affairs)

By Chaplain (Col.) Peter Jaramillo
Joint Force Headquarter Chaplain

In an Easter homily delivered in the 4th century, St. Augustine said “We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our Song!”

The Easter message is the hope of new life after the Lord Jesus endured the horror of his passion, crucifixion and death, and on the third day rose from the dead. Easter gives hope, especially when its truth is applied to Soldiers and their families who are often going through some of the most difficult times of their lives in preparing for deployment. The volatile, ever-changing events of the predeployment time, getting a family care plan together, informing the boss about when exactly will be the last day of work in the civilian job, making time for precious moments with loved ones before leaving the country, and readying the heart and mind for a new reality on everyone’s behalf, all these can be stressful and take their toll. It is a big accomplishment just getting through the grind of today.

At a recent funeral Mass I celebrated for a 95-year-old woman, I reflected on her victory of life! She was a faithful Catholic,



Chaplain (Col.)
Peter Jaramillo

and a hardworking woman who endured suffering in the last few years of her life. As a young woman, she was a registered Army nurse who served her country during World War II. She saw action, stationed in Scotland and England, caring for wounded and the dying.

I was told about the sense of compassion that she displayed not only for her comrades, but when even dealing with enemy prisoners of war who also had great medical needs. They were given the same level of care and compassion. Her medical Nightingale Pledge knew no difference to a dying man who needed care.

In a like manner, the chaplains that are being deployed with 35th Infantry Division and 635th Regiment are keenly sensitive about the realities they will face, and they bring a skill set that only chaplains can offer. Chaplain (Maj.), Richard Dunn, Chaplain (Maj.) John Potter and Chaplain (Capt.) Ron Marshall are highly skilled and seasoned chaplains, men of God who will offer God’s presence to whatever environments, needs or realities that they may face. I am confident that the risen Lord, the conqueror of death, will be their rear guard and strength.

This Easter season promises hope, new life and joy of the power of the resurrection. I pray for our Soldiers from Kansas National Guard, soon to be deployed, and ask God to use our Soldiers and our chaplains for good to complete this mission and bring them home safely.

On-line tools help narrow the search for the right college

By Maj. Chuck Leivan
Education Services Officer

Because the decision to pursue civilian education is one of the most critical decisions you will make in your career, there are many variables to consider before beginning. The keys to success in picking a degree are degree program choice and employability. To help you make a plan, here are three online tools.

The first tool, available at http://www.ks-degreestats.org/program_search.jsp, allows users to search for a degree program at our Kansas Regents Universities. Once a user identifies a program type, all the public schools that offer that program will populate a search result. Users can pick a few at a time for a side by side comparison on estimated cost, percentage of graduates working in Kansas and median annual earnings of graduates.

This type of comparative information helps the user understand the cost-benefit and potential opportunities for employment for the degree the user may choose. There is no log-in or questionnaire to fill out to research information on this site.

The second tool is VIA, found on www.GoArmyEd.com. VIA is a personality inventory questionnaire for Soldiers and at the end, VIA makes recommendations for degree programs that fit the Soldier’s interests and potential post-Army income if the Soldier pursues a particular degree program. VIA degree recommendations may

include any university that accepts department of Defense and Veterans Affairs funding, not just publicly funded Kansas universities.

Any Soldier can sign up for a GoArmyEd account. GAE is the web-enterprise system that manages Federal Tuition Assistance applications and tracks Soldiers’ progress while attending school.

The third degree search tool is at www.netsolutions.com/army. To use the site, a Soldier must register and get a username and password. After registration, the Soldier can log in and use all the functions of the website. This includes college entrance practice exams, Armed Services Vocational

Aptitude Battery practice tests, College Level Examination Program tests, and degree searches. The degree searches include schools in foreign countries

and a Soldier can research information by region, demographics, campus life, admission standards and costs.

If you or your Soldiers have any questions about education benefits, incentive payments or want to speak to an Education Counselor about how to best use the various benefits eligible members have, please call the Education Services Office (785) 646-1081. For more information about Education Services you can go to www.kansastag.gov and click the quick link labeled “Education Services.”



“They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

Benjamin Franklin
Memoirs of the life & writings of Benjamin Franklin

Exercise helps Civil Air Patrol hone communication skills



A Civil Air Patrol Cessna 182 taxis to takeoff at New Century AirCenter to support a Kansas Wing communications exercise March 21. (Photo by CAP Flight Officer Cole Oakland)

By Flight Officer Cole Oakland
Kansas Wing, Civil Air Patrol

Getting real time information into the hands of first response teams is critical to saving lives and property during a disaster. However, transmitting that information may be a problem when cell towers and phone lines are down as a result of the disaster.

A March 21 communication exercise gave members of the Kansas Wing, Civil Air Patrol, the chance to practice how to respond to a disaster when such services are down.

“Conducting routine training such as this allows us to keep our skills sharp, test new ideas, and get new members familiarized with how we operate,” said CAP Lt. Col. Mark Lahan, project officer for the exercise. “Civil Air Patrol’s communications system provides a means to conduct missions during normal conditions and when commercial infrastructure is unavailable or unsuitable.”

The exercise used real world scenarios to improve the ability of Civil Air Patrol to respond when normal communication channels are interrupted.

Kansas City Composite Squadron, Shawnee; Heartland Cadet Squadron, Lenexa; 77th Composite, Emporia; Lawrence Composite Squadron; Flint Hills Composite Squadron, Junction City; Smoky Hill Composite Squadron, Wichita, and Southeast Cadet Squadron, Cherokee,

participated on the ground and communicated using high frequency radios for ground communication or very-high frequency radios to talk with aircraft. New Century Composite Squadron, Olathe; Topeka Eagle Squadron; and Emerald City Composite Squadron, Wichita, conducted both ground and air operations.

The Kansas Wing flies Cessna 172 and 182 high-wing, single-prop aircraft. Some of these aircraft are equipped with Garmin G-1000 “glass cockpit” instruments, which consists of four computer screens that have flight control information in addition to maps of the terrain below.

The exercise flights lasted approximately one hour with most flights taking off between 6:30-7 p.m. The aircraft were flown to designated points to attempt communication with ground stations. Crews logged the strength and readability of the signal and messages passed.

“One of the reasons that we train the way that we do is so that we can still communicate even if the phone system and the internet fail,” explained CAP Capt. Sid Ashen-Brenner, CAP director of communications, Kansas Wing.

“The communications program is particularly import as it supports Homeland Security, search and rescue, emergency preparedness, disaster relief, and other operational missions,” said Lahan.

Breaking the world record



Sgt. 1st Class Kim Fox, Company G, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation, Topeka, competes in the long cycle event of the SCALA Kettlebell Cup in Nævested, Denmark, April 1. The event requires competitors to repetitively clean and jerk two kettlebells for 10 minutes without setting them down. Fox is only the second woman in the world to compete with two 28-kilogram weights (123 pounds total). Fox beat the previous world record of 31 repetitions by completing 40 reps. She also holds the absolute world record of 66 reps with 24-kilogram kettlebells. (Photo provided)