



**35th ID
assumes
control in
Kosovo2**



**Eight months
later, town is
on its way
back11**



**"Care pack-
ages" warm
the hearts of
Soldiers . .15**

PLAINS GUARDIAN

VOLUME 50 NO. 6 *Serving the Kansas Army and Air National Guard, Kansas Emergency Management, Kansas Homeland Security and Civil Air Patrol* DECEMBER 2007

Kansans donate thousands to bring troops home for Christmas

By Sharon Watson

Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius announced Friday, Dec. 7, that more than \$135,000 in cash donations was raised since Dec. 3 to bring approximately 430 Kansas National Guard troops home for Christmas. An additional \$14,000 was raised from in-kind contributions. The funds were donated primarily to the Kansas National Guard Foundation and also to the 161st Field Artillery Regimental Association.

The 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery is training in Fort Bliss, Texas, for a late winter deployment to Iraq, and many Guardsmen didn't have the funds to get home for Christmas. Department of Defense regulations prevent the Kansas National Guard from paying for military travel during leave.

"We have been overwhelmed by the generous response we have received from all over the state, including a donation from the mother of Pfc. Jeremy Drexler, an active duty Army Soldier, who made it

home for Christmas in December 2003, and then died in May 2004. To her we say a special heartfelt 'thank you,' and to everyone, thank you so much for what you have done to bring our troops home," Sebelius said. "There is no doubt Kansans care deeply about our Soldiers and this is a small way to thank them and their families for their service and sacrifice."

The lead corporate givers, Wal-Mart Stores and Koch Industries, Inc., donated more than \$40,000. Wal-Mart presented a check to the Kansas National Guard Foundation for \$21,225 and Koch Industries, Inc. presented a \$20,000 check.

"Wal-Mart is committed to being an active member of the communities we serve," said Angie Stoner, senior manager of public affairs for Wal-Mart Stores. "With this contribution, we hope to make a positive difference in the lives of our men and women serving overseas by helping to bring them home for the holidays."

"The holidays are a time when families



Michele Henry, Kansas National Guard Foundation, expresses her appreciation to the hundreds of Kansans who donated money to help bring the Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery home for Christmas. (Photo by Jane Welch)

should be together, especially these military families who sacrifice so much," said Mark Nichols, director of public affairs for Koch Industries, Inc. "We're happy to do our part to get the troops home."

A wide array of Kansas organizations and individuals also responded to the governor's call for financial support for our troops. Hundreds of individuals have made donations, including a World War II veteran who sent a check to the Governor's office for \$1,000.

The Dodge City Harley Owners Group Chapter and Thunder of the Plains Motorcycle Rally Committee raised enough funds to pay for one of the buses that brought the Soldiers home from Texas. This bus, from Diamond Limousine Service in Montezuma, traveled from Fort Bliss to Liberal, Garden City and Dodge City.

Funds donated to the Kansas National Guard Foundation and the 161st Field Artillery Regimental Association went

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Deadly ice and snow storm closes roadways, leaves thousands in the dark



Trees bowed low in Junction City, the result of an ice storm that left thousands of people across the state without power for several weeks. Additional photos on pages 8 and 9. (Photo by Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales)

By Sharon Watson

A deadly winter storm moved into Kansas Dec. 8 and intensified two days later claiming six lives and leaving more than 130,000 utility customers in the dark. Snowfall forced road closures and ranged from more than a foot in Northwest Kansas to 10 to 12 inches in southwest and south central Kansas. Northeast and Southeast Kansas received an inch to six inches. The storm eventually moved on through other states, leaving its mark throughout the Midwest.

Kansas Rural Electric Cooperative had 23 cooperatives impacted and nearly 10,000 utility poles knocked down with approximately 50,000 customers out of power. Power remained out for approximately two weeks for some, but was

restored to everyone by Christmas Eve. Westar, Kansas City Power and Light and BPU also had numerous power outages.

"In many ways this storm was similar to the winter storm that hit the western part of the state New Year's Eve of 2006," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, adjutant general and director of Kansas Division of Emergency Management. "The main differences were this storm covered many more counties and had a bigger impact in areas with more trees, resulting in more debris."

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signed a state disaster declaration Dec. 10 for all 105 counties. In the end nearly 70 counties sustained the most severe damage. A federal disaster emergency was issued allowing

(Continued on Page 10)

TAG visits troops in Kosovo

By Lt. Col. Rex Johnson

Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, Kansas adjutant general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Haworth, Kansas Army National Guard command sergeant major, paid a visit to deployed Kansas Guard Soldiers in Kosovo over the Christmas holiday.

"I appreciate your service, and what you are doing here," Bunting said to Soldiers at a town hall meeting Sunday night, Dec. 23, at Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo.

"I can't tell you how much I am proud

(Continued on Page 5)



Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting and Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Haworth share a laugh with Soldiers of the 35th Infantry Division during their visit to Kosovo. (Photo by Sgt. Sheila Swantek)

Guardsmen prepare for deployment under new training model

By Staff Sgt. Mark W. Reasoner

The armories of the 170th Maintenance Company, Kansas Army National Guard, are already well accustomed to the annuals of history and took another step into the history books Oct. 16-18, 2007.

The 170th Maintenance Company, which deployed to the Middle East during the first Gulf War, was notified that it might serve another tour in the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. What is new about this assignment is the fact that the unit will be one of the first to be trained under the Army's new Army Force Generation Model, which has been created to meet the needs and demands from the increased operations tempo of the on-going Global War on Terrorism.

In the past, units were mobilized for approximately three months active duty training conducted by the Active component at a regular Army post before validation and deployment overseas. The new model allows Reserve Component units to train to 1st Army Division deployment

standards in the build up to deployment in regular drill status.

This training is reviewed for accuracy and completion during the unit's extended annual training period. If the training is properly documented and attended, the unit is validated for deployment overseas. This saves time, effort and resources of the active component and allows National Guard and Reserve Soldiers to continue working for their employers up until the time of deployment.

The training took place at a makeshift Forward Operating Base at Fort Riley and was closely scrutinized by battalion, brigade and state headquarters. Training involved a Standard Rules of Engagement briefing by the state Judge Advocate General's office, Army Physical Fitness test, M2 .50 caliber machine gun maintenance, MK-19 40mm grenade launcher maintenance, M249 Squad Automatic Weapon maintenance, M16A2 Rifle maintenance, Biometrics, Suicide Awareness and Prevention, M40 protective mask maintenance, and General Orders 1 and 1B

35th Division assumes authority

By Sgt. Shelia Swantek and Lt. Col. Rex Johnson

The transfer of authority ceremony held Nov. 2 at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, marked a special day for both the 35th and the 29th Infantry Divisions. The 29th ID was relieved of their current assignment as the 35th ID assumed the authority of Multi-National Task Force East, MNTF(E).

Brig. Gen. Douglas Earhart, outgoing commander of MNTF(E) from the 29th ID, expressed his gratitude and sincere thanks for the opportunity to serve the people of Kosovo.

"From the very beginning of our time here in Kosovo, we have felt welcomed as if we were family. Today is a day of mixed emotions as we prepare to leave the place we have called home for the past year," said Earhart.

Earhart bid farewell to Kosovo and wished the Soldiers of the 35th good luck and success as he made way for Brig. Gen. John Davoren, incoming commander of MNTF(E) from the 35th ID.

The Soldiers of the 35th ID who make up Task Force Falcon are the newest arrival to the Kosovo Force, or KFOR. As the 29th ID served as KFOR 8, the incoming 35th ID is KFOR 9. They will serve approximately nine months in Kosovo.

MNTF(E) is comprised of the United States as well as Armenia, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Ukraine.

Davoren said he looks forward to serving alongside the multi-national partners in KFOR as well as members of the interna-

tional community and courageous leaders across Kosovo.

"We will strive to build strong, positive relationships from all leadership levels to ensure we take on the KFOR mission in an evenhanded, impartial manner treating all of the people of Kosovo with dignity and respect.

This deployment marks the second deployment of the 35th ID to the Balkans since World War II.

"As Soldiers, we have left our families behind to ensure that the families of Kosovo can face the difficult challenge of building a stable and prosperous future for their children."

Davoren and the 35th take over at a critical time in Kosovo. Kosovo held elections on Nov. 17, and the end of the 120 days of negotiation of their future status was Dec. 10. The future status of Kosovo, whether it will become an independent state or continue to be part of Serbia, has been a controversial issue in Eastern Europe. Kosovo has been under United Nations administration since 1999.

Davoren said Kosovo is a complex and dynamic environment and the Soldiers of MNTF(E) are ready to continue the presence the 29th ID has established.

"We are trained, prepared and committed to maintaining the safety and security required for peace and stability to prevail for generations to come," said Davoren, "The Soldiers of MNTF(E) will not waver in their commitment to ensuring that the good people of Kosovo can go about their lives in relative peace and security."



Staff Sgt. Ernesto Gonzales (second from left) provides instruction and pointers on maintenance of the MK-19 grenade launcher to Sgt. Kenneth Hare (far left) and Sgt. Daren Guy. Gonzales deployed to Fort Riley with the 995th Maintenance Company and to Iraq with the 714th Security Forces, where he was wounded in a mortar attack Oct. 12, 2006. 1st Lt. Wesley O. Topel, company commander, observes the training at the far right. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Reasoner)

of the 1st Army Division among other classes and subjects. Representatives on hand for the training included Lt. Col. Tony Divish, battalion commander and a former commander of the 170th Maintenance Company and Command Sgt. Maj. Manuel Rubio, battalion command sergeant major and a former first sergeant of the 170th Maintenance Company. During the after-action report for the weekend's activities, Divish presented Sgt. Lyndon Ellis with a battalion coin for

scoring the highest score on the Army Physical Fitness Test from the company. The test is made up of three strength endurance tests: pushups, sit-ups, and the two mile run. Ellis earned a score of 299 out of a possible 300.

Just under half of the Soldiers assigned to the company have already deployed once in support of other units overseas or in support of Operation Enduring Freedom at Fort Riley. Of these Soldiers, five have deployed for two different operations.

Medical Detachment commander receives national recognition

Capt. Brian Komar, unit commander, Kansas Army National Guard Medical Detachment, was recognized on Oct. 16, 2007, in Washington D.C. as the National Guard Nurse of Excellence Recipient.

Chosen from among all company grade National Guard nurses, Komar received an Army Achievement Medal and the Army Nurse Corps Award of Excellence, as well as a book on the history of the Nurse Corps, which was inscribed with a personal message of congratulations from Maj. Gen. Gale S. Pollock, commander, U.S. Army Medical Command/Acting Surgeon General.

Komar volunteered for Operation Enduring Freedom and was deployed to Afghanistan in February, 2006. He returned to the U.S. in February of this

year. He was nominated for the award by Lt. Col. John Muther, deputy commander, Clinical Services and chief nurse for the Kansas National Guard, who cited Komar's achievements in Afghanistan.

Komar was also awarded the Combat Action Badge and the Bronze Star Medal for exceptionally meritorious service. He was also awarded the NATO Medal, the Joint Meritorious Unit Citation, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M device, Afghan Campaign Medal and the Overseas Ribbon.

Komar currently serves on active duty operational support for the Mobilization Evaluation Team and is on a leave of absence from his civilian employer, Clay County Medical Center, where he serves as the director of Cardiac Rehabilitation.



Brig. Gen. John Davoren and Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Cochran unsheath the 35th Infantry Division colors during the Transfer of Authority ceremony, Nov. 2, 2007, at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. The ceremony marks the transfer of Multi-National Task Forces (EAST) command from the 29th Infantry Division to the 35th Infantry Division. (Photo by Spc. Tegan Kucera)



Capt. Brian Komar receives an Army Achievement Medal from retired Brig. Gen. William Bester during ceremonies in Washington D.C. (Photo by Angus Baptiste)

731st Medium Truck Company rear detachments stay busy



Staff Sgt. Tim Stoner and Pvt. Harold Ward of Detachment 2, 731st Medium Truck Company, roll down Main Street in the Wichita Veterans Day parade. (Photo by Lt. Col. Roger Murdock)

By Sgt. Amy R. Bellerive, UPAR

The 731st Medium Truck Company continued to push forward with training and convoy missions this month. Soldiers participated in parades, convoys and training.

Staff Sgt. Tim Stoner and Pvt. Harold Ward participated in the Wichita Veterans' Day parade on Nov. 10.

"It was a wonderful opportunity for the 731st to get out in the community and to show support for our veterans and currently serving Soldiers overseas," said 1st Lt. Christopher Sanders, 731st Rear Detachment commander.

"I always enjoy getting out and participating in community events especially when I get to drive our trucks," said Stoner.

"It was a good turn-out," said Ward. "There was a lot of citizen support for the parade. The Kansas National Guard was well-represented with all of the major components bringing equipment and Soldiers. The Kansas Air Guard brought up armored humvees with crew serve weapons like those deployed in theatre."

Stoner, who drove the M915 during the parade, enjoyed the static display.

"I had fun when the young kids climbed into the trucks and blew the horn," said Stoner. "Receiving salutes from the veterans from previous wars while we completed the route was a real honor."

The Veterans Day parade in El Dorado also included an M915 from the 731st. Staff Sgt. James Veasey and Pfc. William Staud drove the vehicle and then parked and interacted with the citizens of El Dorado.

"There were a lot of kids there and they really enjoyed getting to pull the air horn and seeing the inside of the trucks," said Veasey. "The people there were really supportive. They fed us really well and we had a lot of fun."

The busy activities of the unit continued

when drill began on Nov. 17. The units in Larned, Liberal and Wichita conducted the usual activities of vehicle maintenance, classes and drivers' training. The Soldiers reviewed their 4100s.

Classes were held in all three detachments. The classes were given in accordance with the standards put forth in the regulations and then veteran Soldiers gave insight and answered questions regarding real world situations and procedures. Veteran Soldiers are a vital part of the core knowledge base of the Guard. Most of the younger Soldiers expressed appreciation for the real world view and the opportunity to ask questions about situations they had concerns about.

Pvt. Jeremy Siemiller attended the class on Secure at the Halt in Wichita.

"It gave us a lot of insight into procedure and security when you are in a combat environment," said Siemiller. "I think this class will be very beneficial to us since we are truck drivers and this is a situation we might find ourselves in. I liked hearing about actual field experience from people who have been there."

Each detachment was also tasked with a short mission. Detachment 2 convoyed from Wichita to Udall and back to further train the new drivers and sustain the training of the more experienced drivers.

"The convoy was too short!" said Pfc. Shi Metra Smith.

Several Soldiers from the 731st also attended a class in Salina. The class, 5th Wheel Recovery, was very informative and a lot of fun according to the Soldiers who participated.

"We didn't get to play with it as much as we wanted to but it was a good time," said Pfc. William Staud.

"Drill weekend goes fast when we stay busy, but it's always fun," said Stoner.

Kansas Guard seeking journalists for Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Kansas Army National Guard is seeking journalists to help round out its 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in Topeka.

The award winning unit of print and broadcast journalists is seeking individuals who are passionate about public relations, journalism, photography and videography and have a strong desire to serve their community, state and nation with their talents and skills.

In past years the 105th MPAD has won numerous awards within the military

journalism community and is a unit recognized for excellence. "This is a tremendous opportunity for journalists or those who may want to become journalists to gain some valuable experience and build a tremendous portfolio," said Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke. "Nowhere else will a journalist find opportunities like this," he continued.

If you are interested in becoming a journalist with the 105th MPAD, call 1-800-GoGuard or contact the unit first sergeant at (785) 274-1097 or (785) 633-0154.

Field Artillery Brigade inactivated

By Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales, 105th MPAD

On Saturday, Nov. 10, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 130th Field Artillery Brigade cased its colors during an inactivation ceremony at Nickell Memorial Armory in Topeka. The inactivation of a unit implies that the unit may one day be reactivated in support of future military operations.

Organized in September 1917, the 130th Field Artillery Brigade was assigned to the 35th Division and served during World War I in Meuse-Argonne, Alsace and Lorraine. After the war, it was demobilized in 1919 and then reorganized in June 1923.

The 130th was inducted into federal service in December 1940 and during World War II saw service in Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe, then inactivated after five years of service.

Throughout the 1960s, the unit saw more reorganizations, recognitions and demobilizations before being reconstituted in September 1997, consolidating it with other units to create Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 130th Field Artillery Brigade.

On June 29, 2006, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery was activated as Task Force Tornado and assumed the duties of Base Defense at Victory Base Complex, located on the west edge of

Baghdad surrounding Baghdad International Airport. The VBC is a multinational complex which houses the Multi-National Corps Iraq, Multi-National Divisions Command and the Iraqi Ground Forces Command and multiple combat teams and brigade headquarters.

As part of their responsibilities in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Soldiers secured more than 42 kilometers of perimeter, numerous guard towers and operation of all entry control points. The Task Force also conducted more than 10,000 combat patrols, during which they endured 300 indirect fire attacks against their area of operation.

"The 130th is only a number, until you put the fabulous people with it," said Brig. Gen. Jonathan Small, commander, Kansas Army National Guard. "I have every expectation for it to come back again."

The inactivation of this unit is but another example of the military's efforts to evolve to meet the ever changing task that the world of today presents. The 130th, along with numerous other National Guard units, continues to meet the challenges in every way and accomplish its missions.

"There will always be a need of our field artillery skills. We are just going from disciples of fire support to apostles of artillery," said Col. Alexander Duckworth, brigade commander.



The 130th Field Artillery Brigade colors are cased during an inactivation ceremony at Nickell Armory in Topeka on Nov. 10. (Photo by Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales, 105th MPAD)

Patriot Award presented to distribution center manager

By Lt. Col. Kenneth Gully

On Nov. 28, a Kansas Soldier, Staff Sgt. James Kelly Meyers, assigned to the Detachment 1, 171st Medical Company (Air Ambulance), presented his supervisor, Dale Moore, the general manager for the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Ottawa, with an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award for his supervisor's outstanding support of his military service in the Kansas Army National Guard.

For the award, Meyers said that in the last seven years he has been deployed three times overseas as a flight medic; however, Moore has been very supportive of him leaving so many times to perform military duty and serve his country. Each time he was welcomed back with open arms. Meyers said he has never felt that his job was in jeopardy due to serving his nation.

For this support, Meyers recognized Moore with a Patriot Award. All employer recognition awards by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve originate from nominations by an individual National Guardsman or Reservist, recognizing their employer for supportive employment policies and practices. The award is presented

on behalf of the Department of Defense.

The award presentation took place on the floor of the Distribution Center during a bi-weekly meeting with the shift warehouse employees in attendance. Meyers, a floor manager at the facility, opened the meeting by surprising Moore, asking him to come up front for an award. Meyers told the employees that he wanted to present Moore with a Patriot Award for the excellent support Dale has given him as he serves his country. After the award was presented, Mick Allen, the Kansas committee chairman for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve congratulated Moore for his support of Meyers and the sacrifices made by our Soldiers and the employers who support our servicemembers to defend our Nation. Also, attending for ESGR was retired Brig. Gen. James Aubuchon, State Chairman, Emeritus, and Robert Harrington, ESGR Area Chairman for Southeast Kansas.

In addition to the Patriot Award Ceremony, the center also signed a 5-Star Statement of Support for ESGR. The Statement of Support underscores the important role that the National Guard and Reserves play in our National Defense.

Year's events highlight what's right with Kansas

By Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting

What is right with Kansas is a long list, and at the top of it are our people. What's right is how you, the great people of Kansas demonstrate your resilience and patriotism every day while you have endured some tough weather and tragic loss of life and while thousands of Kansans are stationed and deployed around the world, many directly in harm's way. Some of our service members made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure our freedoms.

Many more Kansas families face the challenge of life at home with a loved one at war. Their days are filled with fear, doubt, and loneliness.

Through it all, Kansans shine with a fortitude, and determination born over a century and a half in the trials, tribulations, and joys of building their homes on the prairie. It is the triumph through difficult times, giving



Maj. Gen.
Tod M. Bunting

hope where there is none, providing a moment of joy to someone in need, that truly demonstrates Kansans' spirit.

What's right are our Kansas first responders, emergency managers and workers, charitable organizations and the countless emergency volunteers all proudly and quietly answering the call everyday. These often unheralded heroes step into the limelight only when disaster strikes, but be assured they work hard for you each and every day.

We saw them New Year's Eve working the western Kansas ice storms; we saw them throughout southeast Kansas in response to catastrophic flooding; and we saw them in Greensburg. When called, the National Guard proudly serves side by side with these remarkable Kansans. Every county in Kansas was impacted in 2007, many directly from storms and others who unselfishly sent their people and resources to counties with a greater need.

What's right is that you are never alone in Kansas. When you look around a disaster area you will see great Kansans from across the state, which have come to your community to help and instantly become your trusted neighbor and friend.

On Dec. 7, which was Pearl Harbor Day and a sobering day in our nation's history,

here at home Kansans did what they do best – bring hope and joy to the world! The 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, Kansas Army National Guard, is currently training hard at Fort Bliss, Texas, preparing to deploy for a year to Iraq to perform security missions. Called to duty in very short order, their training was going to leave them stranded away from home for Christmas. Tantalizingly close to home, yet on a Soldier's pay it may have as well been the moon. Just before shipping off to war, they were going to miss Christmas with their families. Kansans responded – grandmas, aunts, uncles, small stores and big business – contributing over \$100,000. Your Kansas Soldiers are coming home for Christmas!

What's right about Kansas is our long and storied history of stepping up in good and bad times. Besides this wonderful outpouring on Dec. 7, this year Kansans through the tax check off have contributed over \$80,000 to the Kansas Military Emergency Relief Fund, lovingly call the K-SMURF. This fund is used for emergency assistance to military families, such as disaster relief, loss of jobs, travel for funerals, and financial problems due to deployment.

Kansans make spreading hope and joy personal. Thousands of families, school-

children and everyday citizens show up for the emotional departure ceremonies, as our service men and women deploy; the joyous return ceremonies as they are reunited with their families; and the somber and heartbreaking funerals for fellow Kansans who have given the last full measure.

What's right is the Patriot Guard, those unstoppable American Legion riders and staunch advocates of our families and our service men and women, which started here in Kansas.

Are there more tough times ahead? Almost assuredly. We do not know when or where our next big storm or disaster will happen, but we do know that no matter when or where our 'big events' happen, Kansans will pull together and support each other, fix what has been broken and move forward.

Ad Astra Per Aspera. To the Stars through Difficulties. Absolutely! I just wanted to let you know that to those of us with the privilege to serve here in Kansas and around the world, the 'stars' in our state motto are you and your fellow Kansans!

God Bless and Thank You!

Editor's note: This column was sent to newspapers statewide in December. However, it was edited in some editions.

Air Lines

Outstanding Airmen Board found candidate selection difficult

By State Command Chief Master Sgt. David Rodriguez

Recently, a select group of chief master sergeants from the Kansas Air National Guard had the distinct pleasure to host the Outstanding Airman of the Year Boards. During this time, the panel of five interviewed 10 of our best Airmen in the state, narrowing the field to five.

Those selected will represent Kansas at the national level in the categories of Airman of the Year, Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, Honor Guard of the Year and First Sergeant of the Year.

Each chief was honored to be a part of the board. However, each also expressed how difficult it was to select a winner in each category when very little separated their achievements because they all did great with the interview process.

During the process the board reviewed the candidates on leadership and job performance in primary duty, significant self-improvement and base or community involvement. All candidates excelled in each area by improving work processes, initiating and implementing programs or revising and organizing procedures for the betterment of their squadron or unit.

Each category or improvement implemented in their primary duty is very important. However, we found it very refreshing that each candidate was so involved and active within their community. I want to share some of what we learned from our Airmen about being productive citizens in and around the state of Kansas.

Many of our candidates do a great deal of volunteer work, such as teaching Sunday school, coaching youth at their local community recreation centers or spearheading the creation of Junior ROTC programs at area high schools. One candidate enrolled in a carpentry course in order to utilize his newly acquired skills to assist with the Habitat for Humanity program.

This same candidate used his new talent to repair and maintain equipment at a local daycare center.

Another young airman supervises cadets assisting autistic students in an area middle school's "Autism Buddies" program. Another volunteers many hours for a program called "Wednesday's Child," designed to prevent abuse and neglect of children. Many participate with Meals on Wheels, Let's Help Project and assisting local rescue missions. Another was a presenter at community leader functions providing awareness of many of the Kansas Air National Guard programs that assist local communities and presents mission successes during the past couple of years. Another is very active as the unit mascot appearing at the Kansas Governor Easter Egg Hunt, family day events and participating at events such as the local zoo, spreading goodwill.

We learned that community involvement did not stop once they deployed overseas. When an Airman discovered one of our small Kansas towns was ravaged by a violent tornado, a fundraiser was established. The Airman raised over \$700 for a family who lost everything in Greensburg. The Airman immediately located the family upon returning from deployment and presented this great gift to the family.

Another airman initiated a community relations support project for children overseas. This resulted in the donation of over 800 soccer and baseballs, a pitching machine and more than 2,000 pounds of school supplies.

A mother broke down with tears of joy when an Airman coordinated the logistics for them to receive a wheelchair for her 10-year-old daughter when he learned that the mother had to carry the daughter everywhere because her wheelchair had been stolen.

The pursuit of self improvement is very evident as well. Many have obtained or are currently pursuing associates, bachelor's and master's degrees in a variety of higher education programs.

Much of what our board experienced during the interviews is not unique in the Air National Guard. A majority of our Airmen are very ambitious, goal oriented and patriotic to state and country. They truly are our Citizen Airmen and I am truly blessed to serve as their state command chief.



State Command
Chief Master Sgt.
David Rodriguez

Basic leadership course is required for warrant officers

By Command Chief Warrant Officer Mark Jensen

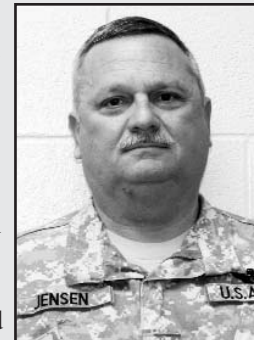
Happy New Year! I wanted to take a moment and bring you all up-to-date on the requirement for warrant officer attendance of Basic Officer Leader Course II (BOLC II). In 2005, a decision was made that all warrant officers would be required to attend BOLC II prior to attendance of their Warrant Officer Basic Course. The implementation date for this action was indicated as January 2009.

The BOLC II course is a tactical battle focused course designed around operations at a Forward Operating Base completed over a seven week period in residence at either Fort Sill or Fort Bragg. This requirement is current and the implementation date of January 2009 is still effective. This impacts each warrant officer in the Kansas National Guard who has not completed the Warrant Officer Basic Course for their Military Occupational Skill prior to the January 2009 deadline. After the implementation

date, the BOLC II will be required prior to attending your basic course, which is designed to be completed in the first two years of warrant officer service to facilitate award of the warrant officer specialty Military Occupational Skill.

There has been a great deal of discussion and activity on this issue at the highest echelons of the National Guard, with a subsequent memo from Lt. Gen. Clyde A. Vaughn to Gen. William S. Wallace, commander of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, requesting an exemption of the BOLC II requirement for Army National Guard Warrant Officer Candidate School graduates who have served as staff sergeant or higher while deployed in a recent hostile fire region. Wallace has provided a memo to Headquarters, Department of the Army, that recommends the headquarters approve waivers of BOLC II on a case by case basis, exempting attendance for Warrant Officer Candidate School graduates of any component who have recently served in a combat leadership position as a staff sergeant or higher in a hostile fire region. This recommendation has not yet been endorsed, but it is quite likely that it will.

The bottom line is that most warrant officers who have not completed the basic course prior to January 2009 will be required to attend the resident BOLC II course and should plan appropriately.



Command Chief
Warrant Officer
Mark Jensen

PLAINS GUARDIAN

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

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For change of address, contact Jane Welch.

Soldiers earn combat lifesaver certification



Soldiers of Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery used each other as practice subjects during a Combat Lifesaver Course, conducted Nov. 12-16 at the Kansas Regional Training Institute in Salina. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steve Ahlstedt, UPAR)

In November, 16 members of Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery completed the Combat Lifesaver Course at the Kansas Regional Training Institute, Salina. The class was conducted Nov. 12-16 specifically for the battalion. Twenty-two Soldiers throughout the battalion attended the course.

"This is a great example of several different organizations working together to make the National Guard, and specifically (our unit) more combat effective," said Sgt. 1st Class Steve Ahlstedt. "Between KSRTI standing up the course, putting it on ATRRS (Army Training Requirements and Resources System), the units requesting and getting approval for orders early on in the new budget and, most importantly, getting the Soldiers to take a week away from work and family the week before Thanksgiving was remarkable."

"My primary motivation for attending the course was to be able to identify what supplies my Combat Lifesavers needed to order for their bags," said Staff Sgt. Marc Beswick, full time supply sergeant for the unit. "I learned a life-saving skill in the process."

"The combat lifesaver is one the greatest tools in the Army medical field arsenal to preserve the fighting strength," said Sgt. Brian Martin, medical program coordinator for KSRTI. "Anyone can be taught to apply a bandage, but we want to train the Soldier to use critical thinking in the treatment of that casualty. The amount of compassion and intensity that comes from the Soldiers as they train is unsurpassed by any other training that takes place in the military, because they know that one day it may be their buddy they will be treating."

TAG visits troops in Kosovo

Continued from Page 1

to serve," Bunting continued. "And how much I am proud to serve with each and every one of you."

Bunting discussed the events happening back in Kansas, to include relief efforts during the severe winter weather. Bunting commented that the state has been busy with the effects of the weather, to include the loss of electrical power. The missions included distributing water, handing out cots, providing food and generators all over the state.

"I know you are busy here, too," said Bunting. "But you ought to be proud of what our folks are doing back home as well."

Bunting continued by discussing that several Kansas Guard Soldiers are deployed right now in the Global War on Terrorism; to include the upcoming deployment of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery.

"There are a lot of state missions," Bunting said. "As Guard Soldiers, we do the state missions as well as the federal missions."

Bunting answered several questions from the deployed Guard Soldiers during the town hall meeting. They ranged from equipment, new and renovated armories, and updates on the relief efforts in Greensburg, Kan.

Greensburg was the site of a category 5 tornado on May 4, 2007. The tornado claimed 12 lives and injured more than 60 people. The majority of the city was destroyed, with the rest severely damaged.

"You don't build a city in 90 years and build it back in six months," Bunting said. "But the city is coming back, slowly but surely."

Haworth answered questions relating to planned force transformations. Haworth said that the next ones scheduled would be the infantry and armored cavalry units. He added that the transition would be complete some time around September 2008.

The town hall immediately followed a Christmas concert from the Ferizaj music school. Bunting commented on how impressive it was for these Albanian children to learn the words in English to Christmas carols and put on the concert for the deployed American Soldiers.

"It can make you feel a bit of heartbreak because you cannot be home with your families," Bunting said. "But it does help put the season into perspective."

Bunting finished by discussing some of the visits that he has had with some of the people of Kosovo. He said that they were very grateful for the work that we have been doing and said, "thank you, Americans."

"That's what it is all about, thanking the American people," added Bunting. "Well, that's us."

This was Bunting's third trip to Kosovo. Following the Town Hall, Bunting echoed the praises he offered during his time with the Soldiers.

"I always say, proud to serve, they (the Soldiers) are enduring some tough conditions," Bunting said. "Keep doing what you are doing and come home safe."

New joint facility taking shape



Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general; Dr. Tom Bryant (second from the right), president of Pittsburg State University, John D. Patterson, vice president, Pittsburg State University; and 1st Lt. Michael Liotta (left) tour the new armory being built on the grounds of Pittsburg State University. The groundbreaking ceremony for the building was held in May and it is expected to be finished in the spring of 2008. This is the first National Guard armory in Kansas that has ever been located on a university campus. The Kansas National Guard will utilize 39,000 square feet of the 97,000 square foot facility for offices, locker rooms, kitchen and training and support areas, plus an exterior compound and maintenance bay. The university's portion will be used for offices for the Departments of Health, Physical Education and Recreation and Military Science/Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) along with the PSU Student Recreation Center. The recreation center will include cardio equipment, free weights, an aerobics room and gymnasiums. Joint use areas will include an assembly hall, fitness center and classroom spaces. (Photo by Jane Welch)

Army preparing to launch new pay and personnel system

By Sgt. Sara Moore, American Forces Press Service

The Army is getting ready to launch a new pay and personnel system next year that will streamline personnel processes and integrate the active-duty, National Guard and Army Reserve components.

The Army Defense Integrated Human Resources System (DIMHRS), which is part of a Defense Department initiative, will be implemented Oct. 1, 2008, at all Army installations and within all service components, said Army Col. Patrick Devine, program director of DIMHRS. The Kansas Army National Guard will participate in the initial training and testing on the system in April and June 2008.

DIMHRS is a commercial product that will take the pay and personnel data from all three components of the Army and put it in a single database accessible online 24 hours a day. A key feature of DIMHRS is that it integrates the pay and personnel sys-

tems, which means that when a personnel action is taken, the system automatically will trigger any associated pay change.

DIMHRS goes toward solving the problem of multi-component units, or those units made up of Soldiers from the active duty, National Guard and Army Reserve, Devine said. In the past, these units had to deal with six different personnel systems and three pay systems, he noted, and DIMHRS will consolidate those into one system.

DIMHRS will give National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers continuity of pay when they are mobilized, Devine said. In the current environment, National Guard soldiers go through five different sites from mobilization to deployment and have to complete paperwork and be certified at each location, he said. When DIMHRS is launched, all military pay will be handled in the one system, and is coordinated with personnel data, so problems can be avoided.

Office now open for business



Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general and Wichita Mayor Carl Brewer cut the ribbon to the new storefront recruiting office, opened in Wichita on Dec. 5. This is the first such office in the city. It is located at 4100 E. Harry, Suite 55. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke)

Chaplain hangs up his uniform after 22 years of Guard service

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Larry Parrish retired on Dec. 31, 2007, after 22 years of service with the Kansas Army National Guard.

Parrish began his military service in July 1968 when he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as an active duty enlisted soldier until April 1970. This included a year's tour in Vietnam where he served with the 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery in the 101st Airborne (Airmobile) Division.

Attending seminary on the GI Bill, he was ordained a deacon in the United Methodist Church in 1971 and a full elder in 1974. As a United Methodist pastor, he served United Methodist churches in Kansas until 2004.

In 1985 he joined the Kansas Army National Guard as a chaplain, receiving a direct commission as a first lieutenant. During his Guard career, Parrish served as a battalion chaplain for the 1st Battalion, 635th Armor in Manhattan and the 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry (Mechanized) in Wichita. He was also a brigade chaplain for the 69th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) and the 130th Field Artillery Brigade.

In January 2005, Parrish received active duty orders to serve full-time with the Kansas National Guard as the Joint Support Chaplain for the Kansas Guard, assigned to Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas, the first chaplain in the Kansas National Guard to serve on a full-time basis in the state. In this role, he worked primarily with families of deployed soldiers and soldiers returning from a deployment.

Parrish worked closely with the Kansas National Guard Family Program Office in moderating deployment separation support groups, participating in family "wellness checks," teaching in reunion workshops, and handling deployment related family crises through counseling, referral, and networking. He and his wife, Mary, were trained in the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program by the National Guard and have led a number of Marriage Enrichment weekends for Guardsmen and their spouses.

Parrish spent time with Kansas Army National Guardsmen at their demobilization sites when they returned from deployments to Iraq and Kosovo and taught in Reintegration Workshops held by the Kansas Guard for Soldiers and their families after their return from a deployment. He also did crisis counseling and referral for Guard members who were having problems with post



Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting congratulates Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Larry Parrish on his retirement from the Kansas National Guard. Parrish retired Dec. 31, 2007, after 22 years of service to the Guard. (Photo by Jane Welch)

combat stress and post-deployment reentry stress and other deployment related issues. Parrish also has taught sessions on the nature of deployment for soldiers and their families and communications during deployment in pre-mobilization workshops for families of deploying soldiers and has given the required Army briefings for combat stress, mild traumatic brain injury, and suicide prevention in the newly-established in-state mobilization training for Kansas National Guard soldiers ordered to active duty for service in Iraq.

During his official retirement ceremony at Joint Forces Headquarters in Topeka on Dec. 2, Parrish was awarded the Legion of Merit for his work during the last three years with Kansas Guardsmen and their families and received other mementoes and commendations from colleagues, friends and other people he has worked with as a chaplain.

Other military awards include: the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal, the Reserve Component Achievement Medal, the Kansas Meritorious Service Ribbon, the Kansas Achievement Ribbon, the National Defense Service Medal with two bronze stars, Vietnam Service Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Kansas National Guard Achievement Ribbon and the Kansas Emergency Duty Ribbon with one sunflower.

Parrish, and his wife, Mary, live in Falls City, Neb., where he has been the pastoral leader of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church since September 2004. They have three children: Michelle Parrish and grandson, Luke, Wichita;

Potter selected as Guard chaplain

Chaplain (Capt.) John Potter has been hired as the Joint Support Chaplain for the Kansas National Guard.

"It is a great blessing to continue in ministry for soldiers and their families," said Potter. "I look forward to helping people and pray that God will enable me to meet the needs they have."

Potter began his military career in 2000 as a chaplain assistant in the Kansas Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment. He received a direct commission to chaplain candidate in September 2001 as he began seminary.

"I took the oath two weeks after 9-11," said Potter. "It was an incredible time to begin a ministry in the National Guard. The need for chaplains grew at an incredible pace, because of Soldiers being called up for deployments. Anytime that happens, it means separation from your family and entering the battlefield. This, in turn, creates a need for chaplains deploying forward and also at home to assist military families."

In April 2006, Potter deployed with the 1-108th to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As battalion chaplain, he worked to ensure the free exercise of religion for all Soldiers.

"We had 25 different faith groups in the battalion while stationed in Iraq. You don't focus on the differences," he said. "You focus on meeting their constitutional right of worship."

Potter is certified in Applied Suicide Interview Skills Training, Critical Incident Stress Management, Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program, Premarital Interpersonal Choices Knowledge and Pastoral Crisis Intervention. During his 18-month deployment, Potter conducted more than 1,300 counseling sessions, 79 worship services, and six marriage enrichment workshops.

Potter is the pastor of Stanwood Friends Church, near McLouth, Kan. He resides in Topeka with his wife, Amy.



Chaplain (Capt.) John Potter

Dr. Marc Parrish, and his wife Sarah, Jackson, Miss.; and Ryan Parrish, Kansas City, Mo.

Upon his retirement, Parrish intends to give more time to working with St. Thomas Episcopal Church, working to become ordained as an Episcopal priest, finding his niche for serving God within the Falls City community and area and spending more time with his hobbies: reading, motorcycling, model railroading and traveling.

Field artillery battalion receives Meritorious Unit Citation

By Maj. Paul Schneider

The 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, Kansas Army National Guard, was awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation in a ceremony on Dec. 1, 2007 during the unit's Annual Saint Barbara's Dining Out celebration. The award, approved and signed by the Secretary of Army Pete Geren, was

awarded to Lt. Col. John Rueger and Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Tritsch, who represented the Soldiers of the battalion. The ceremony was presided over by the commander of the Kansas Army National Guard, Brig. Gen. Jonathan Small.

The Battalion was awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation for its exception-

ally meritorious service during its deployment from Jan. 28, 2004, to Feb. 28, 2005. The unit flawlessly executed seven simultaneous stability and support operations missions, which included running the Multi-National Force-Iraq Joint Visitors Bureau, base defense operations at Camp Slayer, the Radwaniya Palace Complex and Special Operations team houses, and the Iraq Survey Group Protective Services Detail.

"As the first battalion in Kansas to deploy in support of the Global War On Terrorism, the battalion performed superbly in theater. We all knew that it would. This meritorious unit citation is a reflection of the outstanding Soldiers who were and are a part of a great organization," said Rueger, battalion commander.

The Meritorious Unit Commendation is awarded to units for exceptionally meritorious conduct in performance of outstand-

ing services for at least six continuous months during the period of military operations against an armed enemy occurring on or after Jan. 1, 1944.

The 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery holds the lineage and honors of the 130th Field Artillery Regiment and traces its heritage to the 1st Kansas Artillery, formed in 1868. Units or soldiers of the regiment have served in every conflict since the Civil War.

The regiment has been awarded streamers for numerous campaigns including Meuse-Argonne, Alsace 1918, Lorraine 1918, Aleutian Islands, European Theater without inscription, Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The battalion is headquartered in Hiawatha, with units in Troy, Marysville, Concordia, Horton, Holton, Atchison, Salina and Abilene.

NGAKS conference in April

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Joint State Conference in Topeka, April 11-13 at the Ramada Inn downtown. The National Guard Association of Kansas, Kansas National Guard Family Program's Office and the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve office will participate in the conference. Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting will deliver a State of the Guard presenta-

tion on Saturday, April 11. A memorial service and family awards breakfast will be held. Companies and organizations desiring to set up an exhibit, advertise, or otherwise sponsor the conference should contact the National Guard Association of Kansas at 785-862-1066. For more information, go to <http://ngaks.org/> or www.kansas.gov/ksadjutantgeneral.



Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Tritsch places the Meritorious Unit Citation streamer on the flag of the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery. (Photo by Maj. Paul Schneider)

Exercise gives Soldiers a chance to practice for emergencies

By Staff Sgt. James Grosdidier

Whether the disaster is man-made, such as the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, or natural like Hurricane Katrina, the possibility exists for devastating disasters to strike American soil. As a result, government agencies and military units have stepped up their emergency response preparedness training. Because of the unique role National Guard units play in the community as first responders in case of disaster, the National Guard is an important component of any state or federal disaster response.

During the December training, the Soldiers of the 35th Infantry Division took part in a civil-support training exercise to prepare the division staff to play their part in the case of a disaster.

Military Support to Civilian Authorities is one of the Guard's primary missions, said Maj. Gen. M. Wayne Pierson, 35th Infantry Division commander, and the division must be prepared to conduct all of its required missions, often responding to multiple incidents in many locations.

"In addition to our federal war fighting mission, the 35th still has an obligation to The Adjutant General and the state of Kansas to maintain and enhance our ability

to command and control Guard units who may be called to assist local civilian authorities in emergency situations," said Pierson.

During the exercise, conducted at the 35th ID's headquarters at Fort Leavenworth, a simulated massive snowstorm hit Northwestern Kansas, knocking out power to many communities, closing main highways and roads, and leaving thousands of Kansas citizens stranded without power. Simulated terrorists, seeing an opportunity to further disrupt an already tenuous situation, seized the opportunity to attack government buildings in Topeka and to threaten power plants in the state.

Division staff was required to assume command and control of the various Kansas National Guard units that had been called to respond to the simulated disaster.

This required staff to coordinate and communicate on multiple levels with a variety of different entities that included local and state government and civilian agencies. In a civil support incident like the simulated disaster in December, the military is a supporting element to all civilian authorities.

(Continued on Page 14)



Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, second from left, responds to questions from the 35th Infantry Division staff while Maj. Gen. M. Wayne Pierson, left, 35th Infantry Division commander, Brig. Gen. Deborah Rose, director, Kansas Joint Forces Headquarters and Brig. Gen. Stewart Reeve, 35th ID deputy commander, right, listen. (Photo by Staff Sgt. James Grosdidier)

134th Air Control Squadron has busy year of service

By 1st Lt. Alyson Stockton

For members of the 134th Air Control Squadron, the minuteman isn't their heritage; it's their standard.

The words "serving our state and nation" aren't just their mission statement; it's their lifestyle.

Throughout 2007, the proud men and women of the Jayhawk Control have proven their commitment to readiness and disaster response, supporting numerous Military Assistance to Civil Authorities missions and a unit-wide deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The record year for disasters and declared states of emergency started early: Chief Master Sgt. Alan "Butch" Connor dashed out of Dillon's on New Year's Eve so that he could take a generator to Western Kansas. Ice storms had left wide regions of power outages in Kansas, Colorado and Oklahoma.

Senior Master Sgt. Bill Angstadt left so fast for Greensburg – not knowing what he would find or how long he'd be there – that he forgot all about the party he was supposed to host later that day. Staff Sgt. Brian Herr kissed his pregnant wife goodbye and got on a plane to Southwest Asia in July so that he could augment the total force in controlling airspace over Afghanistan and Iraq.

Members of the squadron stood behind Governor Kathleen Sebelius at a State Preparedness Day news conference in September, as an example of preparedness and in appreciation of their service to Kansas and its people.

Eleven Airmen hit the icy roads the night of Dec. 10 with generators in tow to respond to power outages caused by ice storms across the state. Maybe it was the practice, or maybe it was just professionalism, but six men rolled out with two gen-

erators only two hours after they received notification of power outages in Southeast Kansas. They provided generators and maintenance staff to Chetopa, Baxter Springs and Seneca. Thanks to these dedicated Airmen, nursing homes and community centers had power throughout the nasty winter weather that week.

Like the wing it's a part of, the squadron's name doesn't capture all the missions its people perform. The air control squadron is a miniature wing, with its own vehicle and heavy equipment operators, maintenance technicians and communications specialists. Those support personnel complement an operations staff of air battle managers, air traffic controllers and radar operators.

Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general, acknowledged the extensive contributions of the 134th to the state mission at the retirement ceremony of a 134th member in November. He said there's a Wizard of Oz poster in the governor's office that says, "We have flying monkeys and we're not afraid to use them."

"In the Kansas National Guard," Bunting said, "we have an air control squadron and we're not afraid to use them."

Flying monkeys they are not, but these modern Minutemen are setting the standard for today's Guardsmen.



Tech. Sgt. Michael Balevre, 134th Air Control Squadron, makes adjustments on a generator supplied to an ice-stricken community during the December ice storms that swept the state. (Photo provided)

161st Guardsmen arrive home in time for Christmas



The ground was snowy, the wind brisk, but that didn't deter friends and families of Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 161st Artillery as they waited for the buses that would bring their soldiers home to the Lenexa armory on Dec. 23. (Photo by Col. Eric Peck)



After the buses arrived, there were many joyous reunions as Soldiers met up with the families and friends there to greet them. Similar scenes could be found in other communities where the battalion has units. (Photo by Col. Eric Peck)

Trees downed, thousands left without power



The 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation flew Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting and other officials on aerial surveys of storm affected areas in December. (Photo by Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales, 105th MPAD)



Ice damage such as this was typical in many areas of the state in the aftermath of a major ice storm.



Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting surveyed damages on the ground, meeting local officials and discussing assistance that can be given by The Adjutant General's Department. (Photo by Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales, 105th MPAD)



A heavy coating of ice that covered everything greeted the Soldiers of the 242nd Engineer Company on their mission in Labette County. Numerous fallen trees limbs pulled down power

er as massive ice storm blankets the state



storm that swept across portions of Kansas in early December. (Photo by Capt. Sean Linn)



Maj. Gen Tod Bunting meets with Lt. Col. Tom Ames, 184th Intelligence Wing, Kansas National Guard, and Brown County Sheriff Lamar Shoemaker to discuss the extent of damages in the county. (Photo by Jane Welch)



Airmen at the 190th Air Refueling Wing load a generator on a truck. The generator was one of many that was delivered to ice-bound communities across the state to provide power for water pumping stations, sewer systems, hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities. (Photo by Col. Chris Stratmann)



lines and choked public roads. The debris that blocked public thoroughfares was scooped, lifted, sawn and dumped into waiting trucks to be hauled away. (Photos by Sgt. Steve Perkins)

137th Transportation Company delivers generators

By Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales 105th MPAD

On Monday, Dec. 10, The Adjutant's General's Department issued a news release urging Kansans to take proactive measures in preparation for an incoming ice storm. Forecasters were predicting an accumulation of up to two inches of ice throughout Kansas. Emergency managers around the state and the Public Safety Team, which includes the National Guard, went on alert.

By Dec. 13, approximately 106,000 Kansas power customers had lost electricity with the prognosis that power may not be restored for more than a week. Some of these communities had been without electricity since Dec. 10. In the town of Highland, the American Red Cross had been operating a small shelter in City Hall, providing meals for 170 people each day.

In response to this situation, many units of the Kansas National Guard were activated and deployed to the affected areas to provide security, deliver generators and provide debris removal. Twenty six members of the 137th Transportation Company reported for active duty with their Palletized Loading System trucks and orders to deliver generators to stricken

areas of the state

The PLS M1074 is a 10X10, 27 1/2 ton truck with a 500 hp V8 turbo charged diesel engine. The truck has a payload capability of 16.5 tons. This model of PLS has a material handling crane capable of lifting 20,000 pounds which can be utilized to load the truck.

"We can put these generators on the truck in five minutes, have them strapped down and be on the road in 20 minutes," said Sgt. Dennis Farnsworth, a squad leader in the 137th. "Over the past few days we have delivered generators to the towns of Muscotah, Manhattan and Greensburg."

By Dec. 14, the 137th had delivered generators to shelters in Turon, a mobile home park in Manhattan and to the water treatment plant in Muscotah. On Dec. 15, Farnsworth and the rest of the 137th were traveling, delivering their cargo to Oskaloosa, Highland and White Cloud.

The 26 members of the 137th were tasked with 25 delivery missions, delivering 44.2 tons of generators to various locations around the state totaling 5,122 miles traveled between Dec. 12 and 17.

The generators, supplied by FEMA, ranged from 20kW up to 175kW.



"Neither rain nor sleet nor..." The 137th Transportation Company did not let snow and ice deter them as they delivered generators to power critical facilities in storm stricken communities. (Photo by Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales, 105th MPAD)

Storm ambushes Kansas; 778th Transportation Company mounts up

By Spc. Rachel L. Jewitt, UPAR

It was a Friday night, Dec. 14, and a call came to activate Kansas Guard members from the 778th Transportation Company to stage equipment for clean up after the recent ice storm. Another storm front was approaching fast and there were a lot of people in need of assistance.

Eight members from the 778th assembled gear and transportation in several hours. Six Soldiers were on convoy duty and two on generator duty. The four-day activation involved a lot of driving, some eating and sleeping. The convoy commander was Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kevin Harsch, who stayed on top of all communications coming from several sources on the mission.

The area damaged the worst seemed to be past Horton, Kan., around the Kickapoo reservation. The broken power lines were reminiscent of last January's activation for the ice and snow storm that hit Western Kansas. Several civilians came to welcome the 778th and inform the Soldiers that people all the way to the Missouri border were without power and heat. The Horton armory had cots set up and was ready to handle any influx of civilians left without heat or power. The roads were icy and visibility at times was so bad that the convoy had to slow down to 25 mph. Yet, the 778th group was excited to be able to serve.

"This is what we do," said Staff Sgt. Mark Yeager. "This is our job."



Shelly Mulinax, manager of Myer Lumber in Oskaloosa, unloads a generator delivered by the 137th Transportation Company. (Photo by Sgt. Gilbert Gonzales, 105th MPAD)

Deadly ice and snow storm closes roadways, leaves thousands in the dark

Continued from Page 1

for the state to receive direct federal support on Dec. 12.

Nearly 225 Kansas National Guardsmen helped Kansas communities deal with the impact of the ice storm.

Approximately 145 soldiers from the Kansas Army Guard and approximately 80 airmen from the Kansas Air Guard performed a variety of missions ranging from search and rescue, clearing debris from roadways, opening armories as shelters, managing inventory and staff, and delivering generators, bottled water, and cots throughout the state.

Five residents in different homes in Cherokee County were rescued by members of the 891st Engineering Battalion. The Guardsmen assisted local authorities with search and rescue efforts going door to door to check the welfare of individuals.

At the height of the power outages and road closures, approximately 2,000 Kansans took shelter at one of many locations provided by the American Red Cross and other community organizations around the state. The Kansas National Guard has also opened additional shelters in its armories in Clay

Center, Horton, Marysville, Manhattan, Russell and Sabetha.

The Kansas National Guard provided generators to critical needs facilities across Kansas including hospitals, shelters, nurs-

ing homes and water and sewer systems. FEMA also provided 60 generators which the Guard assisted in delivering. In addition, FEMA provided Kansas with more than 950 cots and 40,000 bottles of water

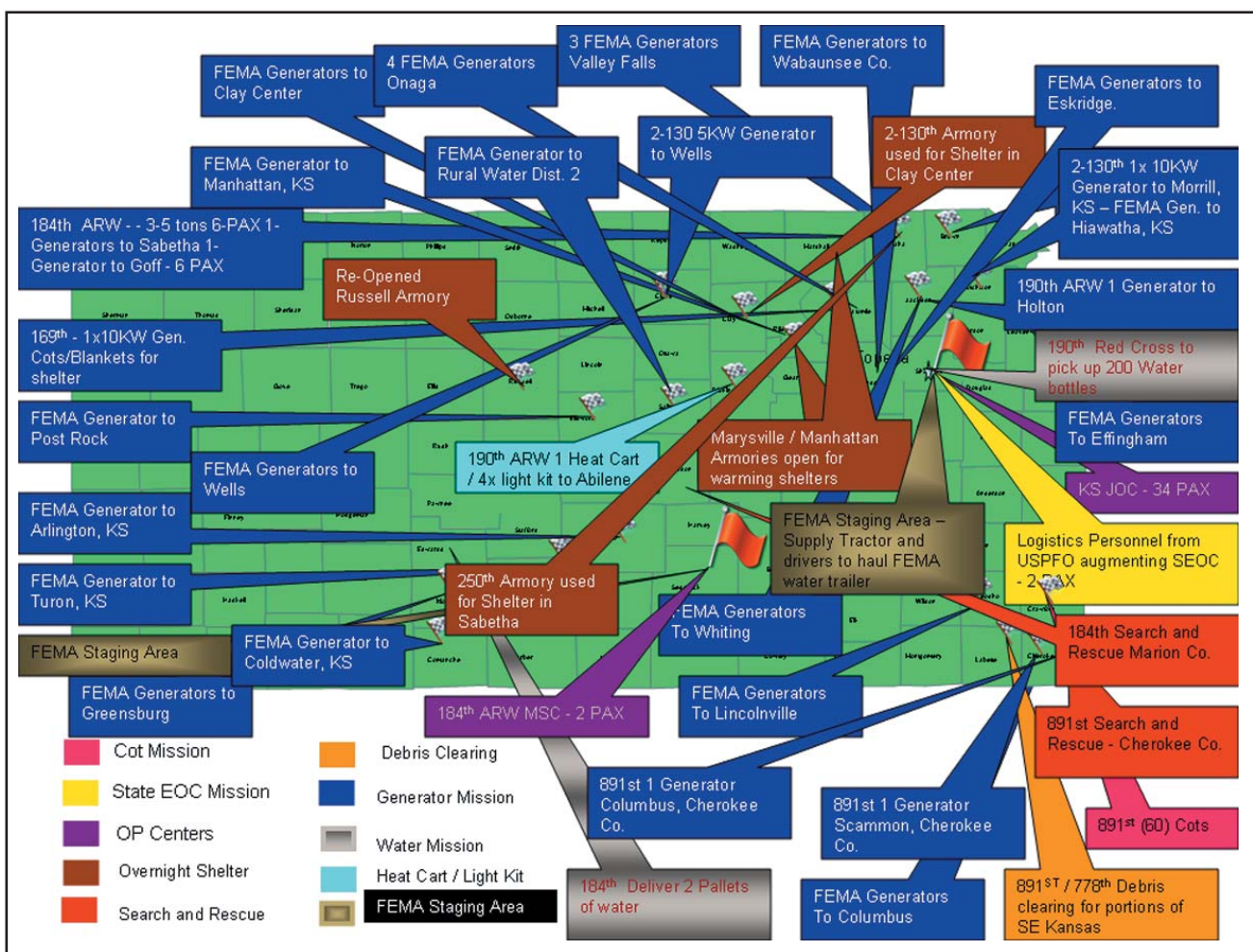
to support shelters as needed and Guardsmen delivered the bottled water and cots where supplies were short.

Guard units involved in the storm response included: 137th Transportation

Company; 891st Engineering Battalion; 778th Transportation Company; 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery; 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry; 184th Intelligence Wing; 190th Air Refueling Wing

Preliminary damage assessments are underway in the hardest hit counties to determine if federal assistance will be available to the local governments, and certain nonprofits including the electric cooperatives. Early estimates from the electric cooperatives alone project more than \$130 million in losses. That number is expected to go up once damage assessments total losses and expenses to local governments and other qualifying non-profit organizations.

"This storm was the fourth disaster in Kansas this year to require a state and federal declaration, and result in millions of dollars in losses," Bunting said. "It was a record-setting year for disasters in our state and we are hoping for a very quiet 2008."



The Kansas National Guard carried out a variety of emergency response and recovery missions related to the massive ice storm that hit Kansas in December and involved nearly 225 Soldiers and Airmen.

Eight months later, tornado-devastated community is recovering

By Sharon Watson

The town of Greensburg is making its way back after an EF-5 tornado nearly destroyed it on May 4, but progress wouldn't have been possible without first removing thousands of piles of debris from the town. The final reports on the disaster reveal just what an overwhelming task that was for the Kansas National Guard, Kansas Department of Transportation and numerous counties, cities and private contractors which all brought equipment to take on this task.

More than 300,000 cubic yards of debris was removed from Greensburg in just the first two weeks, according to a FEMA Debris Collection Report. By May 23, the debris moved was the equivalent of 54 Olympic size swimming pools or a 10 story building the size of the Greensburg High School football field.

During the first two weeks following the tornado, crews removed rubble ranging from just a few cubic yards a day to as much as 25,000 cubic yards in one day.

By mid-July, the debris removed from Greensburg totaled approximately 400,000 cubic yards and would have filled 118 Olympic swimming pools or a 21 story building the size of the Greensburg High School football field.

It took more than 42,000 truck loads to move the debris. Much of it went to the landfill just a few miles northeast of Greensburg off U.S. Highway 54. The highway remained closed for four weeks to ensure the safety of travelers who would have otherwise had to maneuver around as many as 2,400 dump truck loads of debris a day moving down Highway 54.

And despite all of the work done to remove debris, as new projects go up and old structures come down, more debris is an issue. Fortunately, volunteers have always come through for this town. On Oct. 26 and 27, Greensburg celebrated Make a Difference Day. During that time volunteers along with city and county crews spent the days clearing more debris.

The city reports the total debris clean up costs, as of Dec. 20, at more than \$45,000.

Since May, a lot has changed in Greensburg. Trees stripped of all vegetation began to leaf out not long after the tornado, and grass began to grow where piles of debris once lay.

City officials quickly began planning how to ensure residents would return to the town to live and determined starting school in the fall would be the key to keeping many.

School Superintendent Darin Headrick worked with city officials to get temporary structures for an August start date and it happened. Headrick says about 74 percent of district's population has returned to Greensburg. Plans for rebuilding Greensburg schools are now underway and a completion is projected for 2009.

Many others have stepped up to improve the possibility of residents returning to Greensburg to rebuild. For example, H.B. Hudson, founder of Hudson Oil Company, set up an account at the Greensburg State Bank to provide \$700 to each family rebuilding or remodeling their home within the city limits. And recently, Torsten Energy, LLC, announced its plan to build a biodiesel plant in Greensburg which would add approximately 20 to 25 jobs to the



Scenes like this were daily occurrences in Greensburg for weeks. (Photo by 102nd Military History Detachment)

area. The plant is slated to be built in Greensburg's new industrial park.

Just as debris clearing was a major undertaking for the town, utility restoration has been as well. It wasn't until late November that the town had all its electrical power restored. The water tower is to be completed within the next six months. Also, the town's only stoplight, on U.S. Highway 54, was just recently installed and is now operational.

City officials formed a planning group which spent 12 weeks developing a Long-Term Community Recovery Plan which

will guide the direction of development. Greensburg residents and leaders have also determined to make Greensburg a "green" town, that is, one that is built with materials that are environmentally friendly. This has drawn a lot of media attention to the town and The Learning Channel is planning a show to feature families and businesses choosing to build green.

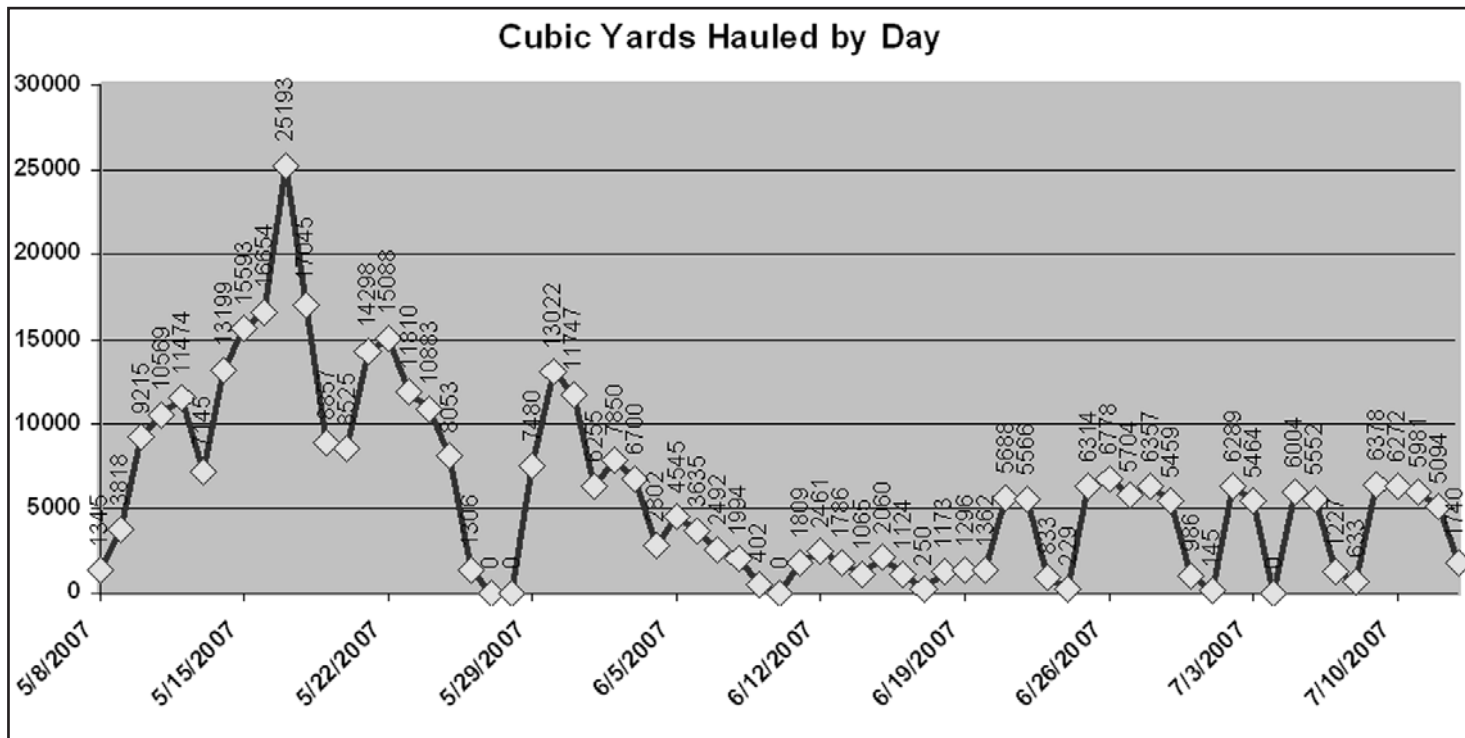
The town is no stranger to media attention since the disaster made it a household name across the world. In fact, Weather Channel featured the tornado as the number one weather story of 2007.

As of mid-December, more than 661 building permits have been issued, with 96 of those to new homes, 39 for permanent commercial structures, 54 for accessory structures and more than 300 others for building or repair work.

Progress can be seen simply by reviewing the list of city projects and the expenses related to them. More than \$3.5 million has been spent by the city to repair the electrical system and more than \$1.5 million to repair street lights. Numerous other projects bring the amount spent by the city to date to nearly \$4 million more.

Over the past six months, many people from all across the nation have donated money and other goods and services to help the people of Greensburg rebuild. The town of Fairview, Kan., held a benefit to help ensure the town's residents had a great Christmas and they delivered 250 Christmas trees and also toys to Greensburg.

For more information on the progress in Greensburg, go to www.greensburgks.org.



At the peak of operations, approximately 25,000 cubic yards of debris were removed in one day from the town of Greensburg. It took more than 42,000 dump truck loads to clear away all the debris, approximately 400,000 cubic yards in all.



Two more loads of debris head toward the landfill from Greensburg. (Photo by the 102nd Military History Detachment)



Now, where once was nothing but rubble, new houses are being built, visible signs of Greensburg's recovery. (Photo by Stacy Barnes, city of Greensburg)

Emergency organizations pass graded exercise for Wolf Creek

By Sharon Watson

FEMA evaluators praised responders from the state, county and Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station for a job well done following a two-day emergency response exercise in November. Every two years, FEMA evaluates the state of Kansas, Coffey County and the plant on its ability to respond to a potential nuclear disaster involving Wolf Creek Generating Station. During this year's exercise, no deficiencies were identified during the drill and only three areas requiring corrective action were noted, all of which were addressed during the event.

"This year's evaluated exercise provided an excellent example of how the state, a county and private industry can work together in an emergency to utilize all of the necessary resources we have to protect the people of Kansas," said Bill Chornyak, deputy director of Kansas Division of Emergency Management. "The actions we took to respond in this exercise are very similar to what we do in many of our disaster responses. It makes our state better prepared to handle not only potential issues with the nuclear

power facility, but any emergency where many state agencies and local entities work together to resolve issues."

During the event, responders from the state, county and plant took their places at their respective emergency operation centers, just as they would in a real emergency, to identify what issues the exercise scenario presented and what actions would be necessary to resolve the issues.

For the exercise, representatives from numerous state agencies, Coffey County and the plant worked in the State Emergency Operations Center at the State Defense Building, Topeka, where Kansas Division of Emergency Management staff coordinated the response on behalf of the state and the governor. Additional county staff responded to Coffey County's Emergency Operations Center which also housed some state and plant officials. In addition, several plant officials worked at the plant's emergency operations facility near Burlington.

"Because the state and county include our plant staff in their emergency operations centers, it truly makes the Kansas response a joint effort and ensures thorough and accurate information is getting to



Representatives of numerous state emergency response agencies and social service organizations staff the State Emergency Operations Center in Topeka during the two-day evaluated exercise for Wolf Creek Generating Station. (Photo by Cathy Autrey, Wolf Creek Generating Station)

the decision makers and to the public," said Matt Sunseri, Wolf Creek plant manager and vice president of Operations.

The scenario involved the simulated evacuation of the plant and several areas around the plant, as well as testing environmental samples following the simulated release from the plant. FEMA evaluated these processes, the timeliness and accuracy of information released to the public, the use of the broadcast emergency alert system, and procedures at two county reception and care facilities which would be used to house evacuated residents.

"It's critical the county plays a significant role in making decisions regarding the plant and the residents, and we will continue to work closely with the state and

the plant to ensure the public is protected," said Randy Rogers, Coffey County Interim Emergency Manager.

The evaluated exercise provides reasonable assurance that the appropriate protective measures can be taken in the event of a radiological emergency. FEMA is responsible for evaluating offsite plans and exercises for states and counties through the Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program. The NRC is the federal agency responsible for evaluating onsite emergency plans and exercises for nuclear power plants.

"Each time we do these exercises together, we improve our techniques, our relationships and our overall readiness at the state, county and facility level," Chornyak said.



Sharon Watson (right) Public Affairs director for The Adjutant General's Department, discusses wording of a news statement with Lt. John Eichkorn, Kansas Highway Patrol, in the Joint Information Center, as Jane Welch, state recorder, keeps a running log of all activities in the JIC. (Photo by Cathy Autrey, Wolf Creek Generating Station)

Leadership announced for Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center

Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the Kansas adjutant general, announced the leadership chosen to command the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center (GPJRTC) in Salina. The GPJRTC, which has received state and federal funding to expand its capabilities, provides inter-agency training for state and local government agencies and the Kansas National Guard allowing them to all train together for state emergency responses. It also provides in-state pre-mobilization military training making Kansas among the first states in the nation to do this.

Col. Randy Roebuck will serve as the first Garrison Commander/Director of the GPJRTC. Roebuck is currently the commander of the 184th Intelligence Wing in Wichita and has a successful leadership track record. He has extensive experience in standing up new organizations and converting existing structure to accomplish new missions which will be his role as director.

Lt. Col. J.J. Jordan will serve as the commander of the 284th Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS). Jordan's experiences in Iraq and his vision of a better way to train for war formulated the vision of the GPJRTC. The squadron will provide advice and liaison support to U.S. Combatant Commanders on how to best employ U.S. and Coalition airpower for Close Air Support (CAS), Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR),

Electronic Warfare (EW), and airlift.

Lt. Col. David Lee is heading up the Pre-Mobilization Training Assistance and Evaluation Team, which allows Kansas National Guard soldiers to train in state to prepare for war, and reduces the amount of time required for them to train away from home. The 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, was the first unit to undergo pre-mobilization at the GPJRTC allowing the Guardsmen to be closer to home for holiday travel at Thanksgiving this year.

"I'm proud to have such a strong leadership team to head up the Great Plains Joint Regional Training Center in Salina," said Bunting. "This facility is on track to be among the finest in the nation to train both civilian responders and military for homeland security needs and to provide national defense warfighting training. I'm honored to have such a well-qualified staff to help shape this center's future."

GPJRTC will also include Crisis City, a multi-use homeland security training facility; and it currently includes the Smoky Hill Range Complex and the Kansas Regional Training Institute (KSRTI) which both provide military training.

The Salina Airport Authority, Chamber of Commerce, emergency workers and managers, and city and county governments have been instrumental in the expansion of this training center in Salina.

2007 Kansas storm damages may exceed \$625 million

By Sharon Watson

Prior to the December 2007 ice storm, Kansas had already experienced three federally-declared disasters resulting in a total of more than \$480 million in damages. The winter storm of 2006 affected 44 western Kansas counties and resulted in \$386 million dollars in expenses, while the Greensburg tornado in May and the northeast/north central flooding at the same time resulted in \$70 million in reimbursable losses. Then the June 29 southeast Kansas flooding left more than \$26 million in expenses.

The preliminary damage estimates for the recent ice storm reveal approximately \$144 million in losses for electrical cooperatives alone. That leaves the state with more than \$625 million in reimbursable losses in 2007, and the total is expected to increase as the damage assessments provide new information.

"2007 was an unbelievable year in Kansas. We lost 25 lives in the four storms, an entire community was nearly destroyed, many homes and personal belongings forever lost, and not a county in the state was spared some sort of impact," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, Director of Kansas Division of Emergency Management and Kansas adjutant general. "The four disasters last year left a deep mark on our state, but we have seen the strength of Kansans as individuals and communities rebuild their lives, homes and businesses."

As preliminary damage assessment teams are surveying the losses from the recent ice storm, there are several similarities to the ice storm that hit the state a

year ago. On Dec. 28, 2006, the storm moved into western Kansas and by New Year's Eve, it had grown in intensity resulting in numerous power outages. The recent storm moved into the state Dec. 6, 2007, and intensified Dec. 10, also resulting in a large number of power outages.

Kansas Electric Cooperatives sustained tremendous losses of power lines and poles in both storms. In 2006, nine of the co-ops were affected with more than 10,000 utility poles knocked down or damaged and 21 transmission structures impacted. This time, 23 co-ops were affected and nearly 10,000 utility poles were again knocked down. Outages at the peak of last year's storm were at 46,000 customers while approximately 50,000 were in the dark this time. Power remained out for approximately three weeks in the western Kansas storm, and for approximately two weeks this time.

The December 2006 ice storm was the most expensive storm ever in the state with more than \$386 million dollars expended due to the storm, and approximately \$350 million of those dollars went to reimburse the Kansas Electric Cooperatives for their repairs. Total damage assessments from the current storm won't be in for a week or two, but preliminary assessments from Kansas Electric Cooperatives indicate approximately \$144 million in losses have occurred to the electrical coops from the most recent storm. That number is expected to climb and does not include expenses incurred by local governments to respond to the storm with emergency protective measures and debris clearing.

Soldier receives Purple Heart



Cpl. Allen C. Hill, Ottawa, receives a Purple Heart Medal from Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general, on Dec. 3, 2007, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Hill was wounded in action Nov. 21 in Iraq by an improvised explosive device. He is a member of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry, but was serving in Iraq with the 731st Transportation Company, Larned. (Photo provided)

Matters of Law

Common sense can help protect your identity against theft

By Col. Bruce Woolpert

Identity theft is spreading at epidemic speed. It is easy to assume this type of crime will never happen to you, but the percentages are increasing each year that it will. An attorney friend of mine recently sent me some specific steps you can take to help reduce the damage that can be caused by identity theft. My advice is to read this and make a copy for your files in case you need to refer to it someday.



Col. Bruce Woolpert

"Do not sign the back of your credit cards. Instead, put "Photo ID Required."

When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, *do not* put the complete account number on the "For" line. Instead, just put the last four numbers. The credit card company knows the rest of the number, and anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to it.

Put your work phone number on your checks instead of your home phone. If you have a post office box, use that instead of your home address. If you do not have a post office box, use your work address. Never have your Social Security number printed on your checks. You can write it in if it is necessary.

Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine. Copy both sides of each license, credit card, etc. This will help you know what you had in your wallet in case it is stolen, as well as all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel. Keep the photocopy in a safe place. I also carry a photocopy of my passport when I travel either here or abroad.

Unfortunately, I, have firsthand knowledge of the horrible experience of having my name, address, social security number, and credit cards falling into the wrong hands because my wallet was stolen last month. Within a week, the thieves ordered an expensive monthly cell phone package,

applied for a credit card, had a credit line approved to buy a Gateway computer, received a PIN number from the Division of Motor Vehicles to change my driving record information online and more. Here are some of the hard lessons I learned from that experience.

We have been told we should cancel our credit cards immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them.

File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where your credit cards, etc., were stolen. This proves to credit providers you were diligent and this is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one).

But here's what is perhaps most important of all: Call the three national credit reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and also call the Social Security fraud line number. I had never heard of doing that until advised by a bank that called to tell me an application for credit was made over the Internet in my name. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

By the time I was advised to do this, almost two weeks after the theft, all the damage had been done. There are records of all the credit checks initiated by the thieves' purchases, none of which I knew about before placing the alert. Since then, no additional damage has been done, and the thieves threw my wallet away this weekend (someone turned it in). These countermeasures seem to have stopped them dead in their tracks.

Now, here are the numbers you always need to contact about your wallet, etc., has been stolen:

- 1.) Equifax: 800-525-6285
- 2.) Experian (formerly TRW): 888-397-3742
- 3.) Trans Union: 800-680-7289
- 4.) Social Security Administration (fraud line): 800-269-0271

It sure seems like my friend's advice is worth taking a couple of minutes to follow.

Here's hoping you are never the victim of a crime, and that the rule of law always be decided in your favor!

Infantry company victorious at 2007 TAG APFT Challenge

Grunts of infantry pride echoed within the walls of the Lawrence Armory, home of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry, as the men welcomed home their physical fitness champions. This most recent achievement further sustains the principle that when presented with any objective, the Kansas Infantry is prepared to uphold its tradition of triumph.

Army National Guard teams from around the state represented their respective units upon the field of competition in Salina on Saturday, Oct. 13, 2007. All competitors executed the standard Army Physical Fitness Test and were scored accordingly. Individual scores were then accumulated to determine overall team rankings. Teams were composed of four individual competitors representing four different age categories.

Company A was represented by: Spc. Virgil Barnard (22-26 age bracket), Sgt. Jeffery Paluso (27-31), Sgt. Robert Patrick (32-36) and Sgt. Raymond Kiely (42-46). Paluso individually placed first in his age category. Barnard, Patrick, and each Kiely placed second in their categories.

"It was a nice morning for an APFT," said Kiely. "There was little wind and the temperature was cool."

Barnard noted that the competition was

fierce. "There were a lot of good teams and a lot of strong individual competitors. Although we knew that we performed well, we were still on the edge of our seats."

Maintaining a physically fit force is one of the many objectives stressed through training in the Kansas Guard. Within the infantry in particular, physical fitness has been emphasized as a crucial aspect of training necessary for the achievement of the battalion mission. Accordingly, Company A has implemented innovative initiatives to achieve and exceed physical fitness goals. These initiatives include regular physical fitness training at drills, accented by individual counseling encouraging healthy lifestyle habits for Soldiers when not at drill.

"The commander has certainly made clear his intent to promote physical fitness within the company," said 1st Lt. Daniel Osborne, Company A executive officer. "Accordingly, we have delegated this intent through leaders at all levels."

When asked to predict the outcome of next year's competition, Capt. Darren Koberlein, the company commander, stated with an inconspicuous grin, "We are not going to declare victory yet, but we have already begun efforts for a repeat."

Field artillery battalion hosts annual Saint Barbara's celebration

By Maj. Paul Schneider

The 2nd Battalion 130th Field Artillery, headquartered at Hiawatha, held its annual St. Barbara's Celebration on Dec. 1 at the Prairie Band Convention Center. Lt. Col. John Rueger, battalion commander, hosted more than 230 guest and members of the battalion in honor of the patron saint of the artillery.

The Order of Saint Barbara is an honorary military society of the United States Field Artillery. Both U.S. Marine and Army field artillery along with their military and civilian supporters are eligible for membership. The order is managed by the U.S. Field Artillery Association and two levels of recognition exist. The most distinguished level is the Ancient Order of Saint Barbara and those who are selected for this honor have achieved long-term, exceptional service to the field artillery

surpassing even their brethren in the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara. The order links field artillerymen of the past and present in a brotherhood of professionalism, selfless service and sacrifice symbolized by Saint Barbara.

Col. Alexander Duckworth and retired Master Sgt. Dan Anderson were inducted into the Ancient Order of Saint Barbara for their longstanding service to the U.S. Field Artillery.

Capt. Larry Leupold, Capt. Brian Williams, Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Rieschick, Staff Sgt. Ivan Nordquist, Staff Sgt. Marc Beswick and Sgt. Terry Jameson were also inducted into the Honorable Order of St. Barbara for their contributions to the U.S. Field Artillery. Carrie Rueger, Ginger Prine and Sheila Bolieu were inducted into the Order of Molly Pitcher for their support of the battalion during the dining out.

TriWest contributes \$15,000 to Kansas National Guard Foundation



Don Brown (left center), market vice president for the central market area at TriWest Healthcare Alliance, presented a check for \$15,000 to Barbara Bunting (right center), chairman, Kansas National Guard Foundation and Brig. Gen. Jonathan P. Small (far right), assistant adjutant general, Army, during a brief ceremony Dec. 18 at Joint Force Headquarters Kansas in Topeka. Also attending the ceremony were retired Command Sgt. Maj. Viviano Reveles, foundation board member; Tim Ray (left), TriWest Service Area Director for Kansas and South Dakota; and Cathy Teidel, TriWest Beneficiary Services Education Representative. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)

“Care packages” warm the hearts of deployed Guardsmen

By Jane Welch

The holidays have always been a time for giving. How people give back varies from person to person. Some give to their favorite charities, adopt a family for the holidays or bake cookies for a sale at their church.

At this time of year The Adjutant General’s Department Public Affairs Office receives a lot of phone calls from individuals, companies, schools and clubs wanting to do something to support the members of the military stationed overseas, thousands of miles away from their homes, who won’t be able to share in the joy of the holidays with their families and friends.

Over the years the Public Affairs Office has helped dozens of groups and individuals send literally hundreds of packages to our Guardsmen around the world.

A package in the mail seems like such a simple thing to most people but to a Guard member away from home it can be the highlight of the week.

Recently our office was contacted by a

group of ladies in the Topeka area who had Halloween candy they wanted to send to the troops. We met at the Post Office and boxed up the candy and sent it to Maj. Brad Burns the commander of the 731st Transportation Company currently stationed in Iraq.

Burns sent the ladies a thank you note and said “It was like watching my own children at Halloween dig into the candy after being out all night. I suppose we are still kids at heart especially when it comes to chocolate. You allowed us all to think of home, if only for a moment. Many of us told stories of a memorable event with our kids on some Halloween night.”

The 35th Military Police is another unit that has also been the recipients of many care packages. The commander Maj. Robert Stinson wrote “I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for your commitment to the Soldiers of the Kansas National Guard that are deployed to Iraq and around the world. It amazes me how much support we are receiving from



Maj. Robert Stinson and 1st Sgt. Robert Iestas, 35th Military Police, get into the holiday spirit with items that were sent in care packages to the unit. (Photo provided)

friends and families back at home.”

A care package from home not only helps make a homesick Soldier know that someone is thinking about him but it also gives the sender a warm feeling in their heart knowing that they were able to make

a difference in the life of a lonely Soldier.

If you would like more information about sending care packages to Kansas Guardsmen, call the Public Affairs Office at 785-274-1190 or send an e-mail to jane.e.welch1@us.army.mil.

Kansans donate thousands

Continued from Page 1

toward the cost of four additional buses from Prestige Bus Charters to bring troops to Lenexa and Kansas City. Prestige Bus Company took 10 percent off the normal cost for these Guard members. The 161st Field Artillery Regiment Association began collecting donations several weeks ago and raised \$10,000 toward the effort. The association is made up of retirees and former regiment members.

Efforts by Mindy Reed, wife of Staff Sgt. Brian Reed, from Battery C, raised enough money to purchase 17 commercial airline tickets that were given to the Soldiers in Battery C, 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, who were unable to purchase the tickets themselves.

Other donors who stepped forward to assist the Soldiers were:

- American Legion Riders – \$ 5,000
- T&M Financial Services of Topeka – \$5,000
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway – \$5,000
- Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc. of Shawnee Mission - \$5,000
- Kansas Speedway – \$5,000
- Listeners of 106.5 FM radio, the Wolf, in Kansas City – \$ 3,416
- AT&T Telecom Pioneers of Topeka – \$2,500
- Campbell family in memory of Lee Ann Orndorff – \$2,275
- Layne Christenson Company of Shawnee Mission – \$2,000
- Oneok Energy of Topeka – \$1,000
- Kansas Air National Guardsmen with

the 190th Air Refueling Wing – \$1,000

- Padgett Agency of Greenleaf – \$1,000
- Topeka Transfer and Storage – \$1,000
- Hutchinson Correctional Facility inmates also contributed \$1,000 to the holiday travel expenses through their Rock Castle Jaycee chapter.

Chartered buses brought many of the Soldiers from the 161st Field Artillery to Kansas. The Soldiers’ holiday leave was from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2.

“We’ve seen the true spirit of Christmas shine through in this effort by Governor Sebelius and many others to get our citizen Soldiers home for Christmas,” said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general. “It’s truly amazing what the people of Kansas have done. I thank them from the bottom of my heart for this generous showing of support for the Kansas National Guard.”

Barbara Bunting, chair of the Kansas National Guard Foundation added: “The incredible response we have had in Kansas shows our state stands strongly behind their citizen Soldiers and their families.”

The additional money raised above what is needed for the buses in Kansas will remain with the Kansas National Guard Foundation which provides financial support for programs aimed at helping Guard members, their families and their communities in dealing with various aspects of military deployments. The Foundation also supports programs that educate the public about the roles and accomplishments of the Guard and their families and the benefits of the Guard in Kansas communities.

Companies’ generosity makes 184th holidays happy

By 1st Lt. Alyson Stockton

Members of the 184th Intelligence Wing had their holidays made a lot happier this year by the generosity of its surrounding communities.

Two Wichita area businesses sought out needy families who were identified by Wing family programs as needing assistance this holiday season. The companies—Hartman Oil Company and Kirkpatrick, Strecker and Company CPA firm—donated money and Christmas gifts to those who would otherwise be without.

Kirkpatrick, Strecker and Company CPAs shopped for five families. The Wing has enjoyed their generosity in years past, too, when they donated care packages for deployed members.

“It may seem as though everyone in uniform has it all together, but our military families are faced with the same needs as civilians and occasionally have hard times too,” said wing executive officer Capt.

Deborah Balentine, who presented an appreciation plaque to the staff at Kirkpatrick, Strecker and Company.

Hartman Oil Company donated \$600 cash. Each year, Hartman’s employees elect to donate money to a charitable cause instead of spending money on gifts. At their holiday party, they surprise their boss with a contribution made in his name to the charity they chose. Their contribution will help families pay bills or meet other financial commitments.

Wing commander Col. Randy Roebuck and family programs coordinator Hilari DeLaRosa attended Hartman’s holiday party to accept the gift. DeLaRosa said the most touching part about the donations was that the companies sought out needy Guard families to whom they could contribute.

The companies gave their gifts to the families anonymously, but such kindness is hard to overlook. The generosity of Wichita’s locals made Jayhawk holidays happy.



Members of the AT&T Telecom Pioneers present a check to Michele Henry (left) and Barbara Bunting of the Kansas National Guard Foundation. The group was one of many organizations that gave money to help bring members of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery home from Texas in time for Christmas. (Photo by Steve Larson)

Kansas National Guard Foundation: Here for the families

By Beth Sutton

The Kansas National Guard Foundation is off to a good start. The Foundation is an organization put together to enhance programs offered by the National Guard Family Programs office to educate and train Guard families by financially supporting these activities.

The Foundation is a non profit organization and because of its 501(c)3 status, all donations are tax deductible. Donations have been received from corporations and the general public.

Some of those donations have already been put to good use. Since the first meeting of the Foundation in June of 2007, the board has approved funds to assist the facilitation of the Kids and Teen camps put on by the Family Programs office. One goal of the Family Programs office is to expand the services offered to families, and the Foundations goal is to support that expansion.

The Foundation Board of Directors are as follows: Barbara Bunting, chairperson,

Beth Sutton, secretary/treasurer, on behalf of the 35th Division Family Readiness; Tom Cundy, representing Wal-Mart; Michele Henry, on behalf of the Kansas National Guard Association; retired Command Sgt. Maj. Viviano Reveles on behalf of the Enlisted Association for the National Guard of Kansas; and Jeffery Shelton.

Anyone interested in requesting assistance from the Kansas National Guard Foundation can contact KSNFGD@yahoo.com for a “Request for Funds” form. This form must be filled out at least 90 days prior to the event. Submissions received after 90 days will be reviewed at the discretion of the Foundation Board of Directors. Submissions should be sent to, or donation information can be found at:

Chairman
Kansas National Guard Foundation
2800 SW Topeka Blvd
Topeka, KS 66611
KSNFGD@yahoo.com

First grade students make holiday cheer for Guardsmen

Christmas can be a hard time for the families of National Guardsmen, whether they are deployed or at home. There are so many things that one wants to do for their Soldier, but what can one really do? One first grader at Wanamaker Elementary, Topeka, had an idea on what he could do for his sister and uncle, both in the Kansas Army National Guard.

One of those students, Bradley Mathewson, has a sister, Spc. Kristin Mathewson, who is a member of the 25th Military Police Company. Bradley's uncle, Sgt. Mike Mathewson, is a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment and works full time for the MPs as their unit administrator.

Bradley convinced Pat Dean, his teacher, into having his class make Christmas ornaments for the unit's Christmas tree. With the approval of Marcy Cassidy, principal of Wanamaker Elementary, the class went to work on the ornaments.

Bradley said "It was fun making the ornaments for my sister and uncle. They are in the Army to protect kids like me. I miss them when they have to go away for a long time. I wish that they would stay here, but they have to go and protect other kids who live far away."

On Nov. 30, the students gathered in their school's lunchroom to turn the ornaments over to 1st Lt. Christopher Coco, rear detachment commander of the unit.

"I was expecting what I made in the first grade," said Coco, "cut out snowflakes and red and green paper

chains. I could not believe the quality of colored balls, candy canes made of red and white beads on pipe cleaners and chains made of yarn, red straws and white plastic snowflakes. It was amazing."

Coco thanked the children and answered their questions about what it is like being in the Kansas National Guard.

The next morning was the December drill for the MPs. The Soldiers spent the first part of their drill putting the ornaments, made by little hands, onto the unit's Christmas tree at the Topeka South armory.

"It was really cool that these kids would do something like this," said Staff Sgt. David Palmer. "I expected this December drill to be a bit of a downer, what with the unit being deployed.

However, this really brightens things up."

"I know what it is like to be away from home on Christmas," said Spc. Mathewson, who spent Christmas 2005 in Djibouti. "What my brother and his class did is really a great thing."

Because of the quality of work produced by the first graders, the MPs decided to share them with their deployed Soldiers. Following the unit's Christmas Party, the ornaments were removed, repackaged and mailed to Iraq. Christmas mail to deployed units can be a bit slow due to the vast amount of mail in the system. However, they arrived in plenty of time to brighten the lives of the deployed Kansans.

The Soldiers of the 35th Military Police Company expressed their thanks to the teachers and first graders of Wanamaker Elementary and wished them a Merry Christmas.



The Christmas decorations these students made with love brought smiles of joy...



... to the soldiers of the 35th Military Police Company.

Leavenworth VFW Post named for fallen Kansas Guardsman



John Arnold, right, presents Lisa Deghand, and her daughter Emma with an official VFW proclamation announcing that VFW Post #12073 will be named the Bernard Lee Deghand Memorial Post #12073 in honor of her husband who was killed in Afghanistan in 2006. (Photo by Staff Sgt. James M. Grosdidier)

By Staff Sgt. James M. Grosdidier

Master Sgt. Bernard Lee "Bernie" Deghand, a 35th Infantry Division Soldier who was killed in the war on terror in Afghanistan, was honored in a dedication ceremony Jan. 5 when the newest Veterans of Foreign Wars Post in Kansas was named in his honor. The new post—the 168th in Kansas—will be known as Bernard Lee Deghand Memorial Post #12073. It will be housed in Tice Hall, the headquarters of the 35th Infantry Division, Kansas Army National Guard, at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Deghand, who deployed to Afghanistan to help train members of the Afghan army, was killed in a fire in 2006. He is survived by his wife Lisa and three children, Jami, Craig and Emma, who attended the dedication ceremony.

John Arnold, Post #12073 commander, presented Deghand with an official proclamation dedicating the new post in her husband's memory.

"I am very touched by this honor to

Bernie's memory," Deghand said. "Bernie would have been very proud." Master Sgt. Deghand had been a VFW member.

Post #12073 has 38 members, 25 of whom were sworn in as new members simultaneous with the creation of the new post. According to Arnold, the reason for the new post is two-fold. The post members—the majority of whom are 35th Infantry Division Soldiers—wanted to honor Master Sgt. Deghand's memory. They also wanted to be part of an organization that could help their fellow Soldiers.

"The guys in this unit [the 35th Infantry Division] wanted to create a family-oriented post to support the Soldiers who are deployed," said Arnold.

More than half of the division headquarters' Soldiers are deployed to Kosovo in support of Kosovo Force (KFOR) 9.

The VFW was started in 1899 after the Spanish-American War as a fraternal organization dedicated to helping returning service members.

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