



NORTH DAKOTA GUARDIAN

Volume 4, Issue 12

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in Iraq

Vietnam War
Veteran Retires

**Ho-Ho-
Hooh!**

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Santa's 'Nice' List Again

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By the end of this month, U.S. Forces will end missions in Iraq. The N.D. National Guard has had nearly 2,000 Guardsmen serve within the country over the past eight years. Read about the units, Soldiers and Airmen who have contributed to Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn.



8 Part of History

Staff Sgt. Teresa Pavljuk is deployed to Iraq at a historic time in the country's history. As the last N.D. Guardsman in Iraq, she has helped service members redeploy by working in the Air Transportation career field in order to make sure equipment and personnel make the journey home.



14 Last to Serve

Master Sgt. Alan Peterson was the last serving Vietnam War veteran in the N.D. National Guard. Upon his retirement last month, Peterson recalled his years of service beginning with his time in the Navy, where he worked aboard a ship in the Gulf of Tonkin.

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NORTH DAKOTA GUARDIAN

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ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

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Digital photos should be at least 300 dpi.

On the Cover



Retired Chief Master Sgt. Paul Tangen, of the 119th Wing, dons a specially made camouflage Santa suit before greeting residents at the annual N.D. National Guard Christmas party at the North Dakota Veterans Home in Lisbon, N.D. N.D. Air and Army National Guard members make personal donations to raise money for gifts and present them to the veterans at the nursing home each year during the holiday season. This year's event will be bigger than ever and take place Dec. 19.

GUARD POSTS

Dispatches from the N.D. Guard Family

BEST WISHES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Season's Greetings, During this special time of year, it's important to reflect on the tremendous sacrifices our National Guard Family has made in support of our nation's defense and our state's safety and security. As Connie and I visit with military Families throughout North Dakota, we are humbled by your steadfast commitment to God, family, country and state.

The holiday season is a time to gather with Family and friends, but this year some of our Families are once again without their loved ones. Some Airmen and Soldiers are deployed on missions throughout the world. Others are looking toward an upcoming deployment, knowing that next year they may not be home to celebrate the holidays with their loved ones.

Over the decades, many of our Soldiers and Airmen have missed holidays, birthdays and other Family events while serving their state and nation. Though it is painful to be apart from Family, our men and women in uniform know the feeling of pride in their service, accomplishing missions in defense of our nation and for the good of our communities and state.

Thank you for your proud tradition of service, both at home and abroad. On Dec. 13, we will celebrate the 375th birthday of America's National Guard, and protecting the homeland has been a crucial part of the National Guard's mission for those

375 years. In addition to the N.D. National Guard's contributions in support of the Global War on Terrorism, we successfully fought epic floods that threatened communities across the state for a third consecutive year. Highlights of these valuable missions are included in the set of DVDs you'll find in this issue.

Our National Guard Family remains strong through the support of our Soldiers, Airmen, Families, retirees, veterans, civilian employees and the employers who help our Guard members serve. Our duties are many, our accomplishments numerous, and a grateful state and nation has been there to support and encourage our force as we've faced tremendous challenges.

Please continue to pray for our fallen heroes and their Families. We will never forget their sacrifice and service on our behalf.

Connie and I wish you the best in 2012. May all of the blessings of the holiday season be with you and our entire National Guard Family, and thank you for your dedication, your patriotism and your service.

Sincerely,

*David
Connie*

Maj. Gen. David and Connie Sprynczynatyk



MAJ. GEN. DAVID & CONNIE SPRYNCZYNYATYK

N.D. National Guard Adjutant General



See more photos from N.D. National Guard events and missions in 2011 at <http://bit.ly/2011inPhotos>.

Means to an End

Guardsmen Reflect On Contributions to Iraq War Effort as Mission Closes



By Staff Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson
Joint Force Headquarters

When the war in Iraq began March 19, 2003, nearly 700 North Dakota Guardsmen were weeks behind the initial movement to combat. Hundreds more followed during the past eight years. But now, as the mission winds down and the U.S. prepares to withdraw all military forces by the end of this month, there's just one who remains. Staff Sgt. Teresa Pavljuk, with the 119th Wing Logistics Readiness Squadron, extended in country to help with the drawdown. She will be the last North Dakota Guardsman to serve in Operation New Dawn, which succeeded Operation Iraqi Freedom (Read her story on page 8).

The tradition of excellence she continues was carried for nearly a decade by 2,000 North Dakota Guardsmen. Eight lost their lives in the effort, and dozens of others were wounded in action. An unknown number suffer the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder. Nevertheless, few would argue the value of the legacy they have left in a troubled country.

"Our Guardsmen have served and sacrificed in Iraq for the past eight years, and their Families and employers have showed their commitment through their own service," said Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, N.D. adjutant general. "Their efforts will live on through the lives they saved, the tactics and techniques they developed and the people they touched. We will never forget those eight Guardsmen who gave everything in the Iraq war, and their Families will forever be in our prayers."

Here's a glimpse of eight years of valiant, selfless and noble efforts by North Dakota Guardsmen.

142nd Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy)

With only days of notice, 502 Soldiers with the N.D. National Guard, along with 145 Soldiers from Minnesota, mobilized to Fort Carson, Colo., in January 2003. They lived in a maintenance bay and trained for their mission until April. At midnight local time on April 27, 2003, the Soldiers crossed the Kuwait-Iraq border, becoming the first N.D. unit in Iraq for the war. While there, the battalion provided construction support for roads, airfields, fortification measures and buildings before returning home in March 2004.

"They had only one week's notice to report to the mob(ilization) station, and despite the difficult and trying conditions, they came together as a team from the very beginning and never looked back," said Col. David Anderson, who commanded the battalion. "The



Soldiers from the 141st Engineer Combat Battalion move in a convoy to patrol the main supply route from Baghdad to Tikrit, Iraq, looking for improvised explosive devices, June 4, 2004.



Above, Soldiers from the 957th Engineer Company (Multi-Role Bridge) construct a bridging system on the Euphrates River in Iraq. Right, Chief Master Sgt. Jason Anderson stops to greet a young Iraqi girl during his deployment Dec. 15, 2004.

142nd performed courageously and played a critical role in supporting and establishing the theater of operations logistics base near Balad. Throughout the deployment, the Soldiers and Families of the 142nd demonstrated 'resilience' before that term became a part of the Army."

957th Engineer Company

Like the 142nd, the 175 Soldiers of this Bismarck-based unit found themselves packing quickly in February 2003, when they mobilized to Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., for training in anticipation of a war beginning in Iraq. They arrived in Iraq in April and began to haul cargo as well as transport, assemble, disassemble and maintain bridging systems. They were the

first unit to be equipped with new Common Bridge Transport trucks for the mission.

Three Soldiers were killed in Iraq, and four were seriously wounded.

"Our unit was very young. Our average age was 21, and I think many people had their doubts about us going to Iraq. What they didn't know was that many of us had trained together for five years or more," said Capt. Janet Masseth, who deployed with the 957th as an enlisted Soldier. "... We were ready for our deployment, and I know I really wanted to go to Iraq. We were very proud, and we wanted to show not only our state but the nation what we were made of."

141st Engineer Combat Battalion

As nearly 700 Guardsmen prepared to return home from Operation Iraqi Freedom I, 480 more with the 141st were gearing up for part two. They mobilized to Fort Carson in December 2003, and arrived overseas two months later. In a first-of-its-kind mission, the battalion took on Task Force Trailblazer — clearing supply routes of improvised explosive devices and other hazards. The dangerous mission claimed the lives of four Soldiers and left about two dozen others wounded. Yet, hundreds of lives were saved by their efforts.

Between March 12, 2004, and Jan. 29, 2005, the Guardsmen found 311 IEDs and destroyed about 10,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance, effectively preventing further IED development. Before returning home in February 2005, the engineers also sanitized more than 400 miles of roadways, which removed locations for hiding IEDs to prevent future emplacement. During the mission, Guardsmen refined techniques and were able to provide a significant amount of data to enhance training and assist in follow-on Trailblazer missions.

Battery F, 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment

In the first of many Global War on Terrorism deployments for the 1-188th, 100 Soldiers mobilized in June 2004 for training at Fort Bliss, Texas, and Fort Polk, La., before arriving in Iraq in December. Under the command of Maj. Jeff Jones, the unit trained Iraqi military forces and played an instrumental role ensuring the Iraqi free election process went smoothly.

"We were a part of changing history," said Retired 1st Sgt. Brad Aune, the senior enlisted leader on the mission. "Fox Battery provided election site security for the first democratic election ever in Iraq. Working and training the Iraqi Army was another great experience. Because of our training and mentorship of the Iraqi Battalion, we were able to turn over the security and operation of our battle space to the Iraqi Army when we left Iraq. I believe that our unit had a real sense of pride that we did make a difference during the time we were in Iraq."

Company A, 164th Engineer Battalion

Following in the tracks established by the 141st, the 164th Battalion mobilized to Fort Riley, Kan., in August 2005 before taking on the Trailblazer mission in Iraq in November 2005. During their year in Iraq, the unit located 470 IEDs and patrolled more than 86,000 miles. Beyond the hundreds of lives saved by their main mission, two Soldiers dived into an irrigation canal during the deployment to save a drowning Iraqi boy. Sgt. Guy Stevens and Spc. Kyle Mueller were both awarded the Soldiers Medal for their heroic efforts.

One Soldier died while performing the Trailblazer mission, and 11 others were wounded before the unit returned home in November 2006. Of the unit's 122 Soldiers, 107 earned Combat Action Badges during the mission, and the unit as a whole received the Excellence in Safety Award.

1-129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

While not specifically deployed to Iraq, the 13 Soldiers in the MPAD spent time on the ground there during their mission to support U.S. Central Command and tell the story of U.S. service members' efforts in the Global War on Terrorism.

The journalists, photographers and videographers mobilized in April 2006, training at Fort McCoy, Wis., before heading to locations at CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa, Fla., and an overseas base in Qatar. From Qatar, they





Soldiers from Battery F, 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment provided election site security for the first democratic election ever in Iraq. Retired 1st Sgt. Brad Aune, the senior enlisted leader for the unit, said, "I believe that our unit had a real sense of pride that we did make a difference during the time we were in Iraq."

132nd Quartermaster Company

Soon after the Engineer Brigade arrived in Iraq, the 132nd mobilized for its own mission. After two months of training at Fort Hood, Texas, the 21 Soldiers arrived in country in July 2007. The Guardsmen forward deployed to several locations across Iraq where they provided potable water.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 164th Engineer Battalion

In the second deployment to Iraq from the 164th, 119 Soldiers mobilized in June 2007. They trained at Camp Shelby, Miss., until starting their mission of perimeter and internal security operations in September. Under Lt. Col. Steven Jahner's leadership, the Guardsmen provided command and control for units from Iowa, Minnesota and California before returning home in May 2008.

817th Engineer Company (Sapper)

Having formerly deployed as Company B, 141st Engineer Combat Battalion, this Jamestown unit was again mobilized for its expertise in the Trailblazer mission. In June 2007, 104 Soldiers mobilized to Fort McCoy, Wis., and were in Iraq by September. The unit incorporated Soldiers from the 815th Engineer Company, as well. Before returning home in June 2008, Soldiers cleared 119 IEDs, saving countless lives. Under the command of Capt. Craig Hillig, the unit also conducted 575 combat patrol missions and cleared about 51,000 miles of roadway in Iraq.

119th Civil Engineer Squadron

In 2008, 35 Airmen from CES deployed to Iraq under the command of Maj. Jon Wahlgren to build and improve coalition force structures.

"Master Sgt. Terry Babler was among the first builders into some areas of Iraq because he had to clear the ground with heavy equipment in order to begin building a FOB (forward operating base) for coalition forces where none had existed before," said Chief Master Sgt. Scott Terry, the senior enlisted Airman on the mission. "We were very busy working at making the bases better over there, but that was OK because we didn't have time to worry about little things and it made the time go by faster."

191st Military Police Company

In the first deployment for the recently re-established MP Company, the 191st began its mission in January 2008 at Fort Dix, N.J., and arrived in Iraq that April. The 182 Soldiers, under the command of Capt. Ben Cleghorn, provided security and support until returning home in January 2009.

119th Security Forces Squadron

Security Forces members deployed to Iraq numerous times including a mission from November 2003 through March 2004 with 13 volunteer Airmen in Baghdad and Tallil Air Base and another stint from October 2005 to April 2006 at Tallil Air Base. A larger group of 26 Airmen deployed again from February through

August 2009, providing security support at Kirkuk Air Base.

Master Sgt. Erik Clemenson served on two of the missions, including as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 2009 deployment, during which Airmen were divided into small groups working multiple different sectors and shifts.

"We worked general base security with personnel along the perimeter in towers, others working base entry control points involving search points for both personnel and vehicles. Some worked in the law enforcement area, which dealt with mostly internal base issues," he said. "... Multiple different individuals received local recognition for excellence based on their normal work duties and some for their additional duties."

1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment (Sentinel Radar)

Three groups from the ADA mobilized together in November 2009, with two groups headed to Afghanistan and a third group of eight arriving in Iraq in January 2010. The Soldiers in Iraq were split among four Brigade Air Defense and Air Management cells throughout northern Iraq where they operated the AN/MPQ-64 Sentinel Radar. It was the first time North Dakota Soldiers used the system in a combat zone to alert short-range air-defense weapons to sites of hostile targets. During the deployment, the Guardsmen worked to coordinate and deconflict airspace throughout Iraq.

Company C, 2nd Battalion, 285th Aviation Assault Regiment

More than a year after being put on alert, the 2-285th mobilized in October 2009, flying UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from Bismarck to its mobilization station in Fort Sill, Okla. They arrived in Iraq two months later and provided transport to many high-profile passengers, including the deputy secretary of state, sergeant major of the Army and many visiting entertainers.

Capt. Douglas Larsen led the unit, and during its time in Iraq, the 47 Soldiers accumulated 5,000 hours of flight time. In a normal training environment, it would take pilots about four years and crew chiefs about five years to acquire that many training hours.

Individual Deployments

While 2,000 N.D. Guardsmen deployed in groups, a smaller number had the additional challenge of deploying individually. Their skills were utilized in weapons video systems and as lawyers, doctors and chaplains. Others provided key consultation roles. For example, Col. Michael



Brig. Gen. Robert Allardice, left, commander of the Coalition Air Force Transition Team in Baghdad, Iraq, presents the Bronze Star to Col. Michael Wobbema Jan. 17, 2008, for his work as the Director of the Iraqi Air Force Training School, and as the Deputy Commander/Chief of Staff, Coalition Air Force Transition Team, Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq. Wobbema was tasked with creating an Iraq pilot training program. He retired from the N.D. National Guard in November.

Wobbema played a key role in helping to establish a training program for pilots in the Iraq Air Force during a yearlong deployment to Baghdad. The year prior, Maj. Teresa McDonough deployed to Baghdad for six months in 2006 to coordinate security for the U.S. Embassy there as well as security for more than 200 movements by Dr. Ibrahim al-Jaafari, who was Iraq's prime minister at the time. Meeting al-Jaafari and his chief of staff, Dr. Tamimi, was the most memorable part of her deployment.

"His personality was genuine. He spoke softly but his English was excellent," McDonough said. "My hope for a successful future of Iraqi government strengthened after meeting these gentlemen. In a three-hour visit, Dr. Jaafari spoke of his admiration for the United States and was extremely educated on our nation's history. He mentioned the leadership styles of several of our presidents, vice presidents, and the years they served. He spoke about our Civil War, our Thanksgiving holiday, his thoughts about Hitler and all the World Wars, navigation via the stars, women's liberation in America. I was impressed with Dr. Jaafari's views on women and family."

Coming to an End

As eight years of missions draw to a close this month, N.D. Guardsmen reflect on their service more than ever. The memories shared move far beyond the mortars and IEDs, though. It's about the people — the Soldiers who gave their lives for the cause, the Guardsmen with whom they've formed an indelible bond, and the Iraqis, whom they hope are living a better life because of the military's efforts.

"One of my most memorable times would be during our long convoys between Iraq and Kuwait," Masseth said. "Not the driving part — the flat tires, the maintenance issues, the attacks, getting lost, using the bathroom on the side of the road — but when we pulled over for the night. We would spend the night on our trucks — the time ... after completing PMCSs and after weapons cleaning and anything else we had to do. I remember how much I enjoyed visiting with my other unit members after a long day. No matter how smelly we were or how tired we were, I could always get a smile out of my battle buddies and they could always get one from me. Sure I remember the horrible sand flies that would drive us crazy and sweating so much that it was hard to fall asleep. Even now, after all these years, when I close my eyes I can still see the stars. The stars in Iraq shined brighter than anywhere else I have ever been. They were beautiful." ■

• We Will Never Forget the Fallen •

• **Spc. Jon Paul Fettig**, of Dickinson, N.D., Jan. 3, 1973 - July 22, 2003 • **Staff Sgt. Kenneth W. Hendrickson**, of Bismarck, N.D., May 7, 1962 - Jan. 24, 2004 • **Sgt. Keith L. Smette**, of Makoti, N.D., Dec. 1, 1978 - Jan. 24, 2004 • **Spc. James Holmes**, of Peoria, Ariz., and East Grand Forks, Minn., Oct. 3, 1975 - May 8, 2004 • **Spc. Philip D. Brown**, of Jamestown, N.D., Dec. 20, 1982 - May 8, 2004 • **Staff Sgt. Lance J. Koenig**, of Fargo, N.D., Dec. 31, 1970 - Sept. 22, 2004 • **Spc. Cody L. Wentz**, of Williston, N.D., Feb. 16, 1983 - Nov. 4, 2004 • **Spc. Michael L. Hermanson**, of Fargo, N.D., July 7, 1984 - May 23, 2006

forward deployed to Iraq, as well as Bahrain, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Djibouti before demobilizing in June 2007.

Engineer Brigade, 34th Infantry Division

After mobilizing to Camp Atterbury, Ind., in March 2007 for a month of training, the Brigade's 45 Soldiers headed to Iraq for a unique mission. Under the command of Col. Dale Adams, the unit integrated into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division and took on the responsibility of managing engineering projects, including restoring electrical power, providing potable water and constructing schools and medical facilities. Unit members were spread throughout Iraq until returning home in March 2008.

"My time in Iraq was both unique and difficult to describe," said Command Sgt. Maj. Orville Wang, the senior enlisted leader for the deployment, who oversaw about 350 service members and civilians doing engineering and contracting work in Iraq. "Providing leadership of a primarily civilian force in a combat area, with all the kinetic activity in a full 360 environment, is hard to explain, let alone manage. I am most thankful that this deployment time is over and behind me. I would like to believe that I'm a better NCO because of my experience in Iraq."

119th Maintenance Squadron

Seventeen Airmen from the 119th Wing contributed their aviation maintenance skills in Balad, Iraq, from February through April 2007. The Duluth, Minn.-based 148th Fighter Wing was deployed there, as well, and maintenance personnel from the Fargo-based Air Guard assisted in maintaining the unit's F-16 fighter jets.

"While (there), the military called for a major surge in operations ... we were under mortar fire daily," said Master Sgt. Ted Robinette. "Several of our Airmen not only performed their daily routines, but donated their own down time to helping at the hospital, unloading wounded servicemen brought in by helicopter and aiding the doctors and nurses at the CASF (Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility) to MEDEVAC the injured — sometimes severely — out of country."

Knowing that I was about to graduate from college and not having a job right away, I began the search for military deployments. Although the Air Transportation (2T2) career field is new to the 119th Wing, it is my second career position since I enlisted in the N.D. Air Guard.

I deployed to Kyrgyzstan in 2008 in my previous position in vehicle operations. I had the “itch” to go again, the desire and wanting to learn and gain experience within my new 2T2 position. Since there were no deployments available, I advertised myself on a Facebook 2T2 page with my qualifications. Finally, more than a year later, I received the good news that they found a deployment to Baghdad, which I would depart for in March 2011.

I’m located on Sather Air Base in Baghdad, Iraq. The forward operating base that I now am working in will be the last one in Iraq, per President Obama’s orders to remove all troops by the end of the year. Due to the nature of my position within the transportation field, it’s very exciting to be part of such a historical development.

A simple description of what the 2T2 job consists of includes uploading and downloading passengers and cargo on aircraft. It is similar to the combined duties of a ticket counter agent at Delta, the baggage handler people at an airport and



End of the Line

Last N.D. Guardsman in Iraq Shares Stories from Historic End of Mission Drawdown

- By Staff Sgt. Teresa Pavljuk -

the UPS/DHL cargo companies moving cargo for their customers.

For the first six months of my deployment, I was a cargo noncommissioned officer in charge of the ramp section. Every day, inventory of all cargo would need to be accounted and tracked. We would also take in cargo to be shipped to various locations. I loved working cargo. I found it very satisfying to one day see my yard (I refer to it as “my yard” because I knew it well and took a passion in maintaining it.) full of cargo, and the next, almost empty,

Above, Staff Sgt. Teresa Pavljuk hands out essential living supplies, including clothes and toiletries, to Iraqi children. The volunteer trip into the communities was a part of the “Good Neighbor Program” created to assist Iraqi families. Left, Pavljuk stands next to a T-wall representing the state of North Dakota. The display has been signed by a number of Happy Hooligans who have served on Sather Air Base in Iraq.

knowing that the customers came to get their much needed equipment. I went back to my living quarters every day knowing I completed my job and the next day I would look forward to facing new challenges in this role.

I expressed interest in learning all aspects of my 2T2 job. Knowing that I was the first 2T2 specialist from our base in this career field to work in a deployed environment, I was eager to bring home as much knowledge as I could. At the end of my six months, I switched to the passenger (pax) side of the house. I enjoy helping others, and in this role I get to interact with people, give and receive smiles and, most importantly, send them home!

The draw down here is in full force and because it was my desire to remain here

until the end of the mission, I asked and was approved to extend my deployment. Although, the 12-hour work days are long, I still find time to enjoy many activities in my free time.

Since we are in a historical area, the Chapel coordinated tours to visit Camp Slayer and see a few of Saddam Hussein’s former palaces and other historical sites. On my first available weekend, I signed up for the Cultural Palace tour and enjoyed the beautiful scenery and architecture. After the tour, I asked if they needed help and, soon after, I became the lead tour guide and bus driver and put my vehicle operator skills to work!

Sadly, tours ended in June due to the draw down. I offered to help with the handover of the camp. In order to “give over” Camp Slayer to the government of Iraq, the palaces and area needed to be cleaned out. It was really special to literally be a part of the

“It’s gratifying to know that our job is appreciated.”

mission goal statement of Operation New Dawn. OND is all about giving the country back to the people of Iraq and we were doing just that. I worked alongside more than 40 volunteers to take out thousands of pounds of trash, scrap, old equipment and much more. It was a dirty, hot job and well worth every single drop of sweat and smudge of dirt. I am so proud of what we accomplished.

In addition to my participation in the tour program, I also took part in the Sather Air Base Honor Guard, where I had the opportunity to learn about the traditional ceremonial procedures and participate in many Wing functions.

I also went through the Modern Army Combatives Level 1 Class, a 40-hour program of intense physical conditioning and self-defense lessons.

With all of the events I am involved in, I have quickly become known as the “volunteer queen.” I have spent the remainder of my little free time participating in the 447th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron adopt-a-road clean up and in the Good Neighbor Program, where we give out clothes, supplies and candy to Iraqi children and families that are part of the Iraqi military.

Out of all of my extracurricular activities here, the most surprising of this deployment came in the one activity that I have the most passion for – RUGBY. I’ve been an avid rugby player for nearly eight years, through high school, college and state women teams. I brought my rugby ball, expecting to just ‘kick it around’ with minimal interest from others. Through networking, I have found another who likes the sport and we join the South Africans, the Britains and the Fijians in biweekly games.

It’s gratifying to know that our job is appreciated. Every day, I have learned something new, encountered different and odd situations and found new solutions to accomplish tasks. It is often said, the quality of life wherever you are at is how and what you make of it. I think I have proven this true, and I have done my best to make the most of my time while I’m here and have experienced the opportunity of a lifetime. ■



Pavljuk sits inside a cave in “Flintstone Village” on Camp Slayer in Iraq. Saddam Hussein made the Flintstones cartoon-inspired area for his grandchildren. In the background sits the “Victory Over America” palace. Construction was never completed on the structure since it was destroyed by U.S. Forces in 2003.



Pavljuk enjoys a game of rugby at Sather Air Base. An avid rugby player for nearly eight years, she brought a rugby ball with her on her deployment. Pavljuk enjoys biweekly games with international counterparts, including service members from South Africa, Britain and Fiji.



On POW/MIA Day, observed the third Friday in September, Pavljuk created this presentation in the Sather Air Base dining facility in honor of all POW and MIA heroes.



Courtesy Photos

Tech. Sgt. Bradly Schneider



Above, from left to right, 119th Communications Flight members Tech. Sgt. Amie Ressler, Master Sgt. Shawna Affield and Master Sgt. Christopher Andvik look at "Thank You" cards Nov. 6 during their unit training assembly. The cards were sent by students from Mrs. Lindemann's 4th grade class at South Elementary in West Fargo, N.D., to show their appreciation for members of the N.D. Air National Guard on Veterans Day weekend.

Sgt. 1st Class Mike Jennings



Staff Sgt. Robert Ferderer, Capt. Shawn Markovic and Maj. Mark Quire, of the 81st Civil Support Team, discuss a strategy for radiological sweeping during a Department of Energy field exercise at Soldier Field in Chicago, Ill., Oct. 20. The unit traveled to the Soldier Field Complex Oct. 17 – 20 to participate in a training exercise with the Argonne National Laboratory, a U.S. Department of Energy facility. While there, the Guardsmen responded to scenarios that simulated the detonation of a radiological device. The training required the Guardsmen to conduct air sampling and to monitor simulated downwind radiological exposure.



Sgt. 1st Class Billie Jo Lorus



Sgt. Brett J. Miller

Master Sgt. Gary Weis, the 119th Medical Group first sergeant, left, and Master Sgt. Cherié Merrick, the 119th Operations Support Squadron first sergeant, don festive caps as they serve the Thanksgiving Day meal Nov. 11 during the unit training assembly at the N.D. Air National Guard, Fargo, N.D. Tech. Sgt. Ryan Affield, of the 119th Logistics Readiness Squadron, right, is accepting the plate of traditional holiday fare. The unit first sergeants serve the Thanksgiving meal during November unit training assembly each year.



Tech. Sgt. Bradly Schneider

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp



World War II Veteran Tom Selleys, 87, carries the United States flag as he walks the first leg of a 28-mile Veterans Day hike Nov. 11. Selleys walked from the south end of Fargo, N.D., to Abercrombie, N.D., to remind people about the importance of remembering military members on Veterans Day. Selleys said that he served in the Pacific War during World War II with the 145th Infantry Regiment, where he lost his left eye in combat.

N.D. Guardsmen from the Human Resource office won the 2011 Best Decorated Office at the annual Halloween event at Raymond J. Bohn Armory in Bismarck, N.D., Oct. 31. The N.D. National Guard Child and Youth Program hosts the trick-or-treating event for all service members and their families. Children trick-or-treat at theme-decorated offices, play games and pose for family photos during the event, which is part of the Family Outreach program that is aimed at supporting military members and their families.

Top center, Ayden Frohlich tries on a firefighter's jacket at the Red Ribbon Carnival Oct. 27 at the Raymond J. Bohn Armory in Bismarck, N.D. Local emergency workers were on site to teach children about safety and promote drug awareness. The carnival brings together elementary schools and community law enforcement agencies to remind the community about the dangers of drug abuse and the benefit of a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

GUARDIAN Snapshots

Here & There

Mobilized Units Report from the Front,
Receive Support from Back Home



Far left, Sgt. James Gross, Spc. Jared Sundby, Spc. Nathan Sheets and Spc. Michael Knutson, of Kosovo Force 15's Task Force Aviation, wait for a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to land during a refueling exercise at Camp Atterbury, Ind., Oct. 18. Left, Spc. Jordan Walth receives an Army Achievement Medal from Task Force Aviation Commander Lt. Col. Bill Watson.

Aviation Soldier Awarded Army Achievement Medal for Life-Saving Actions

A Soldier with the 1st Battalion, 112th Aviation Regiment (Security and Support) was awarded for giving life-saving aid to a fellow unit member at Camp Atterbury, Ind., Oct. 11.

Spc. Jordan Walth received an Army Achievement Medal after performing the Heimlich maneuver on Pfc. Joshua Nuss Oct. 6 when the Soldier began to choke in the dining facility.

Both 112th Soldiers are a part of Task Force Aviation of Kosovo Force 15 and are serving on a yearlong NATO peacekeeping mission.

Nuss, a medic in Task Force Aviation, gave the universal distress signal for choking during an evening meal with his unit at Camp Atterbury. Walth, a flight operations specialist with the

task force, reacted by administering the Heimlich on Nuss. After three compressions, he was able to dislodge the obstruction.

"If it wasn't for Spc. Walth's quick response and basic knowledge of the Heimlich maneuver from the Combat Lifesaver course, I would have blacked out and possibly died," Nuss said.

The Combat Lifesaver course teaches Soldiers first responder techniques to use before a medic arrives. Many Soldiers mobilizing for operations overseas are required to attend the training. As a combat lifesaver, a Soldier gains basic knowledge of immediate life-saving measures, including controlling and managing life-threatening bleeding, opening and managing an airway and evaluating and evacuating a casualty.

"I was extremely proud of (Spc. Walth) and was impressed by his instinctive reaction to provide aid to a Soldier caught in a dire situation," said Lt. Col. Bill Watson, Task Force Aviation commander. "It was an honor to recognize Spc. Walth in front of the Aviation task force." ■

— Story and Photos by Sgt. Angie Gross, 112th Aviation Battalion

Daisy Scouts Send Big 'Thanks' to Soldiers Serving in Kuwait

Bismarck Girl Scout Daisy Troop 83222 collected candy and decorated goody bags and packages Nov. 17 to send to Soldiers of the 188th Engineer Company (Vertical), which is serving on a yearlong mission in Kuwait. The girls from the troop were able to Skype with Spc. Jess Fetsch and Spc. Calie Craddock, who are serving with the 188th, from Rita Murphy School in Bismarck, N.D. The Scouts, who are kindergartners, were wearing red to support military service members as part of "Wear Red Friday." While the event took place on a Thursday in Bismarck, it was Friday in Kuwait. ■

— Story and Photo by Spc. Jennifer Joyce, 116th Public Affairs Detachment



GAME TIME

Army Band Ensembles Take the Stage During Local Sporting Events

By Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen
Joint Force Headquarters

Many interchangeable parts have allowed the 188th Army Band to bring their variety of music entertainment to local communities through the years. Most recently, the unit's different music ensembles have taken center stage at sporting events for the University of North Dakota and North Dakota State University. At a UND home football game against the rival University of South Dakota Coyotes, rock ensemble Three Time Rule provided pregame and halftime entertainment for attendees at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, N.D., Nov. 19. Three Soldiers from the 188th also sang the National Anthem at an NDSU game, an event that sold nearly 19,500 tickets and was



Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

188th Army Band members, from left to right, Sgt. Steven Fraase, Spc. James Landman and Sgt. Christopher Hanson, sing the national anthem Nov. 12 at the beginning of the North Dakota State University Bison versus Youngstown State Penguin football game at the Fargo Dome, Fargo, N.D. The trio are alumni of NDSU and all three performed in the marching band percussion section while attending the college.

broadcast on television to thousands more.

Sgt. 1st Class Jennifer Schwind, readiness noncommissioned officer for the 188th, said the band fills requests for performances based on unit members' availability and that entertainment provided by their ensembles is well-received.

"We've gotten asked back (by colleges and community members), and it's great for us for recruiting and building those relationships in the state and also, they're huge audiences. So, it's a great way to represent the band and the N.D. National Guard," she said.

The 188th can be represented in many different forms. Some of the ensembles the unit sends out for events include two rock bands, a brass quintet, a jazz combo and Dixieland combo. Coordinating the right band for the right venue can present its challenges, though. Band members spend time outside of drill weekends and training events rehearsing on their own. With unit members living in different areas, it's important to make the most of their training time.

Members of the 188th Army Band's country rock ensemble Three Time Rule perform at the Alerus Center, Grand Forks, N.D., Nov. 19. The group provided pregame and halftime entertainment for attendees at the University of North Dakota Fighting Sioux football game against the University of South Dakota Coyotes.

"People are from all over," Schwind said. "For instance our rock bands (are spread out). Half of the people in those groups are from outside the Fargo area, so they can't rehearse together outside of set training."

During drills and annual training periods, the band can perform as a single unit in the form of a concert or marching band. Splintering into smaller groups allows them more flexibility, however.

"About five years ago, the (Department of the Army) Bands started adopting this modularity concept so the focus is on the smaller groups," Schwind said. "It definitely makes things more flexible for someone who requests performances from one of our bands because we have a lot more styles of music to offer."

Next year, the 188th will celebrate its 125th Anniversary, tracing its lineage to the First Dakota Infantry Band formed in 1887. Tentatively, the unit plans on spending part of its Annual Training period touring and performing throughout North Dakota in the cities of Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot, Williston, Bismarck and Lisbon. Lisbon was a longtime home to the band until it moved to Fargo in 1959. The performance there will be even more special as the unit plays on the front lawn of the new Veterans Home to celebrate the completion of the facility and the band's anniversary and honor veterans. ■

GOOD NIGHT, VIETNAM

Era of Vietnam War Veterans Serving in N.D. Guard Ends with Peterson

By Staff Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson
Joint Force Headquarters

While most N.D. Guardsmen are war veterans, one holds a special distinction: He's the last serving Vietnam War combat veteran in the N.D. National Guard.

When Master Sgt. Alan K. Peterson, of West Fargo, N.D., retired last month, he ended an era in both the Army and Air National Guard in the state. There's believed to be only one remaining Vietnam vet nationwide in the Air Force, and while it's unknown, there are presumably very few left in the Army.

SETTING SAIL

After having seen the photos and trinkets his uncle brought back from his travels with the Navy, Peterson enlisted in the service's delayed entry program shortly before graduating from Pine River, Minn., High School in 1970. The war in Vietnam was well under way by then, with involvement peaking the year prior with a half-million U.S. military personnel serving there. On April 28, 1971 — barely a year after graduating high school — Peterson found himself involved in the war, as well.

He first headed to the Philippines to fulfill a 90-day "mess cooking" stint — similar to the Army's KP, or "kitchen patrol" — required for those ranked E-3 and below. After 60 days, he was attached to a ship and itching to get up top.

"I wanted to get on the flight deck — little extra money, you got hazardous duty pay and you got to work in the open air, which I enjoyed. I didn't have enough seniority to do that," he says.

He stayed in the airframes division for the length of that first, short cruise before an opportunity to apply for a plane captain spot in a line division presented itself. He got the job and was promoted to an E-4, or petty officer third class, which is a noncommissioned officer in the Navy. That made him second in charge in a squadron of 10 that managed 14 aircraft. In this role, he served on two additional cruises, working on the USS Kitty Hawk CVA-63.

Similar to a crew chief in the Army and Air Force, a plane captain in the Navy maintains and cleans the aircraft, monitors the work that's done on it, helps the pilot into the cockpit, and conducts a preflight turnaround for the aircraft. Peterson also did maintenance turnarounds, which allowed him to sit in the aircraft while it was tied to the deck and operate the controls while it was being worked on.

MAKING LANDFALL

His time on the ship doing 30- to 40-day stints in the Gulf of Tonkin off of the Vietnam coast would be limited, though. Soon, Peterson was part of a group of 15 or so sent to shore in July 1972. For the next eight months, he stayed at Tan Son Nhut Air Base outside of Da Nang replacing tailhooks, patching holes and repairing landing gear on aircraft that couldn't be recovered by the carrier ships.

"The amenities we have now days for creature comfort weren't there at that time," he says of his accommodations near Da Nang. "Any correspondence I had back home was letters, and usually that was about a two-week turnaround before I got one back."

The workdays on land were shorter than the 14- to 16-hour shifts at sea, though. Peterson worked dawn to dusk with the open-air maintenance work ceasing at dark to prevent becoming a lighted target at night.

"When I look back at it, it was fun to get off the ship," Peterson says. "Life on the ship was pretty monotonous after a fashion. Our close-circuit TVs were limited to what you could watch and there wasn't many of those you could watch ... so you read, laid in your rack, read books, (read) whatever you could get your hands on, walk around, actually run on the flight deck and do PT (physical training), too, to take up your time. Sleep. That's about it."

The berthing compartment where he slept differed greatly from the damp huts near Da Nang that were sunk 3-4 feet into the ground with hurricane fans blowing through at night. Other than the climate and extra amenities, his living conditions in the Iraq War three decades later would prove similar.

NAVY TO ARMY

When Peterson's Navy stint concluded, the young war veteran did much the same as his peers in the 1970s: grew his hair long and sprouted a beard. By the end of the era, in February 1979, he was ready to don the uniform again, though.

"I still had a beard and long hair, and they told me, 'You know, you're going to have to cut that off.' I guess it was time for a change," he says.

He started as a combat engineer with the Army National Guard unit in Hazen,

N.D., while working in a coal mine in the area. His first platoon leader, Dennis Jacobson, still serves with the N.D. National Guard, but now has two stars on his uniform.

After seven years as an engineer and traditional Guardsman, Peterson switched back into a maintenance job, but life outside of the Guard took a major downturn. The house he grew up in was engulfed in a fire, claiming his parents' lives. Plus, work in the coal mine had slowed, and in December 1986 he received a 30-day notice for being laid off.

"That was a pretty tough year for me. I had a wife and three kids to take care of. What am I going to do?"

He drilled the weekend he received the layoff notice and saw a job posting for a maintenance position in Minot. He had his application submitted in a matter of days and before long embarked on a full-time career for the N.D. Guard, first in the Minot shop and later at the Fargo shop, from which he retired Nov. 30.

In the years in between, he shared his knowledge as a maintenance supervisor, deployed to Iraq with the 142nd Engineer Combat Battalion, and developed a unique connection with his middle son, Joshua, who also deployed with him to Iraq in the same maintenance section.

"When I look back, (Vietnam) kind of set me up for the deployment to Iraq and what I experienced over there," he says.

The one major difference? Coming home.

"(My son and I) sat together on the ride back and talked about the year we were gone and things that happened and how we would react. ... It's quite a different feeling when you get off the plane and all those people are lined up to greet you. It's a lot to take in. ... It wasn't the same back

during Vietnam. There was nobody. When I flew back and got out, it was just my parents there to greet me."

Now, he's looking back at both deployments along with a decades-long military career and pondering how he has already turned the mandatory retirement age of 60.

"Here now it's my turn (to retire), and I say, 'Wow, where did all those years go?'"

"I think the Guard for me has been a good choice. It has given me a direction in life and supported me quite well. I look back at all the experiences that I have had and all the people that I've either worked with or just crossed paths, and I feel it was well worth it." ■

This story is part of a N.D. National Guard history series that profiles the brave veterans who have served before us. For more information on the history of the N.D. National Guard, go to <http://bit.ly/NDNG-history>.



Left, this portrait of Peterson dates to his time in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War in 1972. Right, Peterson retired from the N.D. National Guard Nov. 30, 2011.

fr INTERACT WITH US!

See more photos of Master Sgt. Al Peterson at <http://bit.ly/PetersonPhotos>. Video interviews from this story are also available at <http://bit.ly/HistoryVideos>.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp



Courtesy Photo

Top, Master Sgt. Al Peterson works in the N.D. Army National Guard's Field Maintenance Shop No. 2 in Fargo, N.D., Nov. 16. He retired at the end of November and was the last Vietnam Veteran still serving in the N.D. National Guard. Peterson served in the U.S. Navy during the war, including on the USS Kitty Hawk and at Tan Son Nhut Air Base outside of Da Nang. Above, Peterson, left, accepts the Plane Captain of the Month award from his squadron commander on the USS Kitty Hawk in 1972. Peterson served in the Lemoore, Calif.-based Attack Squadron 195 during his time in the U.S. Navy.



Peterson poses on the USS Kitty Hawk in 1972 during his time in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War.

Courtesy Photos

Strong Bonds

Mother/Daughter Recruiters Find Rewards in Tradition, Service

By Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen
Joint Force Headquarters

From early on, the term “Guard Family” has represented more than just a fraternal motto for Sgt. Sam Truckowski, recruiting and retention noncommissioned officer in Dickinson, N.D. The slogan is quite literal. Detachment 1, 132nd Quartermaster Company provided a second childhood home while growing up in Bottineau, N.D. Her parents, Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Kyle Kittleson and Sgt. 1st Class Brenda Kittleson, were members of the unit (Brenda still supports the 132nd through recruiting) and influential devotees to the Army uniform.

“I knew at 10 years old that I wanted to follow in their footsteps,” Truckowski said. “I was just so proud of them. You know ... seeing them in the uniform. I just had that sense of tradition and wanted to be able to carry it on.”

The first step toward continuing that military family tradition came in 2004 when Truckowski enlisted into the 132nd. Already familiar with the commitment Guard service requires, she was more than ready to do her part.

“It’s just a family tradition, something that has always been there, so she was never afraid of it (the challenge),” Brenda said.

But Truckowski would later mirror her mother’s service even further by taking an Active Guard and Reserve position as a full-time recruiter, an occupation Brenda has held supporting the 132nd in Bottineau since 2003, beginning just a few months after Kyle retired.

As a mother/daughter recruiter combination in the N.D. National Guard, they’ve shared pointers with one another about their career field, developed bonds with their brothers-and sisters-in-arms and, more importantly, made a difference through service — not just within their own family, but the Guard Family as a whole.



Courtesy Photos

Sgt. Sam Truckowski, left, is embraced by her mother, Sgt. 1st Class Brenda Kittleson. Both Soldiers are recruiters in the N.D. Army National Guard. Truckowski is based in Dickinson, N.D., while Kittleson works from Bottineau, N.D.

“That’s what the National Guard has done for us, as a mother and daughter,” Kittleson said.

Motherly Advice

Truckowski always knew the expectations that come with Guard service. Kittleson remembers that her daughter experienced a tremendous amount of anxiety after the traumatic events of Sept. 11, 2001, wondering what the effects would be on her parents as they served in the Guard.

“The impact on her was not ‘my country is going to war.’ The impact on her was ‘both my parents are going to war,’” Kittleson said.

She remained, however, steadfast in her goal of serving side-by-side with her parents. An oath of enlistment was never a demand placed on Truckowski. The 24-year-old recruiter made her decision gradually. A demonstration of that enthusiasm came when she worked to graduate high school a year early in order to attend Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training. Having her mother supporting her unit in the recruiting office certainly helped ease her entry into the Guard, as well.

“Every time I would go to drill, I would see her in her little office and she would come in and give us presentations and different classes about retention and any information we needed,” Truckowski said.

As she learned the ropes in the Guard and attended college in Bottineau, Truckowski found a passion for the recruiting field while assisting her mother at a variety of recruiting events. She eventually gained an offer to work in the recruiting storefront in Mandan. From there, the full-time position opened up in Dickinson, and Truckowski

was ready to make a larger commitment to the organization. With living accommodations swallowed up by oil workers in the Western part of the state, she drove back and forth from Bismarck while staying in a hotel. Kittleson encouraged her daughter to maintain her optimism and embrace the challenge — one of many traits she would advise her daughter to bring to her recruiting position.

“I think the biggest (advice my mother gave me) was saying ‘attitude is huge,’” Truckowski said. “As recruiters, you’re going to have multiple tasks and mistakes can be made. When you finally get that enlistment or have that person you support in your unit reenlist (it all pays off). (She encouraged me to) just keep a really good attitude because that makes it worth it.”

Kittleson said a positive attitude is important in order to keep up with the frantic pace recruiters set. The standard 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. workday doesn’t always apply.

“I don’t know any recruiter who doesn’t end up working weekends, evenings, taking calls on Sunday,” she said. “It’s really crucial when you take vacation to just shut your phone off — spend the time with your family.”

Full-Time Job

The oil boom in the west makes the Dickinson recruiting arena worlds apart from the rural areas Kittleson works from. In order to connect with a diverse demographic, Truckowski has had to learn to tailor her recruiting methods. Kittleson acknowledges the contrasts and points out that “every recruiter has to make it their own. They have to have their own style.”

But Truckowski is aware of the challenges she faces, especially when trying to recruit potential Soldiers that might already find steady employment through the abundance of jobs in her area.

“You can’t compete with some of these salaries that they could be making right out of the gate, right out of high school,” she said.

Showing new enlistees what the organization offers to its state and communities is the key to gaining their interest, Truckowski says. She encourages unit members to bring potential Guardsmen to drills and have them experience first-hand the camaraderie serving brings.

“I tell my Soldiers that it’s really important to get them there, to have them meet (unit members) and make friends,” she said. “So, it’s not all about the dollar amounts. It’s about the uniform itself.”

Finding future Guardsmen is not Truckowski’s only job, though. She also supports recruits who have not yet shipped for Basic Combat Training.

“If we’re not supporting our units, I might have to go to the Recruit Training Company (RTC) in Bismarck. If we have weekends off to be at some of these things (RTC drills), we try our best to do that,” she said.

During flood operations this year, members of the RTC were able to serve on state active duty. Truckowski was right alongside them, mentoring and encouraging the recruits. For most, it was their first taste of what it is like to serve in the Guard. Having a familiar face was a comfort to the new Guardsmen as they worked within their communities.

“They’re almost like our children until they ship for basic

training and even when they come back,” Truckowski said. “We’re just here to take care of them.”

The experience was a positive one for the new recruits. Truckowski said it was important for them to experience Guard service and learn what the organization does, not only during overseas deployments, but during domestic operations at home.

“A lot of these (recruits) grow up in these communities and they care about their communities. That is why this is a great organization. We really do care about our state and communities and we’re constantly at the ready to help them,” she said.

Rewards of Service

The additional benefit for RTC Soldiers serving on state active duty this year was understanding that Guard service comes with a number of commitments. Truckowski said it’s important for them to understand that they are sometimes called upon for missions outside of their up-front obligations.

“That might be a little unsettling when they think it’s just one weekend a month, two weeks a year,” she said.

Truckowski makes sure to emphasize to her recruits that serving is about more than just the benefits they might receive upon enlistment. She also enjoys the opportunities to educate potential recruits about the Guard’s mission.

“I love being able to talk to kids and explain what we’re all about ... what we mean to Families and communities,” she said. “I’m just really proud of my job.”

Kittleson is equally proud of the success her daughter has achieved as a recruiter.

“I’m very proud,” she said. “I’m glad that I could be a good example for her, and I’m glad she thinks enough of me and what I’ve done to say, ‘Hey, that’s great. That’s cool. I want to do that.’”

Taking care of the Soldiers she recruits has been an added reward for Truckowski, and she subscribes to her mother’s career-long motto of “I make a difference, not a mission.”

“I love getting those letters from recruits at basic training saying ‘Thank you, so much. I couldn’t have done this without you.’ It’s just a very fulfilling, rewarding job,” she said. ■



Truckowski keeps score for a potential recruit at Richardton High School during a student push-up competition.

TAPS Run & Remember to Return to N.D.

In May, about 160 runners — many of them N.D. National Guard members and military Families — donned special running shirts and ran in honor of fallen service members from across the state and nation. In doing so, they raised about \$32,000 for TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors), a nonprofit organization that provides 24/7 tragedy assistance for anyone who has suffered the loss of a military loved one, regardless of the relationship to the deceased or the circumstance of the death.

Due to the warm welcome they received in the state earlier this year, TAPS Run & Remember will again take part in the Fargo Marathon in May 2012. Interested participants can run or walk any of the Fargo Marathon events, from the kids' races to the 5K, 10K, half marathon, marathon relay or full marathon.

For more information, contact Marie Campbell, TAPS Run & Remember director, at marie@taps.org, or volunteer coordinators: Capt. Penny Ripperger at 701-238-6944 and Staff Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson at 701-412-6895.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Capt. Anna Wittrock, of the N.D. Army National Guard, ran the half-marathon May 21 as a member of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) Run & Remember Team, Fargo, N.D. The team, which is comprised primarily of current and former N.D. National Guard members and Families, raised more than \$32,000 for TAPS during the various Fargo Marathon races in Fargo over a three-day period from May 19-21. About 160 runners were participating in the various Fargo Marathon events as members of the TAPS Run & Remember Team.

Hunting Tradition for Disabled Veterans Continues

For more than 20 years, N.D. National Guard's Camp Grafton Training Center near Devils Lake has opened its gates to disabled veterans for a special deer hunt.

Eight hunters spent two days last month participating in a pastime they've enjoyed for years that has become too difficult for them to do on their own. Accompanied by a chosen companion and a Camp Grafton representative, all hunters except one were able to harvest deer during the hunt — three bucks and four does.

"The disabled veterans hunt is an excellent program that we are proud to host at Camp Grafton," said Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, N.D. adjutant general. "The hunt provides a chance for us to show our veterans that their service is greatly appreciated by providing them this opportunity to hunt despite their mobility challenges."

The late Col. (Retired) Dean Hildebrand initiated the hunting opportunity when he served as the superintendent at Camp Grafton. He saw it as a way to

help control the deer population on Camp Grafton while providing disabled veterans a chance to continue to participate in a sport they enjoyed, but were unable due to disabilities. Lt. Col. (Retired) Rick Moszer continued to coordinate the hunt after Hildebrand retired, and now Chief Warrant Officer 4 Larry Walford maintains the tradition.

"For most of them, hunting has been a long-time tradition and this is an event they still enjoy," Walford said. He's been involved with the hunt for the past decade.

Air Guard Launches Referral Reward Program

The Air National Guard launched a new rewards program for making referrals to their recruiting offices. The program is open to current and retired Air Guard members. To find out more about this program and the rewards available for making a referral within the N.D. Air National Guard, visit www.refer2ANG.com and create an account with the Air National Guard Referral Rewards program.

For referrals or questions on this program, contact the N.D. Air National

Guard recruiting staff at 701-451-2238 or 800-972-8825.

Veteran Indicator Available on N.D. Driver's Licenses

Veterans can request to have an indicator put on their North Dakota driver's license to show that they are a veteran of the U.S. military services.

To begin the application process, veterans should bring a copy of their discharge papers (DD214) to a state, county, tribal or national veterans service officer.

To find out more about how to apply, go to www.nd.gov/veterans/benefits.

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Chaplain's Corner: Farewell Thoughts

By Chaplain (Col.) William Ziegler
Joint Force Headquarters

And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

— Luke 1:47-49

This is my last *Guardian* column. I will retire from military service in January after more than 30 years of service. Here are some farewell thoughts:

Last summer, I was digging out a stump in my front yard. The clumping birch tree I planted a number of years ago thrived until recently, when it suddenly and mysteriously died. As I worked to remove it and prepare the soil for a new tree, our neighbor walked by with her 4-year-old in tow. "Mommy," her daughter said pointing at me, "that grandpa is working hard." *Out of the mouths of children ...*

Although I don't feel "old," the numbers don't lie — it's time to retire. Time eventually catches up with all of us, and though bittersweet, it's a time to focus on the many gifts God has given us.

On Jan. 8, I will preach my final sermon and celebrate a last communion at the 119th Wing chapel. According to my calculations, I participated in more than 400 worship services during my career. I want to thank the Airmen and Soldiers for making worship with the Guard a truly sacred time.

My career in the National Guard has allowed me to travel far and wide working with chaplains from many states and nations. I've learned there is no place like home, and North Dakota is blessed with the finest chaplain team to be found anywhere. One highlight of my career occurred this fall during our annual chaplain conference at Camp Grafton Training Center's Tracy Chapel. I will forever remember that service as we sang "*Eternal*



Tech. Sgt. Bradley Schneider

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) John Flowers, of the 119th Wing, left, and Ziegler place promotion rank on Lt. Col. Bruce Krogstad Nov. 6 during the unit training assembly at the N.D. Air National Guard, Fargo, N.D.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Chaplain (Col.) William Ziegler delivers a nondenominational message at an outdoor chapel service Aug. 8 during the unit training assembly at the N.D. Air National Guard, Fargo, N.D.

Father, Strong to Save." We "rocked the roof," and I felt a deep blessing that God called me to serve with these men and women. Chaplain Thomas Tracy, who served with the Guard's 164th Infantry Regiment during World War II and for whom the chapel at Camp Grafton is named, would be proud of his "descendants" and their service to God and country — I know I am.

Since 2001, all of our Guardsmen have been tested with 10 years of war, and in North Dakota, three consecutive years of fighting floods. It has tested our skills, our Families and our souls. Yet everywhere I've made pastoral visits, a "can do" spirit prevails. Listening to the stories of Soldiers and Airmen, I celebrate their desire to wear our "nation's cloth," serving a call larger than themselves. When your grandchildren ask, "What did you do during the war, grandma or grandpa?" you will stand with patriots.

During my career, in and out of the military, I have been blessed with great mentors, from campus pastors who wore the uniform, to my father and father-in-law — all men of faith who served in our nation's wars. I have always been blessed with supportive adjutant generals and wing commanders. Thank you for believing in me and enabling me to wear the eagles of our nation, a high honor indeed.

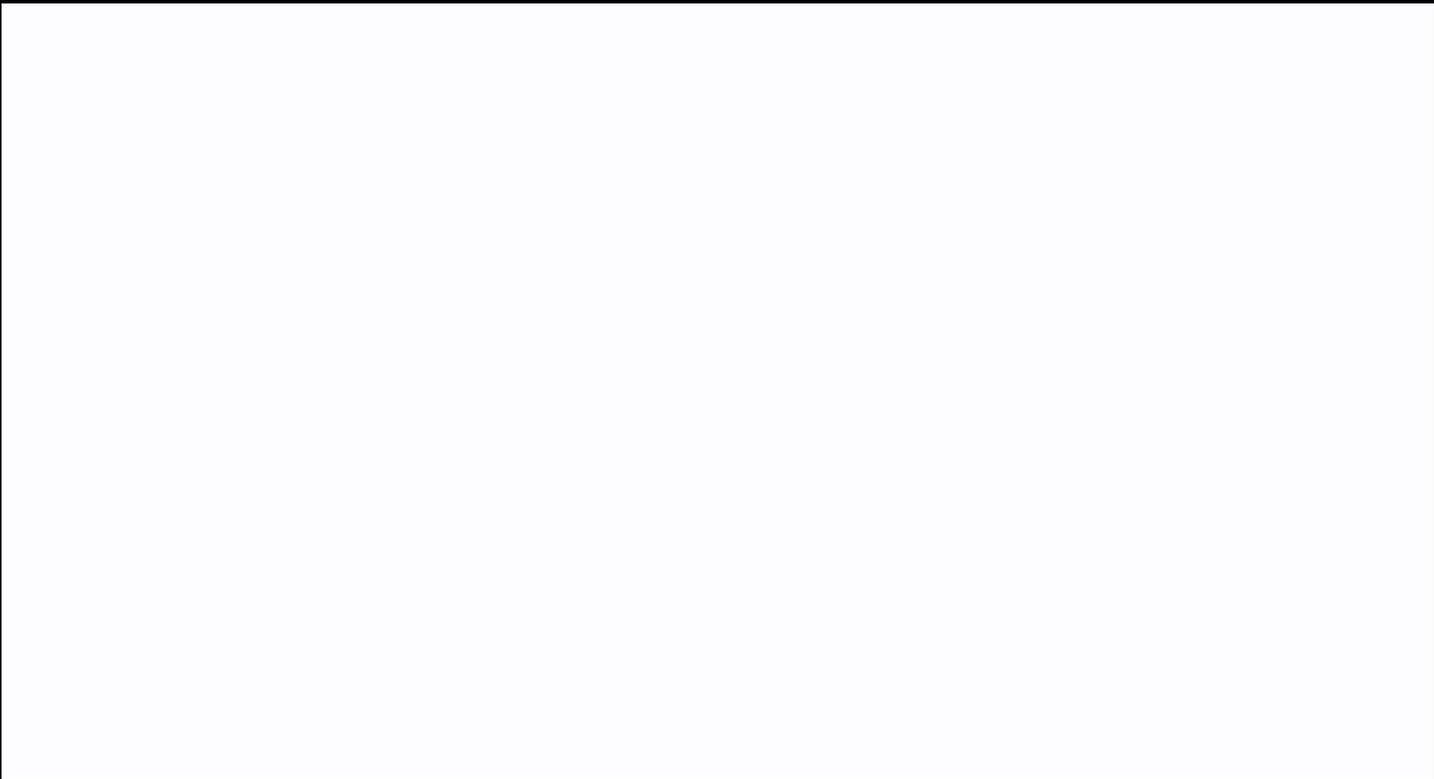
Finally, a special thanks to all Soldiers and Airmen who have invited me into their lives, to share in God's word, celebrate marriages, grieve losses, baptize babies and honor our dead. No greater privilege can be given a chaplain. ■

Season's Greetings!

View holiday greetings from members of the N.D. National Guard Family, including Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, N.D. adjutant general, and his wife, Connie, as well as Guardsmen serving overseas in Kuwait and Kosovo at <http://bit.ly/2011Greetings>.

Reason for the Season

60 years ago this month, we were involved in a different type of war with greater sacrifices by our military members and Families — and the holidays were greatly impacted. Don't miss this moving video at <http://bit.ly/MerryLittleChristmas>.



Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Reiersen

Students in a combat engineer course at Camp Grafton Training Center, Devils Lake, N.D., use a silhouette charge on a roof target during a day of breach range training Oct. 27. The 164th Regional Training Institute at Camp Grafton conducts about 200 engineer courses each year.