



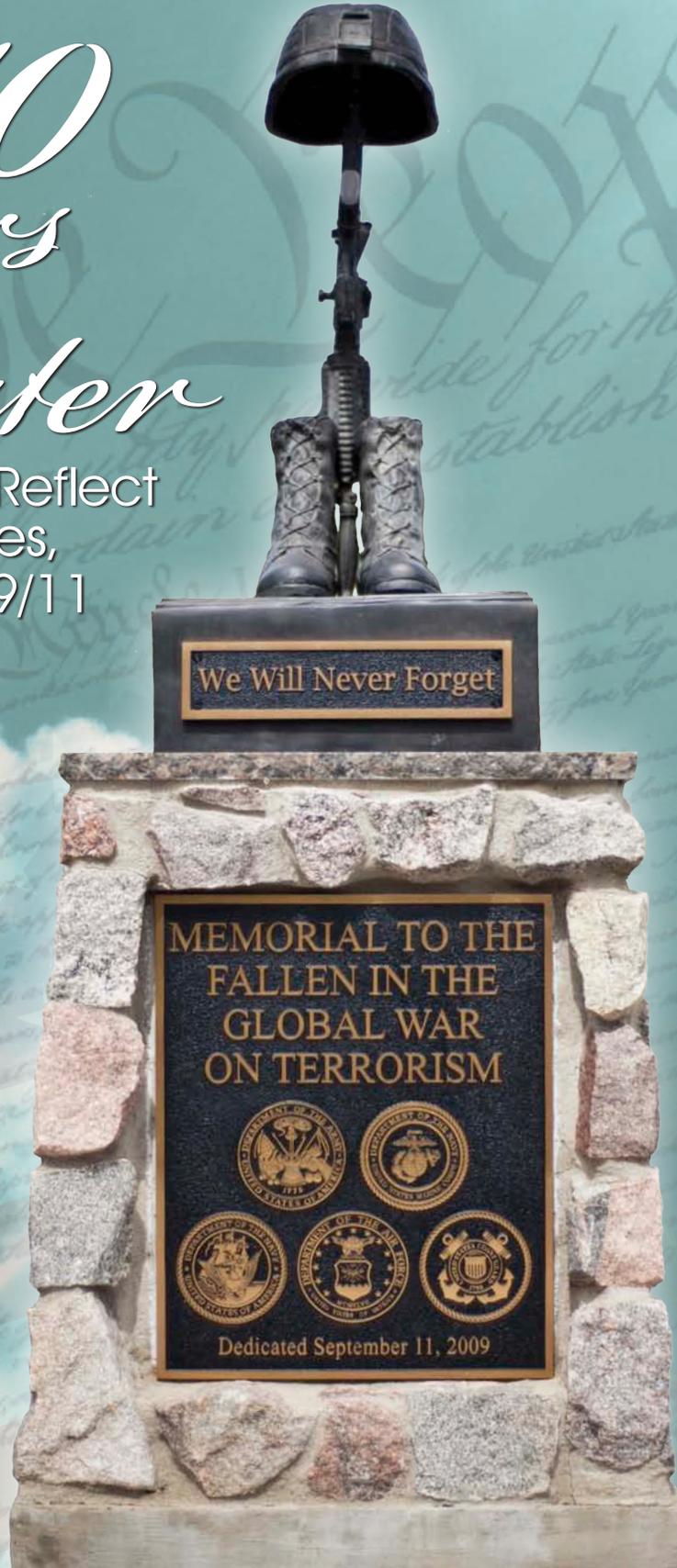
NORTH DAKOTA GUARDIAN

Volume 4, Issue 10

October 2011

10 Years Later

Guardsmen Reflect
on Images,
Effects of 9/11



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The sacrifices of North Dakota Guardsmen are remembered during recent 10-year commemoration ceremonies of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Following the historic date, Soldiers and Airmen have answered the call to service by mobilizing overseas in support of the Global War on Terrorism.



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This summer, North Dakota continued to build upon its partnership with the African nation of Ghana. In a final summer Soldier State Partnership Program exchange, combat engineer instructors host their Ghanaian counterparts after visiting the country earlier this spring.

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NORTH DAKOTA GUARDIAN

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Digital photos should be at least 300 dpi.

On the Cover



A memorial ceremony hosted by the N.D. National Guard Sept. 11, 2011, at the North Dakota Memorial to the Fallen in the Global War on Terrorism at Fraine Barracks, Bismarck, N.D., honored Families and service members and commemorated a decade since the tragic events of 9/11. Nearly 200 Family members, distinguished visitors, service members and supporters gathered at the memorial to show their respect for those who have given their lives for our country. (Photo Illustration by Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen)

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GUARD POSTS

Dispatches from the N.D. Guard Family

REFLECTIONS ON 9/11

Recently, this nation held numerous 10-year commemorations of the 9/11 attacks on our country. During these events, many speakers remarked how these attacks changed our nation forever, and in many respects this is true. For members of our Guard Family, it certainly did change their lives forever — the stress of large scale mobilizations, separations and loss of loved ones. Those difficult and emotional times have been a burden to all of us, but we especially grieve the loss of our Soldiers' lives and the scars, both physical and mental, that some still carry. We all rely on our faith, family and friends as we live with this traumatic reality.

Before the 9/11 attacks, the National Guard was seen as a Cold War strategic reserve with older equipment and weapon systems. After many recent mobilizations for both the Air and Army Guard, the active-duty branches of these services now view the Guard as an operational reserve and a full partner in the Global War on Terrorism with exceptional mission capability.

The average citizen of this nation also views us differently. A recent nationwide survey listed the National Guard as the No. 1 most respected organization in the United States. This well-deserved reputation is generated by the public's awareness of the bravery, exceptional work and caring spirit of our Soldiers and Airmen. The Guard is the gem of this nation.

Another change that occurred because of this event was the realization that our Families needed assistance during these stressful times. The Family Programs Office and the many volunteers who stepped up to provide communication, a helpful hand, friendship and caring was and is extraordinary. They filled a void that only they could fill, and I personally appreciate every one of them.

Another group that was impacted by 9/11 includes the employers of our Guard members. They have made sacrifices of time and resources in adjusting work schedules, helping Families and setting the examples of what a caring attitude is all about.



MAJ. GEN. (RET.)
MICHAEL HAUGEN

Former Adjutant General
North Dakota National Guard

There have certainly been many changes in our lives since the Global War on Terrorism started, but there also are many things that have not changed — our faith in God and the strength we receive from that faith, our reliance on love of family and friends, our belief in our nation and that we live in the best democracy in the world where we fight a war not for money, land or reward, but for liberty and freedom. Because we cherish that freedom and life itself, we will do what we must, including going to war, to protect our Families and each other.

This is a war we must and can win for our survival and our children's future. It is all of the things that have not changed because of 9/11 that enable us to overcome 9/11.

Sincerely,

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Michael Haugen



Maj. Gen. Michael Haugen, right, former North Dakota adjutant general, visits North Dakota Guardsmen deployed to Iraq Nov. 24, 2003. Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, members of the N.D. National Guard have been deployed to locations around the globe 365 days a year. In all, more than 1,800 Airmen and nearly 3,800 Soldiers have mobilized in the past decade from the N.D. National Guard to support the Global War on Terrorism.



Lock, Stock & Barrel

Unbeatable Marksman 'Retires' to Help Others

Sgt. 1st Class Gary Varberg, of the 817th Engineer Company, demonstrates M-9 pistol shooting techniques prior to the beginning of the N.D. National Guard Adjutant General's Combat Marksmanship Match July 29 at Camp Grafton South near Devils Lake, N.D. Varberg has won the event 28 out of the past 30 years (he was deployed during two years of competition) and is now a coach for N.D. National Guard contestants.



By Staff Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson
Joint Force Headquarters

"It's not every day you get to have dinner with the Queen of England," Sgt. 1st Class Gary Varberg says nonchalantly.

That's just one of the highlights of his unprecedented 30-year shooting career with the N.D. National Guard.

As the effects of age catch up with him, he's shouldering his rifle before risking his perfect record. These days, he's coaching younger Soldiers and Airmen in the finer techniques of shooting. And if anybody in

North Dakota — Guard or not — knows shooting, it's Varberg.

'We'll Give You Bullets'

In January 1981, at age 20, Varberg took his oath and marked his first drill with the Jamestown unit. His half-brother, Retired Sgt. 1st Class Roger Nelson, served and Varberg had always thought he would join, but was working quite a bit and kept putting it off.

"After I shot a few civilian matches, (Guardsmen) seen this and they said, 'Why don't you get in the Guard? We'll

give you guns. We'll give you bullets.' So, I decided that was probably good enough reason to get in because I just love to shoot."

How has that worked out for him the past 30 years?

"It worked out pretty good," he says modestly. "I've been places and seen places that I never ever thought I'd see."

He qualified for the state marksmanship team almost immediately out of basic training, and in 1993 he had the opportunity to compete for a spot on the All-Guard Marksmanship Team, an elite

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Sgt. 1st Class Gary Varberg gives some shooting tips to Sgt. Cale Kiser prior to the N.D. National Guard Adjutant General's Combat Marksmanship Match.



group of both Soldiers and Airmen from across all U.S. states and territories who have proven themselves the best of the best when it comes to shooting.

"I'm lucky enough, the very first year I went down there, I won the whole thing. I was exempt for life. If I wanted to go shoot on the All-Guard Team again, I can," Varberg says.

The results, life-size trophies and worldwide honors from dozens of matches since indicate that there was more to it than luck.

Double Distinguished

For starters, Varberg earned the Chief's 50 Award 12 times, including 10 years in a row. While Nelson — who taught Varberg how to shoot — as well as Master Sgt. Dan Marquardt and retired Col. Ray Thompson all wear the medal in the state, nobody has ever come close to touching Varberg's record. To achieve the standard, a shooter must qualify for the Winston P. Wilson National Guard Marksmanship match and then finish in the top 10 — although that's now been expanded to the top 20 — of the hundreds of competitors. Varberg pulled that off for 10 years straight before his first deployment in late 2003. He earned it again when he returned in 2005 and then again in 2010.

One of the most prestigious titles a marksman can earn, however, is Distinguished Rifle or Distinguished Pistol. The honor dates to Feb. 20, 1884, when it grew out of a need for the top Army marksmen to continue to compete; after three years of winning, they were booted from competition to give others a chance. In 1925, the honor expanded to civilian marksmen, who earn points during Excellence in Competition matches to reach the "distinguished" level. While the matches take place in the U.S., international shooters can compete for the honor, as well.

To earn the badge, a competitor must accumulate 30 points in the EIC matches during which shooters must be familiar with their weapons since no sighting is done. Points are given based on a marksman's placement among the top 10 percent of competitors who haven't earned the Distinguished title. The first sixth of that group get 10 points, the next third get eight points and the remaining competitors get six points. A marksman also must earn a "hard leg" by placing in the top half of the top 10 percent. In short, it's not easy. Having one "lucky" day of shooting won't earn anyone the title, either.

In more than 125 years of the Distinguished recognition, references indicate only about 1,400 marksmen have earned the Distinguished Pistol badge and about 1,700 have earned Distinguished Rifle. Only about 250 worldwide have earned both, called "Double Distinguished." Varberg is one of those elite few. It's believed that only four, including Varberg, who have ever hailed from North Dakota have earned the title since 1884.

Perfect Record

Since making the state marksmanship team three decades ago, Varberg has dominated competition in the state. He's won the Adjutant General's State Marksmanship Sustainment Competition 28 out of 30 years. The two years he didn't — 2004 and 2007 — he was deployed to Iraq as a "Trailblazer" searching for improvised explosive devices and keeping routes clear for U.S. and Coalition forces.

It was a dangerous mission, and the first go-round — when the Jamestown unit was Company B of the 141st Engineer Combat Battalion — was the first time such a mission was ever attempted.

"It was tough. It was a tough mission," Varberg says, his eyes revealing more than his words.

Out of 108 Soldiers in the company, two were killed and seven received Purple Heart medals for wounds they received in action.

With the Guard's change to a more modular force, the unit converted to the 817th Engineer Company (Sapper) in 2006, although many of the members remain the same and deployed together again in 2007. Thanks to experience, that mission went smoother. It also made Varberg realize he wanted to spend more time with his family — "I have a beautiful wife (who) stuck with me through all this shooting all these years, and two kids, I have a boy and a girl." It was upon his return that he stopped shooting with the All-Guard Team.

Prior to then, the team brought him around the world.

Global Success

Varberg has competed in Germany, France and South Africa. In one of his four trips to compete in Australia, he placed third in the match, making him the highest-scoring U.S. Soldier to ever compete there. In one of his seven trips to compete in England, he placed tenth out of the numerous soldiers taking part. And, of course, there was that dinner invitation in 1996, where he dined with the queen at Buckingham Palace in London.

He holds a couple of Canadian marksmanship records, too. In one competition, called the Rundown — "it was a very hard match to shoot," he says — he shot a perfect score. It had never been done before and has never been done since.

The timed match allowed 30 seconds

to run and shoot a 500-yard target twice from the prone position, then another 30 seconds to run forward and fire twice prone at the 400-yard target. Another sprint put him firing twice seated at the 300-yard target, followed by a sprint and kneeling shots at the 200-yard target and one last sprint forward for two standing shots at 100 yards.

"The Guard has really done things for me that's been amazing by being on the Marksmanship Team," he says.

Slinging His Weapon

After 30 years of competition, Varberg, who just turned 51, is ready to move on, although he's not yet ready to retire from the Guard.

"My finger hurts today," he jokes from the sidelines during the 2011 North Dakota Adjutant General's Marksmanship Sustainment Competition, where he was coaching this summer.

"It just doesn't feel right. It'll catch on. ... I suppose it'll come along. It's just going to take a year to get used to it," he says, as if trying to convince himself that he believes that.

When asked if he has any regrets about not competing this year, he pauses and sighs loudly before saying no with a tinge of hesitation in his voice.

"You've got to know when to call it quits," he adds. "The older you get, the more the eyes are going to start going worse. The big thing is I just never ever wanted anybody to come here and beat me. That was one of my goals. I always wanted to go out perfect, and it's worked that way."

Now, he's using his skills to mentor and train younger marksmen.

'My New Job'

"I'm here to help anyone with anything that has to do with marksmanship. That's my new job now," he says.

The would-be competition loves that arrangement.

"It's just a relief that he's not competing," Tech. Sgt. Josh VonBank says as he laughs.

In all seriousness, the Air Guard shooter is glad Varberg has assumed his new role as instructor — and not just because it eases the competition a bit.

"To be honest, as good as he is, he's just as dangerous as a coach. But, he's sharing the wealth and giving everybody the same

effort that he's giving the 817th. The state will benefit from his legacy and his edge as a shooter," VonBank says, adding that shooters are only as good as their competition.

"The more high-level competitors you can get together, the better you'll become as a shooter," VonBank says. "I'll never be as good as Gary Varberg and his boys, but I want to shoot with them."

The competition provides a push, VonBank says, and the Guardsmen on the Wing's marksmanship team would likely plateau without the additional mentoring and coaching Varberg provides.

"We don't have to go very far to find a world-class shooter to help us get to the next level, and that's a huge offer," VonBank says.

Varberg's 817th team has benefited from his experience for years, and it's showed. The team advanced through the state and regional competition last year and competed against the best teams in the Army. They're poised to do the same this year, even with Varberg as a coach instead of a competitor.

One team member, Spc. Evan Messer, recently qualified for the All-Guard Marksmanship Team, as well. He was a decent shooter until Varberg helped him hone his skills. Now the protégé is anticipating his first trips out of state to represent the entire National Guard through the barrel of a weapon.

Despite being one of the best in the country, Messer admits that Varberg could still beat him. Varberg's eyes twinkle as he says he already has, and he's "not afraid to do it again."

Varberg may be "retired" from shooting, but his legendary status as a marksman will carry through future generations of Guardsmen who benefit from competing with him, being mentored by him, or even just hearing stories and advice passed along from North Dakota's legend with a weapon. ■



See More Online:

Hear from Sgt. 1st Class Varberg in his own words at <http://bit.ly/GaryVarberg>

See North Dakota Marksmen in action at <http://bit.ly/2011Marksmanship>



Courtesy Photo

Gary Varberg poses by the Fortuna Trophy in England in 1996. The trophy had been in a museum for nearly 100 years and not competed for by the U.S. and England until 1991. Once Gary joined the All-Guard Marksmanship Team, they were able to win the trophy three times. During this trip to England, Varberg even had the opportunity to have dinner with the queen in Buckingham Palace.

Sgt. 1st Class Varberg's Shooting Advice

"The biggest thing that I always tell them is just to shoot their own game, make sure that they're doing their own thing. Don't worry about what anybody else is doing. Do what you know ... to do.

Don't try changing anything in a match. That's the biggest thing I preach to my guys. When it gets real close and it gets right down so you know you're within a couple of points of the other team, I always try to save my strongest shooter and have him be the last guy up to bat. And you can kind of walk up to an old shooter and tell him, 'OK, this is what we need to do.' And you can kind of depend on him. Over the years, I've had that. I've got a pretty new team, but I've

got a couple guys I can walk up to and say, 'This is what we need to do,' and they'll probably do it for me."



Breaking the Silence Surrounding Domestic Violence

October provides an opportunity to gain perspective from victims of domestic violence. This month is nationally recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Many high-profile domestic violence cases attract headlines and, as readers, we are often quick to make judgments based on what is being told by the media. We are even quicker to judge and

criticize the actions of victims. My hope is to use National Domestic Violence Awareness Month to tell some of these stories and to promote greater public awareness and education about the impact of domestic violence on our Families and communities.

North Dakota is not immune to these high-profile headlines. One of the latest incidents involving domestic violence made local news because it resulted in the death of police officer and former National Guardsman Sgt.

Steve Kenner. Although many in our state are familiar with this story, most are not familiar with the thousands of other stories of domestic violence that exist within North Dakota, stories that do not make the front page of the paper. Each story is unique, with one commonality weaving them together. That common thread is one of sheer terror felt by victims of domestic violence.

While there are circumstances surrounding this case that we do not know, there are many characteristics of domestic violence that are very clear. Domestic violence involves a pattern of behavior rather than a single isolated incident. Survivors



Heather Mattson
Joint Force Headquarters
Sexual Assault Response
Coordinator



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Heather Mattson, Joint Force Headquarters sexual assault response coordinator, observes the artwork featured on a T-shirt displayed at a "Clothesline Project" event at the Fargo Veterans Administration Hospital July 29, 2010. The Clothesline Project is a visual display that allows victims of military sexual trauma to share their stories and bear witness to sexual violence.

recant allegations of abuse, more often than not out of fear of retaliation from their abusers, not lack of evidence. The public should be mindful that a domestic violence perpetrator seeks to control the victim without regard to the victim's well-being and often without regard to whether children are present. One might ask, "Why doesn't a victim leave an abusive situation?" The answer is clear: statistically, women are at most risk of death when leaving an abuser. In North Dakota, there were six domestic violence-related deaths in 2010. Nationally, three women die every day at the hands of a current or former intimate partner, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Violence in an intimate relationship is different from other acts or threats of violence. Domestic violence involves elements of control, domination and manipulation as primary goals. Physical, verbal, emotional and other forms of abuse are simply tools to accomplish these primary goals. Domestic violence perpetrators often carefully pick the time, place and means. In some instances, abusers are respected members of their communities and are violent only in the home "behind closed doors."

Through years of efforts, survivors now have many options, from reaching out to a hotline or domestic violence program, to obtaining a court order of protection, to staying in a shelter, to exploring options involving support groups and other services. Victims of domestic violence employ tremendous courage and resilience in their daily lives. The most important message for victims to hear is simply this: You are not alone. Help is available. If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, please contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline number at 800-799-SAFE (7233) or our local hotline at 701-425-4821. ■

Domestic Violence in North Dakota

From January – December 2010

- 5,016 incidents of domestic violence were reported to crisis intervention centers in North Dakota.
- At least 4,739 children were directly impacted by these incidents.
- 94 percent of the victims were women.

— More statistics available at <http://bit.ly/NDDomestic>

FANNING THE FLAME

WING CELEBRATES OPENING OF NEW FIRE HALL

By Staff Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson
Joint Force Headquarters

As Hector International Airport expanded, the mission of the N.D. Air National Guard's 119th Wing firefighters grew. Now, 56 years after the original building went up to handle aircraft emergencies in Fargo, a new Crash/Fire/Rescue building is ready to meet challenges into the future.

Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general, Col. Rick Gibney, 119th Wing commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Mark Solem, 119th Wing fire chief, led a dedication ceremony Aug. 31 to officially open the new \$6.5 million building, which was funded by the U.S. Air Force. Also speaking were Sen. John Hoeven, Congressman Rick Berg and Retired Maj. Gen. Alexander Macdonald.

"Our mission in the N.D. National Guard is to protect lives and property," Sprynczynatyk said. "That can be accomplished in many ways on a global scale and here at home. With regard to this new building, we're taking a big step forward in continuing to fulfill that mission in Fargo on a daily basis. By more than doubling the building size and positioning it more strategically for airport expansion, we are ready to assist Hector Field with emergencies for many years into the future."



The new Crash/Fire/Rescue building at the N.D. Air National Guard base in Fargo, N.D., will decrease response time to any civilian or military aircraft emergency at Hector International Airport. The building meets high environmental standards and is expected to be certified LEED Silver.

The former fire hall spanned just 10,700 square feet, making it impossible to store all of the equipment required for a force of that size inside, which became particularly challenging during winter months. At 22,400 square feet, the new building has 13 bays to house all of the station's equipment, from a foam trailer for fuel fires to a vacuum trailer for fuel spills, as well as equipment needed for confined space extraction and the necessary safety equipment and breathing apparatuses



Staff Sgt. Michael Miller leads Staff Sgt. Erik Vosseteig, both of the 119th Civil Engineer Squadron, on a two-person hose team June 6 as they approach a mock aircraft burn pit while performing firefighter training at the N.D. Air National Guard Regional Training Site, Fargo, N.D.

Photos by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp



North Dakota dignitaries from left to right, Pamela Mohl, a representative of U.S. Sen. Kent Conrad; Fargo Mayor Dennis Walaker; U.S. Sen. John Hoeven; Col. Rick Gibney, 119th Wing commander; U.S. Congressman Rick Berg and Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general, prepare to cut a ribbon Aug. 31 at a dedication ceremony of a new Crash/Fire/Rescue building at the N.D. Air National Guard in Fargo.

for the firefighters. There are 10 sleeping rooms, a gym and a kitchen for the firefighters, 29 of which work full-time with others serving as traditional Airmen.

"As commander of the base, I can't tell you how proud I am and how grateful I am to the people that made this magnificent, world-class facility possible," Gibney said. "To me, the profession of firefighting is one of the most noble, most respected professions in today's society."

The building also achieves high environmental standards, and is expected to

be certified LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver by the U.S. Green Building Council. It uses high standards in both lighting and geothermal energy, as well as rainwater collection for irrigation.

Beyond the structure, the building's location is instrumental to the department's response. The 119th Wing handles all aircraft emergencies, both civilian and military, at Hector. The location of the 1950s-era building to the south made it difficult to reach some locations of the airport — which is larger now than it was then — in the time allotted for proper response. Now, firefighters can respond from the new building to the entire airport in less time, and will be able to continue to do so should the airport grow. Additional space also is available to expand the fire hall building in the future, should it be needed. ■



Master Sgt. Bruce Bauske, right, and Staff Sgt. Jon Lague, of the 119th Civil Engineer Squadron, spray water from a fire hose June 4 as they prepare to approach a mock building fire while performing firefighter training at the N.D. Air National Guard Regional Training Site, Fargo, N.D. The fire is set in a live-fire structural training facility "burn house," which provides realistic training for the firefighters in Fargo.

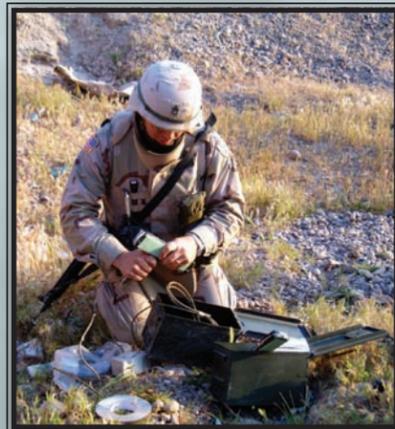
A CALL TO SERVICE

A Decade Later, Guardsmen Remember 9/11, Global War on Terrorism Deployments

By Sgt. 1st Class Billie Jo Lorius
Joint Force Headquarters

Since the 2001 terrorist attacks on America, the N.D. National Guard has mobilized more than 3,800 Soldiers and more than 1,800 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The N.D. National Guard lost 12 Soldiers since the GWOT began. However, the GWOT memorial that was dedicated in front of Fraine Barracks on Sept. 11, 2009, honors 24 service members with close ties to North Dakota who lost their lives since that fateful day a decade ago.

“Since that tragic day in our nation’s history, the men and women of North Dakota’s National Guard have stepped up in big ways to support the Global War on Terrorism,” said Gov. Jack Dalrymple. “Throughout the past decade, thousands of Soldiers and Airmen representing communities across our state have put their lives on hold and on the line to defend our homeland and our way of life. Some



Chief Warrant Officer Cody Hertz (a staff sergeant at the time), of Company C, 141st Engineer Combat Battalion, prepares a block of C-4 to destroy unexploded ordnance in Iraq after finding the items on a “Trailblazer” patrol in 2004. Below, two F-16A Air-Defense Fighter Fighting Falcons of the 178th Fighter Squadron, N.D. Air National Guard, are seen in a turn during an early morning combat air patrol mission over the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., on Nov. 11, 2001.

Courtesy Photo



Air Force Staff Sgt. Greg L. Davis

of those heroes made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our state and nation and we will never forget the price they paid or the Families who continue to mourn their loss.”

Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general, said, “The terrible events that Tuesday morning in September 2001 was a defining moment for our nation and for each of us as individuals. Everyone has a vivid memory of where they were and what they were doing that tragic day. In the ensuing hours, we prayed for the people in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and those on Flight 93. We also prayed for the safety of our Families, our friends and for our communities, not knowing what the future might hold.”

After terrorists struck the World Trade Center Towers in New York, N.D. Air National Guard pilots with the 119th Fighter Wing scrambled from their alert detachment with the North American Aerospace Defense Command at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia and were soon flying over the Pentagon. They were among the first to take to the air as military responders on that day.

Lt. Col. Dean Eckmann was one of the three “Happy Hooligans” in the N.D. Air National Guard’s 178th Fighter Squadron who responded. At that time, the detachment was one of North American Aerospace Defense Command’s seven alert sites designed to protect the nation against an attack.

“We saw something that day that very few saw from the air,” Eckmann said. “That’s basically because once that happened, (the Federal Aviation Administration) shut down the airspace, and we were the only ones airborne.”

What he saw that day was something he will never forget.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

“Normally, the East Coast is filled with airplanes, big and small, on a daily basis,” he said. “Flying that afternoon, the only airplanes that were up were basically military fighters and tankers. It was almost eerie, how quiet it was.”

“When Andrews (Air Traffic Control) put out the statement that any aircraft into Andrews Class B air space will be shot down, I was thinking we’ve got the missiles. It wasn’t like we were out on a combat air patrol over Iraq or somewhere in Europe — it was within the United States. So, that was kind of a gut-puller for me.”

They would continue to provide for the nation’s defense by contributing to 24/7 combat air patrols until the spring of 2002 and then flying at least two F-16 sorties daily until the fighter mission ended for the 119th Wing in October 2006, when they transitioned to flying the C-21 mission.

Emotions ran high in the days following the attacks, but for most, the initial reaction was simply one of shock. No one could believe that the U.S. had come under such an attack.

“On that day, we did not know that we would be a nation at war for more than a decade, and we did not fully know of the sacrifices that would be made by so many as they provided for the safety of our nation. We are truly a safer nation today, but that safety and the freedoms we so much enjoy have not come easily during the past decade,” Sprynczynatyk said.

In remembrance of the 2,993 people killed in the attacks, President George W. Bush proclaimed that Sept. 11 be known as Patriot Day. As part of this proclamation, he directed that all American flags be flown at half-staff, both home and abroad, and that a moment of silence be observed at 8:46 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time, the time at which the first plane struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

More than 65 percent of the N.D. National Guard has enlisted since 9/11. Those who have served more than 10 years and continue to serve have re-enlisted since the terrorist attacks.

“All of our men and women serving in uniform have chosen to serve in a world at war and made numerous sacrifices, along with their Families and employers, to keep our country

Lt. Col. Dean Eckmann (then a major) prepares to fly a N.D. Air National Guard 119th Wing F-16A fighter jet Sept. 28, 2006. Eckmann was one of the N.D. Air National Guardsman who responded following the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. They scrambled from the Wing’s alert detachment at Langley Air Force Base, Va., and were soon flying over the Pentagon. The Fighter mission ended for the Wing the fall of 2006, when the Airmen transitioned to flying the C-21 Learjet.

safe from terrorism,” Sprynczynatyk said.

Joining and serving after the 9/11 attacks holds different meanings for each Guardsman.

North Dakota Soldiers have stepped up time and again to volunteer for GWOT missions. Two Soldiers volunteered to mobilize five times since 9/11. Sgt. Jacob Bollinger, who serves with Company B of the 231st Brigade Support Battalion, has

deployed overseas three times and served on two stateside mobilizations. Staff Sgt. Kristopher Anderson, who serves with the 188th Engineer Company (Vertical), is on his fifth mobilization after having served with the 142nd Engineer Combat Battalion, Company A of the 164th Engineer Combat Battalion, 817th Engineer Company (Sapper) — all in Iraq — and with Task Force Falcon Headquarters in Kosovo. Six other Soldiers have mobilized four times each, including a doctor who spent all four of his 3-6-month deployments overseas.

“Service is part of my nature, and I have deployed so that others don’t have to. I’ve been humbled by my experience, serving with so many great Guardsmen both overseas and in the flood fight. The National Guard is just a great organization that allows me to work alongside some of the finest people in the world,” Bollinger said about his lengthy deployment history.

Numerous heroic acts have punctuated the N.D. National



Courtesy Photo

A Soldier with the 142nd Engineer Combat Battalion greets a group of Iraqi children during a mobilization to the country in 2003.

"We owe a sincere debt of gratitude to all of our military Families."

Guard's service in the Global War on Terrorism. One Guardsman received a Silver Star, others received a Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device for valor and many more have received the Bronze Star Medal. Many hundreds of North Dakota Guardsmen have served valiantly in combat conditions, with hundreds of Soldiers earning Combat Action Badges and many Airmen earning the Combat Action Medal. Dozens of these Guardsmen received Purple Heart medals acknowledging wounds they received in action.

"I am inspired when I think of the sacrifices over the past 10 years and continue to be proud of our Soldiers, Airmen and their Families who have answered the call to service. Throughout the Global War on Terrorism, our military Families have given so very much. Spouses have stepped up to be the head of household all alone. Children have celebrated birthdays and holidays without a parent. Parents have taken over the obligations of their children serving overseas. This service, and the numerous sacrifices that go with it, have not gone unnoticed. We owe a sincere debt of gratitude to all of our military Families," Sprynczynatyk said.

In one of the largest single deployments in N.D. National Guard history, three N.D. Army Guard units were deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom at the same time. About 630 of the 142nd Engineer Combat Battalion and 175 members from the 957th Engineer Company (Multi-Role Bridge) were wrapping up their missions as about 480 members of the 141st Engineer Combat Battalion mobilized. This strong entrance into the war in Iraq set the precedence for numerous successful missions that would follow.

N.D. National Guard units time and again set the standard overseas in the GWOT. The 141st Engineer Combat Battalion became the first military unit to launch a yearlong Trailblazer mission, a first-of-its-kind operation focused on assured mobility. Guardsmen cleared main supply routes in Iraq of improvised explosive devices and other hazards, as well as clearing areas that would provide opportunities for terrorist attacks. In all, more than



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Lt. Col. Dan Bertsch, a JAG officer with the N.D. Air National Guard, returns home from his 15th mobilization on Sept. 13, 2011, at Fargo's Hector International Airport. Bertsch has volunteered to deploy more than any other North Dakota Guardsman. His 15th mobilization was a six-month mission to Afghanistan. Above, Sgt. Jacob Bollinger, who serves with Company B of the 231st Brigade Support Battalion, and Staff Sgt. Kristopher Anderson, right, who serves with the 188th Engineer Company (Vertical), have both served on five deployments since 9/11.

300 IEDs were found and destroyed during the unit's year in Iraq, saving countless lives of U.S. and Coalition forces.

The N.D. National Guard's 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment has proven itself as the experts in operating sensors and equipment to detect threats and attacks in Afghanistan. They have served in groups of about 40, with one group replacing another — oftentimes with 100 percent of the unit volunteering to go — in their mission of protecting the lives of U.S. and Coalition forces. A number of these Guardsmen have even chosen to return as contractors in order to continue their life-saving mission.

The most-deployed N.D. Army Guard Battalion, 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, has served on nine overseas deployments since the GWOT began 10 years ago. Serving in groups ranging from 25 to about 150 Soldiers, they have increased the security and contributed greatly to the war effort in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as contributing to peacekeeping operations in Kosovo. Many have stepped up to volunteer for these missions, which demonstrate the commitment and dedication of N.D. Soldiers.

N.D. Airmen continue to serve in the GWOT daily from



Sgt. Sara Marchus

Trevor Hendrickson, son of Kenneth Hendrickson, who was killed in Iraq Jan. 24, 2004, speaks at the 10-year commemoration ceremony at the North Dakota Memorial to the Fallen in the Global War on Terrorism September 11, 2011. Hendrickson spoke at the event on behalf of the Families of the Fallen.

price so we can be free," former Governor, now Sen. John Hoeven said. "This memorial honors those patriots who have served and sacrificed for our state and nation, and pays tribute to the Families and friends who continue to mourn their loss. We will never forget the incredible sacrifice they have made on our behalf."

This year, during a commemorative event for the tenth anniversary of 9/11, family members and friends placed roses in honor of the fallen service members on the memorial in remembrance of the sacrifices made since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism.

Trevor Hendrickson, the son of Staff Sgt. Kenneth Hendrickson, who was killed in Iraq Jan. 24, 2004, spoke on behalf of the Families of the Fallen during the event.

"Even in tragedy, there is a lesson to learn, though it might be hard to swallow," Hendrickson said. "I learned to be thankful."

While discussing his initial anger over the loss of his father, Hendrickson explained how the anger of his father's death transformed into appreciation for his father's strength and willingness to serve.

"(The fallen) died because they were proud of this country," Hendrickson said.

The N.D. National Guard now has about 175 North Dakota Guardsmen mobilized outside of the state in support of the GWOT.

"We continue to stand ready to defend this great nation against enemies both foreign and domestic. It is our honor and duty as we stand committed a decade later to our country, state and community," Sprynczynatyk said. ■



N.D. GUARDSMEN MOBILIZED

5594	POST 9/11
3700	WORLD WAR I
2828	WORLD WAR II
2404	KOREAN WAR
790	BERLIN CRISIS
632	DESERT STORM

North Dakota's Fallen Heroes

SPC. PAUL A. BEYER
U.S. ARMY

SGT. MICHAEL E. BITZ
U.S. MARINE CORPS

SPC. PHILIP D. BROWN
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

SPC. KEENAN A. COOPER
U.S. ARMY

SPC. DENNIS J. FERDERER, JR.
U.S. ARMY

SPC. JON PAUL FETTIG
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

CPL. NATHAN J. GOODIRON
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

PFC. SHELDON R. HAWK EAGLE
U.S. ARMY

STAFF SGT. KENNETH W. HENDRICKSON
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

SPC. MICHAEL L. HERMANSON
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

SPC. JAMES J. HOLMES
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

MAJ. ALAN R. JOHNSON
U.S. ARMY RESERVE

CPL. CHRISTOPHER K. KLEINWACHTER
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

STAFF SGT. LANCE J. KOENIG
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

STAFF SGT. DAVID C. KUEHL
U.S. ARMY

CPL. CURTIS R. MEHRER
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

SPC. ANTHONY W. H. MONROE
U.S. ARMY

CPL. JEREMIAH S. SANTOS
U.S. ARMY

SGT. JASON A. SCHUMANN
U.S. ARMY

SGT. KEITH L. SMETTE
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

SGT. THOMAS J. SWEET II
U.S. ARMY

SGT. TRAVIS A. VAN ZOEST
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

SPC. CODY L. WENTZ
U.S. ARMY, NDNG

PFC. JONATHAN C. YANNEY
U.S. ARMY



We Will Never Forget



Photo Illustration by Sgt. 1st Class Steve Urlacher



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp



Chief Warrant Officer Theresa Hesch

Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general, presents an "Adjutant General Coin" to Veteran Ervin Jose who attended Veteran Appreciation Day, a part of the nationwide "Forever Proud" National Assisted Living Week (Sept 11-17) theme. Sprynczynatyk met with about 50 residents of Valley View Heights in Bismarck, N.D., on Sept 15. He presented coins to the 18 Veterans who attended the event.

Left, 1st Lt. Brian Ludwig, of the 219th Security Forces Squadron, crouches near training equipment at a simulated launch facility at the Minot Air Force Base, Minot, N.D., Sept. 10, during a tour for visiting dignitaries, including Master Sgt. William Hawley, the National Guard Bureau nuclear enterprise manager, right. Hawley was part of a group visiting the 219th Security Forces Squadron to see the unit at work and to discuss the issues, challenges and success that Air National Guard personnel have had working in a joint mission with active duty U.S. Air Force personnel providing security for missile fields in the Minot area.

Top, Families of the Fallen in the Global War on Terrorism gather at the North Dakota Memorial to the Fallen in the Global War on Terrorism during a commemorative ceremony Sept. 11, 2011. The ceremony took place in honor of all of those affected by the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks on the United States.



Sgt. Ann Knudson

Sgt Rodney Cabezas, Bismarck, N.D., hugs his sons before loading the bus headed for his unit's mobilization duty station, Camp Atterbury, Ind., Sept. 24. Earlier in the day, his unit, the N.D. National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 112th Aviation Regiment (Security and Support), was honored with a send-off ceremony.

GUARDIAN

Snapshots

Warrant Officer Class 1 Benjamin Afful grinned as he spun around in the turret of an Avenger Pedestal-Mounted Stinger System. The Ghanaian Army officer had never been exposed to such a machine and was thoroughly enjoying seeing how it worked, spinning it back and forth to acquire “targets” on the screen. It was just one brief stop during a whirlwind two-week trip to North Dakota for him and Sgt. Maj. Richard Kyere-Yeboah.

Afful serves as a combat engineering instructor for the Ghana Armed Forces and Kyere-Yeboah is a senior enlisted leader at the Engineer Training School in Accra, Ghana. After having hosted combat engineer instructors from the N.D. National Guard earlier this year, the men were wrapping up the latter half of the exchange. It's all part of a robust partnership between North Dakota and Ghana that began in 2004 as part of the Department of Defense-sponsored State Partnership Program.

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Deegan and Sgt. 1st Class Tony Duben, both of Devils Lake, N.D., worked to ensure the Ghanaian soldiers' visit was just as enriching as the trip they experienced in February. Deegan serves as the combat engineer Advanced Leaders Course manager at the 164th Regional Training Institute, where he instructs with Duben, the assistant course manager.

“I'd have to say I'm very impressed with the professionalism and especially the graciousness of not only the military personnel but the local people, as well,” Deegan said after returning from Ghana. “I would love to visit again to interact with the engineers there.”

While in Accra, Deegan and Duben assisted in instructing 32 students at Teshie Camp and took part in demolition exercises, which gave them the opportunity to experience different types of explosives used by the Ghana Army for their combat engineering tasks.

For the two weeks in September, their Ghanaian counterparts were able to experience the engineer school in North Dakota, where Army engineers from across the United States come to train, as well as other parts of the state. While in Grand Forks one day, the Soldiers had the opportunity to try out an Avenger used by the 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment based



Sgt. 1st Class Paul Deegan

Setting it Off

N.D., Ghanaian Engineer Instructors Have a Blast at Summer State Partnership Program Exchange

• By Staff Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson, Joint Force Headquarters •



Sgt. Brett J. Miller

Sgt. 1st Class Darren Linde, with the N.D. National Guard's 164th Regional Training Institute, hands a training charge-sized package of TNT to Warrant Officer Class 1 Benjamin Afful at Camp Grafton South, near Devils Lake, N.D., Sept. 17. Above, Sgt. 1st Class Tony Duben, of Devils Lake, N.D., works with Staff Sgt. Quave, a soldier in the Ghana Army, to prepare explosives for detonation in February 2011. Duben and Sgt. 1st Class Paul Deegan, both instructors with the N.D. National Guard's 164th Regional Training Institute, traveled to Ghana as part of a combat engineer instructor exchange and later hosted their Ghanaian counterparts in North Dakota.

there as well as check out the Improved Moving Target Simulator, a domed virtual world that offers training in shoulder-fired Stinger missiles. The highlights of the trip, however, involved the combat engineer instruction, including the weapons and demolition ranges at Camp Grafton Training Center, Devils Lake, N.D.

“I liked the demolition range, and the firing range was also interesting. It's my first time seeing such a range. It's very interesting,” Kyere-Yeboah said of pop-up targets used for marksmanship practice at Camp Grafton. “We've seen a new way of doing certain things that we'll bring to Ghana.”

Afful also found the demolition range interesting, saying that in Ghana they use British-style plastic explosives rather than the C4 and Bangalore torpedoes used by the U.S. engineers.

“It was interesting, how to initiate explosives. We use detonation cord. They also use detonation cord but they also have what they call MDI (modernized demolition initiators). ... It's very easy to practice with,” he said.

He also benefitted from the training aids Duben and Deegan used and was anxious to bring back more information he could use to supplement his own instruction.

“Describing and talking about experience with Bangalore torpedoes will go a long way,” he said. “We have an improvised one, but now with what I've seen, I think it will help me to use in teaching.”

The mutual benefit of the exchange is



Sgt. Brett J. Miller

Staff Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson



Sgt. 1st Class Paul Deegan, right, helps guide a training version of a shoulder-fired Stinger missile as Sgt. Maj. Richard Kyere-Yeboah sites in a target at the Improved Moving Target Simulator in Grand Forks, N.D., Sept. 21. Below, Warrant Officer Class 1 Benjamin Afful and Kyere-Yeboah, both engineer soldiers in the Ghana Army, watch demolitions explode at Camp Grafton South, Devils Lake, N.D., Sept. 17. The soldiers visited North Dakota as part of an engineer instructor exchange. The events were part of the Department of Defense-sponsored State Partnership Program, which has paired North Dakota with Ghana since 2004.

typical of the many activities that North Dakota Guardsmen and Ghana Armed Forces members have taken part in this summer.

One area of focus has been peacekeeping operations, which is a familiar mission to both partners. In May and June, workshops in Ghana focused on the roles and responsibilities of both engineers and military police officers in peacekeeping operations.

In July, Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general, made his annual trip to the African country to not only meet face-to-face with key leaders in the partnership and further develop a plan for the future, but also to observe training the Guard's 814th Medical Company was taking part in there as part of MEDFLAG 11. His visit included meetings with the minister of defense, U.S. ambassador to Ghana, Ghana chief of defense staff and other Ghana Armed Forces leaders, the commandant of the Sekondi Naval Station, Ghana Armed Forces training areas and instructors, and leaders at the National Disaster Management Organization, which is similar to FEMA. He also visited Takarodi Polytechnic Institute representatives who then visited North Dakota's Bismarck State College in August to further explore an educational partnership.

Also in July, four N.D. National Guard Service Member and Family Support representatives traveled to Ghana for a Family Readiness Group Workshop, and then members of the Ghana Armed Forces family support network — called Magajia, or “leader of women” — came back to the U.S. with them for the National Volunteer Conference in Louisville, Ky.

“Despite the differences in our cultures, we are much more alike than different,” said Rob Keller, Service Member and Family Support director. “Military Families share the same concerns regardless of where we live: separation due to deployment; the education and rearing of our children; financial hardships; and the challenges of living harmoniously under adverse conditions.”

The partnership has spanned many realms that both forces have in common, from peacekeeping deployments to flood response to improving techniques behind the scenes, which was done during an August aviation maintenance workshop in Ghana.

“In fiscal year 2011 (October 2010 through September 2011), the N.D. National Guard pinpointed our role in Ghana by nesting its objectives with AFRICOM (Africa Command) and taking a more strategic approach to its engagements,” said Maj. Brock Larson, North Dakota's State Partnership Program director. “U.S. Africa Command is embracing the State Partnership Program, which adds a unique citizen-Soldier dynamic that the National Guard brings to their Military-to-Military engagement program. With seemingly endless opportunities to expand our program and the desire for our Soldiers and Airmen to participate, future years will prove as robust as ever.”

The Guard continues to look forward to the future and further learning from one another's strengths and challenges. Among the workshops and exchanges planned for the coming fiscal year are a disaster management workshop, chaplain exchange, emergency operations center familiarization, flight and ground safety events and additional workshops and exchanges with engineer instructors, aviation maintenance personnel and military police. ■

N.D. Soldiers Battle for 'Best Warrior' Title

The N.D. Army National Guard's 2011 Best Warrior Competition came to a close after 11 Guardsmen from across the state tested their Soldiering skills during three days worth of military events at Camp Grafton Training Center, Devils Lake, N.D., Sept. 16-18.

Sgt. Thomas Hansen, of Minot, N.D., a member of 141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, was the winner of the state-level Best Warrior Competition in the noncommissioned officer category. In the enlisted-level competition, Spc. Daniel Carpenter, of Fargo, N.D., a member of the 231st Brigade Support Battalion, took top honors.

The winners will now prepare for the regional competition in June 2012. The Soldiers will go up against Guardsmen from seven other states: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington and Wyoming. Regional winners go on to compete in the All-Guard Competition and, if they win there, they compete in the All-Army Competition.

"I'm really looking forward to preparing (for the next level of competition)," Hansen said. "Nothing hurts more than not knowing the answers to some of these questions. Now, I have time to figure out those answers before the regional competition."

Should the winners not be able to compete, they will be replaced by the runners-up from the state competition. This year, Sgt. Kenneth Loepp, of Fargo, with the



Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen



From the Desk of the Adjutant General

RE: Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

Soldiers and Airmen of the N.D. National Guard –

As you know, the Department of Defense has recently repealed the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy on homosexuals serving in the military. Current law is clear that the Armed Forces will not discriminate against any service member for their sexual orientation nor will it be a basis for denying anyone the opportunity to serve in uniform.

Repeal of this policy will not affect the N.D. National Guard's policy of treating all Soldiers, Airmen and civilian employees with courtesy, dignity and respect regardless of gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Thanks to your efforts, the N.D. National Guard continues to be one of the premier military organizations in the world. I am proud to serve with you in support of our communities, state and nation.

Sincerely,

Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk

231st Brigade Support Battalion, was the runner-up in the noncommissioned officer category. Spc. Jacob Knain, of Rugby, with the 957th Engineer Company, took the runner-up position at the enlisted level.

Community Sends Off Guardsmen Deploying to Kosovo

The N.D. National Guard's commander-in-chief, elected officials and senior military leaders joined with community members, Families and friends of deploying Guardsmen to wish them well during

a formal send-off ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Bismarck, N.D., Sept. 24.

About 55 Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 112th Aviation Regiment (Security and Support) have left for additional training at Camp Atterbury, Ind., before heading overseas for the remainder of their yearlong mission. They will serve as part of Kosovo Force (KFOR) 15, a NATO peacekeeping operation.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple led a distinguished group of speakers that included Sen. John Hoeven, Rep. Rick Berg, and Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general.

"These Soldiers are putting their lives on hold and on the line to defend our nation and promote peace in the Balkan region," Dalrymple said. "We owe them and their Families a debt of gratitude for their willingness to serve, and we pray for their safe and speedy return home."

This is the second deployment to the Balkans for the Bismarck-based unit, which sent 23 Soldiers to Bosnia-Herzegovina from 2005-06.

About 150 Family members, friends and members of the North Dakota Patriot Guard (Continued on page 19) ...

Sgt. Thomas Hansen achieves the "mount" position on Sgt. Kenneth Loepp during the Modern Army Combatives portion of the state-level Best Warrior Competition at Camp Grafton Training Center, Devils Lake, N.D., Sept. 18.

Chaplain's Corner: Facing Tragedy

By Chaplain (Capt.) Brock Sailer
231st Brigade Support Battalion

It has been 10 years since America's most tragic day of my lifetime unfolded. I remember it as vividly as my parents can describe hearing of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. I can mentally go back to Sept. 11, 2001, and it feels as though it took place yesterday. I was a student at Providence College in Otterburne, Manitoba. A few of us watched the events take place while watching the TV in my room. I remember feeling as though the ground was unsteady under my feet as I ran with high adrenaline across campus to call my unit, the 136th Quartermaster Battalion. The Canadian/U.S.-border closed for about 24 hours. Chapel was overflowing that afternoon and a few of us American students gathered in the evening. America and the world had changed in an instant, and each of us had, too.

I also will never forget the first time I did return to America for drill after Sept. 11. Emotions came over me as I drove back onto American soil. Tears came to my eyes as I drove through Cavalier and Langdon and saw a visible difference — American flags on nearly every house and business. So much has happened to us as a nation and me personally in the decade since. It is hard to believe this all took place before my marriage and four children were born.

As the time for the tenth anniversary neared, I decided I would be very intentional in remembering this year. So, I watched interviews of the students President Bush was reading to that day. I read stories about different "Heroes of 9/11" and others with unique vantage points to the events of that day. I watched tributes on YouTube. It was so tragic ... still.

There are two main questions I see people wrestle with when



Spc. Jess Raasch

Chaplain (Capt.) Brock Sailer, center, talks with Sgt. Elijah Rude and Spc. Bryan Sims while inspecting dike flood protection in Valley City during the spring 2011 flood fight.

facing tragedy. First is always the question, "Why?" This question never gets a full answer this side of heaven and is one that needs to be let go of in due time. The second is, "What could I have done differently?" This question, unless you are in a position to realistically prevent a repeat occurrence, can also lead to frustration. You cannot stay in the mind-numbing presence of these two questions for long without being crippled mentally and spiritually.

It is better to focus on where one goes for strength in these troubled times of tragedy. That is where the words of Psalm 46, which President Obama read at the memorial, are refreshing and healing. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging" (Psalm 46:1-3 NIV).

We need the refuge that God offers in times of trouble. He reassures us that though the earth feels like it is shifting beneath our feet, he holds us and protects us. We are not forgotten. ■

Check out even more N.D. National Guard news online!

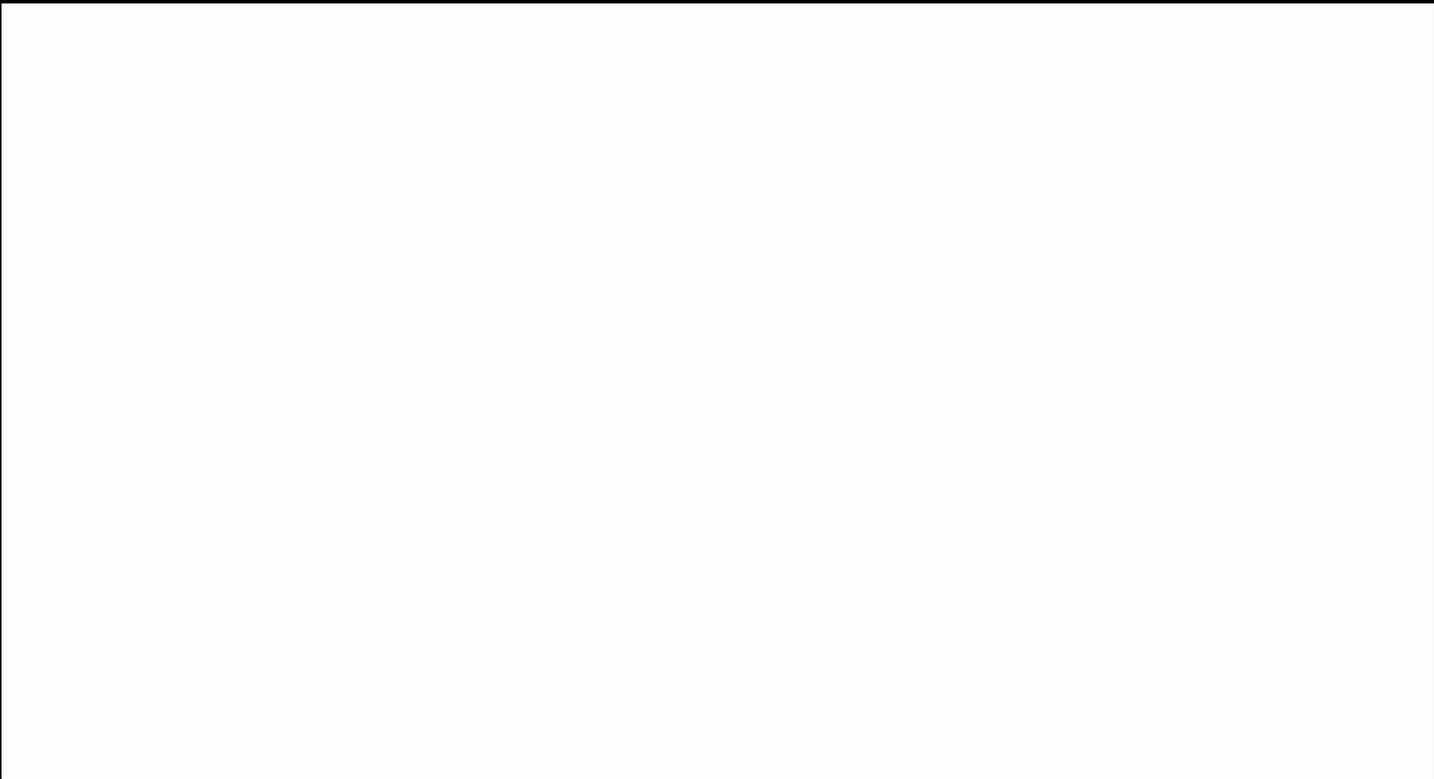


Sgt. Ann Knudson

(from page 18) were on hand to see them off on their tour of duty.

Lt. Col. William Watson, of Bismarck, commands the unit, and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Schuchard, of Jamestown, N.D., serves as the senior enlisted leader. Many of the Soldiers hail from the Bismarck-Mandan area, but the unit is comprised of Guardsmen from 15 North Dakota communities. ■

Spc. Nathan Sheets, right, and members of his Family seated to his left prepare to listen to Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general, render remarks at the send-off ceremony for about 55 Soldiers assigned to the N.D. National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 112th Aviation Regiment (Security and Support) in Bismarck, N.D., Sept. 24. The unit will serve as part of Kosovo Force (KFOR) 15, a NATO peacekeeping operation.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Members of the North Dakota Patriot Guard stand watch as N.D. National Guard members speak to media representatives about their response following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. From left are Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general; Col. Rick Gibney, 119th Wing commander; Col. Brad Derrig; Capt. Dan Murphy, N.D.National Guard public information officer; Lt. Col. Dean Eckmann; Chief Master Sgt. Doug Faldet and Tech Sgt. Tom Lawrence.