



NORTH DAKOTA GUARDIAN



THE
Happy Hooligans

Volume 1, Issue 8

September 2008



End of an Era

141ST ENGINEER BATTALION DEACTIVATES &
LAST VIETNAM WAR ARMY PILOT RETIRES

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Commander in Chief
North Dakota Governor
John Hoeven

The Adjutant General
Maj. Gen. David A. Sprynczynatyk

Chief of Public Affairs
1st Lt. Dan Murphy

Editor
Sgt. Eric W. Jensen

Contributors
Capt. Penny Ripperger
Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp
Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson
Command Sgt. Maj. Jack Cripe
Chaplain (Capt.) Maury Millican
Lt. Col. Mark Ugelstad
Shirley Olgeirson
Chief Warrant Officer Kiel Skager
Sommer Brown
Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger

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ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Contributions to the *North Dakota Guardian* are encouraged! Send articles, photos and art to Editor, JFND PIO, Box 5511, Bismarck, N.D. 58506-5511.

Electronic submissions are preferred. Please e-mail stories in Word format to:

eric.william.jensen@us.army.mil

Phone: 701-333-2195 Fax: 701-333-2017

Digital photos should be at least 300 dpi.

On the Cover



A Chapter Closes: Spc. Duane Hoelter and 1st Sgt. Vernon Martin pose with the "Best Tents" marker in this late 1960s photo. After more than 50 years of service to the community, state and country, the 141st Engineer Battalion deactivated Aug. 31. (Courtesy Photo)

VIEW FROM THE TOP

An Interview With State Command Sgt. Maj. Jack Cripe, Joint Force Headquarters



Understanding the Enlisted Promotion System Crucial to Rank Progression in the North Dakota Army National Guard

North Dakota State Command Sgt. Maj. Jack Cripe sat down with us this month to address questions about the Enlisted Promotion System (EPS) and to explain how the program is critical to enlisted career development in the N.D. Army National Guard.

The EPS determines who in the Guard is eligible and considered for promotion to the grades of E-5 through E-9. The only way a Soldier can be promoted is by being selected from a promotion list generated by the EPS. Soldiers can position themselves on the promotion list by accumulating a number of promotion points through a combination of leadership appraisals, experience and individual achievement. Here are some excerpts from the interview:

Q: Who is considered for a promotion?

A: A variety of requirements have to be met by Dec. 31 of each year. This is the cut-off date at which promotion eligibility is determined. Soldiers must meet time in grade and time in service requirements for the grade they are being considered for promotion to. They must have a valid military occupational specialty (MOS) or be enrolled in an MOS-qualification-producing course.

If the Soldier has multiple MOSs, they must choose which one to be considered for promotion in. They also must not be flagged for any reason. Things like a failed Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) will disqualify someone from being considered for promotion. A Soldier will also be ineligible for a promotion consideration if they fail to complete the proper non commissioned officer educa-

tion system (NCOES) requirement for their current grade before the Dec. 31 cut-off date. A recommendation from leadership is also required to be considered for promotion.

Q: Where do my promotion points come from?

A: They come from two areas: administrative points and leadership appraisal scores. Administrative points are driven by time in grade, awards, APFT scores, weapons qualification, post-secondary education and any additional military training or schools you may have attended since basic training and advanced individual training. There are 600 possible points to be earned from administrative areas and 600 points that can be earned from leadership appraisals. By achieving a high APFT score or weapons qualification score, the Soldier has some control over his or her outcome on the promotion list.

Q: How can I verify my administrative promotion points?

A: This information is available through the unit. A Soldier's first-line leader will present them with a document called an NGB-4100-1-R. This document contains all of the Soldier's current administrative information and how many promotion points each area translates into. This includes APFT scores, weapons qualification scores, college credit and awards that the Soldier has received. It is important that the Soldier verifies that this information is correct. If they see an inaccuracy, they need to notify their unit so that their

record is updated before Dec. 31 to maintain eligibility for promotion.

Q: Can I be promoted during a mobilization?

A: Yes, however, you must be selected for promotion in a position within a traditional unit in the N.D. National Guard. Upon returning from mobilization, you will be transferred into the unit and position for which you were selected for promotion. Your full-time readiness non commissioned officer will be able to assist in answering further questions on positions available within the N.D. Army National Guard.

Q: What is the Senior Enlisted Management Board and what role does it play within the EPS system?

A: This is a board comprised of five command sergeants major from the N.D. National Guard that dictates personnel moves on all E-8 and E-9 Soldiers and positions. In addition to having ownership of the EPS, the SEMB fills all E-8 and E-9 vacancies within the N.D. Army National Guard. The board also determines who is selected to enroll in the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy.

For more information, please contact your unit's full-time readiness non commissioned officer or unit clerk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Cripe".



Soldier Begins Biathlon Races

North Dakota's first Soldier to ever qualify for the national All-Guard Biathlon Team began his first competitive races last month. Sgt. Blake Hillerson, 25, qualified for the team during a national competition in March. He has been training throughout the summer for what will be a full year as one of only five Guardsmen nationwide to qualify for the elite team.



Sgt. Blake Hillerson

Hillerson's first race was the New England Nordic Ski Association's Summer Rollerski Series, a 15-kilometer freestyle race in Jericho, Vt. It has been followed by other races in Vermont, Argentina and Chile.

To continue to compete at national and international events, Hillerson, a Soldier with the 426th Signal Company, will be taking the fall semester off from majoring in economics at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Hooligans Paddle to a Second Place Win

The first-ever Happy Hooligan Dragon Boat team consisting of members and friends of the N.D. Air National Guard competed at the Bemidji Dragon Boat Festival Aug. 1-2.

Dragon boat teams are made up of 16-24 people rowing in unison to the beat of a drum. There were 64 registered teams at the event, each team competing in two 500-meter races. The top 12 teams with the lowest combined scores competed in the Finals Division.

The Happy Hooligan team placed third in the first race and second in the second



119th Wing members, family and friends participate in the Bemidji Dragon Boat Festival Aug. 1-2. The 22-member Happy Hooligan team competed in two 500-meter races before placing second in the finals.

race, unexpectedly qualifying them for the Final Bronze Division. In an exciting final race, the Happy Hooligan team remained neck and neck with the competition, only missing the first-place trophy for the Final Bronze Division by one second. It was a tough defeat, but the team is already looking forward to the comeback next year.

"The teamwork and camaraderie involved in this event made this an amazing experience. We were definitely the underdogs going in, but I think we surprised everyone ... including ourselves with how well we did. Everyone on the team wants to do it again next year. We will definitely be back," said Capt. Penny Ripperger, Happy Hooligan Dragon Boat team captain.

Walton, Boschee to Lead 141st

Col. Robert Walton assumed command of the North Dakota Army National Guard's 141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade on Aug. 16, and Command Sgt. Maj. Guy V. Boschee became the senior enlisted Soldier in the brigade.

Walton was commissioned as a second lieutenant in May 1980 following ROTC at North Dakota State University. His most recent assignment was as the executive officer for the Engineer Brigade, 34th Infantry Division. He replaced outgoing commander Col. Dale Adams, who will assume duties as the deputy land component commander.

Boschee, a Soldier since November 1979, has more than 20 years of construction and engineering experience. He replaces Command Sgt. Maj. Orville C. Wang, who will serve in the 68th Troop Command.

Holly Replaces Naslund in Ghana

Maj. Mike Holly, of Mandan, has begun duties as the bilateral affairs officer in Ghana. As part of North Dakota's State Partnership Program with Ghana, Holly will work at the U.S. Embassy in Ghana and facilitate the program's activities and exchanges. He replaces Maj. Brent

Naslund, who recently returned after nearly three years in the position. Naslund will assume duties in North Dakota as the chief of plans for Kosovo Task Force Falcon.

Family Day Scheduled for Air Guard Family Members

The Happy Hooligans' Family Readiness Program coordinator and volunteers will provide a free lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 11 in the 119th Wing Dining Hall as part of Happy Hooligan's Family Day.

Activities are scheduled for all ages including a Guitar Hero tournament. The winner of the tournament will win a free Guitar Hero game. Additional events include laser tag, Nintendo Wii contests and Football tosses. Many other activities are being planned and a variety of prizes will be given away. All N.D. Air National Guard family members are encouraged to attend.

Band Leaders Retire

Chief Warrant Officer William R. Franke and 1st Sgt. Jeff Sjoquist recently retired after each serving 37 years in the Guard. Franke, of Mandan, has served as bandmaster since 1980, and Sjoquist, of West Fargo, has served as the senior non-commissioned officer since 2003.



Left, Chief Warrant Officer William Franke and 1st Sgt. Jeff Sjoquist, 188th Army Band.

"This is one of those proud days, not sad days," said Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota National Guard adjutant general, during an awards ceremony at the Fargo Armed Forces Reserve Center. "This band's leadership has been tremendous. I thank you for doing a good job, and I thank your families. Your support helps make this team great."

Sprynczynatyk presented Franke with the Federal Legion of Merit Medal and awarded Sjoquist the State Legion of Merit Medal.



Supporting Guardsmen and Employers Across the State and Nation

By Shirley Olgeirson
Employer Support of Guard and Reserve Office

The commitment of our nation's employers is a vital and integral part of the success of our Armed Forces. ESGR is a Department of Defense agency. Its mission is to gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve. ESGR volunteers provide free education, consultation and, if necessary, mediation for employers of Guard and Reserve employees.

The North Dakota ESGR Committee has 63 volunteer members across the state ready to provide unit briefings, present Patriot Awards and talk to Guardsmen during reintegration and Soldier readiness processing activities.

Contact your state ESGR team if you have any questions or concerns. You may reach Executive Director Vern Fetch at 701-333-2057 or vern.fetch@us.army.mil. More information about ESGR employer outreach programs and volunteer opportunities is available at www.esgr.com.

Tips for Soldiers

- Provide your employer with a calendar of training dates
- Discuss your Guard experience with your supervisor
- Reward your supportive employer with a Patriot Award or a higher award
- Update your employment information at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/esgr/privacyAction.do>

Tips for Commanders

- Appoint a unit ESGR representative to work with local ESGR volunteers
- Write a letter to employers explaining the unit mission
- Host a "Train the Employer" day at the unit
- Request a "Bosslift" to an interesting training event



Courtesy Photo

Employers show their appreciation in many ways. Many send care packages, include spouses in company events and display patriotic signs at their businesses. Sgt. 1st Class Jim Schuster, Carrington, of the 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (Security Forces), said this sign caused "a lot of talk" around town.



Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson

Paul Richards accepts the prestigious Pro Patria Award for MeritCare at an employer recognition luncheon at the Air Museum in Fargo. The Pro Patria Award is presented to employers who demonstrate exceptional support for national defense by adopting personnel policies that make it easier for employees to participate in the National Guard and Reserve. Each committee may give only one Pro Patria annually. More than 100 employers attended the Fargo event. From left to right Greg Wilz, N.D. ESGR committee chairman; Hon. Thomas F. Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs; Paul Richards, executive vice president and general counsel for MeritCare; Gov. John Hoeven and Maj. Gen. David A. Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota National Guard adjutant general.



A Tribute to Heroes Missing in Action

By Chaplain (Capt.) Maury Millican
141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

"Love never loses its way home." — West African proverb

The Maupin family used this African proverb to describe the hope that their son would one day return home. Troops in Iraq also used the motto to describe their tireless search for Staff Sgt. Keith Matt Maupin.

On March 31, 2008, the U.S. Army confirmed positive identification of remains found a week earlier in Iraq as belonging to Maupin.

Maupin went missing from the 724th Transportation Company on April 9, 2004 when I was in Iraq with the 141st Engineer Combat Battalion. No one predicted the escalation of enemy activity during Arbayeen, a Shiite Muslim holy day we had never heard of. No one predicted we would have a Soldier MIA during our rotation to Iraq.

In our hooch, we would take turns reading a shared copy of the Army Times, paying special attention to the tally of the "human toll" — warriors KIA and WIA in Afghanistan and Iraq. One day I noticed an unbelievable heading: Missing. And the only name: Keith M. Maupin, Iraq.

I prayed for him sometimes when I was conducting chapel services. I wondered if he was still alive, imagining him in a dark, locked garage in a dusty, rural village just waiting for some American Soldiers to bust down the door and bring him home.

I dreamed that maybe we would find him. Maybe we would get some intel that he was being held in our area, and we would get to bring him home...

We got our answer on March 31, 2008, and the Maupin family laid their brave son to rest. More recently, in July, we got some more answers. American Soldiers in Iraq recovered the remains of Sgt. Alex R. Jimenez and Pfc. Byron W. Fouty. Both Army Reservists had been MIA since May 12, 2007.

Sgt. Ahmed K. Altaie has been MIA since Oct. 23, 2006. He has not been seen since he appeared in a video posted on a militant Shiite Web site in February 2007.

Many other American service members are MIA from other wars. There are approximately 10,000 from World War II (1941-45), 5,000 from the Korean War (1950-53), 4,400 from World War I (1917-18) and 2,300 from Vietnam (1965-73). Lt. Cmdr Scott Speicher, U.S. Navy pilot, has been missing since the Gulf War in 1991. (Forward Operating Base Speicher in Iraq is named after him.)

The Creed of the American Soldier states: "I will never leave a fallen comrade." We will never give up hope. We will never give up the search. We will never leave a fallen comrade. The black POW/MIA flag often flown by veteran organizations reminds us of this creed and the hope of "bringing 'em home again."

Maupin, Jimenez and Fouty have found their way back home because "love never loses its way home."

New Technology Makes Operational Security a Top Priority for All Guardsmen

By Lt. Col. Mark Ugelstad
119th Wing

"Loose lips sink ships." This phrase holds just as true today as it did during World War I or World War II. What *have* changed are the lips.

In the past, the danger of leaking critical information occurred when talking in barber shops, bars and with friends.

Today, with the advent of the Internet and rapid mass communications through texting, YouTube, MySpace and many more Web sites and devices, the threat of leaking critical information is greater than ever. We must be vigilant to ensure

sensitive information does not get into the wrong hands.

We are counting on every Airman and Soldier to protect us. It is important that we all know our critical information lists (CILs) or commanders critical information requirements (CCIRs) and be sure we are communicating this information only with people who "need to know." We must continually review our CILs and CCIRs to ensure they are up to date.

In this information age, when a whisper can be heard around the world, "loose lips" are even more dangerous to the security of our military members.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Airman First Class Derek J. Westerhausen receives a critical information list chip from Lt. Col Mark Ugelstad. The chips serve as reminders to Airmen to always be aware of OPSEC and provide guidance on how to safeguard sensitive information.

Rising to the Challenge

By Sommer Brown
Recruiting and Retention Office

The North Dakota Army National Guard recently made history by winning the “Lewis and Clark Recruiting Challenge” for the fourth year in a row. North Dakota has the honor of becoming the first state to win this challenge four consecutive years in the competition’s 28-year history. Overall, North Dakota has won this recruiting competition eight times since the challenge began in 1980.

This annual competition, named after the expedition led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark that explored most of the states in the recruiting region in the early 1800s, runs for three months, from May through July. The challenge includes Army National Guard recruiting and retention offices within the Recruiting and Retention Area Command region consisting of seven other states; Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming.

“By winning this competition for an unprecedented fourth time, the North Dakota Army National Guard recruiters

have again proven to be a highly driven, competent and professional team by successfully enlisting 91 recruits into the force during the challenge,” said Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota National Guard adjutant general. “The high quality of the men and women joining our organization will continue to contribute to our success far into the future.”

The challenge was initiated to increase enlistments during typically slow enlistment months.

“The victory of the Lewis and Clark Challenge is just one example of how our recruiting force leads the way to the future for the North Dakota Army National Guard,” said Maj. Daryl Roerick, recruiting and retention commander.

The two top recruiters for North Dakota during the Lewis and Clark Com-

petition are Sgt. 1st Class John Saylor, Mandan, with 9 enlistments and Sgt. 1st Class Bobby Buzick, Grand Forks, with 8 enlistments. They both exceeded their assigned goal by two enlistments.

Brig. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, N.D. National Guard deputy adjutant general accompanied Roerick and other key recruiting representatives as they traveled to Camp Rilea, Ore., on Aug. 18 to formally accept the traveling award.

“The dedication and commitment of this team is second to none,” said Sgt. Maj. Brad Heim of the recruiting and retention command. “This victory is really special because no other state in the history of the Lewis and Clark Challenge has won four straight titles.”



Sgt. 1st Class Bobby Buzick, left, and Sgt. 1st Class John Saylor were the top two recruiters for North Dakota during the Lewis and Clark Challenge.



Courtesy Photo

The N.D. Army National Guard Recruiting Team accepts the Lewis and Clark Recruiting Challenge award for the fourth year in a row. They are the first state to achieve four straight wins in the competition’s 28-year history.

All good things ...

141st Engineer Battalion Comes to an End

By Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson
Joint Force Headquarters

following its redesignation as the 141st, Soldiers contributed engineer expertise across the state and around the world.

At one time or another, the battalion had detachments in 18 North Dakota communities, contributing to the economic development of the area and pitching in when needed for State Active Duty missions in response to floods, fires and blizzards.

"I've enjoyed being able to serve my own community (Valley City) in its times of need, as well as North Dakota and the nation," said Sgt. 1st Class Darell Berg, who has been in the 141st since April 1970. During that time, he has participated in about 20 state active-duty missions.

The engineers also traveled overseas, completing projects to help numerous others. Among the many missions were a farm-to-market road in the mountains of Honduras, barracks in Germany and a community center in post-hurricane Jamaica.

In early 2003, Company A mobilized for stateside active duty, and by late that year, the 141 plunged into its biggest mission: providing route clearance

In a world where situations remain in flux, transforming enemies to allies and regularly refocusing military efforts, it's unusual for a single military unit to capably respond to a changing globe without undergoing some change. After more than half of a century of service, this time has come for the 141st Engineer Battalion.

Other engineer units have come and gone within a couple of decades, morphing into different missions. The 141st remained engineers for 53 years while changing and strengthening its capabilities from a post-Korean War battalion to a battalion suited for clearing hundreds of thousands of miles of Iraq roads during the current war.

The five decades in between these events epitomize what the North Dakota National Guard does best: serve, train and succeed.

When the 141st began, on April 15, 1955, Soldiers had been recently released from federal service after serving three years of stateside active duty. Prior to 1955, the Valley City-based unit had established a valiant lineage of service in the Spanish-American War, Philippine Insurrection and both World Wars. When established in Valley City, Dakota Territory, on March 3, 1884, the unit initially was known as Company G of the Dakota Militia.

In the years



A Trailblazer patrol positions itself to stop and pull security off of Main Supply August 2004.



April 15, 1955

Valley City-based unit is converted and redesignated as the 141st Engineer Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Bernard C. Lyons. Some highlights of the unit's service follow.



Dec. 17, 1956

141st Battalion Coat of Arms and motto approved

Verba Parca, Multa Facta



7:36 p.m. June 20, 1957

A deadly F5 tornado hits Fargo. That night, 150 Soldiers from the 141 were ordered "from their encampment at Camp Grafton by Gov. John Davis," reported the June 21, 1957, Forum. It would be the first of many disaster responses for the 141.

1959

The 141st is awarded the Eisenhower Trophy, which recognized it as the best unit in the state. The unit would go on to win three more in the following six years.



April 1963

The 141st is reorganized, which increased strength authorization from 52 to 80 percent of the full authorization. This resulted in Company A being split between two cities.



1965-66

Three disaster declarations for flooding began what would become a familiar state active duty mission for the 141. Soldiers assisted by sandbagging and constructing dykes.

March 1, 1971

A new 141 Headquarters building in Valley City is completed. Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Maj. Gen. Winston P. Wilson, attended the March 5 dedication ceremony.



1974

The first woman enlisted into the 141st Battalion. Capt. David J. Maasjo swore in Spc. Jean T. Donahue, who had two years of prior service in the Navy. The Valley City Times-Record reported that "a change in regulations has authorized the local unit to enlist eight women." They all served as "personnel records specialists."



1984

The 141's Co... by Capt. Mi... received th... recognizing outstanding... the U.S. Arr...



Oct. 18, 2008
Casing of the Colors
Ceremony in
Valley City

Aug. 31, 2008
Official 141st deactivation date

Oct. 1, 2006
Transformation began, and the battalion's
Soldiers moved to newly formed units.



Feb. 16, 2005
The majority of the 141st returned to North
Dakota.

Jan. 19, 2005
Working as
Trailblazers in
Iraq, the 141st
located its
300th IED.



November 2004
Company A demobilized from active duty
at North Dakota Air Force bases.



Nov. 4, 2004
Spc. Cody
Wentz, 21,
was killed in
action near
Balad, Iraq.

Sept. 22, 2004
Staff Sgt. Lance
Koenig, 33, was
killed in action
near Samarra,
Iraq.



May 8, 2004



Spc. James Holmes, 28, died of wounds received in action near Baqubah, Iraq, and Spc. Phil Brown, 22, was killed in action near Samarra, Iraq.



Dec. 18, 2003

The 141st mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom. It would be the unit's only combat deployment.

Company A mobilized 127 Soldiers to Fort Carson, Colo., before deploying in February to Air Force bases in Grand Forks, Minot and Fargo to augment security forces.



January 2003

2000
The battalion food service section earned runner-up status among all National Guard units for the Phillip P. Connelly Award, recognizing excellence in feeding in field operations.

Jan. 12, 1997



President Clinton approved the first-ever request to declare a major statewide disaster due to record snowfall. It was followed by record flooding. The 141 served through it all, often operating around the clock to help communities by plowing paths to farms, removing snow, sandbagging and building dykes. It became the largest National Guard mobilization in North Dakota history.

1987

The 141's Co. B earned the Itchner Award while under the command of Capt. Dale Adams.

1995

The 141st reorganized and dropped Company D.



Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson

An Iraqi man listens to an interpreter translate for Capt. Grant Wilz, the 141st Battalion's Company B third platoon leader. Wilz's platoon stopped at the village near Samarra on Sept. 2, 2004, and he went door to door to let residents know the Soldiers had brought a physician's assistant to provide basic medical care. The village was along a route the platoon patrolled regularly for improvised explosive devices during the battalion's only combat deployment.

in Iraq during what would be the battalion's only combat deployment. Nearly 500 Soldiers spent 15 months on active duty, working as or supporting the Trailblazers. The concept of Trailblazing — finding and clearing obstacles, such as IEDs — was new, and the 141 would be the first battalion ever charged with performing the mission for a full year.

"I was humbled by the Soldiers' dedication to duty," said Col. Bob Fode, who commanded the battalion in Iraq. "It was an honor to lead the 141st and to have served with such outstanding Soldiers."

Countless lives were saved through the Trailblazers' efforts, and yet not all of the battalion's own would return home. Four Soldiers were killed in action: Spc. James Holmes, Spc. Phil Brown, Staff Sgt. Lance Koenig and Spc. Cody Wentz.

Others show scars from their service. Twenty-six came home with Purple Hearts. Nobody came home unaffected.

More than three years have passed since their return, and more than 53 years have passed since the unit that would gain such prominent recognition in Iraq was designated.

While some have expressed sadness at seeing the 141 go, there is nothing melancholy about serving with great honor and fortitude, in protecting and helping communities, in sacrificing for freedom and in achieving success time and again.

Colin Powell once said, "There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, learning from failure." For 53 years, North Dakotans saw those results, and current and future Soldiers will carry that ethic on to the 141's successor units.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Casing of the Colors ceremony

WHEN: 2 p.m. Oct. 18

WHERE: Hi-Liner Activity Center, 180 4th St. N.W., Valley City

WHY: Commemorating the deactivation of the 141st Engineers

An invite-only dinner will take place that evening for former 141 Engineers. For more information, contact Spc. Kary Fountain at kary.fountain@us.army.mil or 701-845-6755.



Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson

Route Tampa, Iraq, in



o. D (commanded Michael E. McNeill) the Itchner Award, it as the most g engineer unit in y National Guard.



Explosives ordnance disposal expert Master Sgt. Ben D. Aster, 119th Civil Engineer Squadron, uses M-18 green smoke hand grenades to add realism to scenarios during an operational readiness exercise Aug. 9 at the North Dakota Air National Guard, Fargo. Aster has water and a fire extinguisher on site to cool the smoke canisters so he can collect them and dispose of them after they have expended all of their contents.

IN REAL TIME

119th Airmen test their skills and abilities during an operational readiness exercise using realistic war-fighting scenarios.

Story and Photos by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

The 119th Wing completed an intensive operational readiness exercise (ORE) during the August unit training assembly.

The exercise was designed to test the unit and its members on their knowledge, tactics, techniques and procedures while under attack.

Regulations require all Air National Guard units to conduct periodic OREs, which are critical tools in maintaining war-fighting and operational support abilities.

“Exercises like this prepare us for the real-world, go-to-war scenarios that unit members may experience with little, or no, notice, either while deployed to the area of responsibility or possibly in our own backyard,” says Maj. Todd Branden, a member of the exercise evaluation team.

The ORE consisted of various ability to survive and operate and chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological and explosive ex-

ercise scenarios. The scenarios were designed to simulate attacks similar to those that would be experienced in combat situations and terrorist attacks.

Personnel working in their duty areas were notified that they were under attack and they acted according to procedures. In this case, it included wearing the full chemical and biological personal protection suit with gas mask and continuing to do their job.

“Anything that requires finger dexterity can become a real challenge while wearing the gloves that are part of the personal protective gear,” says Master Sgt. David J. Bartron, a 119th Communications Flight network administrator. He adds, “The two-pencil typing trick is one way we have adapted to making keyboard entries while wearing the gloves.”

An evaluation team of 53 people was assembled to plan, observe and critique the ORE. They spent more than two months planning the various exercise scenarios and were highly visible in all areas of the base as they observed the reactions of unit mem-

bers to the simulated attacks.

All of the functional areas at the North Dakota Air National Guard assisted in the planning and supporting of a realistic and practical exercise.

Explosive ordnance experts utilized loud explosives and M-18 smoke grenades to add realism to the exercise.

Every Air National Guard unit experiences some turnover, and new members are continually being added. The new unit members and the transition of personnel from one job into another make it necessary to practice military roles and responsibilities in a realistic way during attack environments in order to be prepared if events should ever occur.

“We did a little better than expected,” said Senior Master Sgt. Michelle Reitan, base emergency management superintendent and evaluation team member.

“We productively highlighted areas needing improvement and now we can work on those areas to be a better trained organization with more capable members,” Reitan said.



Tech. Sgt. Todd P. Sequin, 119th Security Forces Squadron, points toward simulated infiltrators during the operational readiness exercise scenario. The 119th Security Forces Squadron personnel used training weapons that fire plastic projectiles to add realism to the exercise.



Senior Airman Theta A. Olson, of the 119th Civil Engineer Squadron, right, inspects the personal protective gear of Staff Sgt. Kent D. Shackelford. The protective gear is worn to prevent exposure to chemical attacks.



119th Wing members practice their decision making process in the emergency operations center. The center is an information dissemination point during an ORE.



119th Wing members stand ready at the contamination control area where personnel exposed to simulated chemical attacks are decontaminated.



Guardian Snapshots

Farewell: Gov. John Hoeven congratulates Chief Warrant Officer William R. Franke during his last performance as bandmaster for the N.D. Army National Guard's 188th Army Band. Franke retired in August after 37 years of service. His prestigious musical career has included composing and arranging music and teaching. Franke has arranged music for Burl Ives, Dolly Parton and John Denver, among many others. He also performed in the leading role of the world premiere opera "Giants of the Earth" and twice won the District Metropolitan Opera Auditions in North Dakota.



Chief Warrant Officer Kiel Skager



Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger

New Ride: Sgt. Scott Werner, left, and Spc. Jaron Johs review the inventory sheets of their newly received Mine-Resistant, Ambush-Protected vehicle at the Camp Liberty MRAP fielding site Aug. 22. Werner and Johs are both mobilized to Iraq with the 191st Military Police Company.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Crunch Time: Senior Airman Brandon W. Miller, left, works for the last few crunch repetitions as Staff Sgt. Darrin L. Quam holds his feet in place during fitness testing Aug. 10 at the North Dakota Air National Guard, Fargo.

Turning the Page

Last Vietnam War Pilot Retires From N.D. Army National Guard

By Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson
Joint Force Headquarters

As the number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in the North Dakota Army National Guard grows, the number of Vietnam veterans has been shrinking. Now, it's down to a handful, including Col. Gerald Heinle, who retired at the end of August.

"I've really, truly enjoyed my time in the Guard," Heinle said. "I am the last Vietnam pilot to serve in the North Dakota Army Guard, and when I retire it will be an end of an era."

Heinle began his military career in August 1969, when he enlisted into the Army as a warrant officer candidate. He spent a year in Vietnam piloting almost daily missions from Dong Tam in a Charlie-model gunship with the 135th Assault Helicopter Company. During that time, he logged more than 1,000 hours of flight time.

A Web site dedicated to the unit's history, www.135ahc.com, documents the 135th: "As other aviation units in the Delta deactivated, the only U.S./Australian helicopter unit in existence took up the slack. The 135th daily flew great distances from home station in support of the war effort." Thirty-seven died during the three years the unit spent in Vietnam.

While the combat missions flown by the 135th were dangerous and intense, Heinle doesn't dwell on the details.

"Back then we just all did our jobs and that was a part of the job," he said.

Heinle's actions on missions earned him a number of accolades, including the

Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with "V" device for valor. Others in history who have received the Flying Cross, the fifth highest Army decoration, include Orville and Wilbur Wright, Amelia Earhart and Charles

Lindberg. Heinle is the only serving member of the North Dakota Guard to hold such honors. One other, Chief Warrant Officer Alan Schoenack, also earned the Flying Cross, but retired in June 2006.

After serving two-and-a-half years in the Army, Heinle got out, but needed to go on a waiting list to get into the National Guard. It finally happened in April 1976, and he began working full time for the Guard less than two years later. In the decades of service that followed, he would choose to leave the warrant officer corps (as a chief warrant officer 3) and become a commissioned officer in order to have more levels for advancement. He moved on to command the 142nd Medical Detach-

ment Air Ambulance and the 1-112th Aviation Battalion, and he became the state aviation officer in 2001.

"One of the highlights was becoming commander as a major over the old 142nd Medical Detachment Air Ambulance," Heinle said, reflecting on his career. "Taking that over was really one of my goals when I got my commission."

Heinle retired after serving more than 35 years. While he's looking forward to retirement, he says he'll miss the job and the people he has met and worked with over the years. He realizes, too, that there's a new era of combat veterans rising through the ranks of the North Dakota National Guard.

"Even the Hueys are going away soon," he said. "It's time to retire all of us older equipment."



Top left, Chief Warrant Officer Gerald Heinle poses near a UH-1C gunship on a Dong Tam, Vietnam, airfield. Heinle logged more than 1,000 hours of flying combat missions throughout his yearlong deployment to Vietnam. He is the last Vietnam pilot serving in the North Dakota Army National Guard. Bottom right, Maj. Gerald Heinle and Chief Warrant Officer Tom Bry look over the additional flight training period schedule at the Army Aviation Support Facility (1990-91). (Courtesy Photos).





Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Defense Language Institute instructor Dr. K teaches Senior Airman Chrystal Nelson, left, and Senior Airman Sheryl Davies the nuances of Iraqi culture and language in an Iraqi Familiarization Course. The course was provided to military members who may be deploying to Iraq as well as those who are interested in learning about Iraqi culture.

Guardsmen Prepare for Mobilizations by Learning Language, Culture

By Capt. Penny Ripperger
119th Wing

“Shaku maku” were the first words spoken by instructor, Dr. K (he is referred to the name for security reasons) to the initially quiet class of North Dakota Air and Army National Guard members attending an Iraqi Familiarization Course at the 119th Wing on Aug. 12-14.

The class would soon learn that “shaku maku” is a common greeting, similar to “What’s up?” in Arabic and that they, the students, would not be able to stay quiet for very long.

The interactive and intense course was open to all military members interested in learning about Iraqi customs, courtesies, language and culture.

“The primary focus of the course was to culturally educate deploying service members to make the transition of living in the Middle East easier and I think we definitely accomplished that,” said Senior Airman Theta Olson, course coordinator.

Dr. K, an instructor with the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language

Center based out of Monterrey, Calif., traveled to Fargo to conduct the course at no cost to the unit. As a former Iraqi citizen and professor at Baghdad University, his knowledge and expertise of Iraqi culture proved invaluable to the military students.

“There are many differences between American and Iraqi culture. We cannot change Iraqi society, but Americans should understand it,” Dr. K said.

The course began with an overview of Iraqi history dating from 6,000 B.C. to present, detailing significant events to include, most recently, Saddam Hussein’s vicious reign.

“The Iraqis are very thankful to the U.S. troops because you saved us after three terrible decades of Saddam Hussein’s tyranny,” Dr. K said.

Students learned about the cultural aspects of Iraq to include the differences of how to properly greet Iraqi men and women. The class also sat in a circle and demonstrated the proper way of eating an Iraqi meal. The long lists of cultural do’s and don’ts also were thoroughly discussed

throughout the course.

A large portion of the lessons were dedicated to the Iraqi language. Dr. K felt that the culture of a society is largely based on the language of the people who live there.

What started as simple words soon turned into sentences and then conversations in Arabic between the students.

Students practiced practical phrases such as, “Anee naqeeb Ripperger. Anee jundee” meaning “I am Capt. Ripperger. I am an Airman/Soldier.”

Other language essentials taught were how to give directions, phone numbers, dates, commands and warnings in the Arabic language.

The three days of instruction passed quickly and in the end the students gained valuable insight to a culture and a country that many of them will soon visit. On the last day, Dr. K adjourned the class with the formal greeting, “es-salamu ‘aley-kum, which means “Peace be upon you.” The students, not nearly as quiet as they were the first day, responded confidently in unison, “a ‘aleykum es-salam,” which means “and also upon you.”

Learning From a Distance

Soldiers Stay Connected to the Classroom While Serving Abroad

By Sgt. Eric W. Jensen
116th Public Affairs Detachment

For an entire summer and fall semester, Sgt. Lisa Sveum never wore a backpack to school. In fact, she didn't even have a designated classroom. Instead, Sveum logged 12 college credit hours wearing a dusty Army combat uniform and a holstered 9mm pistol while staring at a laptop screen in her small living quarters on Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. The North Dakota Army Guardsman is one of a handful of Soldiers who have taken advantage of online courses while mobilized for active duty.

Before her deployment with the 1-188th Air Defense Artillery – Rapid Aerostat Initial Deployment (RAID), Sveum had been pursuing an art degree at North Dakota State University. She was able to continue school by registering for online courses through North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton with the help of the Education Services Office on base. With only a year of courses left to satisfy her degree requirements at NDSU, Sveum forged an entirely new career path by beginning an online pharmacy technician program provided by NDSCS.

"I have a cousin who is a pharmacist and had been trying to talk me into doing the pharmacy technician program for a while. I decided I'd try it and see how it goes," she said.

Soon, opportunities to enhance her online studies started to present themselves on Bagram. While volunteering to help give Soldiers updates on shots at a base aide station, Sveum mentioned her participation in the NDSCS pharmacy technician program to a physician's assistant who worked closely with the base pharmacy staff. The pharmacy agreed to let her volunteer on a part-time basis to get some hands-on experience.

"It was a lot of fun," she said. "I learned a lot of new things that were specific to the career I'm pursuing."

Sveum spent more than nine weeks with the pharmacy staff learning how to prepare IVs and process medical prescriptions. While she wasn't able to parlay the experience into credit toward the pharmacy technician program or a college internship, her time on Bagram helped set career goals she had not previously considered.

"Honestly, I was a little unsure about my career choice before I mobilized," Sveum said. "Having this opportunity helped me find a profession I really like."

Not only that, but she did not need to pay for the online courses she took.

By using the GoArmyEd Web site, www.earmy.com, Soldiers on active duty can receive tuition assistance for online courses and distance-learning programs offered by accredited colleges. The program covers as much as 100 percent of tuition costs and some fees. There are, however, a few items students should take



Courtesy Photo

Sgt. Lisa Sveum, far right, stands with the base pharmacy staff on Bagram Air Base. Sveum enrolled in a pharmacy technician program through the North Dakota State College of Science while mobilized to Afghanistan with her unit, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (RAID).

into consideration before applying for tuition assistance through GoArmyEd.

Capt. Donovan Blazek, North Dakota National Guard education services officer, said that Soldiers mobilized for active duty need to be sure that they have reliable Internet access and, more importantly, time to complete their coursework before registering for online classes.

"Taking online courses while deployed can be very beneficial to the Soldier, but if they register before leaving and find out they do not have the means to meet their course requirements, they could be losing money since their tuition assistance will not be reimbursed," he said.

The GoArmyEd program requires students to pay their school costs up-front. It is only available to those on active duty (Active Guard Reserve or deployed Soldiers), which means Soldiers must start and end their courses within the time period they are on active duty. If the student fails to meet their educational obligations through GoArmyEd, they will lose the money they paid.

Spc. April Lauinger, of the 164th Engineer Battalion (Security Forces), received tuition assistance from GoArmyEd when she mobilized to Iraq in June 2007. While there wasn't an Education Services Office to assist her with registering for the program, she was able to figure out the process with the help of her readiness non commissioned officer, who had heard about GoArmyEd from the unit they were replacing.

"We weren't familiar with the site at first," Lauinger said, "but once we moved around it and made a few phone calls, it became very simple."

Lauinger was able to complete her last general studies course while mobilized. Prior to going to Iraq, she was pursuing a nursing degree at Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Fergus Falls, Minn. She said being able to take online courses during a mobilization held even more benefit than completed college credit.

"There's not much for entertainment so this was definitely something to do that helped pass the time," Lauinger said.

Editor's note: While the N.D. Army National Guard does provide 100 percent tuition assistance to accredited colleges within the state, its programs are autonomous from GoArmyEd. For more information about the GoArmyEd program, please visit www.earmy.com. Traditional Guardsmen who are not mobilized for active duty should apply for tuition assistance through www.nationalguardbenefits.com. Currently, all 11 North Dakota University System schools offer online courses or distance learning programs.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

A Work of Art: Staff Sgt. Alexandra G. Knier, of the 119th Services Flight, puts the finishing touches on her mixed media mural Aug. 13. She created the piece for display in the Aerospace Dining Facility at the North Dakota Air National Guard base in Fargo. The artwork depicting an eagle soaring toward the sun was created using a combination of clay, wood and grout. Knier is a senior at Minnesota State University