North Dakota Guardian

Volume 7, Issue 3

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Digital photos should be 300 dpi, if possible.

On the Cover

A number of benefits are available to service members and veterans through the Veterans Administration.

Contributed Photo

Guard Posts

Dispatches from the N.D. Guard Family

Lt. Col. Greg McDonald

119th Intelligence Support Squadron Commander

Air Guard to see upcoming changes

The 119th Wing has a new mission emerging. Many have heard this edition of "Guard Posts" provides an update. The 119th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group (119th ISRG) will be a multi-faceted organization that contributes to the readiness, planning and operations of the Combat Air Forces. This ISR Group will be comprised of three squadrons: the 176th Intelligence Squadron, the 177th Intelligence Squadron (IS) and the 119th Intelligence Support Squadron (ISS).

The 176th and 177th ISs will produce geospatial and targeting intelligence to prepare the Combat Air Force for operations. During crisis or war, they will act as an extension of the forward-deployed Air Operations Centers and provide critical data for Air Tasking Order development, the Theater Targeting and Assessment Process, and combat unit mission planning and execution. As a part of their normal function, these two squadrons will become proficient in understanding the complexity and employment of Precision Guided Munitions, or PGMs.

The 119th ISS will provide critical resources and support that is necessary for full-spectrum operations. The squadron will create and maintain communications infrastructure, create and implement contingency plans, design and provide intelligence training and coordinate and execute targeting missions for the 119th ISRG.

To support the operations and training associated with the 119th ISRG, an existing building will be modified to accommodate some of its personnel. Construction is planned for a new facility, which is the final stage of mission conversion. This final home for the 119th ISRG will provide the required space for all personnel and all functions associated with this new mission.

In the future, the new 119th ISRG will be able to look beyond our current surge of training and beyond the highly-detailed facility design process to, ultimately, support other domestic operations. The domestic operation mission will apply the same skill sets and resources to provide support for planning and response to a man-made or natural disaster.

The new Air Force Specialty Code training will require a large number of our personnel to undergo a PCS, or permanent change of station, to other Air Force bases for their formal training. Many of these courses will run about five to six months, and several of these new roles also will require follow-on Mission Qualification Training in other states. Not having the full ability to instruct and evaluate our personnel upon return is what drives this training requirement, for now, to again assign our folks away to other bases for operational experience and training. We hope to soon bring all training capability back to the 119th Wing to make our new ISRG fully functional and independent.

The 119th ISRG continues to recruit to unfilled positions in the following specialties:

- Geospatial Analyst/Targeteer – Weapon knowledge and geospatial analysis to estimate potential risk to non-military features and non-combatants.
- Geospatial Analyst/Imagery – Weapon knowledge and imagery analysis to determine mission effectiveness and physical damage from weapons employment.
- Signals Intelligence Analyst – Performs graphic and electronic analysis related to various communications networks.
- Digital Network Analyst – Employs techniques to collect, identify and exploit appropriate communications to ensure accurate targeting.
- Fusion Analyst – Performs detailed analysis on target network communications. Recovers, correlates and fuses technical, geographical and operational intelligence information.

For more information on these emerging careers, contact the professionals in the 119th Wing's Recruiting and Retention Office 1-800-972-8825.

A Higher Education

Devils Lake Soldiers, Students Develop Strong Bonds, Enduring Relationships

By Nicole Parker, N.D. School for the Deaf,
with Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen, Joint Force Headquarters

Courtesty Photo
Students from the N.D. School for the Deaf sign the words of the Star-Spangled Banner during a visit to Camp Grafton Training Center, where they met Soldiers they've been corresponding with at the 164th Regiment's Regional Training Institute.

Staff Sgt. Dawn VanSteenvoort, an instructor at the 164th Regiment's Regional Training Institute, and her sister, Nicole Parker, have known how to speak with their hands since they were little girls. Sign language became an important skill for the two when they met a child who lived down the street in their hometown of Devils Lake. She became deaf at two year old as a result of meningitis.

"We had to communicate with her if we wanted to play when we were younger," VanSteenvoort said.

Years later, Parker and VanSteenvoort still use sign language to make connections with others, and they've brought a number of Soldiers from the RTI into the fold.

Parker now works as a writing teacher at the N.D. School for the Deaf in Devils Lake. As part of her curriculum, she began sharing with her students what it means to be a veteran and, specifically, how local Soldiers at Camp Grafton serve their state and nation. VanSteenvoort was eager to assist.

"I've known sign language and been around deaf kids and adults my whole life. So, when she asked if I could help them understand what we do, I was all for it," VanSteenvoort said.

What followed was a series of visits between Soldiers at the RTI and the students at the School for the Deaf. Parker recently shared her story with the North Dakota Guardian about how the groups came together and built lasting friendships:

As Veterans Day approached last year, I knew I wanted my writing class comprised of deaf students to conduct a project honoring local veterans. I immediately thought of my sister and Soldier, Dawn, as well as her fellow Soldiers, whose courteousness and professionalism

made them stand out as potential role models for us all. For our class project, we picked six professional Soldiers to each receive a hand-written note from a deaf child.

Getting started, our students were taught about Camp Grafton, what being a veteran means, how Soldiers serve in the U.S. Army, and what it means to have to deploy and potentially go to war. What started out as a simple writing project blossomed into so much more! It became the joining of forces between those who serve, and those who will never be allowed to serve because of hearing loss.

Six students from the N.D. School for the Deaf wrote to six local Soldiers working at Camp Grafton. A simple message was prepared that read:

"Dear Soldier, Thank you for protecting our country. You are very brave. I respect you for keeping us safe."

Each student signed their message to their respective Soldier and created a simple keepsake decoration of a Soldier wearing camouflage and boots to display the message. As I packaged the letters to send to Camp Grafton, I had doubts, wondering if the letters would be well-received and whether the Soldiers would understand how hard it was for these students to compose these simple messages.

After the letters were sent to the Soldiers, I received text messages back from them and all of my doubts suddenly vanished! The projects were received with much appreciation. The kids were eager to know what each of their Soldiers thought of the project. I showed them the text messages and they beamed with pride.

As the Soldiers corroborated their feelings about the projects, they devised a plan to meet each of the students in person.

Our class arranged for all six Soldiers to join us at our school for lunch, a tour and a game of kick ball. The kids were beyond excited the day they each met "their" Soldier. Instant bonds were formed between them. I've never seen a group of adults interact with deaf students the way these six Soldiers did that day. They were smiling, encouraging and trying to sign and communicate with students that couldn't hear. It was an amazing experience for all those involved.

As the holiday season approached, the students sent each of their Soldiers a Christmas card along with a picture of them standing with their Soldier. We also invited the Soldiers to stop by before our two-week break. A number of the Soldiers brought their student friends gifts and candy, while others came to create an edible art project with the students. Little did our students know that the best was yet to come.

Courtesy Photo

Nicole Parker and Sgt. Justin Valenti, an administrative noncommissioned officer for the 164th Regiment's Regional Training Institute (RTI), lead students from the N.D. School for the Deaf on a tour of the RTI building at Camp Grafton Training Center. Parker is a teacher at the N.D. School for the Deaf and her sister, Staff Sgt. Dawn VanSteenvoort, is an instructor at the RTI.

The Soldiers came up with a follow-on plan for the students to join them for lunch and a tour of where they work at Camp Grafton. Once our students found out about the trip plan, they began counting down the days until our field trip! Finally, they would actually see Camp Grafton, and exactly where each Soldier works and what each Soldier does.

As we all met at the chow hall, the students appeared a bit shy in the beginning, but by the end of lunch, the dining room was filled with excitement, laughter and camaraderie. The day continued with a tour of the RTI building, and our students saw where each Soldier proudly displayed the projects created for them. The perfect ending came when the students stood on the stage in the building's auditorium and signed along to Lee Greenwood's rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner.

Veterans Day has taken on a whole new meaning to me as an educator. I respect these six Soldiers for giving these students more than we ever imagined, and of course, for serving the USA! Thank you.

When the snow melts this year, VanSteenvoort and Parker have plans to bring the students back to Camp Grafton to see more of what goes on at the training facility. VanSteenvoort said the continued visits will create opportunity for more Soldiers to become involved.

"You have to have a personality that clicks with the kids. We're trying to find Soldiers to adopt because once they (the students) meet you, you're their best friends forever. They have that connection with you," she said.

Staff Sgt. Charlie Steele was one of those Soldiers who clicked with his student right away. He enjoys sharing his experiences from the visits with his family and continues to stay in touch with his student.

"It's really neat to be a part of it," he said.

The Veterans Health Administration — one component of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs — is America's largest integrated health care system.

Many service members and veterans are eligible for VA health care through the system. Here, we dispel some rumors, so you can better...

NAVIGATE THE VA

By Sgt. 1st Class Amy Wieser Willson, Joint Force Headquarters

Navigating health benefits, whether in or out of the military, can be incredibly challenging. As a member of the military, you're eligible for additional services through the Veterans Health Administration healthcare system that your civilian counterparts are not. Knowing where to start, and moving beyond the rumors and misinformation, isn't always easy. Here are some things you've probably heard, and the truth behind the rumors.

Rumor: I'll have to travel to Fargo every time I need to see a doctor.

Truth: Although North Dakota is served by the Fargo VA Health Care System, a number of care options are available outside of Fargo. Community-based outpatient clinics provide services in Bismarck, Dickinson, Grafton, Grand Forks, Jamestown, Minot and Williston. Services also are available in eastern Minnesota — Bemidji and Fergus Falls — and a new clinic will open soon in Devils Lake. video teleconference options also are available through any of the Community-Based Outreach Clinics.

Rumor: I never deployed to a combat zone, so I'm not eligible for care.

Truth: The VA serves anybody who has been activated for federal service, whether during war or otherwise.

Rumor: I was never injured on active duty, so the VA won't cover me.

Truth: Anybody who is serving in the military or who has left the service with an honorable discharge may be eligible for care. A number of factors come into play regarding what may be covered. For example, if you seek VA care for an injury or illness not tied to your service, you may be responsible for a co-pay. Using private insurance with VA benefits might cover all of the expenses. Additionally, if you deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, you may be eligible for special combat benefits, including temporary dental care and higher-priority medical care.

The best way to know the services for which you qualify and the potential out-of-pocket expense, if any, is to apply with the VA.

Rumor: But, it's going to be a such a hassle to apply.

Truth: The VA offers several options for application to suit personal preferences.

- Apply by phone. Contact the eligibility office at 800-410-9723, extensions 9-3427 or 9-3428.
- Apply online. Go to www.VA.gov and complete VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits.
- Apply in person. Set up an appointment in Fargo between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday by calling Amy Gunkelman, outreach program manager, at 800-410-9723, extension 9-4310.

If you'd like additional guidance with the process, call the Fargo Regional Benefit Office at 800-827-1000 to connect with a veterans service officer.

Rumor: I'm a woman. It seems all the care is targeted toward men. I've heard women can't get gynecological services at the VA or anything else specific to their health needs.

Truth: The VA has continued to expand resources specific to women veterans, including female-focused clinical care and mental health services. Specialty care is available for reproductive health, maternity care, gynecological services and more. If a service isn't available, the VA will refer to another facility or community provider at no additional cost to ensure women veterans' needs are met.

For more information, go to www.fargo.va.gov/services/women/index.asp or contact Glenda Trochmann, Women Veterans Program coordinator, at 800-410-8723, extension 9-3893.

Rumor: My buddy went to the VA and they just gave him a bag of pills. I don't want to take a ton of medications. I just want to feel better without being drugged all of the time.

Truth: More and more, the younger generation of veterans has been seeking options outside of traditional care, and the VA is responding with additional therapies. Support groups give veterans a chance to connect with and talk to other veterans with similar experiences. Contracts for complementary therapies continue to grow, too, with veterans being eligible for VA-contracted yoga classes tailored toward chronic pain relief, post-traumatic stress symptoms and weight management. There's also a new Tai Chi class starting in Fargo for those with arthritis, fibromyalgia, pain, decreased muscle strength, depression, anxiety and fatigue. Additionally, a music therapist is available. Other services may be added soon, as well. Check with your local VA clinic for more information and referrals.

VA RESOURCES

If you or somebody you know is struggling, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 and Press 1 for veterans.

Learn about tests and treatments, check out preventative health and wellness tips, and watch health-related videos in the online Veterans Health Library at www.veteranshealthlibrary.org.

Find out how VA benefits fit with the new Affordable Care Act at www.va.gov/aca.

For military sexual trauma concerns, contact Susan Thompson, a licensed social worker with the Fargo VA, at 800-410-9723, extension 9-4523.

For minority veterans' concerns, contact Harold Lindsay, a licensed social worker with the Fargo VA, at 800-410-9723, extension 9-3562.

TRULY HONORED

Tabor Bestowed Prestigious ARMY ENGINEER AWARD

By Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen, N.D. National Guard Public Affairs

A N.D. Army National Guard Soldier recently was presented with one of the U.S. Army Engineer Regiment's most prestigious honors while attending a training course at the Professional Education Center at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock, Ark., which serves as a national training center for the Army National Guard.

Col. Steven Tabor, of Bismarck, who serves full time as the N.D. National Guard's director of facilities and engineering, was awarded the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal for his support to National Guard Construction and Facilities Management efforts, both regionally and nationally.

As the National Guard's Facility Engineering Advisory Council's Region VI representative, Tabor has been a mentor for his regional counterparts and a conduit between the National Guard Bureau and states in Region VI, which include North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon and Alaska.

Nationally, Tabor chairs the Facilities Engineering Advisory Council's strategy, policy and regulations committee and manpower committee. He provides valuable advice and mentoring about strategy, policy and full-time manning assessments to the National Guard Bureau Installations Division and the National Guard's Construction and Facilities Management community.

"I've had a lot of mentors, and examples from my predecessors, on sharing experience to work though challenging issues that affect National Guard facilities planning and management," Tabor said. "This award was completely unexpected. I was honored to be presented with the recognition and look forward to continuing to assist through my role on the Facilities Engineering Advisory Council."

Col. Kimberly O'Keefe, chief of the National Guard Bureau's Installations Division in Washington, D.C., presented Tabor with the de Fleury Medal. O'Keefe also is a North Dakota native, hailing from Williston.

The de Fleury Medal traces its origins to the American Revolutionary War and was named after French engineer Francois Louis Tesseidre de Fleury. In 1779, de Fleury, who had volunteered to serve in the American Army, demonstrated extraordinary heroism at the Battle of Stony Point, a major defeat for the British Army and a turning point in the war. According to the U.S. Army Engineer Association, the Second Continental Congress awarded de Fleury a medal "struck in his honor" for his "intrepid behavior."

The U.S. Army Engineer Regiment makes four award levels of the de Fleury Medal: steel, bronze, silver and gold. The bronze medal is presented to "an individual who has rendered significant service or support to an element of the Engineer Regiment."

Col. Steven Tabor

The Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal is presented to individuals who have rendered significant service or support to an element of the U.S. Army Engineer Regiment.

BRONZE Order of the de Fleury Medal

Moving On

N.D. National Guard's Top Medical Officer Retires

By Spc. Cassandra Simonton,
116th Public Affairs Detachment

After more than 30 years of exemplary service, the top medical officer for the N.D. Army National Guard has retired.

Col. Craig Lambrecht was honored during a formal ceremony Feb. 9 at the Raymond J. Bohn Armory in Bismarck, where he celebrated his retirement with family, friends, fellow Guardsmen and colleagues from Sanford Health, where he serves as the West Region president.

"I have been an officer in the Guard longer than I have been a doctor," Lambrecht said during the ceremony. "The Guard has taught me how to be a leader and greatly impacted my career inside and outside of the military."

Lambrecht, a native of Wishek, joined the N.D. Army National Guard in October 1983 and commissioned as a second lieutenant. He has served in a number of positions, including roles as a physician, flight surgeon and deputy commander and commander of the Guard's State Medical Detachment. In 1995, he was appointed to the position of state surgeon and was responsible for overseeing medical training for all members of the N.D. Army National Guard. He held the position until his retirement.

"My best accomplishment has been helping in facilitating the medical readiness for the entire state," Lambrecht said. "Creating medical awareness is critical to the Guard's success."

Col. Brian Keller, the N.D. Army National Guard deputy state surgeon, said Lambrecht was known across the organization as a supportive leader and mentor.

"I liked how he stepped in when he needed to, but always let us do our jobs when things were running smoothly," Keller said. "He did a lot behind the scenes that people never saw … if it be late at night phone calls or early morning schedule adjustments. He made what needed to happen, happen."

During his years of military service, Lambrecht also participated in overseas mobilizations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq — once in 2004 and again in 2006. There, he was instrumental in expanding and improving services at the Smith Gate Burn Clinic in southern Iraq for pediatric burn patients across the country, and even some from Syria and Iran. He was able to procure equipment for the facility through generous donations made by Bismarck-area residents and others from across the U.S.

"Col. Lambrecht has made a difference in the lives of many," Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general said. "He was instrumental in ensuring that the hospital in Iraq was fit to provide critical care for those in need. That shows the level of character, values and professionalism we have had in Col. Craig Lambrecht over the last 30 years."

Lambrecht's wife, Jewel, and their five children Tabatha, London, Aidan, Tovah and Afton, all were recognized during the retirement ceremony as Lambrecht expressed appreciation and gratitude for their endless support during his military career.

"Their support has been wonderful," Lambrecht said. "When you deploy twice with five kids under the age of ten, it creates enormous stress. The awareness of the Guard, along with the support of my community, has also been instrumental to my success."

Upon his military retirement, Lambrecht said his primary focus will be to continue providing outstanding healthcare for communities in western North Dakota through his work at Sandford Health, as well as spending quality time with his family.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Brett Miller, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

Protecting the Nation's Capital

An Update from the 1-188th ADA's Mission in Washington

Story and photos by Chaplain (Capt.) Timothy Stout, 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment

More than 200 Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment currently are deployed to Washington, D.C., assigned under Task Force Artemis as part of the National Capital Region — Integrated Air Defense Systems mission in support of Operation Noble Eagle. The unit is working alongside members of the Florida National Guard, who make up the Task Force Artemis command section, and New York Air National Guard, who make up the Eastern Air Defense Sector, to protect the airspace around the National Capital Region. Operation Noble Eagle was established in response to the terrorist attacks against the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

Although the 1-188th entered active-duty status in May 2013, the Soldiers have been preparing for the National Capital Region mission since 2011. In May and June 2013, all of the unit's hard work paid off, as the 1-188th not only successfully completed its certifications and culminating training exercise in Fort Bliss, Texas, but it also set new standards of excellence at nearly every stage during training.

The unit moved to Washington, D.C., in June to begin the last phase of its preparation, which included on-site training with the previous unit in charge, an ADA battalion from the Florida Army National Guard. On July 5, 2013, the 1-188th officially took over the National Capital Region mission.

Since that time, the North Dakota Soldiers have settled into their work. Their highest priority has been focusing on the mission and continuing to set high standards of preparedness and security. When the Soldiers are not working on the mission, they continue to hone their skills and to learn new ones during weekly training. Some of that training has included a rare, live-fire exercise using the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System at Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah. Soldiers also have gone into the field at Fort Belvoir, Va., for training on the Sentinel Radar and the Lightweight Surveillance and Target Acquisition Radar systems.

On cultural days, the 1-188th Soldiers also have been able to tour the Washington, D.C., area and visit historical and educational sites, including the museums of the Smithsonian Institution and battlegrounds of the U.S. Revolutionary and Civil Wars. They've also participated in tours of the Capitol Building, the White House and the National Archives, and have coordinated trips to the sites of the Battle of Bull Run in Virginia and the Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania.

The unit has received visits from Gov. Jack and First Lady Dalrymple as well as from each member of North Dakota's Congressional Delegation, including U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer and Sens. John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp. The N.D. Congressional Delegation recognized a number of 1-188th Soldiers for efforts above and beyond the call of duty during a reception held in the unit's honor at the Russell Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general, and other high ranking individuals have made visits to the Soldiers, as well.

Members of the 1-188th also have participated in additional events, including a commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington and have assisted with placing wreaths at Arlington Cemetery during the holiday season. One Soldier was invited to attend President Barack Obama's State of the Union Address.

This has been a great mission and the Soldiers of the 1-188th have done a fine job of representing the best of North Dakota here in the Capital. They have proven themselves to be one of the best air defense units in the country and have much to be proud of when they return home this spring.

Spc. Brandon Koster and Spc. Tyler Fixen aquire a target with the Man Portable Air Defense (MANPAD) missile system.

Staff Sgt. Kyle Emmel aquires a target for the Avenger during training on the banks of the Patomac River.

THE INSPECTORS GENERAL:

AT YOUR SERVICE

By Mr. Bill Prokopyk,
N.D. National Guard Public Affiars

The U.S. Inspector General system was created during the Revolutionary War on Dec. 13, 1777. U.S. Congress created the position of Inspector General of the Army at the request of Gen. George Washington after he decided the Continental Army was insufficiently trained. The IG's mission was to oversee the Army's training in order to ensure skills proficiency and standardize common tactics. The IG became the commander's agent, described as the "eyes and ears of the commander," to ensure tactical efficiency and competence of U.S. troops.

The roles and responsibilities of IGs have changed significantly since the system's inception, however, it has remained relatively stable since the Army Reorganization Act of 1950, which created the Office of the Inspector General of the Army, whose rank is lieutenant general. TIG answers to the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff. It is important to note, that the IG functions independently of the chain of command and reports only to general officers in command or key staff positions.

Today, the IG's main responsibilities are defined as assistance, inspection, investigations and the prevention of fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement. Requests for IG assistance may be filed by Soldiers and Airmen, their family members, retirees, former Soldiers and Airmen or civilian employees.

For most IGs, requests for assistance comprise the bulk of their efforts. It is important to note that, ordinarily, the IG doesn't handle criminal allegations or matters of the Uniform Code of Military Justice decisions, or complaints of Equal Opportunity discrimination.

For example, an IG can provide assistance when a Soldier or Airman believes they are entitled to a special pay per regulation, but the Soldier or Airman is unable to successfully convince the pay authority. If the IG determines there is sufficient reason for an entitlement, they may be able to help convince the pay master that the payment is authorized by citing regulations, policy decisions or other sources.

Understand, the first thing an IG will ask anyone requesting assistance is, "Have you tried to resolve the issue with your chain of command?" Your chain of command has the first responsibility to try and resolve any issues. If they have truly exhausted all avenues of solving the problem, you may have a legitimate issue that requires the IG to get involved.

Every National Guard member or civilian employee has a right to visit with an IG. Each state's National Guard has an active duty officer assigned as the command IG and reports to the adjutant general. Assistant IGs may be National Guard members. In the N.D. Army National Guard, the IG is Lt. Col. Mark Van Hout and the assistant Army IG is Sgt. 1st Class Cody Lindstrom. The N.D. Air National Guard IG is Lt. Col. Martin Tonn.

"EVERY NATIONAL GUARD MEMBER OR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE HAS A RIGHT TO VISIT WITH AN IG."

Guardian Snapshots

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Cadets from the University of North Dakota's Reserve Officer Training Corps participated in a three-day field training exercise at Camp Ripley, Minn. in September 2013. The training gives cadets opportunities to learn rifle marksmanship, grenade basics and team leadership through specially designed obstacle courses. They also experience squad-based missions in a natural environment and learn land navigation.

Photos by Spc. Zachary Schuster, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

Command Sgt. Maj. Grinsteinner and Maj. Tracy Bridwell, both mentors in the N.D. National Guard Developing Leaders Mentoring Program, practice communication skills during this year's program launch at Bismarck State College in January. Forty Soldiers and Airmen (20 pairs) are participating this year, the largest group since the program began in 2007.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Brett Miller, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

N.D. National Guard Soldiers with the 136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and the 3662nd Maintenance Company helped support a community event in Devils Lake Feb. 15 and 16. "Shiverfest" featured the annual Pond Hockey Tournament, in which 42 teams participated.

Contributed Photo

Senior Airman Chloe Gunderson receives the John L. Levitow honor award for Airman Leadership School at the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center from Col. Timothy J. Cathcart, TEC commander, Feb. 12. The John L. Levitow award is the highest honor awarded to a graduate of any Air Force enlisted professional military education course.

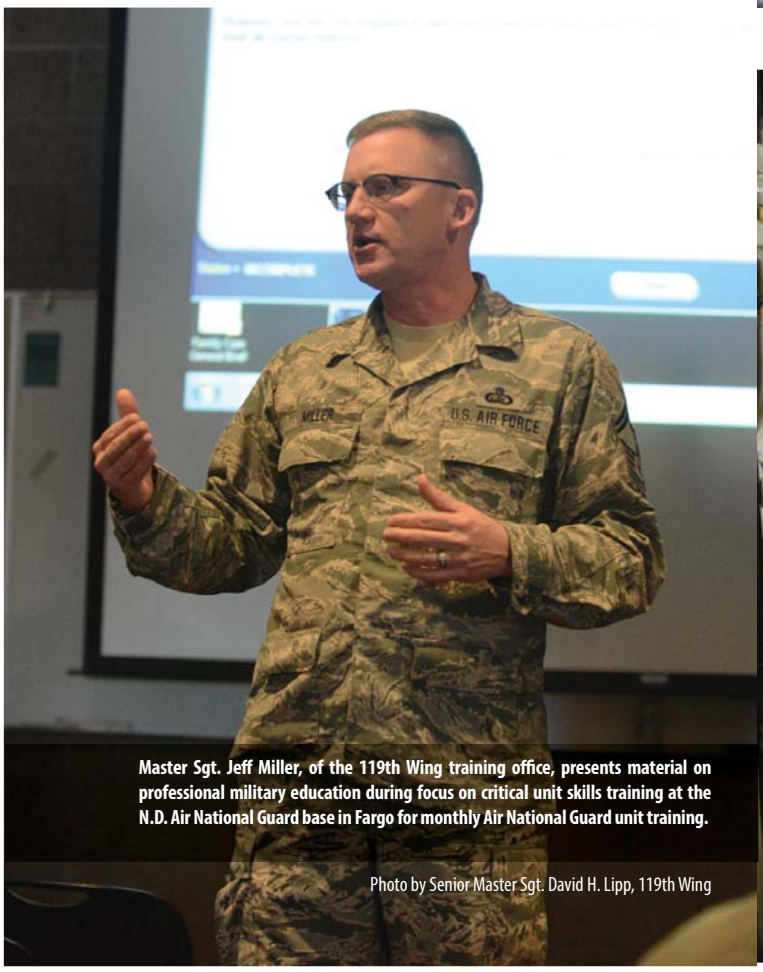
Contributed Photo

Larry Anderson, right, presents the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award to Glenn Beardsley, general manager at ASC Construction Equipment in Bismarck. Sgt. Eric Gustafson, with the N.D. Army National Guard's 957th Multi Role Bridge Company, nominated Beardsley for supporting citizen warriors in the workplace.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Brett Miller, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

Capt. Paul Dosch, of the 119th Wing military equal opportunity office, presents material on sexual assault prevention and response during focus on critical unit skills training at the N.D. Air National Guard base in Fargo. The information is required annually for unit members.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp, 119th Wing



Master Sgt. Jeff Miller, of the 119th Wing training office, presents material on professional military education during focus on critical unit skills training at the N.D. Air National Guard base in Fargo for monthly Air National Guard unit training.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp, 119th Wing

Staff Sgt. Brett Nelson drives a forklift into place with assistance from Tech. Sgt. Anthony Salquist, both of the 119th Logistics Readiness Squadron, in a supply warehouse at the N.D. Air National Guard base in Fargo.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp, 119th Wing

Staff Sgt. Chris Larson, of the 119th Civil Engineer Squadron, points directions from a crane as he prepares to position equipment into place at the N.D. Air National Guard base in Fargo Staff Sgt. Dan Rimer, also of the 119th Civil Engineer Squadron looks on.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp, 119th Wing

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Email high-resolution photos to Staff Sgt. Eric Jungels, N.D. Guardian editor, at eric.p.jungels.mil@mail.mil.

GUARDIAN FITNESS

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

GUARD OFFICERS TRAIN FOR 12-MILE OBSTACLE EVENT

By Sgt. Jennifer Joyce,
116th Public Affairs Detachment

Courtesy Photo

From left, Capt. Jeremy Malo, Capt. Jeremy Berger and Capt. Jake Larson competed in the 2013 Tough Mudder in Hudson, Wisc., as team "Mudstache Nation." Together, they completed the course with a time close to 2 hours and 30 minutes.

"Why would I drive across two states and pay money to go roll around in the mud?" This was the response Capt. Jeremy Malo received when he asked friends to join him for a 12-mile obstacle course competition in 2012. He didn't have enough commitment from anyone to form a team then, so he competed solo. But last year he was able to convince a couple of his peers to go with him.

Malo, commander of the 3662nd Maintenance Company, was joined by Capt. Justin Berger, the 136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Headquarters commander, and Capt. Jake Larson, the Regional Training Institute personnel officer, for the 2013 Tough Mudder competition in Hudson, Wis., last summer. Together they formed the team "Mudstache Nation," a name created to reflect the mustachioed teammates. They are registered for the 2014 event in July, along with Capt. Patrick Joyce, 132nd Quartermaster Company commander. The team hopes to increase involvement among other N.D. National Guard members.

The event is annually held in 30 different locations throughout the U.S. Each location features a 10- to 12-mile course with up to 30 different obstacles (depending on location) with maniacal names like "Devils Beard," "Fire Walker," "Electroshock Therapy" and "Ladder to Hell." Only 78 percent of the entrants complete the entire course.

Proceeds from the Tough Mudder go toward the Wounded Warrior Project, a non-profit organization which aims to provide programs, services and support to wounded veterans. To date, Tough Mudder has raised more than $6 million for the Wounded Warrior Project.

"The Tough Mudder is not an individual race, it focuses on teamwork," Malo said. "There are obstacles throughout the course that require teamwork, unless you can jump over a 12-foot wall by yourself."

Berger said Soldiers and Airmen can benefit from competitive races and events for reasons beyond enhancing physical fitness and feeling the satisfaction of crossing the finish line.

"It all starts with goal setting, because being fit entails more than just being physically in shape," said Berger. "Our team's goal is to encourage others to embody the mindset of self improvement. Fitness, both mental and physical, is essential to overall well-being."

The team of captains have similar motives: to enhance self betterment and to work together as a cohesive unit in order to complete the course.

"Difficult obstacles in life and work are more easily accomplished by an appropriate application of teamwork," Berger said. "The degree of chance of success diminishes exponentially when esprit de corps, camaraderie and leadership are not present."

Malo, Berger, Larson and Joyce encourage Soldiers and Airmen to find whatever motivation is necessary to face challenges and to set an example for others. Malo said N.D. National Guard leadership goes beyond the uniform — it isn't a skill or characteristic reserved for just drill weekends.

"Keeping the commitment to be a part of something bigger than ourselves is a trait that has been engrained in Soldiers' psyche since the day of enlistment," Berger said. "At drill, at work, at home, we are always looking for the next challenge to conquer. Tough Mudder is a perfect example of a challenge to overcome. The training is a great opportunity to practice the discipline of commitment."

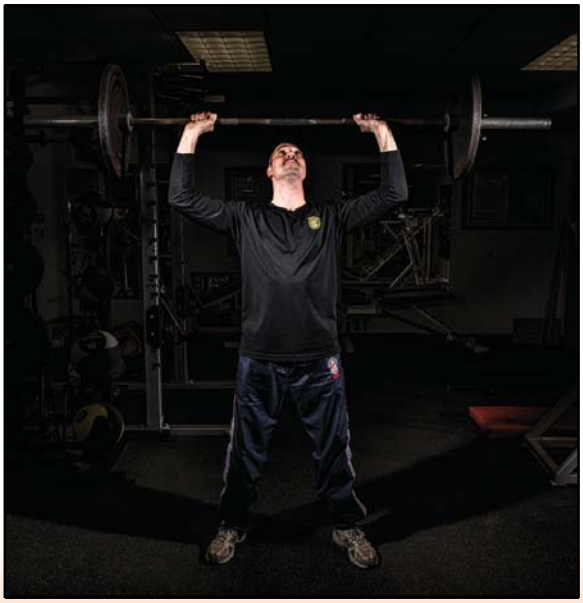
"Come with us. Let's conquer today to be a better version of ourselves tomorrow," Malo said.

Those interested in competing in the 2014 Tough Mudder in Hudson, Wis., with "Mudstache Nation" can visit the team's Facebook page or the Tough Mudder website at www.toughmudder.com/events.

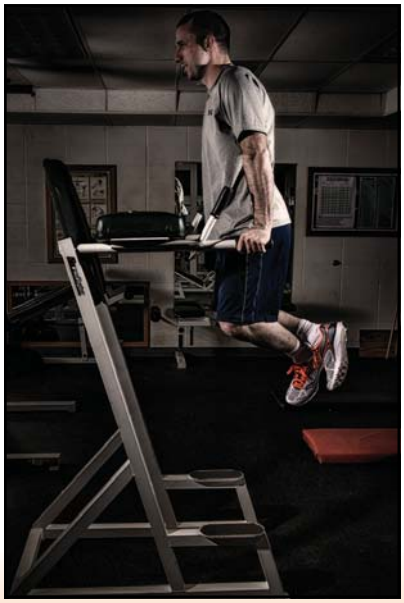
Photos by Staff Sgt. Brett Miller, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

DEMONSTRATOR: Capt. Jeremy Malo **EXERCISE:** Renegade Row **TARGET AREA:** Back

DEMONSTRATOR: Capt. Justin Berger
EXERCISE: Step-Up Thrusts
TARGET AREA: Legs



DEMONSTRATOR: Capt. Patrick Joyce
EXERCISE: Overhead Barbell Press
TARGET AREA: Shoulders



DEMONSTRATOR: Capt. Jake Larson
EXERCISE: Dips
TARGET AREA: Chest & Triceps

Maintenance Soldiers Qualify for Semi-Finals in Army-Wide Competition

Photo by Lt. Col. Edward Johnson, Combined Support Maintenance Shop

Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Hunt, of Devils Lake, a surface maintenance mechanic at the N.D. Army National Guard's Combined Support Maintenance Shop, fabricates a cover for an Armored Support Vehicle. The CSMS, located at the Camp Grafton Training Center, was named a semi-finalist for the Department of the Army's 2013 Chief of Staff, Army Award for Maintenance Excellence.

After garnering first place in regional and National Guard-wide maintenance competitions this fall, the N.D. Army National Guard's Combined Support Maintenance Shop (CSMS) was named a semi-finalist for the Department of the Army's 2013 Chief of Staff, Army Award for Maintenance Excellence (AAME). The CSMS, located at the Camp Grafton Training Center near Devils Lake, will now compete against U.S. Army, U.S. Army Reserve and other Army National Guard maintenance facilities from across the nation.

The AAME national award program annually recognizes Army units that have demonstrated excellence in maintenance operations. A unit or maintenance shop's performance is gauged by a number of indicators, including mission accomplishments, effective use of maintenance resources, management innovation and improving and sustaining maintenance readiness.

"For our Guardsmen to reach this level of competition and advance to compete against the top maintenance Soldiers in the nation, is an indicator of their professionalism and superior maintenance support of our North Dakota Army National Guard units," said Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general. "Equipment readiness is absolutely critical to performing our missions, for both stateside emergency response and national defense. I congratulate both the 3662nd Maintenance Company and the Combined Support Maintenance Shop on their outstanding achievements in the Army Award for Maintenance Excellence program."

North Dakota's CSMS ascended to the top level of the Army-wide competition by first submitting a nomination packet outlining its maintenance missions, training plans, environmental standards and community service activities. The maintenance shop's achievements were evaluated in August 2013 against 75 other entries from its region, which includes maintenance facilities in South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon and Alaska. In the regional competition, North Dakota's CSMS was named the winner of the "Small Tables of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) Unit" category. In September, the shop took first place in the same category for a National Guard-wide competition and, later, was selected and advanced to the semi-finals of the AAME.

This spring, a team of AAME evaluators will visit North Dakota's CSMS and conduct an on-site evaluation by touring the facility and visiting with full-time personnel.

The N.D. Army National Guard's 3662nd Maintenance Company, also based at the Camp Grafton Training Center, saw success during AAME competitions this year, as well. The unit was named runner-up in the "Medium Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) Unit" category for the regional competition and took fifth place in the National Guard-level competition, but was not selected as an AAME semi-finalist.

In its nomination packet, North Dakota's CSMS touted a number of successes for fiscal year 2013, including conducting technical inspections on 671 new pieces of state equipment, providing superior maintenance support for units during and after mobilizations and achieving 100 percent accountability during routine inventories.

North Dakota's CSMS provides maintenance support for more than 60 N.D. Army National Guard units' equipment. Its operations include automotive, communications electronics, armament, inspections, calibration and repair and service support.

WWII Exhibit Set to Open in Fargo-Moorhead Area

While members of the North Dakota National Guard were deployed in support of U.S. war efforts during World War II, those who remained behind also contributed significantly to the nation's call. A new historical exhibit in the Fargo-Moorhead area promises to tell the story of men, women and children who faced struggles and triumphed back home during WWII.

The Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County's new exhibit, Doing Our Part: Clay County in WWII, is now open. Admission to the exhibit is free to all active military members and their immediate family members.

"North Dakotans have a strong history of stepping up and serving in times of need," Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general said. "This is an excellent opportunity to reflect on and recognize the efforts of the service members, families and community members that served before us."

The exhibit will be on display at the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead, Minn. until Dec. 31, 2015. For more information, visit the Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County website at http://bit.ly/WWII-Exhibition, or contact Tim Jorgensen at 218-299-5511 ext. 6737 or email tim.jorgensen@ci.moorhead.mn.us.

Chaplains' Corner:

Struggling Lately?

Bjertness Reminds Service Members that Nobody has to Struggle Alone

By Chaplain (Maj.) Corey Bjertness,
141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

An anonymous Internet writer posted:

I am writing in response to your request concerning clarification regarding the information I supplied in block No. 11 of the insurance form, which asked for the cause of the injury. I answered, "Trying to do the job alone." I trust the following explanation will be sufficient:

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the date of the injury, I was working alone, laying brick around the top of a five-story building. When I finished the job, I had about 500 pounds of brick left over. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to put them into a barrel and lower them by a pulley that was fastened to the top of the building.

I secured the end of the rope at ground level, went back up to the top of the building, loaded the bricks into the barrel and pushed it over the side. I then went back down to the ground and untied the rope, holding it securely to insure the slow descent of the barrel. As you will note in block No. 6 of the insurance form, I weigh 180 pounds. At the shock of being jerked off the ground so swiftly by the 500 pounds of bricks in the barrel, I lost my presence of mind, and forgot to let go of the rope.

Between the second and third floors, I met the barrel. This accounts for the bruises and lacerations on my upper body. Fortunately, I retained enough presence of mind to maintain my tight hold on the rope and proceeded rapidly up the side of the building, not stopping until my right hand was three knuckles deep in the pulley. This accounts for my broken thumb (see block four). Despite the pain, I continued to hold tightly onto the rope. Unfortunately, at approximately the same time the barrel hit the ground, the bottom fell out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighed about 50 pounds. I again refer you to block No. 6 six, where my weight is listed. I began a rapid descent.

In the vicinity of the second floor, I met the barrel coming up. This explains the injury to my legs and lower body. Slowed only slightly, I continued my increasingly rapid descent, landing on the pile of bricks. Fortunately, only my back was sprained. I am sorry to report, however, that this also explains my two broken legs. I trust this answers your concern. Please note that I am finished trying to do the job alone.

There are things in life no one is prepared to face alone. And, you don't have to be a service member to experience them: the death of parents, a spouse or a child; romances lost, romance never found. And then, for us as service members, there is the transition from citizen to Soldier or Airmen, and then back again. The human soul has not been designed to go solo. The best of the Christian story is simply God saying to humanity, "I will be with you even till the end of the age." You are not alone. In the spirit of that message, let me add this: Having trouble with life? Give your chaplain a call. You are not alone.

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N.D. National Guard Announces New African Partnerships

The N.D. National Guard has broadened its participation in the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program by announcing the addition of two new partnerships with the West African countries of the Togolese Republic and Republic of Benin. Last month, the North Dakota commemorated 10 years of partnering with Ghana.

"The N.D. National Guard has done an outstanding job advancing this program and building a strong and productive relationship between our state and the country of Ghana," said Gov. Jack Dalrymple.

Administered by the National Guard Bureau, the SPP is guided by the U.S. State Department's foreign policy goals and executed by the state adjutants general in support of security cooperation objectives and Department of Defense policy goals. The SPP aims to enhance military capabilities, improve interoperability and enhance the principles of responsible governance. The addition of Togo and Benin make for a total of 10 SPP partnership countries in Africa.

"The N.D. National Guard is an ideal partner for the countries of Togo and Benin because of the Guard's diverse and unique mission capabilities that allow for a robust military-to-military exchange," Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general, said.

The new partnership with both Togo and Benin was signed into effect in Stuttgart, Germany, by the commander of U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Army Gen. David M. Rodriquez.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp, 119th Wing

Maj. Gen. David Srynczynatyk, the North Dakota adjutant general, left, presents the Bronze Star Medal for distinguished acts of heroic or meritorious achievement while deployed in Afghanistan to Master Sgt. Joshua Clarke of the 119th Security Forces Squadron, at the annual N.D. Air National Guard outstanding Airman of the year banquet held March 1. Watch for the full next month.