



NORTH DAKOTA GUARDIAN

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Staff at the Chief Master Sgt. Richard L. Etchberger Airman Leadership School at Grand Forks Air Force Base, near Grand Forks, North Dakota, hosted an Airman Leadership School in-residence class at the Guard's air base in Fargo last month. The five-week course is designed to prepare junior enlisted members for leadership and supervisory roles as they become noncommissioned officers.



14 Summer Camp for Soldiers

Annual training for many units across North Dakota began at Camp Grafton Training Center, near Devils Lake, North Dakota. The number of visitors to the area last month — including those to the facility's 9,300-acre training area southeast of Camp Grafton North — reached more than 1,200 Soldiers in a single day. National Guard units from across the state, as well as outside of North Dakota, use Camp Grafton's training areas throughout the year.



18 Musical Mentorship

The North Dakota National Guard's Child and Youth Program, with support from Operation: Military Kids and the 188th Army Band, hosted a Military Music Camp for the state's military children musicians at North Dakota State University in Fargo, North Dakota, last month. Coaches from the 188th Army Band instructed and mentored military youth during break-out sessions designed for a number of musical disciplines.

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ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

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Digital photos should be 300 dpi, if possible.

On the Cover



Maj. (Dr.) Erik Holten, right, and Maj. Jackie Nord, both of the 119th Medical Group, attend to simulated injuries on a state-of-the-art human patient simulator mannequin during training at the North Dakota Air National Guard Base in Fargo, North Dakota, last month. The mannequin was capable of simulating normal bodily processes, such as breathing and having a heartbeat. The realistic human simulator mannequin is one piece of the training equipment and instruction provided by the Simulation in Motion-North Dakota Program.

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

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GUARD POSTS

Dispatches from the N.D. Guard Family

LIVING HIS COMMAND PHILOSOPHY

I am proud to serve in the North Dakota National Guard, one of the best military organizations in the nation. As the newly-assigned army component commander, I'd like to share a few thoughts:

The main component of our long-term success is the quality and technical competence of our Soldiers and Airmen. These individuals are our most important resource. Without them, we would not be able to accomplish our state and federal missions.

Leaders at every level have a stake in ensuring we are properly and professionally trained, mentored, empowered and retained to ensure a bright future for our organization. Leaders, especially senior leaders, need to have a vision for their unit or section and set goals. For instance, a squad within a platoon could set out to achieve 100 percent in weapons and Army Physical Fitness Test qualifications with no unexcused drill absences.

Another key to organizational success is setting high standards that are clear and obtainable; this means that officers and noncommissioned officers at all levels must understand their jobs and be as technically and tactically proficient as possible. Take the initiative in your military training; read some books on your military profession and take a real interest in your Guard career by actively seeking opportunities and positions of increasing responsibility.

I encourage leaders to challenge themselves and their subordinates physically and mentally whenever possible. For example, it's hard to expect your Soldiers to qualify with their weapons if you are not qualified with your weapon. Have pride in your service and your unit. You can never go wrong by setting a good example for your team to emulate.

With a decrease in Global War on Terrorism deployments and the challenges associated with reduced budgets, leaders at all levels must ask themselves, "How do we keep our Guard members focused and engaged?"

One way we can do this is to ensure our drills and annual training are challenging events filled with tough, effective training. Dynamic, hands-on training will contribute to retention and unit morale. When you assign a mission, ensure you issue appropriate guidance, but then sit back and watch as you let Soldiers determine how to accomplish the task. This is the best way for them to learn and grow professionally. It encourages your team to take initiative and responsibility for their decisions in training and personnel issues. And, we must always remember: we can delegate authority, but not responsibility.

Be sure to mentor all of your members, regardless of rank or position. This process can be formal or informal. Formally, we write evaluations for officers and noncommissioned officers, and we periodically counsel in writing. Don't let this become an event that feels like "checking a box." Challenge yourself to make the counseling sessions meaningful for both of you. Providing guidance to a subordinate can be as simple as offering them some advice on how to manage their careers. You also can check out our Guard's mentoring program, which formally pairs two Guardsmen together for a year. Constructive mentoring means accepting honest mistakes in training, mistakes that we all can learn from. A "zero-defect" mentality belongs in our safety program, not our training and mentoring program.

Another important component of success is retaining our men and women by taking care of them, their families and employers. When a Guardsman's family



COL. ROBERT A. FODE

Army Component Commander

doesn't feel like they're part of our N.D. National Guard family, we are probably not going to retain that Soldier or Airman.

In order to have a competent fighting force that is resilient, confident and as accident-free as possible, we must work together to train, maintain and take care of our Soldiers and Airmen. This includes ensuring timely promotions and awards to providing dynamic training and a work environment free of harassment. We also must send a clear message that we require the equal treatment of others and everyone the same opportunities. Also, sexual assault or other types of misconduct will absolutely not be tolerated. Our success depends on our ability to take care of our force, our families and civilian employees.

Working together, we can ensure our Guard is a resilient, skilled force that retains the best Soldiers and Airmen, who are ready to defend our nation and serve our communities and state. It's up to all of us to continue the great legacy of those Guard members who have served before us and who have entrusted to our care a great organization with a tremendous reputation. ■

Robert Fode

116th Public Affairs Detachment Conducts Overseas Mission



By Sgt. Tyler Sletten,
116th Public Affairs Detachment



Contributed photo

Members of the North Dakota National Guard's 116th Public Affairs Detachment (PAD) supported land-force exercises June 4-28 between NATO allies in the Baltic region. Unit members, from left, are Staff Sgt. Brett Miller, of Bismarck, North Dakota; Sgt. Tyler Sletten, of Fargo, North Dakota; Sgt. Sara Marchus, of Bismarck; Spc. Cassandra Simonton, of Minot, North Dakota; Sgt. 1st Class Billie Jo Lorius, of Bismarck; and Capt. Kristi Blair, of Moorhead, Minnesota.

Six members of the North Dakota National Guard's 116th Public Affairs Detachment (PAD) travelled to Latvia and Lithuania last month in support of exercise Saber Strike 2014 and Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Saber Strike 2014 was this year's iteration of a long-standing, multilateral, multifaceted, U.S. Army Europe-(USAEUR)led security cooperation exercise. This year's exercise spanned multiple locations in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and involved approximately 4,500 personnel from ten nations.

After participating in Saber Strike, 116th PAD remained in the region to support Atlantic Resolve, a series of unscheduled land forces exercises among NATO allies demonstrating their continued commitment to collective security and enduring peace and stability in

the region.

"The Soldiers of the 116th PAD had the amazing opportunity to not only work with our own U.S. brothers-and sisters-in-arms, but to provide print and broadcast products for our NATO allies during an expansive exercise," said Capt. Kristi Blair, 116th PAD commander.

Members of the 116th PAD worked as part of a combined press information center team that included military and civilian public affairs personnel from Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and the United Kingdom. In addition, they worked alongside other personnel from active-duty, reserve and National Guard units from across the U.S. and Europe.

The unit's mission in the Baltics was to gather information and create and distribute print articles, broadcast reports and photographs

about the exercises and their participants. In addition, they assisted civilian reporters covering the exercise.

Some of the highlights of the PAD's mission in Latvia included coverage of paratroopers from USAREUR's 173rd Airborne Brigade, whom were participating in Saber Strike and Atlantic Resolve.

The North Dakota Soldiers documented and reported on allied airborne operations involving U.S., Canadian and Latvian paratroopers jumping from Europe-based, U.S. Air Force C-130 aircraft and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from USAREUR's 12th Combat Aviation Brigade. To capture all the action, the public affairs Soldiers were positioned on a drop zone with their equipment and also mounted video cameras inside the paratroopers' aircraft.

Staff Sgt. Brett Miller pulled double duty, filming and photographing the airborne operations.

"Filming a jump like this is not only an awesome event to put together a great product, but also an opportunity to have those products be instrumental in letting people know that the U.S. is standing behind its allies in the Baltic region," he said after documenting the Black Hawk operation.

During the 116th PAD's mission in the Baltic region, their video, print and photo products were used by thousands of traditional and social media outlets worldwide with millions of readers and viewers.

"Their products are being viewed on a worldwide scale, and I am extremely proud of their dedication to their mission," Blair said.

"Throughout this entire mission, U.S. Soldiers and members of our partner forces have commented on how professional, helpful and impressive our work has been. Our counterparts from other nations came to us throughout the exercise asking for our expertise to help them satisfy their missions in getting the word out to their respective countries," said Sgt. 1st Class Billie Jo Lorus, the unit's noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

"My experience this past month is something I will never forget," said Spc. Cassandra Simonton, a print journalist with the unit. "The opportunities for growth within my profession were profound, and the relationships and partnerships we developed have helped me to learn culturally and personally about our partner nations. I was impressed with their enthusiasm and dedication to their profession."

Saber Strike co-director, Latvian Brig. Gen. Ainars Ozolins, praised the 116th PAD. He said the stories and images produced by the unit helped his people feel safe knowing that NATO allies had come together to work as a team and learn from each other's capabilities.

Maj. Gen. Mark McQueen, co-director of Saber Strike and USAREUR deputy commanding general for Mobilization and Reserve Affairs, commended the members of the 116th PAD for their hard work and contributions, saying that their success here proves that words and images are still the most powerful tools the military can use. ■



Photo by Spc. Cassandra Simonton, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

Staff Sgt. Brett Miller, of the 116th Public Affairs Detachment, photographs a training exercise during 2014 Saber Strike at the Adazi Training Facility in Adazi, Latvia on June 17. Saber Strike 2014 is a joint, multinational military exercise held in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and involves approximately 4,500 personnel from 10 countries. The exercise is designed to promote regional stability, strengthen international military partnerships, enhance multinational interoperability and prepare participants for worldwide contingency operations.

Airman Leadership School

Total Force Approach Aims to Enhance Leadership Training

Story and Photos by Senior Master Sgt. David Lipp,
119th Wing

The 119th Wing training office, in conjunction with staff at the Chief Master Sgt. Richard L. Etchberger Airman Leadership School at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota, hosted an Airman Leadership School in-residence class at the North Dakota Air National Guard Base in Fargo, North Dakota.

A first of its kind, the ALS course was taught by Air Force active-duty instructors to Air National Guard students in Fargo, while simultaneously, active-duty students at the Etchberger ALS took part in the five-week class. The training culminated with the students coming together for a formal graduation ceremony at Grand Forks AFB.

The course is designed to prepare junior enlisted members for leadership roles as they become noncommissioned officers.

According to the course handout, lessons are divided into five units of instruction providing students the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to succeed as supervisors in the military environment. It covers topics, such as military standards and responsibilities, Air Force history, communication principles, management practices, writing and speaking skills and various

leadership techniques.

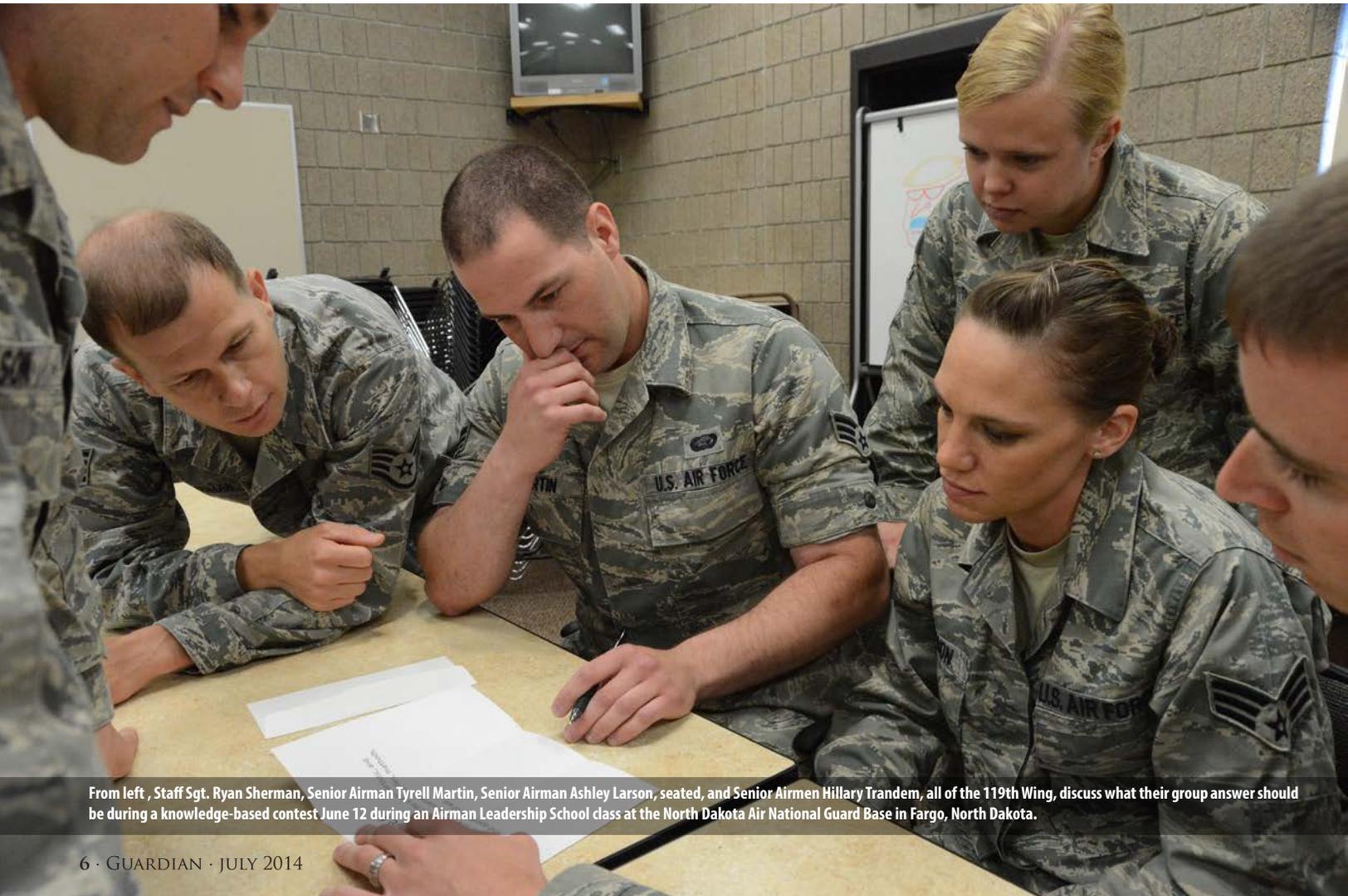
“We give them tools to deal with arising situations involving other Airmen. We try to set them up for success,” said Tech. Sgt. James Richey, an active-duty instructor from the Etchberger ALS.

Air National Guard members throughout the country have the option of doing the coursework through distance-learning programs without attending any actual classroom studies. But, attending the classroom course allows them to interact with an instructor and other students as they practice applying what they read in the text.

The hands-on application of the classroom material gives the students a realistic experience to draw from when they encounter situations while on duty later in their careers, and the instructors can share experiences they have had in similar situations.

Noncommissioned officers who become ALS instructors are trained for the duty in addition to their Air Force specialty at six-week schools, such as the one Richey attended at Maxwell-Gunter Annex Air Force Base in Alabama.

“When I talked to the training people at the National Guard



From left, Staff Sgt. Ryan Sherman, Senior Airman Tyrell Martin, Senior Airman Ashley Larson, seated, and Senior Airmen Hillary Trandem, all of the 119th Wing, discuss what their group answer should be during a knowledge-based contest June 12 during an Airman Leadership School class at the North Dakota Air National Guard Base in Fargo, North Dakota.



U.S. Air Force Airman Leadership School students from the 119th Wing give each other a high-five upon completion of a knowledge-based contest.



Senior Airman Roy Roach III, of the 119th Medical Group, catches a frisbee as Senior Airman Taylor McMillan, of the 119th Maintenance Squadron, left, looks on during a competitive game of ultimate frisbee between Airman Leadership School classmates. The contest is a part of the physical training activities done by the students during the course, which reinforce the need for physical conditioning as part of a military career.

From left, Senior Airman Christopher Schmidlin, of the 219th Security Forces Squadron; Senior Airman Sophie Miller, of the 119th Civil Engineer Squadron; Senior Airman Ashley Larson, of the 119th Force Support Squadron; Senior Airman Christopher Mann, of the 119th Security Forces Squadron; and Senior Airman Hillary Trandem, of the 119th Wing, render a salute during a drill evaluation.

Bureau, they said they have not heard of another Air National Guard base doing it this way,” said Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Miller, the 119th Wing noncommissioned officer-in-charge of training.

“I believe we develop better leaders for our unit by having the Airmen attend an ALS class rather than by doing the training through correspondence because it gives the Airmen an opportunity to benefit from the interaction with an instructor and their peers in the classroom. And, it is a great opportunity to be able to do that at our home station,” Miller said. “It doesn’t fit into everyday life circumstances for every Guard member, but it is beneficial for those who can do it in the classroom.”

The students apply their instruction through interactive course activities involving realistic scenarios addressing issues, such as suicide prevention, substance abuse, stress management,

sexual assault prevention and response, and identifying concerns in their fellow Airmen so they can help them find support from the right organization.

“It is crazy how much you can learn in this class to become a better military member and also take things back to make you better in your civilian job,” said Senior Airman Tyrell Martin, of the 119th Operations Support Squadron, who also is a business manager for Titan Machinery in Wishek, North Dakota. “I hear about things going on with friends in their civilian jobs and think, you should be taking these classes — but they can’t.”

The concept of having one active-duty instructor travel to the Air National Guard Base in Fargo to teach a course rather than having several Air National Guard Airmen travel to the Grand Forks Air Force Base, and stay there to attend the course, arose from discussions between Miller

and the Etchberger ALS Commandant Master Sgt. Aaron Holmes. The benefits became apparent to the pair of senior noncommissioned officers as they discussed the financial savings for the U.S. government as well as the job satisfaction of contributing to the improvement of leadership training for the Air National Guard members and the total force concept.

“Doing the course this way is going very well and we are looking at doing it once or twice each year here (Fargo), as well as the possibility of doing it in other places,” Holmes said. “I find it very rewarding when Airmen tell me — no kidding — how the lessons from the course have been applied in their Air Force careers, and they are actually using the lessons being taught.”

GUARDIAN

Snapshots

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Sgt. 1st Class John Pearson, the combat branch chief for the 164th Regional Training Institute, describes the capabilities of the training ammunition, called Ultimate Training Munitions (UTM), to Col. Robert Fode, North Dakota Army National Guard Army Component Commander. The UTM uses wax bullets called man-marker rounds, which leave a small, identifiable mark when a target is hit.

Photo by Sgt. Jennifer Joyce, 116th Public Affairs Detachment



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

Members of the North Dakota National Guard's 188th Army Band perform June 20 during the Adjutant General's Annual Picnic at the National Guard headquarters at Fraine Barracks, in Bismarck, North Dakota. The band performed at various locations throughout the month as part of their annual training.



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kiel Skager, Joint Force Headquarters



Sgt. Jenner, with 68th Troop Command, plays kickball with kids attending Military Youth Fish Camp near Garrison, North Dakota. Jenner was one of six Guardsmen who were squad leaders for the camp from June 9-13.

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



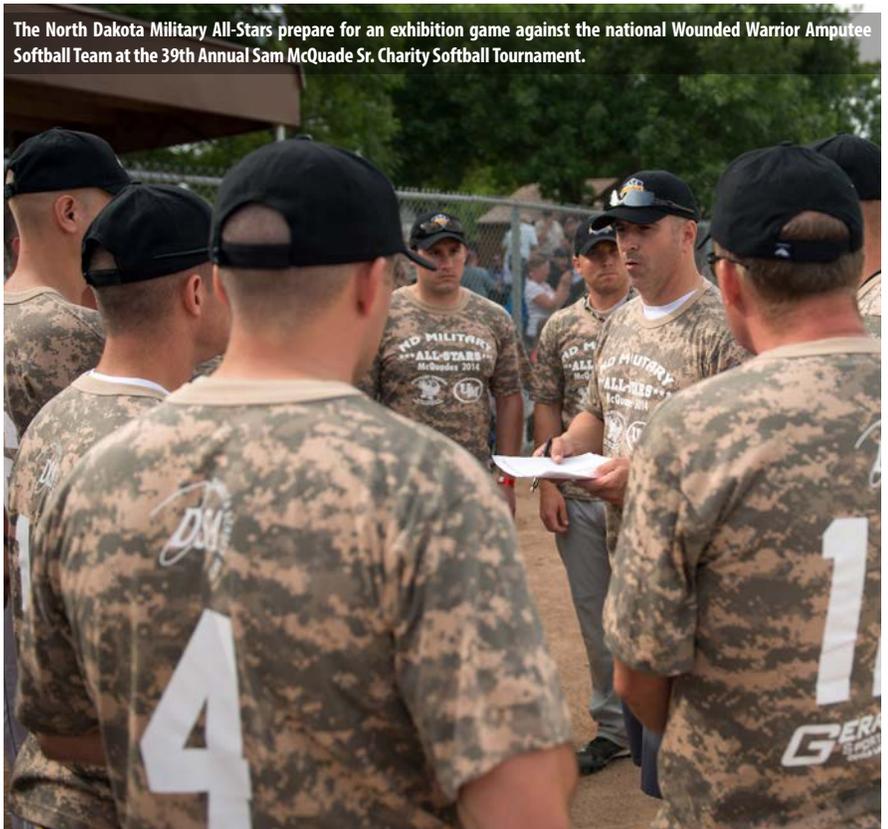
Soldiers with the 957th Engineer Company (Multi-Role Bridge), assemble a dry support bridge June 8 at Kimball Bottoms, south of Bismarck, North Dakota.

Photo by Sgt. Jennifer Joyce, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

The national Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team (WWAST) played the North Dakota Military All-Stars June 27 in an exhibition game that helped kick-off the 39th Annual Sam McQuade Sr. Charity Softball Tournament in Bismarck, North Dakota. In addition to the exhibition game, the WWAST also competed in the tournament.



Sgt. 1st Class Cody Lindstrom, an assistant inspector general with the North Dakota Army National Guard, performs the National Anthem before the national Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team played against the North Dakota Military All-Stars in an exhibition game at the 39th Annual Sam McQuade Sr. Charity Softball Tournament.



The North Dakota Military All-Stars prepare for an exhibition game against the national Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team at the 39th Annual Sam McQuade Sr. Charity Softball Tournament.



Tech. Sgt. Jesse Schmidt, left, monitors and instructs blindfolded firefighters, Staff Sgt. Gene Keller, Tech. Sgt. Jon Renteria and Senior Airman Mark Aakre, all of the 119th Civil Engineer Squadron, as they simulate conditions where they might have to follow a fire hose through a dark building to find their way out during training at the North Dakota Air National Guard Base in Fargo, North Dakota, last month.

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



Master Sgt. Mary Jo Jangula and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Theresia Hersch arrive at the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery, the destination for the 9-mile Military Appreciation Road March held June 8 to honor and remember all service members killed in action in the Global War on Terrorism.

Photo by Sgt. Jennifer Joyce, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

Share your photos!

Submit your photos to be considered for inclusion in the N.D. Guardian!

Email high-resolution photos to Sgt. Jennifer Joyce, N.D. Guardian editor, at jennifer.m.joyce2.mil@mail.mil.



Futuristic Medical Training Provided at the 119th Wing

Story and Photos by Senior Master Sgt. David Lipp,
119th Wing



Groans come from a patient as a team of medical responders apply treatment. The responders treat the patient with urgency as they ask him questions. He responds in obvious pain, as the team stands in his “blood,” surrounding a gurney in a treatment facility on wheels.

It looks like a high-tech recreational vehicle, designed for emergency medical care, which it is — but the patient is a life-like simulator (SIM) and the blood is fake. The treatment is for training, and the realistic groans are being sent to the SIM by technicians in a control room.

119th Medical Group personnel met June 2-3 for two days of state-of-the-art training in the mobile medical lab vehicles at the North Dakota Air National Guard Base in Fargo, North Dakota.

The training was provided by Simulation in Motion—North Dakota (SIM—ND), which is a program operated jointly by the ND STAR (Simulation, Teaching and Research) Center at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, North Dakota, and the North Dakota Department of Health. They are partnered with Altru Health, of Grand Forks; Essentia Health, of Fargo; Sanford Health, of Bismarck and Fargo, North Dakota; St. Alexius Medical Center, of Bismarck; and Trinity Health, of Minot, North Dakota, to provide the staff for the training.

SIM—ND operates the mobile learning lab vehicles through a grant project. They travel around North Dakota to various locations giving training on trauma treatment and emergency response. The vehicles have a replicated ambulance in the back, an emergency room bay in the front, and a control room in between and can simulate conditions that emergency responders might find in civilian rural medical facilities, as well as forward operating base conditions for military medical personnel.



The vehicles contain human patient simulators that are extremely lifelike. Their chests rise and fall with varying sounds as if breathing; they have realistic skin with veins running through their limbs and can bleed; and they can speak and make sounds that real patients would make, giving the responders clues about their condition.

“The folks from SIM-ND have made a good effort to make the scenarios realistic and applicable to situations we might see in deployed locations, such as a penetrating gunshot wound scenario, and an improvised explosive device (IED) blast with shrapnel and a leg amputation...and then some of those you don’t typically think of in a deployed setting, but are actually pretty common, such as a patient with chest pain having an acute heart attack,” said Lt. Col. Dwight Harley, a 119th Medical Group physician assistant who deployed to the U.S. Air Force field hospital at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, in 2005 and 2006. As a civilian, Harley works as a physician assistant in a community health clinic.

A team behind a one-way glass watches the medical responders perform and manipulate the mannequin according to the actions of the medical personnel. The mannequin speaks and lets the responders know if it is in “pain” and asks questions and makes comments that

a real patient might make. The SIM-ND team can change the vital signs depending on the course of action of the medical team and can deteriorate or improve the vital signs depending on the treatment done on the mannequin. The medical personnel can start intravenous (IV) therapy on the mannequins, defibrillate them, and perform treatments that they would do for a real patient.

“It’s easy to say we are going to give medicine or fluids (while training) and not actually do all that stuff, so to be able to actually administer the treatment to the SIM (mannequin) at the appropriate time is important,” says Steve Siedschlag, an instructor and paramedic at Sanford Hospital.

“We’ve had a unique opportunity to do some real-world type training that we might encounter in a deployed, combat setting,” Harley said. “It is very valuable for a lot of our younger troops, and some of us who have had a little bit of experience have also learned some tricks. All in all, it has been a very positive experience.”

“We have had a couple of great days of training, and the people from SIM lab have been fabulous,” said Chief Master Sgt. Mike Anders, the 119th Medical Group superintendent. ■

FIELD DAYS

By Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen,
Joint Force Headquarters

On a long and not-so-lonesome highway, east of Devils Lake, North Dakota, along the body of water that bears the town's namesake, fishermen cast their lines off stony shores while mosquito hordes dance in black clusters next to them. It is the start of summer, and Highway 20 is bustling. There's virtually no road construction this year — a reprieve after years of frantically building up infrastructure to stay above the Devils Lake Basin waterline — and residents are taking full advantage of the area's outdoor recreational opportunities.

Camp Grafton Training Center, which is obscured by the dense woods that hug Highway 20, has seen a surge in activity this year, too. Last month, staff at the National Guard installation welcomed an assortment of visitors, including students attending courses at the 164th Regiment Regional Training Institute (RTI), North Dakota National Guard units and units from neighboring states, as well as distinguished guests from civilian groups. During the week of June 9-13, the traffic at Camp — including that of the 9,300-acre training area to the southeast — reached more than 1,200 visitors in a single day.

"The one anomaly this year is the number

of North Dakota units that are training at Camp Grafton," said Lt. Col. Clark Johnson, Camp Grafton Training Center manager. "The (number of) other outside agencies, like the RTI students, is fairly normal. But, the actual North Dakota units training here in June ... there's been a lot more (of them) than there has been for many years."

With unit deployments tapering off and no statewide emergencies to respond to, Soldiers and Airmen convened at Camp Grafton this year, the training venue to be at during the summer of 2014.

Focusing on the Fundamentals

Sgt. Kevin Marvig, of Fargo, North Dakota, used to work in human resources for the 191st Military Police Company. That was before he graduated from a military occupational specialty (MOS) qualification course on May 24 as a water purification specialist. Thirteen days later, he was at Camp Grafton's southern training area near Lake Coe for his first annual training event with his new unit, the 134th Quartermaster Detachment. After a breakneck, humid four-week course at Camp Blanding, Florida, Marvig was happy to get acquainted with his new team.

"They're (the 134th) a very tight-knit group of individuals, and they're very inviting. They're funny and work hard,"

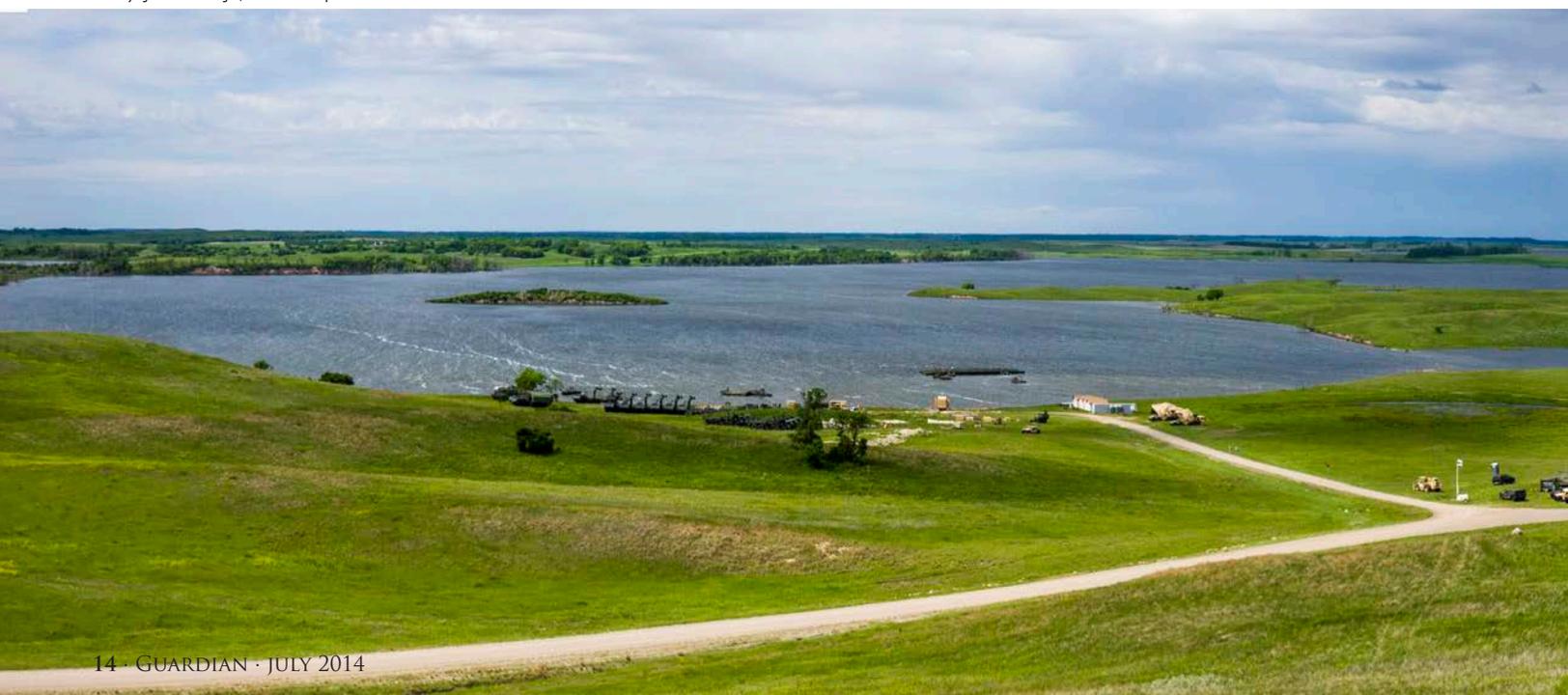
Marvig said. "They enjoy having a laugh, but they come to put in the work."

Marvig's unit also was joined on Lake Coe by Soldiers with the 133rd Quartermaster Detachment and 132nd Quartermaster Company, while the 136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion provided command and control for the units back at Camp Grafton Training Center, further north. The units, which annually train on their missions of purifying, storing and distributing water, also incorporated and reviewed a few selected warrior tasks — including setting up a traffic control point and occupying a forward operating base — to augment the Soldiers' MOS training.

"Morale is good. We have had extremely good weather, so that's kind of the crucible of being miserable or not — whether it's hot or cold or rainy. We had a lot of success at the (firing) ranges yesterday (June 9) and we're just about ready to get to the nitty gritty of it (annual training) and have some fun," said 1st Lt. Dave Stein, of Bismarck, North Dakota, who serves as a platoon leader for the Bottineau-based Detachment 1, 132nd Quartermaster Company.

Spc. Shelby Hauge, of Bismarck, who also is a member of the 134th Quartermaster Detachment, said training at Camp Grafton forces her team to work through problem solving. Soldiers in her unit and the 133rd

Photo by Sgt. Jonathan Haugen, Joint Force Headquarters



CAMP GRAFTON TRAINING CENTER WELCOMES INFLUX OF SUMMER VISITORS

Quartermaster Detachment were using a Tactical Water Purification System, or TWPS, to distribute water to notional units in the field, while the 132nd Quartermaster Company purified the water. Hauge said a standard TWPS kit with enough booster pumps will allow a unit to distribute water up to 10 miles away.

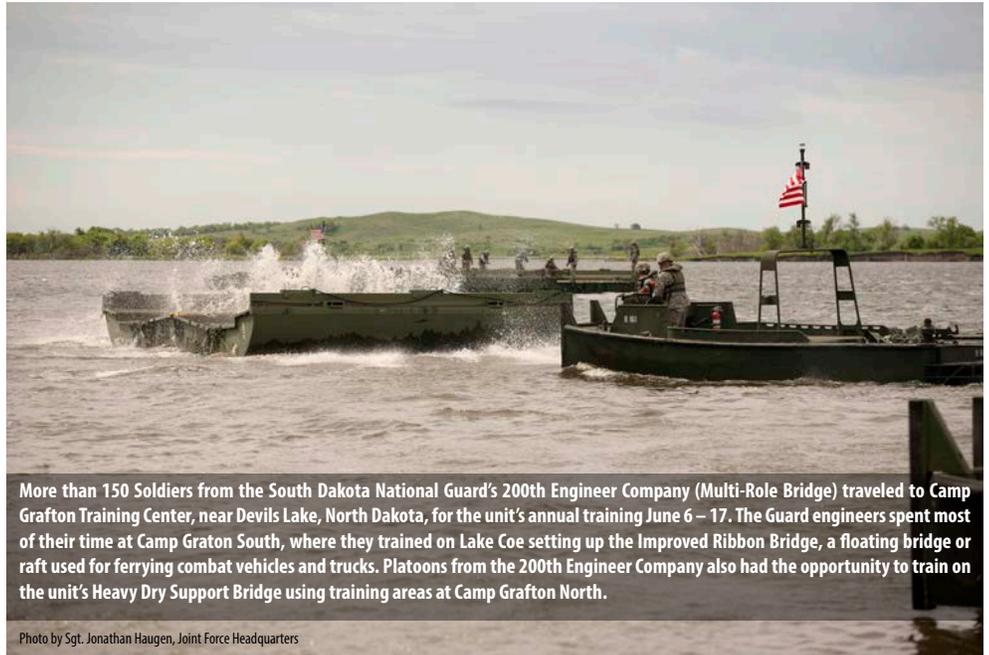
“With the landscape we’re on, we’re just trying to find the best set-up. This is great field training for us, because normally we work on flat surfaces. The landscape here provides more challenges,” she said.

Building a Team

Next door to the Quartermaster units at Lake Coe, Soldiers from North Dakota’s sister state in South Dakota were unloading components for an Improved Ribbon Bridge (IRB) system into the water. More than 150 Soldiers from the 200th Engineer Company (Multi-Role Bridge) made the journey north in June to Camp Grafton after training last year in Pierre, South Dakota.

“This is a good training site. We’ve been up here many times,” said 1st Lt. Elle Miller, a platoon leader for the unit.

“We send all our troops up here (to the 164th RTI) for MOS and NCOES (noncommissioned officer education system) courses. So, we really have a good working relationship with Camp Grafton. The people



More than 150 Soldiers from the South Dakota National Guard’s 200th Engineer Company (Multi-Role Bridge) traveled to Camp Grafton Training Center, near Devils Lake, North Dakota, for the unit’s annual training June 6 – 17. The Guard engineers spent most of their time at Camp Graton South, where they trained on Lake Coe setting up the Improved Ribbon Bridge, a floating bridge or raft used for ferrying combat vehicles and trucks. Platoons from the 200th Engineer Company also had the opportunity to train on the unit’s Heavy Dry Support Bridge using training areas at Camp Grafton North.

Photo by Sgt. Jonathan Hauge, Joint Force Headquarters

up here are just amazing,” said Sgt. 1st Class David Serbousek, a platoon sergeant with the 200th Engineer Company.

The South Dakota Soldiers used Camp Grafton’s training areas to work with an assortment of equipment, including the IRB and the Heavy Dry Support Bridge. About 20 members of the 200th Engineer Company also received training at a live explosive breach range, which was led by

164th RTI Instructor Sgt. 1st Class Paul Deegan. Deegan recently was named the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command’s National Guard Instructor of the Year, and also instructed Serbousek when the South Dakota Soldiers attended NCOES courses at the 164th RTI in years past. Camp Grafton’s training areas also allowed the 200th Engineer Company Soldiers to complete marksmanship



qualifications at its firing ranges. Serbousek said his unit's junior Soldiers and noncommissioned officers particularly benefitted during the summer training.

"We've got a lot of new Soldiers after our last deployment (to Afghanistan in 2012) and people moving into new leadership positions, and we're working our way up (with training). So, this (annual training) is huge," he said.

From the Ground Up

A little further to the west, another engineer unit was kicking up dust using heavy equipment to put the finishing touches on Camp Grafton's Contemporary Operating Location (COL), a site that can accommodate battalion-sized groups when they go to the field for training. About 30 Soldiers with Detachment 2, 815th Engineer Company (Horizontal), based out of Lisbon, North Dakota, were applying top soil there to seed grass. The unit, along with the 816th Engineer Company, based out of Dickinson, North Dakota, has worked on the project for the last three summers.

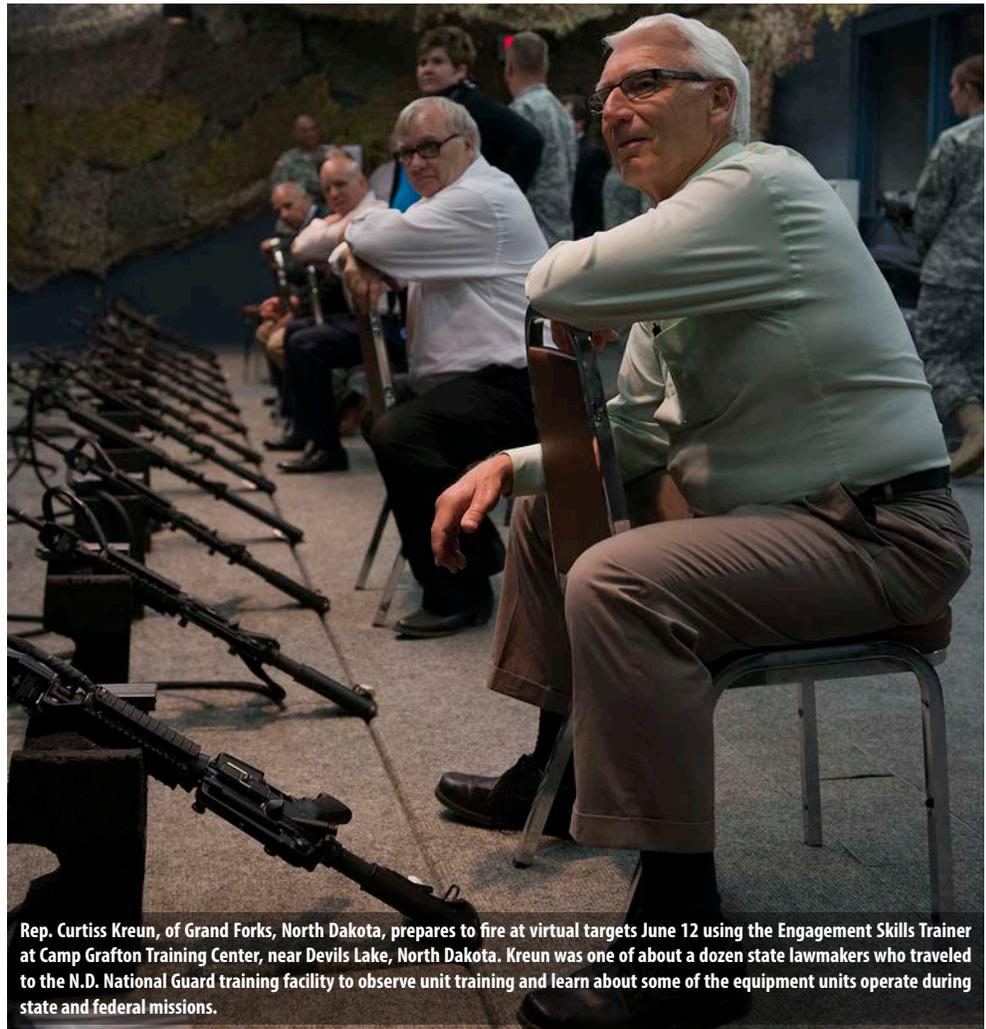
"We started off with a hilltop and took that hilltop way down. It's changed drastically from what it used to be," said Sgt. 1st Class David Feldman, a platoon sergeant with the 815th Engineer Company. "This is one of the best sites (for training) that I've been to in the state. There's always been something to do. There's enough area where we're not standing on top of each other (running equipment). I've loved it. I actually hate to see it be over now."

Johnson said the next step in fully completing the COL is to begin vertical construction at the site by installing hard-standing structures, including administrative buildings and living quarters. That work will be carried out by North Dakota's vertical engineer units and students from the 164th RTI.

"If the weather cooperates (this year), we hope to have the dirt, the seeding, everything done and basically let that sit so by next year, that COL is available for units to use. They'll have to set up tents, but it will be able to be used," Johnson said.

Local Attraction

Johnson said one of the best aspects of his job as Camp Grafton Training Center manager is showing off the installation to visitors. He had a chance to do that June 12 when about a dozen state lawmakers came to visit with North Dakota Guardsmen



Rep. Curtiss Kreun, of Grand Forks, North Dakota, prepares to fire at virtual targets June 12 using the Engagement Skills Trainer at Camp Grafton Training Center, near Devils Lake, North Dakota. Kreun was one of about a dozen state lawmakers who traveled to the N.D. National Guard training facility to observe unit training and learn about some of the equipment units operate during state and federal missions.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen, Joint Force Headquarters

during annual training events. The legislators are a part of the Interim Government Services Committee, which, according to the North Dakota website, studies "current state and federal benefits available to North Dakota veterans."

To get an overview of Camp Grafton, the group toured the 164th RTI building, the historic Edwards House and Tracy Chapel and got a look at a food service specialist course taught by instructors from the 164th RTI. The legislators also visited and ate lunch with Soldiers training at Camp Grafton and, later, fired at targets using the Engagement Skills Trainer.

"We regularly invite representatives from the North Dakota Legislative Assembly to events during the year to get a better understanding of how our Soldiers and Airmen train to support our state," said Lt. Col. Davina French, N.D. National Guard government affairs officer. "Typically, they always are impressed with our facilities, training and the overall professionalism of our military members. These events are

great for the N.D. National Guard because it provides unique, first-hand experiences for our state leadership and allows them to interact with our service members."

Camp Grafton garners interest from other groups, as well. Johnson said the facility works with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, or ESGR, to host "Boss Lifts" for employers of N.D. National Guard members, giving them an opportunity to see what their employees/citizen-Guardsmen do while away at training. This year, Camp Grafton also is joining the Devil Lake Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of North Dakota by hosting an open house June 27-28, when community members can visit the installation's historical sites.

"Anyone who wants to come and see the history of Camp Grafton is welcome," Johnson said. "Camp is just another piece of the history of the area (around Devils Lake) and we're proud to be a part of this community." ■

Deegan Named TRADOC Instructor of the Year



Photo by Lt. Col. Warren Pauling, Joint Force Headquarters

By Staff Sgt. Eric W. Jensen,
Joint Force Headquarters

A long-time combat engineer instructor and Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran from the North Dakota National Guard's 164th Regiment Regional Training Institute (RTI) was named the 2013 National Guard Instructor of the Year by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) during a formal ceremony May 30 at Fort Eustis, Va.

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Deegan, of Devils Lake, North Dakota, was selected for the recognition, beating out all other National Guard instructors in the United States. He has worked fulltime at the RTI — at Camp Grafton Training Center near Devils Lake — for more than 13 years and is certified to teach a number of military operational specialty (MOS) courses, including Combat Engineer, Combat Engineer – Advanced Leader Course, Combat Engineer – Senior Leader Course, Bridge Crewmember, Army Basic Instructor and Small Group Instruction.

Deegan, with support from the RTI's engineer combat section instructors, trains about 320 combat engineer National Guard and Reserve Soldiers each year.

"TRADOC searches out the best examples in the Army to put in front of our burgeoning leaders — to show Soldiers what right looks like, and to show that one day they can be just as professional and dedicated," said Gen. David G. Perkins, commanding general of TRADOC, during the ceremony.

The road to winning the prestigious TRADOC National Guard Instructor of the Year award is extensive. Deegan first competed amongst 60 other RTI instructors from the 164th RTI to become Instructor of the Quarter for the North Dakota installation. The four Instructor of the Quarter winners then competed for the RTI's



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class David Dodds, 141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

Instructor of the Year award.

Once the top regional instructors from each state are determined, they go on to compete at a national level, having their nominations for TRADOC Instructor of the Year reviewed by National Guard Bureau (NGB). NGB forwards their top three selections to TRADOC, where a winner is determined. According to TRADOC, "candidates were judged on tactical and technical knowledge, communication skills and classroom management. Their contributions to training and education, including curriculum development, research and article publication were also considered."

"It's a huge honor for us to have one of our instructors recognized, especially on the heels of the RTI being named an 'Institute of Excellence' by TRADOC," said Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Grinsteiner, 164th RTI commandant. "Sgt. 1st Class Deegan's recognition shows you why we are able to accomplish so much at our schoolhouse. We have some of the best instructors in the nation right here in North Dakota. The quality and skill of our instructors and cadre here is top-notch."

Deegan is the third instructor from the 164th RTI to be named TRADOC's National Guard Instructor of the Year. Sgt. 1st Class Charles Porter, of Devils Lake, and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Keefe, of Fargo, North Dakota, also have earned the distinction in past years.

At the awards presentation ceremony, Deegan received an Instructor of the Year plaque, TRADOC Certificate of Achievement, TRADOC coin and four-star note from Perkins.

"I thank my wife, Denny, for her outstanding support during my time here at the RTI and during my military service, in general. I couldn't do it without her," Deegan said. "There are several key instructors from North Dakota I credit as mentors, who have



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class David Dodds, 141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

molded me as an engineer instructor in the combat section. These colleagues include 1st Sgt. Kurt Schwind and Master Sgt. Jeff Wollschlaeger, and retired instructors Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Elkin, Sgt. 1st Class Dale Ott and Sgt. 1st Class Dave Grove. Without their technical expertise and guidance, surely this honor would not have been mine."

An Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, Deegan mobilized with F Battery, 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment to Kirkuk, Iraq, from 2004-05. While there, he helped train and conducted joint operation missions with the Iraqi Army. Additionally, Deegan has had significant involvement in North Dakota's State Partnership Program with Ghana. He has participated in an Instructor Exchange Program with engineer instructors from the Ghanaian Armed Forces four times, traveling to the country to assist and teach at its Engineer Training School.

"I'm passionate about what I do because it's a job that directly impacts the Army combat engineer community. The students who attend courses at North Dakota's RTI go from our classrooms, back to their units and later serve in overseas missions," Deegan said.

Last month, the 164th RTI received a "Fully Accredited" rating and "Institution of Excellence" status from TRADOC through an accreditation process. A team of evaluators administers the inspections in 3-year cycles to Army training institutions nationwide. It was the third time in a row the North Dakota schoolhouse had received the distinction.

Currently, there are 68 full-time N.D. National Guard Soldiers and 27 traditional Guardsmen who support the 164th RTI, which provides 19 fully-accredited engineer courses each year with about 150 classes scheduled annually. About 65 percent of all U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard engineers across the United States receive training there. ■

Musical Leadership

188th Army Band Conducts Music Camp for Military Youth

By Spc. Kelsy Johnson,
188th Army Band

Summers on college campuses tend to be quiet, but in early June, the classrooms of North Dakota State University's music building in Fargo, North Dakota, were abuzz with youth and National Guard Soldiers in rehearsals.

The 188th Army Band and the North Dakota National Guard Child and Youth Program kicked off their first Military Music Camp on June 5. Fourteen young people from current National Guard families traveled to Fargo to take part in a four-day intensive musical experience.

The performing groups were tailored to the specific instrumentation and experience of the students. The campers brought a wide range of musical skills, which presented a challenge for the instructors. Once the staff assessed the abilities of each student, they divided the campers into ensembles and selected appropriate music.

Each ensemble was staffed by instructors and coaches from the 188th Army Band.

The squad leaders, or camp counselors, were either musicians from the 188th Army Band or volunteers from other units who played instruments.

In addition to playing instruments, the students learned to use songwriting as a form of expression about their feelings and thoughts. Using some basic guidelines and the musical knowledge of their instructors, the youth split up into groups and collaborated on their own work. By the end of the morning, each of the three groups shared an original song with lyrical content ranging from tacos to the Minecraft video game to family.

Campers learned performance techniques from 188th Army Band live ensembles during a special evening session. The students learned examples of good and bad techniques as they were demonstrated by members of the band. Sgt. Christopher Hanson, the musical director of the camp, was impressed by the amount of feedback

and criticism the campers offered.

"The performance techniques class was the best example of the kids participating and communicating," Hanson said. "It showed they were paying attention and were interested."

Over the course of the camp, musicians worked in three musical groups: a woodwind ensemble, a low brass ensemble and a popular music combination. At the conclusion of the event, the campers and instructors performed an outdoor concert for families and friends, showcasing their work from the weekend. The staff, squad leaders and instructors joined the students for a finale fit for a military band, "America the Beautiful."

But, the weekend was not just about music. The squad leaders kept the youth busy with evening camp activities that helped to foster new friendships over the course of the weekend. N.D. National Guard recruiters brought in a Reality Oriented Physical



Sgt. 1st Class Kate Naujokas, of the 188th Army Band, left, sings with a youth student at the North Dakota National Guard Child and Youth Program Military Music Camp held at North Dakota State University June 6.



Staff Sgt. Justen Reed, of the 188th Army Band, left, assists a young music student playing a drum.



Sgt. Christopher Hanson, left, conducts a band made up of 188th Army Band members and students attending the North Dakota National Guard Child and Youth Program Military Music Camp for a concert performance outdoors at North Dakota State University in Fargo, North Dakota.

Exercises, or R.O.P.E.S., course for some leadership training, and the youth made scrapbooks and attended a Fargo-Moorhead Red Hawks baseball game.

At least half the kids at the camp belong to families who have experienced deployments, and all of them had parents whose military lives have kept them apart for periods of time. With this in mind, the kids received instruction on resiliency and practiced journaling and expressing their feelings.

Cameron Bauder, a 10th grade flute player, enjoyed being a part of a military family function and a musical camp. His dad, Mike, serves with the 231st Brigade Support Battalion in Valley City, North Dakota, and has deployed twice. His mother, Melissa, said she knew he was having fun because he never called home. She appreciated that the National Guard offered an activity appropriate for Cameron's age group.

"A lot of times, the older kids are left out," Melissa said.

Nikki Braaten, North Dakota Child and Youth program coordinator, said the Military Music Camp has the potential to reach 30 or

more youth in future years. This year's camp competed with summer school for many families, so the participation numbers were lower than projected.

The 188th Army Band and the Child and Youth Program already are making plans for a camp next year. With a full group of campers, they hope to include a choir and a marching band.

The Military Music Camp model is a unique concept for the National Guard. Hanson said, as far as he knows, the 188th Army Band is the first National Guard band in the country to offer a camp like this. A delegate from South Dakota's 147th Army Band visited the camp to potentially establish a similar event in his state.

Hanson pitched the idea to 68th Troop Command late in 2013, and the plan took shape over several months. Col. Scott Boespflug, commander of 68th Troop Command, said the Military Music Camp meets several goals for the organization: maintaining partnerships, building knowledge of the Guard, and recruiting.

"Everybody at all levels supported it," Boespflug said.

Unlike other programs for military families, such as Military Youth Camp or Military Youth Fish Camp, the Military Music Camp fell under the direction of a specific National Guard unit, the 188th Army Band. Support to military families is central to the band's mission. Ensembles from the 188th Army Band are performed for Soldiers and their families for every sendoff and return from deployment, as well as other unit functions across the state. Military music serves an educational purpose, as well.

"We've been trying to establish an educational outreach for the last four years," Hanson said. "This is a major step forward."

As members of the band gain rank, they are expected to possess musical leadership skills. Leading small ensembles and teaching master classes gave the instructors teaching experience. The camp was a new challenge for the instructors since many of them do not have a music education degree.

"It's one thing to be a good performer," Hanson said. "It's another thing to be a good teacher." ■

N.D. GUARD SOLDIERS PARTICIPATE IN ARMY'S "WAR FIGHTER" EXERCISE

Story by Sgt. 1st Class David Dodds,
141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

It was by far the largest "War Fighter" exercise that the U.S. Army has ever executed, and North Dakota Soldiers were a huge part of its success.

The 141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB), based in Fargo, North Dakota, got a chance to show off the unique assets it brings to the battlefield as a rear-area support and security element at the June training event that took place at the National Guard's Mission Training Center on the eastern edge of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Lt. Col. Debra Lien, brigade commander, said the 141st MEB did not disappoint the Minnesota-based Red Bulls of the 34th Infantry Division (ID), the higher headquarters that her unit was there to support.

"The 141st MEB was fully integrated into the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division mission during this War Fighter Exercise. In our training exercise, we were responsible for wide area security within the "rear" of the Division's area of operation," Lien said. "Due to our diligence and proactive approach with the exercise, we were able to provide the local population a sense of security within our area of operation in order to decrease (simulated) ethnic tensions."

The 34th ID may have been the top unit under the Army's microscope during the nearly 3-week-long exercise, but it was subordinate brigades like the 141st MEB that allowed the division to focus on owning, shaping and eventually winning the high-tech simulated war.

Until a couple years ago, War Fighter exercises, which gauge a division's ability to conduct full-scale unified land operations, only evaluated the work done at the division level. The subordinate units were merely "response cells," or in other words, human training aids.

That's not the case anymore.

The 141st MEB, along with nine other National Guard brigades, all were put to the test during War Fighter '14.

Nearly 2,500 National Guard Soldiers from 14 states made up the War Fighter

roster. Of those, more than 150 Soldiers comprised the 141st MEB, its response cell and security team. It was augmented by other North Dakota National Guard Soldiers from the 1-188th Air Defense Artillery Battalion, the 164th Engineer Battalion, the 136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion; and two Soldiers from the South Dakota National Guard.

Mission Training Center officials confirmed that the June War Fighter was the largest the U.S. Army had ever done, eclipsing one conducted in May in which the 42nd ID was supported by five training brigades — half the June War Fighter number.

The War Fighter is described by the Army as "the most complex and holistic lethal and nonlethal mission command experiences our commanders can gain just short of actual combat."

"This exercise is meant to stress the staff with multiple different challenges so they can learn as much as possible in a compressed amount of time," said Lt. Col. James Olson, head of operations for the 141st MEB. "Our Soldiers got to see what their months of hard work and training leading up to this was all

about."

Scenario-based

The War Fighter concept uses a scenario to exercise the ability of the division's staff and its subordinate units to maintain command and control of notional troops on the battlefield in an attempt to influence and disrupt the notional enemy.

In the scenario, the 141st MEB is in charge of maintaining support and security in the 34th ID's ever-expanding support area as it pushed forward from one objective to the next.

Lien said to be successful, the 141st MEB had to use the skills and resources of all of its staff members, including planners, intelligence analysts, and legal, medical and information operations experts.

"This exercise is one of the best professional development opportunities that our Soldiers will have in their military careers," Lien said.

The Army goes all out to make the training as realistic as possible. Units face a notional enemy that is controlled by a nerve center of military experts on computer-based, real-time systems. Those systems mimic the



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class David Dodds, 141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

Lt. Col. Debra Lien, deputy commander of the 141st MEB (acting commander of the 141st MEB for the War Fighter Exercise), briefs commanders of the 34th Infantry Division on her unit's mission and plans at a Combined Arms Rehearsal.



Photo by 1st Lt. Tyler Mitchell, Fort Leavenworth Public Affairs

North Dakota Soldiers help tear down the site used for the War Fighter Exercise, a full-scale, unified land operation, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

enemy by injecting challenges and reacting to the decisions and actions of friendly forces.

The U.S. forces track their own moves and that of the enemy from multi-echelon command centers that are synced with each other.

The number of North Dakota Soldiers that actually attended the War Fighter was a little more than 150. However, the virtual nature of the exercise allowed the brigade to maintain command and control over about 60 subordinate units of varying size with a combined count of more than 4,200 Soldiers.

“The benefit of having a notional enemy and scenario allows units like the MEB to train on the mission the Army designed us for, with units we don’t have in North Dakota, against a realistic competitor,” Olson said.

Meticulous Planning

Lien said 141st MEB began the train-up for War Fighter ‘14 in late 2012 when the 34th ID was in its initial planning stages.

“I stepped up and said we’d like to be your MEB,” she said.

Then, in June of 2013, key leaders of the 141st MEB traveled to Fort Leavenworth to see firsthand how a War Fighter looks by observing the 301st MEB, out of Washington, run through the gauntlet.

Mission planning for War Fighter began last September, and two months later, the 141st MEB started extensive computer-

based training and testing. That training would continue for the next six months.

All the hard work and careful planning paid off in the end, and the Soldiers of the 141st MEB were impressed by the training.

Staff Sgt. Ciciley Littlewolf, of Moorhead, Minnesota, 141st MEB medical section noncommissioned officer-in-charge, said that having so many other knowledgeable experts in her field close by made a big difference for her.

“I could ask any question and they provided me with enough information for me to develop a better operational picture for myself,” Littlewolf said. “That really allowed me to feel successful.”

High-ranking Visits

Littlewolf also was thrilled to meet and give an impromptu update on her duties to the acting director of the Army National Guard, Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, who visited the 141st MEB during the War Fighter. Lyons was so impressed by his chat with Littlewolf that he gave her one of his commander’s coins.

“It was amazing how relatable and humble he was about everything,” Littlewolf said. “He was very down to Earth.”

Lyons also presented coins to 2nd Lts. Leona Woods, of International Falls, Minnesota, and Jo Wiege, of Fargo, both up-and-coming officers within the 141st MEB.

During the War Fighter exercise, three

other 141st MEB Soldiers were honored by the 34 ID’s commanding general, Brig. Gen. Neal Loidolt, for going above and beyond in their jobs. Loidolt presented Sgt. Christopher Brereton, of West Fargo, North Dakota; Spc. Talon Petersen, of Grand Forks, North Dakota; and Stephen Johnson, of Moorhead, with commander’s coins to reward them for their efforts.

Maj. Gen. David A. Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general, also led a delegation to Fort Leavenworth to visit the North Dakota War Fighters. Sprynczynatyk was joined by Col. Robert Fode, Col. Giselle “Gigi” Wilz and Lt. Col. Jon Erickson.

The adjutant general took time during his visit to present coins to a dozen 141st MEB Soldiers who were nominated by their superiors to be recognized for their hard work.

Lien said, apart from the outstanding training that her Soldiers received, the War Fighter experience also allowed the 141st MEB to demonstrate its capabilities and relevancy to the 34th ID commanding general and other Army leaders.

She said she looks forward to continuing the training relationship that has been started with the 34th ID.

“They have been absolutely phenomenal to work with from the beginning,” Lien said. “It has been a very smooth process with very few challenges along the way.” ■

Engineer Soldiers Receive Alert for Possible Mobilization

Soldiers assigned to the North Dakota Army National Guard's Dickinson, North Dakota-based 816th Engineer Company (Horizontal) have received an alert notification for possible mobilization. The unit also has a detachment in Mott, North Dakota.

If mobilized, more than 150 Soldiers with the unit are expected to serve in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in early 2015. This would be the first overseas mobilization for Soldiers of the 816th Engineer Company in support of the Global War on Terrorism since the unit was re-designated in 2006. Previously, the unit was designated as Company C, 164th Engineer Battalion. Members of this unit deployed to Iraq from December 2003 to February 2005 with the N.D. National Guard's 141st Engineer Battalion.

"The 816th Engineer Company is a well-trained unit equipped with earthmoving equipment, which provides a tremendous capability to the force," said Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota adjutant general. "Their significant contributions to our state and communities



Photo by Sgt. Jennifer Joyce, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers with the 816th Engineer Company (Horizontal) train and qualify with equipment at the Camp Grafton Training Center near Devils Lake, North Dakota, last month in order to meet pre-mobilization training requirements.

during our emergency flood responses in 2009 and 2011 were extremely appreciated. If deployed, the Soldiers can rely on the superb support of their families, friends and employers during this important mission away from home."

N.D. Army National Guard units that are currently mobilized overseas include the Bismarck-based 814th Medical Company (Area Support) in Afghanistan and Company C, 2nd Battalion, 285th Aviation Regiment in Kosovo. One North

Dakota Soldier is serving in Kuwait. Approximately 15 Soldiers of the 231st Logistical Support Element also have received an alert for possible mobilization in November. In March, about 15 Airmen from the N.D. Air National Guard assigned to the Minot, North Dakota-based 219th Security Forces Squadron began a six-month deployment to Southwest Asia in support of U.S. Central Command, or CENTCOM. ■

N.D. Army Guard Soldier Accepts West Point Position

Capt. John Peyerl, formerly assigned as the supply management officer for the North Dakota Army National Guard's 136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, has accepted a position with the United States Military Academy, West Point, in New York.

Peyerl's 3-year tour as an instructor of military science for the academy's Department of Military Instruction begins this month. He is currently the only National Guard officer serving as an instructor of military science at West Point.

Peyerl found the vacancy announcement on the National Guard Bureau's website. The announcement specified that an officer branched in combat arms was preferred. Peyerl put in an application packet for selection and was offered the position despite being qualified as a logistics officer.

The opportunity came as a shock to some.

"Everyone I told did a double take as it is an unlikely assignment for a traditional officer," Peyerl said. "There are very few logistics officers assigned to the United States Military Academy."

Prior to his selection as an instructor at West Point, Peyerl worked as an assistant professor of military science at the University of North Dakota's (UND) Recruit Officer Training Corps (ROTC), beginning in June 2011.

"I enjoyed seeing the personal and professional growth in the cadets at UND," he said. "That's something that I will continue to enjoy as I assist with the development of future leaders at the United States Military Academy."

Peyerl enlisted as an engineer equipment repairer with the N.D. Army National Guard's 3662nd Maintenance Company in 1999. He commissioned as an officer in 2005 and has since served with the 132nd Quartermaster Company, the 957th Engineer Company (Multi-Role Bridge) and the

136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. He deployed to Kosovo in 2010 with the 957th Engineer Company.

Peyerl's wife, Dr. Naomi (Hovendick) Peyerl, and their children, ages 3 and 1, will accompany Peyerl in New York for the duration of his tour as an instructor.

"It is thrilling and scary to leave the friendly confines of where you call home," he said. "We have been seeking opportunities to broaden our experiences and careers. This will certainly provide some of that experience. Living on a military installation will be a new experience, but hopefully positive for the entire family."

Peyerl said that his experience with the N.D. Army National Guard over the past 15 years has prepared him for the career opportunity.

"I am grateful that the N.D. National Guard granted me the release to serve this tour," he said. ■

Chaplains' Corner:

By Chaplain (Col.) John Flowers,
119th Wing

Not long ago, a POW/MIA (Prisoner of War/Missing in Action) memorial table at Patrick Air Force Base near Cocoa Beach, Florida, was removed from public view. It seems that the presence of a Bible on the table offended someone. The Bible, along with everything else on the table, symbolizes some aspect of enduring through captivity. Unfortunately, in this era of universal tolerance, the very presence of a Bible seemingly ignited controversy and division.

It is a historically, undisputed fact that prisoners of war endured captivity with a healthy assist from religious faith. They used the "Tap Code" to pass prayers, hymns, Bible verses and words of hope to one another. They meditated on Bible verses they remembered from their past. An organized public worship service by the POWs at the Hanoi Hilton during the conflict in Vietnam was one of the most inspiring and motivational events of their captivity. When we allow a tiny vocal minority to scrub all reference of faith from the public arena, we are breaking faith with these heroes.

Rear Adm. Jeremiah Denton died earlier this year at the age of 89. He served eight years as a POW in the Hanoi Hilton, four of them in solitary confinement. He and the other POWs endured the most unspeakable conditions of torture, deprivation, isolation and despair.

Denton is most famous for going on worldwide television in 1966 and blinking the letters TORTURE with his eyes in Morse code. This was the first confirmation that our POWs were being systematically abused in prison by the enemy. He was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroism and inspirational leadership.

When questioned by the enemy on television about America's involvement in Vietnam, Denton answered, "I don't know what is happening, but whatever the position of my government is, I support it fully. Whatever the position

of my government, I believe in it, yes, sir. I am a member of that government, and it is my job to support it, and I will as long as I live." This is courage. This is loyalty. This is true faith and allegiance.

Upon release, Denton made the first public statement for the POWs: "We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country under difficult circumstances. We are profoundly grateful to our commander-in-chief and to our nation for this day. God bless America."

Vice Admiral James Stockdale was awarded the Medal of Honor for his valor as a POW in Vietnam. As the senior officer, he organized resistance to the enemy. He endured torture and solitary confinement for years and remained defiant. At one point, he disfigured himself with a razor blade and beat himself with a stool so the enemy could not use him in propaganda broadcasts. That is courage. That is loyalty. That is true faith and allegiance.

Stockdale had this to say regarding his coping strategy during captivity: "I never lost faith in the end of the story. I never doubted, not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which, in retrospect, I would not trade."

Our POWs were sustained by religious faith. You don't have to agree with their faith. But, as an American, you must allow them the space to exercise faith. If you are a person of faith, you must also respectfully affirm the rights of others to express a different faith, or no faith. That's how America works.

We don't serve in the Communist Armed Forces where all reference to religion has been scrubbed away. We don't serve in the Taliban Armed Forces where everyone is coerced to believe exactly the same thing.

We serve in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. We are free to believe, or not believe, any way our conscience leads us. The placement of a Bible on a POW/MIA table does not coerce anyone's conscience. It does not disrespect anyone. It simply memorializes the fact that many people have been sustained by religious faith. To insist on its removal



irrationally denies our history. These heroes willingly sacrificed their bodies for the good of all Americans; those with religious faith, and those with no religious faith. Their religious faith formed their resilience. Removing a Bible from a memorial to their sacrifice denigrates their faith and their service.

How about this: if you are personally offended by the placement of a Bible on a POW/MIA table, if it twists you up that a released POW would say, "God Bless America;" if you are bent out of shape because a co-worker wears a cross around her neck; could you please allow for some diversity of expression? Freedom of thought? Could you please offer some tolerance? Do you really want to live in a society where every vestige of opinion that might offend someone is disallowed by the coercive force of government? Be very careful how you answer.

If you are interested in reading more about our Vietnam POWs, I recommend the book

"DEFIANT: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, the Women Who Fought for Them, and the One Who Never Returned," a 2014 book by Alvin Townley.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" — the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ■



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kiel Skager, Joint Force Headquarters

An aerial view shows the housing and training facilities used by service members at the Camp Gilbert C. Grafton Training Center (North), which sits about 5 miles south of Devils Lake on Highway 20 in northeast North Dakota. The facility is home to the N.D. National Guard's 164th Regiment Regional Training Institute, 136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and 3662nd Maintenance Company. National Guard units from across the state, as well as outside of North Dakota, use Camp Grafton's training areas throughout the year. In June 2014, the number of visitors to Camp Grafton — including those to the facility's 9,300-acre training area southeast of Camp Grafton North — reached more than 1,200 Soldiers in a single day.