

Militiaman

Official Publication of the Iowa National Guard



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Sidewinder Challenge**

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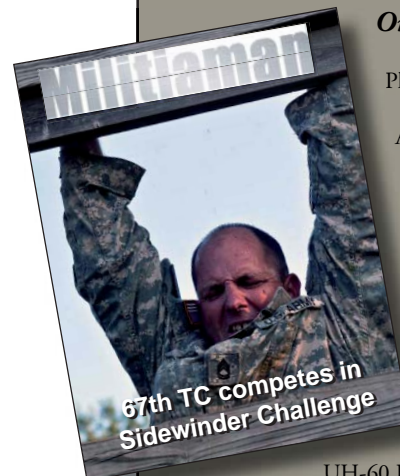
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On the Cover

Photo by Sgt. Chad D. Nelson

A 67th Troop Command Master Sgt. takes to the confidence course during their recent Sidewinder Challenge, as the best Soldiers from 67th Troop Command gathered in a grueling competition that took place in the fields, thick forests and obstacle courses of Camp Dodge, as well as in UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters.

Iowa National Guard enters new era of



Transition

The National Guard's contribution to our national defense requirements since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 has been historic.

More than 700,000 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen have mobilized in support of overseas contingency and domestic support operations since that fateful day, many more than once. Today, there are still nearly 54,000 National Guard members deployed in support of Operations New Dawn and Enduring Freedom.

The Iowa National Guard has contributed more than 15,000 Soldiers and Airmen to these ongoing endeavors. While we anticipate future deployments, with the return of Company B, 2-211 General Support Aviation Battalion, we have reached an important milestone for the Iowa National Guard.

With the exception of about a hundred individuals who are mobilized with other states, we do not currently have any units deployed. This is a first since deployments began in 2001.

Although we have received several Army and Air Force unit sourcing notifications for Fiscal Year 12 and 13, we still do not have any official unit mobilization orders.

Those units sourced for potential deployments will continue with their pre-mobiliza-

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tion preparations, however, we expect that some of these anticipated missions may change or even be canceled altogether.

The nature and scope of future Iraq deployments will continue to change. The President has directed all U.S. military forces to be out of Iraq by Dec. 31, 2011. Over the past year, the U.S. military has been working hard to reduce forward operating bases in Iraq, move equipment to Kuwait and turn over remaining facilities to the Iraqi government.

Despite the year-end withdrawal deadline, the US will maintain limited military forces in Kuwait as a rapid response force and to assist with equipment reconstitution efforts.

The President has also directed that we

continue to reduce our forces in Afghanistan. The current plan is to turn over security responsibility to the Afghan government and remove the bulk of US forces from Afghanistan by 2014. Current force reduction efforts are likely to result in a reduction of approximately 40,000 International Security Assistance Force servicemembers across all contributing NATO and supporting countries.

Deployment numbers, types of units, and missions change daily as Central Command adjusts force cap requirements in order to meet the President's intent. Recently, several National Guard Brigade Combat Teams have been re-missioned to various security force assignments due to reduced requirements in Afghanistan.

While we don't know for certain what the deployment picture will look like in the months and years ahead, what we do know is that we are in a period of transition. Between potential budget reductions and shifting national security priorities, the next ten years are likely to look much different than the past decade.

Regardless, the role of the National Guard will remain the same – always ready, always there.

Mission Focused – Warrior Ready!

67th TC Soldiers in annual Sidewinder Challenge



Sidewinder Challenge interesting is the challenges require a team of Soldiers to work together, said Shroyer. Teams have to work and move as one, to move on.

Engineers, aviators, medics, and band members formed seven, nine-man teams of the best Soldiers they had to offer. They competed in physical fitness tests, land navigation, marksmanship under stress, Warrior task skills, relay races and ruck marches.

“Every team competing in this event is only as strong as their weakest Soldier,” said Shroyer.

The day started off with the Army Physical Fitness Test before dawn. After enduring push-ups, sit-ups and a two-mile run, the teams split up and rotated between tasks. One of these tasks, was a situational training exercise, with teams being airlifted via Blackhawk to the Department of Natural Resources’ Saylorville Wildlife Management Area.

While there, they had to react to real-world situations, such as: evacuating the casualty of a helicopter crash by air; reacting to a suicide bomber; and meeting with an Afghan village elder.

The teamwork aspect was noticeable because if a team leader was killed or wounded, another Soldier had to fill his/her role. Teams had to communi-

cate amongst their ranks and understand every Soldier’s job on their team so they could complete the mission. And of course, the team had to care for their wounded teammate and evacuate them from the area.

After all the competitors rotated through their stations, they came together at dusk for the Viper Challenge, a series of games that pitted teams against each other in head-to-head contests, such as a tire-roll relay, holding a weighted raft over their heads, and pulling an armored vehicle by hand.

Immediately following the games, which were designed to push the Soldiers past muscle failure, they donned their heavy rucksacks and moved on to the final event, the highly anticipated six-mile

Story by Spc. Adrian Muehe

A fierce battle for a traveling trophy was waged at Camp Dodge, as the best Soldiers from 67th Troop Command, Iowa Army National Guard, gathered to face each other in a fierce and realistic series of challenges. This grueling exercise took place in the fields, thick forests and obstacle courses on Camp Dodge, as well as in UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters.

The event? The Sidewinder Challenge.

“The Sidewinder Challenge is a rigorous competition between the units of our command,” said Sgt. Major Donald Shroyer, the 67th Troop Command operations sergeant major.

Most units in the Army have competitions for Soldiers. What makes the



Warriors compete in Sidewinder challenge

road march.

“This is my second year doing this,” said Spc. Nick Amrine, of Fairfield, and a saxophone player with the 34th Army Band. “I came back after last year because I enjoyed the challenge. It is easy to define yourself by low standards, but coming to the Sidewinder, you meet the best of the best in the Iowa National Guard and see what you’re really made of.”

“I’m really proud of my team members,” said Staff Sgt. Anthony Van Cannon, an Ames native, squad leader and Blackhawk crew chief for Company B, 248th Aviation Support Battalion. “I could not have done this without them; they made my job a lot easier.”

The challenges they had to face were not only measures of knowledge and endurance, but based on situations that could occur in a more serious setting.

“This is a great day and a great training opportunity,” said Pfc. Daniel Kelly, of Ankeny, a mechanic with Company A, 248th ASB. “The competition makes it fun, but training is what it’s all about.”

The Sidewinder Challenge provided an intense, grueling competition for all 67th Troop Command units. Whether it was crawling under barbed wire (top left), calling in a nine-line emergency evacuation message (top right), to directing the crew chief of an overhead Black Hawk helicopter to a wounded Soldier (bottom left), to dealing with civilians trying to get past a makeshift security checkpoint (bottom right), 67th TC Soldiers found themselves tested on all fronts. And when the competition concluded, the 248th Aviation Battalion stood alone in first place.

While Camp Dodge is the main training site for the Iowa National Guard, most of these units drill and train in armories across the state. These exercises and tasks not only benefit the Soldiers competing in this event, it also gives these Warriors knowledge, which they can pass on to

***Sidewinder Challenge
continued on page 17***





On target with Governor's X

Story by
Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden
Photos by
Sgt. Chad D. Nelson

For most Iowa National Guard Soldiers, experience on the rifle range is simply part of their basic marksmanship training during their annual weapons qualification. Once qualified, they won't see the range for another year.

The Governors X Sustainment Training Exercise, however, takes marksmanship to a whole new level. Any Soldier who attends the match receives more advanced marksmanship training than most troops will receive in their entire National Guard career.

The Governor's X competition is specifically designed to test Soldiers marksmanship skills in head-to-head, or in this case, shoulder-to-shoulder competition. Held annually since 1975, it promotes battle-focused marksmanship training and enhances overall marksmanship proficiency.

Open to any Iowa Army or Air National Guard member, Soldiers and Airmen can participate, either as an individual, or as a team.

The Individual Classification is either open or novice. A "novice" is one who has never participated in the Governors X Match, or at a higher level. An "open" competitor is one who has participated at the Governors X match or a higher level.

For Team competition, individuals are classified as either old or new. A competitor that has fired on an "A" Team at the Winston P. Wilson Match (2007 to present) or at a higher level are considered old competitors. Teams may have any combination of new shooters, but are limited to 50 percent old shooters on any given team.

One thing that makes the Iowa event rather unique is that all participants are required to shoot the same weapon systems, to include the M16 or M4 rifle, M9 pistol and the M240 Bravo machine gun.

During annual weapons qualification, if you hit your target anywhere, you're

good to go. That, according to Staff Sgt. Ken Lathrop, part of the Iowa Marksmanship Team and the Small Arms Readiness Team, isn't even an option.

"Most stages of fire require the Soldier to hit the center of the target. There is only one match that is hit or miss. On the rest of the courses of fire, if you aren't roughly within five inches or less from the center of the target, you start losing points."

To say the Governor's X courses are a challenge, is an understatement. There is no such thing as an alibi – competitors absolutely train as they fight.

"We have the match programs set up to really test their marksmanship capabilities. Troops will be required to engage multiple targets within a limited time, from standing, sitting, kneeling and prone positions with the rifle," said Lathrop.

"We have pistol courses that require the competitor to draw their weapon from the holster and engage multiple targets from standing, kneeling and prone positions. They'll engage targets from barricade positions and with their weak hand, as well," he said.

"We have matches set up that require Soldiers to shoot with elevated heart rates and limited time to engage multiple targets. Weather conditions play a large part in some of the team matches. Being able to read the wind and adjust your sites accordingly plays a large part in team matches that can have targets up to 600 meters away. The teams that learn these skills are the teams that excel in the competitions," said Lathrop.

One of the few ways to simulate battlefield conditions, said Staff Sgt Matt Waechter, a competitor with the 132nd Fighter Wing, is to do live-fire, high-stress competitions.

"The Governor's X is a great measure of a Soldier's or Airman's ability to perform fundamental combat skills under stress. It isn't just about shooting – it's an



A Soldier fires his pistol from the prone position during the Governors X Sustainment Training Exercise, held at Camp Dodge, Iowa.

all-around competition measuring your fitness, ability to handle stress, knowledge and skills with ballistics and weapon systems.

“Governor's X separates the real shoot-

ers from the self-proclaimed shooters. It opens the door for them to represent their state, region and country in various exercises,” he added.

Iowa shooters have proven the quality of

their training in recent years. Iowa National Guard personnel have contended in every match they attend, often placing in the top three in several events at both the national and regional level, as well as beating active component teams at All-



Army matches. They also consistently produce some of the top shooters in the New Shooter categories at these events.

Interested personnel should realize it's not too late to begin training for next year's Governor's X competition, to be held at Camp Dodge in May 2012.

“Marksmanship is a perishable skill that can only be maintained with hands-on training,” said Sgt. 1st Class Pat Rose, Governor's X Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge. “The Beam Hit and EST 2000 are great marksmanship tools that any unit can hand receipt from the Sim Center to maintain and improve individual Soldier skills. Units can use these tools to maintain marksmanship fundamentals, as well as develop shooters.

Otherwise, Lathrop said, Soldiers can train for the match by shooting at home.

“Even a .22 rifle can help prepare you for the match



and will also help increase your annual qualification scores. Trigger time is trigger time. I didn't become a good shooter by shooting 9mm or 5.56mm, I became good by shooting a .22, as the fundamentals are the same.

"In a system that does not put much emphasis on marksmanship, the only way to excel is if you do it yourself, and the .22 is one of the most economical ways you can practice," Lathrop said

For Lt. Col. Todd Aarhus, a first-time

competitor, the serious competition between the various Air and Army teams was an eye-opener.

"Some of these teams were new and others were veteran teams that put countless hours into practice and studying the different matches for their best edge. This exercise is not for the unprepared and no one can expect to walk on and win.

"Commanders can show their support for marksmanship and the exercise by

encouraging their Soldiers to organize a team and compete. In fact, I challenge commanders and first sergeants to come to the Governors X next May and see for themselves how good an event this is for the Iowa National Guard and for building upon a basic, but important Soldier skill," Aarhus said.

The Soldiers making up the Iowa Marksmanship team took part in a four-day train-up held on Camp Dodge before traveling to Hastings, Neb. to compete at the MAC V Regional Marksmanship Sustainment Training Exercise. Competing among 22 teams from eight states, all three Iowa teams placed in the top 10, with Iowa's "B" team placing second.

The top two teams at each Regional match (there are seven regions within the US) are invited to the All-Army match held on Fort Benning, Ga. in March. Iowa will send five shooters to this match.

Soldiers and Airmen compete in the many phases of the Governors X Sustainment Training Exercise, held at Camp Dodge, Iowa.

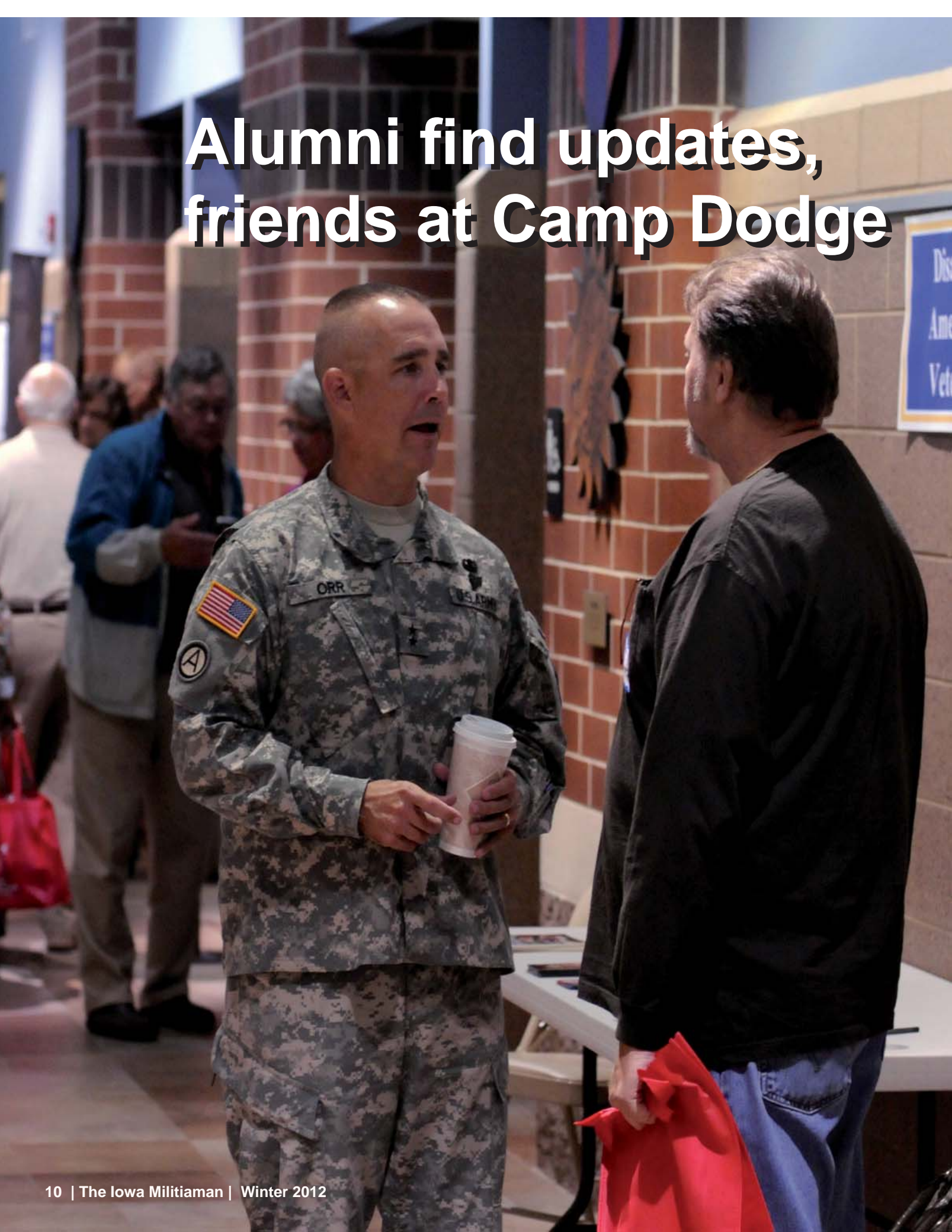


2011 Iowa Marksmanship Team

Staff Sgt. Lathrop, Kenneth
Sgt. Andersen, Michael
Staff Sgt. Hobbs, Jacob
Sgt. Russell, Ben
1st Sgt. Krumboltz, Brent
Sgt. 1st Class Marcellus, Treg
Tech. Sgt. Waechter, John
Maj. Grimaldi, James
Staff Sgt. Drish, Jason
Vandeventer, Mark
Steffen, James M.
Rose, Patrick M.



Alumni find updates, friends at Camp Dodge



Information booths for services ranging from credit unions, to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Association for Disabled American Veterans were set up throughout Camp Dodge's Freedom Center.

"My first priority was to get information from the General's update and the Army update, followed by the class on veterans benefit changes," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 (Ret.) Charles Ruby, from Fairfield, Iowa. "Everything was presented in a detailed, professional manner, which made it very educational, helpful information."

Although the hallways and classrooms were full, the Freedom Center drill floor was set with tables and chairs for a continental breakfast and catered lunch, which provided retirees plenty of time to catch up with those they had served with while in the Iowa National Guard.

"I've walked around trying to find people I knew and have only seen a couple," said Lt. Col. (Ret.) James L. Bennett, a Des Moines, Iowa resident. "I've probably outlived most of them, though, considering I'm 91 this year." Bennett was one of only a handful of World War II veterans who attended the festivities, but he said he still enjoyed finding some of his old buddies and getting a chance to talk.

Even though it may have been a challenge for Bennett, he and several hundred others still found plenty of useful information, and at least a few familiar faces.

"I have only been out to this maybe six or eight times and I told my wife that today I needed to be here," said Bennett. "Seeing these people and visiting the museum was very nostalgic." Those experiences are exactly what organizers were looking for.

"I think everything went smoothly," said Craven. "With any operation there are things you can improve, but the comments I've heard make me believe we were able to get everything they needed today."



Maj. Gen. Timothy Orr, the Adjutant General of Iowa, speaks to a retired National Guard member at the Iowa National Guard Alumni Day (facing page). Visitors were able to talk with current and former National Guard members, and representatives from a variety of veterans' organizations.

Registrants for the 26th annual Iowa National Guard Alumni Day (top) sign in at the Freedom Cen-

ter. Guests were provided important updates on benefits, as well as the status of the National Guard.

Edward Koehler, an Oelwein, Iowa native (below), talks to his daughter about weapons he used during World War II in the arms room at the Camp Dodge Gold Star Museum. (US Army photos by Pvt. Zachary Zuber)



Iowa Soldiers recognized for Ironman System

by Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden

Three members of the Iowa National Guard's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, were recognized as part of the U.S. Army's greatest inventions competition after a panel of combat veteran Soldiers voted them part of the most innovative advances in Army technology.

Staff Sgt. J. Winkowski, of Nevada (a Belle Plaine native), along with Mark 48 machine gunners Spc. Aaron McNew, 22, of Cedar Falls (a Reinbeck native), and Spc. Derick Morgan, 28, of Troutdale, Ore., all with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Waterloo), created their own prototype design for the "Ironman Pack Ammunition Pack System for Small Dismounted Team" during a recent year-long deployment to Afghanistan. This high-capacity ammunition carriage system enables a machine gunner to carry and fire up to 500 rounds of linked ammunition from a rucksack-like carrier.

"When we first arrived in-theater (Afghanistan) in late October (2010), we were issued the Mk 48, 7.62 mm machine guns," Winkowski said. "This was a new piece of equipment for us, and we struggled to come up with a solution for carrying and employing ammunition for it due to our small team size and the inability to have a designated ammo bearer, as is common doctrine with the standard M-240B machine gun."

Winkowski wondered aloud how a single gunner could carry a combat load of ammo. In a circumstance of life imitating art, reference was made to actor Jesse Ventura's character in the movie "Predator," who carried an M-134 Mini-gun fed by an ammo box on his back.

Perhaps it was more a case of necessity being the mother of invention, because that's when the light bulb popped on.

Winkowski scrounged an old ALICE (All-purpose Lightweight Individual Carrying Equipment) pack frame, welded

two ammunition cans together – one atop the other after cutting the bottom out of the top can – and strapped the fused cans to the frame. To that he added a MOLLE (Modular, Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment) pouch to carry other equipment and the Ironman Pack was born.

"After some initial testing on the live-fire range with my two Mk48 Machine gunners, Spc. McNew and Spc. Morgan, we took it into combat," said Winkowski.

"The prototype pack worked just like we wanted it to and we knew right then we really had something.

"We then set out to make another one, to make them even better, and to make it available to as many soldiers as we

could," he added.

The original prototype has since been retooled by the Army's Natick (Mass.) Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center (NSRDEC), and is now being used in the field. According to Dave Roy, an operations analyst at NSRDEC, "It's gotten quite a bit of high-profile visibility and positive feedback that this is a good idea," he said. "I believe we've been able to meet the objectives laid out by that unit."

The Iowans were presented their award by Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody, Commanding General, Army Materiel Command, during the recent Association of the U.S. Army annual meeting in Washington, D.C.



Spc. Aaron McNew, 22, of Cedar Falls, models the "Ironman Ammunition Pack System for Small Dismounted Team." Two other members of the Iowa National Guard's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Staff Sgt. J. Winkowski, of Nevada and Spc. Derick Morgan, 28, of Troutdale, Ore., were also recognized.

Receive valuable info through JSS Portal

Are you getting it?

Are you connected and receiving the latest resources and information from the Warrior and Family Services Branch? If not, please connect with us on Facebook and “like” the Iowa National Guard Warrior and Family Services Branch.

Also, if you haven't registered on the newly renovated Joint Services Support Portal, we highly recommend you do so in order to receive the most recent information regarding resources, events and training for Iowa National Guard Service Members and their Families.

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) Joint Services Support (JSS) Portal brings the websites, or sub-portals, for seven programs all under one umbrella, accessible with a single user name and password. In addition to providing services and information online as each site has done in the past, the new portal also adds mobile device access and a phone-based Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system.

Here are the seven programs you will find on the JSS Portal:

1. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP): This program provides information and education on services, referrals and outreach programs to assist you through all phases of the deployment cycle.
2. Employer Support of the Guard

and Reserve (ESGR): Recognizing outstanding employer support and resolving employee/employer conflicts through mediation.

3. Family Program (FP): Provides programs, benefits, resources and information that assist National Guard members and their Families in preparing for and meeting challenges throughout the deployment cycle.
4. Psychological Health Program (PHP): Promoting strong, positive mental fitness via referrals and assessments, resource identification, case management services and wellness education.
5. Financial Management Awareness Program (FMAP): Connecting you to valuable financial information, services, and support to help through every phase of your financial lifecycle, free financial services provided by the Department of Defense.
6. Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SAPR): Sexual assault prevention, reporting options for Service Members, and referrals/resources for victim advocacy.
7. Warrior Support Program: Information on benefits and entitlements to include Veterans Affairs, TRICARE, disability benefits, counseling referrals and job search assistance.

The portal allows you to register for events and training opportunities in your community. You can also access resources and contacts within these programs and the National Guard.

If you would like to register, go to www.jointservicesupport.org. Once registered, your role(s) will be approved by a local state staff member, and then you'll be able to begin accessing the full range of services and information the JSS Portal has to offer.

You will also begin receiving the Warrior & Family Services Branch Newsletters which contains information on events, training, and other resources of interest to Iowa National Guard Service Members, Families and friends.

You may select more than one role and choose all that apply to you. If you have questions or problems registering on the site, please contact Shalee Torrence, Senior Family Readiness Support Assistant, at shalee.torrence@us.army.mil or call (515) 252-4781.

Mark your calendars for the upcoming State Family Readiness Conference and Youth Symposium 2012. This year's conference will take place on Camp Dodge the weekend of April 28-29, 2012. For more information, please contact the Family Readiness Office at 515-252-4781.

71st CST

provides security through preparedness

Story by Pvt. Zachary Zuber

Photos by Spc. Adrian Muehe



The suit has its own climate. There's enough body heat from carrying a 30-pound air tank to start a rain of sweat. Once the face shield fogs up, there is no clear view of the outside.

Imagine enduring all this, while analyzing potentially deadly chemicals.

Over 500 hours of specialized training led to this point, with another couple of hundred hours to know how all the equipment works. Stress turns a simple lab investigation into a high-pressure workout.

Just being a part of the 71st Civil Support Team means giving time and energy to preparing for serious threats to Iowa citizens.

"We have to train continuously, so simple things become routine," said Staff Sgt. Steven Simmons, a CST survey team chief from Prairie City, Iowa. "That way, when the pressure is on inside that suit, you don't forget anything."

Then there's the 24-hour, on-call status, as well as being focused on analyzing potential threats from radiation, anthrax, or other chemical and biological threats.

"We are continuously on standby for threat events, but our mission also includes being able to identify, advise, assess, and assist in situations. Our primary assistance function includes sending slice elements of our team for specific requests and training the various state teams," said Capt. Clint Powell, 71st CST survey team leader, and an Indianola, Iowa native.

"There are seven WMD [Weapons of Mass Destruction] teams in Iowa, as well as Hazmat [Hazardous Material] teams in many fire departments that we work with," he said.

They provide vital training to firefighters who serve as first responders. Acting not only as hazardous material specialists but also emergency medical technicians, teams tasked for WMD missions have a full plate.

"We will do training events on the different departments' schedule once a year, as well as call-outs to bring in their individual members twice a year," Powell said. "We also offer our resources to any Hazmat team who requests refresher



Council Bluffs firefighter Dan Niles (far left) labels a Petri dish of bacteria during a chemical extraction exercise with the 71st Civil Support Team. Master Sgt. Joshua Ollom of Newton, (above) discusses extraction techniques with Council Bluff Firefighters.

training, tailored to keep these folks up-to-date with anything they need.”

“Because we are a multi-faceted unit with people focused on certain areas, we are expected to be experts in everything we ask these WMD teams to do,” said Simmons. “The goal for us is to go out and train them to find their needs and personalize training so we can make it as easy as possible for them to keep up-to-date.”

Together, the CST and local teams create a two-tiered support system for any perceived threat found within Iowa. In the event of a terrorist act, the federal government would also become involved with additional support channels.

Once a concern is found, the first response is to bring out the local team, and if necessary, the 71st. Survey members of the WMD team would be able to gather initial information which could be passed on to the CST for analysis and a planned course of action.

“In a serious situation, we’d be prepared to be first responders, but would also likely request assistance from the CST,” said Curtis McKeon, an engineer/Hazmat tech/paramedic for the Council Bluffs Fire Department. “Our main focus when

we arrive is to first manage safety of the surrounding population, and then prepare an initial examination of the scene.”

Evaluating a scene becomes similar to a CSI episode, but with a much higher tension level. Teams must first check for



Staff Sgt. Steven Simmons, the 71st Civil Support Team survey team chief, explains the capability of their response vehicle while conducting a training exercise for firefighters in Council Bluffs

potential radiological threats, then pay close attention to air quality and any other harmful contaminants.

“If a real-world event arose, the WMD teams would typically be the first ones on scene, and would complete an initial recon of the situation to identify potential threats,” said Simmons. “That would give us a better idea of what to be ready for.”

Just initiating a survey takes significant time, involving preparation of a protective suit, equipment, and communications equipment. Then there’s a comprehensive process of photographing the environment and evaluating simple things, such as lighting for clues, all within a sealed suit that limits dexterity, vision, and requires a time limit for a safe return.

After completing an initial investigation, the team works through photos and observations to determine the threat’s origin and how to eradicate it.

To keep these situations from being harmful to the public, it’s important they’re handled as quickly as possible,

71st CST

continued on page 23

Military muscle

By Master Sgt. Mike Battien

The butterflies turn in your stomach. Mentally, you run through your presentation. One final exhale before it's time to prove yourself.

It's not a promotion board. It's worse.

You're about to be judged by a panel of fitness and bodybuilding experts, among hundreds of other competitors and spectators. Welcome to competitive bodybuilding and figure competition.

It takes courage, determination and confidence to succeed and excel as a member of the Air National Guard; the same qualities 1st Lt. Renee Rausch used on stage at her first bodybuilding and figure contest, the Nutri-Sport Natural Iowa and Central Midwest Bodybuilding and Figure Competition.

Rausch, a contracting officer with the Iowa National Guard's Joint Forces Headquarters, is known in her unit as a "go-getter," with a commitment to the mission and her fellow Airmen. Several years ago, she turned that spirit inward, setting aside time for regular exercise and minding what she ate. That commitment opened up new doors for her at the gym and eventually to a competition trainer that suggested she had what it takes to succeed on stage.

"She gave me a book that went through the art of competition from A to Z. She also indicated she would be competing in a show in the springtime. At first I laughed and thanked her for the compliment, and then I decided to read the book so I could follow along with her progress.

"As I read, I became more interested in what competitors actually go through to drop their body fat and get into the best shape of their lives. I knew I wasn't getting any younger, and I had never dedicated myself to something so challenging.

"Finally," Rausch said, "I told my trainer

I would follow her in her journey and compete with her."

Rausch performed well at the competition – placing second in the novice division – and took away lessons only learned through hard work, dedication and the guts, to put it all out there for everyone to see and judge.

"I try very hard to give my best each day, whatever I do, in order to feel a sense of accomplishment or purpose. I do not want to be a failure, or to be known as someone that only gives 50 percent when accomplishing a task.

"As a member of the Guard, my job also encompasses being fit for duty. This means mentally, spiritually, emotionally and physically. In order for the first three to happen, the last one must also happen for me," she said.

Asked for advice to anyone about to tackle a personal or professional goal, Rausch emphasizes the importance of taking the first step.

"Failure to take action is the reason why most people do not succeed. It is not because they aren't able, but in most cases they are just scared to develop a resistance to failure – because that would

require change. Most people don't like change. Change requires stepping into the unknown and believing in yourself, and sometimes believing in yourself is the hardest thing for us to do.

"I may not win 100 percent of the time, or be in first place, but at least I tried. I believe life is a journey, and now I will have another story to tell my children and grandchildren someday," Rausch said.



1st Lt. Renee Rausch, Contracting Officer, Joint Forces Headquarters, placed second in the novice division at the Nutri-Sport Natural Iowa and Central Midwest Bodybuilding and Figure Competition. (Iowa National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mike Battien)

Nominate your employer for support of Guard & Reserve

Soldiers and Airmen are reminded to nominate their supportive employer for the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest honor given by the U.S. government to employers for exceptional support of Guard and Reserve employees.

The DoD encourages all Guard and Reserve members to nominate employers who have provided exceptional support of their military service. Nominations may be submitted by service members, or a family member on their behalf, at www.FreedomAward.mil through January 16.

Vikings honor Iowa Soldiers

MINNEAPOLIS – Benjamin J. Corell, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division commander, and his brigade Soldiers were recognized during the half-time show at the Vikings versus Raiders game in Minnesota Nov. 20.

Service members from all military branches were honoured during the game. Fans welcomed the Iowans home from their recent deployment to Afghanistan earlier this year.

VITA program offered

The Staff Judge Advocate Office is offering the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program at the Joint Forces Headquarters Armory, Camp Dodge. This is free assistance in the completion and electronic filing of most State and Federal income tax returns. Soldiers and Airmen will be seen now by appointment only, for tax year 2011 returns and beginning Jan. 17, for tax year 2012 tax returns.

Due to IRS rules, you must have the following documents. If you do not bring these documents, they will not be able to complete your tax return or file it.

You must bring:

- * Social Security cards for each individual listed on the return
- * A copy of last year's tax return and Amended Return, if applicable.
- * All W-2s, original and corrected, (if applicable). If receiving SLRP, you will have a second W-2.
- * All 1099s, 1098s, etc., (if applicable)
- * AGR Soldiers bring your dental insurance premium amount (this information is on your LES)

* Anyone paying premiums for TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS), bring total amount paid in 2011.

Call Spc. Arthur O'Haver to set up an appointment at 515-252-4259. Please advise as to what tax years you'll be filing.

eFile your taxes today

Approximately 85 percent of Iowans filed their income tax return electronically last year! You can get your Iowa income tax refund in 10 days or less when you file electronically. eFiling is fast, safe, and easy!

Most people 65 or older are eligible to eFile for free. Beginning in mid-January, the Iowa Department of Revenue Web site (www.iowa.gov/tax) will feature links to software companies offering online filing of income tax returns. File your federal and Iowa income tax returns together from the Department's website.

Info needed for Iowa Book of Honor for Jewish vets

On April 22, 2012, the Iowa Jewish Historical Society and the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines will host a special event to honor Iowa's Jewish

men and women who serve and have served in all branches of the United States military, during times of both war and peace.

A critical element of this event is the creation of a Book of Honor, which will be on permanent display in the Caspe Heritage Gallery. They are requesting the assistance of Iowa's Jewish community to identify the Jewish men and women who served in all branches of the military, including the Iowa National Guard. In addition, the Iowa Jewish Historical Society wants this to be a state-wide list and to do this they need your help.

Requested information:

- Veteran's first, middle and last name
- Date of birth
- Branch of Service (includes Iowa National Guard)
- Rank
- Dates served
- Military assignment(s) and Awards
- If living – current address, telephone number, email address if available
- If deceased – date of death, place of burial

Please contact Executive Director Sandi Yoder or Collections Manager Lindsey Smith at ijhs@dmjfed.org or by calling 515-987-0899 ext. 216.

Sidewinder Challenge continued from page 5

their fellow Soldiers back home.

"Sidewinder is a great event to test our abilities, but if we fail a task, we learn from it and then take that knowledge back to train," said Van Cannon. "It not only strengthens the team I brought here, but our unit as a whole."

At the end of the day, the 248th Aviation stood alone in first place.

"We took the best we had and were hoping to beat the band," said Van Cannon, who was also selected as the Challenge's top leader.

"We kept constantly motivated and never looked back. We kept our focus on one event at a time," he said.

After the awards were presented, Van Cannon hoisted the coveted Sidewinder trophy before presenting it to each of his teammates – reinforcing the importance of teamwork.

The awards ceremony was held the following day, on the 10th anniversary of 9/11. Before the results were released, all the competitors bowed their heads for a moment of silence, paying their respect to the Americans who lost their lives in those tragic attacks 10 years ago.

While their heads were bowed, the names of fallen Soldiers from current operations were read aloud as a reminder that our nation is still engaged in combat operations after being attacked one decade ago.

All the competitors went home tired and weary. Even after enduring a day full of pain, many competitors are looking ahead to the next competition.

"Of course we'll be here next year," said Van Cannon. "We have a title to defend!"



**For more information
contact the Iowa National Guard
Education Services Office
at 1-515-252-4468,
or visit educationia@ng.army.mil**

MGIB-Select Reserve (Chapter 1606)

Soldiers who want to receive CH1606, may contact their VA Certifying Official (VACO) at their college or university, the VACO will help process all VA benefits. Chapter 1606 has a rate of \$337 a month at a full-time rate.

Soldiers must provide a copy of their Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) and GI Bill kicker (if you have one) to the VACO. NOBEs can be found in your iPERMS Soldier file. If you are having difficulty locating this document, contact your unit for assistance.

The VACO will send the documents to a VA Regional office. It may take 10-12 weeks to process the claim, so start the process early. If you need assistance locating your NOBE, contact your unit of assignment. Don't forget to do your end of month verification, 1-877-823-2378 or the W.A.V.E. program online.

MGIB-Active Duty (Chapter 30)

Those Soldiers eligible for MGIB-Active Duty, Chapter 30, need to submit their DD 2366, DD 2366-1 (if available) to your VACO. Chapter 30 has a rate of \$1,462 a month at a full-time rate.

These forms can be found in your iPERMS Soldier file if you bought into the Chapter 30. You still need to verify at the end of each month and the rates can be found on the www.gibill.va.gov web site by calling 1-877-823-2378 or the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment.

Post 9/11 Gi Bill (Chapter 33)

This GI Bill allows Soldiers and Airmen to transfer entitled benefit (TEB) to their spouse or dependents. The TEB needs to be done before retirement or Estimated Time of Separation (ETS). Applications are being processed now online at www.gibill.va.gov.

If you want to learn more about this benefit, visit the VA website. To become eligible for CH 33, Soldiers/Airmen must have at least 90 aggregate days of Active Duty, or serve 30 days continuous with a service connected disability.

On the www.iowanationalguard.com web site, the education office has posted a CH 33 tab, under the Army Education tab, with a power point presentation to assist Iowa National Guard members in applying for and transferring their CH 33 benefits.

Reserve Education Assistance Program

When applying for the REAP, for those that have deployed, submit your DD 214 and GI Bill Kicker (if you have one) to the VA Certifying Official (VACO) at your college, or university. All documents can be found in your iPERMS Soldier file. Please contact your unit if you have iPERMS issues.

Eligibility for this entitlement depends on how many months of deployment each Soldier has completed. Unlike CH 33, Soldiers cannot add multiple deployments to get a higher percentage of benefit. Don't forget to do your end-of-month verification by calling 1-877-823-2378 or the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) on the www.gibill.va.gov web site.

1168th holds 2nd annual Dining Out

Story and photos by Sgt. Ry Norris
135th Mobile Public Affairs

The 1168th Transportation Company, 1034th Command Support Sustainment Battalion, hosted their second annual Dining Out ceremony in Des Moines, Iowa.

The event was held to promote readiness among the Soldiers, involvement with their families and just a hint of a friendly rivalry.

“It is a great motivation for the troops,” said Capt. Stefan Shirley, 1168th Transportation Company commander. “Some of our Soldiers re-enlisted tonight. The families enjoyed being a part of it.”

The hall filled with laughter as each Soldier called out each other’s transgressions to get them to drink out of the ceremonial grog bowl. Punishments for these transgressions included riding a tricycle, taking notes with an enormous pencil and saying, “May the force be with you,” each time a Soldier toasted with, “To the mess.”

The unit recently redeployed from Afghanistan in 2009. When Shirley assumed command, he and the unit’s family readiness group (FRG) organized their first dining out on Camp Dodge.

”We plan on hosting the next one at one of the other locations and then circulate each year after that,” said 2nd Lt. Lance Smith, the operations officer for the 1168th Trans. Co. “It’s a bit difficult for our unit to get together like this with some of us being spread out in Audobon, Perry, and Marshalltown.”

Even though the event was a joyous one, attendees took time to remember the events of 9/11 and those they have lost. After the speeches and playful banter, the commander covered some mission-essential tasks.

“Yesterday, we ran an APFT (Army Physical Fitness Test). Tomorrow, we’ll have briefings and classes for the troops and their families. Today, this dining in is just a part of our mission and our troops... they look sharp [in their uniforms],” Shirley said.



Soldiers with the 1168th Transportation Company, 1034th Command Support Sustainment Battalion, re-enlist at the unit’s dining out. The Soldiers extended their enlistment for one, four, or six more years.



Capt. Shirley Stefan, commander of the 1168th Transportation Company, 1034 Command Support Sustainment Battalion, presents a gift to Col. Gary Freese, Chief of Staff, Army National Guard, the guest Speaker at the unit’s second annual dining out.

Making a difference for one young Afghani

by Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.)
R. Wesley Bender

Are we making a difference in Afghanistan? At least for one young Afghani citizen, yes we are.

In 2007, when the Iowa Army National Guard sent three Embedded Training Teams to Afghanistan, my very close friend, Chief Warrant Officer Two James Ditter, went. We were serving together in the 3655th Maintenance Company when he was called on deployment. Ditter was actually living in Missouri at that time.

After arriving in Afghanistan, Ditter was given an Afghan interpreter, Fahim Masoud, just 19 years of age, but a gifted interpreter nonetheless. They spent the next four months doing what a Maintenance Chief does in that war zone – fix the broken stuff. Ditter had a makeshift shop and a platoon of mechanics, all Afghan Soldiers of course.

There were some close calls while retrieving broken down equipment. All in all, the Chief relied heavily on Fahim and his skills.

Fahim is not an ordinary young Afghan man; He is extremely smart and knowledgeable. Fortunately Ditter recognized that and started the process to sponsor Fahim to return to the United States with him. It worked out, with Fahim and Ditter arriving home on leave for the 2007 holiday season.

Chief Warrant Officer Don Roorda and I went to visit and meet Fahim then.

Ditter returned to Afghanistan without Fahim, as Fahim began school, finishing his Associates Degree at a community college in St Charles, Mo. Fahim spent last summer working for the U.S. Army in Fort Polk, La., training soldiers in Afghan Language skills.

Fahim even returned for a short while to



Afghan interpreter Fahim Masoud, with Chief Warrant Officer Two James Ditter in Afghanistan. Ditter, Chief Warrant Officer Four (Ret.) Wesley Bender and Fahim at the Officer Recognition Dinner.

his homeland, courtesy of the U.S. Army. Today, Fahim is a sophomore at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., where he is carrying an A- average and has made the dean's list.

I was honored this holiday season when Ditter and Fahim came to visit me here in Springville, Iowa. I have not seen them since they both attended the 2010 Officer Recognition Dinner in Des Moines last March.

The other night I received an e-mail from Fahim, thanking me for the hospitality from his recent visit. Below is an excerpt from that e-mail – and the reason I wrote this story that I hope you might share:

“I am so glad to be here in America. America is my adopted country and it has given me so much. I love America and it is the best place to be! And thanks to Chief Ditter – without his selfless support, I wouldn't have been where I am today.”

signed, Fahim Masoud



Love knows no bounds

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But he wasn't the only guy who holds the key to her heart. Brody, a beautiful, blue-eyed little guy, has this 26-year old mom wrapped around his pinky finger. Indeed, here is a story of a beautiful woman and the two loves of her life. Like God's love for us this season, Jenny's love, too, knows no bounds.

Brody was born on July 31, 2008, just one day after Andrew's birthday. Brody has congenital myasthenic syndrome, an inherited neuromuscular disorder, which causes a general muscle weakness, as well as feeding and respiratory problems. Brody has a tracheotomy to help with his breathing and is connected to a machine that monitors his heart rate and oxygen levels. He receives 16 hours of nursing care and requires a full-time nurse throughout the night while he sleeps. While not the experience first-time mothers expect, Jenny has adapted, and she gets done what needs to be done.

Having a child with serious medical issues is challenging enough for any mother, but six months after giving birth, Jenny was dealt another blow. Andrew, who had recently returned from his second deployment and was her husband for less than a year, was diagnosed with spinal cancer. "You get hit again and again. It would be so easy to give up," Jenny recalled, reaching for Andrew's hand. Andrew's surgery left him paralyzed from the chest down and bound to a wheelchair. His cancer was in stage four and fast-growing.

Andrew joined the Iowa Army National Guard in November 2000. He served two deployments – in the Sinai and Iraq. While in Iraq, Andrew was a team leader and truck commander. In between deployments, he worked for Rock Bottom Masonry, coached wrestling at Dubuque Senior High School and Jefferson Middle School, and attended the University of Dubuque, where he majored in business administration and achieved honor roll in Fall 2007, before his diagnosis.

Andrew lived his life to the absolute fullest. He enjoyed outdoor activities,

including fishing and golf. His competitive nature shone during "friendly" games of poker and cribbage. He was the king of practical jokes. Spending time with family and friends, snuggling with his son and wife, the Connolly boys' movie nights, Iowa Hawkeye football and wrestling, scroll sawing at the Disabled American Veterans, donation Sunday and "paying it forward" were all near and dear to Andrew's heart. His desire to advocate for other disabled veterans inspired the Andrew Connolly Veteran's Housing Act by the Iowa Legislature of U.S. Congress!

At the Celebration of the New Life of Andrew, I was inspired by the readings that Andrew, Jenny and Brody had picked: Revelation 21:1-5a,6b-7; Psalm 23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-6. I was also deeply touched by these two meaningful quotes from Andrew: (1) "It is not length of life, but depth of life." (Ralph Waldo Emerson) and (2) "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened." (Theodor Seuss Geisel)

Yes, this season we celebrate Mary, a mother who brings us to God with such capacity for love and grief and everything in between. And, yes, we celebrate and remember our military members who have served on deployments and for some who have paid the ultimate price and been called home by God. And we celebrate these families, like Andrew-Jenny-Brody, who bring us closer to God, and who teach us a love that knows no bounds!

And we celebrate these mothers, like Jenny. Andrew summed this up best when he wrote this about his wife: "Jenny is a beautiful person in every way. Her beauty inside exceeds her beauty on the outside. She has made me a better person."

Thanks, Andrew, Jenny and Brody, for making Chaplain Lippstock a better person and a more loving person!

71st CST

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with team members on a 24-hour, on-call status. If the call is made, the CST could be on-site within three hours. If they're requested outside the state, there's a plan

in place to fly their equipment anywhere, "All of our members are within a 45-minute drive of the Des Moines air base, so we're able to quickly deploy to any situation within the state," said Simmons. "That allows us to be an added asset to the team that's already there and to provide any of our extra capabilities or specialized knowledge they don't have."

This quick support allows firefighters extra comfort in dealing with Hazmat calls. "We have great support keeping up with the required training for all aspects of our job, but it still takes a great amount of initiative to stay proficient in all fields," said McKeon. "Having the 71st a phone call away means adding a level of expertise that covers anything we might miss."

Many requests are for specific parts of the team, varying from visual scene analysis from a chemist, or needs for communications assistance.

"The local teams can handle a powder or chemical spill, but a lot of the assistance they request is sending questions to our chemical officer, or medical officer for specifics in certain issues," said Powell. "If a regular Hazmat team were to come across a lab, they would have the choice to go after it, or call in help, and a lot of that is where we see our requests come in."

The 71st also provides support with potential threats. They have assisted in watching for threats at several political conventions and sporting events, surveying for any attack created in a public setting.

"We have worked with the Department of Energy for events they support like the Super Bowl and the Republican National Convention in Minnesota," said Air Force Master Sgt. Joshua Ollom, of Newton, the 71st CST Reconnaissance Non-Commissioned Officer.

"We've also been asked to assist in clean-up after the floods in 2008 and Hurricane Katrina to make sure crews didn't get hurt dealing with hazardous materials."

During these events they are considered on standby to monitor air threats and anyone who could try to create a public threat.

"Our goal is to be continuously ready for any needs that come up," said Simmons. "We try to train our partners so they can be ready for anything as well."

Transition

What the future holds for the Iowa National Guard ...



“Having said that, what we have done over the past 18 months, and really during the last nine years, has been unprecedented.”

Throughout the State of Iowa we are completing the last of our Yellow Ribbon events for our Warriors deployed in support of contingency operations during the last 18 months. I think it would be safe to say our entire organization, to include our warriors, their families, and their employers, are all looking forward to a more predictable and steady pace in the future.

Having said that, what we have done over the past 18 months, and really during the last nine years, has been unprecedented. We have deployed more than 15,000 Iowa National Guardsmen and women in support of contingency operations around the world and we've been here and ready to support our state and communities in the event of domestic emergencies.

And at every critical point along the way we have made a difference – We have improved our Area of Operations and we have even made it better than when we arrived. That's a tribute to each and every Warrior in our formation.

During this same time, the National Guard has changed from a Strategic Reserve to an Operational Force, and we are now going into another period of transition.

With the last of the U.S. forces having departed Iraq at the end of December and the reduction of forces in Afghanistan, it would appear that our overseas operational tempo will slow down. All indications are that the number of deployments required of the National Guard will be reduced over the upcoming years.

Along the way, there has been uncertainty and challenges, and we will face uncertainty and challenges in the future as we work our way back to that more predictable and steady pace.

Some of these challenges, like funding and resourcing issues, may already be apparent. Others, we will learn as we go. But whatever the challenges, I would ask that you remain focused on the basics, or fundamentals.

As Sgt. Major of the Army Jack Tilley said, “I believe focusing on the fun-

damentals is what is most important. Whether it is training, leadership, readiness or values, it is the basics that make a difference in the end. My charge to you is that you never lose sight of this at the junior enlisted or NCO levels.”

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Tilley's charge to us as Warriors, to focus or concentrate on the fundamentals, is at the heart of our profession.

It is also the foundation for building a strong, adaptable organization with the capacity to change as required, and it will serve us well as we go through this period of transition.

Those fundamental things, like fitness and discipline will remain constant during this period of change,

I want to wish our Warriors, Families, employers and the entire National Guard Family, a safe and successful 2012.

Thanks for all you do!

Warrior Ready!

Warrior 7

Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain (Col.) Paul Lippstock, Iowa State Chaplain

Love knows no bounds

As I celebrate the season of Advent-Christmas for my 60th-time, I have been "captured" by the painting "Kissing the Face of God" by Morgan Weistling. For me, this scene captures God's love which knows no bounds. You see the baby Jesus: Brown fuzzy hair, apples for cheeks and a light in his eyes. His mother Mary holds him close, kissing his right cheek.

The painting was inspired 11 years ago when Morgan, now a 47-year old father in California, heard Steve Amerson's song "Mary, Did You Know" on the radio. One phrase stood out: "When you kiss your little baby, you've kissed the face of God." Amerson's phrase appealed to him. "This little child she bore was God in the flesh, and yet, she cuddled and kissed him just as all mothers do."

Morgan's paintings are very realistic and he uses real people as models. His Mary was 16, a brunette named Katie who had a "sweet humbleness to her." The baby was of Jewish descent, born to a woman with a crack addiction and recently placed in a foster home. Morgan knew he needed to master Mary's kiss, rendering it tender. Her left hand, pressing the swaddled baby to her heart, also was crucial.

Morgan had long admired the way Mary's marble hand grips Jesus' side in Michaelangelo's Pieta. "The

painting speaks to the broken-hearted," Morgan says.

As I am writing this reflection, I am reminded of one of our Iowa National Guard families. In the span of one month, I celebrated three Celebrations to New Life in the Connolly Family—(1) Sgt. Andrew (Jenny) Connolly, 28 (Aug. 26, 2011), (2) Kristi Nurre, 24 (Sept. 11, 2011), (3) Msgr Leon Connolly, 79 (Sept. 27, 2011). Indeed, the Connolly family has brought me closer to the Kingdom of God – through a young married couple, a young adult and a wise priest. If I would have taken a picture and produced a painting for this 2011 Advent-Christmastide, I would have used Andrew, his wife Jenny and their three-year old son Brody as my models. I would have entitled the painting "Love Knows No Bounds."

I served with Andrew in our first deployment to the Sinai (May 2003 – February 2004) – the Multi-National Observer Mission. For our second, we served in Iraq between 2006 and 2008 – Andrew served with the 1st Battalion, 133 Infantry in Iraq for 22 months while I served with V and III-Corps in Baghdad for 16 months. During Christmas Eve and Day 2006, I was blessed to be with our Iowa Soldiers in Al Assad, as the Marines cancelled all flights out on Christmas Day!

Jenny Connolly married her high school sweetheart, Andrew on March 17, 2008.

**Love knows no bounds
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FROM FRONTIER SOLDIERS TO GLOBAL GUARDIANS

The History of the Iowa National Guard

OPENING IN SPRING 2012

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