

Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

State building boom continues

Officials break ground on new joint force headquarters

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor



New Nebraska National Guard Joint Force Headquarters.

State and federal officials broke ground on the Nebraska National Guard's new \$26.9 million Joint Force Headquarters building during a ceremony, March 31, at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln.

Governor Dave Heineman thanked those who had worked

to make the new facility a reality and said it will be a big step for the citizens of Nebraska.

"This is a very, very important day for the state of Nebraska," said Heineman. "This new Joint Force Headquarters will be an essential part of our emergency planning response for years to come."

See JFHQ on 7.

New reserve center to give Columbus troops new capabilities

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

Nebraska Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers assigned to Columbus, Neb., will soon have a new, 46,000-square foot, state-of-the-art reserve center to call home.

Standing on the corner of a grassy field that will soon house an \$8 million Armed Forces Reserve Center, officials from the Nebraska National Guard, U.S. Army Reserve and local governmental leaders

broke ground on the construction project, March 15.

According to Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, Nebraska adjutant general, the new AFRC is part of a state-wide effort to replace aging Army Guard and U.S. Army Reserve armories with energy efficient facilities that will enable units to be able to accomplish much more of their pre-mobilization tasks at home.

"This is a great step for us to replace some aging facilities with high quality, energy efficient

See COLUMBUS on 6.

22 Months In Afghanistan



Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Russell Bartholow

Making A Difference; 1st Lt. Russell Bartholow, Nebraska Army National Guard, poses by a monument at a park he helped build during his 22-month deployment to Afghanistan. Bartholow became interested in rejoining the military after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and ended up recording the longest uninterrupted deployment to Afghanistan of any other Nebraska Army National Guard Soldier.

Guard Soldier's journey to Afghanistan started with simple dream

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

Russell Bartholow struggles to remember exactly when the dream first occurred.

Was it a sudden realization or did it evolve more slowly over time? He simply doesn't have the answer.

What he does know is that following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, he became consumed by an overriding desire to make difference.

It's probably safe to say that many people had similar thoughts following 9/11 and the beginnings of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom and Bartholow would've probably been forgiven if he'd simply chalked it up to a simple early middle-age crisis.

He'd already served a stint as an active duty infantryman and a follow-on tour in the U.S. Army Reserves and was now a college graduate who had developed a successful internet business.

For some reason that Bartholow still struggles to define, this dream

See MAKING AN IMPACT on 8.

First of a
Multipart
Series

Soldiers, families gather information at Omaha workshop

By Spc. Koan Nissen
Staff Writer

More than 1,100 Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers and their families participated in a Yellow Ribbon Program pre-deployment workshop at Omaha's Qwest Center, Feb. 20-21. The gathering was the largest the Nebraska Guard has seen.

The event was sponsored for units deploying to Iraq and Af-

ghanistan later this year: the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade's Headquarters Company, the 1-134th Cavalry Squadron and the 1167th Brigade Support Company.

The Yellow Ribbon Program's briefings help families and loved ones understand what resources are available to them when their Soldier deploys, said 1st Sgt. Kenneth Winn, the first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-134th Cavalry. Winn said

the information gathered during the workshop will provide people with answers to some of the questions they may have down the road.

The workshop is a great way to share those resources, said Winn, who will deploy for the third time.

On hand for opening comments was Brig. Gen. Roma Amundson, the Nebraska National Guard assistant adjutant general.

"Less than one percent of the people of the United States wear

the uniform," said Amundson. "So that means that those people that are associated with that one percent are very scattered."

Getting involved with support systems is very important, she said. The Nebraska National Guard will be that support system for those needing it.

Amundson recalled when her husband, retired Lt. Col. Randy Amundson, mobilized in 2003. "It

See YELLOW RIBBON on 9.

Nebraska state legislature congratulates Air Guard wing

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

The Nebraska State Capitol's Warner Chamber has been the scene of many different events over the year.

The historic chamber took on a definitive shade of digital green and tan, April 6, when the Nebraska Legislature formally honored the men and women of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing for earning the organization's 10th U.S. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

"Be it resolved by the members of the 101st Legislature of Nebraska, Second Session, that the Legislature hereby congratulates and extends its appreciation to the men and women of the 155th Air

See RESOLUTION on 4.

Air Lift

Nebraska Air National Guardsmen practice recovering aircraft using just seven pounds of air pressure

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

If there is only seven pounds of air pressure in a car tire, it's a flat tire.

The Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing recently proved that seven pounds of air pressure is enough to lift much more weight than the average car when they took a yearly training exercise to its limits by using seven pounds of air pressure in multiple airbags to lift a KC-135R Stratotanker at the air base in Lincoln, Neb., April 15.

Called a crash, damage, disabled, aircraft recovery, or CDDAR exercise, the Airmen simulated a scenario in which an aircraft suffered a failure of one of its landing gear while taxiing, causing the aircraft to come to rest on its jet engines at the intersection of the Lincoln Municipal Airport's two major runways.

See CDDAR on 3.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Getting Diled In: Tech. Sgt. Christopher Deaton, 155th Maintenance Squadron, tightens air hoses to a aircraft lifting bag control console for the 26-ton aircraft lifting pneumatic bags.

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Searching For Crew Members: A member of the Nebraska Air National Guard Fire Department prepares to search the KC-135 Stratotanker for injured crew members.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Adjustments: Senior Airman Timothy J. Baruth, 155th Maintenance Squadron, makes adjustments to the amount of air moving into one of the 26-ton aircraft lifting pneumatic bags.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Loaded Down: (Foreground) Airman 1st Class Travis L. Tonkinson, 155th Maintenance Squadron and Tech. Sgt. Dale E. Duhachek, 185th Maintenance Squadron (Sioux City, Iowa,) carry hoses at the start of the crash, damage, disabled, aircraft recovery exercise at the Nebraska National Guard air base.

CDDAR continued from page 1.

“The whole exercise consisted of a simulated aircraft incident,” said Col. Keith Schell, commander of the 155th Maintenance Group. “In this case, we simulated that the aircraft was on take-off roll and it suffered a track failure – basically a gear collapsed – and the aircraft came to (rest) in the middle of two major runways. That would drive the Airport Authority to say we need to get the aircraft off of there right away because they need to open one of them up for commercial traffic that comes in and out of Lincoln.”

In order to move the aircraft, the side that suffered the failure would need to be lifted off of its engines before a trailer could be placed under the wing allowing the aircraft to be towed safely.

Several options exist to lift an aircraft, but the 155th utilized a newly acquired air bag system made up of several individually controlled bags stacked on top of each other that, once inflated, can lift the aircraft using only seven pounds of air pressure in each bag.

Although this is an annual exercise, this was the first time an actual aircraft was lifted, said Schell. The Air Force doesn't allow lifting of primary aircraft, but the 155th happens to have a KC-135 belonging to the U.S. Air Force Museum that is waiting to be permanently displayed as a static aircraft.

Initially the museum denied requests to lift its aircraft, but once they learned that Chief Master Sgt. Russell Kobaly, a quality assurance supervisor for the 171st Air Refueling Wing in Pittsburg, Pa., and the lead CDDAR program specialist for the Air National Guard, was there to assist, they gave their permission.

Kobaly said he has been working on aircraft recovery since 1975 and has performed anywhere from 85 to 100 aircraft lifts during exercises and real-world incidents. He said there are two main purposes for the exercise.

“One is to ensure personnel safety – they need to know how to handle the equipment and understand the hazards of doing this operation,” said Kobaly. “The secondary importance is to prevent secondary damage to the aircraft.”

Kobaly added that in a real-world situation CDDAR teams can usually have an aircraft lifted and off of the runway in less than an hour.

Schell said he wanted to accomplish two goals.

“For the maintenance side of it was the communication flow, because we wanted to make sure that the individual incident went all the way through the channels all the way down to the bottom level of the CDDAR team getting notified,” said Schell. “The second one was the CDDAR team actually going out there, looking at the problem, analyzing it, coming to a conclusion about how to move the aircraft and then actually doing the lift – and of course, doing it safely and correctly.”

“They fulfilled that goal one hundred percent.”

In addition to the scenario of failed land-

ing gear, the exercise included two more scenarios to involve more organizations on the base. “We added a couple extra things in there to test the fire department, of course they're first response,” said Schell. “Then a simulated injury and then a simulated fuel spill and that included environment and the fire department.”

Schell said they faced several challenges, but communication and getting everyone on the same page proved the most challenging because of how many different groups were involved. “This is the first time that some of the people actually ran a checklist with the CDDAR exercise, so some of the terminology that they didn't know, they do now,” he said. “Another one of the challenging things is making sure you have all the right equipment. A lot of the CDDAR equipment is expensive and so that's been a challenge trying to get that stuff.”

Schell said successfully completing the exercise not only shows the Airmen the aircraft recovery capabilities they now have, it puts the 155th ARW in a favorable light with others.

“I was confident that they'd be able to do it, but more importantly, now they know they can do it safely and effectively,” said Schell. “It shows the Lincoln Airport Authority and the tower...and the National Guard Bureau that we are fully capable.”

“With the air show coming in next year, this is a boost because one of the things that they really want to see at bases is if there is aircraft recovery,” he added.

The exercise definitely had an impact on the young Airmen getting their first look at the new air bag equipment and how it operates.

“This is the first time I've done it,” said Airman 1st Class Travis Tonkinson, an Airman with the 155th's Repair and Reclamation shop.

“It's almost like a game plan of how everything needs to take place,” added Tonkinson. “You might not know exactly what you need to do, but at least you have a general idea what needs to happen.”

Actually lifting the aircraft was a bit surprising to those involved. “The ease at which the bags raised it – I was surprised that it was that easy,” said Schell.

Tonkinson echoed Schell and thought it was gratifying to see the plane lifted. “Any time you lift an airplane it's pretty neat,” he said. “If you were doing that in the real world I'm sure it would be pretty gratifying to actually lift it... get a trailer underneath of it and see it get rolled away.”

Working alongside the members of the 155th were two members of the 190th ARW in Topeka, Kan., and nine members of the 185th ARW in Sioux City, Iowa. The Airmen from other units were there to train with and assist the members of the 155th and they all felt the exercise was a success.

“Everybody that went there from the other two units and our unit said that it was a great exercise because it was so realistic,” said Schell. “Talking with Kansas and Sioux City...now when they have an exercise like this they're



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Preparations: Senior Airman Timothy J. Baruth, 155th Maintenance Squadron, tightens air hoses to a aircraft lifting bag control console for the 26-ton aircraft lifting pneumatic bags, April 15, during the crash, damage, disabled, aircraft recovery exercise at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb.

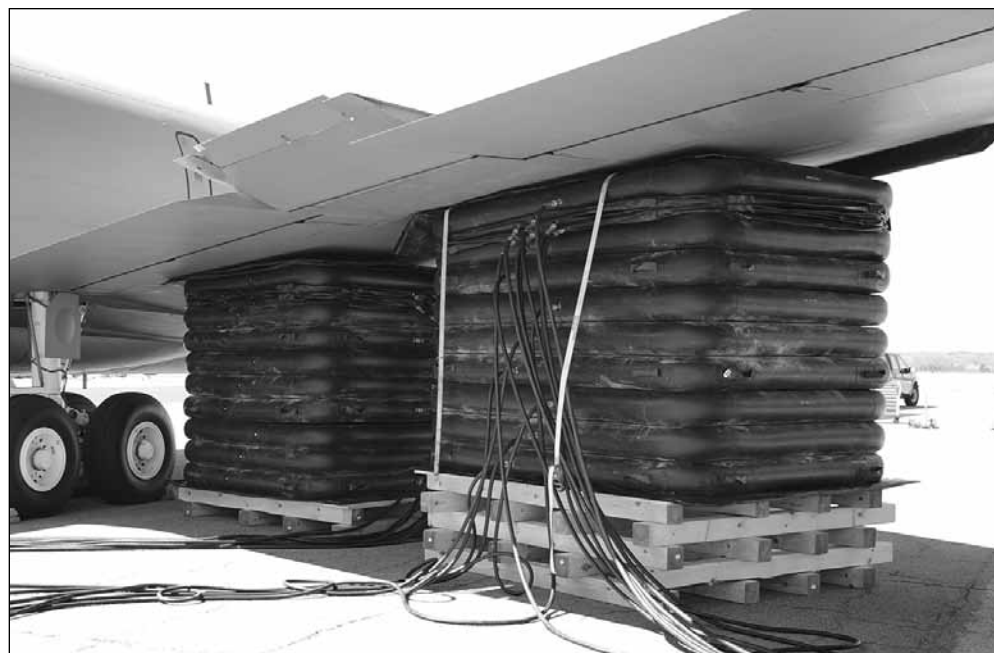


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Air Lift: The wing of a KC-135 begins to be lifted up by the 26-ton aircraft lifting pneumatic bags, April 15. The April 15 crash, damage, disabled, aircraft recovery exercise gave Airmen from the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing and visiting Airmen from the Iowa and Kansas Air National Guard the opportunity to actually go through the steps of physically lifting an aircraft off the ground using the air bag system.

going to call us and see if we want to send anybody up because this is great for all of us.”

Schell said the seamless work between the three units really shows the strength of the Air Force's training.

“The other two units and our people got together and did exactly what the book says, by the regulations,” said Schell. “They looked at the problem, they came up with a solution, and they were able to carry it through and these people had never worked together before.”

Overall, Schell was very pleased with the exercise and said the things that needed to be

corrected were very minor and have already been addressed.

“It's nice to know that we're able to do this,” said Schell. “It's nice to know that we have all the equipment we would need to do something like this, so it's a big morale boost and a confidence builder.”

“It was a great exercise,” he added. “I think it did exactly what we wanted it to do, wanting to show where we were maybe falling short in some areas like the communications, but it showed we could do what we needed to get done and we did.”