

# Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## Lyons becomes 32nd adjutant general

■ New adjutant general pledges support to Guard families, employers while continuing to lead state's preparations for upcoming overseas deployments

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

The Nebraska Military Department's new adjutant general pledged to continue the organization's legacy of being prepared for both the governor's and the nation's call while also ensuring families and employers receive the support they need.

"We have a long-standing tradition of responding to help our friends and our neighbors as well as for our missions overseas. This will continue on my watch as the 32nd adjutant general of the Nebraska Military Department," newly promoted Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons said shortly after accepting the colors of the Nebraska Military Department from Gov. Dave Heineman during a change of command ceremony held at the Nebraska National Guard air base mall, Aug. 23.

"These Soldiers and Airmen and civilians in our Emergency Management Agency will not let you down, sir."

Lyons, who succeeds Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy as the Nebraska adjutant general, said he realizes that he is accepting the responsibilities as the senior



Photo by Master Sgt. Vern Moore

**Inspecting the Troops:** (From left) Col. Daryl Bohac, commander of troops, escorts Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, Gov. Dave Heineman and Maj. Gen. Tim Kadavy as the leaders inspect a formation of approximately 1,000 Nebraska National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, Aug. 23, during the adjutant general change of command ceremony in Lincoln, Neb.

Nebraska National Guard leader during an era of unprecedented challenges. He added he also understands the challenges are about to become even greater.

"2010 is going to be a significant challenge for the Nebraska National Guard in terms of deployments," said Lyons, speaking on a bright, sunny Sunday morning as nearly 1,000 Soldiers and

Airmen representing the major Nebraska Army and Air National Guard organizations looked on from a formation spread out in front of him.

"The good news is we will respond to that challenge as Nebraskans have always done. We will train hard to reduce the time at the mobilization station to ease the burden on our families and our

employers. And the Soldiers and Airmen that are here today... they will perform magnificently as they always have done."

"I'm going to keep my eye on supporting our families and our employers as they lend us their loved ones and their employees to make sure that we are doing everything possible to reduce the

**See ADJUTANT GENERAL on 4.**

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## Newest armed forces reserve center opens in Hastings

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

Distinguished guests including Gov. Dave Heineman, then-adjutant general Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, and Hastings Mayor Vern Powers, dedicated the Greenleaf Armed Forces Reserve Center during a ribbon cutting ceremony, Aug. 14, at the Greenleaf Training Site in Hastings, Neb.

The Greenleaf AFRC is designed to support both the

Army Reserve and Nebraska Army National Guard mission requirements for the 21st Century.

It includes 62,376 square feet and 15,100 square yards of parking for government and private vehicles.

The Greenleaf AFRC will serve as the home for the Nebraska Army National Guard's Detachment 1, 1167th Brigade Support Company; Troop A, 1-134th Cavalry; Det. 1, Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry; Det. 1, 267th Ordnance Company;

and the Army Reserve's 295th Ordnance Company, Ammo Heavy Lift.

"This facility will help ensure Nebraska Soldiers are equipped with the skills they need for future deployments, with the goal to provide the best possible combat training to the units based here in Hastings," said Heineman.

"This is an important day for Hastings, for our state and frankly, for our country."

At a cost of approximately \$11.9 million, the facility is the

result of a 2005 Base Realignment and Closure commission recommendation to consolidate Army Reserve and Army National Guard facilities in Nebraska.

The BRAC commission evaluated each military installation and then provided an objective, non-partisan and independent review and analysis of military installation recommendations issued by the Department of Defense.

Along with other states, the **See CENTER on 6.**

## Agribusiness Development Team returns to Nebraska after spending year helping local Afghan farmers grow new lives



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

**Welcome home Dad:** Staff Sgt. Robert Page gets a tearful welcome home hug from his six-year old daughter, Lexi, Aug. 28.

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

On a sunny Friday hundreds of friends, family and distinguished guests stood in front of the Lancaster Events Center in Lincoln, Neb., holding American flags, yellow ribbons and homemade signs.

They were waiting to welcome home the members of the Nebraska National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team that had spent the last year in Afghanistan helping local farmers redevelop their nation's agricultural capabilities. With the Soldiers mere min-

utes away, the anticipation and excitement grew. After so many months apart, spouses, children, parents and friends could barely contain their excitement.

It's been a long difficult year, said Holly Page, wife of Staff Sgt. Robert Page, as she waited with daughter, Lexi, 6, and son, Carter, 2, Aug. 23. "It has been trying...but confirming that we could do it."

"We are just full of happiness and an extreme amount of pride."

Page said she and Lexi had been planning for this day for a long time. The biggest thing **See ADT on 3**

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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

**Long Overdue Hug:** 1st Lt. Brandon Burton gets reacquainted with his 1-year-old daughter Millie during the welcome home ceremony for the Agribusiness Development Team, Aug. 28. Millie was only three days old when Burton deployed to Afghanistan as part of the ADT in September 2008.



Photo by David Nore

**Nice Hat Dad:** Lonnie TenHunzen plays with his son Zach, 5, during the Aug. 28 welcome home ceremony.



Photo by David Nore

**Family Reunion:** Staff Sgt. Nicholas Province is welcomed home by his wife, Karisa, and three daughters Sidney, 6, Madison, 5, and Liberty, 14-months, during the welcome home ceremony for the Agribusiness Development Team, Aug. 28.

**Seat with a View:** Kaylee Olson, 2, sits on the shoulders of her father, Staff Sgt. Justin Olson, as they wait for Olson's brother, Sgt. Jesse Olson, to return from a year-long deployment to Afghanistan as a part of the Agribusiness Development Team. The ADT returned to Lincoln, Aug. 28.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

## ADT continued from page 1.

Lexi missed while her father was away was simple.

"My hugs," she said. "I'm going to run up and then I'm going to wrap my arms around him."

Staff Sgt. Justin Olson was there to welcome home his brother, Sgt. Jesse Olson. He said it was great to finally have his brother home.

"It means a great deal," said Olson. "I know they did a great job overseas and we're proud to have them back."

Olson, who has also deployed before, said he knew his brother missed the simple everyday things Americans often take for granted.

"It's the small things," said Olson. "Just seeing green and being able to go into your backyard and barbecue, I think that's what a guy misses the most... you don't know how much you take for granted until you're over there and you don't have it."

Olson said he and his brother were also looking forward to the Nebraska football season and planned to go to the first game of the season.

At last, two large busses arrived at the events center, driving through the parking lot that was lined with flag-holding members of the Patriot Riders.

Finally, the doors opened and the 49 members of the ADT quickly filed off the bus and into the waiting arms of loved ones. After several minutes of teary-eyed welcome homes, a ceremony was held to officially welcome the Soldiers home.

Gov. Dave Heineman thanked the Soldiers and their families for their sacrifices.

"To the family, to the friends and all the Nebraskans that are here today, thank you for showing up. This is awesome, it's incredible to show these Soldiers just how much we love you, how much we care about you and how much we support you," said Heineman. "America's proud of you. Nebraska is proud of you."

Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, adjutant general, thanked the Soldiers for bringing their knowledge of agriculture to those who need it to survive.

"You all brought your hometown experience to bear in a country where the people so desperately need it," said Lyons. "Welcome back to Nebraska... job well done."

Comprised of Soldiers with agricultural backgrounds from across Ne-

braska, the members of the ADT left for Afghanistan in September 2008. While in Afghanistan the Soldiers, all of whom volunteered for the deployment, helped local farmers rebuild an agricultural system that had been destroyed by the 1979 Soviet invasion and subsequent Taliban reign. Once a profitable agricultural system, many Afghan farmers are now forced to produce poppies and opium for the drug trade.

The Nebraska National Guard Soldiers worked to change that.

"We did a lot of things that are going to have a lasting effect, but probably the biggest one was we restored some hope that there's a better life," said Col. Michael Johnson, commander of the ADT. "The ones we worked with gained some knowledge on how to put some food on the table and maybe make some money for their family."

Representing Sen. Ben Nelson, retired Lt. Gen. (Neb.) Roger Lempke praised the Soldiers on their completed mission.

"You've been involved in an innovative and very significant mission," said Lempke. "It's going to help develop a relationship with the people of the country. It's going to be so important as we move forward with trying to stabilize that portion of the world."

With their deployment now finished, the members of the ADT now begin rebuilding their own lives at home, just as they helped the Afghans. Getting reacquainted with family and assimilating back into their normal life, the Soldiers said they were happy to be home.

"The biggest thing is just the relief of being back in a place that's familiar, that's clean and that's safe," said 1st Lt. Brandon Burton.

Burton was welcomed home by his wife Brittany, son Jude, 2, and daughter Millie, now 1, who was only three days old when Burton left. Not surprisingly, Burton didn't miss any material things... just his family.

"My little girl," he said. "I (saw) her for three days after she was born, so I've missed teeth, walking, everything. So just to see her is just an amazing feeling."

"The happiest day I've had in a long time," he added.

To celebrate his homecoming, Burton said he only wanted to spend time with his family. "We're going to play in the sprinkler."