

# Warrior Ready

Iowa National Iowa Guard / January 2016



Annual training at JRTC - Fort Polk, La.





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January 2016

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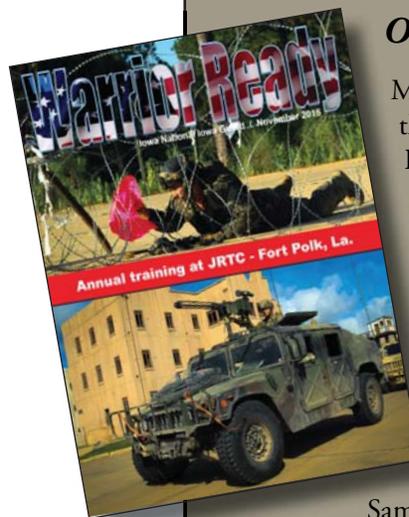
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## On the Cover

More than 2,000 Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, with subordinate and supporting units from across the state, recently completed three weeks of annual training at the U.S. Army's Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La. (Iowa National Guard photos by Sgt. Christie Smith and Capt. Samuel Rollins)

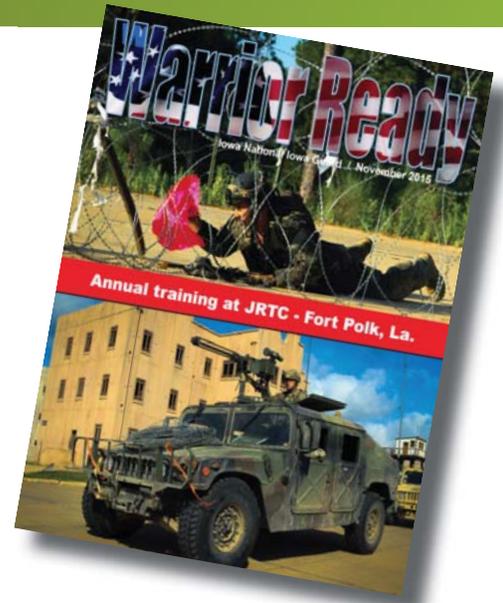


# Debut

of the new

Iowa National Guard

*Warrior Ready* magazine



Protecting Iowans since 1839, the Iowa National Guard was built upon a foundation of strong units, strong families, strong civilian employers, and strong communities. From our simple origins as protectors of settlers on the early Midwestern prairie, we've since evolved into global guardians.

Traditionally, the Iowa National Guard's strategic vision has also grown and evolved in order to manage our actions and activities across the organization, enabling us to build new capabilities to ensure the Iowa National Guard remains relevant, responsive, and ready to meet emerging threats and accomplish assigned missions.

For more than 50 years, The Iowa Militiaman has served as the Adjutant General's communications tool, keeping our Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen better informed of that strategic vision, current military issues, as well as the commander's intent.

Just as the Iowa National Guard has grown and evolved, so has this publication. Today marks the introduction of Warrior Ready, the newest incarnation of the Iowa National Guard command information tool.

Being good stewards, we can no longer justify the expense of physically printing a 24-page hard-copy publication due to the escalating costs of newsprint and postage and shrinking Department of Defense budgets. Readers will continue to find their premiere source for Iowa National Guard news and information, only in a unique, easy-to-use electronic format.

The Iowa Militiaman was previously issued as a quarterly, 24-page publication, the Warrior Ready will now be published or issued on a monthly basis to keep our Soldiers and Airmen informed.

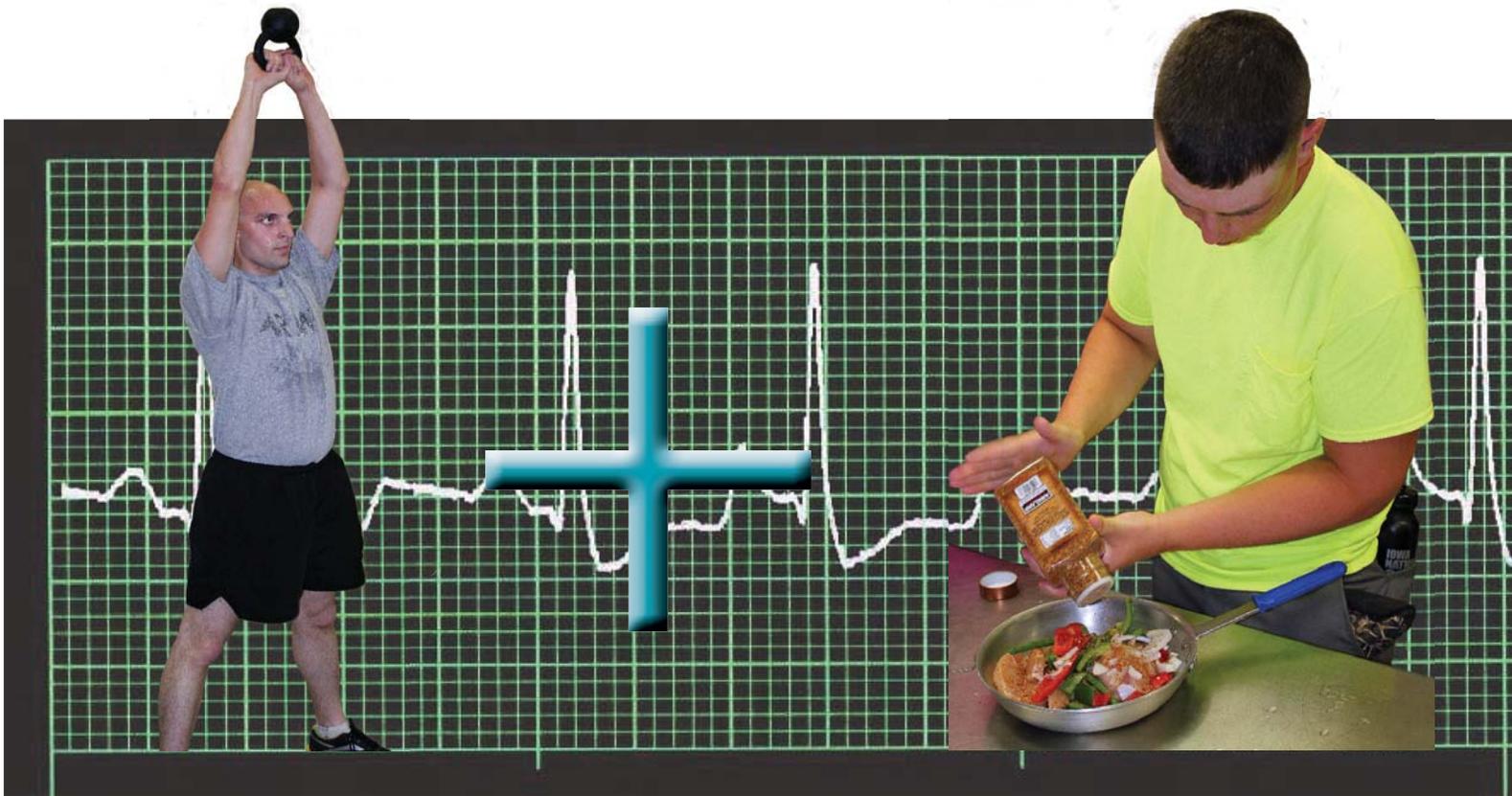
Our new title, which reflects a more contemporary perception of today's

Soldiers and Airmen, more closely aligns with Maj. Gen. Tim Orr's philosophy of the Iowa National Guard being "Mission Focused – Warrior Ready."

In order to maintain our organizational readiness, both now and in the future, we must constantly focus on maintaining our readiness, Army infrastructure, and the realignment of our force to achieve greater organizational efficiencies and maximize limited resources.

Warrior Ready, is yet one more strong organizational tool to help propel the Iowa National Guard into the 21st century.

Happy  
Reading



# Wellness Camp produces strong

by Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden

For Spc. Jerrod Luetje, of Ogden, Iowa, his life-changing epiphany came within five to six weeks after taking part in a relatively new Iowa National Guard program.

“I was able to pass my Physical Fitness test in April for the first time since I had knee surgery in late 2012. Since I passed the Army Physical Fitness Test, I was able to reenlist and stay on as a full-time technician,” said Luetje.

“I could actually see the changes in my body,” he added. “My gut was shrinking and my upper body was developing muscles I never knew I had. Overall, my body just felt better.”

According to Iowa National Guard projections, more than 600 Soldiers could conceivably be separated over the next several years, either from failing the Army’s Physical Fitness Test, or not meeting height/weight standards. By failing to act, the Iowa National Guard could lose nearly nine percent of its force to circumstances its leadership could actually impact.

This disturbing forecast sounded a loud and clear call for Iowa National Guard officials, and it wasn’t long before Camp Dodge’s innovative Wellness Camp was born.

“All across our nation, as well as the National Guard, we have a lot of health issues,” said Master Sgt. Gary Waters, the Iowa National Guard’s State Retention Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge.

“Within the Iowa National Guard alone, we have Soldiers who can’t pass their Physical Trainin (PT) test, so they’re not eligible to extend, which drops the numbers of our overall strength, so our readiness is just a little bit lower.

“So, we’re now offering specialized classes addressing nutrition, healthy choices and lifestyles and working out. Overall, it’s all about these Soldiers becoming more health-conscious persons, as opposed to just being able to pass a PT test, or maintain their height and weight standards,” Waters said.

This four-day program specifically targets Iowa National Guard Soldiers with less than six years of service, who’ve previously failed their PT Test and/or are flagged for

height/weight failure. It’s custom-tailored for those Soldiers who wish to continue their military career and are dedicated to improving their overall health and wellness.

The curriculum provides Soldiers everything they need to know about nutrition basics, ranging from portion sizes, to shopping at the grocery store, to making the right decisions whether cooking or dining out. In addition, Soldiers receive invaluable instruction on a wide variety of exercise

***“I never knew it was so easy to eat the foods that are good for you. It’s also very easy to change your habits, things that can make a difference in nutrition.”***



# ger, smarter, healthier Soldiers

options, to include resilience training, swimming, and proper physical fitness techniques.

While each Soldier departs the camp with all the necessary tools to meet APFT and height/weight requirements, more importantly, it's up to each Soldier to translate those lessons into significant lifestyle changes, enabling them to make better wellness choices the rest of their life.

Pfc. Scarlett Merrifield, of Des Moines,

**o easy to substitute  
ou and taste good too.  
ange the way you cook  
e all the difference  
al value."**

**- Pfc. Scarlett Merrifield**

volunteered to attend the Wellness Camp after her husband participated in the August 2013 camp. She thought if she went through the course, it would be easier for both of them to make any necessary health alterations.

"I went into it very open-minded. The program was really new and I wasn't sure what to expect. I thought it was going to be very PT-focused, but there was a lot of nutrition focus as well," Merrifield said.

"I never knew it was so easy to substitute foods that are good for you and taste good too. It's also very easy to change the way you cook things that can make all the difference in nutritional value.

Now, Merrifield said, her family's eating habits have changed for the better.

"We're cooking at home more and when we do go out, we order things that are better for us," she said. "We also get out and do something every day, even if it's just a walk around the neighborhood."

Figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show self-reported obesity among U.S. adults in 2012 ranged from 20.5 percent in Colorado to 34.7

percent in Louisiana in 2012. Thirteen states (Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia) had prevalence equal to, or greater than, 30 percent. Iowa's prevalence figure was 30.4 percent. Luetje admits his Camp experience had its good and bad moments.

While the "best part was the fact the instructors and staff had very broad knowledge of what they were presenting, and they practiced what they preach," he also noted his least favorite part was the swimming exercise, since "I'm not a strong swimmer, whatsoever," he said.

A Physical Military Trainer with the 132nd Fighter Wing, Iowa Air National Guard, Tech Sgt. Anne Downing served as an instructor, helping demonstrate proper fitness routines and fitness habits for recent Camp participants.

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**Wellness Camp  
continued on page 15**

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# 132nd Air Wing Command Chief Tim Cochran assumes duties as Iowa Air National Guard Command Chief

Photos by  
Tech. Sgt. Linda K. Burger

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Command Chief Master Sgt. Tim Cochran assumed duties as the sixth State Command Chief of the Iowa Air National Guard during a Change of Responsibility ceremony at the Joint Forces Headquarters in Johnston, Iowa.

Brig. Gen. Jennifer Walter, Chief of Staff, Iowa Air National Guard, presided over the ceremony, which saw the outgoing State Command Chief Master Sgt. Lowell (Ed) Schellhase Jr., transfer his responsibilities to Cochran. Schellhase retires following 43 years of military service.

“I’m very excited for the opportunity to represent all Airmen within the entire state,” said Cochran. “We have a state full of awesome Airmen and I look forward to celebrating their successes. I also look forward to the collaboration and synergy gained for our servicemen and women with Command Sgt. Maj. Rachel Fails and the Soldiers of Iowa.”

A 33-year Air National Guard veteran, Cochran has already hit the ground running.

“My first goal is to meet all the Airmen in the state and start building relationships. We need to ensure our Airmen are

receiving effective performance feedback and focus them on personal initiative and discipline for success,” Cochran said. “We also need to guide them to proactively acquire development training and professional education, plus ensure they’ve identified mentors to help them plan for success and achievement of their career goals,” he added.

Cochran, a Martensdale, Iowa native, began his military career with the Iowa Air National Guard in November 1981 when he enlisted into Des Moines’ 132nd Fighter Wing. He completed basic training and technical training in 1982 at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, and Chanute Air Force Base, Ill., where he was Honor Graduate at both schools.

He returned to the 132nd Fighter Wing, where he served in various full-time positions within the Maintenance Group to include jet engine mechanic, intermediate maintenance supervisor, fuel systems supervisor, fabrication element supervisor, accessories element supervisor, maintenance operations superintendent and quality assurance superintendent. In August 2012, he became the 132nd Fighter Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant.

Schellhase enlisted in the Air Force as a high school senior on Dec. 18, 1972, and after graduating from Cedar Falls’ Northern University High School in 1973, he attended basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. In July 1973, Airman Schellhase attended basic electronics and advanced radio maintenance training at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Miss., where he graduated with honors.

In March 1977, Schellhase separated from the active duty and began work at the Iowa Department of Public Safety Communications Division as a radio technician.

In October 1977 he joined the Iowa Air National Guard, 132nd Communications Flight as a radio maintainer. In 1984 he became a full-time technician with the 132nd Communications Flight.

He was promoted to Chief Master Sergeant on Sept. 15, 1994. In September 2006 Schellhase deployed to Kirkuk, Iraq as the 506th Air Expeditionary Group superintendent, which was the highlight of his military career. While deployed, he was selected as the 132nd Fighter Wing Command Chief. He served in that position until July 2011 when he was selected as the fifth State Command Chief for the Iowa Air National Guard.

He was also very active in his community, proudly serving on the Norwalk Fire Department for 25 years as a firefighter-EMT, captain, assistant chief and fire chief.

He and his wife, Doreen (Holmes), reside in Norwalk and have three children, Michelle, Jennifer and Daniel, and seven grandchildren. He said he looks forward to retirement and doing the things he loves, like scuba diving, traveling, camping and fishing.



**Brig. Gen. Jennifer Walter reads Chief Master Sgt. Timothy Cochran the Command oath, with his wife Teresa at his side, as he assumes responsibility as the Command Chief Master Sgt. of the Iowa Air National Guard.**



**Maj. Gen. Timothy Orr, The Adjutant General of the Iowa National Guard, presents Doreen Schellhase, wife of Chief Master Sgt. Ed Schellhase with a certificate of appreciation during Schellhase's retirement ceremony held at the Camp Dodge Pool Pavilion on July 11. Schellhase retires after 42 years of service.**

In the meantime, responsibility for the Airmen of the Iowa Air National Guard rests in the able hands of Iowa's newest State Command Chief Master Sergeant.

“I lead from the front and by example,” Cochran said. “I’m passionate about the profession of arms and serving others. It’s a privilege and honor to defend the constitutional values of our great nation and we need to pass the baton onto our future generations in even better condition than when we received it.”

# UAV training provides invaluable air assets

by Sgt. Renee Surentine  
135th Public Affairs Detachment

On a hot summer day in central Louisiana, Iowa Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Chris Jorgensen, of Garrison, Iowa, oversees the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) training of his 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division Soldiers.

Iowa and Minnesota Army National Guard Soldiers recently trained at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Fort Polk, La. to obtain flight validation on the Raven UAV during their two-week annual training.

The Soldiers run tests and checks on the UAV system prior to hand-launching it. Once it's airborne, they use the remote ground station controller to guide the UAV's flight. They also learn to work with the Falcon View computer program, which is a multi-platform mapping and mission planning application used with the reconnaissance aircraft.

"Before every launch we have a series of checks we have to do to make sure everything is working well with the bird before it goes up in the air," said Iowa Army National Guard Sgt. Ray Deojay, of Huxley, Iowa, a certified UAV operator with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 334th Brigade Support Battalion, Iowa Army National Guard.

While Soldiers go through a two-week UAV course to get certified, they are still unable to fly alone. They have to fly with a master trainer until they meet unit requirements to fly solo.



***Iowa Army National Guard Spc. Jared McKenna, Company A, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, from Dubuque, Iowa, prepares to launch an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle at Fort Polk, La., during annual training at the Joint Readiness Training Center. McKenna is a Certified Operator and Navigator for the reconnaissance aircraft. (Iowa National Guard Photo by Sgt. Renee Seruntine)***

Classroom training includes a safety brief and a discussion on air space control so they're not flying the same airspace as manned aircraft, as well as dialogue on some of the other hazards particular to operating at JRTC, said Jorgensen, a small unmanned aerial system master trainer.

"Today we had to do the validation flights so the JRTC observer-trainers can make sure these guys know what they're doing," said Jorgensen. "So when they go out to the maneuver box, they're not flying into where Blackhawks come in, or spend days looking for a downed Raven."

"Once they complete this field exercise, they'll be able to operate independently without people observing them," said Jorgensen. "The people at JRTC, for safety reasons, want to make sure before they send

somebody out to fly solo, that individual knows what he's doing."

The mission of the aircraft is to collect reconnaissance and photos, observe a selected area and find the enemy before sending out troops.

"Ravens give the company commander a reconnaissance asset he or she can control," said Jorgensen. "They can use it to specifically look at things they need to know as a company commander, so they can better utilize their soldiers to accomplish the mission."

Besides military applications, these same skills Soldiers are learning today in Louisiana can later be used back home in Iowa as part of emergency response efforts. These same UAVs can also be used to provide real-time images to first responders during tornados, floods, or other natural disasters.

# The care and feeding of 2,000 Iowans

**Staff Sgt. Darwin Seehusen**  
**135th Public Affairs Detachment**

**S**ometimes it takes a drill sergeant attitude to take total chaos and organize it into a working plan, especially when it comes to feeding hungry Soldiers in a field environment.

In this case, it takes a former paratrooper, who supervises hospitality staff in the entertainment industry and plans and organizes formal events when he's not serving his country.

Sgt. 1st Class John DeVore, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2/34 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, Iowa Army National Guard, has the monumental task of feeding more than 2,000 Soldiers on a daily basis during the Iowa National Guard's Joint Readiness Training Center rotation at Fort Polk, La.

Devore, from Columbus Junction, Iowa, supervises 36 Soldiers at a consolidated dining facility on Forward Operating Base Warrior. They prepare hot meals twice a day from three Containerized Kitchens (CK) and each is capable of serving up to 800 Soldiers per meal.

Devore explained during the first meal there's no orderliness for Soldiers trying to get their meal, condiments, and drinks. This causes bottlenecks at different stations which delays Soldiers from getting served and seated, so they can enjoy their meal.

Devore spent three days determining the most efficient way to bring the meals from the kitchens to the service line, optimizing the flow of Soldiers in and out of the dining tent, feeding them as quickly as possible in a constantly-moving line.

"It takes old-school mess hall guidance," said Devore with a smile on his face.

All of Devore's team members are cooks, and each of the CKs has six personnel prepping and cooking meals during each service. Cooks not actually working in the kitchens are serving meals or making sure the drink and condiment stations are stocked.



***Iowa Army National Guard cooks unload milk into a refrigerated container during a JRTC rotation. These Soldiers operate a dining facility which prepares hot meals twice a day, and more than 4,000 meals each day. (Iowa National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Darwin Seehusen)***

"It's (meal service) non-stop for two-and-a-half hours," said Devore. "It's a continuously moving line."

Devore said they're serving around 2,400 meals per service and had a high of more than 4,800 meals over one day.

The food service workers do a great job communicating with each other and are excited about working together to serve Soldiers, said Devore.

After each meal they perform an after-action review to discuss ideas on how to provide better service.

"The food service personnel appreciate when Soldiers tell them they're doing an awesome job," said Devore.

Staff Sgt. Brad Rouse, a combat engineer from Prestonsburg, Ky., assigned to the 577th Sapper Company, 201st Engineer Battalion, Kentucky Army National Guard, stated the service is pretty quick and the dining facility has a variety of food available.

Rouse likes waking up to a hot break-

fast. "The biscuits and gravy makes you feel at home," said Rouse. "It a real morale booster."

Sgt. Brian Butterfield, a logistics specialist from Sumner, Iowa assigned to Company E, 334th Brigade Support Battalion, really enjoys the air-conditioned dining area. "The A/C is a nice touch. (It's) the first one I've had in the field," said Butterfield. "It's better than eating in the field."

Butterfield especially liked the personal-sized pizza the dining facility offered. "They give us the nutrients we need and a hot meal beats an MRE (pre-packaged Meal Ready to Eat)," said Butterfield.

Not everyone agrees a hot meal beats an MRE.

Spc. Craig Borden from Primghar, Iowa, assigned to Battery A, 1st Battalion, 194th Field Artillery, said the dining facility offered plenty of food and meals were good, but "my favorite meal is an MRE. You can't mess up an MRE."



## Iowa National Guard Soldiers *'Keep on Truckin'*

**By Staff Sgt. Darwin Seehusen  
135th Public Affairs Detachment**

**F**or Pfc. Taylor M. Christensen of Eagle Grove, Iowa, his first annual training was hotter than what he expected.

“I didn’t think it would be this hot,” Christensen said.

Christensen is a truck driver with the 2nd Platoon, 2168th Transportation Company, 1034th Combat Service Support Battalion, 734th Regimental Support Group, Iowa Army National Guard. His unit was tasked with supporting Iowa National Guard Soldiers during their Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation at Fort Polk, La. by hauling vehicles and equipment from Iowa to Fort Polk and by providing logistics and security support from Forward Operating Base Forge to units out in the field.

“We put forth the effort to accomplish the mission. Everyone worked together.” said Christensen.

Nearly 6,000 National Guard, Reserve and Active Duty Soldiers and Airman from 24 states, including more than 2,000 from the Iowa Army National Guard, participated in this rigorous, relevant and realistic three-week training exercise. This includes Iowa Soldiers participating in the training as well as those providing support.

It was a Herculean task to get that many personnel to Fort Polk on time with the right equipment so they were mission ready for their JRTC rotation. It took more than nine months of logistics planning to make it happen.

Sgt. Maj. Jeff Peterson, Logistics Sergeant Major for the Iowa Army National Guard, said more than 800 pieces of equipment equaling more than 1,000 military and commercial loads, were shipped to Fort Polk from Iowa and other participating states. In addition to over-the-road-trucking, 25 commercial planes and 69 buses were used to bring Soldiers and equipment here for the rotation.



“I cannot stress enough how this has been a team effort across all areas of the operation.” said Peterson.

One of those tasked with hauling equipment to Fort Polk was 1st Lt. Brett Blazicek from Urbandale, Iowa, platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, 2168th Transportation Company, Iowa Army National Guard.

“(My Soldiers) had to come together as a team. (They) had a great attitude and accepted the challenge. I couldn’t be any prouder.” said Blazicek.

Blazicek's platoon hauled more than 70 pieces of equipment from Iowa including commercial trailers and eight fuel tankers, consuming more than 7,000 gallons of fuel in the process.

# Iowa employers gain new appreciation for demands on their Citizen-Soldiers

By Sgt. Christie Smith  
135th Public Affairs Detachment

The old Army adage “hurry up and wait” was the first lesson Iowa employers learned during the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) “Boss Lift” this summer.

After experiencing a few weather delays at the Iowa Air National Guard’s 132nd Wing at the Des Moines Airbase, 21 civilian employers and three ESGR volunteers, who serve as liaisons between servicemembers and their civilian employers, boarded a KC-135R Stratotanker aircraft headed for Fort Polk, La.

The Boss Lift, flown by the Iowa Air National Guard’s 185th Air Refueling Wing from Sioux City, Iowa, gave employers a 24-hour glimpse into a day in the life of their Iowa National Guard Citizen-Soldiers as they conducted annual training. The ESGR-guided tour provided employers a dining facility breakfast, meal-ready-to-eat (MRE) lunch, and a behind-the-scenes look at various training sites.

ESGR State Chair Dick Rue of Des Moines facilitated the Boss Lift to Fort Polk.

“The Boss Lift program is a core element of what we do; it allows us to bring employers and Soldiers and other reserve component members together to see what they do on a daily basis,” Rue said.

The bosses were given a traditional military breakfast at the Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior dining facility, followed by a presentation from the 1st Battalion, 194th Field Artillery (with units in Fort Dodge, Algona and Estherville). After seeing the Field Artillery’s 105mm Howitzer cannons, the employers toured several training

sites, including the Military Operations in Urban Terrain site, which is a mock village designed to replicate a Middle East village.

The employers also had a chance to see a medical facility on FOB Forge, designed to treat mass casualties.

Of the 21 Iowa employers from businesses both large and small, 20 had no prior military service.

Bill Ehm of West Des Moines, Iowa attended the Boss Lift as a representative from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

“Having not been in the military, I really didn’t have any knowledge of what goes on,” Ehm said. “And I have to say coming here has given me a vision that it’s much more complex and involved than what I ever imagined.”

Rue stressed the importance of the Boss Lift for employers, who may not fully understand the demands their Citizen-Soldiers face.

“This program is critically important because it aligns the interest of the employer with the interest of the mili-

tary member,” Rue said, “Our military members have to balance their family life, their employment career, as well as their military career — and if we can get employers onboard to help support the military aspect of their employees, it’s a win-win situation.”

In addition to the Boss Lift, ESGR provides other services to both service members and their civilian employers.

“The ESGR program is really comprised of three main elements,” Rue explained. “We have our employer outreach, ...military outreach, ...and then we have our mediation services where our ombudsmen will mediate issues that might occur between employers and servicemembers.”

Mark Hennessey, an ESGR Area Chairperson from Robins, Iowa, described ESGR’s role as both ambassador and advocate for servicemembers in the civilian workforce.

“[This program] has a huge impact on employers,” Hennessey said. “It really gives them a lot of insight and a full, new appreciation for their servicemembers.”



## First visit since conversion

# 132nd welcomes Governor Branstad, Lt. Gov. Reynolds during tour of Wing



by Tech. Sgt. Linda K. Burger  
132nd Wing Public Affairs

**T**he 132nd Wing, Iowa Air National Guard welcomed Iowa Governor Terry Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds to the Des Moines, Iowa airbase this past summer, for a tour of the Wing's capabilities.

This visit included a visual demonstration of the Wing's domestic operations capabilities and a brief of the Wing's three missions: Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance; Defensive Cyber Operations; and MQ-9 Remotely Piloted Aircraft flying operations.

During the presentation, the 132nd Wing Commander, Col. Kevin Heer, explained how over the last two years of conversion, unit members have been resilient and maintained a spirit of enthusiasm resulting in one of the most efficient conversions in Air National Guard history. He quoted the Director of the Air National Guard, Lt. Gen. Stanley Clarke, who said, "You are doing it right."

Heer also spoke about the 132nd being efficient custodians of their facilities. The 132nd hangars once used to store and maintain F-16 Falcon aircraft have since been repurposed into the 132nd Fire Department, where they also store an RC-26 and C-12 aircraft.

This facility may also be used in the future by the Iowa Army National Guard to store and maintain UH-60M Black Hawk and UH-72 Lakota helicopters.

During the tour, Iowa officials learned about Iowa National Guard domestic operations capabilities, including demonstrations of the Medical Counter Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Program, Civil Disturbance Kit, Disaster Response Mobile Kitchen, Fatality Search and Recovery Team, Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC), Urban Search and Rescue, Civil Engineering Debris Clearance, and Prime Power.



*Master Sgt. Jason Gamble counts the number of burpees completed by Staff Sgt. John Van Beest during the 2nd Annual 185th Fitness Challenge. Teams from*

*different sections of the base had to complete physical challenges over a 1.5-mile course. (Air National Guard photo by Capt. Jeremy J. McClure)*

## Fitness challenge focuses on fun, competition

by Capt. Jeremy J. McClure  
185th ARW Public Affairs

With bright shirts and names like, 'The Wing Nuts' and 'The Young and the Rest of Us,' Airmen with Sioux City's 185th Air Refueling Wing competed in the base's 2nd Annual Fitness Challenge.

"The Fitness Challenge is a fun way for our members to compete and challenge each other while building morale," said Master Sgt. Val Rose, a member of the Logistics Readiness Squadron and one of the competition's organizers.

"With the unit's commitment to improving fitness, we found this to be

a great way to get people excited about working out," said Rose.

The event covered a 1.5-mile course in which teams completed physical challenges like carrying 35-pound kettle bells, push-ups, sit-ups, burpees, and then displaying their marksmanship using airsoft rifles.

"The teams had to complete each stage before they could continue to the next stop," explained Rose.

Team members named their own teams and came up with unique shirts for the competition. The winners of the Best Costume went to 'The Wing Nuts' who painted their faces and adorned their

heads with a patriotic themed wing nut.

"This is a great way to work on team cohesion and challenge each other," said Staff Sgt. Phillip Simonsen, a member of the 185th Security Forces Squadron.

Simonsen was on the winning team, 'The Sheep Dogs,' who captured the title with a time of 19 minutes, 25 seconds. They received a traveling trophy for their accomplishment.

"Even though the teams were made up of people from different sections, everyone on base cheered on all the competitors and that is also what this was about," said Rose.

# The deployment cycle: It's not just for the servicemember

**F**amily Readiness is when families are prepared and equipped with the skills and tools to successfully meet the challenges of military life.

**Getting Ready:** Start by building a connection as a family. Being “Family Ready” and staying “Family Strong” is something the entire family needs, well before the announcement of mobilization and deployment.

**As a Family:** The servicemember and his/her family need to work together to deal with the challenges of a Military Family

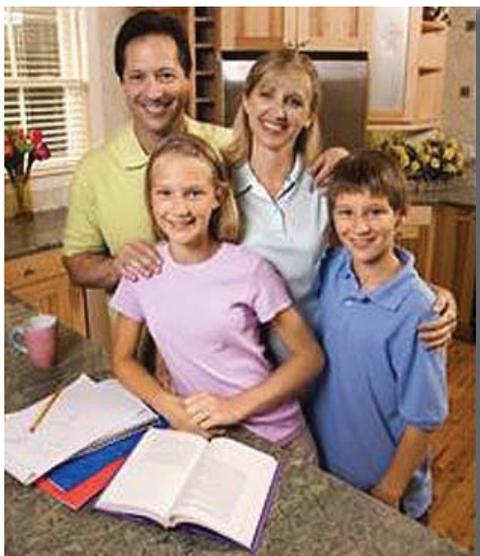
**With the unit:** Understand the overall service of the military, as well as the stringent schedules and demands of its servicemembers.

**To Programs, Agencies, Organizations and Resources –** Locate and explore different agencies and resources that serve the military and their families. Become actively involved in your unit’s Family Readiness Group (FRG).

It’s helpful to learn and understand the different parts of the deployment cycle. Emotions change throughout the deployment cycle and it’s important to understand where you fit in that cycle and recognize the changes in your family, servicemember and yourself.

**Pre-Deployment:** This stage includes the train-up/preparation and mobilization part of the deployment cycle. These parts focus on unit and Servicemember preparations for the military mission and on family readiness. Preparation and communication are paramount and integral to the success of the military family. The family should prepare, just as the servicemember does, for their mission.

It’s important when family members talk about the servicemember’s duties in the



military and life during deployment, they’re likely to be less anxious. Discuss plans in case of an emergency at home or overseas, get your finances in order, know where your families’ important documents are located, resolve your family problems before the servicemember leaves and how you are going to stay in contact.

Remember, everyone has a right to their feelings and should support each other.

**Deployment:** At this time the servicemember has left their home station and is in the theatre of operations, performing their mission.

It’s imperative to remember to keep the lines of communication open as much as possible to foster the military family connection. The strength of the connection is linked to the reunion process, reintegration of the Family and the mental and emotional health needs of all involved.

**Manage the separation.** Take good care of yourself and your family. Take advantage of the military support system, such as, FRGs and Family Assistance Specialists (FAS). Look to your local community

and organizations for support.

Be open to those you trust about your feelings, doubts and fears. Prioritize what is critical and pace yourself. Be realistic. Keep learning. Anticipate, prepare and recognize stress and know when you need support from available resources and reach out.

Keep children connected during deployments by getting them involved and in touch with your servicemember. Maintain communication with the FRG and the unit.

**Homecoming:** Your servicemember is getting ready to come home. The unit is beginning the post-conflict/mobilization processing in-theatre during the redeployment phase. This is for Rest and Relaxation (R&R) or return to home station (Active) or demobilization station (Reserve).

At this time, preparations are being made for your servicemember to return home. The important thing to remember is reunions are more than just about your servicemember coming home. It’s a major event in their life, as well as his/her family. Accommodations will have to be made by both the family and the servicemember to make the transition easier.

Just as you prepared for your servicemember to deploy, you’ll have to prepare for his/her return. There are many emotions taking place during this time, and each one is normal. Connection and communication are just as important during reunion and reintegration, as during pre-deployment and deployment.

As a family, you will be building your “new normal.” Most likely, things will not return to how they were before your military separation. People grow and change as time passes and as they experi-

ence new and different things. As you are preparing your family and adjusting, you will be adjusting your finances as well.

Again, always keep in touch with the unit and its FRG during this phase.

**Post-Deployment:** During the post-deployment and reconstitution phase, the servicemember is readjusting to work and family life, while the family is readjusting to their being home.

Reintegration can be an exciting and joyous time, but it can also be an emo-

tional, nerve-wracking and frustrating experience. It's important to remember to be flexible and patient for the servicemember and family to find their "New Normal."

It's also imperative to keep the readjustment process gradual. Keep the lines of communication open to build the family connection even stronger. Stay connected to the unit and the FRG during this time to be aware of any events, resources or organizations that can help the family and servicemember smoothly reintegrate.

The primary thing to remember is, every situation, servicemember, family member and deployment is different. What may work for one, doesn't necessarily work for all, and what may have worked for one deployment, doesn't always work for a deployment that may follow later. The family dynamic and make-up may even be different then it was before.

Finally, be flexible, understanding and knowledgeable of the resources available to the servicemember and the family.

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## **Wellness Camp continued from page 5**

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Besides establishing a daily fitness regime, Downing suggests keeping an exercise diary, or a notebook.

"If you set a goal, write it down," Downing said. "Write down what you do every day, making sure you're tracking that goal and writing it in a book. If you don't, then you're most likely going to forget about it, or where you are in that goal. Tracking it in a notebook is the best thing I would say to take with them."

After six camps and nearly 250 participants, Waters can easily cite a wealth of Wellness Camp success stories.

"I was in Knoxville when I saw a young man who previously couldn't pass his PT test. I said 'Hey, you're looking pretty slim and trim. How are you doing?'"

He told me, "Pretty awesome. I passed my PT test and signed up for my first 5k road race."

Waters pointed out while five kilometers may not seem like a lot to long distance runners, for a young man who used to struggle with running just two miles, 3.1 miles is quite an accomplishment.

On another occasion, after completing a pilates class, Waters sent out a note saying, "I've never tried this before. I don't know if anyone else has, but give it a shot."



**Sgt. 1st Class Micahel Burton, (left) from the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, demonstrates the differences between sauce pans as part of a cooking class. Soldiers and Airmen taking part in the Iowa National Guard's Wellness Camp are taught some easy recipes that are smart, nutritional, yet easy to prepare. Tech Sgt. Anne Downing (right), from the 132nd Wing, instructs camp participants on the proper procedures for using kettle bells, as well as tips on maintaining a good exercise routine. Downing also serves as a Physical Military Trainer for the Air National Guard. (Iowa National Guard photos by Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden)**

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He received an e-mail back from a young Wellness Camp graduate in Sioux City.

"Hey, you probably didn't expect a response from me," the Soldier wrote, "but I'm down 25 pounds already."

"A couple of weeks later, I'm in Sioux City and that same young man comes up and tells me, 'I'm down another eight pounds from the last e-mail I sent you. My wife and I are eating healthier, and we're working out together. We're really motivated to do this.'

"Then the Soldier adds, 'I feel so much better.' And he was just here at Camp Dodge during our last class. He's taking these lessons he's learned at Wellness Camp and he and his family are applying it to their daily lives," Waters said.

"And that's what we preach to them: Goals," he added. "Regardless of what your goal is, it's got to be yours, you have to own it. We don't want you to just pass the PT test, we want you to be a healthier person."



## Visit your Iowa Gold Star Military Museum

Since opening in 1985, the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, located at Camp Dodge, in Johnston, Iowa, has served to honor the heroic service of all Iowa veterans, from the Mexican War through the current overseas Contingency Operations.

In fact, the mission statement for the 30-year old old museum is "To honor and depict the military experience of all Iowa citizens in all wars, homeland defense and Iowa service.

The Museum's purpose is to collect, preserve and exhibit materials that illustrate the story of Iowa's military past, from statehood to the present. The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum honors the heroic service of all Iowa veterans.

Your Iowa Gold Star Military Museum has a lot to offer. For example, did you know...

- More than 23,000 people visited the museum in 2013.
- There are more than 300 military small arms, ranging from American and German weapons, to Spanish and Chinese armaments, displayed in the gun room.
- More than 6,000 books about warfare and the equipment used to wage war reside in the Brig. Gen. Ed Bird Memorial research library.
- There's more than meets the eye – approximately 140,000 donated artifacts, ranging from clothing to mementos, are

neatly stored on hangers and shelves in the behind-the-scenes storage area.

- The museum has approximately 30,000 square feet of exhibit and storage space.
- A special exhibit detailing the history of the Iowa State Patrol is also on display.
- The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum is the only federally-recognized repository for military artifacts in the state of Iowa.
- And...best of all...admission is free!

### Hours of Operation

**Monday - Friday**  
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Saturday**  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

(Closed Sundays & holiday weekends)

**Phone: (515) 252-4531**