

# Warrior Ready

Iowa National Guard / May/June 2016



*Iowa National Guard's Best Warrior competition*





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Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden



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# Warrior Ready

May/June 2016

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## On the Cover

Spc. Ethan Estabrooks, a Slater, Iowa resident and crew chief and mechanic with Co. C, 2-147th Aviation in Boone, Iowa performs a functions check on an M4 carbine rifle during the recent Iowa Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at the Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center, Johnston, Iowa. (Iowa Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Andrew Shipley)



## Promises are promises

**It would be impossible for any human to stop the day or night from coming at their appointed time.**

**In the same way, it would be impossible for any human to break the promises God makes.**

**J**eremiah was a prophet called by God to speak to the nation of Israel just before they were going to be taken into exile by the Babylonians. A prophet's job was not something to be desired.

They were ridiculed, laughed at, beaten and their life was in danger because they were told by God to go to the people, the spiritual leaders and the King and tell them that God was not happy with the way they were acting.

God's people were continually turning away from his precepts and doing whatever they wanted to do. They worshiped other gods and lived their life no differently than the pagan societies around them.

Jeremiah was especially not liked because God gave him the task of telling the leadership and people they were about to be attacked by King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon and taken into captivity for 70 years!

It was not a popular message.

Yet, in the midst of the message, the love of God for His people is so clear. You see, God had promised King David, many years before Jeremiah, there would always be someone from David's lineage who sat on the throne of Israel. For Jeremiah to go about saying the Is-



raelites would be destroyed would mean the promise of God would be broken. But God intended to keep his promise as he does all his promises.

God had promised about 450 years before Jeremiah was called to be a prophet there would be a descendant of David's on the throne forever. He was speaking of Jesus Christ. Despite the fact the nation would be taken into exile, God didn't forget his promise.

In Jeremiah 33:20 God tells Jeremiah to tell the people, "If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that the day and night no longer come at their appointed time, then my covenant with David my servant can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne."

God used the absurdity of that thought to tell the people, while they will be taken into captivity for a time, they will



surely not cease to exist as a people. It would be impossible for any human to stop the day or night from coming at their appointed time. In the same way, it would be impossible for any human to break the promises God makes.

Sometimes life can seem overwhelming and difficult. We may not feel like it's going the way we want it, or had planned. We may be dealing with depression or anxiety. Perhaps our relationships in life aren't what we expected and things aren't going too well for us. It can be any number of things that can make us feel as if we're not cared for, or someone isn't looking out for us.

There were people in Jeremiah's time who were following God and not giving in to the societal pressure around them; surely they felt like God wasn't in their corner. Yet in all of it, God was telling them even though bad times are coming for a time, the best is yet to be!

So if you're feeling overwhelmed today, think of this time in the history of Israel. If God will keep his promise to a nation of people that continually turned its back on Him, surely when he says to us, "I will never leave you nor forsake you," (Joshua 1:5) we can trust what He says.



# MILITARY MOMS



## CELEBRATING MOTHER'S DAY

*By Sgt. Christie Smith*

**A**s families across America met for Mother's Day brunches and celebrations, members of the Iowa National Guard, Staff Sgt. Catie Beck (top right), Lt. Col. Linda Craven (bottom left) and Angela Kennebeck (bottom right) spent it like many other holidays – away from home, saying goodbye or cherishing the rare occasion when everyone is together.

## **Staff Sgt. Catie Carr** **Headquarters and** **Headquarters Company** **734th Regional Support** **Group**

**F**or Staff Sgt. Catie Carr, a Pella native and Assistant Operations Non-Commissioned Officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 734th Regional Support Group (RSG), Iowa Army National Guard at Camp Dodge, Iowa, juggling military service with motherhood is business as usual.

“I don’t think I’ve ever had to explain it. It’s all my daughters have ever known,” Carr said.

Carr works full-time for the RSG as an Active Guard and Reserve Soldier. She and her husband, also a veteran, have two young daughters.

After years of relying on a supportive network of friends and family to help care for the girls when Carr and her husband would be absent for military training, schools or deployments, Carr’s husband decided to transfer his skills to the civilian world and leave the Iowa National Guard.

“He misses the military a lot,” Carr said, “but he knew that was best for our family.”

As Carr continues to advance in her military career, she said being a mother brings unique challenges.

“I’m currently waiting to have [another] kid until I can get my next phase of school knocked out,” Carr said, referring to the Senior Leader Course which is required for promotion.

Because pregnant women cannot attend many military schools, Carr’s had to carefully plan her pregnancies around Army training opportunities.

Despite having to miss important dates

with her daughters, like Mother’s Day when she drilled with the RSG, Carr said being a military mom has its advantages.

“You realize how much your children mean to you and how much you miss them,” Carr said. “Those little everyday things, like taking them to the babysitter, putting them to bed at night, or reading a story, maybe they’re mundane to you, but they become special when you can’t do them anymore.”

Having periods of time away from her family helps them to appreciate the time they do spend together. Carr said she’s found ways to let her daughters know she’s thinking of them when she’s away.

Although she hasn’t deployed since her daughters were born, she had advice to give to moms who have to leave their daughters for extended periods of time.

“There’s little things you do as a mom,” Carr said. “You can send a card. I recorded one myself singing their lullabies.”

## **Lt. Col. Linda Craven** **185th** **Combat Sustainment** **Support Battalion**

**T**his advice may come in handy for Lt. Col. Linda Craven, a Johnston native and executive officer with the 185th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. Craven has two daughters who are learning the struggles of being in a military family.

Craven is joining other members of the 185th as they deploy to Afghanistan. The send-off ceremony for the Soldiers was, you guessed it, held on Mother’s Day, May 8.

“I thought ‘Of all days, really, Mother’s Day?’” Craven said.

Later though, Craven said she realized this Mother’s Day would make all of her future Mother’s Days with her daughters extra-special.

Craven married her husband, Luke, during flight school as they were training to become U.S. Army helicopter pilots. After several years on active duty, Craven and her husband decided to start a family.

Shortly after the birth of their first daughter, the Cravens’ unit was deployed to Iraq. Her husband went on the deployment, while Craven was asked to remain at Fort Hood, Texas and serve as commander for the rear detachment. Craven said she appreciated the opportunity to stay at home with their infant.

“The military has been really great and they’ve really tried to balance family demands with military service,” Craven said.

Craven left the active duty Army in 2008 and joined the Iowa National Guard while her husband attended law school after leaving the Army himself. She made the decision to leave aviation and become a logistics officer.

“I have made some career decisions... to ensure, does this make sense also for the family?” Craven said.

Switching from active duty to the National Guard, Craven added another job title to her resume: Citizen-Soldier. With so much on her plate, Craven said it was helpful to be organized and to keep prioritized to-do lists. She said she often offers advice and mentorship to other military parents.

“I think the biggest thing for military moms is knowing you can do it,” Craven said. “You can balance a civilian career, a military career and a family at the same time.”

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### **Military Moms**

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# Iowa Air National Guard hosts U.S. Air Force Academy cadets through unique collaborative program

By Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden

**T**hanks to a rather unique collaboration, Airmen from the Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Wing, located at the Des Moines International Airport, provided cadets from the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) a comprehensive view of the capabilities and diverse missions of the Wing's more than 900 Citizen-Airmen.

Maj. Gen. Timothy Orr, the Adjutant General of the Iowa National Guard, sought to create a program to educate future Air Force leaders on the differences and similarities of Air National Guard operations and to demystify the Air National Guard as a component of the U.S. Air Force.

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**U.S. Air Force Academy cadets (left) get some hands-on cyber security demonstrations during their three-day visit to the Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Wing. (Right) retired Maj. Gen. Gregory Schwab, a 42-year veteran with the Iowa Air National Guard, chats with U.S. Air Force Academy cadets about his military career as an A-7 Corsair and F-16 Falcon pilot. The cadets were able to receive a comprehensive view of the capabilities and diverse missions of the Wing's more than 900 Citizen-Airmen.**



He reached out to Air Force Academy faculty member, retired Lt. Gen. Chris Miller, about the potential for collaboration between the organizations. The Academy Superintendent's action team, Pathways to Excellence, then secured funding and approval for the initial site visit, which served as a test bed identifying possible areas for future collaboration.

"To our knowledge, this pilot program is a first for the Air National Guard," said Iowa Air National Guard 2nd Lt. Rick Rutter, who served as the program manager. "This program seeks to initiate a Total Force partnership between the Iowa Air National Guard and the U.S. Air Force Academy to provide cadets the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of Air National Guard operations.

"We reached out to every commander at the 132nd Wing, so we could set up briefings and tours throughout every element of the Air National Guard. We actually sought a more hands-on approach that we felt was better able

to meet Gen. Orr's objectives. You can have all the briefings you want, but it's actually meeting with our National Guard personnel which leaves more of a lasting impression," said Rutter, who also serves as the Director of Inspections, Inspector General Office at the 132nd Wing.

By immersing the cadets into the daily operation of the Iowa Air National Guard during a drill weekend, the cadets had the opportunity to shadow Airmen performing a wide diversity of missions at the Wing, while becoming educated on the Air National Guard's Federal and State dual mission structure.

The 132nd Wing, which has served as an aerial reconnaissance and combat fighter unit for more than 70 years, converted to three new operational missions beginning in 2013: an MQ-9 Remotely Piloted Aircraft Mission Control Element; an Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group (ISRG); and a Cyber Operations Squadron.

What made this visit especially significant for this group – Cadet 1st Class Kegan Garnett, Cadet 1st Class Andrew Holba, Cadet 1st Class John Tougas, Cadet 2nd Class Alexander Fulton, Cadet 3rd Class Samuel Chadwick and Cadet 3rd Class Nathan Montieth – was the fact three plan to specialize in flying Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), while the other three are involved in cyber security.

According to Lt. Col. Casey Tidgewell, the Cadet Group One commander, since RPA and Cyber are two of the in-demand career fields cadets are motivated towards, they brought three cadets of each mission type.

"We chose three first-class cadets (seniors) who've been selected to serve as RPA pilots upon graduation who also

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## USAF Academy visit

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## Iowa's top NCOs, junior enlisted, vie for title of 'Iowa's Best Warrior'

by Staff Sgt. Chad Nelson

**T**wenty-three Iowa Army National Guard Soldiers from across the state gathered at Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center in Johnston, Iowa for the annual Best Warrior Competition held March 18 – 20.

The competitors, grouped into junior enlisted and Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) categories, were faced with challenges testing their knowledge, skills and mental endurance.

“It was a good mix of knowledge and physical activities,” said Sgt. Cody L. Vantiger, a Sioux City, Iowa, native and heavy equipment operator for the 831st Engineer Company, 224th Engineer Battalion in Middletown, Iowa. “It’s a tough weekend, and it’s long, but we get through it.”

The tough weekend consisted of the Army Physical Fitness Test, weapons qualification, drill and ceremony, an

obstacle course, a 12-mile march while carrying a 35-pound rucksack, and several other events.

The Soldiers are notified of the events before the competition so they could study and train for them, but this year there was a mystery event none of the competitors knew about in advance: a three-mile run taking place directly after the physical fitness test, which itself contains a two-mile run.

“It really took me by surprise, but it’s what we train for,” said Staff Sgt. Jason A. England, of Polk City, Iowa, and a senior management analyst for Joint Forces Headquarters in Johnston.

Training for this competition is critical. With competitors from widely-varying backgrounds in the military – everything from unit supply specialists to infantrymen – there was something to challenge everyone.

“It took me five months to prepare. I

spent a lot of time studying for the appearance board and the written test, and spent two to three hours a day doing physical fitness training to get into shape,” said Sgt. Allison R. Knipe, an Oskaloosa, Iowa, native and unit supply specialist for Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 734th Regional Support Group at Camp Dodge.

The appearance board offered a formal question and answer session in which the state’s most senior enlisted personnel asked a series of questions about Army rules and regulations. Occasionally, Soldiers were stumped, digging deep into the recesses of their memory for an answer.

These occasional missteps during an individual event didn’t faze the competitors. If they made a mistake, they shrugged it off and drove on to the next event, regaining their confidence by executing other tasks to standard.

“I felt like I did pretty well until the



ruck march,” said Spc. Ethan Estabrooks, a Slater, Iowa, native and crew chief and mechanic with Co. C, 2-147th Aviation in Boone. “I enjoyed the land navigation event the most. I was able to find all the points and within a time I was happy with.”

For the land navigation event, Soldiers were given eight grid coordinates, a map, protractor and compass. They then had to plot each grid coordinate on the Camp Dodge map, and walk to each point. Each location contained a unique stamp to prove they found it. Points were given for each coordinate successfully reached, and ties were settled by the fastest time.

And, in the end, it was all about trying to avoid ties in each of the events. It was about trying to be the fastest, the smartest, and the toughest.

Each Soldier pushed themselves to their physical and mental limit, ignoring the bitter cold and snow during the obstacle course and the ever-growing blisters on their feet during the ruck march. Each of these Soldiers tried their best to elevate their performance above the efforts of their peers. The spirit of competition was alive and well inside each and every one of the competitors.

“Competition is what drives me,” said Spc. Dakota VanBrocklin, a Dubuque, Iowa, native and combat medic with the 134th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), 109th Multifunctional Medical Battalion at Camp Dodge. “I’m very goal oriented. [The competition gave] me something to look forward to and train towards. Putting in the time and effort outside of drills and when you’re tired and doing the things you don’t want to do is really what makes you the best.”

VanBrocklin’s drive ultimately pushed him to victory in this three-day competition, as he was declared the Soldier of the Year out of the nine competitors in the junior enlisted category.

Sgt. John Finken, the newly-crowned Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year,

shared a similar drive.

“I’ve always been internally motivated. That’s something I’ve never had a problem with. If I have goals it forces me to get ready,” said the Johnston resident and Soldier with the 186th Military Police Company at Camp Dodge. “I want to push myself to always improve, and I’ve learned you’re either on your way up or you’re on your way out.”

But, while only one NCO and one junior enlisted Soldier were given the titles of Best Warrior during this event, all of the competitors demonstrated the high values held by American Soldiers. Each of them shared the determination and drive to never accept defeat and to never quit.

“Every single one of them put ev-

everything they had into it to try to be number one in either the Soldier or the NCO category,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Rachel Fails, the State Command Sergeant Major for the Iowa Army National Guard.

“All these Soldiers worked extremely hard to get to the state-level competition. They’ve gone through a competition at the unit level and then competed at the battalion level; these Soldiers really wanted to be here. It is very rewarding to see how much effort they put into every event.”

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**Sgt. John G. Finken (Far left), with the 186th Military Police Company climbs an obstacle during the Iowa Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition. Finken placed first in the Non-Commissioned Officer competition. Staff Sgt. Jason A. England (Below), a senior management analyst for Joint Forces Headquarters, completes his run during the Army Physical Fitness Test (Iowa National Guard photos by Sgt. Zachary Zuber) Sgt. Cody L. Vantiger (Inset), with the 831st Engineer Company, 224th Engineer Battalion, performs a functions check. (Iowa National Guard photo by Sgt. Andrew Shipley).**



# Father, son focus on Best Warrior competition

Story and photos  
by Sgt. Drew Shipley

The 2016 Iowa Best Warrior Competition held at Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa March 18-20 presented a unique opportunity for one Soldier.

Spc. Ethan Estabrooks, a crew chief and mechanic with Company C, 2-147th Aviation, Iowa Army National Guard, navigated, engaged and maneuvered through the three-day event with the help of a fellow Soldier who acted as his sponsor and who also happens to be his father.

"I wanted to be there for him for moral support and help him with anything he needed," said 1st Sgt. Gary Estabrooks, first sergeant of Company A, 248th Aviation Support Battalion, in Waterloo, Iowa. "To help guide him through the Best Warrior Competition and watching him compete was fun. It (the competition) was an animal."

The Best Warrior Competition consisted of several mentally- and physically-demanding events such as land navigation, an Army Physical Fitness Test, a 12-mile march with a loaded rucksack, and several other tasks.

Ethan, a Slater, Iowa native and third-generation servicemember, recalled his interest in the military and his father's service as a child.

"As a child, I grew up throwing on some boots and this small [Army] uniform with 'Estabrooks' on it," said Ethan. "It has always interested me. One day, before graduating from high school, dad comes in the house and asks me how I'm going to pay for college. Two or three days later, he was able to convince me that the National Guard was the way to go."

Gary, a former recruiter with the



***Spc. Ethan Estabrooks, a helicopter crew chief with Company C, 2-147th Aviation, Iowa Army National Guard, performs a personal search on his sponsor and father, 1st Sgt. Gary Estabrooks, first sergeant for Company A, 248th Aviation Support Battalion, at the Iowa Best Warrior Competition at Camp Dodge March 19, 2016. Gary served as Ethan's sponsor during the event, providing instructions and assistance throughout the competition.***

Iowa Army National Guard, felt his background helped his son to enlist.

"When it was time for Ethan to enlist, my background in recruiting was important to make sure he was getting what he wanted," said Gary. "It was a way to get his college done and set him up for success."

With the benefits gained by serving in the military, there also comes a certain level of duty, loyalty and selfless-service.

"Being pulled away from the family is never easy," said Gary. "My wife and I never pushed the military on Ethan. I'm happy to see that he's happy and being successful."

Gary feels he's passing the torch in their family's military service.

"I really never envisioned that he would

be in the National Guard," Gary said. "I started out in aviation, he's starting out in aviation. We had a lot of fun spending time together during this competition. It's a neat way to hand it off and see what he can do with it."

Ethan, one of eight junior enlisted Soldiers to finish the competition, added he had some ups and downs during the competition, but felt it was an overall success.

"I felt like I did pretty well until the ruck march," said Ethan. "I enjoyed the land navigation event the most. I was able to find all the points and within a time I was happy with."

Ethan is currently taking pre-engineering classes at Des Moines Area Community College, before transferring to Iowa State University to earn his degree in aerospace engineering.





***Sgt. Allison Knipe from Fort Madison, Iowa, a unit supply specialist with the 734th Regional Support Group, Iowa Army National Guard at Camp Dodge, Iowa, crawls through the mud to complete one of the confidence course obstacles as part of the annual Best Warrior Competition. Knipe trained in the gym three hours a day to prepare for this competition. (Iowa National Guard photo by Sgt. Renee Seruntine)***

## Female Soldiers seek to earn title as Iowa National Guard's Best Warrior

by Sgt. Renee Seruntine

**O**n a cold, windy, three-day weekend in central Iowa, Iowa Army National Guard Soldiers competed in the annual Iowa National Guard Best Warrior Competition. The event took place March 18-20 at Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center in Johnston, Iowa.

The competition consisted of several events, including weapons qualification, the Army physical fitness test, board interviews, written exams, a 12-mile march with rucksack, and Warrior Tasks and battle drills related to today's operating environment. Each Soldier had to successfully complete each event for points toward their overall score.

The majority of these 23 Soldiers from across the state were male. However, three females represented their units with confidence and pride.

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***"Overall, it's a test  
of your Soldier ability  
and it's a challenge."***

***Spc. Holly Morrison***

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"Overall it's a test of your Soldier ability and it's a challenge. It's exciting to go out and see where you stand compared to everybody else in the Guard, especially being a female. You get to see exactly where you stand compared to the males," said Spc. Holly Morrison of Letts, Iowa, an automated logistical specialist with Co. B, 334th Brigade Support Battalion, based in Cedar Rapids.

Many female Soldiers welcome the

challenge of competing with males, and these women met the challenge head-on.

"I love it; they're good competition and it's fun to compete against the males. I think sometimes females are underestimated, so it's nice to be able to prove that we can step up to the plate. We can perform just as well as a man if not better in some categories," said Sgt. Allison Knipe of Fort Madison, Iowa, a unit supply specialist, with the 734th Regional Support Group at Camp Dodge.

Stepping up to the plate in this competition required challenging preparation. The participants put in weeks of studying and physical training to perform their best in each event.

"It took me five months to prepare. I spent a lot of time studying for the appearance board and the written test, and spent two to three hours a day doing physical fitness training to get into shape. It's important to put in time on the treadmill, running the two miles, and practicing for the road march, since it was during the winter," said Knipe.

Females performing in this competition feel they can meet any challenge asked of them. They believe in themselves, and their units fully support them as they help them prepare.

"There are some events in this competition that naturally, I think I'll be better at, such as the exam and the appearance boards. I hope I can be an inspiration to other females who want to do something like this. I use competing against males as my motivation every day, and if I'm the underdog, then I feel I have to show somebody up," said Morrison, who placed third in the Soldier of the Year competition.

These female Soldiers are confident they did their best, giving their male counterparts a run for their money. Through the intensive preparation and spirited competition, they became better Soldiers and will continue to push themselves to improve on a daily basis.

# Following in the family footsteps

by Sgt. Zachary Zuber

**S**taff Sgt. Greg Bell, a squad leader with Co. A, Forward Support Company, 224th Engineer Battalion, Iowa Army National Guard based in Fairfield, Iowa, always wanted to follow in his father's footsteps and become a truck driver.

However, he said he never wanted to be a full-time driver. Bell accomplished that goal 13 years ago, with help from his family.

"I always had the ambition to be a truck driver," Bell said. "Being a truck driver and being gone so much, my family talked me into joining the National Guard so I could be a truck driver and not be away from home as frequently."

According to Bell, a Tipton, Iowa native, the education he's received over his military career has assisted him in his civilian occupation.

"As a truck driver in the National Guard, the experience I received was able to carry over to my civilian job as a bridge crew operator with Cedar County," Bell said. "The Department of Transportation recognized my military experience to obtain my commercial driver's license, which is a prerequisite in being hired by the county."

Each Soldier's military career can consist of challenges they must

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***Soldiers from the 1168th Transportation Company(top photo) transport an FMTV (Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles) from the Forward Support Company, 224th Engineer Battalion, to be decommissioned. Sgt. Zach Faught (bottom right), a Marshalltown, Iowa native and motor transport operator with the 1168th Transportation Company, secures an FMTV to a trailer for transport in Fairfield, Iowa.***

***"Being a truck driver and  
being gone so much,  
my family talked me into  
joining the National Guard ..."***

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***Staff Sgt. Greg Bell***

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overcome to be successful. Bell is no exception.

As part of the Iowa National Guard's recent reorganization process, the primary mission of Bell's company will be shifting in another direction.

"Our transportation assets are currently being transferred to Nebraska," Bell said. "Alpha Company's focus will be changing to fueling operations. I was able to select three preferences into which I can transfer to."

Bell has decided he will reclassify as a petroleum fuel handler so he can stay with his company, which will still be located in Fairfield.

"I could have transferred to another unit to remain a truck driver, but the location of the units were rather unreasonable from where I live," said Bell.





# Purple Up for Iowa military kids

by Master Sgt. Vincent De Groot  
185th Air Refueling Wing

Digital tiger stripe camouflage is the usual uniform of the day for members of the Iowa Air National Guard's 185th Air Refueling Wing in Sioux City. Today however, unit members joined with area school students and supporters from across the nation in wearing purple to show support for military children.

According to the 4-H website, <http://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org>, "Purple Up Day" was established by former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger in 1986. Weinberger's designation of April as the Month of the Military Child acknowledges the significant role military youth play in our communities.

In 2011, the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Military Youth and Family Program started the "Purple Up! for Military Kids" initiative that quickly gained momentum and is now celebrated nation wide. New Hampshire chose April 15 to be that special day.

Lori Risdal, Iowa Air National Guard 185th Air Refueling Wing Family Programs Manager, says more than 11,000 children in Iowa are connected to the military. She said burdens placed on family members are often unknown and wearing purple on April 15 is one way for Iowans to show support for the sacrifices these families make.

Risdal says military children face many challenges unique to their situation, like having parents deployed for long periods of time. She says deployments and family separations can be stressful times for children.

"Because many Iowa military families live in rural areas, they're separated from military installations where



services are traditionally provided to military members and their families," said Risdal "This makes it all the more important that our military children find support within their communities."

Rather than using terms like Army green, Marine Corps red, or Air Force, Navy or Coast Guard blue, "purple"

was adopted from military organization's use of the term when referring to a unified effort that doesn't belong to a specific military branch.

In Iowa, participants added photos of themselves wearing purple at #IAPurpleUp throughout the day as part of the activities.



**Members of the 185th Air Refueling Wing, Iowa Air National Guard, pose for a group photo wearing purple in a show of support for military kids as part of national "Purple Up Day" at the Air National Guard base in Sioux City, Iowa. (Iowa National Guard Photo by Master Sgt. Vincent De Groot)**

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# Military Moms

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## Angela Kennebeck former U.S. Army Active Duty Soldier and Family Readiness Group Leader

**A**ngela Kennebeck, an Ankeny native and Camp Dodge Post Exchange employee, has spent more than 30 years mentoring military families.

As a Family Readiness Group leader, Kennebeck was the go-to person for countless families, especially while their Soldiers were deployed.

“The important thing is to let those families know, night after night, you’re not the only one that may be crying themselves to sleep,” Kennebeck said.

Angela met her husband at a recruiting station when they were both in high school. Sgt. Maj. Dean Kennebeck, the U.S. Property and Fiscal Office for Iowa sergeant major, and Angela were married while they were both serving in the regular Army.

After Angela’s initial enlistment as an administrative specialist, she got out of the Army to start a family with Dean, then a military police officer who spent a lot of time away conducting training missions in the field. Angela said adjusting to life as a military wife and mother of three daughters was a learning process.

“You know, being overseas in Germany, being far from home and being a new mother, that’s an experience,” Angela said. But, the comradery between military families built a support network she still cherishes to this day.

Angela quickly learned adaptability is  
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the key.

“You have to be flexible because nothing goes as planned,” she said.

When she realized her husband, and later her daughters, would be missing family holidays for deployments or training, she said she started baking cakes right away.

“You just celebrate it on a different day,” Angela said.

In 1997, Dean joined the Iowa National Guard after a short break in service.

As the Kennebeck daughters grew, two of them also joined the Iowa National Guard. At one point, two of the Kennebecks deployed together.

“The hardest thing about being a military mom is saying goodbye at deployments, or goodbye when they leave for training,” Angela said. “My husband has deployed three times. On the third deployment, my middle daughter, Megan, went with him. It’s almost like a piece of your heart walks away when your daughter deploys.”

During those deployments, Angela said she worked hard to help support other

military families through Family Readiness Groups. While being involved in these organizations for her husband and daughters, Angela touched the lives of countless other Soldiers. Now that Angela works at the Camp Dodge Post Exchange, she said those Soldiers know the hugs are always free.

“A lot of Soldiers will come into the store and say, ‘Hi, mom!’” she said. “And I don’t mind it a bit.”

Being a “surrogate mom” to many Soldiers has made her proud to be part of the backbone of America’s Army. Angela fought back tears as she referenced the pride and appreciation for her extended military family.

Being a mother is a demanding role, but being a military mom presents another unique set of challenges requiring adaptability, resiliency and optimism.

While Carr, Craven and Kennebeck have each made different decisions for themselves and their families in service to their country, they all have one thing in common: They are Army moms and they are Army strong.



Military families = Courage, strength, sacrifice



## USAF Academy visit

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participate in the Air Force Academy's Unmanned Aircraft Systems course," Tidgewell said. "We also chose three cadets (two 3rd-class cadets, or sophomores, and one 2nd-class cadet, or junior) who are part of the Academy's Cyber Competition Team."

The ensuing three-day visit featured a whirlwind tour of the Iowa Air National Guard. It began with an informal dinner at Orr's home on the Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center, with Orr and Col. Shawn Ford, the 132nd Wing commander. It concluded with tours of the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group; Cyber Operations; RPA Operations; and the Mobile Emergency Operations Center; as well as briefings about the Wing's Mission Support, Total Force Integration and domestic operations roles.

Cadets also had the opportunity to speak with Col. Mark Chidley, the vice wing commander, retired Maj. Gen. Gregory Schwab, and Lt. Col. Michael Barten, an RPA pilot and USAFA graduate. They also were able to have lunch with a wide range of company grade officers, encompassing all the different missions that comprise Iowa Air National Guard operations.

"Unique opportunities included seeing the 132nd Wing's diverse missions, including MQ-9 operations, cyber operations, and the ISR Group, as well as the several unique state disaster response missions," Tidgewell said. "Cadets do not receive routine exposure to our Total Force partners, so this was a great opportunity to see what the Air National Guard has to offer and what cadets can expect as they serve side-by-side with the Total Force training for and supporting current operations."

Montierth, a sophomore from Arizona, felt the trip provided a great exposure to the Air National Guard.

"I've had no previous exposure to the Guard, so the trip really helped me understand what the Guard does and how it compares to active duty. The people I met were great and I was impressed with the leadership I observed. It was an awesome trip!"

"These cadets came away with a great understanding about the National Guard. They now understand how we have both a federal and a state mission, and that speaks volumes. I most certainly believe this visit met all of Gen. Orr's objectives," said Rutter.

"In my opinion, the USAFA does an outstanding job of selecting these future leaders. You could tell they were very well-rounded, very confident leaders. They're very competent, very personable and very mature," he said.

Tidgewell said the highlight of the visit was their ability to see the Iowa Air National Guard's MQ-9 mission in action and their support of current operations, just like active duty units. He also cited a few of their main takeaways from the Iowa visit.

"The Iowa Air National Guard has an extremely diverse mission set in relevant and high-demand career fields, has several unique opportunities, and

brings professional, dedicated Airmen to the Total Force, where we serve side-by-side training for and supporting current operations."

By starting with such a small number of cadets, officials hope to fine-tune the process, before ramping it up to include participation with the 185th Air Refueling Wing in Sioux City, Iowa.

Tidgewell pointed out there are several opportunities for future collaboration between the two Air Force entities.

"There are several areas we can explore for future collaboration opportunities, including additional site visits with larger numbers of cadets, 132nd Wing Airmen traveling to the USAFA to educate and motivate cadets towards careers in RPA, cyber, and intel, and collaboration between the USAFA's fledgling Cyber Innovation Center and our Cyber Competition Team.

"Cadets were exposed to mission areas they'll either soon be entering, or are interested in pursuing and they were exposed to the professionalism, dedication, and opportunities of our Air National Guard partners. The ground work was laid and contacts established for future collaborative opportunities between our bases," he said.



***U.S. Air Force Academy cadets get the opportunity for some hands-on cyber security demonstrations during their recent visit to the Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Wing, located at Des Moines International Airport.***

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