Since Aug. 30, 1855, the Kansas National Guard has been the defender of freedom and security in the state. To mark the 150th anniversary of its founding, the Kansas National Guard held a year-long celebration, highlighted by a “Celebration Weekend” Aug. 27 and 28, 2005, in Topeka.

On the hot and humid morning of Aug. 27, representatives from the Kansas National Guard’s major commands assembled at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, located at Forbes Field, to take part in an inspection ceremony, a time-honored military tradition. Arranged in ranks, from west to east, participants included Soldiers from Joint Forces Headquarters – Kansas, the 35th Division, 35th Division Artillery, 130th Field Artillery Brigade, 69th Troop Command, 235th Regiment and Airmen from the 184th Air Refueling Wing and 190th Air Refueling Wing.

Three cased flags stood near the eastern end of the formation, representing the 1st Battalion, 635th Armor; 891st Engineer Battalion, 169th Corps Support Battalion, all units that were deployed at the time. Music for the ceremony was performed by the 35th Division Band.

“Good morning, everybody, and Happy Birthday,” said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general, in his remarks. “In the last century and a half many things have obviously changed for the Citizen-Soldiers of Kansas, like our uniforms, tools of our trade and the complexity of our plans and strategies,” he continued. “However the important things remain the same – our basic mission, the loyalty and devotion of our members and our exemplary service to our state and nation.”

Following the ceremony, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and the public toured the Museum of the Kansas National Guard and its grounds, where a number of vintage and current military vehicles and equipment were on display. Re-enactors from the Civil War, Spanish American War and World War II eras were camped on the grounds, sharing their knowledge and demonstrating equipment used during those periods.

Military re-enactors were also the highlight of a concert presented by the 35th Division Band during the afternoon. Period music accompanied authentically costumed Guardsmen reading excerpts from diaries and letters written by Guardsmen from the Civil War through Operation Iraqi Freedom. Inside the museum, a “Dialogue With the Troops” allowed visitors to hear from Soldiers from Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, who had recently returned from a year-long deployment in Iraq.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius accompanied by Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general (left), and Col. Eric Peck, chief of staff for the Kansas Army National Guard, inspect the troops during a special ceremony on Aug. 27, 2005, marking the 150th anniversary of the Kansas National Guard. (Photo by Maj. Toni Truelove)

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting and some children share a moment with Sgt. 1st Class Howard Williams, a cavalry soldier re-enactor, and his mount following the inspection ceremony. Williams is a member of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 127th Field Artillery. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)
Military ball highlights 150th anniversary celebration

By Spc. Terrance Lovchik, 105th MPAD

“Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the 150th anniversary of the Kansas National Guard.”

With those words from Sgt. Maj. Keith White, the senior operations sergeant for the 35th Infantry Division and the Master of Ceremonies for the night, the 150th Anniversary of the Kansas National Guard Celebration Ball was underway — and what a celebration it was.

Following White's introduction, The Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, took the podium. Tonight was an occasion for history and symbolism, so Bunting chose to tell the story of the creation of our state flag.

“Major General McLain, who was the adjutant general of Kansas from 1925 to 1951,” Bunting began, “designed this official flag.” Bunting told the audience that the flag was first flown in Fort Riley, Kan., for Kansas National Guard Soldiers and that the state banner was also designed by Lt. Col. Joe Nichol, another former adjutant general.

The ball was also used as an opportunity to unveil a special painting by Dale Gallon, a renowned military artist, which depicts the Eighth Kansas Infantry charging Missionary Ridge during the Civil War Battle of Chattanooga. The original oil painting was presented to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius by Gallon himself, who also remained on hand to sign and sell prints of the painting. Gallon was commissioned by the Kansas National Guard to create a visual representation memorializing the 150th anniversary. The charge at Missionary Ridge was chosen because it displayed the broad impact Kansas National Guard Soldiers have had on national defense, even at such an early period in the organization’s history.

Sebelius was also presented with the official 150th anniversary banner and had the honor of cutting into another special piece of art: cake. The majestic four-tiered tower went well with the wine from a Kansas winery, decorated with commemorative 150th anniversary labels.

Not all of the ceremony was as joyous, however. Shortly after the posting of the colors by the 1st Kansas Volunteer Color Guard, made up of re-enactors representing several different eras of Kansas military history, came the traditional POW-MIA toast. This somber moment reminded all of the sacrifices that have been made in order to ensure the safety and security of our great nation and state.

To this end, Sebelius told the crowd, “On behalf of the citizens of Kansas, for your commitment to the tradition and to the safety and security of our state and our nation, we are grateful for your service and your sacrifice. God bless you all.”

The celebration soon turned back to the festivities with a rendition of “Home on the Range,” followed by a concert by the Bop Daddies. The band played hit songs from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s, closing out the night to a dance floor full of cheerful faces and feet.

By Spc. Terrance Lovchik, 105th MPAD

The Kansas National Guard has many traditions that have transcended time, traditions that have evolved over the years to become steadfastly entrenched in the culture of our military service. The traditions range from the ceremonial inspection, as was performed on Aug. 27, 2005, at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard at Forbes Field, to the various flags and banners displayed by the many units throughout our state. It is important to remember, though, that none of us would be able to enjoy any of these traditions had it not been for the Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice so that those who survived would remain free to celebrate the rich history of our nation and state.

On Aug. 28, under a tent set up outside the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general; State Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Rodina; Chaplain (Col.) Greg Riley, chaplain for Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas; and many others gathered together for a memorial service doing just that.

"Today we honor their memory and the priceless gift which they laid upon the altar of freedom," said Chaplain Riley. It was a day filled with prayer and song. It was a day for looking back over the 150 year history of the Kansas National Guard in remembrance of the Soldiers and families who made this nation and this state so great.

"When we go about our daily lives it must be in the back of our minds, 'I am here because of what you did for me,'" said Bunting. "Again and again, American military men and women have put aside their personal lives to go where they were needed in the name of freedom, and we must not forget that."

"Today we are engaged in a new war, a war where the enemy has no country and hides in the shadows preyng on the innocent and making no distinction between men, women and children," said Bunting. "And once again our service men and women and their families are being asked to make sacrifices to keep our homeland secure so that others may know the blessings of liberty!"

Bunting also relayed the stories of some of the Soldiers who have recently fallen and a list of all of the conflicts that the Kansas National Guard took part in was read.

After the prayers were prayed, the hymns sung, and the stories relayed, Bunting and Rodina stepped outside the tent to salute a memorial wreath which represented the fallen Soldiers.

"As we hear 'taps' play today at the conclusion of our ceremony, let us not be sad, but remember with glad and thankful hearts all those who in the name of this great state of Kansas and in defense of our nation's liberties and ideals have fallen in our conflicts," said Riley.

As the crowd dispersed from the memorial, some left silently with tears in their eyes while others lingered over the memories of their loved ones. It was a ceremony that touched all who attended and a tradition that will, sadly, be repeated over and over until there are no more wars to be won.

Memorial service brings tears and words of encouragement

Military history artist Paul Gallon shakes hands with Gov. Kathleen Sebelius after presenting her with a painting commissioned for the Kansas National Guard’s 150th anniversary celebration. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)
Visions of the past: A camera’s eye on the Kansas National Guard

It is known as the “Legislative War of 1893.” The Republican and Populist parties both claimed to have a majority in the Kansas House of Representatives after the 1892 election. Neither party would back down, each swearing in deputies, scuffling on the House floor and trying not to leave the building to prevent the other party’s taking over. At one point, the Populists tried to lock Republicans out of Representative Hall, but Republicans broke down the door, barring themselves inside. Violence seemed unavoidable. The Kansas City Star wrote that Topeka’s Kansas Avenue was “too wide for a street and hardly wide enough for a cornfield” but “would make a fairly roomy battlefield.” The governor called out the militia, which sent eight National Guard companies and a light artillery battery armed with carbines and Gatling guns. Order was restored. The only bloodshed was a National Guardsmen’s broken nose.

The 20th Kansas Regiment was not expected to fight well. The Soldiers arrived in San Francisco in mid-1898 and became a joke in the local press. Few Soldiers had pieces of the Army’s blue uniforms and many lacked shoes or boots. Col. Frederick Funston, appointed by the Kansas governor to command the regiment, arrived later that year and began whipping the Soldiers into shape. When fighting erupted in the Philippines in February 1899, people began to rethink their assessment of the regiment. In the taking of Caloocan, the 20th fought so hard the general leading the battle sent this message to headquarters: “Kansas a mile advance of the line. Will stop them if I can.” He couldn’t. Three Kansans received the Medal of Honor for the Battle of Caloocan, only one of 19 battles they fought in the Philippines, for which they earned the title “The Fighting 20th.”

Ten divisions. 400,000 Soldiers. A month-and-a-half of fighting. The Meuse-Argonne offensive was the largest operation and most important victory of World War I – and the Kansas National Guard was there. From its position near the Aire River, Kansas’s 35th Infantry Division faced Germany’s second Landwehr and the First Guard Division, arguably the most feared of German troops. The fighting lasted from Sept. 26, 1918, until the signing of the armistice on Nov. 11. Nearly 1,500 35th Division Soldiers were killed in the Argonne Battle – many of them in the first four days of the battle – and more than 6,000 were injured.

2nd Lt. Erwin Bleckley was the first of three National Guard aviators to receive the Medal of Honor during the 20th century. Bleckley, a Wichita native and field artilleryman from the Kansas National Guard’s 130th Field Artillery Regiment, volunteered for forward observation duty with the Air Service and was attached to the 50th Aero Squadron, Army Air Service.

In October 1918, Bleckley and other members of the squadron were assigned to locate and resupply the 1st Battalion, 308th Infantry, 77th Division, the “Lost Battalion” that had been completely cut off by German forces. Having failed to locate the battalion on their first mission of the day, Bleckley and his pilot, 1st Lt. Harold E. Goettler, volunteered for a second flight. They drew intense enemy fire while making several passes over the area and German machine gunners fired down at the flyers from the ridges, as well as from below. Badly wounded, they made a crash landing near a French outpost. The pilot was dead and Bleckley died before the French could evacuate him to a medical aid station. Bleckley’s notes from the mission narrowed the search area and the trapped Soldiers were found. For this act of bravery, they received the Medal of Honor, posthumously.
When Kansas was still a territory, Citizen-Soldiers began protecting Kansas homes and families as they left farms, businesses and other work places to defend the state and nation when called. As members of the National Guard of the United States, they trace their roots to the organized "militia" regiments formed in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in December 1636. "Militia," from the Latin "miles," means "soldier." The concept of armed citizenry comes from the Greeks who required military service of free male citizens to defend their own land and the city-state, generally for one or two hours. That concept, which came to the colonies from England through the Saxons, brought with it an enduring fear of standing armies -- the repressive forces of monarchs. The posting of British Regulars in the colonies reinforced that fear and distrust of full-time soldiers.

"Minutemen" from that same colony's militia fired the "shot heard around the world" at Concord River's North Bridge on April 19, 1775, and began our nation's struggle for independence from Britain. We gained that independence with the help of the Marquis de Lafayette, a volunteer commander for American troops, and on his return to America in 1824, members of a New York militia took the name "Minuteman Guard" in honor of the Marquis who was the commander of a French military unit called the "Garde Nationale de Paris." By the end of the 19th century, militia units in nearly all states were designated "National Guard" with the same symbol of the Militia Act of 1903, the name National Guard became official. Both the Army and Air National Guard roles and responsibilities changed with time, but the symbol remains the same.

Colonial times, the Minutemen were the members of the militia who volunteered to respond within 30 minutes with their own arms. The plowshare in the Minuteman symbol represents the civilian job the Guardsman leaves as he picks up his musket to answer the call to serve our state or nation. The forerunner of the Kansas National Guard, the Kansas Militia, was formed on Aug. 30, 1855, when the Territorial Governor, with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Kansas established "An Act to organize, discipline and govern the militia of this Territory." The Act also provided for the Territorial Governor, with the same organization and equipment for the National Guard in each state as provided to the U.S. Army. The Kansas National Guard consists of the Kansas Army National Guard and the Kansas Air National Guard, the latter established on Sept. 18, 1947. The Kansas National Guard has been involved in the nation’s conflicts since the state’s inception as a territory. The Kansas Guard actively participated in the Civil War, 1861-1865, Indian Wars, 1864-1870, Spanish-American War, 1898-1899, Mexican Border, 1916, World War I, 1917-1919, World War II, 1940-1946, Korean War, 1950-1952; Berlin Crisis, 1961-1962; Air National Guard Squadron Tactical Reconnaissance Interceptor Program alert (STRIK), 1965-1965; Vietnam War, 1966-1969; 8044 (formerly Single Integrated Operations Plan Alert), 1978 - present; Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm, 1990-1991; Operation Southern Watch and Southern Watch in Southwest Asia, 1992 - 2002; Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, 1992-1991; Operations Joint Endeavor, Defy Threat and Joint Guardian in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1995-2003; Operations Phoenix Scorpion, Phoenix Scorpion III and Desert Viper in Southwest Asia in 1997 and 1998; Operation Allied Force in Kosovo, 1999 - present; the Global War on Terrorism (Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Noble Eagle), 2001 - present, and Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003 - present. During the Philippine Insurrection following the Spanish-American War, five Kansas Guardsmen were awarded the Medal of Honor for their heroic actions. Col. Frederick Funston was the most famous of these Guardsmen. The others were Pvt. Edward White, Pvt. William Trembley, 1st Lt. Arthur Ferguson and Sgt. John A. Humiston. Another Medal of Honor recipient was William F. Cody, a.k.a. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, who was a member of the 7th Kansas Cavalry during the Civil War. Cody earned his medal for gallantry in 1872 during the Indian Wars when he was a civilian scout assigned to the 3rd U.S. Cavalry.

A posthumous award was presented to 2nd Lt. Erwin Bleckley for helping to save the "Lost Battalion" during World War I. He began military service by enlisting in the Kansas Army National Guard’s Battery F, 1st Field Artillery, which later became the 1st Field Artillery. His interest in aviation led him to volunteer for the Army Air Service, the forerunner of the U.S. Army Air Corps, which later became the U.S. Air Force. As the first aviator to earn the Medal of Honor, he is claimed by the Kansas Air National Guard and U.S. Air Force, although in reality he was a member of the Kansas Army National Guard. Col. Donald Ballantyne, a retired member of the Kansas National Guard, saved lives while risking his own life as a Navy medic in Vietnam and is the only living Kansas Guard Medal of Honor recipient. Kansas Citizen-Soldiers and Civilians have also served our state supporting civil authority in the 1888-89 County Seat Wars, the 1893 Legislative War, labor disputes in 1886 and 1893, and during student unrest over the Vietnam conflict in the 1960s. They continue to train to assist civil authority today. They also serve to protect Kansans in response to emergencies and disasters throughout the state, including floods, tornadoes, fires, earthquakes, and other weather-related and man-made emergencies and disasters.
Mobile Museum takes Kansas Guard history across the state

By Spc. Terrance Lovchik, 105th MPAD

The Kansas Army National Guard is a unique organization that has an ancient history. It was formed at the beginning of the American Revolution, and as a state adjutant general – Army and commander of the Kansas Army National Guard, knew that the 150th anniversary of the Kansas National Guard should be celebrated by the entire state. He understood that this was a momentous occasion that would present an opportunity to promote public interest in the organization while also instilling a sense of pride and accomplishment to members of the Guard both past and present. What he struggled with was how to include the entire state in such an event, when it clearly would have been impossible for him to be everywhere at once.

For the answer to this question, he turned to the 150th Anniversary Committee. This committee was headed by General Small and included other people, both civilian and military, who have been associated with the success of the Kansas National Guard in one way or another for many years. Among these members, Lt. Col. Doug Jacobs found an answer.

We had one of our original orga- nizational meetings for the 150th celebra- tion, it was presented by General Small that he would like to have a way to touch every community the state. He also had several displays of period uni- forms, including uniforms from the Civil War, World War I and World War II. In addition, there are some interactive dis- plays of the various types of headgear worn by National Guardsmen throughout the years so that people can see what it is like to wear a Vietnam War era helmet, an Airmen’s helmet, a helicopter pilot’s hel- met or modern style Kevlar. To broaden the appeal and to acknowl- edge that the Kansas National Guard is in the business of national defense, the mobile museum has periodically included a Light Antitank Weapon and Tubex missile, mirrored, tracked, Wire-guided missile.

We do not typically carry any kind of weapons on the Mobile Museum because it is not appropriate for us to do so. We do not have a secure enough area to keep the Kansas National Guard should be one celebrated anniver- sary celebration; as well as throughout the state of Kansas. The Mobile Museum has also become a critical piece of the Museum of the Kansas National Guard at Forbes Field in Topeka, presenting an opportunity for people outside of Topeka to witness and donate to the preservation of the important history of the Kansas National Guard.

“We have received artifacts out on the road, a lot of photographs,” said Jacobs.

“When I was in Abilene not too long ago I received a letter from Harry Colmery and President Eisenhower. Colmery was the guy who helped draft the GI Bill. In addition to items such as this, the Mobile Museum also collected various artifacts to be placed inside a time capsule that will be reopened when the Kansas National Guard celebrates its 150th anniversary. The time capsule includes seven keys to various cities throughout the state, proclamations and letters of support, a handmade catcher’s mitt from a cowboy in Dodge City, unit patch- es, an MIA flag, a photo of a Rodeo Queen, the actual whistle used during the whistle stop tour and city maps and plan- ning maps to show the developments that will occur over the next 50 years.

The museum was opened up again the next day so the students from Northern Valley Junior High School could come back to the Community Center and ask questions about the military and the National Guard in particular. The students were then given to the school’s principal and teachers.

The event was closed with a moment of silence in remembrance for those who died in battle.
Celebrating 150 years of service

Inspection

August

Museum of the Kansas

Topeka
Special Ceremonies
27, 2005
Kansas National Guard
Topeka, Kan.

235th Regiment
184th Air Refueling Wing
190th Air Refueling Wing
Ceremonial Salute Battery
35th Division Band

Deployed
891st Engineer Battalion
169th Corps Support Battalion
1st Battalion, 635th Armor

by the Kansas National Guard
A ceremonial howitzer fires a round for a cannon salute during the 150th anniversary inspection ceremony. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)


Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, who recently returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom, share their experiences with the public during an open forum. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)

Maj. Monte Weathers (right) chats with re-enactors portraying Soldiers from the World War II era. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)

The 35th Division Band presented a musical retrospective of the Kansas National Guard’s history. Costumed re-enactors read excerpts from diaries and letters as the band played music appropriate to each historical era. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)
A pair of boots, a helmet and a rifle the traditional memorial to Soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of freedom. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)

Chaplain (Col.) Gregg Riley led the memorial service on Sunday morning. See story on Page 2. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)

Citizens and Citizen-Soldiers filled a tent for a memorial service outside the Museum of the Kansas National Guard. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)

A special 150th birthday cake was cut by sabers during a birthday party at the Kansas Statehouse on Aug. 30, 2005. See story on Page 5. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)

Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general, presents a commemorative artillery shell casing to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, commander in chief of the Kansas National Guard. (Photo by Stephen D. Larson)
In the fall of 1944, the Allies had suffered major setbacks—Operation Market Garden had failed to break through in the west and the Russian army had stalled in Poland. The Germans had the momentum and knew it was their last chance to launch an offensive. On Dec. 16, 1944, Germany began a surprise attack in the Ardennes region of France. Infantry began the attack, followed by the Fifth Panzer army and the newly formed and highly elite 6th SS Panzer army. Destroying the Panzer tanks these armies relied upon was the job of American tank busters like those of the Kansas National Guard’s 635th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which distinguished itself in the battle that proved to be the beginning of the end of the German army.

It’s become a mantra in the Army: “Train as you fight.” Usually, this also means that you fight beside the people with whom you’ve trained. For the Soldiers of Kansas’ 69th Infantry Brigade, however, this wasn’t an option.

In May 1968, the Soldiers of the 69th arrived in Fort Carson, Colo., and for the next two years, the unit would fight what was jokingly called the “Battle of Fort Carson,” a battle against boredom and complacency. Still, individual Soldiers would be selected for duty as replacements in Vietnam. In all, nearly 2,400 Soldiers of the 69th Brigade would see action in Vietnam. Hundreds were wounded in combat and 40 made the ultimate sacrifice.

The year was 1991. Tensions in Iraq had escalated, and the first Gulf War began. Not content to sit on the sidelines while other Soldiers and Airmen risked their lives liberating the Kurds and promoting democracy, 500 members of the Kansas Air National Guard’s 190th Air Refueling Wing volunteered for active duty. They deployed to Saudi Arabia on Aug. 10, 1991.

The 190th epitomizes the courage and selfless service of the Kansas National Guard. They took the concept of a “volunteer guard” to heart for service in the Kansas Air National Guard and for active duty in a war zone.
Today...

In the Minuteman tradition, I serve my community, state and nation as Citizen, Soldier and Airman.
I am the Kansas National Guard.
As part of the Kansas National Guard’s 150th anniversary celebration, the commemorative committee designed and produced several items of memorabilia featuring the official 150th anniversary logo, including T-shirts, mugs and a special “challenge coin.” Limited quantities of these items are still available for purchase.

Prints of the commissioned painting “Battle of Missionary Ridge” are also available for purchase by contacting Lt. Col. Mark Stevens (785-274-1188); mark.stevens1@us.army.mil or Lt. Col. Barry Adams (785-274-1070); Barry.Adams@ng.army.mil.

For information on purchasing coins, mugs or T-shirts, contact Lt. Col. Bruce Woolpert (785-274-1024); bruce.woolpert@ng.army.mil. Information on these items is also available on the official 150th anniversary Web site (www.Kansas.gov/ksadjutantgeneral/150th Guard Anniversary).