



KC-AUSA News

Greater Kansas City Chapter of the Association of the United States Army

www.kcausa.org

October 2007

OPERATION SOLDIER ASSIST

More than 100 organizations team up to donate goods, services and labor to remodel and furnish home of medically retired U.S. Army National Guard Soldier in Lowry City, Mo.

The Kansas City, Lowry City and Clinton communities came together the weekends of Sept. 8-9 and 15-16 to make much-needed repairs to the home of a member of the Missouri National Guard who was severely injured in 2003 while serving in Iraq.

One-hundred-two area companies and organizations donated thousands of dollars worth of goods, services and labor to Sgt. George Bellis, his wife, Tricia, and their three children, Canaan, 12, Hunter, 9, and Grace, 4 who live in Lowry City, MO. With volunteer labor and other intangibles, the value of the effort is considered well beyond \$130,000.

Called "Operation Soldier Assist," this humanitarian effort was a community service project of Kansas

See OSA, p4



Photo by Mark H. Wiggins

Scott Balentine, left, the project manager for the KC Chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), presents a symbolic key to the Bellis family after completion of the renovations on their home, Sept. 16. Not visible behind Balentine is Debby Allmon, KC NARI's president. Right from Balentine is DeAnn Wandler, Grantham University's Director of Admissions; the Bellis family; and far right, partially visible is Mike Neer, KC AUSA Chapter President.

KCAUSA Chapter elections during month of November

In November the KCAUSA board will send out ballots to members to elect a new chapter president and executive vice president. Ballots will be sent out to members in both email form and in "snail" mail form for those without a registered, confirmed email address. Members are encouraged to vote for the nominated candidates or to write in another member of their choosing.

The slate of nominated candidates includes Diane Boeger for Executive Vice President and Rick Katz for President. These candidates were selected by the Nomination Committee chaired by Lt. Gen. Robert H. Forman (USA Ret.) and presented to the chapter board of directors in the October board meeting.

ROTC membership campaign underway in Fall 2007

By Lt. Gen. Robert H. Forman, U.S. Army, Ret.
Chairman-KCAUSA Board of Advisors

Your Greater Kansas City Chapter of the Association of the United States Army exists to advance an understanding of national security, the importance of maintaining a strong and ready Army, and to enhance the patriotism of the Greater Kansas City area. Early after the establishment of the Chapter we recognized that an excellent opportunity toward meeting



our goals was to actively support the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs of the area's universities. Thus far our focus has been on providing AUSA cadet memberships to those cadets selected by their military faculty. For example, this past year we supported 280 cadets in our initiative.

I have talked with each of the Professors of Military Science whose

See ROTC, p3

Chapter President's Note

The year continues to move by at breakneck speed. We have accomplished much and continue our mission to promote National Security, the Army, and Patriotism.

Your chapter continues to be a trendsetter. Our largest delegation to the national meeting, 14 participants in all, just returned from the annual meeting in Washington, D.C. where we took 12 awards: Chapter of Excellence; Star Chapter; Superior Chapter; Merit Chapter; Family Programs; Take the Hill; Electronic Chapter; ILW Honor Roll; 232nd Army Birthday; Army History; and, Best Support to the Recruiting Command. The meeting was an exceptional event, as every one has been that I have attended. I highly recommend attending this annual event and strongly urge you to make plans for the 2008 event. You cannot attend these meetings without coming home with fully charged batteries, ready to expand programs to help our Soldiers



Photo courtesy www.army.mil

Secretary of the Army Pete M. Geren kicks off the annual convention of the Association of the United States Army in Washington, D.C., Oct. 8. with emphasis on America's Army as "The Strength of the Nation" and promises to match Army family members' quality of service with improved services and resources.

and families. During the annual meeting we had the opportunity to hear from several exceptional speakers. The keynote speaker was Secretary of the Army Pete Geren; the Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey spoke at the Eisenhower Luncheon; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates spoke at the Sustaining Member Luncheon; and retired Lt. Gen. Julius Becton was honored with the Marshall Award at the George C. Marshall dinner. I recommend you visit the Army's public web site to see and hear all these great leaders. (go to www.army.mil, click on "Audio/Video" at the top of the home page to open the "Army Media Player; then click on the "Channels" tab; then click on the "Ceremonies/Events" channel to see the list of AUSA remarks available)

In September we completed a project that was nine months in planning to remodel the home of a wounded Missouri Guardsman. The project proved to be an exceptional experience

pulling together more than 100 regional companies and organizations to complete the work. We estimated the value of this project to be more than \$137,000. Thanks to Scott Balentine of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry and Diane Boeger of our chapter who made this project such a success. See the accompanying article for more details.

Thanks to our corporate members who empower our chapter. We could not accomplish our local mission in the manner we now enjoy without their support. Keep up the great work.

We are readying an election to bring you new leadership and carry the chapter to new heights. Please participate in the election and give your new leaders the same exceptional support you have given the current executive team.

Now, let's move this chapter to 1000 members and 200 corporate members. As always, I'll see you around town.

Col. Mike Neer, USA Ret.

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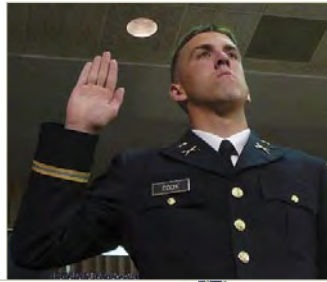
AUSA is a private, non-profit educational organization committed to supporting America's Army--Active, National Guard, Reserve, Civilians, Retirees, and family members. AUSA represents Soldiers by providing a voice for all components of the Army; fostering public support of the Army's role in national security; and providing professional education and information programs.

ROTC, from p1

programs we support and find another “surge” is ongoing. That is a surge in cadet enrolment. What a great and important statement for our young college students. Our nation is at war, and they are responding just as we would hope and expect. This is our opportunity to start the cadets’ affiliation with their professional organization, AUSA. They will receive their individual copy of the Army magazine as well as many of the other very fine AUSA publications and professional benefits.

This program is funded by individual and corporate member donations. One of our individual members got the Chapter off to a good start this year with a donation of \$500. We don’t expect that amount from everyone, though perhaps some of our corporate members can consider matching or exceeding such a generous donation. We do hope that each of you can help. We will need approximately \$5000 to achieve the objectives we have established for our cadets.

Consider sponsoring as many as



Photos Courtesy KU ROTC

Eleven University of Kansas Army ROTC cadets were commissioned in ceremonies in Spring 2007. KU ROTC is one of several area college ROTC programs KCAUSA’s cadet AUSA membership drive will benefit.

you can. This is an important Chapter program. If each member, individual and corporate, contributes, we will certainly accomplish this mission.

Just make your check out to “AUSA Cadet Fund” and send your contribution to KCAUSA, PO Box 27250, Overland Park, KS 66225-7250.

Reflections on our Chapter’s activities

By Lt. Gen. Robert H. Forman, U.S. Army, Ret.
Chairman-KCAUSA Board of Advisors

The president of one the veteran’s organizations that I belong to recently remarked that an organization’s worth is measured not by the size of its membership, but rather the enduring contributions it achieves. That notion caused me to reflect somewhat on our Greater Kansas City Chapter of AUSA. We, should take great pride in the enduring impact our Chapter is achieving in our greater Kansas City community.

Just to list a few contributions:

- Twice each year we provide volunteers in support of the planning and execution of the “**Veterans Stand Down**” in downtown Kansas City. This weekend operation provides needed assistance to countless (mostly homeless) veterans, providing them with clothing, medical checkups, meals, legal assistance and other forms of support.
- We have initiated an annual **Army Birthday Celebration** which provides an

impressive evening of pageantry, a superb dinner, an appropriate guest speaker, and most importantly an evening of close kinship and camaraderie with those whose values synchronize with our Chapter.

- **ROTC Cadet Support** enables our chapter to provide AUSA membership, leader development functions, and library support to the ROTC programs at five area universities.

- **Army Recruiting Support**, a new activity, is enabling several of our corporate members to learn the challenges and successes of Army recruiting and meet on a personal basis these fine Soldiers who make a volunteer Army possible.

- **Chapter Meetings** enable us to bring splendid senior military and civilian executives to speak to our members on current and critical national security subjects.

- Our Chapter **Soldier and Family Support Fund** was established to provide monetary

support to military families as well as wounded Soldiers from the Kansas City area. Through this fund we have been able to provide direct support to recognize the sacrifice of deserving families and Soldiers.

- Our Chapter conducts other **special projects**, the most recent of which was a project to remodel the home of a most deserving veterans. (See the article about **Operation Soldier Assist**.)

These are but a few of my reflections; I know you will have others. Needless to say, all of this could not have happened without the dedicated work of our Chapter President, Mike Neer, the Chapter’s executive board and our supportive members. Also very noteworthy is the encouragement, understanding, and financial support of our Corporate Sponsors. They are absolutely the best I have ever seen.

Take pride in these enduring contributions to our community that your Chapter has achieved. None of this was happening prior to the establishment of our Chapter a short six years ago.

OSA, from p1

City NARI (National Association of the Remodeling Industry), in cooperation with the Greater Kansas City Chapter of the Association of the United States Army (KCAUSA).

Volunteers included 50 members of Kansas City NARI and dozens of KCAUSA volunteers, including soldiers from the Missouri National Guard and the U.S. Army Recruiting Command. Grantham University presented the family a four-year undergraduate scholarship that includes all tuition, fees and books. Nebraska Furniture Mart provided all new appliances, The Home Gallery provided new living room furniture and Micro Center donated a computer. Grantham University, GX Magazine and Home Depot provided approximately \$18,000 to purchase carpet, furniture, furnishing, appliances and other accessories not included in the base scope of work. Conway Freight

and Ryder provided transportation and storage for furniture, supplies and building materials. Lowry City and Clinton-area church groups and civic organizations cooked and delivered meals during the event.

“Operation Soldier Assist is an amazing example of how not one, but two, communities can come together to lift up a family in their time of need,” said KCAUSA Chapter President Mike Neer. “It is our intent that this humanitarian effort serves as an example to other communities and inspires them to help a Soldier and his family who have participated in securing our Nation.”

Improvements to the home included converting the garage into comfortable living space, upgrading the kitchen, improving and repairing two bathrooms, replacing the deck and patio door, repairing or replacing windows, repairing flooring transitions

between rooms, and upgrading electrical service.

“To see so many people come together as a community to bring joy to the Bellis family was very rewarding,” said Scott Balentine, Kansas City NARI “Operations Soldier Assist” Project Manager and owner of Lifestyles Custom Homes & Remodeling, Inc.

During the course of his deployment in Iraq in 2003-2004 for the Missouri National Guard, Bellis was involved in multiple incidents and accidents in which he suffered severe concussions and head injuries. Upon his return home, he was diagnosed with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and was medically discharged from the Missouri National Guard due to the extent of his injuries. Because of Sgt. Bellis’ condition, his wife terminated her employment to care for George and their three children.

For more information about NARI, visit www.remodelingkc.com.

Photos by Mark H. Wiggins



The Operation Soldier Assist banner was proudly displayed at the driveway entrance to the Bellis home. Members of the Missouri Army National Guard volunteered their time to direct traffic around the work site while KCAUSA corporate members from Grantham University manned the volunteer registration table.



Lt. Gen. Forman spends some time with George Bellis in the front yard.



Above, NARI project manager Scott Balentine kicked off each day’s work with a morning meeting, while, right, NARI member Wendall Gartman led the group in a word of prayer before beginning work.



Several church groups and other organizations volunteered to provide food for the project workers. None of the folks on the site went hungry or thirsty. Here Diane Boeger, KCAUSA’s project manager for Operation Soldier Assist, goes through the “chow line.” Diane was singularly responsible for mobilizing the local volunteers.



NARI Member Hank Bednar sports a huge smile while renovating one of the Bellis’ bathrooms.



Col. Pearre from the Missouri National Guard reads some of Sgt. Bellis' awards and decorations aloud to the crowd during the final ceremony--lest they not understand "once a Soldier, always a Soldier."

John Haiduk from Fox News in Kansas City was the lead news reporter. He spent countless hours covering the story. Here he interviews Mike Neer.



NARI member Mike Moore takes a measurement for the new deck on the back of the Bellis' home.

Maj. Gen. Ray Barrett pitches in to help move out the old appliances from the Bellis' kitchen.



Newly appointed Missouri State National Guard Command Sergeant Major Matthew Jenkins comes to check on the work at the Bellis home.

Tricia Bellis brings George out to see all his hunting trophies and military memorabilia newly hung in his new "man cave." This space was formerly an old garage on the back of the house.



KCAUSA conducts first ever "Operation Lunch Break" in support of recruiters



Photo by Diane Boeger

Army Recruiters at the 7510 State Avenue Recruiting Station in Kansas City, Kan. show their appreciation for KCAUSA's "Operation Lunch Break" in a photo opportunity.

In the spirit of AUSA providing support for our Soldiers, the Kansas City Chapter initiated "Operation Lunch Break" to give a boost to our local recruiters during the summer months. Several of our corporate members participated by sponsoring a "lunch break" for local Army Recruiting Stations: JE Dunn Construction Company sponsored lunch for the Olathe Recruiting Station on Strang Line Road in Olathe; Pioneer Services send lunches to the Army Recruiters at the Waldo Recruiting Station on Broadway Avenue in Kansas City; and Grantham University sent lunches to all the recruiters from all branches of service in the Zona Rosa Armed Services Career Center in north Kansas City.

Armed Forces Bank of Leavenworth took this challenge to a whole new level by volunteering to offer lunches to all 134 recruiters in the Kansas City Army Recruiting Battalion. AUSA worked to find a local restaurant who would partner with Armed Forces Bank. Chipotle Mexican Grill stepped up and donated free burritos to all the recruiters while Armed Forces Bank bought gift cards from Chipotle to cover the cost of the rest of lunch. KCAUSA then packaged these lunches in brightly colored sacks, added candy and a Recruiter T-shirt and delivered the lunches all over the Kansas City area to Army recruiters on August 1.

AUSA would like to thank those generous corporate members for their participation. Their efforts were very much appreciated by the Kansas City Recruiting Battalion. Special thanks goes to Diane Boeger, KCAUSA board member, who developed and delivered on a great idea.

In a recent board meeting, KCAUSA board members agreed to make Operation Lunch Break an annual event for the chapter to recognize the efforts of our Army recruiters to provide quality Soldiers in support of our nation's security.

Educating the community about the ESGR program



Photo by Diane Boeger

Seated from left, Jerome Wilson, Grantham University, and William Johnsmyer from Shook-Hardy-Bacon sign their "Statements of Support" for their Guard and Reserve employees as part of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program during a KCAUSA breakfast meeting Sept. 6. Looking on is Brig. Gen. Tracy Beckett (USA Ret.), the Missouri State ESGR Executive Committee Chairman. Not visible behind Beckett is the Chairman of the Kansas ESGR Executive Committee, Brig. Gen. Jim AuBuchon (USA Ret.). KCAUSA sponsored this breakfast meeting with representatives from the two state ESGR organizations to help educate employers in the Kansas City area about the ESGR program.

Advertising opportunity available to KCAUSA members and corporate members

KCAUSA continues to provide assistance and support for the 308th Psychological Operations Company from Belton, Mo., during their deployment.

One of the 308th's unit family readiness group projects is to raise money to pay for 300 yearbooks to commemorate the unit's deployment as part of Psychological Operations Taskforce 10.

The yearbook will include formal photos of the 308th Soldiers prior to deployment and photos taken in country during the deployment. Advertising space in the yearbook is being sold to defray publishing expenses and make these memorable yearbooks available to all deployed Soldiers at no cost.

KCAUSA members and corporate members interested in supporting this project by placing an ad in the

yearbook or by making a contribution may contact Marcia Crabtree at 314-638-8437 or email her at:

marcia.p.crabtree@us.army.mil

Please reserve your space or make a contribution no later than November 20. Ads must be full color 300dpi in jpeg format.

Please remember this is not a KCAUSA initiative, but merely a chance to support a military unit.

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KCAUSA continues to provide support to units in 89th RRC

On September 8-9, Pete Murdock, a KCAUSA board member and a representative from "Military OneSource," briefed the 89th Regional Readiness Command during their family readiness group training for the 603rd Military Police Company in Belton, Mo. The 603rd recently deployed to Iraq and has Soldiers assigned to the unit who live in several different states.

Murdock provided the group with information on how the Kansas City chapter can help support the unit and the Family Readiness Group during the deployment as well as Soldier and family support services available from *Military OneSource*.

Restaurant conducts 7th annual 'Military Appreciation Monday'

For the past 6 years, Golden Corral has been honoring the U.S. Military with a free "thank you" dinner and beverage at any Golden Corral restaurant on Military Appreciation Monday (first Monday after Veteran's Day). This year, Golden Corral has designated Monday, November 12, 2007, from 5 to 9 pm, to honor any person who has ever served in the United States Military.

From the first Military Appreciation Monday in 2001 to the present, Golden Corral has donated 1.5 million free "thank you" meals and \$1.9 million dollars to the Disabled American Veterans.

Events Calendar

November 10

232nd Birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps

November 11

Veteran's Day

November

KCAUSA Chapter Leadership Elections

December 7

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 16

Battle of the Bulge Anniversary

January (specific date/location TBD)

Chapter Membership Breakfast with the Sergeant Major of the Army, Kansas City, Mo.

February (specific date/location TBD)

KCAUSA Chapter Reception in honor of the chapter's Corporate Members, Kansas City, Mo.

June 14, 5:30 p.m.

KC Chapter of AUSA Army Birthday Celebration, Guest Speaker- Gen. Eric Shinseki, 34th Chief of Staff of the Army, Westin Crown Center Hotel, Kansas City, Mo.

First Thursday of every month

KCAUSA Board Meeting. Specific times/locations are announced each month. All members are welcome.

More details on scheduled events are always available on the KCAUSA web site at www.kcausa.org.

KCAUSA assists in Summer Stand Down 2007

Thanks to Robert Forman, Mike Neer, and the families of Diane Boeger, Rick Katz, Rich Ellison, and Mary Lewis, plus several volunteers from the Meadowbrook Insurance Company, our homeless veterans received many benefits during the Summer Stand Down June 23 and 24.

Over this two-day period, the veterans received food, clothing, toiletries, showers, haircuts, and the opportunity to receive medical, legal, and job counseling services.

The KCAUSA group plus many other volunteers helped 760 men, women and dependents have a better day. In looking around and observing the participants on both days it was



Courtesy Photo

easy to visualize the hardships most of our homeless veterans have endured.

There is another stand down planned for November 3 and KCAUSA hopes to be well represented at that event also. Thanks to all the volunteers who participated in this event and remember we can always use more volunteers.



Chapters to vote on 2008 AUSA Resolutions

After in-depth briefings from the senior Army leadership, AUSA's Resolution Committee crafted the resolutions for 2008 during the recent Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The 2008 Resolutions will focus AUSA's efforts as the voice for the Army on Capitol Hill for the coming year and will ensure administration and congressional leaders hear the AUSA's messages.

The resolutions for this year spotlight the unique and complex challenges facing the Army after more

than six years of war. They include issues such as the Soldier and the family, military compensation, health care, retirement, Army civilian personnel, homeland defense, resourcing the Army, manning the force, and reserve component forces.

Voting on the 2008 Resolutions by AUSA Chapters started Oct. 22 and will end at noon on Nov. 5.

Once that process is complete, the 2008 Resolutions will be available for viewing on AUSA's website, www.ausea.org.

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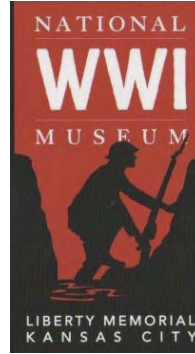
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