NORTH DAKOTA
GUARDIAN
THE Happy Hooligans
Volume 2, Issue 6
June 2009

EPIC FLOODS

Guardsmen, Communities Come Together to Battle Rising Waters

» 24-Page Special Issue!

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North Dakota Guardian

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Digital photos should be at least 300 dpi.

On the Cover

Community Commitment: North Dakota National Guard members mix with civilian flood-fighting volunteers; packing the floor of the Fargo Dome in an effort to fill sandbags used to block the rising waters of the Red River, Fargo, N.D., March 24. (Photo by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp)

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Comments from North Dakota National Guard Leadership

Gov. John Hoeven & Maj. Gen. David A. Sprynczynatyk
North Dakota National Guard
Commander in Chief and Adjutant General

Thank-you for being there

The winter of 2008-2009 saw record snowfall which led to record flooding all across North Dakota. From our largest cities to our rural communities, North Dakota Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen were there, responding in record numbers, working shoulder to shoulder with fellow North Dakotans to stem the rising waters. From Fargo to Lisbon, Valley City to Kindred, Bismarck to Burlington, Guardsmen stepped up in record numbers to help protect lives as well as homes, businesses and infrastructure.

The list of accomplishments is truly impressive and everyone greatly contributed to our extremely successful flood fight. Guard members filled, transported and emplaced sandbags, patrolled countless miles of dikes, manned traffic control points, and pumped water. They constructed earthen dikes, repaired roads and buried dead cattle helping protect citizens from the spread of disease. Guard members employed new flood fighting tools and technology, erecting HESCO barriers and Rapid Deployment Flood Walls (RDFW) as well as emplacing giant one-ton sandbag by air and heavy equipment. When an ice jam caused the waters of the Missouri River to threaten the Bismarck-Mandan area, you assisted contractors in destroying the jam by drilling holes in the ice and preparing the demolition charges not once, but twice.

Guard members also ran produced electrical power with portable generators, helped organizing civilian volunteers, and manned quick reaction forces, reacting at a moments notice to breeches in the levies and dikes. Everywhere our soldiers and airmen were on duty, they were greeted with respect and were greatly appreciated by the folks that benefited from your efforts

They assisted with evacuations, patrolled in bridge boats, and provided security. They flew over 100,000 flight miles in helicopters and fixed wing aircraft, transporting key personnel and equipment, providing critical aerial reconnaissance of flooded areas and salted rivers to promote melting in ice gridlocked areas.

Dozens of Guard members worked behind the scenes processing Soldiers and Airmen for duty, arranging lodging, preparing meals, tracking personnel, transporting equipment, serving as liaison to civil authorities, and planning and executing operations. Soldiers and Airmen contributing in a hundred ways not easily visible to the public. The leadership exhibited at every level was clearly visible and instrumental in your achievements and mission success.

The eyes of the Nation were on North Dakota during many of the days this fight, often featured on national news and in foreign countries. You responded in record numbers, ready to assist your neighbors and communities as the first military responders. North Dakota served as a beacon to all Americans demonstrating that success against overwhelming odds is possible with hard work, cooperation and 'can-do' spirit.

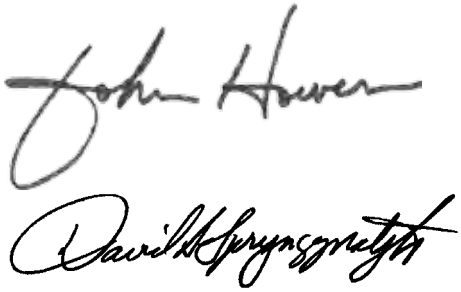
Your Families, Employers, Universities and Colleges stood beside you in your fight. Their efforts were an important component of your success and should be acknowledged and thanked whenever possible.

As your Commander-in-Chief and Adjutant General, we are extremely proud of all of our Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen. The North Dakota National Guard has again proven, that it is a great military organization, highly skilled and motivated.

When your state and community called on you, you were ready, responding with over 2,000 Guardsmen, bringing all of your energy to the fight.

You have lived up to the National Guard motto, "Always Ready, Always There".

Thank-you for being there when your communities and the people of North Dakota needed you the most.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

From right to left Kevin Baumgard, of the Army Corp. of Engineers St. Paul district office, points out flood fighting issues and concerns to North Dakota adjutant general Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota Governor John Hoeven, and U.S. Congressman Earl Pomeroy April 13, as they stand on top of a levee built along the Sheyenne River, on the N.D. highway 27 bridge in downtown Lisbon, N.D.

The Many Days of Operation Rollback Water

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Story by Staff Sgt. Billie Jo Lorius
116th Public Affairs Detachment

It's been a year for the record books. After a winter that left in its wake heaps of snow that covered much of North Dakota, Mother Nature next turned to spring flooding in an attempt to dissolve the resolve of the state's inhabitants.

Rising waters began plaguing much of the state by mid-March. But, even before the ice began to melt and the rivers swelled, the North Dakota National Guard was working in partnership with the Department of Emergency Services (DES) and other state agencies to prepare for the worst. Plans were drawn up, forces were readied weeks in advance and the N.D. National Guard stood ready to engage the flood fight.

"Based on the amount of snow the state received over the winter months, we knew that when it melted, we needed to be ready with equipment, people and fortitude to take on any flooding that the state might incur," said Lt. Col. Jon Erickson, N.D. National Guard deputy operations officer — director of military support.

The strategic planning and readiness paid off. The Guard was first called upon March 21 and immediately set up a 24/7 Joint Operations Center (JOC) in Bismarck to create a central command post where needs could be assessed and missions assigned to areas in need of assistance.

About 200 Soldiers and Airmen immediately began working hand-in-hand with citizen responders to fill millions of sandbags. Based on the river crest predictions by the National Weather Service, Fargo was an area that needed miles of dikes to protect the city or face imminent flooding with the potential to wash away a good portion of the city.

Soon after, flood threats began popping up all over North Dakota's map. It seemed no city was off limits. To create a smooth operation, with the Guard able to respond statewide to the flooding, 24-hour flood operations were established in Minot, Fargo, Valley City as well as in Bismarck.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Left, Staff Sgt. Wayne Baumbach, of the 119th Communications Flight, wades out of flood water after checking the safety of a rural civilian resident April 1 near Harwood, N. Dak. Baumbach was part of a quick response force team tasked with checking on rural civilian residents in a flood ravaged area along the Red River on the North Dakota – Minnesota border. Right, Guardsmen respond to a farm southeast of Kindred to deliver sandbags for ring-diking.

Area of Operations - East was based at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Fargo, with a second operations center in the Valley City Armory. Area of Operations - East coordinated and managed the Guard's flood-fighting support in the following counties: Pembina, Walsh, Grand Forks, Trail, Cass, Richland, Steele, Ransom, Sargent, LaMoure and Dickey.

Area of Operations - West was based at the Minot Armed Forces Reserve Center with an operations center also in Bismarck. Area of Operations - West managed the remainder of the state. The Military Service Center in Bismarck, with direct connections to Family Assistance Centers around the state, supported military members and their families affected by the flood.

"One thing I've learned is you don't take knives to a gun fight and you don't fight floods without the Guard," said Dr. Tim Mahoney, Fargo deputy mayor.

Fighting the Flood

As momentum gained in the flood fight and the water kept rising, Soldiers and Airmen volunteered to help their fellow neighbors and citizens. Guardsmen assisted in filling sandbags and placed them around homes, churches and schools in an effort to stop the intensifying flood from threatening life and property.

On March 22, the first Guard-assisted evacuation happened as Black Hawk helicopters evacuated two families at Carson and New Leipzig. Homeowners also were stranded in Linton, and the Guard reacted with 20 Soldiers to evacuate homeowners.

Two days later, a Presidential Disaster Declaration was signed signifying that the entire state was under an emergency. Guardsmen continued their operations with 50 Guardsmen responding to the Bismarck and Mandan flood situation on the nearby Missouri River. Over the course of two days, the Guardsmen assisted with ice demolition operations to break up an ice jam that was causing flooding in southwestern North Dakota.

At the same time, 400 more Guardsmen reported to Fargo to help additional areas of the city. By March 27, there were more than 1,300 Guardsmen in Fargo as the Red River crested at 40.6 feet and the city ordered a partial evacuation.

As the water rose, so did the steadfast commitment of Soldiers and Airmen throughout the state. The Guard was now fully engulfed in flood fighting operations with specific specialties to respond where and when needed. There were Soldiers and Airmen who operated equipment; bulldozers and heavy machinery needed to move dirt and build dikes in strategic areas. The N.D. National Guard partnered with communities to face the water and win.

The N.D. National Guard's Unit Ministry Team and military chaplains were also available in Valley City, Lisbon and Fargo. The teams gave spiritual support, conducted morale and welfare checks and provided counseling to individuals in need. There were Soldiers and Airmen who cooked and served meals, and troops who captured video, photographs and stories about what the Guard was doing to placate the flood. Everyone had a job and rolled up their sleeves, resolute to accomplish the task on hand.

Also vital to the Guard's flood fighting offense were the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) teams, who responded to dike leaks or breaches.

As April began, the QRFs were placed where the Guard determined the biggest threats were located. The biggest flood threat areas were in Harwood, Oxbow/Hickson, Kindred, Fargo and West Fargo. Eight minutes was the average response time for the QRFs to move from the staging area to the site of a leak, breach or other need. These teams allowed the Guard to be ready with the appropriate personnel with the equipment to get the job done. Major breaches or dike leaks that the QRF teams were called to respond to include:

- March 27 – Responded to a major dike breach in Fargo, reacting quickly to keep the area secure
- March 31 – Overland flood threat near Kindred caused by the Sheyenne River
- April 12 – Major breach in Valley City

At the peak of the flood fighting efforts on March 31, the Guard has responded with more than 2,400 National Guardsmen; and was supported by Guardsmen from six other states to include Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Montana, Iowa and Missouri as well as assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army.

By mid-April, the Guard had assisted with dike patrols, evacuating residents, transport and placing; providing traffic control points, and presence patrols; aviation support to include reconnaissance and ice salting to promote melting; providing and operating water pumps, breaking ice jams and performing others missions as required.

By April 8, the Guard had ramped up its presence in Valley City and Lisbon. Some of the action in western North Dakota was getting a reprieve, and all eyes were on Valley City. On April 13, the National Guard responded to the second breach in Valley City as a Black Hawk UH-60 helicopter placed 20 one-ton sandbags to stop the water.

The continued flooding in Valley City resulted in a failure of the main sewer system on April 17. Following instructions of city officials to conserve water, the 119th Civil Engineer Squadron (CES) was called in to set up portable showers, further contributing to Guardsmen's needs while on flood duty.

"Considering the fact that we are operating in an environment with no functioning sewer system, limited water supply, and few creature comforts, the ability to get a hot shower in a clean well-functioning facility is invaluable," said Capt. JoDee Aubol-Haining, a company commander in the 231st BSB.

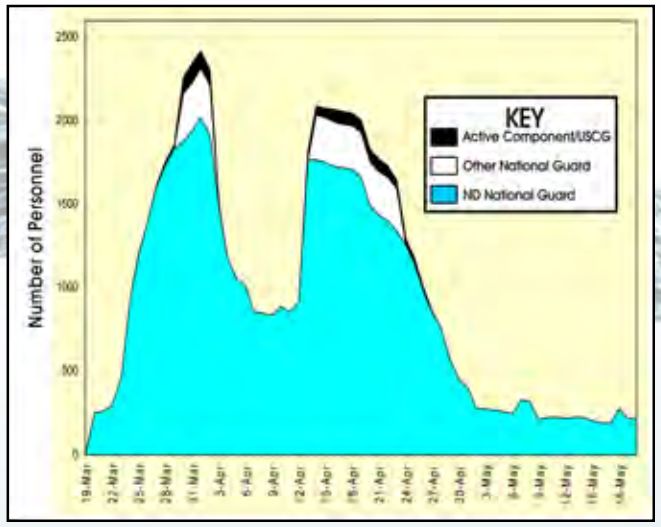
During the flood fight, a toll-free hotline was established to assist with questions. Numerous businesses provided food and beverages to support Guard members working around the clock in North Dakota to fight the flood.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Spc. Ian Schmidt, left, pries sandbags loose from a frozen pile of snow and passes them along a human chain to Spc. Shane Saari, both of the 164th Engineer Battalion, to build sandbag dikes March 25 in Fargo, N.D. Coverage from national media outlets often noted the resilience and optimism show by communities during the flood fight. The National Guard was just one of the components included in a massive effort to stave off the waters of the Red River, as well as areas across the state.

"We were able to sustain a long, sometimes daunting mission, because of the teamwork and community effort that went into the flood fighting efforts," said Maj. Gen. David A. Sprynczynatyk, N.D. National Guard adjutant general. "This was a partnership with communities, state and federal agencies that was coupled with the resilience of the people of North Dakota to commit to fighting this flood together. The flooding was harsh and the damage it caused will leave a lasting mark, but as a whole, our efforts were successful to minimize the loss of life, limb and property."

As the waters begin to dissipate, the state now undergoes its clean up efforts and steps back to tally the toll of the flood-ravaged communities. One thing is for sure, the people of North Dakota will mark this year down in the history books and tell stories of its significance for years to come.



Fighting the Flood of 2009: A Timeline of Events

March 21 —

- **Joint Operation Center establishes 24/7 operations in Bismarck, N.D.**
- **200 Soldiers and Airmen work with citizens to fill millions of sandbags in Fargo**

March 22 —

- **JTJF-East established in Fargo - 24/7 operations**
- **Black Hawk helicopter evacuates two families in Carson and New Leipzig**
- **20 Soldiers respond to Linton, N.D., to evacuate stranded homeowners**

Air Assault

Guardsmen Fight Floods From Above

By Sgt. Ann Knudson
Joint Force Headquarters

Aviation played an essential role in flood operations this spring in North Dakota. Airplanes and helicopters moved people and equipment swiftly to where they were needed. Helicopters airlifted people from flooded homes and took explosives experts out to blow up ice dams. They enabled the N.D. National Guard and civil authorities to inspect and photograph dikes and floods from above.

Remotely-controlled Predators provided real-time persistent surveillance; fed directly to the Joint Operations Center (JOC). Helicopters lifted and placed giant sandbags to plug eroding dikes and spillways, and may have saved two dams from failure near Kathryn and LaMoure.

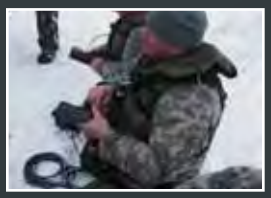
Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

A National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter emplaces several one-ton sandbags on the spillway of the Clausen Springs Dam near Kathryn, N.D. April 15. The one-ton sandbags were lowered and positioned into a place on the dam spillway to divert over-flowing water away from an eroding area of the dam, caused by high water levels.

March 24 —
- **Presidential Disaster Declaration for entire state**
- **Bismarck/Mandan flood emergency - 50 Guardsmen report to support sandbag operations**
- **4000 additional Guardsmen report to Fargo**

March 25 —
- **816th and 818th Engineer Companies along with the 112th Aviation Battalion are put on state active duty**

March 25-26 —
- **Demolitions expert detonates ice jam on the Missouri River in Bismarck - River level recedes from 16 ft. to 14 ft.**



March 27 —
- **Fargo orders partial evacuation - Red River crests at 40.6 ft in Fargo**
- **QRF responds to major dike breach in Fargo**

Soldiers from the 188th Engineer, based out of Wahpeton, look on as a UH-60 Black Hawk slingloads a 1-ton sandbag at Clausen Springs Dam in Barnes county April 16 .

Sgt. Jill Fischer

The N.D. National Guard's aviation assets consist of smaller scout helicopters (OH-58s), larger Black Hawks (UH-60s) and small fixed wing planes (C21s and a C12).They were augmented by 17 Black Hawks and ten Chinooks (CH-47) from the National Guards of Montana, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin, and from the active Army at Ft. Riley, Kan.

Also joining the flood fight were seven orange Dolphins (HH-65) from the Coast Guard in Louisiana and Michigan, a couple of twin-engine Hueys (UH-1N) from the Minot Air Force Base, and an aircraft maintenance team (AVCRAD) from Missouri. Out-of-state aircraft were crewed and staffed by their own personnel.

All together, the military aviators racked up more flying in six weeks of floods than North Dakota normally does in a year: 385 missions, almost 1000 flight hours and over 100,000 gallons of fuel.

In addition, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) flew five airplanes in 134 sorties, totaling 324 hours, with some help from two Minnesota and two South Dakota planes. The CAP captured 6,235 images, accessible at http://tinyurl.com/cap09flood and http://tinyurl.com/nd09flood.

"Our airplanes flew out of Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, Dickinson and Minot. We flew and observed conditions from west to east, which includes the Souris (Mouse) River, Little Missouri River, Knife River, Heart River, Missouri River, Cannonball River, James River, Cheyenne River, Red River and all tributaries to each," said Maj. Darrel Pittman, CAP air operations branch director, who was stationed in the State Emergency Operations Center. "Most of our 300 members put in a lot of hours in addition to their normal work duties to help in the effort. I'm very proud of our volunteer members."

The Predators belong to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Air and Marine Operations. They flew over 30 hours and used 735 gallons of fuel. "Our synthetic aperture radar took radar images of rivers, which provided information on ice jams, dikes and critical infrastructure," said John Priddy, deputy director of air operations.

A very useful innovation in the flood fight was the one-ton sandbag, lifted and placed by Black Hawks and Chinooks. For example, at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 29, a Fargo dike broke and Oak Grove School went under. A secondary dike limited the water's spread, but the break needed to be plugged. At noon, a North Dakota UH-60 (Blackhawk) helicopter with a cargo hook started lowering one-ton sandbags into the breach.

"The Emergency Operations Center told us roughly where to go and there was a Quick Reaction Force on the ground with an FM radio that helped us place them exactly. The crew chief, in back, directed the flight crew how to move the chopper, and the QRF told us when to release," said Chief Warrant Officer Five Monte Myers, the aircraft commander. The co-pilot was Maj. Paul Helten, his

March 29 —

- **Dike breach at Oak Grove School in Fargo. 1,380 Guardsmen in Fargo and 1,937 total throughout the state.**

March 31 —

- **Military presence peaks at more than 2,400 - Number includes N.D. Guardsmen and Guardsmen from six other states.**
- **QRF responds to overland flood threat near Kindred (Sheyenne River)**

April 1 —

- **Guard follows Red River north to Grand Forks, Pembina and Drayton**

April 3 —

- **Number of Guard personnel on title 10 orders drops below 1,000**

crew chief was Sgt. Monte Weiand, and Staff Sgt. Eric Heupel was crew.

Since the flood began, the aviators had been thinking about the potential for dike breaches and worked to figure out what they could do about it.

"A Minnesota pilot, Maj. Greg Fix, told us about doing something similar to what had been done on the levees after Katrina," said Myers. "We modified it and made it work."

The aircrew got feedbags rated for 2,200 pounds from an elevator, then filled them half full to weigh 2,000 pounds each. Sand is heavier than grain, so half a bag's worth of sand made a one-ton load. They rigged a cable system with a 50' line and a remote release and then practiced lifting, lowering and releasing, just in case.

"You can't drop them, or they'd break," said Myers. "You hover and lower them gently, and then release."

When the call came, they were ready, and placed eleven one-ton sandbags in an hour and a half.

"We basically built a dike system," said Myers.

The one-ton sandbags were also used in Jamestown, Valley City and other places. The most significant uses were at two dams: Clausen Springs dam, near Kathryn, and Lake LaMoure dam, on Cottonwood Creek near the city of LaMoure. Both dams filled until water flowed over their emergency spillways. Both spillways started eroding, threatening the integrity of the dams, and the town of Kathryn was evacuated. Black Hawks placed one-ton sandbags, Chinooks placed both sandbags and pallets of riprap, and heavy machinery pushed rock into the spillways to slow the erosion.

After several days of work, both dams were saved. 519 one-ton sandbags were used on the spillways, 108 at Clausen Springs and 411 at LaMoure. 559 were used altogether, the equivalent of about 30,000 ordinary sandbags.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Spc. Zach Landis, of the 832nd Aviation Medical Detachment, makes adjustments to river ice salting equipment as it is attached to a UH-60 Black Hawk aircraft March 29, north of West Fargo, N.D. The salt was lifted off the ground using a sling load and delivered onto ice jams in the Sheyenne River in an effort to remove blockage of the river flow.

Birds Eye View: Predator pilot Jonathon Johnson, an air interdiction agent for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, left, pilots a Predator aircraft in the ground control station for the Predator B unmanned aerial systems (UAS) April 3, at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection UAS operations center at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., as UAS instructor pilot Bob Concannon operates the sensor controls. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection Predator was a new high tech tool being used to help in flood fight planning for the first time in North Dakota. The Predator flew and observed flood dangers from the Garrison Dam on the Missouri River, on an easterly pattern over the North Dakota towns of Jamestown, Valley City, Wahpeton, Fargo and Grand Forks. It transmited imagery to technicians who were able to forward the information to city administrators tasked with planning and maintaining local flood fights. The imagery collected by the Predator was used for positioning of N.D. National Guard flood fighting personnel and resources in North Dakota at the request of the local authorities and in coordination with N.D. National Guard leadership. Ice jams could be seen from the predator as they collected on rivers causing potential flooding.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

April 8 —
- **Significant Guard presence begins in Valley City/ Lisbon (Sheyenne River)**

April 10 —
- **70 Guardsmen report to Minot/Burlington - Flood preparations increase in Souris River Basin**

April 12 —
- **QRF team responds to major breach in Valley City**

April 13 —
- **Black Hawk places 20 1-ton sanbags in response to second breach in Valley City**
- **Interstate 94 closed from Bismarck to Jamestown - Road flooded East of Fargo**

April 14 —
- **24/7 Operations Center established in Valley City (450 Soldier and Airmen on duty)**

Pulling the plug

Guardsmen Assist With Ice Jam Demolition on Missouri River

Story and photos by Sgt. Jonathan Haugen
Joint Force Headquarters

At noon on March 23, 2009, the Burleigh county emergency manager issued a civil emergency message advising Fox Island residents in south Bismarck to voluntarily evacuate the area due to rapidly rising water of the Missouri River. More voluntary evacuation orders would eventually follow for other parts of the city. An aerial reconnaissance determined that the major cause of the flooding was a massive ice jam on the River about 11 miles downstream.

"We knew the problem was an ice jam near Fort Lincoln State Park," said Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, adjutant general for the North Dakota National Guard. "The ice was acting like a dam causing the river to back up and overflow its banks."

Emergency officials began checking into possible solutions to solve the ice jam in order to get the water flowing again. Hydraulic excavators (HYEX) were considered but their limited reach would not be able to break up ice in the center of the river. Demolition was determined to be the best course of action.

The North Dakota Department of Emergency Services hired Advanced Explosives Demolition (AED) from Idaho to breakup the ice jam. Lisa Kelly, of AED, said the company has blasted ice jams in other states, but more often uses explosives to bring down high-rise buildings, smokestacks and bridges.

On March 25, AED, assisted by 20 members of the North Dakota Army National, went to work drilling holes with ice augers, prepping and placing explosive charges. Military demolition materials were secured from Camp Grafton's ammunition supply point and Black Hawk helicopters transported the contractors and Guardsmen to the ice jam along with their equipment. There were two blasts, one at about 3 p.m. and later, a second blast at about 11 p.m. when it was determined that the jam was not sufficiently destroyed.

Staff Sgt. Shawn Lehde, of the Joint Force Headquarters, perpares explosives at the edge of the Missouri River March 25.

Explosions on the Missouri River March 25.

"We drilled about 140 holes for the day blast spaced about 15 – 20 feet apart," according to Capt. Doug Larsen, officer-in-charge of the team. "We drilled 100 holes for the night blast, reducing the hole spacing to about 10 feet."

Overall, about 300 pounds of Composition 4 explosive, or 'C-4' as it is commonly called by the military and 4800 feet of detonation cord was used for the mission.

"About half our team consisted of experienced combat engineers used to handling and executing demolition missions," said Master Sgt. Dennis Beck. "This operation was tough but extremely satisfying because we helped serve our community."

The most difficult and hazardous part of the operation was venturing out on the ice, in order to drill holes for the demolition charges in frigid weather conditions.

"We had to work carefully on top of the ice, hoping that the jam didn't break away and sweep us under the water," said Sgt. 1st Class Marvin Beck. "Everyone was tethered together and safety was paramount".

On March 26, as the team prepared for a third blasting mission, officials announced that the demolition efforts were successful because the river started to successful flow under and over the ice jam, rapidly lowering the water.

Over the next few days, Black Hawk helicopters spread about 35,000 tons of a 'sand-salt' mixture to help promote melting.

April 18 —
- **Joint Task Force - East is released from direct support to the city of Fargo. Heavy QRFs remain on standby at the 119th Wing.**

April 20 —
- **1-ton sandbag mission concludes on Cottonwood Creek Dam in LaMoure after 272 bags were placed by a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.**

April 23 —
- **339 Guardsmen in Jamestown ready to respond to dike breaches and emergency evacuations. Dike patrols and sandbagging operations continue 24/7.**

MORE THAN A FLICKR

N.D. Guard Begins Using New Media During Flood for Information Engagement

By Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson
Joint Force Headquarters

We're all a-Twitter about getting a little Face(book) time with You(Tube).

The N.D. National Guard now has an official Facebook page for sharing information, YouTube and Flickr sites for posting videos and photos, respectively, and a Twitter account for sharing links and exchanging short bits of information. The Guard's Public Affairs Office launched these social media tools just before flood operations began. It's a new way to conduct information engagement, allowing the Guard to communicate many of the same things, just in a slightly different manner.

"We all receive information and news from a number of avenues in today's global information environment. The social media sites your National Guard is utilizing are an immediate way to communicate the dazzling things done every day by North Dakota Soldiers and Airmen. Check them out, share them and help spread the word, the North Dakota National Guard is what others benchmark themselves against," said Capt. Dan Murphy, public information officer for the North Dakota National Guard.

Plans had been made to implement new media tools before the flood, and the stepped up operations simply offered the Guard more avenues to showcase it's efforts during the massive call-ups.

During the flood, Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, N.D. National Guard adjutant general, took advantage of another new media tool for information engagement, and entered the blogosphere, conducting a teleconference with a number of military and civilian bloggers.

"Today was the first time that a National Guard adjutant general has directly engaged bloggers to tell our story in a homeland defense mission," said Jack Harrison, the director of public affairs at the National Guard Bureau, after the April 2 interviews.

Sprynczynatyk took questions from the phone and social media sites, such as Twitter, as he talked about flood response efforts. He embraced the roundtable as another opportunity to "get the word out."

"It's important that we use these tools to communicate with our publics," Sprynczynatyk said later. "As a responsive, change-centric force, we need to understand that this is not a fad but a new way of doing business in our technology-based society."

According to Lindy Kyzer, who works for the U.S. Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs and coordinated the blogger interviews, several hundred live listeners typically participate. Afterward, interviews are posted to iTunes, where they may be downloaded.

The North Dakota Guard's other social networking sites continued to gain a broader following as the flood increased interest in Soldiers' and Airmen's activities. More than 100 "fans" were on Facebook and more than 150 "followers" on Twitter after just the first few weeks online. Numbers have since climbed to about 200 fans and more than 400 followers, and the views on YouTube and Flickr are quickly approaching the 10,000 mark.

"As with any progressive organization, we must stay current and relevant in the way we communicate not only to our Soldiers and Airmen, but also to the public at large," said Capt. Penny Ripperger, 119th Wing public affairs officer. "Using social media effectively is a way that we can bridge that gap and communicate with the younger generation and hopefully inspire and connect with those people who are thinking about joining the National Guard. Communicating through social media is quickly becoming the norm; whether we like it or not, we need to lead the way in the military or we will be left behind."

N.D. National Guard Official Online Sites

www.ndguard.com
www.119wg.ang.af.mil
www.youtube.com/ndnationalguard
www.flickr.com/photos/ndguard
www.twitter.com/ndnationalguard
www.facebook.com, search Pages for "North Dakota National Guard"

April 26 —
- 815th Eng. Co. and 191st Military Police Co. are released from state active duty in Valley City. Soldiers volunteer to continue in flood fight.

May —
- The Sixty-First Legislative Assembly of North Dakota signs a senate concurrent resolution recognizing and requesting the Governor to proclaim June 14, 2009, as a day of recognition to express appreciation for the great and noble effort to fight and clean up after the floods during the spring of 2009.

"One thing I've learned: You don't take a knife to a gun fight and y

"THIS IS WHAT I JOINED THE GUARD FOR."

— Pfc. Mitch Strand, Minot, a member of the 957th Engineers who coaches the Sawyer High School boys' basketball team

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Faces *of the* Flood

From left to right, Kevin Baumgard, of the U.S. Army C
Sprynczynatyk, N.D. Gov. John Hoeven, and ex-Lisbon

In recent months, I have visited with your Soldiers in the war zone in Iraq and I have visited with them as they patrolled the dikes during a flood fight in Fargo. It makes me so proud to know that their service makes such a difference for our state and country."

— U.S. Sen. Byron Dorgan

Pfc. Curtis Schestler, of the 2-285th Aviation Assault Battalion, left, and Staff Sgt. Bryan Hensel, of the 119th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, walk flood levees Jamestown, N.D. May 16.

"It's kind of fun because we're managing our own area
gotten personal because we don't want to leave this s

— Spc. Joshua Klundt, Jamestown, a member of the 817th Eng
who patrolled dikes in Fargo, Valley City

"The assistance the National Guard provided in the air and on the ground was critical in winning this fight."

— Justo "Tito" Hernandez, federal coordinating officer, FEMA

Spc. Joshua Klundt, of the 817th Engineer Company (Sappers), carries a roll of plastic for use in sandbag dike building April 8 in Valley City, N.D., as Valley City State University students pile the sandbags in place behind him.

"The week was extremely tough on me emotion
any time with him and he was already growing
thinking that I needed to be doing what I wa
I kept telling myself what a great story this

*— Senior Airman Dominic Ste.Marie, 119th Wing, wh
was born five weeks premature and admitted to the neo
Ste.Marie continued to volunteer for flood duty, going betwe*

you don't fight a flood without the National Guard." — Fargo Vice-Mayor Dr. Tim Mahoney

re is no alternative in this fight but victory. We have got to win believe we will win it, and it is because of the extraordinary it of the people of this community."

— U.S. Sen. Kent Conrad

Photos by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Corps of Engineers' St. Paul district office, North Dakota Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David mayor Morrie Saxerud discuss Sheyenne River flood operations in Lisbon, N.D., on April 13.

"One of my inspiring moments came when we asked the churches of West Fargo to provide snacks for the troops. ... Within minutes, a stream of baked goods began to appear. ... Many times, when chaplains visit in the field they take food for the troops. During flood ops 09, the troops were so well supplied that they offered us food wherever we went. It's a great example of community support and generosity."

— Chaplain (Lt. Col.) John Flowers

"The N.D. National Guard we hold in tremendous esteem and it's because whenever we need them, they're always there. It doesn't matter if it is a war in Iraq, Afghanistan, or any place else in the world, or whether it's a flood, tornado or blizzard, or anything at home — or both at the same time."

— N.D. Gov. John Hoeven

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gineer Company
and Jamestown

"It's been a great opportunity for me to learn a new skill. More important, as a unit we've been able to show we're more than musicians. We've done a fantastic job on something that's not our main mission."

— Spc. Kacie Hughes, Harwood, a member of the 188th Army Band, which took on transportation duties during the flood

"We are very proud to have many of these men and women as our students at NDSU. (The university) does a number of things to support and assist our Guard Soldiers who are called to duty."

— Prakash Mathew, vice president for student affairs at NDSU (about 160 NDSU students serve in the National Guard)

"They, along with other members of the Guard, were the backbone in helping a number of North Dakota communities cope with rising waters."

— Peter Johnson, executive associate vice president for university relations at UND (speaking on the more than 125 UND students in the National Guard)

ally. I had my first child and I hadn't spent and changing, but at the same time I kept as doing to help out with flood efforts. would be for him when he got older."

o became a father March 14 (His son, Rylan Alan natal intensive care unit at MeritCare in Fargo. een his wife and son's side and the sandbagging line.)

"The N.D. National Guard was an integral part of the Cass County team and a major reason for our success during the flood of 2009. Their professionalism and pride in the performance of their duties was something that stood out and was noticed by all. It was a privilege to serve with them during Cass County's time of crisis!"

— Cass County Sheriff Paul D. Laney

Capt. Grant Larson, 119th Wing, and Cass County Sheriff Paul D. Laney

Morale is fight within the flo

Story and photos by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp
119th Wing

Uniforms blurred together as military members worked jointly with various government agencies to assist civilians and boost morale during the spring flood fight of 2009.

"We need to be visible out here to reassure the public that we're helping them," Says Fargo city police officer Christopher Potter, as he patrols the flood levees along drain 27 in Fargo, N.D. with Spc. Cody Renner, of the 957 Multi-role Bridge Company.

"Fear caused by stress is a concern during a disaster. You can tell that civilians are reassured when they see police officers and military members keeping an eye on the flood levees and neighborhoods," adds Potter.

The National Guard presence has been apparent across the state of North Dakota as National Guard members have been checking levees, directing traffic, walking through neighborhoods and visiting stranded homeowners isolated by flood water.

Joint government agency emergency operation centers (EOCs) sprang up in various locations around the state providing the means for civilians to ask for help when the water came knocking on their door.

"We have been ready to respond to flood emergencies in the EOCs, and ready to direct National Guard assets into action to help civilians threatened by flood water," says Capt. Grant Larson, of the 119th Maintenance Squadron, who has been working in the Cass County EOC.

"This joint operations arrangement should serve as a model for emergency centers around the country in future disasters," said Justo "Tito" Hernandez, a federal coordinating officer with FEMA.

"The assistance the National Guard provided in the air and on the ground was critical in winning this fight," adds Hernandez.

National Guard personnel have also been dispatched regularly to visit civilians isolated by water who may want to evacuate their home, but have been unable to do so.

"We've been making regular visits to homeowners who can't get in and out from their property because of the high water," said Staff Sgt. William Griffin, of the 136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion as he steps out of a high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (Humvee) after navigating a road flooded by water from the Sheyenne River April 15, near Fort Ransom, N.D.

Chaplain, Lt. Col. John Flowers, of the 119th Wing, is supporting the troops who support the civilians.

"Chaplains call it 'ministry of presence.' It means being there with soldiers and airmen as a visible reminder of God's love and care. We are one of the teams that can circulate around the field and make sure the troops have everything they need," said Flowers.

"Airmen and soldiers are very open with us about morale issues. We can lend a listening ear and allow them to vent their frustrations. Often times we can help them see why a certain decision or policy was made," adds Flowers.

"The North Dakota National Guard was an intrical part of the Cass County team and a major reason for our success during the flood of 2009. Their professionalism and pride in the performance of their duties was something that stood out and was noticed by all. It was a privilege to serve with them during Cass County's time of crisis!" said Cass County Sheriff Paul D. Laney.

"The theme of this flood was neighbors helping neighbors," said Dr. Tim Mahoney, Vice-Mayor of Fargo.

Welfare visits by joint government agencies were a big part of neighbors helping neighbors during the spring flood fight of 2009.

Above, From left to right Chaplain Lt. Col. John Flowers, of the 119th Wing, makes a morale visit to Sgt. Marty Myers and Spc. John Frey, both of the 153rd FSC based in South Dakota , as they monitor a flood dike for leaks along the Red River, Fargo, N.D.

Staff Sgt. William Griffin, of the 136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (Dev drives a high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (Humvee) on a road flooded the Sheyenne River April 15, Fort Ransom, N.D. Griffin and Spc. Jessica Sandberg, Quartermaster Battalion (Rugby, N.D.), are making a welfare visit to a rural civilian his home, which is surrounded by the flood water.

od fight

Right, Staff Sgt. Wayne Baumbach, of the 119th Communications Flight, and Cass County Sherriff's deputy Dan Korsmo, evacuate Juan Munoz, of Milwaukee, Wisc. from a house in a rural Harwood, N.Dak. neighborhood April 1. Munoz has been helping his parents protect their house from rising flood water along the Red River on the North Dakota - Minnesota border. They are part of a quick response force team tasked with checking on rural civilian residents in the flood ravaged area.

Background photo, Cass County Sherriff's office deputys and U.S Fish and Wildlife personnel manuever an airboat over a flooded road near Davenport, N.D. as they bring supplies to isolated residents who are cut off by the water.

Right, Heath Lynnes takes a break from flood levee maintenance, as his father Greg peaks around the corner of his house April 1, near Harwood, N.D. The Lynnes house is completely surrounded by flood water from the spring flooding in the Red River Valley.

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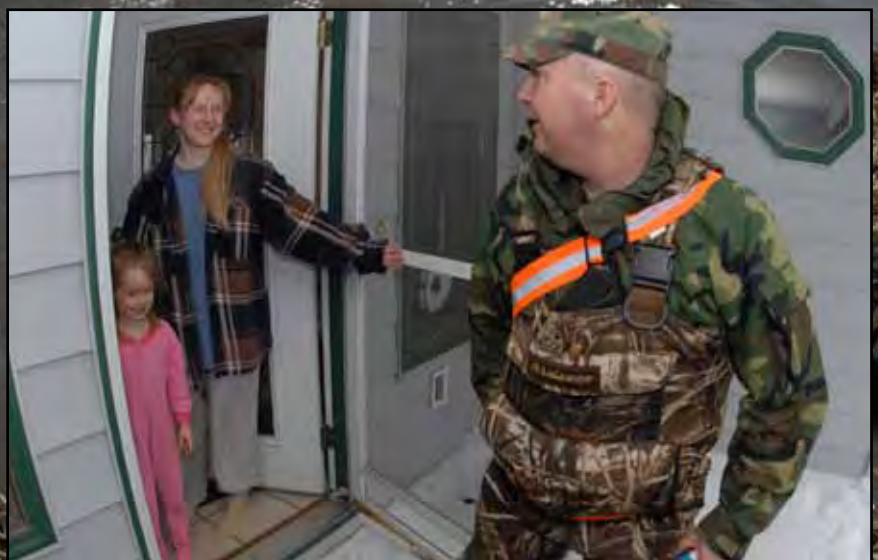
by water from
of the 132nd
resident at



Left, Master Sgt. Troy Pederson, of the 119th Maintenance Group, checks on the safety of Melissa VanVleet and her daughter Rebecca April 1 near Harwood, N. Dak. Pederson is part of a quick response force team tasked with checking on rural civilian residents in a flood ravaged area along the Red River on the North Dakota - Minnesota border. He is wearing chest waders which give him the ability to walk through high water to get to the homes.

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SENIOR MASTER SGT. DAVID H. LIPP
119TH WING

ABOVE Volunteer sandbaggers stand knee deep in floodwater as they transfer sandbags from the bucket of a front-end loader to a rural Cass County farm house southeast of Kindred, N.D., on April 21.

RIGHT Senior Airman Nathanael Baardson, a 119th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, passes a sandbag to build a dike near the Red River in Fargo on March 25.

BELOW Sgt. Adam Gehlhar, left, passes a sandbag to Sgt. 1st Class Gary Verberg, both of the 817th Engineer Company, as they create a human chain moving sandbags from a pallet to a temporary levee being built along the Sheyenne River in Valley City, N.D., on April 8.

When people come to the aid
heartwarming and touching sigh
try to prevent a disaster it is equa
has been a challenge of historic p

Flood levels reached all-time high levels throughout the state of North Dakota in the spring of 2009.

Every North Dakota county except one was declared a federal disaster area this spring, but through the challenges that the floods brought, our spirit has shown through.

Sometimes it takes a disaster to bring a community together, and by community, I mean a region.

For a few weeks in March and April people in areas affected by flooding focused on one common goal — fighting the water.

"My perception is that the crime rate was very low during the flood fight in Fargo," said Detective Leo Rognlin, of the Fargo Police Department.

It seemed that all differences were set aside and people just looked for ways that they could help each other. And if it is possible to have fun doing it, they did.

It's not that there weren't terrible consequences with the flood, because there were. People suffered through property damage and even loss of life in at least two flood-related deaths in North Dakota. It's just that a can-do attitude seemed to rise up and prevail, even for people who had lost, or were losing, their personal battles.

It didn't even seem to phase Fargo police officer Christopher Potter that he and his family had been evacuated from their south Moorhead home as he walked the flood levees protecting Fargo.

Despite difficult conditions people were working hard — and smiling.

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of others in a time of disaster it is a nt. When people come together to ally inspiring. The spring of 2009 proportions in North Dakota.

Along with grunts and groans, joking and laughter could be heard all around the state in places such as "Sandbag Central," the FargoDome, the Valley City Winter Show Arena and the Ransom County Fair Grounds. The chuckles could be heard in the human sandbagging chains in backyards — late at night — in near blizzard conditions. The freezing conditions made the sandbags feel like 30-40 pound frozen turkeys, requiring sandbaggers to throw them on the ground to break the sand loose before piling them securely in place in the darkness.

Volunteers from surrounding towns and cities — with no personal stake in the flood fight — rode hours on buses to join sandbaggers. Men and women in their 60s and 70s shoveled sand into bags held by children that were 10 and 11 years old. They passed the sandbags to hoards of high school and college students. Truck drivers worked tirelessly, hauling them to neighborhood streets and alleys around the clock. People in uniform stood side-by-side with civilians for a common goal. The time of day became irrelevant.

Surprising statements came from unlikely places, as a ninth grade girl from Fargo South High Campus 2, who was sandbagging April 9 could be heard saying, "I don't care what anyone says, this is fun," then adding a slightly embarrassed giggle.

When sandbagging was called off in Fargo because the levees were complete people were saying, what do we do now?

Reporters from national media outlets seemed disappointed to find cheerful people working hard at fighting the flood in the Fargo-Moorhead area, rather than the despair that they were expecting. What they found were self-reliant people coming together to create a force that would not accept defeat.

"I have countless stories of reporters asking us for more drama ... more tragedy ... because the reporters had trouble finding it not only in our military, but also in the civilians fighting the flood," said Capt. Penny Ripperger, the 119th Wing public affairs officer.

There were strong community and government leaders guiding the fight. Leaders and people seasoned by a harsh climate, making tough decisions — and tough people meeting a challenge with a rare spirit.

The post-flood slogans and t-shirts are entertaining, including my personal favorite — "United We Sand."

Experiencing the culture of volunteerism and camaraderie during the flood fight was truly inspirational — to the point of goose bumps.

The joy of youth is apparent as Fargo South High School ninth-graders pass sandbags along a human chain April 9 in a north Fargo neighborhood near El Zagel Golf Course.

Senior Airman Trisha K. McDonald, of the 119th Services Flight, carries sandbags to pile on pallets March 24 at the FargoDome.

Sgt. Gina M. Deibel hefts sandbags onto pallets at the Fargo city garage on March 23.

Guardians *in* War & Peace

Deployment-hardened Soldiers, Airmen use familiar barriers to dam rising floodwaters

While deployed in Iraq, Spc. Ryan L. Karsky got accustomed to the towering Hesco barriers that ringed his base.

These large modular steel baskets, lined with a fine meshy material, held compacted desert sand, gravel and chunks of concrete. They served as an effective shield against hostile fire and shrapnel.

Master Sgt. Shane Kosen, of the 119th Logistics Readiness Squadron, maneuvers a forklift into place to remove pallets of HESCO barriers from a flatbed truck March 24, at the North Dakota Air National Guard, Fargo, N.D. The sections of Hesco are being unloaded so they can be linked together and filled with sand to create a flood barrier from the rising waters of the Red River.

Now, back home in North Dakota, Karsky, a member of the 817th Engineer Company of the North Dakota Army National Guard, has found a different use for the trusty barriers. He was among about 50 Guard Soldiers and Airmen constructing miles of Hesco barriers along low-lying parts of Fargo, which was dealing with major flooding.

The Hescos were all that stood between the rising Red River and many of south Fargo's most flood-prone neighborhoods.

"I saw them all the time in Iraq," Karsky said, "but I never ever thought we'd be using them to fight a flood. I thought we'd be over here throwing sandbags."

NEW SINCE 1997

Sandbag dikes were the protection of choice back in 1997, the last time the Red River seriously threatened the Fargo area and before many of the citizen-Soldiers and citizen-Airmen working the dike lines today were even members of the Guard.

1st Sgt. Curtis W. Kaseman, also of the 817th, is one Soldier who remembers the 1997 flood fight well. And as a Veteran of the war in Iraq, he's another Soldier who learned to appreciate the Hescos for the protection they provided him in a combat zone.

Kaseman, of Jamestown, said the Hesco barriers in Iraq were much larger, sometimes as high as 20 feet, compared to the three-feet-tall versions that were used in Fargo. The emplaced barriers were lined with plastic to help hold back the impending wall of water.

"They are not new technology as far as fighting floods is concerned, but they definitely are new around here since 1997," Kaseman said.

DUAL PURPOSE

In fact, Hesco Inc. representatives say that the barriers actually were designed primarily for flood control and to impede hillside erosion. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan opened up a new market for the company.

Hesco Inc. is based in Hammond, La., just north of New Orleans and Lake Pontchartrain, another area of the country that is accustomed to massive flooding.

What makes their barriers so beneficial is the speed at which they can be constructed compared to traditional sandbag efforts. Company specifications claim that what would take a crew more than 70 hours to do with sandbags can be done in 30 minutes with Hesco barriers.

STATEWIDE RESPONSE

On a March day, Spc. Brett M. Steele and Karsky, both of whom live and work in the Bismarck area, quickly cleared a path and laid down a plastic base ahead of the rest of their crew that was setting up and filling the Hescos.

For them and the other Soldiers of the Jamestown-based 817th, it was a race against the clock and the swelling river. The unit has been placed on active duty orders and sent to Fargo to fight the flood.

They join more than 800 North Dakota Guard Soldiers and Airmen, most of whom volunteered, for the statewide flood-fighting efforts. All were working alongside civilian

Story by Sgt. 1st Class David Dodds / 116th Public Affairs Detachment + Photos by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp / 119th Wing

contractors, businesses and homeowners to hold the high ground.

Before his unit was activated, Steele already was a Guard volunteer involved in flood fighting in central North Dakota, near Beulah. He said it was hard to just pick up and leave.

"But, this is where we need to be now," Steele said. "My only hesitation in all of this is that I had to move from one spot in need to another one."

TOP Spc. Loyal Good, right, and Spc. Andrew Gustafson, both of the 815th Engineer Company, assemble Hesco barriers on April 15 for temporary flood levees in Lisbon, N.D.

BOTTOM Spc. Joshua Klundt, of the 817th, sets up a Hesco barrier to form a levee along Fifth Steet South in Fargo on March 24.

FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS

Spc. Jordan J. Nygaard, Jamestown, also with the 817th, was amazed by the rapid-fire pace of the dike work going on around him. The Soldiers kept the Hesco assembly line humming, as a parade of dump trucks supplied fresh clay and dirt to the site near Fargo's Lindenwood Park. A fleet of Bobcat loaders, driven by civilian contractors, filled the Hescos as quickly as they were set up.

"It's kind of intriguing to see nine Bobcat loaders working so quickly within a distance of one city block," Nygaard said. "There's a lot of moving parts. You have to watch out."

Gary Boatman, a Fargo resident whose mother lives near Lindenwood Park, was in the area and saw the work being done by the Guard. He wanted to help, so he brought his own Bobcat loader to the fight, complete with a crude cardboard sign that read, "Tell me what to do!"

"It's not just these neighborhoods that appreciate what the Guard is doing for us — it's the whole city of Fargo," Boatman said, between hauling loads.

THE NORTHERN FRONT

On Fargo's north side, flood fighting also was in full effect between 14th and 15th Avenue North.

Because of the terrain in the area, Hesco barriers could not be used, according to 1st Lt. John W. Peyerl, a volunteer from 136nd Combat Service Support Battalion in Grand Forks.

Peyerl said about a 130 Guard Soldiers and Airmen were forming a chain to move sandbags and place them about two feet high.

"They're a little sore out there today, but I don't think any of them are sorry they signed up for this," Peyerl said. "This is what they want to be doing and they are out having a good time."

Staff Sgt. Elliot Steinbrink, with the North Dakota Air Guard's 119th Wing, had a little more on his mind than some of the other volunteers on the sandbag line who had come from other parts of the state. His home is only blocks away from the river.

"It makes me nervous, but everyone needs the help, not just me," Steinbrink said. "When you're working as a National Guardsmen, it means something. People recognize that and it feels good."

Right, Spc. Elizabeth Feliciano, of the 132nd Quartermasters Company, a Psychology major at North Dakota State University, reviews in-processing information being explained by Master Sgt. Jennifer Kraiter, of the 119th Mission Support Flight, Mar. 23, at the Armed Forces Reserve Center, Fargo, N.D. Feliciano was planning attending college classes and joining the flood fight with the North Dakota Army National Guard later in the week, but when classes were canceled she changed her plans and volunteered to join the fight early.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Above,Staff Sgt. Alvin Anhorn, of the 191st Military Police Company, positions a hose used to remove water with a pump near a temporary flood levee along the Sheyenne River in Lisbon, N.D. The water is seapage from a minor leak in the levee and is being pumped back into the river.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Above, the flood clock on the scoreboard is ticking as Spc. Jarred Munoz, of the 818th Engineer Company, kneeling, and Spc. Joshua Bechtle, of the 957 Multi-role Bridge Company, with shovel, join with civilian flood-fighting volunteers who pack the floor of the Fargo Dome in an effort to fill sandbags, Fargo, N.D., March 24.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Above, a N.D. Army National Guard soldier adjusts a pump hose March 27, as it pumps water from a backyard in south Fargo over a sandbag levee and into drain 27. The soldier is part of a quick response force team responding to an emergency in the Oak Creek neighborhood of Fargo.

Tech. Sgt. Bradly Schneider

Left, N. D. adjutant general Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk joins the flood fighting effort with North Dakota National Guard members Airman 1st Class Paul Bartron, of the 119th Security Forces Squadron, left, and Staff Sgt. Mark Lewis, of the 119th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, March 21, at the Fargo, N.D. city garage.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Above Staff Sgt. Jamie Frankl, of the 219th Security Forces Squadron, directs traffic allowing flood fighting dump trucks to pass through intersections during the morning rush hour March 24, Fargo, N.D.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Upper right, Staff Sgt. Mathew Mitzel, throws sandbags from an earthen dike to Staff Sgt. Derek Hjelseth, in a Zodiac raft, for placement next to a failing permanent flood wall at Oak Grove High School March 30, Fargo, N.D. Both soldiers are members of the 957 Multi-role Bridge Company. The sandbags are being placed into the water next to reinforce leaking sections of the flood wall.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Above, from left to right Staff Sgt. Ryan Sherman, of the 119th Logistics Readiness Squadron, Airman 1st Class Kristen Thomsen, of the 119th Student Flight, and Airman 1st Class Jeremiah Johnson, of the 119th Civil Engineer Squadron, pick up trash as they monitor flood levees, which are holding back the flood waters of the Red River, Fargo, N.D. March 30. They are also walking through the flood troubled neighborhoods in order to present a community presence for the military to help reassure the residents.

Left, South Dakota Army National Guard soldiers activated for the flood fight in North Dakota, bunk in the North Dakota Air National Guard motorpool garage March 23, Fargo, N.D.

Background photo, a flood water measuring stick pokes up from the water behind a a sandbag levee March 27 along drain 27 in south Fargo, N.D. The levees are built to have one foot of freeboard above flood water level predictions by the National Weather Service. Army Corp of Engineers and city engineers monitor the levees to make sure that they meet the required height to hold back the flood water. This stick is good for 42 feet at a time when the National Weather Service was predicting between 42 and 43 feet.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Below, North Dakota National Guard Soldiers sandbag a house on the banks of the Des Lacs River in Burlington, N.D., on Easter Sunday, April 12. The Soldiers came from the Headquarters Headquarters Company and Forward Support Company of the 164th Engineer Battalion, Minot; the 957th Multi-Role Bridge Company, Bismarck, and the 818th Engineer Company (Sapper), Williston.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp,

Left, soldiers and airmen of the North Dakota National Guard pass sandbags along a human chain to build sandbag flood levees March 25, near El Zagel Golf Course, Fargo, N.D. Among the N.D. National Guard members in the line are Senior Airman Brandon Miller, left, and Tech. Sgt. Robert Robinson, in sunglasses. Both of them are in the 119th Wing.

Below, Senior Airman Christopher Haroldson, of the 119th Avionics Squadron, left, hands a sandbag to Spc. Ross Brumely, of the 188th Engineer Company, as they place the sandbags on a temporary levee April 7, Fargo, N.D. in preparation for a second crest of the Red River.

Sgt. Ann Knudson,

Tech. Sgt. Bradly Schneider

Above, The FargoDome floor is covered with pallets of sandbags March 31, Fargo, N.D.

Right, Spc. James Burhans and Staff Sgt. Jamie Hyatt, of the 164th Engineer Battalion, help Sandra Boe, owner of the Minot KOA, down from a N.D. National Guard five-ton truck April 14. Spc. Jeremy Thorne stands by at right, and the owner's brother, Bob Tyson, gets ready to hand down their pets and belongings.

Sgt. Ann Knudson,

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Right, Master Sgt. Eric Johnson, of the 119th Wing, passes a sandbag along a human chain as he stands knee-deep in flood water in rural Cass County, southeast of Kindred, N.D. Photo by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp, 119th Wing

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Right, water runs into the 'glory hole' emergency spillway at the Jamestown Reservoir April 27, Jamestown, N.D. It is the first time that the water level of the Jamestown Reservoir has risen high enough to flow into the glory hole.

Left photo, Pfc. Curtis Schestler, of the 2-285th Aviation Assault Battalion, right, and Staff Sgt. Bryan Hensel, of the 119th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, walk along a flood levee May 16, on the bank of the James River, Jamestown, N.D. They are monitoring the levee for possible leaks or areas where breaches may occur, so that repairs can be done before damage gets too severe.

Below, Airman 1st Class Jens Gylland, of the 119th Security Forces Squadron, moves a road barrier in place to restrict vehicle access at a traffic control point in south Fargo March 27. Taffic control points help dump trucks to better access levee areas by limiting traffic.

Sgt. Ann Knudson

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Above right, a N.D. Army National Guard dump truck dumps a load of clay on top of water bubbling up from the sewer manholes on North Dakota Highway 27 near the bridge crossing the Sheyenne River, near the center of Lisbon, N.D. April 15.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Sgt. Ann Knudson,

Above, "Boots on the ground" had a slightly different meaning in Burlington, where North Dakota National Guard Soldiers sweated on Easter Sunday, April 11, to get two more houses sandbagged against the rising Des Lacs River. The Soldiers came from the164th Engineer Battalion, Minot; the 957th Multi-Role Bridge Company, Bismarck, and the 818th Engineer Company (Sapper), Williston.

Left, Spc. Kevin Gemar, right, and Spc. Cole Tucker, both of the 231st Brigade Support Battalion's Company B, monitor a flood levee along the Sheyenne River in Valley City, N.D. April 22.

Photos by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Eight members of the 188th Army Band have the unique chance to use ceremonial M-1 rifles as musical instruments during the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra's rendition of Peter Ilych Tchaikowsky's 1812 Overture April 25 and 26, during a free community concert celebration commemorating the end of the 2009 spring flooding of the Red River at the FargoDome, Fargo, N.D.

The 1812 Overture is a musical depiction of the War of 1812 between the United States of America and the British Empire, which is sometimes called the second war for independence. The M-1 rifles are being used as percussion instruments to add drama during the climactic ending.

"We were thrilled to have the ND National Guard provide the live artillery fire during the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra's performance of Tchaikovsky's famous "1812 Overture" at our post-flood community celebration concerts. When we were quickly making plans for this performance, I came up with the idea not knowing if it would be feasible, or even possible, on such short notice. I am so honored that everyone involved went above and beyond the call of duty - when they had way more important matters to attend to - to make this happen. Our audiences were enthralled with both the team's performance as well as Maj. Gen. Sprynczynatyk's address (left). Kudos to the talented members of the 188th Army Band - for musicians, they wield a mean rifle! On behalf of the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra and the entire region, our sincere thanks for your participation in this concert and for ALL you do. You are all an inspiration." Said Linda Coates, Executive Director of the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra.