

U.S. Must Finish War In Iraq, General Says

Today's Army, Navy and Air force "must finish the fight we didn't start," Brig. Gen. Myles Deering said last Friday, at the 2007 Armed Forces Day Luncheon.

General Deering is commander of the Oklahoma National Guard, the 45th Infantry Brigade. He was the guest of honor at this year's Armed Forces Day events.

The United States is fighting an enemy which is not under a particular leader or is from a particular nation, Deering said. "Their allegiance is to terror."

The general said the war "did not start in the mountains of Afghanistan" or "on the plains of Iraq," but "in our own back yard."

He added that he has never seen "finer soldiers than we have today," and that they are "up to" the challenge they face. These soldiers are volunteers, he noted, and they have a "technical capability that no army had had before.

The "vast majority" of them enlisted as a senses of duty.

Even those Americans who oppose the war in Iraq are in support of the nation's servicemen and women.

If those who served in World War II were the "Greatest Generation," as they have been called, the current soldiers are "The Next Greatest Generation."

He said they are "highly trained," highly motivated "and ready to take the fight to the enemy."

McAlester Regional Hospital During The Ice Storm



Shaun Beggs, Hospital Administrator

Shaun Beggs, Hospital Administrator and CEO of McAlester Regional Health Center listed thousands of dollars in "Major Projects" which the hospital needs, following the January ice storm, in his April 3 talk to club members.

Included on his list is a water tower and pumping station for the hospital, powered by a hospital generator; a secondary generator for the hospital and a primary generator for the Assisted Living Center; and a "Paging Tower" operated by generator power, for paging hospital personnel during an emergency.

The hospital official gave no total costs for the items he found the hospital needs, after the January storm experience.

He stated some possible sources of funding as "sales tax," "fund-raising", the hospital foundation, "CDC and other grants" and "FEMA mitigation assistance." A sales tax would involve a city-wide election.

Beggs told club members the day-by-day developments at the hospital during the ice storm.

On Jan. 12 the moderate rain and sleet changed to freezing rain, he said. The Jan. 12-13 information said that all essential personnel were notified to come to the hospital and bring clothes and personal items needed for staying overnight, if necessary.

Next, the transportation plan for essential personnel was implemented.

There were intermittent, short power outages and surges throughout the day, the hospital official said.

By around 3 p.m., the transfer of patients by "air ambulance" was grounded, and ground ambulances would not risk travel to Tulsa.

By early that evening, the Assisted Living Center and other facilities on the hospital "campus" had lost their primary power and the hospital started operating on emergency power.

On Sunday, Jan. 14, about noon, the transfer of 49 persons at the Assisted Living Center, started.

Other hospital CEOs were called in other areas, for assistance in accepting transfers.

That evening, the Emergency Room was overloaded, Beggs wrote in his log.

He also reported that the "Mayor mandated travel outside of McAlester."

At 10:15 that night the hospital lost its primary power. At 10:30, the county EMS was asked to deploy the Medical Reserve Corps.

On Monday, Jan. 15, the available clinical staff was assigned to "assist ER and nursing units." With meals in the cafeteria up to four times the usual number, "the non-clinical and surgical staff was assigned to cook, serve and wash dishes."

The hospital lost its primary power again that morning, and the surgery schedule for Monday and Tuesday was cancelled.

On Tuesday, Jan. 16, the number of cafeteria meals created a good shortage.

Public schools and local restaurants donated food from their freezers. A local grocer provided bread.

The hospital also ran out of linens and scrubs, but a linen provider helped out.

A local pharmacist helped with filling prescription orders for residents of the Assisted Living Center.

At 12 that day, there was a main power loss at the water plant. The National Guard was alerted for water transportation, if needed.

At 3:15 p.m. the power to the water plant was restored. About 3:20, the power was restored to the Assisted Living Center.

The residents returned to the center.

The mid-day food trucks arrived.

And the local radio broadcast allowed public announcements to the community.

On Thursday morning, Jan. 18, the Medical Reserve Team started arriving.

The Wellness Center was opened to the hospital staff and physicians and their families, for showers and recreation.

Late that morning, the power to the Assisted Living Center went off again, but the residents were polled and decided not to evacuate again.

On Friday, Jan. 19, the hospital lost its emergency generator. They had three vent patients, 14 ICU patients, 12 Dialysis patients, and two surgery patients on the table.

A local banker then contacted a friend in Tulsa, and "routed" two generators from a company to the hospital.

At 9:50 a.m. PSO re-routed power from another grid and restored primary power. On Saturday, Jan. 20, the hospital generator was inoperable and the rented generator at the hospital failed.

It was Sunday before the main power was restored to both

RN Tells About Advances in Organ Donation



Jeanie Holt

Jeanie Holt, a Registered Nurse in “critical care and ER” for 29 years, told us April 10 that most courts now honor “First Person Consent” for organ and tissue donations.

In 42 of the 50 states, laws have been passed to let a person decide to donate human organs or tissues, at

their death. In Oklahoma, there is a list of 600 persons waiting for organs or tissue.

Nation-wide, there are 69,000 on the waiting list, Ms. Holt said.

The first tissue donation was over 100 years ago, yet the first organ donation was in 1954, the speaker said.

One out of every two persons in Oklahoma is now a donor, so it is important to get the information into the state donor registry. It is usually listed on a driver’s license now, she noted.

Last year there were 60 donors, but there were 91 the year before.

An average year totals about 85, with about 42 from the metropolitan areas and 43 from “all over the state.”

Even if you put the agreement in writing, “let your family know,” she urged.

Members of the State Bar Association are studying the current law, she reported.

She told of one family, in which a later donor said no, initially, because she wanted to avoid an argument with her mother. Another spouse couldn’t remember being asked.

Ms. Holt explained that a person in a car accident might not be able to donate the organs they planned, due to possible damage to some organs. At the same time, another person may have died of a gunshot wound and may be able to donate all their organs. Cancer, hepatitis, or a blood disease also can change plans by donors. Or a lack of oxygen which caused a death can make some organs unusable. However, kidneys or the liver may still be donated.

Now, decisions are made on a cases-by-case basis, she explained.

There is no cost involved.

April is Organ Donation Awareness Month.

Club Hears More About CASA

Shirley Collier told us last week more about CASA, a group of volunteers who help represent the court in cases of abused and neglected children.

The work takes eight to 10 hours a month, “to speak for them in court,” she said. But that is after 30 hours of training, to teach them how to do their jobs.

It is “a real need,” Ms. Collier said, with 500,000 abused and neglected children in the U.S.

There are 24 volunteers in Pittsburg County, who help CASA, she said. They talk to the children, to determine their needs. They

talk to parents, to school teachers, to foster parents. “They look out for the best interests of the child,” the CASA official said.

“They are the eyes and ears of the judge.”

Judge Jim Bland, a Rotarian, said the information the CASA volunteers collect is “valuable.”

He said a majority of the abused and neglected children do not go back into foster homes again.

Asked how the work of CASA is funded, Ms. Collier said it is a combination of federal grants, state grants, and “fund-raising events,” like a golf tournament and the “Taste of McAlester.”

Hospital form Page 1 “main feeders.”

There were no more outages, and surgery was scheduled for Tuesday.

A voluntary clean-up day was also scheduled for Tuesday.

Then the full surgery schedule was rescheduled.

Beggs estimated that the revenue loss at the hospital was \$1 million.

Twenty-one patients were diverted.

A budgeted profit of \$260,000 made it an actual loss of \$125,000 for the month. He said the “cash impact” was “\$1.5 million for one week, downtown.”

Storm-related injuries numbered 117 patients.

The hospital has 197 beds, plus 49 patients in the Assisted Living Center. It also includes three medical office buildings, a Wellness Center, Ambulatory Surgery Center, Cancer Center, DME offices and Home Health Center, a Dialysis Center, an administrative office complex, “Rotary House” and a Rural Health Clinic at Longtown.

Attendance, Visitors, and Handshakers

On April 24, the attendance was 48. Barbara Gilbert was a guest of Steve Smith. Ann Owens was gone and Steve Brock presided.

Attendance April 17 was 43. Assistant District Governor Tom Cobb was with us, as was Chris Smith.

On April 10 there were 33 present and no guests.

On April 3, there were 48 in attendance.

In addition to the student guests, Waverlee Washington and Darriell Matthews, Ann Owens had Tracy Locke, Marcia Kasheta and Larry Logerra as her guests. Mark Morris was a guest of John Freeman.

GOOD CITIZENS-The “Good Citizens” from McAlester High School, who are visiting the club this month, are Waverlee Washington and Darrick Matthews.

Waverlee is president of the Family Career and Community Leaders of America and is vice president of the Afro-Student union. She plans to go to UCO after graduation. And she is related to Loise Washington.

Darrick is Area Player of the Year, on the MHS Basketball Team. He is a Kiamichi All Star in basketball and is All Star and All State with

the Oklahoma Basketball Coaches’ Association. He has a basketball scholarship to Oklahoma Christian College.

HANSHAKERS-The older members are coming back, in the money laundering department, if they can remember where they have the dollar.

Noble Miller still can remember everything. He had the dollar on April 10, and also worked the attendance table. He said he had a silver dollar and wanted to keep it. He had counted 33 people and the speaker and said he was going to give it to the 35th person there. But he gave it to Paul Green. On April 3, they trusted George Lampton with the dollar. He gave it to Phil Brenner.

On April 17, Thurman Shuller was the handshaker, and he figured he could give it to Fred Turner and make it a “payoff” to quit writing about the money laundering. But it wasn’t quite enough money. Last week they tried again, with Fred as the handshaker and the dollar going to Ted Welch. (Let’s see a million more weeks...)

Attendance Is Still A Problem

A Membership Committee will discuss plans to boost attendance. The Board of Directors has discussed the matter.