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# Guard Receives Morale Builder In Dexter

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*Special to the ShowMe Times*

DEXTER, Mo. – For about two weeks the Missouri National Guard has been on the ground in southeast Missouri leading the charge with flood relief efforts. There is no doubt the 24-hour missions the soldiers have been running has been demanding on the hundreds of troops in uniform. The community members who have personally been affected by the constant rain and flooding have also had their fair share of trials.

Gurdsmen in Dexter had the opportunity to be recharged spiritually at a morning worship held at the armory. Capt. David Spears, Missouri National Guard chaplain, lead the service.

Spears, who serves with the 1140th Engineer Battalion in Cape Girardeau, opened up by asking for prayer requests and praises from the troops. One recurring sentiment was the concern for the people in the communities these Soldiers were helping. The focus was not on themselves and their wants or needs, but those they have been helping during this disaster.

“It sure is nice to be working at home, serving our people and helping out our community,” said Spears.

These Soldiers said they knew <images/Blog Images/Local News/5.17.2011 GUARD.jpg> the struggles they were

currently facing were short-lived because they would soon return to a life of normalcy. However, the nearby residents remained with the devastation and destruction left from the wake of the floods. On the flip side, these same residents were also reaching out in gratitude and concern for the very ones helping them out.

“Certainly these people have been affected by this in a very adverse way, but they’ve been able to reach out to you guys which has given them something to feel good about,” said Spears.

Staff Sgt. Allen Kanell, who is the fulltime supply sergeant for the 1221st Transportation Company in Dexter and lives in nearby Poplar Bluff, had interest in both sides of the coin. Kanell has been assisting with the mission, helping the units working out of his armory, while at the same time personally concerned with his fellow neighbors.

“The community has accepted these guys really well,” said Kanell. “Some people have come up and tried to buy their dinners. One gentleman brought gallons of ice cream and filled their freezer up.”

These acts of kindness demonstrated to the Soldiers how appreciated they are.

“I know it’s a tragedy, but it’s one of the times personally I feel we’re doing one of the best things we can do as the National Guard, we’re helping our own,” said Kanell. “We’re here taking care of our town, our community.”

For many of the troops, the message was a great motivator and came at a time when they needed that extra push to drive on and complete the mission at hand.

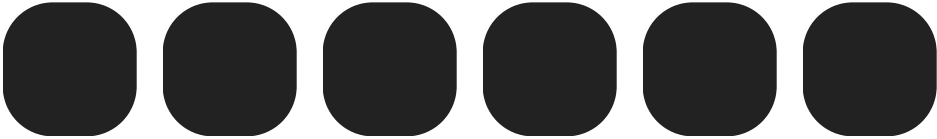
“I thought it was wonderful,” said Kanell. “I think today is a blessing to all of these guys. Today seems to be the day everybody got to take that deep breath.”

*By Jennifer Archdekin,  
Missouri National Guard*

***Photos Above: Top Photo - With his Bible open, Staff Sgt. Allen Kanell of Poplar Bluff listens intently to a Sunday morning message. Capt. David Spears, Missouri Army National Guard chaplain, delivered a sermon to some of the soldiers at the Dexter armory who were serving on flood duty. Bottom photo -***

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