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SDNG soldier dies in Afghanistan

Specialist Jensen, formerly of Vermillion, is victim of accident

Gov. Dennis Daugaard said today (Wednesday, Aug. 17) that a National Guard soldier serving in Afghanistan with the 200th Engineer Company died in a non-combat related accident Tuesday, Aug. 16.

Specialist Dennis G. Jensen, 21, of Sioux Falls died from injuries suffered while working with bridge materials near Camp Leatherneck in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan.

Jensen, formerly of Vermillion, was struck by two steel bridge decking panels that fell from a forklift when a

securing strap broke. He was immediately transported to Bastion Airfield Hospital and pronounced dead about 9:30 a.m. Afghanistan time. Jensen was wearing all appropriate safety gear at the time.

The accident is currently being investigated.

"I am deeply saddened by the loss of Specialist Dennis Jensen," Gov. Daugaard said. "Our hearts and prayers go out to his family and friends for their loss, and we offer our gratitude for Specialist Jensen's service to our

state and nation."

The 200th Engineer Company is a multi-role bridging unit headquartered at Pierre, with detachments in Mobridge and Chamberlain. The unit deployed in May for a one-year mission to maintain, repair and replace military bridges throughout Afghanistan.

"Our most sincere condolences go out to the family and friends of Spc. Jensen," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the South Dakota Army National Guard. "Our thoughts and prayers are with Spc. Jensen's

family, as well as all members of the 200th. The entire South Dakota National Guard family is deeply saddened by this loss."

Jensen enlisted as a member of the 211th Engineer Company of Madison and De Smet, in which he served as a combat engineer. Jensen volunteered to deploy with the 200th as a bridge crew member in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. This was his first deployment.

He is survived by his mother, Christine Bestgen of Lead, father Glenn Jensen of Yankton, and sister Melissa Jensen of Minneapolis, MN. Funeral arrangements are pending.



SPECIALIST DENNIS G. JENSEN



Laura Bern, 11, and Elaina Taggart, 8, were crowned princess and junior princess at the Miss Clay County Fair Pageant, held Friday, Aug. 12, on the main stage on the fairgrounds. See more scenes from the pageant by logging on to spotted.plaintalk.net.

(Photo by David Lias)

Here she comes:

Miss Clay County Fair crowned

By David Lias

david.lias@plaintalk.net

To the delight of both its participants and its planners, a fairly new event added to the Clay County Fair experience ran smoothly and attracted an enthusiastic audience.

The third annual Miss Clay County Fair Pageant, which crowned a junior princess and a princess, was held Friday afternoon, Aug. 12, on the main stage near the Extension building on the fairgrounds.

Receiving the crown as junior princess was Elaina Taggart, 8, daughter of Tom and Sarah Taggart of Vermillion. First runner-up was Kennedy Pratt, 9, daughter of Farron and Shellie Pratt, Vermillion.

Megan Haselhorst, 10, daughter of Kevin and Amy Haselhorst, and Lexi Saunders, 9, daughter of Bill and Kelly Saunders, tied for second runner-up junior princess.

Laura Bern, 11, daughter of Arlan and Tami Bern, was crowned Miss Clay County Fair princess. Runner-up was Emily Rolfes, 11, daughter of Mike and Susan Rolfes.

Judges for the pageant were Jolene Lyngstad and Tina Lee, both of Irene.

The morning of pageant, each participant was interviewed by the two judges. During the pageant

itself, the girls modeled sportswear and party wear, and were judged on talent. Each of these four categories counted for as much as 25 percent of the total score judges could give to each participant.

"I thought these young ladies were very composed," Lyngstad said. "They have a lot of talent, they were fun to visit with and I hope they keep competing and doing this because it is a great experience."

Lyngstad said she has attended many pageants like the one held at the Clay County Fair, but this was the first one she had judged.

"We looked at things like the composure the girls had on stage - their stage presence and their personalities," she said. "We listened to how they answered questions - if there was hesitation or if they could just get right on it - and they all did a very nice job. I was very impressed by this group of girls."

"I think this pageant is a great opportunity for girls to get involved in public speaking and to be community leaders," Lee said. "Besides just the school atmosphere, something like this gets them out in the community, and I thought they did a wonderful job."

"They are all very friendly and very accepting of each other," she said.

Plea agreement reached in dog death case

By Travis Gulbrandson
travis.gulbrandson@plaintalk.net

A deal has been reached in the case of a Burbank man who allegedly beat his neighbors' dog to death with a hammer.

Clay County State's Attorney Teddi Gertsema said Robert Kyte is pleading guilty to Intentional Damage to Property in the Second Degree and Killing or Injuring Animal of Another, both of which are Class 1 misdemeanors.

Under South Dakota law, Kyte could face up to one year

imprisonment in the county jail, a fine of \$2,000 or both for each charge.

He was set to make an appearance in the Clay County Courthouse Friday, Aug. 12, before the deal was made.

Initially Kyte was charged with Killing or Injuring Animal of Another, as well as Intentional Damage to Property in the First Degree, which is a Class 6 felony.

Had the felony charge been maintained, he could have faced up to two years imprisonment in the state penitentiary, a fine of \$5,000 or both.

In addition, Kyte will be required to pay restitution to his neighbors, Gertsema said.

Kyte allegedly beat his neighbors' German shorthair pointer - whose name was Shy - to death in its kennel in June.

According to the Associated Press, Shayne and Kim Ludwig said their dog was gentle and barked only if someone was trespassing on their property.

Kyte is scheduled to appear in court at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 23.

- The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Johnson tours Mo. River flooding

BY TRAVIS GULBRANDSON
travis.gulbrandson@plaintalk.net

Sen. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) said the flooding that marked the late spring and summer of 2011 continues to be "an advanced problem" for the affected areas in South Dakota and elsewhere.

So advanced, in fact, that he said Congress may become involved.

"From Montana to Missouri there is a complete agreement (of the) need for hearings on oversight," Johnson said.

The senator made his remarks after a question-and-answer session with county, state and federal officials at the Clay County Courthouse Monday at the conclusion of a tour of flooded areas.

He visited Dakota Dunes, as well as the Riverside, Windstone and Ponderosa areas Monday morning.

"I'm seeking input wherever I can," Johnson said. "I have my eye on the river at all times, and I'm seeking input (on) what needs to be happening."

Dave Becker, Gavins Point project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers attributed the widespread floods to a series of circumstances, including heavy snow and rainfall on the upper

plains - some areas of which had one year's worth of precipitation in one week.

"Last year was the third-wettest year on the Missouri since 1888," Baker said.

He added that the Corps knew it would be a wet year, so higher flows were released from Gavins Point Dam starting in late April. By early May, the dam was releasing 55,000 cubic feet of water per second (cfs).

Last year, the flows peaked around 49,000 cfs, Baker said.

Gavins Point currently releases 150,000 cfs, although starting Friday, Aug. 19, the Corps will begin stair-stepping down in 5,000 cfs increments each day until Aug. 30, at which point the release will be 90,000 cfs.

Johnson said he had attempted a tour earlier in the summer, but floodwaters were still too high.

"Things have changed (over the summer), especially down south," he said. "I tried to visit Dakota Dunes, Riverside and Windstone, but was turned back originally. There was too much danger and too much activity to allow me to get into those places."

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Wilbur appointed to S.D. high court

By Chet Brokaw
Associated Press Writer

PIERRE — Gov. Dennis Daugaard on Tuesday appointed Circuit Judge Lori S. Wilbur of Pierre to the South Dakota Supreme Court.

Wilbur, 58, becomes the second female justice on the state's highest court. She replaces Justice Judith Meierhenry, the first woman on the Supreme Court, who retired in June.

"Lori Wilbur will be a phenomenal Supreme Court justice," Daugaard said in a written statement. "She is well-

■ JUDGE, Page 15



South Dakota's newest Supreme Court justice, Lori S. Wilbur of Pierre, (left) shakes the hand of Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson after he administered the oath of office during a ceremony Tuesday afternoon at the University of South Dakota School of Law in Vermillion. Wilbur took the oath with her left hand on her family's Bible, held by her mother, Marcene Scully of Sioux Falls.

(Photo by David Lias)

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