

# Two in a Ver Million Meet the Stammers

By David Lias

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"Busy, busy people." That's the best way that Deb Christensen, a member of the Vermillion United Way board of directors, could describe Dave and Nikki Stammer.

Deb presented Nikki and Dave with the 2012 United Way Volunteers of the Year award at the 2012 Annual Vermillion Area Chamber & Community Awards Banquet held March 20.

The Vermillion couple is constantly on the go, it seems, finding ways to make the community a better place.

"Nikki is the leader of two Vermillion Girl Scout troops, and Dave helps out behind the scenes by helping with fundraising events and organizing the troops' cookies and nuts sales," Deb said. "They are both involved

in nearly every community Girl Scout event. When other troop leaders need help or have questions, they call the Stammers."

Nikki and Dave have taken a number of girls on many trips to attend a variety of events, including two trips to the Wisconsin Dells with two different Girl Scout troops.

"In the last two years, they both were highly involved in the planning and organization of the Vermillion annual Special Olympics Polar Plunge," Deb said. "They put in countless hours to make sure the polar plunge is a success. On top of the many hours of planning for the polar plunge, Dave and his daughter, Kayla, joined the fun and took the plunge together, raising nearly \$2,000."

In the last two years, the Stammers have coached a girls' softball team.

Dave also finds time to serve on the Vermillion School Board.

"It shows the commitment they have for our community, and for Vermillion," Deb said. People who submitted written comments to nominate the couple for the volunteer of the year award noted that Nikki and Dave efforts "are for the kids in the community. There are not many people in the community with the drive, determination and dedication that Dave and Nikki Stammer have. Vermillion is truly lucky to have them."

Deb said when the Stammers aren't busy helping others in some fashion, they likely can be found cheering on their own kids as they are also involved in many activities.

"Girl Scouts are a big part of their commitment to this



Nikki and Dave Stammer are the recipients of the 2012 United Way Volunteers of the Year Award.

(Photo by David Lias)

community, and their house has often been described as a cookie depot," Deb said. "There are many girls who have signed up (to become Girl Scouts) because of Nikki's involvement. I understand that when sign

up time comes, people immediately ask, 'is Nikki still a leader?' She is responsible for having girls sign up and staying active in the Girls Scouts.

"Dave and Nikki are great role models and are passing

this on to their own children, as well as the children they work with," Deb said. "The importance of their volunteering makes our community a great place to live."

## THIS WEEK IN S.D. NATIONAL GUARD HISTORY

By CW5 Duke Doering (Ret.)  
SDNG Historian

In recognition of the South Dakota National Guard's 150 years of service to the state and nation from 1862-2012, the SDNG will be publishing significant dates in the history of the organization all year long for the media's use in your publications or broadcasts.

For more information on these events, please contact the SDNG Historian, CW5 Duke Doering at (605) 737-6581, or e-mail duke.doering@us.army.mil.

On this date in SDNG history:

May 1, 1943

A major German stronghold, Hill 609 in

Northern Tunisia, was captured in an attack led by the National Guard's 34th Infantry Division and its 109th Engineer Battalion.

"Hill 609 will forever grace the annals of the 34th Division as one of its most glorious achievements," stated the division commander.

During the planning in April, the leadership had decided that tanks could be most helpful in the attack, and the 109th Engineers were detailed to find the best route of approach to the mountain.

Two platoons of Company B, from Hot Springs, cleared mines and made roads to the south of the hill. Under the cover of darkness, Lt. Crichton's platoon of Company C, from Sturgis,

prepared a wadi (swamp) crossing for the tanks at the very foot of Hill 609. This was a dangerous job hampered by artillery fire.

Lt. Crichton was especially grateful for the poor quality of the enemy artillery rounds as a dud round landed just a few feet from him. (SD in WW II, page 145, by the WWII History Commission)

May 2, 1991

The 1742nd Transportation Company was in King Khalid Military City (KKMC), Saudi Arabia. They had moved there on April 27, and continued to haul 20 and 40-foot sea vans to the consolidation point at KKMC.

In late April, Capt. Scott Jensen and 1st Sgt. Leroy Benson had met with Brig. Gen. Robert McFarlin from the 2nd Corps Support Command and were asked to speak about driving safety and received a certificate honoring the unit for its safe driving record. The certificate was for the unit logging over 500,000 miles without any

reportable accidents was a remarkable unit accomplishment considering the conditions and local traffic.

By the time their tour was completed, these 1742nd drivers had tallied more than 850,000 accident-free miles. (Capt. Scott Jensen, in Dakota's Desert Storm)

May 3, 1959

Former President Harry S Truman, who was a National Guard captain commanding Battery D, 129th Field Artillery from Missouri during World War I, is the honored guest at the dedication of the new National Guard Association "Memorial" on Capitol Hill.

Maj. Don Holliday was tasked with coordinating the South Dakota National Guard contingent to attend the dedication. Holliday said, "We took a representative from each Battalion, Group Headquarters and the Air National Guard. We met in Sioux Falls and the South Dakota Air National Guard flew us in on the C-47."

The Association, organized in 1879, is a private organization with membership restricted to National Guard officers (active and retired), and represents Guard political and financial interests to members of Congress on actions prohibited by federal law for the Guard Bureau to pursue.

To share information with its membership in 1947 the Association began publishing The National Guardsman (today National Guard) magazine. Over the years, it has taken upon itself the secondary mission of telling the Guard's history through the "National Guard Memorial Museum" which is open free of charge to the public.

May 4, 1942

The 22 officers and 579 enlisted men of the 109th Engineer Battalion sailed on the ship MEXICO from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Belfast, Ireland.

The convoy departed this date and traveled in a dense fog in mine infested waters on

May 4 and 5, and then had relatively smooth sailing for the rest of the trip. The convoy anchored in Belfast Harbor on May 12.

The troops were moved by train to Camp Killadeas, Ireland, which was a beautiful spot. The 109th Engineers trained there until they entered combat in North Africa, one company on Nov. 8, 1942, and the remainder in January 1943.

After the war, at a reunion of the 109th Engineer Battalion World War II veterans, Corporal Joe Ginsbach, who spent more than 500 days in the combat zone, was asked what scared him the most in the war.

Ginsbach said, "the troops ships had huge, heavy stainless steel tables in the center of the bays where the troops ate and slept. One night, on the MEXICO, the seas became quite stormy, and lots of waves. I was sleeping when that darn stainless steel table tipped over in the middle of the night. That was the most scared I was during World War II."

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