



## NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD

# NEWS RELEASE

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**HELICOPTER PILOT, AFGHAN  
VETERAN NAMED NEBRASKA ARMY  
NATIONAL GUARD CHIEF OF STAFF**

**RELEASED BY  
LTC BOB VRANA**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

LINCOLN, Neb. – A Nebraska Army National Guard helicopter pilot and returning combat veteran from Afghanistan has been named the new Nebraska Army National Guard chief of staff by Maj. Gen. Roger Lempke, adjutant general of Nebraska.

Col. Thomas E. Schuurmans, 44, will succeed retiring Col. William “Steve” Rein, 56, as chief of staff of the Nebraska Army National Guard. Rein has served as chief of staff since June 2004. As chief of staff Schuurmans will serve as the chief advisor and principal assistant to the Nebraska Adjutant General in all matters relating to the Nebraska Army National Guard.

Schuurmans, the youngest son of Maxine and the late Virgil Schuurmans, was born in Tyndall, S.D. He graduated from Tyndall-Tabor High School in 1979 and went on to receive a bachelor of Arts degree in Human Relations from Doane College, a masters of Science degree in Administration from Central Michigan University, and a masters degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

Schuurmans’ military career began in 1979 when he enlisted as a private into the South Dakota Army National Guard as a combat engineer assigned to Company D, 153rd Engineer Battalion. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in July 1981 at the South Dakota Military Academy and then initially served as a Medical Clearing Company platoon leader with the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Schuurmans transferred to the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1983 and has since had a number of different leadership assignments including section leader, maintenance officer, flight operations officer, company commander and battalion commander. His full-time assignments have included medical recruiter, state training specialist, marksmanship coordinator, operations and training officer, executive officer of the 92d Troop Command, supervisory aircraft instructor pilot, director of Army Aviation and Safety, commander of the Army Aviation Support Facility, and deputy chief of staff for Operations.

Schuurmans is an Operation Desert Shield/Storm veteran, deploying with the Nebraska Army National Guard’s 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) as a helicopter pilot, and an Operation Enduring Freedom veteran, deploying to Afghanistan where he commanded the 1st Infantry Brigade (Embedded Training Team) and the Regional Corps Advisory Group of the 203rd Corps.

Schuurmans is a master aviator and has earned the Combat Medical Badge and Combat Action Badge. His military awards also include two Bronze Star Medals, the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal and others.

Schuurmans and his wife, Beth, have two children, Kaitlin and Race. They reside in Lincoln.

Rein, 56, was born in Scottsbluff on June 13, 1949. He graduated from Scottsbluff Senior High School in 1967 and received a bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering, a master of science degree in BioSystems Engineering both from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a masters degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

He enlisted in the Nebraska National Guard in 1972. Following his commissioning, he was assigned to the 1-168th Field Artillery from 1976-1987, serving as a forward observer, fire support team chief, target acquisition platoon leader, battery commander for two batteries and battalion logistics officer.

He became a full-time National Guardsman in 1987 and since that time has served as the logistics officer for the 67th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized); recruiting and induction officer, State Area Command; executive officer, 67th Infantry Brigade (Mech.); commander of the 1-168th Quartermaster Petroleum and Supply Battalion and commander HQs 209th Regimental Training Institute. Prior to becoming chief of staff, Rein served as Joint Director of Personnel for the Joint Forces Headquarters.

Rein's awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal and others.

Rein's wife, Nancy, is the daughter of Dorothy Flint of Lyman, Neb. The Reins have two children, Eric and Heather and 5 grandchildren. He is the son of Bill and the late Mildred Rein of Scottsbluff, Neb. Bill Rein currently resides in Surprise, Ariz.