

# THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

Volume Eleven, Issue Two

Serving the men and women of Kentucky's Army and Air National Guard

February 2007

## The HEAT

is on



### Inside:

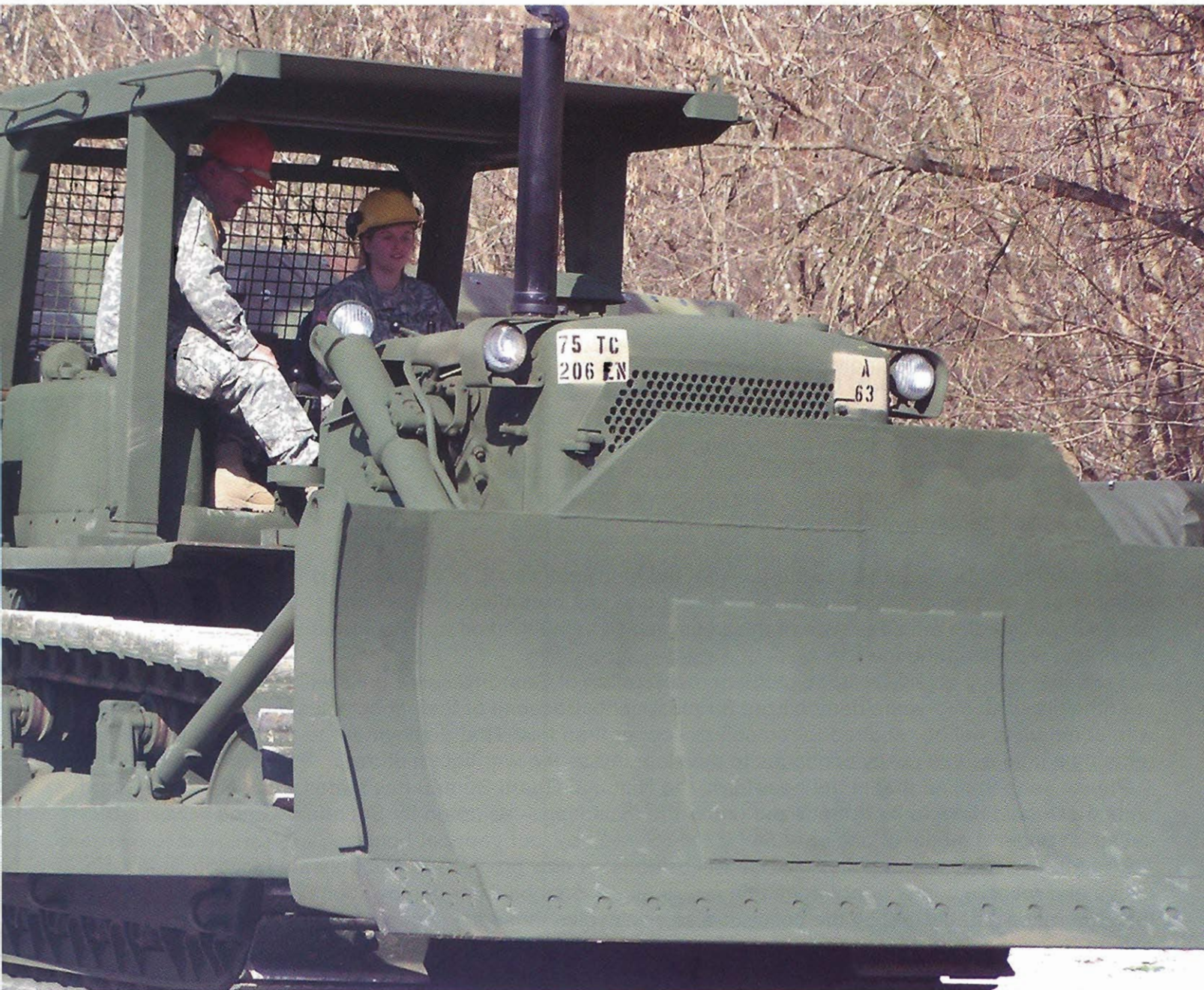
Aviators develop new Humvee  
rollover training simulator  
Fire Readiness center opens

# THIS ISSUE

- 6 **Video e-mails**  
AKO broadens communications
- 8 **Family ties**  
Deployed relatives together in Iraq
- 11 **Retirements**  
12 Soldiers retire from JFHQ
- 12 **Are you game?**  
JSO starts recruitment
- 18 **Into the Blue**  
Airman depicted in Heritage Print
- 21 **Family Support**  
Hazard resident loves her Guard unit







*Photo submitted by Shelly Coomer, wife of Master Sgt. Guy Coomer*

Sergeant 1st Class Justin Reichenbach instructs Spc. Brandy Caudill in operating the D7 dozer. Both Soldiers are in Alpha Company, 206th Engineer Battalion located in Jackson, Ky. The unit is reorganizing and will become Detachment 1, 207th Engineer Company by the end of fiscal year 2007. All Soldiers in the unit are undergoing 21-Echo training to become Heavy Construction Equipment Operators.



Kentucky National Guard Aviators assist with the development of device that can save Soldier's lives. Read more on page 11.



# Policy changes for Reserve Forces

Greeting Soldiers, Airmen, families and retirees,

On Jan.. 11, the secretary of defense announced a number of policy changes affecting the way the Department of Defense will manage reserve component forces. There is a lot of confusion regarding these changes and I want to clarify them for you as best I can.

The first aspect of the policy change involves the deployment of reserve forces. Currently, reserve deployments are managed on an individual basis. In the future, deployments will be managed on a unit basis, allowing for greater unit cohesion and predictability for training and deployments.

This is nothing new for the Kentucky Guard because we have always deployed as units. Individuals have been deployed by exception.

The second aspect of at the new policy changes the maximum mobilization period of 24 months to one year, including pre-deployment training. That is a huge change! Dropping the time deployed to 365 days is a winner for everyone, and knowing exactly how long you'll be deployed will be a great help to families and employers alike!

Not mentioned in the announcement is that the mobilization cap of 24 months is gone. If you are a member of a deploying unit, you will deploy with that unit regardless of how long you were deployed previously. Also, the effective date of this policy is still being worked out. As soon as we have clear guidance, we will announce it.

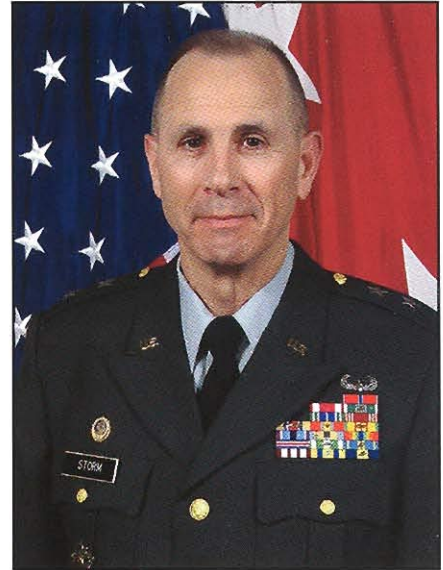
Third, the policy objective for involuntary mobilization of Guard/Reserve units will be a ratio of one-year mobilized to five-years demobilized for most units. Because of their specialties and the demands of war, some units will be required to remobilize sooner than this. That deployment-to-demobilization ratio remains a goal as this policy continues to develop and as the war fight matures.

Please keep in mind that in the near term, the National Guard Bureau has stated Army National Guard units that would have to be remobilized under the exception -- as noted by Secretary Gates -- would be called on under a model of one-year mobilized followed by four years at home.

The fourth aspect of the policy change will establish a new program to compensate individuals in both active and reserve component forces that are required to mobilize or deploy sooner or more frequently than the ratios established by the policy. It also will involve those service members who are required to extend beyond established rotation policy goals. More details about this facet of the policy will come in the following weeks.

The final aspect of the policy change will direct commands to review their administration of the hardship waiver program, to ensure that they have properly taken into account exceptional circumstances facing military families of deployed service members. In the Kentucky Guard, we always have worked hard to identify individuals with hardships to ensure they receive the necessary assistance to do what is right for their family.

Hopefully, most of these changes will positively affect the National Guard and its members. After all, we are in the people business. Our Soldiers, Airmen and families are our single greatest resource. Without you, we can't perform our vital state and federal missions. *With* you, we will prevail!



Respectfully,

Donald C. Storm

Major General

The Adjutant General, Kentucky National Guard



## Communication made easier

*AKO brings families and Soldiers together with video e-mails*

American Forces Press Service

Soldiers and families can now communicate by video e-mail through the Army Knowledge Online intranet portal. On the first day, more than 3,500 video e-mails were transmitted.

AKO video messaging allows all deployed active-duty, National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers to create video messages on a computer with a Web camera. The message is stored on a server and sent to the recipient in an e-mail with a link to the video. Soldiers are able to hear and view video e-mail even in limited bandwidth environments, and the link can be accessed at any time from anywhere.

Instructions can be found on the AKO home page. Soldiers must follow the same Defense Department security measures used for standard e-mail and are not allowed to use Web cams in secure areas.

Families with an AKO account can send video e-mails from home with a personal computer and a Web camera. They can also use Webcams in many of the yellow-ribbon rooms on military bases.

"Families no longer need to coordinate

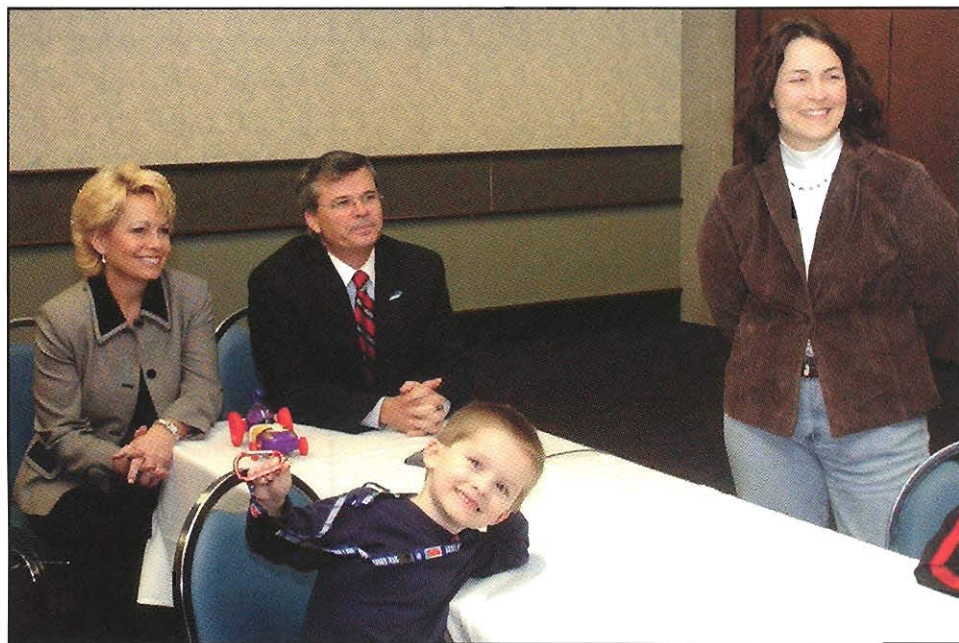


Photo by Sgt. Gina Vaisle/KYARNG

Governor Ernie Fletcher and his wife, Glenda, along with Lisa Mattox and her son Lincoln, talk with Chief Warrant Officer David Mattox via video teleconferencing on Dec. 16 at the Freedom Calls event held in Louisville. The Mattox family currently uses AKO to talk via video e-mail on a regular basis.

times to ensure everyone is available to see each other," said Gary L. Winkler, director for governance, acquisition and knowledge in the Army Chief Information Office, who initiated the project.

"This will help families stay closer during deployment, and we also expect other benefits from this capability as users become more familiar and comfortable with it," he said.

Chief Warrant Officer David Mattox, currently deployed to Kuwait with the Kentucky National Guard's Foxtrot Company, 135<sup>th</sup> Aviation, uses the video e-mail feature often to communicate with loved ones at home.

*Continued on next page*



"I have used the video messaging and am very pleased with all aspects of it," said Mattox. "I sent out about 10 videos on Christmas day to my friends and family."

"As long as you have a Webcam installed on your computer the steps to complete your video are simplified and fast. The length of the video can go up to two minutes, which is pretty ample to say 'hi' and tell what has been going on lately."

Chief Mattox's wife, Lisa, and their sons, Logan and Lincoln, enjoy the feature as well.

"Getting an e-mail or chatting online is nice, but it only goes so far," said Lisa. "Although you know your loved one is well, it's so much better to see and hear that he is well. It gives us peace of mind and it gives my boys a chance to 'see' their dad."

Lisa said she uses a dial-up connection at home, and though the download can be very slow, it is well worth the wait.

"The video quality is more than acceptable," said Lisa. "The stream is consistent once the download is complete. It's a great way to make us feel like our loved one is closer to us and able to share with us in our daily lives."

Officials said Army video e-mail applications could also be used for distance learning and training, recruiting and telemedicine in the future.

# Tax Statements online

Courtesy of Defense Finance and Accounting Service

ARLINGTON, Va. (Army News Service, Dec. 13, 2006) - Service members, military retirees and annuitants, and federal civilian employees paid by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service can expect to receive their 2006 tax statements beginning this month.

DFAS customers with myPay access will be able to retrieve their tax statements electronically up to two weeks sooner than those relying on regular mail delivery.

myPay is a secure Web-based pay information system. One of the many benefits of this system is avoiding risks associated with identity theft. myPay has a series of security measures with layers of defense against identity theft. The secure technology provided to myPay customers meets or exceeds security requirements in private industry worldwide.

"Tax statements are available online, allowing customers to view and print W2s and 1099Rs. Whether anyone needs the statements to complete taxes or just wants an extra copy for their records, the tax statements can be accessed and printed at any time," says Patrick Shine, DFAS Operations Director. "The printable statements are approved by the Internal Revenue Service."

Shine added that current myPay account holders can eliminate the costs associated with generating and distributing the tax statements via mail by signing up and using myPay.

New users and those who have forgotten their personal identification numbers may request a new PIN at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>.

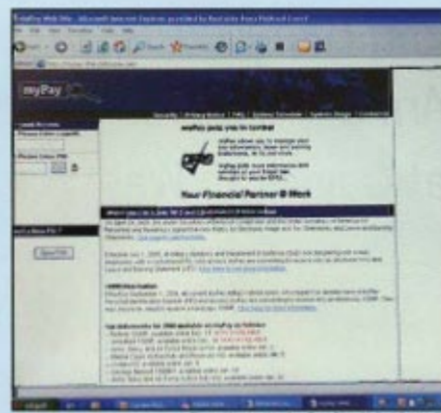


Photo illustration by Sgt. Gina Valle/ARMY



# FROM FRONT LINES

## Armor unit unfurls colors in Iraq

*2nd Battalion 123rd*

*Armor improves security  
at Qayyarah West Base*

**By Capt. David Thomas**  
*2nd Battalion 123rd Armor*

Soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 123<sup>rd</sup> Armor, uncased their colors in October at the Qayyarah West Base Complex, Q-West, Iraq, transferring of authority from the 153<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery Brigade.

The "Orphan" Battalion deployed with 30 Soldiers after 12 weeks of training that included two weeks at Wendell Ford Training Center, eight additional weeks at Camp Shelby Mobilization Center, Mississippi, and another two weeks during their relief in place at Q-West.

The Orphan's mission is to manage the installation garrison functions over Q-West, including all base defense operations, force protection projects, and mayoral oversight.

It didn't take long for the Armor battalion to be tested. After intelligence increased the threat level during Ramadan, Lt. Col. Mike Farley, commander of the 2-123<sup>rd</sup> Armor, presented recommendations for improvements to current security operations to his higher headquarters, the 45<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade.

Colonel Michael T. McBride, commander of the 45<sup>th</sup> Special Troops Battalion, impressed with the new security measures, told Maj. David Reed, operations officer for the 2-123<sup>rd</sup> Armor, "You guys have done more in two weeks than your predecessors did the entire time I had them."

Currently, the Orphan Battalion is moving forward with more plans for improvements to Q-West's security posture and quality of life. Farley feels the 2-123



Photo by Capt. David Thomas/KYARNG

Lieutenant Col. Mike Farley and Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Wilson participate in the Transfer of Authority ceremony at Qayyarah West Base Complex in Iraq last October.

Armor's primary mission is to ensure that Soldiers conducting combat patrols outside the wire have a secure place to live and relax before conducting further operations.



# A Family Affair

*Deployment a bit easier for eight Soldiers in Danville based unit*

Stories and Photos By 1st Lt. Michael Sharp  
410th Quartermaster Company

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Like many units in the Kentucky National Guard, the 410<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company, based in Danville, Ky., considers itself family. When you eat, sleep and work with the same people day in and day out, it's only natural that you become so close.

But for eight Guardsmen in the 410<sup>th</sup>, the bond is deeper than just 'brothers-in-arms,' it's blood thick. There are two sets of siblings, a pair of first cousins and four members of one Danville family.

"The best part about being deployed together is that I know 100 percent that he has my back in all situations," said Sgt. Ricky Mullins about his brother, Kenny.

The Mullins brothers grew up in Lincoln County watching two uncles and two older cousins enjoy the Guard experience. When it was time for them to make the decision about joining the service, Ricky and Kenny enlisted into the



Spc.

William Taylor

hugs his sister

Spc. Wanda Denham.

The two say their deployment to Iraq is a bit easier having each other to talk to.

same unit.

During the mid 90s, a total of eight members of the Mullins family were on the Kentucky National Guard books.

For Spc. Wanda Denham, having her younger brother, Spc. William Taylor, around is a good thing. Both Soldiers depend on each other for support and said the deployment would be more difficult if they weren't together.

"Having my brother here is a blessing," she said. "He is always there when I feel homesick."



Brothers Sgt. Kenny Mullins (left) and Sgt. Ricky Mullins celebrate Thanksgiving in Iraq.

*Continued on next page*



# Strong connections

Continued from previous page

Like many Kentuckians, Staff Sgt. William Wagoner grew up around his first cousins. He and Sgt. Chris Tarter spent much of their youth with each other and view one another as brothers. Both Soldiers spent time on active duty prior to joining the National Guard. Wagoner convinced Tarter to join the 410<sup>th</sup> in 2000 and the two agree that the unit has kept them very close in the last seven years.

"Now that we have our own families, we wouldn't be nearly as close if it wasn't for the Guard," Tarter said.

But for one family, the Guard isn't needed for them to stay close to one another. Sgt. Brad Dunne, mess sergeant for the 410<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster, is proud to serve with his stepson, Spc. Aaron Castro, son-in-law, Spc. Daniel Montgomery, and nephew Sgt. Chaz Garcia.

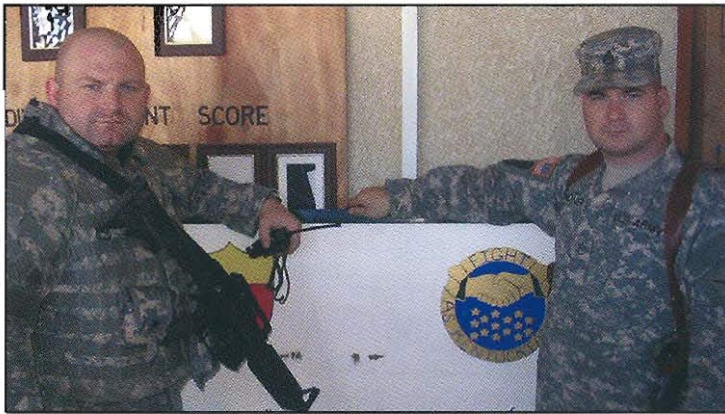
"It makes the deployment much easier," he said, describing the unique support channel the family shares. On the other hand, he said, he has "much more to worry about."

Each member of the family said they have grown closer to one another because of the time spent serving in the Kentucky National Guard.

Although many units may call themselves a family, the 410<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company has a special bond. The Soldiers in the unit who share the same blood line bring an even stronger connection to the unit. Whether doing their duties or enjoying some downtime, the 410<sup>th</sup> understands that family really does matter.



Four members of one Danville family serve with the 410<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company. Spc. Daniel Montgomery, Spc. Aaron Castro, Sgt. Brad Dunne and Spc. Chaz Garcia are all stationed at Camp Taji, Iraq.



Sgt. Chris Tarter and cousin, Staff Sgt. William Wagoner, grew up together and joined the 410<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company in Danville. The two said serving in the Kentucky National Guard has kept their relationship close.

## GOT NEWS?

Fill out the Hometown News Release located on our Web site and possibly get your story printed in The Bluegrass Guard!

## CHECK US OUT ONLINE

<http://www.dma.ky.gov/publicaffairs>



# Soldier granted US Citizenship

*Naturalization Ceremony held in Baghdad for 75 Soldiers on Veteran's Day*

By Sgt. Gina Valle  
Editor

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A Kentucky National Guard Soldier was one of 75 deployed service members granted citizenship on Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, 2006, in Iraq.

"I joined the Army to say thank you; to show my appreciation and to do my part in protecting my home, my family and the American way of life," said Spc. Njaga Jagne. "Now if people ask me where I'm from I can finally say 'I'm from Kentucky,' and I can prove it."

Jagne, a 35-year-old native of the Republic of Gambia, West Africa, has lived in the United States since 1994. Searching for better educational, economic and personal growth opportunities and a better way of life, he arrived in Frankfort in 1995.

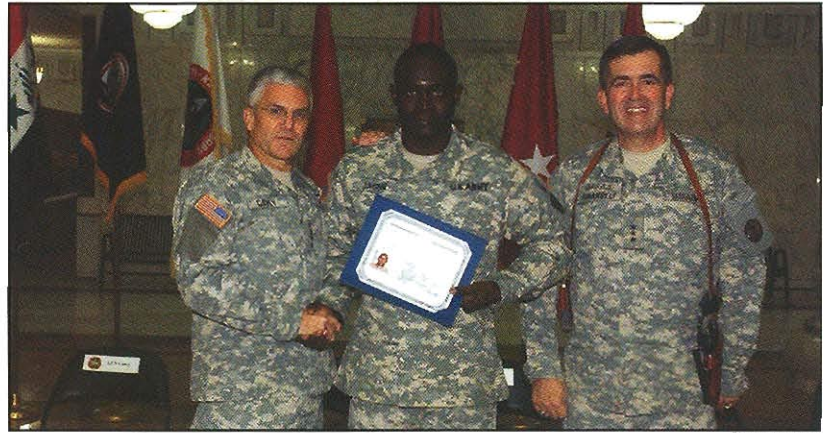
He graduated from Kentucky State University in 1999 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and enlisted into the Kentucky National Guard in June 2005. He currently serves with the 149<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team, headquartered in Louisville.

Thinking the naturalization process would be long and drawn out, Jagne wanted to wait until the unit was back in Kentucky to apply for citizenship. At the direction of his superiors, he learned of an executive order, signed by President Bush in 2002, granting expedited naturalization for service members.

"Specialist Jagne is an excellent Soldier and was most worthy of consideration for expedited citizenship," said Lt. Col. Scott Campbell, the officer in charge of Jagne's current duty assignment.

"He has earned the respect of his fellow Soldiers and possesses the personal traits necessary to be a positive contributor to our nation. I am proud to now call him a fellow U.S. citizen," he said.

Now, even a month after the ceremony, Jagne said he feels like he has achieved something



Commander of Multi-National Force Iraq, Gen. George W. Casey and Lt. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, commanding general of Multi-National Corps Iraq, congratulate Kentucky National Guard Spc. Njaga Jagne, of Frankfort, following a naturalization ceremony in Baghdad, Nov. 11, 2006.

equal to going to the moon.

"I am now part of a nation founded upon and guided by the principles of liberty, justice, equality and humanity," he said. "Everything about (the ceremony) sends chills down my spine."

During the ceremony, Soldiers heard speeches by Zalamay Khalilzad, United States Ambassador to Iraq and Gen. George W. Casey, commanding general, Multi-National Forces-Iraq. Prerecorded remarks by President Bush also were aired during the ceremony.

Jagne was presented with a certificate by Emilio Gonzalez, director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, after he administered the oath of citizenship.

"This is an opportunity for our Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines to be part of America ... and enjoy the full benefits citizenship brings," Gonzalez, who also is a naturalized citizen, explained.

"This is why I wanted to personally fly from Washington to be here, because they so love this country that they are willing to fight for it without being citizens. That says a lot about the character of the person."

Jagne's wife, Katrina, lives in Frankfort with their two sons, Omar and Andrew, and his step-daughter, Page Sharp.



# Inside the



## *Kentucky Aviators develop unique Humvee safety program in Kuwait*

By Dave Altom  
Editor

Riding in a Humvee is quickly becoming a safer experience for Soldiers across the globe, thanks to two Kentucky Army National Guard aviators.

During a deployment last year to Kuwait and Iraq, Chief Warrant Officers Mark Grapin and Dean Stoops were asked to look into the problem of Humvee roll overs and training Soldiers to survive such events.

"The goal of the project is to develop a program to teach Soldiers the proper procedures to egress from an inverted Humvee," said Stoops. "Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003, 249 soldiers have been severely injured in (Humvee) rollover accidents. Ninety of the 249 were rollover fatalities."

At the time Stoops was the aviation standardization officer for the Udairi Army Airfield and additional-dutied as that for the Coalition Forces Land Component Command. Grapin was the aviation safety officer for the UAAF with similar duties with CFLCC.

According to Grapin, the involvement of the Kentucky aviators – as unlikely as it may



Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Larry Chambers/USCG

Kentucky National Guard Chief Warrant Officers, Dean Stoops and Mark Grapin, were instrumental in the Army's newest training simulator. The Humvee Egress Assistance Training Simulator is designed to teach Soldiers how to survive a rollover accident in a Humvee. The Warrant Officers developed the training while stationed at Udan Army Airfield, Kuwait in 2005.

have seemed – was ideal.

"We immediately saw [the solution], though our aviation prescription, as a sort of land-based dunker that aircrews train in to learn escape techniques from submerged helicopters," said Grapin. "We already had a workable program of instruction for the dunker, so the fit seemed quite natural to us."

In addition to developing a training program, the two Kentucky aviators began work with fabricators and within two months the team went from concept to a completed Humvee Egress Assistance Training Simulator.

"Writing the training (manual) for the





- ✦ A Soldier is helped out of the HEAT simulator after a training exercise in Humvee rollover safety.
- ✦ Chief Warrant Officer Mark Grapin converses with Soldiers prior to HEAT training. Grapin, along with Chief Warrant Officer Dean Stoops, helped develop the training.

- photos submitted



HEAT, at least for us, was the easy part," said Stoops. "Taking part in the sort of 'Monster Garage' the first simulator was being fabricated in was the fun part! The more it took shape, the more interest it garnered, and the more compelled we were to see the project through."

After the first HEAT Simulator was fabricated and training was under way, the two warrant officers continued to be called in to qualify HEAT operators. Their experience as instructor pilots came into play at this point.

According to Grapin, a person who is "egress trained" stands a 250 percent greater chance of survival than an untrained occupant when faced with a water egress emergency.

"This training program is intended give the Soldier confidence in his or her ability to respond automatically to this inverted emergency whether they are under water, under fire, or on fire," he said.

Soldier feedback was crucial to the project. Based on comments from one rollover survivor that the only thing lacking was "the junk that flies around the inside of the cab," so foam rubber ammo cans and foam filled water bottles and soda cans were added to

increase realism.

Shortly after training began, Grapin and Stoops were informed that two crews that took part in HEAT training were involved in roll overs. There was no loss of life in either incident; in one case, no injuries at all.

"Chief Grapin and Chief Stoops gladly took on this responsibility in addition to their airfield duties," said Col. Ben Adams, who commanded the pair during their deployment. "Every minute of their involvement was with the sole focus of saving lives. This is typical of the kind of professionalism we have in the Kentucky aviation community."

### **What's next for the HEAT?**

Initially local contracts called for producing 31 HEAT simulators with plans for a total of 58 units in operation by all four services.

"It's great to see the downward arrows on the accident trend charts, showing decreased numbers of accidents involving Humvee roll overs and fatalities," said Grapin. "I like to think we were the right guys in the right place at the right time!"



# Mountain Warriors feed people of Al-Furat



Photo by Maj. Chris Cline/KYARNG

Sgt. 1st Class Todd Hensley, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry, unloads a truck full of food and supplies for residents of Al-Furat, Iraq, Jan. 7.

## *Soldiers keep promise to help residents of Sunni neighborhood*

**By Spc. Shea Butler**

*7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

AL-FURAT, Iraq – It was a common meeting between a coalition commander and an Imam. A normal conversation commenced between them. After discussing pressing issues the meeting ended with a handshake and a firm promise to help local residents.

“We didn’t have much time to prepare but we got the job done, and we made a promise,” said 1st Lt. Robert Andersen, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Brigade, Kentucky Army National Guard.

Within 48 hours of that promise, Soldiers from 1-149th “Mountain Warriors” quickly responded to the needs of the people of Al-Furat. They delivered enough food Jan. 7 for 300 people to live off of for a week.

“It was a quick mission. It only lasted 15 to 20 minutes,” said Andersen. “We were able to deliver all kinds of food products and blankets.”

Security was in place in and around the

neighborhood which allowed the Soldiers to move around freely and complete the mission.

Al-Furat is a Sunni neighborhood surrounded by Shiites. They needed a little help and coalition forces were willing to do so, said Maj. Chris Cline, a Hodgenville, Ky., native serving with the 1-149th.

“Security was a big part of the mission too,” said Anderson, an Elizabethtown, Ky., native. “Without the security the mission would have been more difficult.”

“The locals were very thankful and willing to help unload the food,” Cline said. “They were cooperative.”

The Mountain Warriors didn’t have much time to prepare for the mission because the people were in need, but it was completed without any complications, Andersen said.

“I credit the success of the mission to the fact that we are National Guard (Soldiers),” Cline said. “We are used to doing humanitarian missions in the states, as well.”



# Care packages appreciated by Soldiers

By Sgt. Gina Vaile  
Editor

For most Soldiers serving in the desert, it is easy to lose track of time.

"I was somewhat unaware how close Christmas is," said 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Kelly Smith, serving at Camp Slayer, Iraq, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 149<sup>th</sup> Infantry Mountain Warriors. He said most of the Soldiers regularly work 12 to 18 hours each day.

But a Christmas package, sent in the mail from London, Ky., reminded Smith what time of year it was.

The packages were full of a variety of items from toiletries to snacks and chewing tobacco.

Smith, along with nearly 500 other Soldiers in the Mountain Warrior Battalion, received Christmas care packages from the communities of Whitley, Laurel, Knox and Pulaski counties.

"It makes you feel needed, and that what you are doing is not going unnoticed," Master Sgt. Gordon Hinkle said. His wife, Renee, was instrumental in getting the project started.

Renee said she and other supporters of the Mountain Warriors wanted to make sure the Soldiers knew they were loved and supported back home in the hills of Appalachia.

Like many of the families in Eastern Kentucky, Renee celebrated Christmas 2006 without her Soldier. More than 500 Mountain Warriors departed Kentucky in June and another 80 Soldiers of Team Warrior left London, Ky., in November.

Renee, along with another Soldier's wife, Lisa Roark, rallied friends and family to donate hygiene items, food and other goodies for the care packages.



Photo submitted

Volunteers from three Eastern Kentucky groups supporting the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Mountain Warriors stuffed boxes to send every Soldier a care package.

Local schools and community organizations wrote letters and made Christmas cards. Three Eastern Kentucky groups: The Kentucky Long Rifle, based in Barbourville, the Mountain Warriors Ladies Auxiliary of London and the Somerset Family and Friends collected donations to pay for the postage.

The groups' members, Soldiers from the rear detachment and hundreds of community volunteers met at the London Armory on Dec. 3 to package the donated items and get them in the mail.

The Kentucky Guardsmen said they appreciated the packages because it brings home closer to them, especially during the holiday season.

"I received a picture book of Kentucky's countryside and it really made me and everyone else who flipped through it miss home," said Sgt. Nathaniel Hedden of Louisville. "Being here really makes you appreciate the little things of life back home."

## GOT NEWS?

**The Bluegrass Guard wants your photos, news stories and upcoming events to publicize in our pages and on the Web. Call Sgt. Gina Vaile at 502-607-1186.**

## CHECK US OUT ONLINE

<http://www.dma.ky.gov/publicaffairs>



# OPERATION SCHOOL DROP

## Pencils, paper bring smiles to Iraqi students

By Staff Sgt. Mary Rose

7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**CAMP SLAYER, Iraq** – An infantry unit from the Kentucky Army National Guard spent the morning of Jan. 14 not patrolling the streets of Baghdad like they usually do, but delivering supplies to local school children.

Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, loaded up an

up-armored Light Medium Tactical Vehicle with wooden crates full of backpacks, pencils, pens, rulers and notepads. Then they headed out to the Al Hamdaniyah School with an entourage of humvees for security.

The troops arrived a little early for school, but it didn't take long for the children to start coming in from all directions to greet the Soldiers.

The children seemed excited to see the Soldiers and asked for pens by pretending they were writing on paper with their hands. While the Soldiers interacted with the horde of children they tried to teach them English words, to help with communication.

For the children, they were open to taking whatever the Soldiers had to give them whether it was an English word, a smile or better yet, a pen.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Rose/ 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kentucky National Guard Spc. Jason Davenport, a Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry medic, guards the pens in the sleeve of his uniform as children attending the Al Hamdaniyah School in western Baghdad try to get them. The Soldiers donated supplies to the students Jan 14.

"It doesn't matter what you give them they'll take anything," said Spc. Jason Davenport, a medic for Company C.

The children, with their pants tucked into their socks to keep from getting muddy are willing to take what the Soldiers give because they have so little themselves. Their nine-room school house has 310 students, water damage, no electricity, no running water, no heat and many of its windows broken out, said Maj. Chris Cline, a civil affairs officer with the unit.

Along with all the damage, there is no money being given to the school to fix the problems.

"The teachers haven't been paid in three months," said Cline a native of Hodgenville, Ky. Despite that, he said the teachers still come in to teach the children who attend the school.

The supplies from U.S. Soldiers are the only





Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Rose/ 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

◀ Sergeant 1st Class Danny Page stands next to the pile of school supplies that the Kentucky National Guard 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry, Mountain Warriors provided to students of the Al Hamdaniyah School in western Baghdad. The Kentucky Soldiers gave backpacks and other items to 310 children who attend the school.

thing the school has received in months, according to a teacher at the school.

While at the school, troops unloaded the LMTV and played with the children, until it was time for classes to begin. The children filed into the cold classrooms, after collecting their new supplies and waited for the teachers to join them for their studies.

One of the teachers, who spoke through an interpreter, said there is no school being held in many of the more populated areas around Baghdad, due to security issues.

"We need security," the teacher said. "With security, we can make better education."

Security and lack of financial assistance wasn't the only problem the school had; there are children with medical needs.

Davenport assisted two girls who had ailments, but because of the limited resources

on hand, he referred them to the Civil Military Operations Center's free medical clinic for local Iraqis.

"It is important for them to know that we are here to help them," said Davenport a native of Barbourville, Ky.

Even though the school is barely operational, 1st Lt. Robert Andersen, a civil affairs officer with the regiment, said he was impressed with the number of students still attending.

"For a war going on and so many children to still be in school, it shows that parents do care about the future of their children, which is a good thing," said the native of Elizabethtown, Ky.

"We could be here a hundred years and not make a dent if they don't want to help themselves," Davenport noted.

He said the teachers' dedication to the children at the Al Hamdaniyah School is an example of what Iraq needs to get back on its feet.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Rose/ 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

◀ Sergeant 1st Class Danny Page stands next to the pile of school supplies that the Kentucky National Guard 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry, Mountain Warriors provided to students of the Al Hamdaniyah School in western Baghdad. The Kentucky Soldiers gave backpacks and other items to 310 children who attend the school.



## Twelve retire in JFHQ ceremony

### Staff Report

Twelve Kentucky National Guard Soldiers were honored Jan. 7 at Boone National Guard Center during the Joint Forces Headquarters Retirement Ceremony. The senior leadership, combined, had more than 390 years service to the United States Armed Forces.



Col. Michael Sebastian



Col. Kenneth D. Edwards



Lt. Col. Curtis L. Dunn



Lt. Col. Kelly Goad



Lt. Col. Raymond L. Latendresse



Lt. Col. James C. Royster



Chief Warrant Officer  
Robert N. Courtney



Chief Warrant Officer  
Larry W. Young



Sgt. Maj. William Hill





Master Sgt.  
David M. Clifford



Sgt. 1st Class  
Chester W. Bland



Sgt. 1st Class  
Rickie L. Vencill

**Congratulations to all these fine Soldiers, and  
best wishes on a happy retirement!**

## JSO Recon Detachment selecting members

*Assessments begin March 30, 2007*

### Staff Report

Joint Support Operations challenges all Kentucky National Guard Soldiers to participate in the open selection and assessment that begins March 30 and lasts through April 13.



Commonly referred to as the Counter Drug Program, JSO assists 19 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies with combating the cultivation and production of illegal drugs throughout the commonwealth.

Soldiers remain on Active Duty status while participating in JSO and maintain professional relationships with local, state and national law enforcement agencies. This is a great opportunity for Soldiers who are interested in law enforcement as a civilian career.

Kentucky National Guard Soldiers involved with JSO have the opportunity to attend military school such as Mountain Warfare, Air Assault and Airborne.

Interested Soldiers should contact Sgt. 1st Class Patrick George at 859-293-4165 to schedule an interview.



Photo by Spc. Richard Simpson/KYARNG  
A Kentucky National Guard Soldier and State Police land close to an area of marijuana cultivation in Eastern Kentucky in September 2006.



# FROM THE FIELD

## New Fire Station opens at WHFRTC

By Sgt. Gina Vaile  
Editor

GREENVILLE, Ky.—A \$2.4 million Fire Team Readiness Center opened in December at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center. The center will hold three Kentucky National Guard units.

Dignitaries cut the ribbon on the 12,625 square foot fire station Dec. 2, 2006. The new fire readiness center will support the 176<sup>th</sup>, the 177<sup>th</sup> and the 178<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Army National Guard Fire Fighting Teams.

"This facility is home to three of the most unique units in the Kentucky Guard," said Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, Kentucky's adjutant general. "Because of the immense responsibilities that come with this job, these Soldiers are among our most important. This is a great example of the kind of opportunities the Kentucky National Guard has to offer young people."

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Greg Armstrong, the Fire Team

Readiness Center is a multi-purpose building that acts as a fire station, serves as the base operations and armory for the three Kentucky Guard fire teams and the fire headquarters for WHFRTC.

"With this facility and our fire teams, we are able to provide fire rescue support to the 123<sup>rd</sup> Air Wing when they bring C-130s to the training center and our aviation assets when they are training with helicopters," Armstrong said, noting that a primary focus of the fire teams is training for possible aircraft disasters.

Each fire fighting team is a separate seven-soldier unit that can be deployed independently to assist with wild fires, structure fires and other disasters on



Photo by Spc. Vernis Phipps/KYARNG

Dignitaries, including Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, cut the ribbon on the new Fire Center Dec. 26.

### WHFRTC.

In the near future, the Kentucky National Guard hopes to provide assistance to the Muhlenberg County first responders when it is needed.

"We are only five minutes from the (Western Kentucky) Parkway," Armstrong said. "There is the possibility that our fire readiness center could become the primary first responder for vehicle crashes in the area."

*Continued on next page*



- ▲ The new Fire Readiness Center at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky
- ▲ boasts three OshKosh Striker trucks like the ones pictured here.

- all photos by Spc. Vernis Phipps/KYARNG



# Fire Readiness Center has three full-time firefighters, hopes to add more

Continued from previous page

The Kentucky National Guard has three Oshkosh Striker Attack trucks housed at the Fire Team Readiness Center, in addition to two diesel trucks outfitted for wild fires and range fires. Also, the fire station boasts an Emergency One 3,000 gallon Aircraft Fire and Rescue Fire truck and one of three 6,000-gallon tankers for large remote fires. The Unit has two of three Humvees that will have Fire fighting gear installed for small wild land and range type fire response.

According to Armstrong, Soldiers on the fire teams are "high speed folks," that are highly deployable.

"At every base in every country there are teams like the ones we have here at the training facility," he said. "Our Soldiers mobilized after Rita and Katrina and manned fire stations in the devastated areas. The mission was a success."

Currently there are three full-time firefighters (employed by the Kentucky Department of Military Affairs) manning the Fire Team Readiness Center on a daily basis. Armstrong hopes that as the Guard

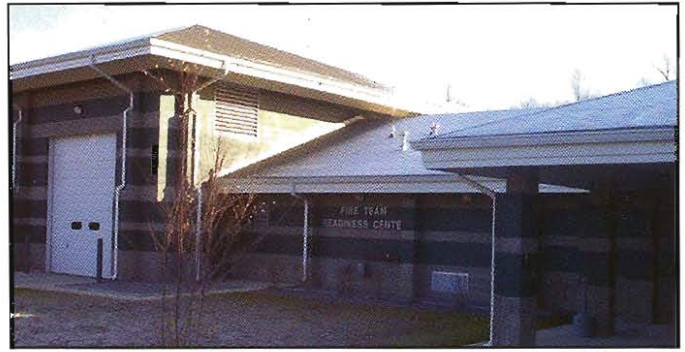


Photo by Spc. Vernis Phipps/KYARMG

The \$2.4 million Fire Team Readiness Center at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center opened Dec. 26. The Building serves as an armory, fire station and rescue center for the Kentucky National Guard.

continues to outfit the station with more equipment, more staff will be added for continuous 24-hour coverage of the training center and surrounding areas.

"We are in the process of building the team we need to man this facility," he said. "Our firefighting Soldiers are training on the equipment we have and are learning new techniques each time they drill. We are proud to have them here at the training center."

## Two lieutenants commissioned into Guard

Courtesy Western Kentucky University ROTC

Looking for hands-on experience, two Western Kentucky University students set out three years ago to embark on careers as Soldiers.

Jonathan Smithson and Andrew Crowell enlisted into the Kentucky Army National Guard in 2004. Shortly thereafter, the two joined the Simultaneous Membership Program with the Western Kentucky University Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps. In May 2006, the two received their commission as second lieutenants in the Kentucky National Guard.

"I received great leadership training from ROTC," said 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Smithson. "But I chose the SMP program to get more hands-on experience."

During weekend drills, Smithson said, he was able to observe and fill the role of an officer while he was still a Cadet.

Currently, Kentucky's newest officers work at Western Kentucky University as Gold Bar Recruiters. Their current job allows them to interact with prospective students and inform young men



Photo submitted

Second Lieutenants Jonathan Smithson and Andrew Crowell commissioned from the Western Kentucky University ROTC program in May. Both were members of the Kentucky National Guard Simultaneous Membership Program.

and women about the benefits of the SMP program. They also serve as mentors to the incoming ROTC Cadets.

Crowell and Smithson currently serve in the rear detachment of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 123<sup>rd</sup> Armor and are awaiting slots to attend their Basic Officer Leader Course (Phase II) and Officer Basic Course.



# Freedom Calls

## Retired Kentucky Guard Soldier assists with expanding program

By Capt. David Page

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment Commander

On the third Saturday in December, the Cats and Cards squared off once again in the commonwealth's most heated state rivalry, and many deployed Soldiers and their families were watching TVs, but not for the reason you would think.

For more than 50 Soldiers and their families, the day presented an opportunity for them to see one another via video teleconference from locations literally half way around the world.

Freedom Calls, in conjunction with the support of UK Healthcare's Kentucky TeleCare Network and the Kentucky National Guard, linked Soldiers in five sites throughout Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan and their families together to share a minimum of 20 minutes with each other.

The event, now in its third year, was the brainchild of Rob Sprang, the director of KTN.

Sprang said he was introduced to the Freedom Calls organization by a peer during a conference a



Retired Master Sgt. Tom Gavin and his family talk with son, Spc. Matthew Gavin, currently serving with the Kentucky National Guard's 198th Military Police Bde., in Afghanistan, during the Freedom Calls event.

few years ago.

"When I returned from the conference, I looked up [Freedom Calls] and called them," said Sprang.

Based on the mission of KTN, which helps patients in remote areas link up with doctors via video teleconferencing, Sprang hoped to extend his company's services to help connect troops and their families.

Sprang said the event has grown each year, but doubled in size this year with the help of retired Master Sgt. Tom C. Gavin, who works full time for the Kentucky National Guard's Directorate of Information Operations as a video operations specialist.

"We [KTN] were introduced to Tom," Sprang said. "This, by far, was the easiest year we had."

Gavin used his technical knowledge and military background to expand the Freedom Calls event from two sites to five this year. Gavin coordinated with units on the ground in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan to find compatible technology to bridge the connection between the states and abroad.



Photo by Capt. David Page/KTN

Major General Donald C. Storm, Adjutant General for Kentucky, addresses the crowd prior to the University of Kentucky vs. University of Louisville basketball game. More than 240 family members were linked up with nearly 60 Kentucky Soldiers during "Freedom Calls from Freedom Hall."

Continued on next page



## Teleconference highlight of bluegrass battle

*Continued from previous page*

"We worked with Rob and the Freedom Calls folks," Gavin said. "I dropped request forms to AT&T to get the lines for overseas."

Gavin said Freedom Calls, a non-profit organization, paid for the long distance charges to the lines needed to connect the locations.

Setting up this event was more than just a work-related task for Gavin. Gavin's son, Spc. Matthew Gavin, is serving in Afghanistan with the 198<sup>th</sup> Military Police Brigade. Tom was able to talk to his son via the Freedom Calls event.

"Seeing my son was fantastic!" Tom said.

Tom and his family know just how special the opportunity was because Tom served in Desert Storm.

"We were lucky to get a couple of phone calls while in Desert Storm," Tom said. "And, the Internet was unheard of really."

The day's events were made more special for families and Soldiers due to a visit from Gov. Ernie Fletcher, Mrs. Fletcher and Kentucky's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm.

The governor, his wife and Storm visited with



Photo by Capt. David Page/KYARNG

Governor Ernie Fletcher and his wife, Glenda, join the Cornett family during "Freedom Calls at Freedom Hall". The family was talking with Spc. D.J. Cornett, serving in Afghanistan, with the Kentucky National Guard's 198<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company.

families who were waiting to talk to loved ones and also rotated through the rooms that hosted the five sites aboard so they could tell the Soldiers personally how much they appreciated their service.

Sprang said he plans continue to do the Freedom Calls event as long as troops are deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and Tom said he will right there with them.

"It makes our Christmas to be a part of this," Sprang said. "For people like me, we don't know what it is like. It is good for the public to see this."

Next year, the game will be held at Rupp Arena in Lexington, and if need be, Freedom Calls, KTN and the Kentucky National Guard will be ready to execute the fourth annual Freedom Calls event.

## VALUE OF THE MONTH

*Each month The Bluegrass Guard will explore a different Army Value and how to use that value in your daily life.*

**P**robably no greater honor can come to any man than the respect of his colleagues." - Cary Grant

For the Army to work properly, there must be a bond between the leader and those being led. A bond that rests not on authority alone – but on professionalism, good will and mutual respect. The chain of command must respect Soldiers, and the Soldiers must have respect for the chain of command.





# INTO THE BLUE

## Airman honored with heritage print

By Sgt. Gina Vaile  
Editor

For one Kentucky Airman, March 4, 2002 is a date that will forever be burned into his memory.

Technical Sgt. Keary Miller, a combat search and rescue team leader from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, hit the ground hard after the MH-47E Chinook helicopter he was riding was hit with a rocket-propelled grenade on Roberts Ridge, of Takur Ghar Mountain in the Paktia Province, Afghanistan. Miller was part of a team sent to rescue Petty Officer 1st Class Neal C. Roberts, a Navy SEAL who had fallen from a separate Chinook while it attempted to land on Takur Ghar Mountain.

Four years after the Battle of Takur Ghar, Miller was recognized at the Kentucky State Capitol Rotunda as a depiction of the Airman assisting a wounded helicopter pilot was unveiled Dec. 19.

"It brings back emotions," Miller told the crowd of Soldiers and Airmen at the Rotunda. "It was just one of them days."

The National Guard Heritage Painting shows a brief portion of the 17-hour ordeal that resulted in the loss of seven American lives, including Petty Officer Roberts. The painting is part of a collection of artwork



Photo by Sgt. Gina Vaile/KYARNG

Master Sgt. Keary Miller stands with Gov. Ernie Fletcher and Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm during the unveiling of the National Guard Heritage Painting depicting his efforts at Roberts Ridge.

recognizing each conflict involving the National Guard – the tradition dates back to the 1600s. This particular painting will represent Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Not one single person saved the day. It was a team effort by the Air Force, Army and Navy – and a lot of air support," he said. "We took it to them and we took that hill."

Air Guard Maj. Jeff Wilkinson told reporters that "Keary is one of our most reliable para-rescuemen. He does a great job taking care of his guys and making sure the mission is accomplished. His actions didn't surprise me because he is truly the right man for the job."

"The Battle of Takur Ghar" painting was on display at the Kentucky

*Continued on next page*



# Air Guard promotes Dornbush

By Maj. Kirk Hilbrecht

Joint Forces Headquarters Public Affairs Officer

The Kentucky Air Guard rang in the New Year at the Louisville Air Guard Base with a promotion ceremony.

Michael J. Dornbush was pinned with the star of brigadier general on Jan. 6. Witnessed by a dozen of active and retired generals and hundreds of Airmen and Soldiers, Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm presided over the ceremony.

"It's a great day here at the Kentucky Air National Guard base, recognizing the promotion of this great American," Storm said. "Mike's an outstanding Airman who has done tremendous things for the Kentucky National Guard."

Dornbush serves as the chief of staff for the Kentucky Air National Guard and as the Joint Forces Air-component commander. With these positions, he is responsible for coordinating policy, guidance and direction of the commonwealth's 1,200 Air Guard members, and Kentucky's joint forces air operations.

With more than 22 years of service, Dornbush is experienced in numerous airlift functions at the unit and state headquarters levels. Under his command, the 123<sup>rd</sup> Mission Support Flight won national recognition five times.

A graduate of the Air War College, Dornbush holds master's degrees in human resources management and national security strategy. He deployed in 2003 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Dornbush has received numerous awards, including the Bronze Star.

Dornbush, a resident of Georgetown, Ind., lives with his wife, Linda.



Photo by Tech Sgt. Dennis Fierst/KYARNG

Michael J. Dornbush receives the star of brigadier general from Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm. His wife, Linda Dornbush, also assisted with the pinning ceremony.

## Miller awarded Silver Star for efforts in Operation Enduring Freedom

Continued from previous page

Military History Museum in Frankfort. It will take a short tour to Lexington, Louisville and then back to Frankfort before it is put on permanent display at the National Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Miller has been promoted to master sergeant since the Battle of Takur Ghar and received the Silver Star for his efforts that day.

He is a full-time Airman at the Louisville Air Guard Base. He lives in Goshen with his wife, Gina, and children, Ian and Kearsten.



Photo by Sgt. Gina Miller/KYARNG

Master Sgt. Keary Miller stands with his wife, Gina, and their children, Ian and Kearsten during the unveiling Dec. 19.





# Guard responds to derailment

By Sgt. Gina Vaile  
Editor

A train derailment in Bullitt County caused 14 rail cars to burst into flames Wednesday, Jan. 16, spewing smoke thousands of feet into the air. The accident forced residents and employees in the area to evacuate and closed Interstate 65 for several hours.

The train, traveling from Birmingham, Ala., to Louisville, derailed about 8:45 a.m. Shortly thereafter, the Emergency Operations Center, in Frankfort, was activated.

"We were requested to provide downwind, air-quality sampling," said 1st Lt. Stephen Smith, operations officer, 41<sup>st</sup> Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction).

The 41<sup>st</sup> CST is a joint forces unit, comprised of approximately 20 Air



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer David Barker/KYMG

In the days following the Jan. 16 train derailment in Bullitt County, the Kentucky National Guard 41<sup>st</sup> Civil Support Team monitored air-quality levels in the area surrounding the accident scene.

and Army National Guard members trained in fourteen different specialties including: hazardous material handling, communications, information systems management, medical care and the scientific analysis of chemical, biological and radiological materials. All members of the 41<sup>st</sup> CST are full-time Soldiers and Airmen, making it easy for the unit to rapidly deploy to disaster areas. The unit was mobilized at 9:45 a.m., and



responded from Louisville in an hour with manpower and equipment to assist local, state and federal officials on the scene.

"All of our Soldiers and Airmen have completed hundreds of hours of training in all aspects of Hazmat training," Smith said. "We've gone through countless hours of sampling and monitoring instruction so we can be prepared for an incident of this nature."

Using a mass spectrometer, Soldiers and Airmen found minimal readings of toxins in the air during operations the evening of the accident. The burning rail cars contained cyclohexane, methyl ethyl ketone and 1,3-butadiene. All three chemicals are extremely flammable and all three could be harmful if high concentrations are released. The 41<sup>st</sup> CST found very minimal ratings of the chemicals in the air.

"We were measuring in parts-per-billion and parts-per-trillion," Smith said. "We presented our findings to the EPA."

The Louisville Courier-Journal reported 23 people were treated at the Jewish Hospital Medical Center South in Hillview, Ky., most of the cases were eye irritations, according to hospital spokeswoman Carrie Lincks. Five people were treated at the Norton Immediate

Care Center in Shepherdsville, Ky., for respiratory distress. All patients were released Wednesday night.

The 41<sup>st</sup> CST worked with local first responders, the EPA, CSX contractors and the National Transportation Safety Board in the days following the accident to be certain that toxic fumes were not being released into the air.

Lieutenant Col. Stephen C. Davis, commander of the 41<sup>st</sup> CST, said he is proud of the way the Soldiers and Airmen under his command performed.

"Their actions contributed directly to ensuring the safety of the public where there was tremendous potential for loss of life," he said. "The 41<sup>st</sup> CST performed its mission to support the first responders in the best tradition of National Guard assistance to civil authorities. The 41<sup>st</sup> is proud to be trained, equipped and ready to serve the Commonwealth of Kentucky at a moments notice."



A smoke plume provides the background for two 41st CST vehicles stationed approximately two miles from the derailment site.



# Last Hoo-rah



*Photo submitted*

Members of the Kentucky National Guard's 141st Personnel Services Detachment celebrated one final Christmas together at the Frankfort Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9235 in December. The unit will dissolve during fiscal year 2007, under the Base Realignment and Closure Act of 2006. The 141st PSD mobilized in 2003 in support of Operation Noble Eagle and provided personnel support at Fort Knox, Ky.

## STORY DEADLINE

**T**he Bluegrass Guard wants your photos, news stories and upcoming events to publicize in our pages and on the Web.

All submissions and story ideas for the April edition of The Bluegrass Guard Magazine must be turned in by March 2, 2007.

Contact Gina Vaile at 502-607-1186 or [gina.vaile@us.army.mil](mailto:gina.vaile@us.army.mil) to submit your story.

## CHECK US OUT ONLINE

<http://www.dma.ky.gov/publicaffairs>

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you know someone not receiving their edition of the Bluegrass Guard, encourage them to submit an address change at the unit level.



# Marksmen take first place

By Sgt. Gina Vaile  
Editor

It was a week of sun and shooting for members of the Kentucky National Guard Marksmanship Team as they traveled to Puerto Rico Jan. 9-16, for a championship shooting match sponsored by the National Rifle Association.

The Kentucky contingency joined National Guard teams from North Carolina, South Carolina, New Mexico, New York and Puerto Rico, as well as NRA members, for long-distance shooting.

The Kentucky team took first place in the military classification of the tournament.

"Our shooters valued this experience because it was a constant learning situation," said team coach, Sgt. 1st Class Charles Reed. "The shooters were getting down range feed back at each yard line they fired from."

Because the NRA ran the matches, Reed said this particular tournament was scored on a different scale than military matches.

"NRA rules applied to this competition," he said. "The NRA uses composite scores, not combat scoring."

"Essentially, the Soldiers and Airmen who participated in this tournament learned what they need to do at the 200-, 300- and 600-yard line," Reed said. "Shooting from



Brigadier Gen. Roberto Marrero-Corletto, assistant adjutant general of Puerto Rico, stands with the Kentucky National Guard Marksmanship Team at the Puerto Rico State Championship in January. The team placed first in competition. Team members from left to right: Sgt. Norman Reehel, 1st Lt. Aaron Grimm, Sgt. Anthony Huddleston, Sgt. 1st Class Loren Long, Staff Sgt. Eric Dean, Staff Sgt. Ken Nillson, Sgt. 1st Class Eddie Garcia, Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Reed and Sgt. Jeff Ice.

the 600-yard line with a GI-issued M16 and GI-issued ammo is not easy, especially in the windy conditions the shooters faced."

Reed said his shooters learned, among other things, how to better concentrate on their target and trigger squeeze. "That is going to help them when they return to their home unit and talk with other Soldiers and Airmen on proper techniques when shooting long range."

## SINCGARS video wins national award

Staff Report

Captain Scott Blevins and Chief Warrant Officer Dewey Pope, both of the Information Technology offices on Boone National Guard Center, were awarded the National Videographer Award of Distinction in 2006 for their "Introduction to the SINCGARS Radio" DVD.

The DVD provides Soldiers with familiarization of the SINCGARS radio and its associated equipment. An additional CD offers reference manuals for Soldiers to print and use for step-by-step operating procedures.

Blevins wrote the script and narrated the film that Pope recorded, edited and packaged for distribution.

"It is really informative for the first-time SINCGARS Radio user," said Pope. "It is a very technical DVD."

Soldiers interested in viewing "Introduction to the SINCGARS Radio" can log on to <http://lms/course/view.php?id=16>.

This is the second National Videographer Award of Distinction for the Video Information branch. In 2004, Pope was awarded with John Trowbridge, the command historian, for the "History of the Kentucky Guard" DVD.



Chief Warrant Officer Dewey Pope and Capt. Scott Blevins received a National Videographers Award for their piece on the SINCGARS radio.



walking

# HISTORY

## Hazard's favorite Grandma becomes oldest FRG member in the nation

By Sgt. Gina Valle

Editor

Margie Duff didn't cry the day she sent her nephew, Schyler Watts – the boy she raised – to Vietnam, not even for his second tour.

But when Sgt. Jack Duff, her grandson, deployed to Iraq with Bravo Company, 206<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, Margie Duff couldn't help but cry.

"Oh, Lordy, I cried," said Margie. "When I sent Schyler, I didn't think he wouldn't come back ... but then he was killed. When little Jack went, well, it just hit me so hard."

Margie knew she needed to focus her energies on something positive and joined the Family Readiness Group for her grandson's unit.

"She about wore my dad and my cousin out," Jack said. "They were driving her up to the [FRG] meetings, waiting on her after it was over 'cause she had to talk to everybody."

"I just love my meetings," Margie said about her FRG. "They love me over there."

According to Alvonda Ronnebaum, FRG chairperson for the 206<sup>th</sup> Engineers, Margie has attended every meeting and function the FRG has held since joining in May 2005.

"She is the light of our lives at the armory," Ronnebaum said. "We can always count on Mrs. Margie to brighten up anything we are doing."

Margie has a seat in the unit Humvee that

participates in Hazard's Black Gold Parade. For the past two years, she's waved her hand and smiled at citizens on the sidewalks.

"I didn't want them to strap me in, but they told me they had to," Margie said.

"You know those things ain't got any doors on 'em!"



Margie Duff, with her grandson, Sgt. Jack Duff, is the oldest Family Readiness Group member in the United States.

### Living history

Margie is a walking, talking history lesson. The daughter of a Civil War veteran, she has known someone who has fought in every war since then. She'll talk to you about the people she knew, the ranks they held and how successful they became. The military has become a part of her life.

It was only recently she revealed that before she started her family in Hazard, she lived and worked on Fort Knox.

"I was married to an Army man," she said. "I even worked at the PX for a while. But the last time I went out there I didn't even recognize the place."

It was then that her patriotism and love for those in the service grew. She had great respect for those in uniform. Margie tried to join the Air Force at age 19, but she didn't get in. Her family tree is sprinkled with veterans and service members -- cousins and nieces in the Air Force, and others in the Army.



"I know people who were in battles you ain't even heard of," she laughed.

Recently, at the age of 88-years-old, Margie became history herself. In December, the Kentucky National Guard Family Assistance Center presented her grandson, Jack, with a plaque, recognizing Margie as the oldest Family Readiness Group member in the United States.

Unfortunately, Margie couldn't attend the Company's Christmas party to receive her award. She was on strict doctor's orders to stay in bed due to an illness and a recent fall.

"Oh, I cried," Margie said. "They wanted to keep it a surprise that I was going to get this and then I go and fall and bust my hind end.

"The doctor said I was critical They act like I can't do nothin', but I can still get around," she proclaimed.

### The Mother of Perry County

Everyone in Hazard, Ky., knows Margie and she knows just about everyone – according to Jack, she's known around town as the mother of Perry County. As the owner and operator of Margie Duff's Whiskey Store (from 1948-1990), she met a lot of people.

"I remember once, when I was little, she grabbed



Margie Duff points to the name of her nephew, Schyler Watts, on the Vietnam War Wall memorial in Washington, D.C. (Photo courtesy of Duff family)

the .38 Special she kept under the counter and took off after some guy who took a case of beer," Jack said. "She came back a short while later, with the case in her hand, and said 'I can't believe he tried to steal from me.'"

Jack said everyone who has ever encountered Margie knows of her strong work ethic and her generosity to others.

"She is always giving back to people," he said, noting that Margie paid for his college education.

While Jack served in Baghdad, he met up with a master sergeant in the Army Reserve. The Soldier, wearing an armor patch, struck up a conversation with Jack and told him he was from Kentucky. While the two were talking, Hazard was mentioned and the master sergeant told Jack about a little whiskey store he had once visited.

"I told him that was my Grandma Margie," he said. "The guy had talked with her for a long time because she found out he was in the Army the day he stopped in."

Community members say Grandma Margie Duff exemplifies the spirit of America. She has traveled to The Wall, in Washington D.C., to pay tribute to those Soldiers from the Vietnam War, including her nephew, who was killed. She visited the traveling Wall when it stopped in Kentucky. She remembers paying respects to the Soldiers of her father's era at Camp Wildcat, just south of Lexington.

"My daddy said they just left those men on the field there," she said. "You always should pay your respects for people in the military."



First Sgt. Tim Mullins presents Sgt. Jack Duff with a plaque recognizing his grandmother, Margie Duff, as the oldest member of a Family Readiness Group in the United States at the Bravo Company, 206th Engineer Battalion Christmas Party. (Photo by Eastern Kentucky Freedom Press, Hazard, Ky.)



## THANKS

The State Marksmanship Team would like to thank Cols. Hunter Mathews and Ron Turner for their unfailing support for marksmanship in Kentucky. Read more about the team's first place win in Puerto Rico on page 24.

## GOT HISTORY?

John Trowbridge, Kentucky National Guard historian, is looking for Soldiers who have documented unit history.

If you have historical information about your unit, please contact Mr. Trowbridge at 502-607-6301 or send your reports to [john.m.trowbridge@us.army.mil](mailto:john.m.trowbridge@us.army.mil).

## CHECK US OUT ONLINE

<http://www.dma.ky.gov/publicaffairs>

## In Memory



Staff Sgt. Thomas W. Clemons  
Bravo Co. 2nd Battalion, 123rd Armor  
Dec. 11, 2006  
Ad Diwaniyah, Iraq



## THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

100 Minuteman Parkway

Frankfort, KY 40601

phone: 502-607-1186/1562/1556

fax: 502-607-1468

[www.dma.ky.gov/publicaffairs](http://www.dma.ky.gov/publicaffairs)

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT #126  
FAYETTEVILLE, NC