

Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 26, Issue 1 - April 2023

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

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RECRUITING & RETENTION


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AROUND THE GUARD



ON THE COVER - Over the last two years, The Kentucky National Guard has had many missions, including winter storms, flooding and tornado response. The men and women who serve the commonwealth are always ready and always there for our communities. (Front cover by Mr. Andy Dickson)



JFHQ - Command Chief Warrant Officer 5 Warrant Officer 5 Ricky L. Skelton receives the saber signifying his assumption of command from Maj. Gen. Haldane B. Lambertson during a Change of Responsibility ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort Oct. 28, 2022. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)



149th MEB - Command Sgt. Aaron Lester, 149th's operations sergeant's major, coins Pfc. John Jones, one of the two honor graduates during their first formation patching ceremony, Feb. 19, 2023. During the ceremony, Lester welcomed the newest Soldiers to the Guard (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)



138th FAB - Soldiers work with Kentucky State Police to help clear I-71 in Gallatin County, Dec. 23, 2022, after winter storm Elliott passed through the Northern Kentucky area. (Photos submitted by Staff Sgt Jerami Tewsley, C Btry, 2-138th FA)



63rd TAB - W5 Shawn Gabhart, the state's UH-60 Black Hawk standardization pilot, and the 63rd's Chief Command Warrant Officer, and his family celebrate his final flight at the Army Aviation Support Facility Feb. 7, 2023. Gabhart leaves the Guard with 6,148 flight hours. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)



75th TC - Four Soldiers from the 41st Civil Support Team competed in the Chief National Guard Biathlon Championship in Jericho, Vt., Feb. 16-22. The four Soldiers were: Lt. Col. Frank Molder, Sgt. 1st Class Joel Campbell, Sgt. 1st Class Eric Shackelford and Sgt. 1st Class Chris Fugate. (Courtesy photo)



123rd Airlift Wing - Master Sgt. Christopher R. Terrell, Senior Airman John M. Forcht and Master Sgt. Dustin J. Turner, with the 123rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight, have been awarded Master Blaster of the Year for 2022. The honor recognizes an outstanding United States Air Force EOD Airman, noncommissioned officer and senior NCOs for their contributions to the unit, base, command and the EOD program. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Joshua Horton)



238th RTI - Officer Candidates from class 65-23 planned and executed their dining-in event at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center Feb. 11, 2023. Candidates are responsible for the planning and execution of the event as part of the OCS curriculum. (Photo by Lt. Col. Carla Raisler)



BLUEGRASS GUARD

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Guard members and their families are encouraged to submit articles meant to inform, educate or entertain Bluegrass Guard readers.

Articles should be submitted in Word format, 10-point arial font and include the writer's name, unit and contact information. Photos should be in JPEG format with captions submitted via Word document, 10-point Arial font. Send submissions, photos and correspondence to pao@kentuckyguard.com.

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Please report any corrections to:
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A LETTER FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL



We have a new recruiting program in the KYNG called the Kentucky Enlistment Enhancement Program or 'KEEP.' It will pay \$500 to every Airman, Soldier, and KYNG Retiree for providing a referral to our recruiters who ends up enlisting.

Our recruiters, both Army and Air, had some of the best results in the country this past year, yet they were facing the same challenges as the efforts of the entire DoD.

While many causes to these challenges have been suggested, I believe having gone through three years of a pandemic has hampered our recruiting efforts the most. Our recruiters had to come up with a new means of reaching out to potential Airmen and Soldiers while a number of school systems throughout the state closed their doors to us.

Now that our schools are open again, the challenge is not over. It will take some time for our recruiters to re-establish their previous recruiting pipelines.

As a means to incentivize our entire force structure for aiding recruiting efforts, this KEEP payment is authorized to our service members and retirees regardless of their rank or duty status. They can be M-Day, DSG (Drill Status Guardsmen), AGR, Dual-Status Technicians, ADOS or FTNGOS personnel, or retirees. All that's necessary is to get the referred individual to use the QR code identified and to provide their information. The data is collected and a KYNG recruiter will be notified to work with the referral from that point on.

The primary group of new Service members comes from 17- to 24-year-olds. Of this population group, once you

“
**WE NEED EVERYONE'S
ASSISTANCE TO
TOUCH BASE WITH
THESE POTENTIAL NEW
GUARDSMEN/WOMEN WHO
ASPIRE TO SERVE IN THEIR
OWN COMMUNITIES.**
”

take out those not qualified for military service due to education, height, weight, medical issues, legal issues, or other variables, only about 23% of this group still qualify. Of this 23%, take out those with no inclination for military service and our recruiters are left with about 9%. In our state, that leaves approximately 81,000 17- to 24-year-olds willing and capable of service.

Even with all of their established outreach channels, our recruiters would not be able to reach all of those inclined to join our ranks. *Thus, we need everyone's assistance to touch base with these potential new Guardsmen/women who aspire to serve in their own communities.*

If you have any questions, reach out to one of our recruiters. Or perhaps, simply scan the KEEP QR codes in this magazine.

MAJ. GEN. HAL LAMBERTON ★ ★

STATE
PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAM



Maj. Stephen Young, the J6 plans/policy officer for the Kentucky National Guard's Directorate of Information Management (left), presents a coin to Djiboutian Armed Forces Capt. Elmi Moussa, of Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide.

KENTUCKY GUARD SIGNAL LEADERS SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND BUILD RELATION- SHIPS WITH COUNTERPARTS IN PARTNER NATION DJIBOUTI

Story and photos by Capt. Cassandra Mullins, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

DJIBOUTI CITY, Djibouti – Although the early-morning sun was still low in the sky, temperatures were already hovering near 100 degrees, as a small group of Kentucky National Guard signal leaders made their way in utility vehicles across the rugged, barren terrain of sunbaked Djibouti, a small country in East Africa Aug. 11-19, 2022.

This drive was just a small part of the journey for those who traveled more than 15,000 miles to meet with Djiboutian military signal counterparts and to continue building Kentucky's relationship with the nation as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program.

But it was, perhaps, in this moment, during the hour-long ride from Camp Lemonnier to a Djiboutian military facility, that the impact and the importance of the mission was felt by the Kentucky Soldiers. From their windows, the Soldiers watched as small children emerged from tents and make-shift lean-to structures in villages along the route, grinning at the sight of the familiar U.S. military uniforms and stretching their arms high to wave — their faces brightening as the Kentucky Soldiers waved back.

"It didn't use to be this way," said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Fox, of the 6th Battalion, 2nd Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB), who is stationed at Camp Lemonnier, a base that hosts the only enduring U.S. military presence in Africa. *"When I first arrived, the children would throw rocks at us, but we've come a long way in building relationships and establishing partnerships since then."*

They know we are here to help, and they can trust us and can count on the U.S. military."

Fox and the SFAB team serve as liaisons to Djiboutian Armed Forces and have put a great deal of effort into bringing in needed military expertise, as well as personally connecting with the Djiboutian service members and residents of the villages outside

the fortified walls of Camp Lemonnier.

He said Kentucky's partnership with Djibouti has been instrumental in helping his team build that trust.

Djibouti is particularly important because of its strategic location in the Horn of Africa at the mouth of the Red Sea. A significant amount of the world's trade and natural resources flow through the area, making Djibouti a key U.S. partner to security, regional stability, and humanitarian efforts across the region.

Since the forming of the state partnership in 2015, the KYNG has sent engineers, infantry Soldiers, and high-ranking leaders, among others, to exchange ideas, knowledge, and best practices with Djiboutian Armed Forces. For this mission, Kentucky National Guard Soldiers were hand-picked based on their signal expertise ranging from spectrum management to various communication systems and antennas.

Davis and Kentucky Guard Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Reno, a satellite communications non-commissioned officer, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery (HHB), 138 Field Artillery Brigade, spent hours hovering over a laptop and two radios as they worked with a small group of Djiboutian signal service members to program and validate the tactical communications to be used by BIR.

SCAN HERE TO SEE THE REST OF THE STORY



LETTER TO EDITOR POLICY

The Bluegrass Guard values opinions

To comment, keep remarks under 150 words, include your name, rank and address and send them to:

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We reserve the right to edit letters for tone, length, clarity, and factual accuracy.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Don't miss an issue

All change of address requests should be made by the unit clerk using IPPSA for all current Army or Air National Guardsmen. The Bluegrass Guard is mailed out via alert roster addresses at the unit level.

Army Retiree address changes should be made through Personnel Services Branch at 502-607-1497 or email nicholas.j.sheridan.mil@army.mil.

Air Retirees should request changes through retired Chief Master Sgt. James Turpin at jturpin1945@gmail.com.



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STRUGGLING TO PERFORM THEIR BEST,
AS WELL AS EXPERTS AND MASTER
FITNESS TRAINERS TO CONTINUE TO
PERFORM AT THEIR BEST.”**

- 2nd Lt. Brenton Abshire





(Photo by Capt. Cody Stagner)

PERFORMANCE COURSE

Story by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Reno, Kentucky
National Guard H2F



Members from Bravo Company, Recruiting and Retention Battalion take part in Kentucky's first Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) program held at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort Feb. 9. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Reno)

For two weeks in February 2023, the Kentucky Army National Guard Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) team conducted their first performance course at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort as part of a push to help Soldiers perform at their best.

"Our performance course is based around the Holistic Health and Fitness system," said Capt. Jeremy Mullins, H2F officer in charge. "We provide education in all five domains to increase the overall wellness of today's Soldiers to maximize their performance in multiple aspects."

The H2F team is relatively new to the Army and includes unique training for some Soldiers.

According to Maj. Gen. Lonnie G. Hibbard, former commander of the U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training and senior leader during the inception of H2F, the program is aimed at helping "the individual Soldier," which included postpartum training for the first time in the Army.

According to 2nd Lt. Jesse Mascoe, H2F state coordinator, this "performance" course provides value by educating the Soldier on making healthier choices, teaching resiliency tools, connecting Soldiers to their inner spirituality, and maximizing individual potential to enhance their careers.

Students begin the performance course by completing an InBody scan to measure body composition and using a Functional Movement Screen (FMS) to test mobility. The H2F cadre then use this data to shape the training program, which teaches lifestyle changes, mitigates future injuries, and helps to meet individual goals.

"With the H2F model, we invest in the Soldiers' wellness which will optimize personnel readiness, reduce injury rates, and improve the overall effectiveness of the Army while allowing optimal performance in their personal lives," said Mullins. "Data numbers show improved retention, improved fitness scores, improved quality of life scores, and a decrease in flagged Soldiers."

Bravo Company, Kentucky Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, was the first unit to attend the H2F performance course.

Performance experts from Fort Knox, Kentucky, Fort Riley, Kansas, and Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, traveled to Frankfort to aid the H2F cadre in educating Bravo Company's recruiters on various performance topics, including ongoing stressors that impact their everyday life.

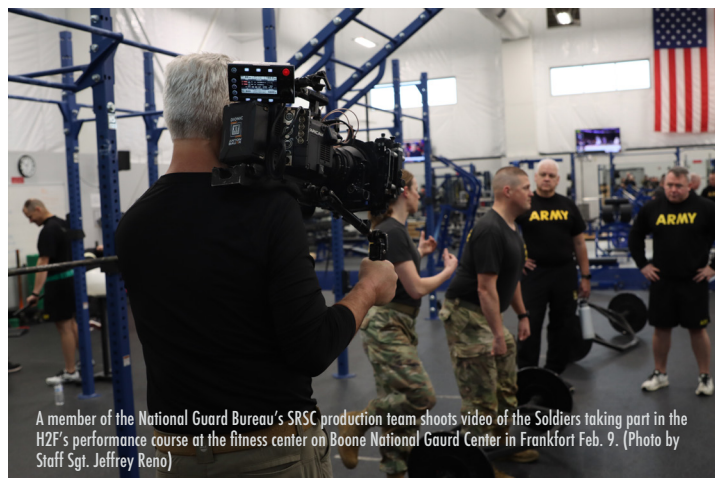
According to Staff Sgt. Hunter Marcinek, recruiters are faced with trials and tribulations. Therefore, "It is essential that we deliberately maintain resilience to ensure our competence," said Marcinek. "The H2F course allowed recruiters to pause, breathe, and stand back up. This [training] gave us the strength to regain control of our mental, spiritual, and physical health."

"What I see from our performance courses is a large amount of buy-in from the Soldiers," said Lt. Col. Eddie Simpson, AXE Course founder and H2F cadre. "By the time participants were educated on how their nutrition, sleep, recovery, spiritual and mental readiness affected their day-to-day performances, I feel more than eighty percent of Soldiers leave here with the attitude that says, 'Hey, I want to implement this into my daily life.'"

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) SRSC Production Team traveled to Kentucky's H2F performance course to produce an informational video to showcase Soldiers' hard work on the TEAM and promote the program nationally.

The production team interviewed Kentucky's H2F cadre, Mullins, Mascoe, Simpson, 1st Lt. Brenton Abshire, and Staff Sgt. Suzanne Williams.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to educate attendees and honored to have NGB document our work," said Mullins. "The success of this program is important to me, and helping more and more people should always come first in our mission."



A member of the National Guard Bureau's SRSC production team shoots video of the Soldiers taking part in the H2F's performance course at the fitness center on Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort Feb. 9. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Reno)

REFER A FRIEND GET \$500

Earn \$500 for every friend or family member you refer who enlists. The Kentucky Enlistment Enhancement Program (KEEP) incentivizes currently serving or retired Guard members to refer eligible people for enlistment. By helping us build the Kentucky Army National Guard, you earn money and unique swag.



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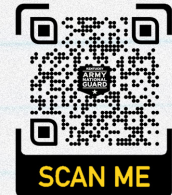
You can get some serious cash for recruiting your friends—**\$500 for every person** you refer who enlists. Helping someone decide if the National Guard is right for them can be confusing, so we created a roadmap to simplify things a bit. If you know someone who's interested, follow the arrow here:

START HERE ▶

Discuss what the National Guard can do for them and the benefits of joining (tuition assistance, monthly pay, healthcare, etc.)



Find someone who is interested in joining the Kentucky Army National Guard.



Once they agree to speak with a recruiter, scan the **Kentucky Enlistment Enhancement Program (KEEP) QR code**:



Complete and submit QR code form.



The Recruiting and Retention battalion receives the referral information and checks your status for KEEP eligibility.

Be available to attend the referral's first appointment with the recruiter to sign KEEP documentation (Form 1).



The referral lead is then sent to the recruiter assigned to the referred candidate's area.



Recruiter processes KEEP referral paperwork.

When referral enlists, KEEP Form 2 is completed by Recruiting And Retention Battalion and documented in enlistment paperwork. Your KEEP incentive is then processed for payment by the Department of Military Affairs.



FINISH

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Civilian Employer Spotlight

By Julie Wood, GE Appliances

Creating a culture to support those who serve: Jonathan Gocke presents Marcia Brey with the

Patriot Award

In 2007, Jonathan Gocke joined GE Appliances (GEA) and the Kentucky National Guard after serving in the Army for four years after college. His first role was on the Sourcing team.

Today, Jonathan is the Senior Warehousing Program Manager in Distribution and serves as the Deputy Commander (Lieutenant Colonel rank) for the 138th Field Artillery Brigade in the Kentucky National Guard, based in Lexington, Ky.

"I have a dual role as I am both the 2nd in Command ready to step in for the Commander, and I serve as Chief of Staff," said Jonathan. Jonathan's Brigade has 1,200 people spread across three Battalions, the Brigade Headquarters, and a Signal Company.

During his time in the Kentucky National Guard, Jonathan's been activated twice for local concerns and once for a NATO exercise in Germany. The support he has received from his GEA team has been both excellent and unique.

"The company goes above and beyond to ease the stress of those on active duty," said Jonathan. "Very few senior leaders in the Kentucky National Guard are in a traditional corporate role. They are typically government employees, and that is what makes GE Appliances unique. I can do both roles because GEA cares about both."



Jonathan was recently nominated for the Army War College, the U.S. Army's highest level of professional-military education. It is designed to develop senior officers with the strategic and critical thinking tools they need to lead in complex situations. It is a 2-year, rigorous, distance learning course that ends with a master's degree in strategic studies. "We have readings from all sources including insights from business journals, leadership books, CEO writings, and specific leadership case studies that are incredibly interesting and applicable to not just my role in the Army but also my role at GE Appliances," said Jonathan.

In June, Jonathan had Guard training at the same time GEA's new Dixon warehouse was ramping up. When he goes to training, his Distribution colleagues treat it like they don't expect to hear from him. "My team always has my back, but I checked in during downtime," said Jonathan. "They don't expect it, but their support makes me want to stay connected."

The support he has received over the years led Jonathan

to nominate VP of Distribution Marcia Brey for a Patriot Award. "I nominated Marcia for this award because she is the epitome of a supportive leader to our National Guard/Reserves," said Jonathan. "She is phenomenal in her support of our military. When I told her I was selected for Army War College, she was overwhelmingly excited for me. The first thing she asked was what could she and the team do to make sure I would be successful, and that they would support me. Marcia implements a culture of trust and support throughout Distribution that allows all service members to continue to serve at a high level. She is the model for what this award is for, and we could not be as successful in our service without her support."

"I love both my careers, and it's because of the leaders like Marcia that I can be successful in both!"

-Lt. Col. Gocke

Another area of support for veterans at GEA is the Veteran's Network, an affinity group that has been a part of GE Appliances for 23 years. It can be tough transitioning to civilian life. The Veteran's Network is filled with people who understand what new vets are going through and provides a support system and comradery. The group also supports deployed soldiers from the company and elsewhere by writing letters, sending care packages, and staying connected with families.

GE Appliances provides support so employees can serve our country and take care of their families. If the employee's orders are for less than a month, there is no change in their GEA pay status. If their leave is greater than a month, the company pays the difference between an employee's military pay and their GEA salary for up to three years.

"GE Appliances is incredibly unique in our overarching culture and support of veterans, both past serving and those of us who are still serving," said Jonathan. "Over the course of my 19-year military career, I have talked with hundreds of traditional civilian-soldiers like me, and I can speak with authority that there is no other company that matches GEA's level of support. Between the culture that leaders like Marcia have instilled, to the support of the Veteran's network sponsored by other business leaders, to the benefits our company provides, GE Appliances is the benchmark of a 'Veteran Friendly' company. I love both my careers, and it is because of leaders like Marcia that I can be successful in both!"



Top Recruiter *of the year*



Sgt. 1st Class Lori Lawson wins state and region Recruiter of the Year

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Reno

Sgt. 1st Class Lori Lawson takes home the Army National Guard Recruiter of the Year award for the state and regional competition.

Lawson, assigned to Kentucky Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion's Bravo Company, was awarded this honor by helping to sign the most recruits into the Guard within that fiscal year.

By winning the state award, she was able to compete at regions where nine other recruiters competed against one another in a board style format. Lawson came out on top there and won the title for Recruiter of the Year for Region 3, as well. This sends her to the national competition to be held in March.

Lawson had a mission to put in 20 recruits and was able to best that by six to get a total of 26 new Soldiers in 2022. This fiscal year, she has already gone above and beyond by meeting her recruiting mission numbers within the first quarter of fiscal year 2023.

Command Sgt. Maj. Johnnie Parton, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, said, "Sgt. 1st Class Lawson continues to demonstrate a passion for changing lives and her recruiting profession. She's in perpetual motion of extremely high achievement through dedication and mission focus."

Lawson was prior service in the Marine Corps and re-joined the Kentucky Army National Guard after a 13-year break in service. She made it her mission upon getting back in to become a recruiter.

"I got to know more about the guard and who we are," said Lawson. "I want your job; I want to change lives."

After boarding for a recruiting job several times, she was selected to recruit in her hometown.

Lawson's recruiting efforts now cover Madison County, and she is the primary military liaison for Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond.

"I get up everyday thinking I have the best job in the world; The best thing I get to do is to change lives," she said.

"I get up everyday thinking I have the best job in the world; The best thing I get to do is to change lives"





(Photo by Andy Dickson)

By Andy Dickson, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

The Army warrant officer is a technical and tactical leader who is critical to today's operational environment and is a subject matter expert for both enlisted and commissioned officers in their branch.

The Kentucky National Guard's Warrant Officer Candidate Accession Program (WOCAP) is a streamlined process to help Soldiers achieve their goals of becoming a warrant officer.

The path to becoming a warrant officer is not an easy task for many of the branches and depends on the Soldier's experiences in both their military and civilian careers and education.

According to Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jennifer Ritchie, the director of Kentucky Army National Guard's WOCAP, the program streamlines the process for prospective candidates.

"They have packets to complete, collect documents, take physicals, and all the other parts that are required before attending school," said Ritchie. "In the past, we've seen some Soldiers take up to four years to complete their packets. By devoting their IDTs to becoming a warrant officer, we've been able to reduce that process, for some Soldiers, down to about six months."

To enter the program, Soldiers must meet the basic requirements for their branch, complete a preliminary checklist, not be flagged for favorable actions, meet educational requirements, and have a letter of recommendation from their commander.

Once the Soldier contacts Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jonathan Bailey, the warrant officer strength manager, Bailey can assist the Soldier through the process with their unit. Once all the checks are made and the commander writes a letter of recommendation, the future candidate can begin attending WOCAP.

"This program has helped us identify folks and help them become well-rounded applicants," said Bailey. "We also put them through training in physical and mental fitness and bring in guest officers who can talk about the process to better prepare them for school."

Not only does the WOCAP speed up the application process

for Soldiers, it also has improved the chance Soldiers will be selected for WOCS.

According to Sgt. Dylan Nash, a traditional Soldier with the 307th Chemical Company, the program has helped him speed through the application process.

"The biggest thing I have taken away from this is the clarity of what I am doing," added Nash. "The WOCAP team has been incredibly professional and motivating so that I can get my packet complete. I have the resources here and I get to work face-to-face with the people who know the process."

Once a Soldier completes all requirements to attend WOCS, they pin on the WOCS rank. The warrant officer candidate course begins each April and is a six-month program that culminates in a commissioning ceremony where they receive the rank of Warrant Officer 1.

For more information on what warrant officer speciality you MOS feeds into, visit https://recruiting.army.mil/ISO/AWOR/ARMY_FEEDER/

Begin your journey today! 🇺🇸

Contact the KYARNG warrant officer accession team at:

Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Brumley
@ jonathan.m.brumley.mil@army.mil or
(502) 320-0330

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jonathan Bailey
@ jonathan.m.bailey.mil@army.mil or
(502) 607-6200



Warrant Officer Tucker Huff holds a mentor hour for those that are interested in the Warrant Officer Candidate Accession Program. There, he discussed his experience going through the program in hopes to gain potential new candidates for the WOCAP. (Photo by Andy Dickson)

W O C A P



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Members of the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron load a pallet of cargo onto a North Carolina Air National Guard C-17 Globemaster III at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky. in preparation of Cope North, Feb. 10, 2023. (Photo by Phil Speck)

Kentucky Guard Airmen supporting exercise in South Pacific

Cope North

Story by 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

SAN JOSE, Northern Mariana Islands -- A team of contingency response Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard provided cargo handling and aircraft maintenance services for Cope North, a multinational exercise designed to enhance combat readiness in the South Pacific, Feb. 8-24.

The Airmen, all from the 123rd Contingency Response Group, will be sharpening their rapid mobility and air base-opening capabilities over the next 10 days, said Col. Ryan Adams, group commander.

Contingency response teams are a kind of “air base in a box” — a diverse group of Airmen who can deploy to a remote, non-functional airfield to establish air cargo and passenger operations within hours of arrival. These teams bring everything they need to be fully self-sufficient, from electrical generation, communications gear and security forces to cargo-handling equipment, aircraft maintenance and airfield control.

“Force packages such as our contingency response team were designed with agility in mind, well before the Agile Combat Employment construct was formalized for the broader Air Force,” Adams said.

Working from the island of Tinian, the team of 14 Kentucky Airmen is postured to support on-load and offload of cargo, as well as quick-turn maintenance, in support of joint and combined combat operations.

“They will support multiple C-130s, including two C-130J Super Hercules aircraft from the Kentucky Air National Guard, and HH-60 aircraft from the Japanese Self-Defense Force,” Adams said. “This team of multi-capable Airmen will also conduct airfield survey and assessment, engine-running offloads and wet-wing defueling as they operate under remote and austere conditions.”

Following operations on Tinian, the 123rd is expected to rapidly redeploy to Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands, where they will train with active duty Airmen from the 921st Contingency Response Group, based at Travis Air Force Base, California.

“Cope North provides a rare opportunity for the Total Force to exercise this unique mission capability in the demanding environment of the South Pacific,” Adams said.



Kentucky Army National Guard Officer Candidate School



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LEADERSHIP PROFILE:

KENTUCKY GENERAL TAKES CHARGE OF, LEADS ACTIVE-DUTY DIVISION

Story by Capt. Cody Stagner, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs



What does a Guardsman do when a four-star general asks him to command one of his active-duty divisions?

Undeniably, he takes charge.

That is exactly the response of Brig. Gen. Bryan M. Howay when ordered to serve as acting commander of First Army Division East by the commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command (CG FORSCOM), Gen. Andrew P. Poppas.

"To my knowledge, Brig. Gen. Howay is the only National Guard general officer to ever serve in this capacity," said Maj. Gen. Haldane B. Lamberton, the adjutant general for Kentucky. "His selection as the commanding general for the First Army Division East is simply a reflection of the quality of some of our senior leadership in the Kentucky National Guard."



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Darron Salzer)

TOP SECRET
HOWAY, BRYAN
BG

According to Lamberton, Howay's service and presence drew attention and the support of both the senior regular Army and National Guard leadership.

Becoming the acting commander of an active-duty division was no simple task.

"The FORSCOM commander said the only actors he knows are in Hollywood. So, when you are in charge, take charge," said Howay, the Kentucky National Guard's land component commander. "Since then, I've been running with it, and it has been a pretty good experience for me."

Division East is headquartered at Fort Knox, Ky., and conducts training and

"I love being a Kentucky Guardsman. There's been no better opportunity for me. It's a place where if you work hard and you do the right things, you will succeed. And at this point, I think I am living proof of that."

mobilization oversight of mobilizing and demobilizing reserve-component units geographically located east of the Mississippi.

Since the call, the Louisville native has not only been responsible for the lives of approximately 6,500 Army Guardsmen as land component commander, but dual-hatted to command an additional five brigades of active-duty Soldiers within Division East.

Howay will maintain serving in the two-star general officer position until another leader is formally selected to replace the outgoing Division East commander, Maj.



(Photo courtesy of First Army)

Gen. Mark H. Landes.

However unprecedented this situation is for Howay who is also nominated to possibly become the full-time commander, he speaks of his acting command in modesty.

"I plan to keep this division moving forward by planning future events and keeping the division on track until a new commander is named," he said.

Howay's confidence stems from his familiarity with the organization, which has grown since becoming the deputy commanding general of Division East in May of 2021.

Being the acting commander of a division-level, active-duty unit required the general officer to change his daily routine as one of Kentucky's top leaders.

"When they named me to be the acting commander, I kind of had to work a deal with the adjutant general, so my focus would be on the division. I had to relinquish several duties, temporarily, which allows me the extra time to go back to Fort Knox most days," Howay said.


According to Howay, his main challenge of being dual hatted has been balancing his time between multiple Army roles. For more than 18 months, he served as Kentucky's Land Component Commander and Director of the Joint Staff, as well as Deputy Commanding General of Division East.

Since December, the temporary promotion has shifted Howay's focus to the division and required him to basically take a military furlough from his Guard time to serve active-duty operational support orders that may last up to six months.

Despite his assignments, Howay calls the Kentucky Guard his home and is known to practice what he preaches.

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THE REST OF THE STORY





Closeup Ready

Capt. Jeremy Mullins, Holistic Health and Fitness' OIC and the National Guard's only registered dietitian, gets interviewed by the NGB's Strength and Readiness Support Center's video production team during their recent H2F Performance Course.

PHOTO BY CAPT. CODY STAGNER

THE SPOTLIGHT





“Mountain Warriors” return home from two fronts

Lt. Col. Jason Mendez and Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Hughes case the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Colors during a ceremony held at Camp Novo Selo, Kosovo, Oct. 29, 2022. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Anna Pongo, Nebraska National Guard)

Mountain Warriors complete NATO mission

Story by Sgt. Matt Damon, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment “Mountain Warriors” returned to their Old Kentucky Home after a nearly 11-month mission overseas to a large crowd at the Blue Grass Airport Nov. 17, 2022.

Approximately 200 Soldiers returned from their mission in Kosovo in support of Operation Joint Guardian. The Soldiers were part of NATO’s Kosovo Forces (KFOR) mission as KFOR 30, representing the thirtieth rotation for U.S. Soldiers.

This deployment marked the first time that the Infantry

Battalion deployed in nearly a decade. In addition to that, the battalion was deployed to two different theaters of operation.

Under Task Force Mountain Warrior, their mission was to provide a safe and secure environment for citizens of Kosovo, and to provide freedom of movement throughout all of Kosovo. Task Force Mountain Warrior consisted

of Soldiers from four different troop contributing nations, to include Latvia, Poland, Turkey, and the United States.

Throughout their mission, Task Force Mountain Warrior conducted more than 4,500 different patrols. More than 15 air insertions were conducted along the administrative boundary line. The task force conducted more than five named operations.

Not only did Task Force Mountain Warrior conduct their primary mission, but they were also able to host or participate in more than 25 different training events. From the quarterly KFOR training events Golden Sabre and Frozen Sabre to the multiple joint marksmanship ranges, including the German Schützenschnur. One of the highlights of the training events was Fire Phobia training.

“The purpose of the training is to help better prepare our Soldiers in the event that any type of flammable material is deployed against us in a crowd control setting,” said Army Sgt. Matthew Joseph, an infantryman with Charlie

Company, 1-149th. “I think this really builds cohesion within the unit when we do these types of training events.”

In addition to the mission and training events, the Mountain Warriors also hosted a number of different challenges and friendly competitions. For the Army’s birthday celebration, the Mountain Warriors hosted a tactical team run for some friendly competition with our multinational partners to celebrate the Army’s 247th birthday. The run consisted of a 1,775-meter run while wearing body armor, a Sked drag, a litter carry and a water jug carry. Teams completed the competition by running up a small slope to “Take the High Ground,” the battalion’s motto. U.S. Army National Guard Soldiers from Kentucky represented a portion of the U.S.’ contribution toward the 3,600 troops provided to KFOR by 28 countries working towards maintaining a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all people in Kosovo.



Bravo Company returns from Africa

Family, friends and leaders welcomed Soldiers from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment during a ceremony at Bluegrass Airport in Lexington, Oct. 8, 2022.

Bravo Company was mobilized with Task Force Red Dragon under the command of the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team comprising more than 1,000 Soldiers.

Their mission was to provide a security force for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ THE REST OF THE STORY

Deployed Kentucky Guardsman wins the award for top fire inspector of the year

Staff Sgt. Michael Wells won the "Fire Inspector of the Year" award. This award is given to individuals who demonstrate exceptional skill and performance in the field of fire inspection.

Wells is one of three Kentucky Soldiers who are part of a team in charge of manning four fire teams of seven individuals from National Guard units around the U.S. The ASA-BS covers Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase, Romania and Novo Selo Training Area in Bulgaria. They are responsible for the area that includes approximately several hundred buildings and over 4,500 personnel.

According to Capt. Mark Gardner, his team's operation is focused on structure, vehicles and multinational aircraft response while the headquarters team does assessments and develops response plans for critical incidents and conducts other fire prevention activities through inspections and fire safety education.

"I am very proud but not surprised by the performance of Wells and the 761st FFT," said Army Col. James Richmond, director of personnel for the Kentucky Army National Guard and 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade commander. "They are professionals in every respect and take their mission very seriously."

P1102



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SCAN ME

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

LIFE SUPPORT

Chaplain (Col.) Bill Draper
Deputy State Chaplain
KYARNG
502-607-1729
William.c.draper6.mil@army.mil

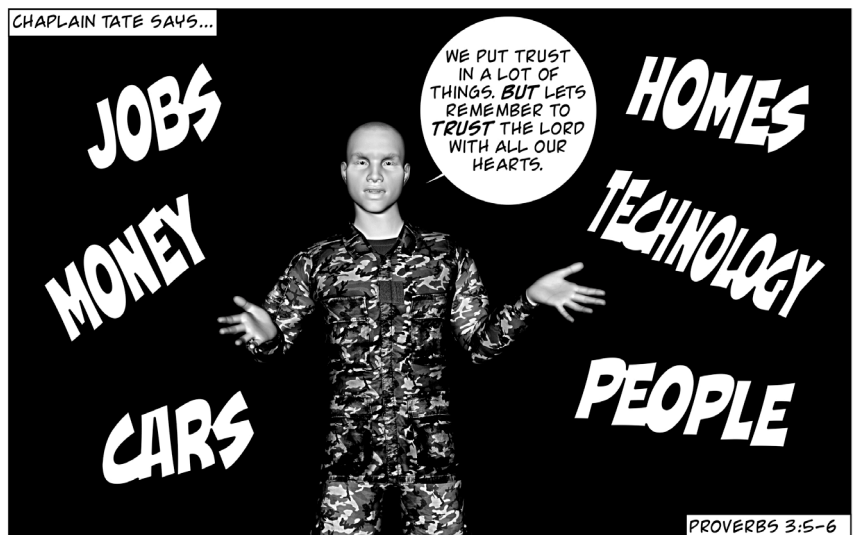
General George Marshall gave his formula for handling people: 1) Listen to the other person's story, 2) Listen to the other person's full story, 3) Listen to the other person's story first. Although not specifically aimed at chaplains, we seek to follow this method when encountering soldiers in all environments: IDT, AT, Deployment and Home. UMTs provide a "listening" ear that is also confidential.

Chaplains care for the spiritual well-being of Soldiers regardless of their religious background, ministering to their needs and helping them meet challenges in areas like religion, morals, and morale. Along with Religious Affairs Specialists they comprise the Unit Ministry Team found in every battalion and brigade command.

I encourage you to get to know your Unit Ministry Team and trust them to provide support to you and your family as we ALL serve together. Ask about the "Building Strong and Ready Teams," (BSRT), initiative that provides communication skills training for both the Soldier and their Family members. Continue to serve well, treat others with respect, and believe your service is making a positive difference in our communities, commonwealth, and nation.

Grace for the journey!

CHAPLAIN TATE SAYS...



PROVERBS 3:5-6



THE LAST WORD

TO READ THE FULL VERSION OF THESE STORIES, USE YOUR SMART PHONES CAMERA TO SCAN QR CODE OR GO TO KY.NG.MIL



Kentucky hosts Leadership Development Day

By Lt. Col. Carla Raisler, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs, photos by Dale Greer, 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

More than 900 Soldiers and Airmen from the Kentucky National Guard attended Leadership Development Day at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky. Feb. 5, 2023.

Governor Andy Beshear started the event off with an address to the officers and senior enlisted personnel in the audience followed by a presentation of awards to Airmen and Soldiers for their exceptional service.

Other presenters included: U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Marc Sasseville, vice chief of the National Guard Bureau; U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Troy Galloway, deputy commanding general of the Army National Guard; U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Robert Davis, assistant operations and training Army National Guard; U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Mark Landes, commander of First Army East; U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Haldane Lamberton, adjutant general of the Commonwealth of Kentucky; and U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Duke Pirak, deputy director of the Air National Guard.

In addition to U.S. senior military leaders, Ecuador Army Col. Fernando Silva, defense attaché of Ecuador and Ambassador Dennis



Hankins, foreign policy advisor to Chief of the National Guard Bureau addressed the audience on the importance of our national security strategy on a global scale.

"Each of the speakers, whether from the highest level of elected leadership within Kentucky (Governor Beshear) to senior leadership and general officers from throughout the National Guard, brought operational and strategic perspectives to the Kentucky National Guard leadership, connecting our efforts of recruiting, organizing, training and equipping at the state level and its overall importance to the national level and contributing to the on-going security of our country and global community," said Brig. Gen. Brian Wertzler, deputy adjutant general and component commander for the Kentucky National Guard.

"What a great day it was for our Kentucky leaders of all ranks, as they participated in such a memorable experience," Wertzler added.

With the success of the first Leadership Development Day in over a decade, Kentucky plans to bring back the event on a bi-annual basis.

"The event provided a rare opportunity for all our senior leaders to hear straight from some of our most senior state and National Guard leaders," said Brig. Gen. David Mounkes, assistant adjutant general air component commander. "There's something about our current and future leaders being able to look these senior leaders in the eye and hear for themselves heartfelt thanks and praise along with thought provoking and sometimes challenging messages. Hopefully it helped our soldiers and airmen (and even several of our spouses) understand the critical role they play in protecting and serving our great state and nation," Mounkes concluded.

Longtime Kentucky aviator retires



Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

After thirty plus years of service as an aviator in the Kentucky Army National Guard, one of Kentucky's finest Soldiers will be moving on to something new.

Army Col. Gary Dwayne Lewis held three positions for the last several years as the counterdrug coordinator, state Army aviation officer, and commander of the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade.

"I consider myself lucky to have worked with such great people over the last 30 years. The relationships I have built and the trust that I have in my coworkers have made all the difference. Holding three jobs simultaneously wouldn't have been possible without that trust in them to do their jobs and to do them well. They did, and it worked out well for everybody," he said.

Being a part of the counterdrug operations has allowed him to get over 7,700 flight hours.

"I would say I've had the best career I could have ever imagined," he said. "I've been able to command units and fly as much as I have needed to. A lot of it was luck and good timing, and things just fell into place. I am thankful to have gotten to perform those duties and hold those positions for the time that I did."

But when he first decided to join the National Guard in August of 1992, being an aviator was not on his radar.

"Initially, it was really about paying for college and also serving my country. I had an uncle that I really looked up to. He was in the Air Force and retired as an E-9, Chief Master Sergeant. I wanted to follow in his footsteps and serve my country," he said.

He joined Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, for the first four years of his career.

"When I saw that the Guard had aviation, I thought, 'Well, let's see how this goes,'" he said.

He was enrolled in the ROTC program at Eastern Kentucky University at the time and went to interview with the brigade commander of aviation.

"Back then, the interviews were a little bit easier than the ones now," he laughed. "The only question [the aviation brigade commander] asked when I went for the interview was, 'What's your PT score?'"

Lewis had always done very well in his physical training so off he went to flight school and the rest is history.

Now he is qualified in numerous aircraft including UH-1 Huey, OH-58 A/C, and UH-60A/L/M Black Hawk. He has more than 5,000 flight hours in Black Hawks alone.

His last flight was on December 7, 2022,

in London, Ky.

"It has always been an honor to do anything I could to help the people of Kentucky and its citizens. What is next for a retired colonel with this much flight experience? More flying. He is slated to join the Kentucky State Police as one of their helicopter pilots. His official last day in the KYNG will be March 31, 2023. Until then, he will be enjoying terminal leave.



First female Kentucky Army National Guard master sergeant honored

Story and photo by Andy Dickson, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Retired Army Master Sgt. Wilma J. Ross, 81, was laid to rest with military honors at Grove Hill Cemetery in Shelbyville, Ky., on Dec. 3, 2022.

Ross, from Shelbyville, served more than 24 years in the military and was the first female to be promoted to the rank of master sergeant in the Kentucky Army National Guard.

After the color guard folded the national colors, the flag was presented to her daughter, Pauletta Willard, by Army 1st Sgt. Naarah Stallard, the senior enlisted for the 223rd Military Police Company.

"It was a privilege to have been part of Master Sgt. Wilma Ross's funeral service," said Stallard. "It gave me a deeper sense of appreciation and respect for this honorable duty as I presented the flag to her daughter."

Ross enlisted in November 1974 as a clerk typist with the State Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, leaving her family for two weeks to attend basic training in Mississippi. She would later begin working as a full-time technician in personnel management for State Area Command (STARC).

In 1993, Ross was promoted to master sergeant by the Kentucky Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Michael Davidson.

Army Col. Bill Draper, the state support chaplain, presided over the service.

Draper served with Ross when he was an enlisted chaplain's assistant. Draper said the whole STARC staff was like family and knew Guard members and their families well.



Kentucky Aviators say their goodbyes, set to deploy to Africa

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

A small contingent of Soldiers said goodbye to their families prior to heading out for their deployment to the Horn of Africa after their ceremony held at the Army Aviation Support Facility Hanger on Boone National Guard Center Nov. 16.

Four Soldiers with Detachment 4, Charlie Company, 2/245th Aviation Regiment, 63rd Theater Aviation Battalion will be charged with flying C-12 King Air fixed wing aircraft in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During their deployment they will be providing air movement support throughout the Africa Command's (AFRICOM) area of responsibility.

"This will be my first time leaving the country so I'm excited to have that experience," said Sgt. Joshua Eisenback, an aviation operations specialist with the 2/245th. "The downside is obviously going to be leaving my family since I was just married last week. I think that will be a little tough on me, but I know it is going to be even tougher on her."

Leaving Families and loved ones isn't the only challenge facing them as they step off and begin their training for the deployment.

"The mission is about 270 days on the ground, typically, it's 10 to 11 months from front to back before we get rotated out," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Keith, commander of the 2/245th.

Senior enlisted advisor visits Kentucky Soldiers



Story and photo by Andy Dickson, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

The National Guard Senior Enlisted Advisor

visited Kentucky to meet Soldiers and answer questions in Lexington, Frankfort, and Louisville, Ky. on Dec. 4, 2022.

Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA) Tony Whitehead visited Soldiers with the 138th Field Artillery Brigade (FAB); 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade (TAB); Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD), 75th Troop Command (TC); the 223rd Military Police Company; and the 202nd Army Band before the holiday season to take questions about the senior enlisted advisor to the Chief, National Guard Bureau position.

Whitehead's priority with each unit was the same; he wanted to spend time meeting enlisted members and to encourage non-commissioned officers to strengthen their working relationships with the officer corps.

Whitehead spent time with Soldiers, asking them questions about not just their military career, but their civilian jobs and how their military and civilian careers have complimented each other.

While at each location, Whitehead also recognized troops who stood out among the units.

"Kentucky Soldiers are a lot of fun!" said Whitehead. "They have a lot of energy, they have a lot of pride, they have a lot of patriotism. They have a lot of appreciation for community. And that is an important part of being a Guardsmen. I've seen Kentucky Guardsmen take that to heart in everything they do."

Whitehead is the first Service member to hold the rank of senior enlisted advisor and he is the only person to hold that rank.

Resiliency leads to the Kentucky National Guard's first female infantry officer



Story by 1st Lt. Kaitlin Baudendistel, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

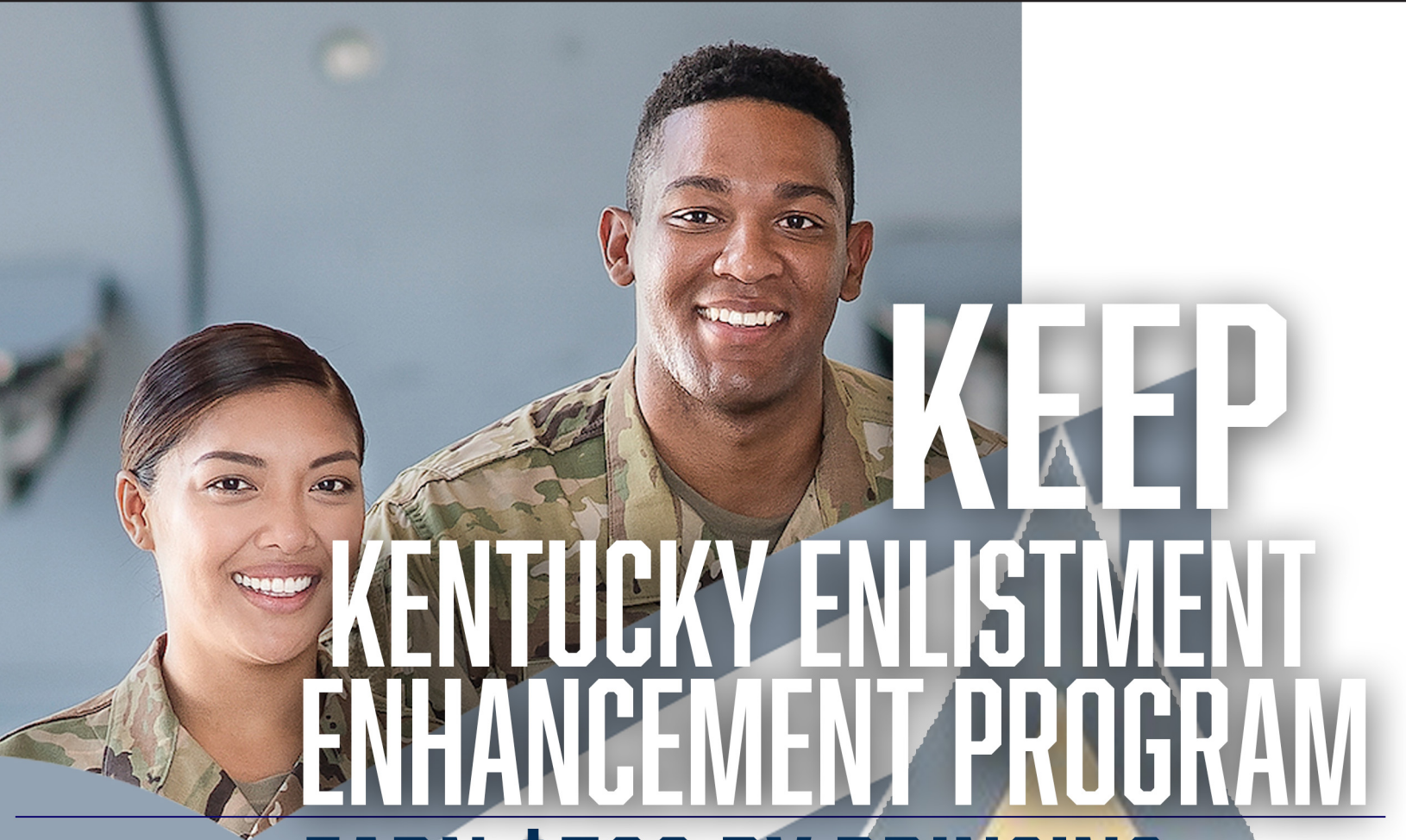
In January 2022, the Kentucky Army National Guard welcomed the commonwealth's first female infantry officer to the team.

2nd Lt. Jennifer Korth attended basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, in August of 2020 and commissioned through Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, in April 2021. Immediately following OCS, Korth attended the 20-week Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course, also at Fort Benning, completing her training in January 2022.

Though Korth faced many obstacles to become an infantry branch qualified officer, she never lost sight of her goal.



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