

Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 26, Issue 2 Aug 2023

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



**TRAIN
LIKE
YOU
FIGHT**

**Infantry gets
back to basics
p. 10**

Air Defender p. 14

AROUND THE GUARD



ON THE COVER - Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment simulated medical care on the battlefield during their annual training at the Harold L. Disney Training Center in Artemus, June 6. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)



JFHQ - Maj. Gen. Bryan Howay took command of 1st Army from Maj. Gen. Mark Landes at a ceremony held at Fort Knox, June 14. Before the change of command ceremony, Howay was promoted to Major General. (Photo by Milt Spalding)



149th MEB - Warrant Officer 1 Chad Castle graduated from Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS) June 28 at Fort Novasek, Alabama. Castle will serve the Legion Brigade as its Human Resources Technician. (Courtesy photo)



138th FAB - Paladin M109A6s from Alpha and Charlie Batteries, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, compete for Top Gun during XCTC at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, June 28. (Photo by 1st Lt. Lucas Hackleman)



63rd TAB - Spc. Connor Ridings builds links on the ADSI (Air Defense Systems Integrator) to provide Command and Control data and track friendly and enemy forces activity within the airspace of the unit's area of operations during Warfighter 23-05, Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, July 3. (Photo by 1st Lt. Kaitlin Baudendistel)



75th TC - Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Thornsberry, Headquarters and Headquarter Detachment, throws a training grenade in the rain while taking part in the grenade familiarization range during their annual training at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, May 16. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)



123rd Airlift Wing - An MC-130J Commando II from the 1st Special Operations Wing takes off from Highway 789 during Exercise Agile Chariot near Riverton, Wyoming, May 2. Agile Chariot tested Agile Combat Employment capabilities, including using smaller, more dispersed locations and teams to rapidly move and support aircraft, pilots and other personnel wherever they are needed. (Photo by Master Sgt. Phil Speck)



238th RTI - 1st Battalion recently conducted a HIMARS familiarization for Security Force Assistance Brigades personnel at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in June. This is the second rotation of this type of training that is intended to familiarize Soldiers with the weapon systems, employment, capabilities and tactics, techniques and procedures. (Courtesy photo)

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A LETTER FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL



We've returned to a relatively normal training year with fewer weather and public health disruptions. However, our training events remain connected to real-world operations. Currently, our 138th Field Artillery Brigade is preparing for an overseas mission in Southwest Asia as part of the National Guard's role as an Operational Reserve for the Department of Defense.

Because of the proven readiness, reliability, and effectiveness we've shown in combat deployments over the past 20-plus years, the DoD and all active-duty services have come to rely on the Kentucky National Guard more than ever. Our training is directly or indirectly linked to real-world missions. We've participated in FORSCOM's major training exercises, including Division Warfighter Exercises (WFX) and a Joint Readiness Training Center rotation under the Army's Combat Training program.

Units within the Kentucky National Guard have contributed to these exercises. The 1123rd Sappers provided Combat Engineer support during JRTC 22-04. The 63rd Theatre Aviation Brigade participated in the 42nd Infantry Division's WFX. The 138th Field Artillery Brigade participated in the 40th Infantry Division's WFX. And the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and the 38th Division Artillery Brigade supported the 38th Infantry Division's preparation for their TY24 WFX. Additionally, two battalions conducted collective training under the Exportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) exercise package at Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas, and Camp Roberts, California.

Outside the U.S., our 175th Cyber Protection Team participated in exercises in Romania and Ecuador, while our 133 Mobile Public Affairs Detachment went to Australia for Exercise Talisman Saber. We have also provided transportation assets to Operation Patriot Press and maintenance assets for a Mobilization Training Exercise in Fort Stewart, Georgia.

The urgency of real-world concerns, such as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the rising threat from China, emphasizes the need for realistic and relevant training. Our training alignment with the U.S. Army V Corps Headquarters, with its mission in Poland to help coordinate forces in the Ukrainian fight, emphasizes that realism.

“

I salute every Soldier, Airman and unit for their dedication to our training environment.

”

The 2113th Transportation Company is one of many National Guard units supporting Operation European Assure, Deter and Reinforce, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies to maintain security and stability in Europe.

This year will see the highest number of KYNG units participating in named training exercises or mobilizing for real-world missions. Unlike twenty-six years ago when training plans were based on hypothetical scenarios and enemies, we now have the experience of overseas deployments to inform our training, including the potential for kinetic operations in both the Army and Air Guard.

Recently, our 123rd Airlift Wing's Contingency Response Group took part in Operation Air Defender, the largest NATO-led Air Force exercise. The U.S. Air National Guard played a significant role in this exercise, which was led by the German Air Force.

General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., Chief of Staff of the Air Force, recognizes the National Guard's crucial role in addressing the complex challenges posed by China and Russia, particularly in the realm of Air Power. General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, also acknowledges that a significant portion of the Army's capacity resides in the National Guard and expects the demand for our services to increase in the future.

I salute every Soldier, Airman and unit for their dedication to our training environment. Through our commitment to readiness and relevance, we fulfill the National Guard's mission of securing our country and supporting our commonwealth.

MAJ. GEN. HAL LAMBERTON ★ ★

LEGION BRIGADE REFINES SKILLS WITH 38TH INFANTRY DIVISION

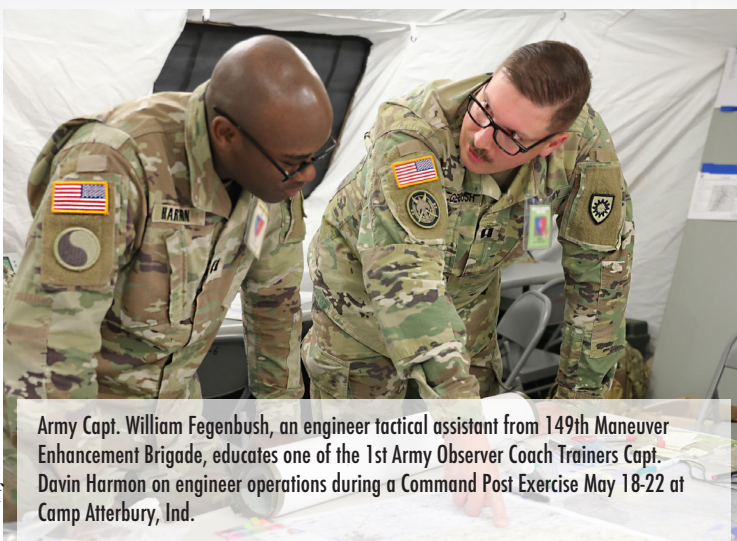
By Sgt. 1st Class Rebecca Wood
149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. – Members of the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Headquarters Support Company and the 149th Signal Company packed up their tactical operations center, loaded trucks and convoyed from Kentucky to Indiana to participate in a Command Post Exercise (CPX) May 18-22.

The CPX is a multi-echelon exercise focused on tasks supporting communications, command and control systems, and procedures. The MEB set up their Current Operations Integration Cell (COIC) along with several other tents, replicating an operational environment using a tactical scenario.

The brigade fires operations noncommissioned officer, Army Master Sgt. Steven Morgan, has participated in multiple exercises with the MEB since 2016 and enjoys any opportunity he gets to practice the actual functions of his section.

“This is when we actually get to do our job and show how a maneuver enhancement brigade is supposed to work”



Army Capt. William Fegenbush, an engineer tactical assistant from 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, educates one of the 1st Army Observer Coach Trainers Capt. Davin Harmon on engineer operations during a Command Post Exercise May 18-22 at Camp Atterbury, Ind.

Army Maj. Robert Meacham, battle major, checks reports on a Command Post of the Future (CPOF) while participating in a Command Post Exercise at Camp Atterbury, Ind.



SCAN QR CODE FOR FULL STORY

The Guardsmen set up their tactical work areas as part of their annual training and became acquainted with their counterparts. They spent time communicating with other sections via combat-net radios and fine-tuning their operating procedures with the 38th Infantry Division the organization they are aligned under for training as part of the National Defense Strategy.

The 149th's leadership considered

the exercise an extension to the Headquarters Support Company annual training successful. The Brigade's Commander, Col. J.B. Richmond said the actions of the Legion Brigade's Command and Control staff during this exercise has reinforced his confidence in their abilities moving forward in wargaming for full-scale operations in the future.

The 149th MEB staff have participated in extensive after-action reviews and is scheduled for another small CPX exercise with the 38ID in preparation for the 2024 warfighter event.

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.

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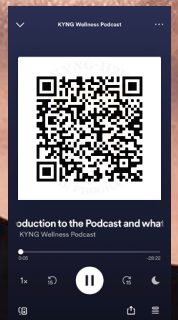
FITNESS CORNER

“Time and health are the two things we take for granted. The healthier we can be, the more time we will be granted. Don’t let time run out before you get your health in order.”

- 2LT Erik Thomas, MFT



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STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

30th Anniversary

This year marks the **National Guard's**
30th anniversary of the State Partnership
Program

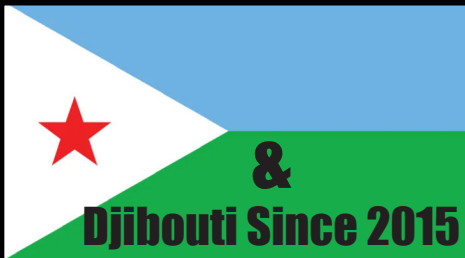


Kentucky National Guard Soldiers and Airmen were the first to receive a new state ribbon recognizing service with the State Partnership Program (SPP) in a ceremony at the Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, April 13.

The Kentucky State Partnership Program Ribbon was created to honor Soldiers and Airmen who enhance military-to-military relationships in subject-matter-expert engagements with one of Kentucky's partner nations. (Photo by Andy Dickson)



**Kentucky has been
partnered with Ecuador
since 1996**



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MORE ABOUT SPP AT 30



THE HON

START HERE ►



KEEP RECRUITERS

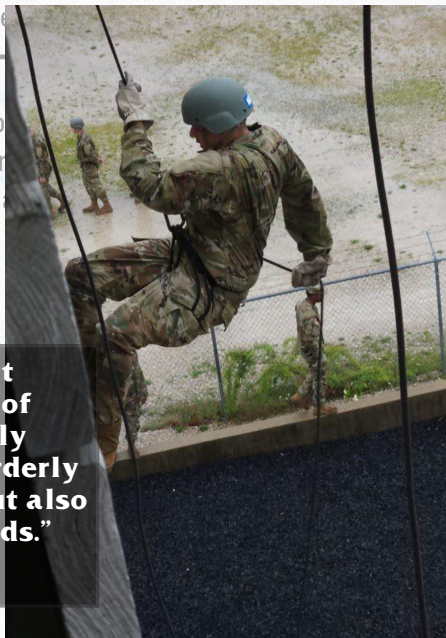
T F O R ME TEAM

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Whitaker
recruiter,

QR code:



“Coria Alejandro is one of the most dedicated people I know. I’m glad he took the next step in furthering his future. He is one of the best men I know.”
—Spc. Ethan Brewer

CAN ME



“Carter Hudson will be a good fit; he is motivated, physically fit and a natural born leader.”
— Pfc. Clayton Woodson

“Aurora is a great fit for the Guard. She is driven and determined, and when she puts her mind to something she’s eager to get it done.”
—Spc. Nathaniel Howell



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Affairs.



“Pvt. Logsdon will be a great fit because he is a hardworking man with a great attitude.”
—Spc. Justus Montgomery



FINISH

TRAIN LIKE YOU FIGHT

INFANTRY UNIT GETS BACK TO

Basics

DURING ANNUAL TRAINING

By Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

After spending the past year in Kosovo and Africa, Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, known as "Mountain Warriors," are getting back into the flow of things as they took part in their annual training events at the Harold L. Disney Training Center June 3-17.

During their two weeks of training, the infantry Soldiers went through a round-robin of refresher classes on combat-life-saving techniques, reacting to contact on the battlefield, observation and mapping, radio basics, concealment basics, and weapon familiarization.

The weapon familiarization portion required the Soldiers to break down and reassemble several different weapon systems while being timed. After a morning full of practice, they competed for the fastest times.

"It was awesome to see the guys compete against



each other," said Pfc. Christian Griebenow, a weapons trainer with the 1-149th.

One of the highlights of the training was when the medics taught the infantrymen how to care for injured Soldiers starting from the moment of injury on the battlefield all the way to making the nine-line medevac request.

"The medical training is designed to test infantrymen on proper and effective medical treatment while under fire," said Spc. Logan

»

As a trainer, I felt I needed to set the standard on the time for maintaining the M240 medium machine gun. Once Sgt. James Bray broke his own personal record, I felt obligated to improve and beat his time. It's just been an ongoing competition and a good morale booster. Watching everyone enjoy it made me feel like I accomplished my role this year. »

-Pfc. Christian Griebenow



Festervan, a medic with the 1-149th. "We break the training down to a 'crawl-walk-run' technique, making it a simple and effective way to prepare them for situations that they may encounter. All the training is necessary to keep everyone on the same page and ready if called into action."

The overall intent of the training here was to build on the basic skills needed to compete for proficiency badges and foster camaraderie within the unit.



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HOMELAND DEFENDER

2023

Soldiers from the 2061st Multi-Role Bridge Company load vehicles onto their raft bridge to be transported to the other side of the lake during the Homeland Defender Exercise at the Muscatatuck Training Center in Butlerville, Indiana, June 9.

Homeland Defender is a three-day, multi-agency exercise that brought together the Indiana National Guard, Kentucky National Guard, FEMA, Indiana first responders, and Verizon Networks.



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FULL STORY



(Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)



2061ST MRBC CONDUCTS WET GAP CROSSING TRAINING DURING INTERAGENCY EXERCISE

By Capt. Cody Stagner, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

As part of annual training this year, members of the 2061st Multi-Role Bridge Company participated in a joint exercise with military and civilian agencies as part of Operation: Homeland Defender 2023 at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, June 8-10.

The 2061st was critically responsible for aiding search and rescue and creating a wet gap crossing to support the inter-agency disaster response training event.

“No matter the emergency, it quickly becomes vital that support operations are able to reach the victims and sustain life or provide rescue and evacuation,” said Capt. Brandt Cashion, commander of the 2061st. “That sets up the role we play in the earthquake scenario.”

The earthquake, as simulated in the Homeland Defender scenario, caused a vital bridge to collapse, notionally isolating a community and hindering

land-based search, rescue, retrieval, and evacuation efforts.

The engineer company is then summoned for assistance through the Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) process, which enables the military to aid in tasks typically conducted by civilian agencies.

“We have [Zodiac] boats that can look

for victims and survivors in flooding waters, and if bridges collapse like in this scenario, we can help get land vehicles and other support elements from one side to the other,” said Cashion.

The bridge company

Soldiers arrived at the water gap with boating equipment and ribbon bridge bays loaded onto their common bridge transporter (CBT) trucks.

The first pieces of equipment in the water during a wet gap crossing are the Bridge Erection Boats, or BEBs. Then each bay of the floating bridge is offloaded, one-by-one.





***"IT WAS REALLY
INTERESTING TO
INTERACT WITH THE
GERMAN SECURITY
SPECIALISTS AND SEE
HOW PASSIONATE
THEY ARE ABOUT
WHAT THEY DO."***

-Staff Sgt. Samuel Jenkins

Master Sgt. Chris Kinberger, a loadmaster assigned to the Kentucky Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Squadron, looks out a paratroop door of a 123rd Airlift Wing C-130J Super Hercules during exercise Air Defender 2023 in Saarbrücken, Germany, June 15.

(Photos by Master Sgt. Phil Speck)



Kentucky Air Guard
strengthens ties with
NATO allies in Air
Defender

AIR DEFENDER '23



By Master Sgt. Phil Speck,
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

WUNSTORF AIR BASE, Germany -- More than 130 Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard arrived here in early June to participate in NATO's largest-ever multinational air force redeployment exercise, joining with more than 10,000 personnel and hundreds of aircraft from 25 partner countries.

Air Defender 23, which began June 12 and concluded June 23, was designed to integrate U.S. and allied air power to defend shared values while leveraging and strengthening vital partnerships to deter aggression around the world.

Throughout the event, Airmen from the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing delivered air transportation and airdrop capabilities via C-130J Super Hercules

aircraft while contingency response forces managed cargo, passenger and airfield operations. Other Kentucky Air Guardsmen provided essential aircraft maintenance, medical services and logistics support.

Enhanced interoperability with forces across NATO was a key goal of Air Defender, said U.S. Air Force Maj. Loren Miller, a pilot assigned to the Kentucky Air Guard's 165th Airlift Squadron.

"Exercising with our allies builds strong bonds and deep trust," Miller said. "Personal connections are established, not just when operating, but also during any down time. We find that we have more in common than we have differences, and one of the most important is the shared value of promoting peace through strength."

According to the National Guard Bureau, approximately 2,600 U.S. Air Guardsmen

and 100 Guard aircraft from 42 states rapidly descended on western Europe to train with 24 allied nations as part of Air Defender, enhancing joint capabilities across the globe.

Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Texas and Wyoming all joined Kentucky in bringing C-130 aircraft to Wunstorf Air Base. Those aircraft joined German A400 and Romanian C27 transports to provide key airlift capability.

"The airlift and airdrop packages were vital to getting equipment and boots on the ground," Miller noted.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. James Embry, officer-in-charge of C-130 maintenance, said the exercise helped prepare his maintainers for the future.

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AVIATION BRIGADE DEMONSTRATES COMBAT READINESS, INTEGRATION DURING WARFIGHTER

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

FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, Pa. — The combat readiness and operational capabilities of the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade, supported by the 751st Troop Command, were put to the test during the Warfighter 23-05 exercise held from May 27-June 13.

Acting as a combat aviation brigade at the corps level, the 63rd successfully executed large-scale combat operations, showcasing their proficiency and tactical expertise in a realistic simulated battlefield environment. The exercise aimed to identify strengths and areas for improvement, enabling the units to fine-tune their tactics and ensure seamless integration with ground forces.

One of the significant challenges faced by the 63rd was their transition from a theater aviation brigade to a combat aviation brigade, incorporating attack assets into their force structure. This new concept was welcomed by the brigade, as it presented an opportunity for growth and development.

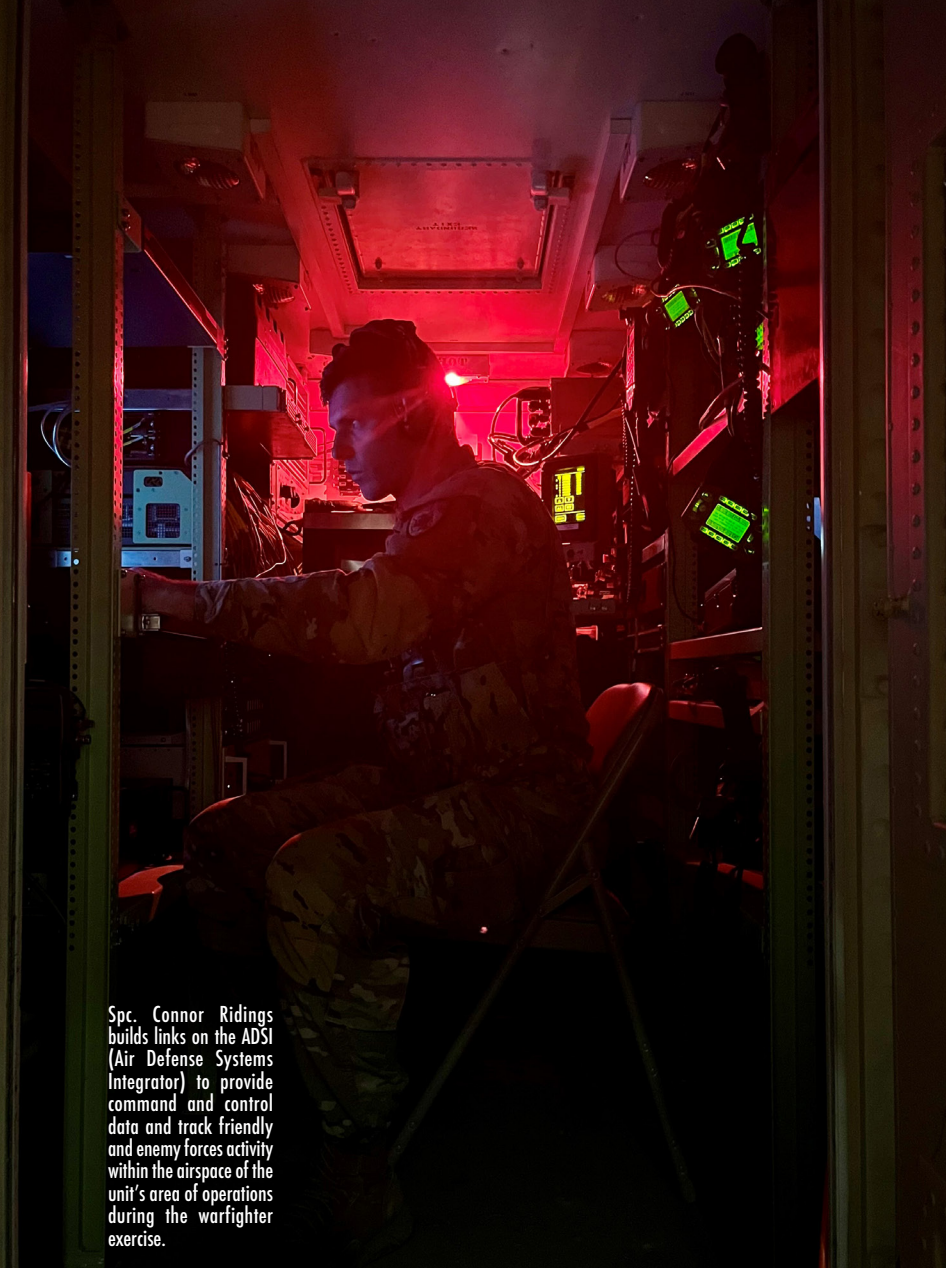
Col. Mike Armstrong, the commander of the 63rd acknowledged the challenges and the progress made by the unit.

“As an aviation brigade, we don’t have attack assets within our force structure. Employing and implementing attack assets is a new concept for our headquarters and lower command,” said Armstrong. “From CPX (Command Post Exercise) one, two, and three to where we are now, we have grown leaps and bounds. We’ve been able to fully integrate all our systems which we would use in a secret environment and learn how those systems feed information to the staff to analyze and bring to me as the brigade commander to understand my risk and authority for how to implement our assets.”

Armstrong commended every Soldier that participated, both at the battalion and brigade level.

“This has been a great experience. The morale and

desire to learn has been tremendous. Everyone has been open to learning new things and new positions, and how a combat aviation brigade fits into all the warfighting functions and how we implement that overall.”



Spc. Connor Ridings builds links on the ADSI (Air Defense Systems Integrator) to provide command and control data and track friendly and enemy forces activity within the airspace of the unit's area of operations during the warfighter exercise.

(Photos by 1st Lt. Kaitlin Baudendistel)



The Watering Hole was open for lunch daily during the warfighter and was a morale booster for the 63rd participants.

Soldiers of the 63rd board a C-130 flown by the Kentucky Air Guard to fly back to Frankfort at the conclusion of the warfighter exercise.



Col. Mike Armstrong updates Brig. Gen. Richard Bell, commanding general of the 1st Armored Division on unit activities during the warfighter.



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SUPPORT BATTALION TAKES PART IN FOOD-OFF!

By Andy Dickson, Kentucky National
Guard Public Affairs

Army Spc. Adam Bwesi of India Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 75th Troop Command, serves food to Soldiers in a containerized kitchen during the Regional Philip A. Connelly Field Feeding Competition.



Soldiers from India Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 75th Troop Command, competed at the 56th Regional Philip A. Connelly Field Feeding Competition at the Harold L. Disney Training Center in Artemus, June 14.

The troops set up their containerized kitchen and field sanitation stations for evaluation and competed against Service members from nine other states and territories geographically located in the southeast United States.



Army Spc. Chevy Abney of India Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 75th Troop Command, adds ingredients to food in a containerized kitchen during the Regional Philip A. Connelly Field Feeding Competition.

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149TH KENTUCKY DERBY



Sgt. Matt Broce and Pfc. Micah Fisher with the 617th Military Police Company, place the winner's trophy on display in the winner's circle at Churchill Downs prior to the running of the 149th Kentucky Derby.

PHOTO BY SPC GEORGIA NAPIER

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Soldiers and Airmen from the Kentucky National Guard helped provide safety for Derby patrons and security for the trophy at Churchill Downs for this year's 149th running of the Kentucky Derby, May 6.

Soldiers from the 617th Military Police Company provided security for the Derby from outside the track, conducted traffic control and augmented the Louisville Metro Police Department. Inside the Downs, the Soldiers of the 617th kept a close eye on the Kentucky Derby trophy as it was transported throughout the building and eventually to the winner's circle prior to the race.

"I think it's great being around the community and speaking to the people," said Spc. Tyler Wilson, a military police officer from the 617th. "We want them to know that we are here if they need us."

According to Sgt. Kevin Underwood, a military police officer from the 617th and a Louisville resident, a team of six Soldiers from his company were assigned to trophy detail. Their role was to stand guard and safely transport the trophies during the Kentucky Derby.


Along with the trophy detail, there were a contingent of Air Guardsmen with the 123rd Airlift Wing and Army Soldiers representing numerous different units around the Commonwealth lined the track during the race.

Also working behind the scenes making sure the grounds were safe before and during the event was the 41st Civil Support Team (CST) with about 20 Soldiers from Kentucky, as well as other Soldiers from CSTs from around the country.





351st Aviators get hands on training during AT



"We had many opportunities to get our hands dirty with some different maintenance tasks that we typically don't get to do."
-Spc. Zachary Blevins



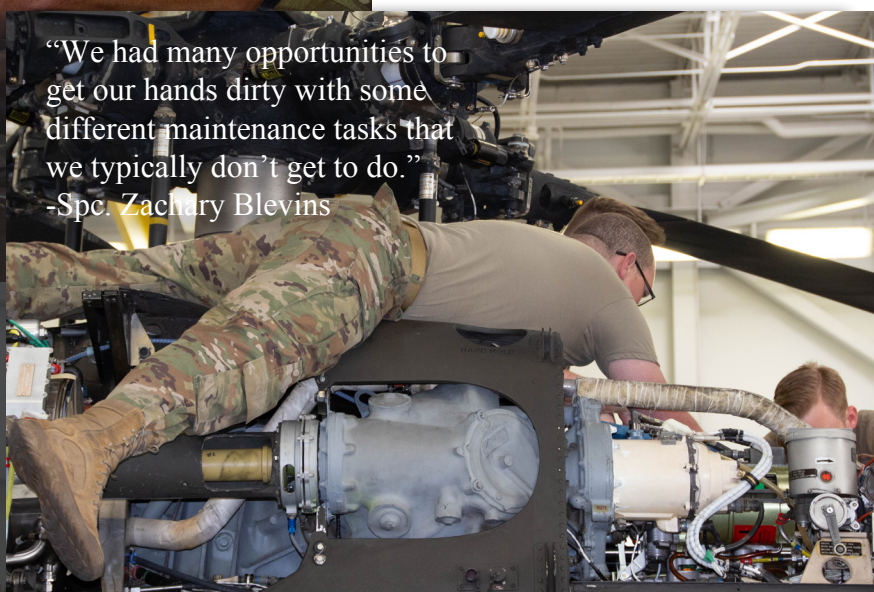
By Milt Spalding, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers with Bravo Company, 351st Aviation Support Battalion completed their annual training in June at the Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort.

The more than 90 Soldiers that make up the company spent the two weeks conducting aviation maintenance training at the flight facility. The company handles a diverse range of aircraft maintenance capabilities including engine, avionics, sheet metal and airframe mechanics. "We've really enhanced the type of training we're doing," said Maj. Joseph Snoke, commander of B/351st ASB. "We've brought in external resources to make sure that our Soldiers

are able to do some of the maintenance training that they previously hadn't been able to do. We also intentionally planned the aircraft for maintenance so that they would be at a certain phase of maintenance requirements."

In addition to classroom time, Soldiers had the opportunity to get hands on experience in a variety of tasks such as corrosion control inspections, APR-39 warning system removal, swashplate installation,



main rotor head reinstallation and quick engine change. They also attended a UH-60 aircraft flight control rigging class, giving the Soldiers an opportunity to do a complex maintenance task that they don't frequently get.

"This is simulating what their job would be if they were deployed," Snoke said. "They're training on the aircraft that their job would be in support of in any sort of environment that they'd be deployed to or conducting their mission in. It's really important to M-day Soldiers who only do this once a month to get that immersion, hands-on experience."

Soldiers taking part in the training felt that the experience was a positive one with ample opportunities for hands-on experience.

"This year's AT turned out to be extremely beneficial to myself and all of us aircraft engine guys," said Spc. Zachary Blevins of Barbourville. "We had many opportunities to get our hands dirty with some different maintenance tasks that we typically don't get to do."





Kentucky logistics director promoted to colonel

By Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane,
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Army Lt. Col. Phillip Robinson was promoted to the rank of colonel by his wife and children during a ceremony at the Wellman Armory auditorium June 28.

Robinson is the director of logistics for the Kentucky National Guard on the full time side, and is the commander of the 238th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) on the M-day (traditional Soldier) side. Getting pinned colonel is not just a big accomplishment, it's a rare occasion, which is something the adjutant general for Kentucky discussed during his speech.

"For everyone that decides to take the officer path, only five out of 200 will make the rank of colonel," said Maj. Gen. Haldane B. Lamberton. He went on to talk about Robinson's importance to the Kentucky Guard and how well deserved the promotion was.

"Phil is an indispensable person for us," said Lamberton. "He makes the organization run smoothly."

Having the spotlight is not something that this logistician is comfortable with, but getting praised by the adjutant general still meant a lot to him.

"It was very humbling," said Robinson. "I'm not one who likes to receive public praise so it was a little uncomfortable for me, but it is important for my family to hear those things. I was very grateful for what he said to my family. It was impressive."



From band member to being a section director and commander of troops, Robinson has paid his dues and has loved the journey. Being a leader and a Soldier is what drives him and is what he wants to be for as long as possible.

"There's so much to like about the Guard," he said. "That's how I have defined myself. So my sense of self-worth comes from this organization and always has."



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FROM THE CHAPLAIN LIFE SUPPORT

Chaplain (Col.) Bill Draper
State Chaplain
KYARNG

502-607-1729

William.c.draper6.mil@army.mil

By Chaplain (Capt.) Jonathan Wilkins, 623rd Field Artillery,
Kentucky Army National Guard

Power of Persistent Praise

Leaders must constantly provide the fuel of encouragement to maintain high levels of effort and productivity. When people fail to feel encouraged and appreciated, they contribute less while losing a sense of enthusiasm and hope.

After the Korean War, an Army psychiatrist worked to understand why death rates were disproportionately high among American Prisoners of War (POW). Surprisingly his research found that captors did not physically torture POWs but used a far more devastating tactic—a lack of emotional support. The guards censored POW's mail by removing all positive news while allowing only the negative to reach the prisoners. Instances included "Dear John" letters, overdue bills, and tragic reports from home. As a result, Soldiers brooded, gave up, and many perished due to this loss of hope.

Effective leaders intentionally use praise to engage Soldiers while completing their assigned missions. People need praise. A skill codified within ADP 6-22 which defines an incompetent leader as one who "withholds encouragement" (8-49) while ideal leaders use intangible rewards of "praise or recognition" (5-31) to enhance motivation. Without sincere and specific praise, people's desire to contribute will diminish.

According to PAM 165-19, the Chaplain Corps provides moral leadership that builds unit morale, enhances collective effectiveness, and promotes personal development. Soldiers and commanders will find that chaplains deliver a host of spiritual services, pastoral care, and moral leadership training that maximizes individual and corporate readiness and resiliency. Any Soldier may receive these free and timely services through their local assigned chaplain. Contact for the State Chaplain Office is 502-607-1729.





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Training Center Firefighters respond to unique call

By Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Tucked back in a building that if you blinked, you'd miss it, is the firehouse of Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center.

The small crew of 11 firefighters who work there are responsible for responding to calls within the training center as well as responding to calls from the surrounding community. "We normally help respond with Graham Fire Department, Greenville Fire Dept., Central City and Bremen Fire, which are our bordering departments," said Rondal Hambrick, the fire chief for the station. "We typically run out on big vehicle accidents, structure fires and wildland/brush fires."

According to the fire chief, they are not usually the first ones dispatched to the surrounding communities, due to the new equipment and vehicles they have, they are needed for the larger emergencies that the volunteer fire departments cannot handle on their own.

After the work day had ended for the fire chief, on May 15, 2023, he heard the tone calling for his station just as he was getting comfortable at home. But, what he was called to respond to was something out of the usual for him.

"I had just sat down ready to relax when I heard our tone go off and they said it was for

a downed aircraft," said Hambrick. "I was kind of puzzled at first, because you don't get something like that every day."

The downed aircraft was a replica model of a 1918 JN4 Jenny that was flying back from an airshow at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois with pilot Dorian Walker behind the sticks. He and his copilot had just refueled for their last leg of the trip back to Bowling Green when they lost power at about 1,200 feet in the air.

"I had tried to restart the engine, but it only came back on for about ten seconds before it went dead again," recounted Walker. "I immediately had to start looking for places with enough space to safely put the aircraft down and saw an open field and decided that was my best option."

That field was actually part of an old coal mine reclamation project going on at WHFRTC.

Upon hitting the ground, the landing gear snagged something in the tall grass and was ripped off, forcing the nose of the plane into the ground and the middle section to twist and break in half. Despite the damage to the plane, Walker and copilot were okay; only sustaining minor injuries.

Without knowing where they were, the two men scoured the area looking for the owner of the land they were on while contacting 911.

Hambrick and crew chief, Kyle Wade, arrived at the scene shortly after they got the call to assist the pilots.

"I was worried about the fuel catching the field on fire," said Wade. "But when we pulled up and saw there wasn't any fire, I sent the Striker back to the station and we had our ambulance take one of the pilots to the hospital for evaluation."



Gold Star Families cruise the Ohio River



By Staff Sgt. Matt Damon, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Gold Star family members of fallen U.S. military service men and women came together for a riverboat ride on the Ohio River June 11.

More than 350 family members of those who passed away in the line of duty were in attendance. This year was a little different though, with Survivor Outreach Services coordinating nine additional locations for departures on the same day: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Nashville, Tennessee; Charleston, South Carolina; St. Paul, Minnesota; Portland, Oregon; Hannibal, Missouri; Brownville, Nebraska; and Cleveland, Ohio. Attendance at each location varied based on the size of the boat and the Owner's agreement. Planning for attendees at these sites ranged from 50 to 500, with state military leadership in attendance at each event ready to greet Gold Star Families.

Family members, young and old, hailed from Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. They enjoyed the cruise up and down the river along with a meal sponsored by Northern Kentucky's B&B Riverboats.

The purpose of the day was to honor and acknowledge the surviving family members of fallen military service members who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation.

While Gold Star children are frequently the primary recipients of themed entertainment during the cruise, there is an abundance of enjoyment available for everyone on board. This includes activities like face painting, balloon animals, engaging in crafts, and indulging in plentiful amounts of ice cream.

One of the families on board, the Bohlanders, celebrated the life of their Ohio National Guardsman, John Breslin Bohlander.

"We look forward to these events every year," said Laurel Bohlander, mother of John. "These events are important to families. We all share the same common grief, but we can share our loved one's story and learn the stories of others."

The family of Kentucky National Guardsman Darrin Potter was also aboard. Potter was the first Kentucky Guardsman killed in the line of duty since the Vietnam War.

Potter's mother, Lynn Romans, reiterated what Ms. Bohlander stated and added that "Events like this are a great way to connect, renew friendships, and make new friendships."

Kentucky Guard welcomes newly certified OSHA instructor



By Milt Spalding, photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Kentucky National Guard

Scott Jackson, occupational health nurse for the Boone National Guard Center, recently completed his post graduate certificate for Safety & Health Specialist through Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond. "Jackson has years of experience and training to include running occupational health clinics and OSHA programs for Army Public Health Command in Europe," said Maj. Stephanie Fields, the state safety and occupational health director. "This certification will posture him for his CP12 credentials with the Army Safety Center in July. He will be the first CP12 credentialed person in the safety office in almost ten years."

The certification will also allow Jackson to conduct OSHA certified courses for full-time technicians, something that has not been done in a while.

As part of the DoD's Safety and Occupational Health Program, OH is responsible for prevention of accidental death, injury or occupational illness.

"This will have future positive implications for the KYARNG and safety and occupational support as we prepare soldiers and leaders to better manage hazardous scenarios," Jackson said.

"We recognize the job of soldiering is inherently dangerous, but we should all strive to manage the risk," he said.

Kentucky engineer wins outstanding platoon leader award



By Andy Dickson, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

A Kentucky Army National Guard platoon leader was awarded the 2022 Lt. Orville Munson Award at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri on April 28.

1st Lt. Jason Ball, a platoon leader with the 2061st Multi-Role Bridge Company, received the award from U.S. Army Col. Joseph C. Goetz, the commandant of the U.S. Army Engineer Regimental School.

The Munson award is given annually to honor an engineer lieutenant or warrant officer platoon leader in the Active Army and Army National Guard in recognition of outstanding contributions to military engineering by demonstrated technical and leadership ability.

"We select the very best from the Active Army and the Army National Guard to recognize military engineers and show that we take pride in what we do," said Goetz.

Ball's innovation and his ability to get in with the bridge company and come up with different ways to train has really stood out to us," said U.S. Army Col. James B. Richmond, the commander of the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. "The bridge company has so many difficulties getting to training areas because they are so large and he is one that has helped them look for local training areas and get boats in the water more often."

According to Ball, he is the third Kentucky Army National Guard platoon leader in a row to win this award. Kentucky engineers are known for their award winning excellence with many companies winning the Lt. Gen. Emerson C. Itscher Award within the past decade.



First KYNG Signal Chief Warrant Officer 5 signs off the net

By Lt. Col. Carla Raisler, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Barker retired during a ceremony at the Boone National Guard Center, in Frankfort, Kentucky on April 27, 2023, culminating a distinguished 39-year-long military career.

Barker joined the Army in 1984 as an enlisted Soldier, and in 1993 commissioned as a warrant officer, specializing in electronic maintenance. His career at Boone National Guard Center began before he enlisted into the Kentucky National Guard as a groundskeeper.

"I was mowing grass on Boone Center and going to college at night," said Barker. "I really couldn't figure out what I wanted to do. I joined the Guard to pay for college and 39 years later, here I am."

Barker began his federal technician career in 1997 as an electronic mechanic supervisor at the Combined Support Maintenance Shop. His career eventually led him to his final role as the mission command branch chief and the first signal warrant officer to reach the rank of chief warrant officer 5 in the Kentucky National Guard.

During his career, Barker developed the G6 tactical communication training program, emergency communications program, established the wireless communications shop and implemented the DMARCS system that provides radio communication across the Commonwealth. Most recently, he became the first director for the G6 mission command branch, focusing on tactical and emergency communications capabilities.

"Not only has Chief Barker built a mission command support infrastructure that will continue to serve the Kentucky National Guard for the foreseeable future, his impact on everyone he has worked with over his 39 years of service will continue to serve the Commonwealth as part of his lasting legacy," said Col. John Blackburn, the chief information officer.

Kentucky Air Guardsman continues grandfather's WWII legacy

By Senior Master Sgt. Vicky Spesard, 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Standing on the Wunstorf Air Base flight line, Maj. Matthew Skeens, a 123rd Airlift Wing logistics readiness officer, scans the horizon to soak in the moment.

Nearly 75 years ago his grandfather, U.S. Air Force pilot Kenneth Skeens, flew above that same flight line during the Berlin Airlift in 1949.

Skeens, an LRO with the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Contingency Response Element, arrived in Germany in early June on his own historic airlift mission, Air Defender 2023.

"My grandfather was a B-24 pilot and flew combat bombing missions in Italy, then went to the Pacific where he flew cargo aircraft," Skeens said. "He then became a DV pilot for an officer in the Pacific before being transferred back to cargo flying which is how he ended up here."

Little did elder Skeens know that as he was taking off in his C-54 Skymaster from Wunstorf Airfield in 1949, his mission then would have a significant impact on his grandson 75 years later.





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