



The BLUEGRASS GUARD

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Award, wreath honor veterans

By Capt. J. Gordon Nichols

Governor John Y. Brown Jr. and Adjutant General Billy G. Wellman presented on Aug. 6 the Kentucky Honorable Service Award at Arlington National Cemetery in memory of Kentucky veterans who are buried there.

The medal was authorized by the last session of the Kentucky General Assembly to be displayed in the Memorial Auditorium at the national cemetery.

The Governor placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to commemorate all veterans from the state that have given their lives in the service of this country.

Wellman noted that the ceremony also honored all veterans who have served this state honorably to defend freedom. There are over 400,000 veterans in Kentucky, according to federal statistics.

Representatives from states' congressional delegations, several veterans organizations and both the Army and Air National Guard attended the ceremony.

Approximately 30 other states have held similar ceremonies at the national cemetery.



KENTUCKY VETERANS REMEMBERED—Gov. John Y. Brown Jr. and Adjutant General Billy G. Wellman (standing behind the Governor) present the Kentucky Honorable Service Award in a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. (Photo by Ray Krause, Department of the Arts)

123rd TRW awarded coveted Spaatz trophy

Adjutant General Billy G. Wellman surprised the entire staff and membership of the 123rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing during the July drill by flying in Governor John Y. Brown Jr. for a decoration ceremony and picnic.

Two days before General Wellman had received word that the Louisville unit had won the coveted Spaatz trophy and he invited the governor to present the news to the unit in person. Brown joined Wellman in making the announcement and congratulated the unit on "showing the nation that we have the best national guard units in the world."

Brown also cited the unit for keeping up

strength, representing the nation in Denmark recently and for being named the outstanding unit in competition with active and reserve units.

Wellman told the group that they had achieved all the goals that he had asked them to gain during this year and they deserved every possible award for their type unit.

Brown also decorated a number of Air Guardsmen and presented Brig. Gen. Carl Black the Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal for his leadership during the past year.

The announcement was met with cheer-

ing from nearly 1,000 Air Guard personnel that had been assembled for a picnic as a reward for their accomplishments during the past year.

The trophy presentation will be held in Puerto Rico at the National Guard Association National Meeting.

The Air Guard in Louisville had won the trophy two times before in 1950 and in 1965.

The trophy is named after General Carl E. Spaatz, the first Air Force chief of staff and is awarded to only one air unit each year for all-around excellence. Ninety-one Air National Guard units compete for the honor.

Soldier gets medal for past battles

By Spec. 4 Ed Armstrong and
Capt. Tom Little

For the battles fought by a 19-year-old boy, a 57-year-old man recently received a medal that has been long in coming.

Sgt. Maj. J.W. Brown, Operations Sergeant for the Recruiting and Retention and Command, has finally received the Bronze Star, a medal he earned in 1944-45 for his service in the China-Burma-India theater during World War II. The medal was awarded to Brown by Maj. Gen. Billy G. Wellman at the Frankfort armory in June.

Brown explained that he doesn't blame anyone but himself for the delay in getting the award. He said he had known about the medal for a long time, but had not taken the action necessary to receive it.

Brown joined the Army as a 19-year-old in 1944 and went to Fort Riley, Kansas, for basic training in the mounted horse cavalry. He was among the last American soldiers trained in that field.

In the fall of that year, he was assigned to the 475th Infantry, which was replacing "Murrell's Marauders." That unit had recently liberated Burma. The 475th was given the mission of opening the Burma Road into Kunming, China.

About 5,000 Allied troops opposed nearly 120,000 Japanese troops, according to Brown.

During the 750-mile campaign, which was covered on foot, "we carried everything we owned on our back," said Brown. That included packs, machetes, rifles, ammunition, "and all the grenades you could carry."

Brown was a sniper, armed with a bolt-action .30 caliber rifle with a scope. The weapon had an effective range of about 800 yards.

"The first day we made about 12 miles, and after about two hours, I cried like a baby. I didn't think I could make it," the gray-haired sergeant remembered

thoughtfully. "We knew our chances of survival were not good," he said.

The only way of getting supplies was by airdrop. Traveling in really rough country, there were days when the Air Force couldn't find them so they had to live off of the land.

Brown saw combat nearly every day between September 1944 and February 1945. Brown said he never got a scratch except from his own grenade, which he threw up a hill and it rolled back down and nearly got him.

On New Year's Eve, 1944, Brown was evacuated to a hospital because of malaria.

"I thought I could make it, but I was exhausted and couldn't get any strength up," Brown recalled. "Now I see that the hospitalization probably saved by life."

He remained in the hospital about 10 days and was then flown back to the combat area in a C-47. The fighting was coming to a close, but he learned his commander and first sergeant, as well as many other members of the unit had been killed and the company had been dissolved. Only 27 of the unit's 60 men had survived.

Brown was assigned to another company and helped liberate Shanghai. It was in China that he reenlisted in the Army to extend his tour of duty.

In 1946, after he had left the Army and returned to his native Russellville, he

received a notice that he had been awarded the Bronze Star and could pick up the proper documents in Bowling Green. It wasn't terribly important to him as a young man, and he didn't do it.

About 10 years ago, he saw an article in a VFW magazine about the many people who had earned the medal, but who had never picked it up. He didn't do anything about it then, but he did put the clipping in his military personnel file. He had joined the National Guard in 1952.

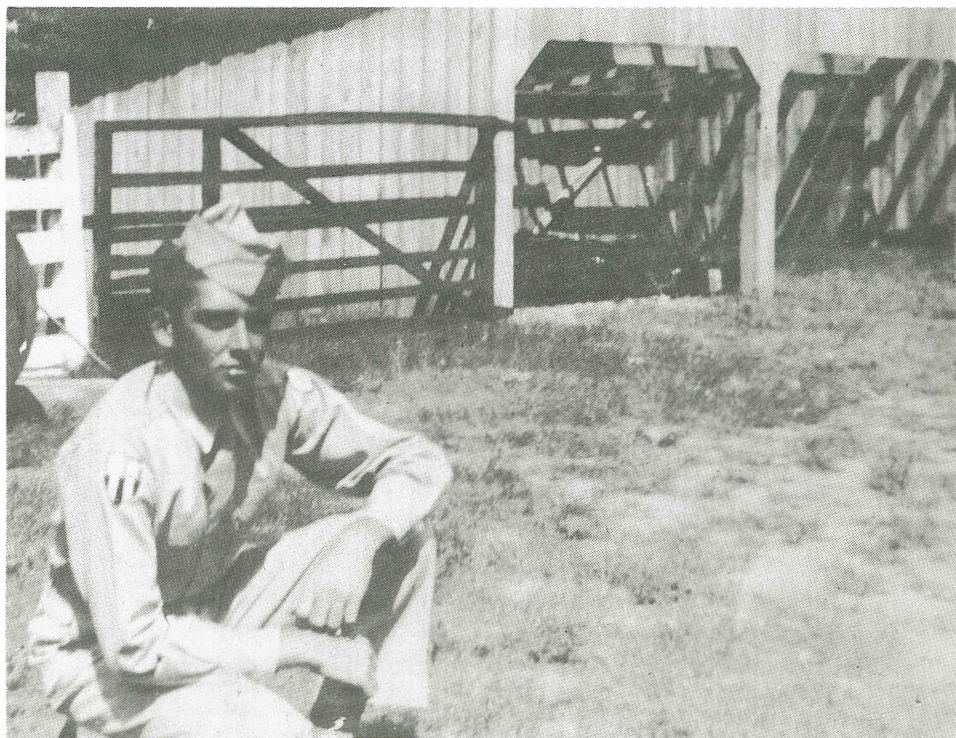
More recently, he was assigned to the Army Guard headquarters in Frankfort, and he found he had ready access to the records and people necessary to gain his award after so many years.

He consulted with Lt. Col. Larry Barker, Deputy Director of Personnel, and the process of gaining his well-earned medal began. Now, after a 38-year wait, the medal is in its proper place.

Why was it important after so many years?

"When you start to think about retirement, you want to leave some sort of record of what you did," he said.

In addition to the Bronze Star, that record includes the Combat Infantry Badge, Asiatic Pacific Theater Ribbon with two battle stars, Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal.

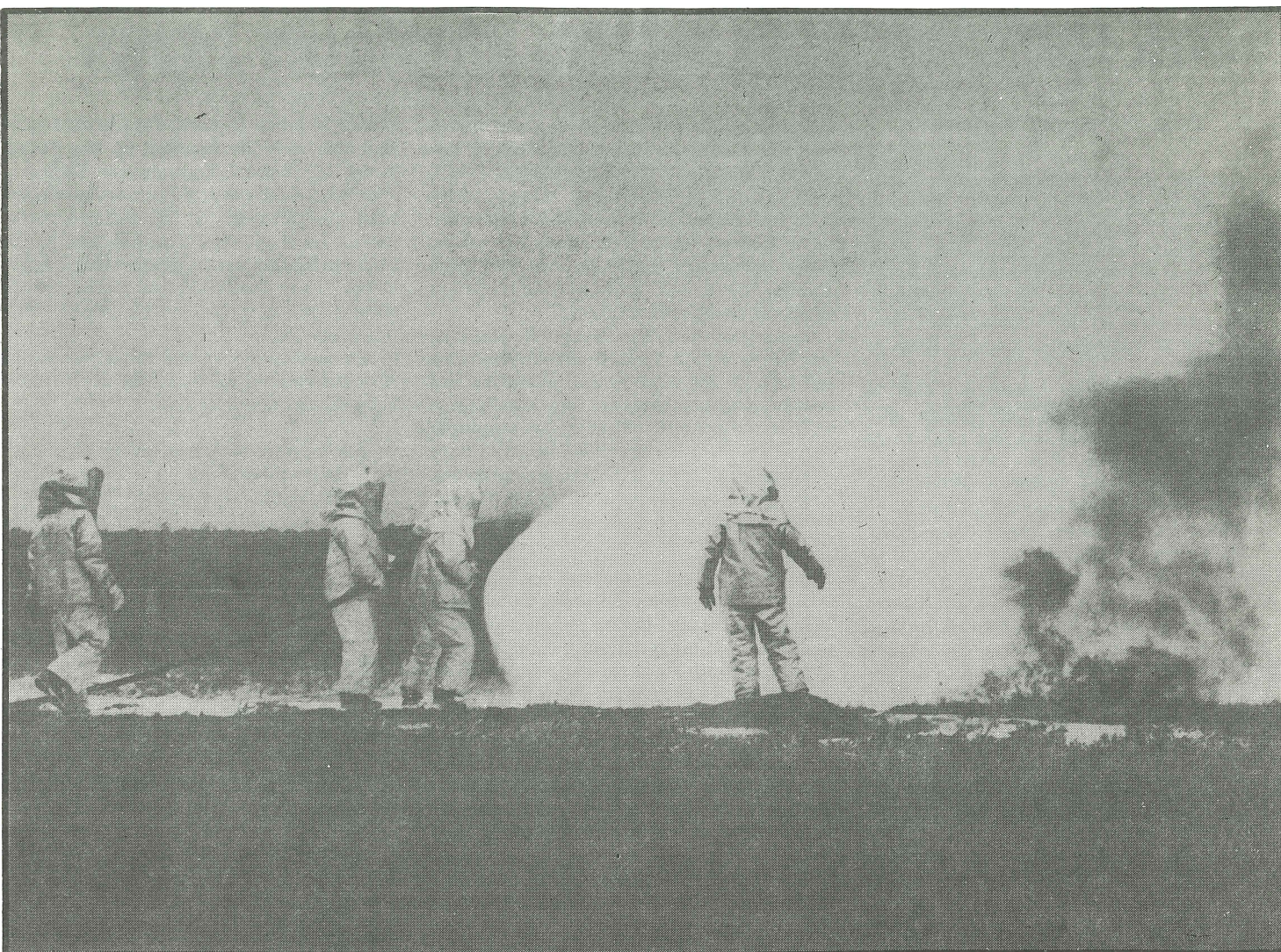


SOLDIER RETURNING HOME—J.W. Brown relaxes at home in Russellville after overseas duty in Asia during World War II. This photo was taken in 1946 immediately after his return. He recently received a long-overdue Bronze Star medal for his services in the China-Burma-India theater.

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BLAZING BATTLES—Fire protection specialists from the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing

combat a fire in annual training activities at Camp Shelby, Miss.

Flabby excuses abound in Guard

By Maj. Gen. Billy G. Wellman
The Adjutant General

How many times have you heard a fellow Guardsman say, "I know I've picked up a few pounds, but we had some friends over last weekend and the food was just great. Besides, I'm getting ready to start on a diet, and I'll drop it with no problem."

That comment, or one like it, is much more common than most of us want to realize. And, unfortunately, it too often applies to us rather than the "other guy." Many of us aren't 19 years old anymore, and pounds don't disappear as they once did. I've heard many people say that they've lost 200 pounds over the past couple of years. Sadly, they've put on 210.

I'm very concerned about the weight problem in the Kentucky National Guard,

not only because regulations set specific standards, but also because it just isn't healthy to carry extra pounds. We know that overweight people face many health problems and that the heart is particularly subject to stress.

I don't want to lose a single one of you, because you are important to your state, community and, most important, to your family and friends.

It's for that reason that I frequently remind commanders that they must be serious about enforcement of the weight standards. If your commander, first sergeant, or supervisor repeatedly brings this to your attention, he does it because I want him to and because he knows it's in your best interest.

Your commander will not be able to promote you or get you into a military

school unless you are in acceptable physical condition. That's not an attempt to make life difficult for you—it's a simple fact of life.

We don't expect anyone to lose 50 pounds in a month, even if that's what is needed to meet the standard. But we do expect you to work with a reasonable diet and exercise program, preferably under the supervision of a physician, to bring your weight in line with the standards.

My message is this: Commanders, you know the policy and my feelings. Thus, you know your responsibility. Fellow Guardsmen, your health is important to all of us, because we all depend on you. Understand why we must meet these standards and give it your best effort. We need you.

Laws spell out Guardsman, employer rights

By Spec. 4 Sparky Goodman

A recent survey indicates that about one third of the Guard and Reserve members who leave the service each year do so because they find it too difficult to juggle both their civilian and military careers. Many of these people quit the military of their own volition but others claim they quit because their bosses pressure them to do so.

Many Guardsmen apparently fail to realize that there are both federal and state laws which spell out the obligations of themselves and their employers. In order to avoid and resolve conflicts, it is the responsibility of each Guardsman to acquaint himself with these regulations.

According to Chapter 43 of Part III of Title 38, Section 2024(d) of the U.S. Code, Guard and Reserve members have the right to be excused from their jobs upon request so that they may attend military training. In most situations, they cannot be required to use their normal vacation time to attend annual training. Upon completion of training, a Guardsman cannot be denied any promotion or benefits he is entitled to nor can he be fired or demoted. There are certain stipulations, however.

First, the Guardsman must be employed in a full-time, permanent position. Second, these regulations do not pertain to discrimination in the initial employment of a Guardsman and third, the individual must inform his employer in advance of his training schedule.

Other than the normal weekend drills, initial MOS training, and regular annual training, Guardsmen are limited to 90 days additional time every three years in order to maintain their reemployment rights. In other words, if a Guardsman attends a military school that lasts more than 90 days, the employer is not required to rehire him.

This situation has resulted in many

Guardsmen choosing to take their classes through correspondence, but this is not appropriate for many technical skills which demand "hands-on" training. This puts the Guardsman in a difficult situation. He wants to further his skills by taking these courses and yet if he does take these courses, he is not guaranteed his civilian job back when he is finished.

According to CW4 George R. Karsner, the State Equal Opportunity Officer, the solution to the problem is cooperation and communication between the Guardsman and his employer. "Let your employer know about training schedules and duty requirements as far in advance as possible. Provide your employer with copies of your orders or other paperwork which might help him understand your position."

Karsner, added "These are economically difficult times and in many cases Guardsmen fail to understand the employer's perspective. Many employers simply cannot afford to have workers leave for extended periods, particularly if they were given a relatively short notice."

It is the Guardsman's responsibility to keep his employer informed of training activities and informal discussions with an employer can actually help build a rapport between the Guard and businesses in general.

One of the worst situations, according to Karsner, is when Guardsmen threaten their employers by spouting off the laws. Many times, Karsner noted, this results in a shouting match and an abusive situation before any agency has the opportunity to alleviate the problem.

Should a problem arise, the Guardsman should contact his unit commander to attempt to resolve the schedule conflict. If this fails, the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve ombudsman can be reached Monday through Friday at 800-336-4590. Karsner, located at Boone Center in Frankfort, may also be able to help. If an em-

ployer is taken to court for justified cause, the case may be handled by the Department of Labor through its Office of Veterans' Reemployment unless the Guardsman is employed by the Federal government. In that case it is handled by the Federal Employees' Appeals Office. This is a last resort, however, and every attempt should be made to rectify the problem much earlier.

Preventing a conflict through cooperation and communication with the employer is by far the best solution.

For more information write:

Rights Fact Sheet
National Committee for Employer
Support of the Guard and Reserve
Suite 206
1735 N. Lynn St.
Arlington, VA 22209

The Kentucky Committee for Employer Support also functions to encourage businesses to support the Guard and Reserve. This committee promotes media awareness of the Guard and Reserve and also identifies and recognizes those businesses who have demonstrated their support.



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Aviation openings available

The Army National Guard aviation program is now accepting applications for Helicopter Flight Training School for fiscal year 1984.

Basic, non-waiverable requirements for the program include:

1. maximum age of 27½ years
2. pass a Flight Aptitude Selection Test
3. pass a Class I flight physical
4. be approved by a selection board
5. successfully complete two weeks of Officer Candidate School with the Ky. Military Academy at Ft. Knox
6. have a minimum GT score of 110

7. high school diploma or GED
8. qualify for a secret security clearance
9. sign agreement to remain in Army National Guard Aviation Program for four years after completion of flight school
10. completed, or undergoing, Basic Combat Training

Anyone interested in the aviation program should contact Col. David F. Fleming or SSgt. Irene Robinson at (502) 564-8468 or Lt. Col. Thomas Quisenberry at (502) 564-8476.

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