

THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

Volume Ten, Issue One

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

July 2006

Welcome Back!



Also Inside:

Soldiers brand Kuwait

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Spec. Eric Mayo and Spec. Kenny Smith chat with Maj. Gen. Donald Storm and Gov. Ernie Fletcher after deployment with the 617th MPs.

A 'thank you' from the Adjutant General

The Kentucky National Guard has gone through an incredible transformation these past five years. Prior to September 11, 2001, we were a solid organization, fully capable of supporting our fellow citizens in times of tornadoes, winter storms and just about any other natural disaster you could think of. We'd sent troops to the Persian Gulf War where they served with extreme professionalism and valor. And we'd even deployed to Europe and Central and South America in support of various training and partnership missions with our active duty brethren. Conclusively, we were a sound organization.



Then came September 11 and the world has not been the same since. Within weeks of the attacks on American soil, Kentucky Air National Guard troops were in Afghanistan, taking the fight to the enemy. Army Guard troops were sent to Europe to guard military bases and mobilized to protect our airports here at home. And then Afghanistan kicked into high gear and next came Iraq ...

While all this was going on, something remarkable happened. Something that I truly marvel at every day I put on my uniform and look in the mirror.

The Kentucky National Guard became a truly world class organization.

I know, I know, if you've been to any of the countless farewell and welcome home ceremonies we've held the past several years, you've heard me say this time and again, how the Kentucky Guard is world class and that our Soldiers are the best in the nation. I've always believed that, from the bottom of my heart. But since September 11, 2001, this has become a proven fact. From Kabul to Abu Graihb to Katrina, we stand tall in the eyes of our peers, both in the active duty world as well as among the reserve components. Our recruiting effort is breaking records and our innovations in training have caught the eye of military leaders across the nation. We have accomplished so much in such a brief period of time, it defies the imagination.

Having said all that, there is only one thing left for me to say.

I thank you, from the bottom of my heart, from the most junior private and airman to our most senior staff officers. My prayers go out especially to the families of those who have fallen and to those who have been wounded in action. But without everyone's dedication, without your belief in what we do and what we represent, the Kentucky National Guard could not be the truly world class organization it is today.

Again, thank you for your hard work and your patriotism. May God bless the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the United States of America!

Donald C. Storm
Major General
The Adjutant General



THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

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FROM THE FIELD

Magazine back from year-long absence

We're back and we're better than ever! It's been more than a year since the last Bluegrass Guard made it into your mailbox and found a home on the coffee table.

Due to the deployment of the 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and State Public Affairs Officers Col. Phil Miller and Capt. David Page, the office has been short staffed. But we've compiled as many photos and stories as possible to bring back the only magazine that's written by Kentucky National Guard soldiers and airmen for Kentucky National Guard soldiers and airmen.

It has been quite a year for the Kentucky National Guard. In these pages you'll find photos of homecomings and tributes. You'll see and read why Kentucky is ahead of the game when it comes to training our soldiers for war. You'll read about your brothers and sisters in arms serving overseas and on the homefront.

Our mission is to bring you the news about Kentucky National Guard units and troops. Our

goal is to publish bi-monthly. We encourage you to submit letters and contributions to the publication. If you have photos of your deployment or perhaps your unit held an awards ceremony or family day at last drill; please submit those to the Public Affairs Office for possible use in The Bluegrass Guard.

The staff of The Bluegrass Guard encourages you to visit our new Web site: www.dma.ky.gov/publicaffairs. News and information about the Kentucky National Guard is posted on this site and in the near future electronic copies of The Bluegrass Guard will be available for family and friends of the Kentucky National Guard.

So, what are you waiting for? Read on ... and look for us in your mailbox in the months to come!

Gina Vaile
SGT KYARNG
Bluegrass Guard Editor

Swearing in



Photo by Sgt. Gina Vaile/KYARNG

Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm swears in three of the Kentucky National Guard's newest 2nd Lieutenants. Second Lt. Jason Spayd; 2nd Lt. Matthew Reff and 2 Lt. Lee Rivette graduated in April from the Accelerated Officer Candidate School.

HOMETOWN HEROES



Meet Kentucky's new Ranger



Photo Submitted

Major Bryan Howay embraces his family after enduring eight weeks of the elite US Army Ranger School. Pictured with Howay is his wife Sharon and sons Travis and Ethan.

By Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

Major Bryan Howay recently volunteered to endure eight weeks with only one or two meals per day, little sleep and physical demands that cause most people to lose 20-30 pounds. Even though there were days the Kentucky National Guard soldier didn't know if he could walk one more inch, the thought of giving up never crossed his mind – because when it was all said and done, he would become a United States Army Ranger.

"It took me 18 years to get there, I wasn't about to give up," Howay said.

On November 23, Howay was one of 102 graduates of the United States Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Ga. The school ranks as the most prestigious for infantry soldiers.

"The school was long and hard," Howay said. "But in the infantry you become convinced that [Ranger School] is what you have to finish."

Howay enlisted in the United States Army out of high school in 1987. He joined the Kentucky National Guard in 1992, obtained a degree from the University of Louisville and commissioned in 1993 from State OCS. Though he attended several other military schools, Howay said Ranger school is something he fought to be able to attend over the 18 years he has served in the military.

"I kept hearing that there was never funding to send me," Howay said. "As soon as the opportunity became available I decided it was time to do it. It was either put up or shut up."

The 56 day school has been renowned since the first Ranger Class graduated in 1952. Considered a top honor among infantry soldiers, many do not graduate due to injuries. Howay, one of the oldest graduates of his class graduated without attending sick call once.

"The toughest part was getting there," Howay said. "If you stay motivated and are in good physical shape you will do fine."

Howay said he always thought he was very well prepared for the strains of becoming a Ranger. But he attributed part of his success to the Pre-Ranger training he received through the National Guard Pre-Ranger Course at Fort Benning.

The two week course highlighted what would happen on a day to day basis during the three phases of Ranger School: Fort Benning phase, Mountain phase and Florida phase.

"The National Guard Pre-Ranger Course set me up for success," Howay said. "It was well organized and the instructors were professional NCOs and officers who know what it takes to become a Ranger."

Howay spent most of his days running mission oriented exercises with little sleep and fewer calories than what he was used to. He spent days out in the fields of Fort Benning, the Mountains of Georgia and the shores of Florida training to become a hard core leader.

"The day would start at 0400 hours and sometimes it wouldn't end. Sometimes we only got four hours of sleep and one meal a day," Howay said. "But that taught me how to lead under stress."

Howay has not seen combat during his tenure in the Kentucky National Guard. He was deployed to Bosnia in September 2002, where he led Charlie Company 1st Battalion 149th Infantry in peace keeping missions. Ranger School, he says, has instilled a new confidence in him to lead soldiers under extremely intense situations.

"I am fully trained to lead my men in combat," he said. "You learn how to lead others when they are stressed and you don't have enough equipment and everyone is at the point when they don't want to do anything – and you are just as tired and hungry as they are, but there is the over-riding sense of urgency to complete the mission."

Though Howay logged countless miles during PT runs and swims as well as road marches, his greatest hardship was the lack of contact with his wife and two sons.

"I think I got to call home twice and the mail was always running behind because we were constantly moving or in the field," he said. He says his family is what kept him from being recycled to another class.

Howay encourages any motivated soldier who is eligible for Ranger School to push for the opportunity.

"You've got to want to have it, want to go," he said. "If you stay focused you can get through it."

In addition to graduating from Ranger School, Howay was promoted to major at Fort Benning following the graduation ceremony.

Think you could be the next Kentucky Ranger? Get on the path to becoming one of the Army Elite by revamping your PT schedule to include:



5 mile run (3 times/wk)



Swimming in uniform (3 times/wk)



Pushups, sit ups and chin ups (reps)



walk fast in boots with 45 lb. ruck often



Ride stationary bikes with resistance



build leg muscles with squats and lunges

623rd Medic awarded Bronze Star

By Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

For Annell Ball, her husband Sgt. Michael Ball is her hero. He makes her smile and laugh. He has dedication and love for his family and friends as well as the men and women he serves with in Iraq.

“He has made me proud, and ignites a spirit of patriotism within my soul,” she says.

Debbie Ball smiles with excitement when someone asks about her son. To describe her him, she sums it up by saying she’s extremely proud.

“Whether it’s his regular civilian job or being a medic in the Guard, he puts forth 100 percent,” she says. “He is a hard worker no matter what he is doing.”

And hard work is exactly what he did on March 30, 2005 when a vehicle in the convoy Ball was following was hit with a vehicle born IED.

“I just had extreme tunnel vision,” said Sgt. Ball, remembering back to the moments following the attack. “They radioed back that they needed a medic so I jumped out and my gunner threw my aide bag to me – I ran up and saw a soldier lying on the side of the road. I just went to work to try to save him.”

Sgt. Ball, a medic with the 623rd Field Artillery, had no idea the soldier on the ground was his friend, Spec. Eric Toth. The two had just spent the night before together on a mission, just the same as any other night.

“I didn’t even know who it was until he was already on the Blackhawk being flown out. All I saw was a list of injuries and I knew what I had to do,” Sgt. Ball said. “I think it made it easier that I didn’t know it was him.”

Crouched closely to a burning vehicle, Sgt. Ball spent two minutes with Toth, and was able to stabilize the soldier for a Medi-Vac out of the hostile area.

The rest of the convoy regrouped and stayed the night in Baghdad. Once the convoy was safe at a holdover point in the city, Sgt. Ball and his comrades

learned of Toth’s death.

The Award

Several weeks after the March 30th attack, Sgt. Ball was told he’d been recommended for an award. While he was honored to be considered, day to day operations caused his mind to be focused on missions rather than medals.

As part of daily duties, Sgt. Ball and a team of soldiers are in charge of escorting prisoners from Abu Grahb prison to various places in Iraq. Because the threat of attacks such as the one that killed Toth is high, Sgt. Ball said he concentrated more on his surroundings and daily operations rather than an award.

Four months after the incident Lt. Gen. John Vines, Commanding General of Multi-National Corps in Iraq visited troops at Abu Ghraib with the soul purpose to award high honors to two distinguished soldiers. Sgt. Ball was one.

The Bronze Star, awarded for heroic or meritorious achievement of service in combat, was initiated by Gen. George C. Marshall in a memorandum to President Roosevelt in 1944.

Marshall wrote: “The fact that the ground troops, Infantry in particular, lead miserable lives of extreme discomfort and are the ones who must close in personal combat with the enemy, makes the maintenance of their morale of great importance.”

While the medal was historically adopted to raise a soldier’s morale, Sgt. Ball says it hasn’t really changed his outlook on the situation of March 30th.

“I was sad,” he said describing the day he was pinned with the Bronze Star. “I lost a friend.”

Sgt. Ball says he doesn’t feel any different being a decorated soldier – it’s an honor, he says, but he’d have done the same thing for any other soldier given the circumstances he was faced with on March 30th.

“I’d gladly give it back to have Toth back,” he said.

And his wife believes he would give the medal back in a heartbeat, “Mike is honored to be recognized for

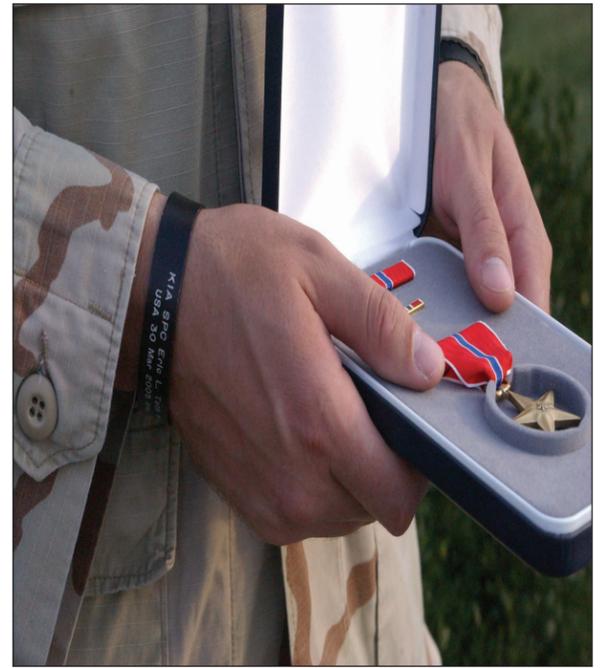


Photo by Sgt. Gina Vaile/KYARNG

Sgt. Michael Ball holds the Bronze medal he received for his efforts in saving Spec. Eric Toth. Ball also wears a memorial band on his wrist bearing Toth’s name.

his valiant efforts, yet he believes it is more important to honor and remember the soldier who lost his life that day.”

Debbie says she too has mixed emotions about her son’s medal.

“I was and still am heartbroken for the Toth family,” she said.

“At the same time, I felt compassion for Michael. I knew that he was so upset. He worried that he hadn’t done everything that he could. It was something that he will never get over.”

Chaplain ready to serve soldiers and families

By Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

When Chaplain Bill Draper, full time Chaplain for the Kentucky National Guard, was activated in the fall of 2005 for Operation Enduring Freedom, Col. Patrick Dolan, the State Chaplain on the M-Day side, took the reigns to fill in as full-time Chaplain until his return.

Now, several months into the assignment, Chaplain Dolan finds each day more rewarding.

“I can connect with soldiers and help them connect with God in their own way rather than my way,” Dolan said.

Dolan’s career with the military began in 1987 when he received a direct commission as a Lieutenant in the US Army. A Roman-Catholic priest before his enlistment, it took Dolan nearly ten years to become a soldier – so he’s very familiar with patience.

“I had to get permission from the Bishop to join the Army, and I joined at a time when recruiting wasn’t as quick as it is now. It took seven years to get permission and an additional two years to be accessioned,” Dolan said.

But he stood fast in his faith and his desire to become a soldier and ten years after deciding the military was part of his calling, he reached his goal. A soldier thirsting for more knowledge on soldiering skills, Dolan didn’t stop when his Officer Basic Course was completed.

He’s a decorated soldier and has completed Air Assault, Airborne and the Pathfinder courses.

“That’s something many people might not



Photo by Sgt. Gina Vaile/KYARNG

Maj. Gen. Donald Storm and Michigan Air Guard Tech Sgt. Michael TerBush nephew of Chaplain Patrick Dolan pin Dolan with the Colonel rank. Chaplain Dolan serves as full-time chaplain while Chaplain Bill Draper is on deployment.

know about me,” he said. “I have the heart of a soldier. I have a passion for making sure the Nation is properly defended.”

He’s been nearly everywhere the Army has an address and has deployed to Iraq three times since the onset of the war. “I know what it’s like (to deploy) and I know I can help soldiers and their family understand what lies ahead.”

Helping soldiers and their families is not just part of the job for Dolan, but a joy. He is ready to give counseling; advice; lead religious services and respond to various needs that Kentucky National Guard soldiers and their family may

have.

“I’m here to listen and give advice all under an umbrella of confidentiality,” he said. “Most importantly, I can give blessings and prayers.”

If you or a family member is having difficulties and you don’t know where to turn, chances are Chaplain Dolan can assist.

“Soldiers can blow off steam to me without any repercussions,” he said. “Also, because I get to see the big picture of things, I can help folks understand what each tiring duty really means, and often help soldiers find their own solutions or point them in the right direction.”

FINAL GOODBYE



Spec. Jonathan A. Hughes
B 1/623d FA Bn
19 March 2005
Iraq



Spec. Eric Toth
A 1/623d FA Bn
30 March 2005
Iraq



Sgt. James Sherrill
2113th Trans Co
3 April 2005
Iraq



Spec. Michael R. Hayes
617th MP Co
14 June 2005
Iraq

“...We should thank God that such men have lived.” -Gen. George S. Patton Jr.



Spec. Ryan J. Montgomery
HHSB 1/623d FA Bn
3 July 2005
Iraq



Staff Sgt. William A. Allers
617th MP Co
20 September 2005
Iraq



Staff Sgt. Brock A. Beery
HHC 2/123d AR Bn
23 March 2006
Iraq



Master Sgt. Clinton W. Cubert
2113th Trans Co
16 April 2006
injuries received in Iraq



Capt. Clayton L. Adamkavicius
HQ 149th AR Bde
20 April 2006
Afghanistan

SHARPSHOOTER

123rd Marksman aims for 2008 US Olympic Team

By Capt.. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The road to an Olympic gold medal is a long and hard one, but for Master Sgt. James Johnson, a combat controller in the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron it's something that's within reach.

After competing in a match that serves to identify members of USA Shooting's National Team, Johnson is hopeful for a slot. Those who made the Team form the drawing pool for America's Olympic hopefuls in 2008.

"This match started the process," Johnson said of the National Team Tryouts, which were held at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. "It will set the tone for the next two years, until the 2008 Olympics."

During those two

years, Johnson hopes to compete in numerous international competitions, trying to accumulate enough first-, second- and third-place finishes to earn a spot in the Beijing Olympics.

A gold medal may sound like a grand aspiration for a shooter who only began competing at the national level last year, but Johnson has come a long way in a short time.

Impressive showings at the 2004 National Rifle and Pistol Championships earned Johnson and a KyANG colleague, Tech. Sgt. Frank Tallman admission to the U.S. Air Force Marksmanship Team — all-time firsts for members of the Air National Guard.

Since then, Johnson has continued to hone his skills in a dozen matches held across the country,



scoring several personal bests and multiple top-three rankings.

In fact, Johnson typically finishes within a few rankings of his far more experienced USAF team members, and he's now one of the squad's primary shooters. (Tallman, a radio maintenance technician with the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, is currently deployed overseas and remains on the team's developmental

Master Sgt. James Johnson, a combat controller in the Air Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, practices with his rifle. Johnson hopes to become a member of the 2008 US Olympic Shooting Team, a goal he says is attainable if he maintains a positive attitude.

Photo by Capt.. Dale Greer/KYANG



squad.)

Johnson's scores took a considerable jump this past spring after he invested \$3,000 in a new rifle to replace an aging Winchester on loan from the base.

"The new rifle fits me so much better than the one I was issued here," he explained. "My scores increased 20 or 30 points right off the bat."

Sergeant Johnson is shooting so well that he found himself in first

place midway through this summer's America's Cup finals while competing against a gold-medal Olympian and a world-record holder.

He would later drop to eighth place after scoring a series of 9s. A score consisting of 10s would have been necessary to maintain a lead at this level — but his achievement was still considered remarkable.

"Once it was over, I was like, 'Holy Cow!' It really

got my confidence up. Now I know that if I don't shoot a 585 or better (out of 600) in prone rifle, I'm just having a really bad day," he said.

"I guess I need to start planning on winning. That kind of confidence goes a long way."

"I'd like to think I'll make the national team," he said. "At the very least, I expect to finish in the top 10 or 15 percent."

For now, the Olympics await.

Training for the fight

By Sgt. Gina Vaile and Spec. Vernis Phipps
Editor/Photographer

UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters hovered overhead as Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) detonated on convoys that rolled along dirt roads leading to “Medina Jabal,” a city of plywood and trailers.

From the city, Iraqis scrambled into the streets, shielding themselves from gunfire.

Even though the Iraqis were actors, and actually spoke Spanish (to create a language barrier), the only thing out of place was lush green landscape and moderate temperatures. But for the Kentucky National Guard Soldiers immersed in the action, there was an overwhelming feeling that Western Kentucky was actually a far away country in the Middle East.

“This is what they’re going to do over there in Iraq or Afghanistan or wherever it is they may go when they deploy,” said Maj. Michael Abell, a training officer with the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry. “You always train for the fight, even if



Photo by KYARNG Public Affairs

Specialist Christopher Webb, D 1/149th IN, politely refuses an Iraqi trying to sell items. The encounter took place during the 2005 Annual Training at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center.

you don’t get to the fight.”

The 149th Infantry Battalion ; Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie Companies (located in London, Somerset, and Ravenna) was the first to use the Exportable Combat Training Center (XCTC) at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center last summer.

Nearly 500 soldiers in the 149th experienced the cutting edge technology June 9th - July 9th 2005. The XCTC offers a combination of global positioning technology, sound effects and pyrotechnics to train soldiers on convoy operations, search missions, ambushes and how to react to other battlefield situations.

Soldiers were outfitted with MILES 2000 Gear, a system that increases combat readiness and fighting effectiveness. Using laser light in the form of pulses, information is transmitted from one soldier’s weapon to the desired target. Information contained in the pulses includes



Photo by Spec. Vernis Phipps/KYARNG



player identification, the type of weapon used as well as a casualty assessment of wounded or killed.

“The training was given by experienced personnel in an environment that will be extremely beneficial to our mission.” said 2nd Lt. Dawayne Meyer of Bravo Company.

Making XCTC mobile lessens the cost of readying a unit before deployment and alleviates delays, according to military officials.

“It’s plug and play training,” said Maj. Gen. Donald Storm, Adjutant General for Kentucky. He noted that the training is an “asset for a military that has become increasingly reliant on Guard and Reserve forces.

“We realized years ago that we had to bring a training component to the National Guard that would be efficient,” Storm said.

Sgt. Dallas Eubanks, of Corbin, has been in the military 13 years and said he never experienced such authentic training.

“These are lessons the troops learned in combat and brought back to us,” Eubanks said.

“When we get there, we’ll be a leg up on everybody.” he added.



Photo by Spec. Vernis Phipps/KYARNG

WELCOME HOME!

Bluegrass Homecomings

Warm embraces, laughs and celebrations highlight the homecomings of Kentucky National Guard soldiers. After a deployment most soldiers share the same thought: "It's good to be home."





Soldiers at Walter Reed stay connected via computers

Army News Service

WASHINGTON- The Army has implemented a pilot program to provide a way for wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to stay connected with loved ones.

The "Thin Client" system, first introduced in 2005, was created by Information Technology Systems for the purpose of e-learning, video communications and entertainment.

Improving patient life

"We went to families, soldiers and administrators to come up with a product that would best suit the wounded soldiers," said Hari Bezwada, a program manager for ITS.

Lt. Gen. Steven W. Boutelle, the Army chief information officer, worked with ITS to create a product for long term soldiers who are recovering for several months or more at Walter Reed's Mologne House.

"Those soldiers had become isolated by not being able to connect with the rest of the world and many – most or all of them – are Internet Literate," said Boutelle.

Providing a future

After talking with the patients, Bezwada and Boutelle wanted to make it easier for soldiers to save their work. Each patient has their own thumb drive so data can be saved without the



Photo Submitted

Kentucky National Guard Sgt. Jeremy Austin checks his e-mail using "Thin Client" technology while recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Soldiers use the technology to take online courses and stay in contact with friends and family.

information being viewed by others on a hard drive. They also wanted to provide patients with valuable resources that are available Army-wide and online training that patients could use to obtain certifications for follow-on jobs.

"I can keep in touch with the guys (in Iraq) still," said Sgt. Jeremy Austin, a Walter Reed patient and Kentucky National Guardsman. "I miss them terribly because they are like my family and I can keep in touch with family and friends back home."

Austin is also using the technology to take online courses in air conditioning and heating with the hope of learning skills so he can open his own business.

"The best thing about online (education) is you can do it as fast as you want, when you want to do it and it's at your own pace," Austin said.

Advancing technology

During the first phase of the program, patients

received a flat-screen monitor and common access card-enabled keyboard connected to a local area network which provides Internet, e-mail, application support and printing services. By the summer of 2005, all 329 rooms at Walter Reed were equipped with the technology.

After talking with patients at Walter Reed, Bezwada said the soldiers wanted the capability to talk to their comrades who are also in the hospital, but in different rooms. After the initiation of phase two, their wish will come true.

Boutelle said he believes this technology will help soldiers at Walter Reed.

"This is the ideal model that the PEO (program executive office) put in at Walter Reed," he said. "If you do it in other places in other hospitals around the world, this is the model to follow."

COMING UP NEXT ISSUE



Kentucky Guard supports racing event at Paducah



Your record online



Coverage of Freedom Salutes and farewells



Family Support: how to get involved

Purple Heart Hall of Honor seeks stories of Purple Heart recipients

Courtesy of the New York State Senate

Historic New Windsor Cantonment is the site of the first presentation of the Purple Heart Medal which took place in May 1932.

Now, 74 years later at that same place, Americans can learn about the two million brave men and women who were killed or wounded in combat.

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is expected to open Veterans Day, November 11, 2006 in New Windsor, New York. The state-of-the-art facility will preserve the stories of ordinary men and women and the extraordinary sacrifices they made for our Nation.

The Hall will create a National Data Base for recipients and their stories. An oral history program will collect the interviews of Veterans from all eras to educate students and citizens on historical milestones; the role of the military; the effects and reality of war, and the pursuit for peace and liberty throughout the world. The vision is for an Internet connection between the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor and classrooms across America. Its mission is to preserve, interpret and disseminate the story, history and records of United States veterans who have received the Purple Heart.

All recipients of the Purple Heart of family members of a Purple Heart recipient are encouraged to send a copy of the servicemember's DD214 to:

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor
PO Box 207
Vails Gate, NY 12584

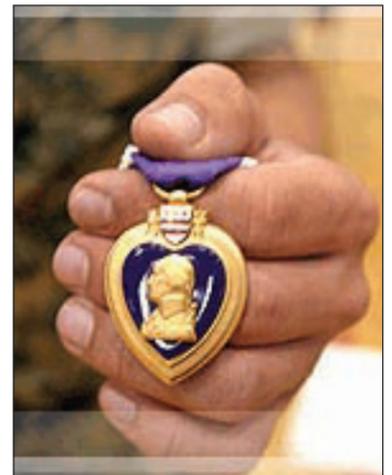


Photo Submitted

The first Purple Heart was awarded in 1932. A new museum will gather the stories of recipients to preserve their stories.

New law prohibits protestors at funerals

By Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

Surrounded by National Guardsmen, veterans and legislators, Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher signed a law March 27, forcing protestors to keep their distance from military funerals.

The law was created to specifically keep members of Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., away from funerals of Kentucky troops. The group has demonstrated

around the country at funerals for soldiers killed in Iraq. The members carry signs reading: "Thank God for IEDs" and "Thank God for 9/11." The protestors claim that U.S. soldiers are dying as punishment by God for America tolerating homosexuality.

State Rep. Mike Weaver, D-Radcliff, a retired Army Colonel and Sen. Tom Buford, R-Nicholasville sponsored legislation to keep the protestors at least 300 feet away from funerals, memorial services or burial services.

"We have a situation where military individuals and others have been protested at their own funerals," said Buford. "It's time to put a stop to this kind of foolishness in our state."

Buford said that while the maximum punishment would be a year in jail, the immediate goal is for police to have the ability to remove protestors from the area and allow mourners to grieve in peace.

Phelps, the leader of the protests, told the Lexington Herald-Leader that such laws are unconstitutional and the church would continue its protests.

"It was a sucker punch to my stomach," said Regina Talley, who saw protestors at the funeral of Spec. Michael Hayes of the 617th Military Police Company.

"To slander a soldier's name is wrong and it's not covered under the Constitution," she said. "They have no respect for the family members at all."

Lawrenceburg resident Bart McQueary, represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, filed suit in the Kentucky Supreme Court May 1, against the new law. McQueary says the law is unconstitutional and infringes on the First Amendment Rights. McQueary has protested with the group in Louisville, Lexington and Bowling Green.

Patriot Guard rides strong

The day the law was signed into effect, three members of the group protested outside the church where funeral services for Fort Campbell Cpl. Nyle Yates III were held. An organization called The Patriot Guard Riders (PGR) was there to counter the protests of the Westboro members.

Photo by Sgt. Gina Vaile/KYARNG



Members of the Kentucky Chapter of the Patriot Guard Riders line the path of the funeral procession for Staff Sgt. Brock Beery. The organization was formed to show support for the military and to shield families from protestors.

with one mission: to shield the mourning family and friends of interruptions caused by the Westboro protestors.

"These families need our support much more than they ever needed shielding from protestors," said Dan Woodrick, State Captain, noting that though the law will now shield the families, his organization will continue to ride to pay their respects for the fallen.

The main focus of the group, according to Woodrick is to "show our sincere respect for our fallen heroes, their families and communities."

The group attended the funeral for Staff Sgt. Brock Beery in March and Master Sgt. Clinton Cubert in April.

"Every Mission is unique and reflects the family's wishes, the degree of community involvement and the type of service," Woodrick said.

Members of the organization have been known to escort families to grave sites and line the route with non-riders bearing flags.

For information on how you can join the Patriot Guard Riders, visit www.patriotguard.org.



Protestors from Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan. have protest funerals of soldiers killed in combat. Legislation recently signed into law prohibits such protests.

Photo Submitted

Cell phone use restricted on military bases

Armed Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5, 2006 – Defense Department installations have implemented new cell phone restrictions for drivers on military installations.

The new regulation, published in the Federal Register in April 2005, states that anyone driving a motor vehicle on a DoD installation cannot use a cell phone unless the vehicle is safely parked or the driver is using a hands-free device.



Photo by Gina Vaile/KYARNG

New DoD regulation prohibits talking while driving.

Many installations have implemented the new restrictions, and the rest will implement the rules on their own schedule, said John Seibert, assistant for safety, health and fire protection for DoD. Seibert expects most installations will do so this year.

"We have not issued an implementation schedule," he said. "But it's definitely getting everyone's attention."

The law enforcement policy offices for each military department are putting together policies and procedures for the implementation and enforcement of the restrictions, Seibert said. He explained that this regulation is a minimum requirement and installation commanders still have the authority to put stricter rules in place. Each installation will determine the punishment for violation of the rules, he said.

As the installations implement the restrictions, they have a responsibility to notify the public by putting up signs or putting notices in base newspapers, Seibert said. Many installations are allowing a grace period in which motorists in violation of the rule will be warned and not ticketed.

This regulation was developed based on information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which studied driving distractions as the cause of motor vehicle accidents. The study found that cell phone use is the fastest growing and most visible distraction that leads to accidents, he said.

The DoD regulation follows suit with many regulations that states and cities have already imposed. Currently only Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and the District of Columbia ban hand-held cell phones for drivers, but many cities have imposed their own rules, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association.

This cell phone regulation will increase traffic safety on installations, Seibert said, but more importantly, it will encourage safe driving habits.

"Our intent is that this will drive an increased attention to the importance of safe driving and that we'll see a change in driving behavior, both on military installations and off," he said.

SMP program benefits Cadets

Murray State ROTC rebuilds thanks to state SMP program

By **CPT Brent Hulse**
Murray State ROTC

Murray State University ROTC program was in existence until 1997, and then due to Army wide cuts it was discontinued.

In 2003 that all changed with the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Kentucky Army National Guard, Murray State University, Western Kentucky University and U.S. Army Cadet Command. This revamped ROTC program is different than most, because at Murray State, our membership is composed of Kentucky Army National Guard (Active Guard Reserve) AGR Officers and Noncommissioned Officers.

The new Murray State University (MSU) ROTC program is built on our Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) soldiers. This program allows cadets to get valuable experience in the Kentucky Army National Guard and pair that with our ROTC training in the classroom and out in the field before they are commissioned Second Lieutenants. They are assigned to Kentucky units and shadow officers in that unit. Often times, they are used to fill in where units are short officers.

Cadet Brian Skyes took a few ROTC classes before signing a contract to commission. "I liked it so much that I decided to change branches, and I went to the local National Guard recruiter to begin the process of swapping over to the 438th Military Police Company," he said.

Under the guidance of cadre at MSU and with the help of a local recruiter, Skyes is now a platoon leader and XO shadow for the 438th Military Police Company in Murray.

Cadet Jeffrey Newnum was briefed on the program at MSU and decided to try it out. Now, he's on track to become an officer with the 63rd Aviation Group in Frankfort and fly helicopters for Kentucky.

"The Kentucky National Guard and MSU ROTC have given me the tools I need to become successful," Newnum said.

Since its return semester in 2004, the Murray State University ROTC program has contracted over 10 SMP (Simultaneous Membership Program) soldiers. Within the next year, the program is set to nearly double its SMP cadets with 14 freshmen hoping to contract and eventually become SMP soldiers.

Interested soldiers who are already attending college should talk to their unit or cadre at their college's ROTC program for more information about SMP. Graduating high school students might find SMP to be the perfect fit after college. Contact your local recruiter for more information.



▲ Murray State SMP Cadets Bland, Monroe, Boatwright and Sykes prepare for the Ranger Challenge Ruck March.

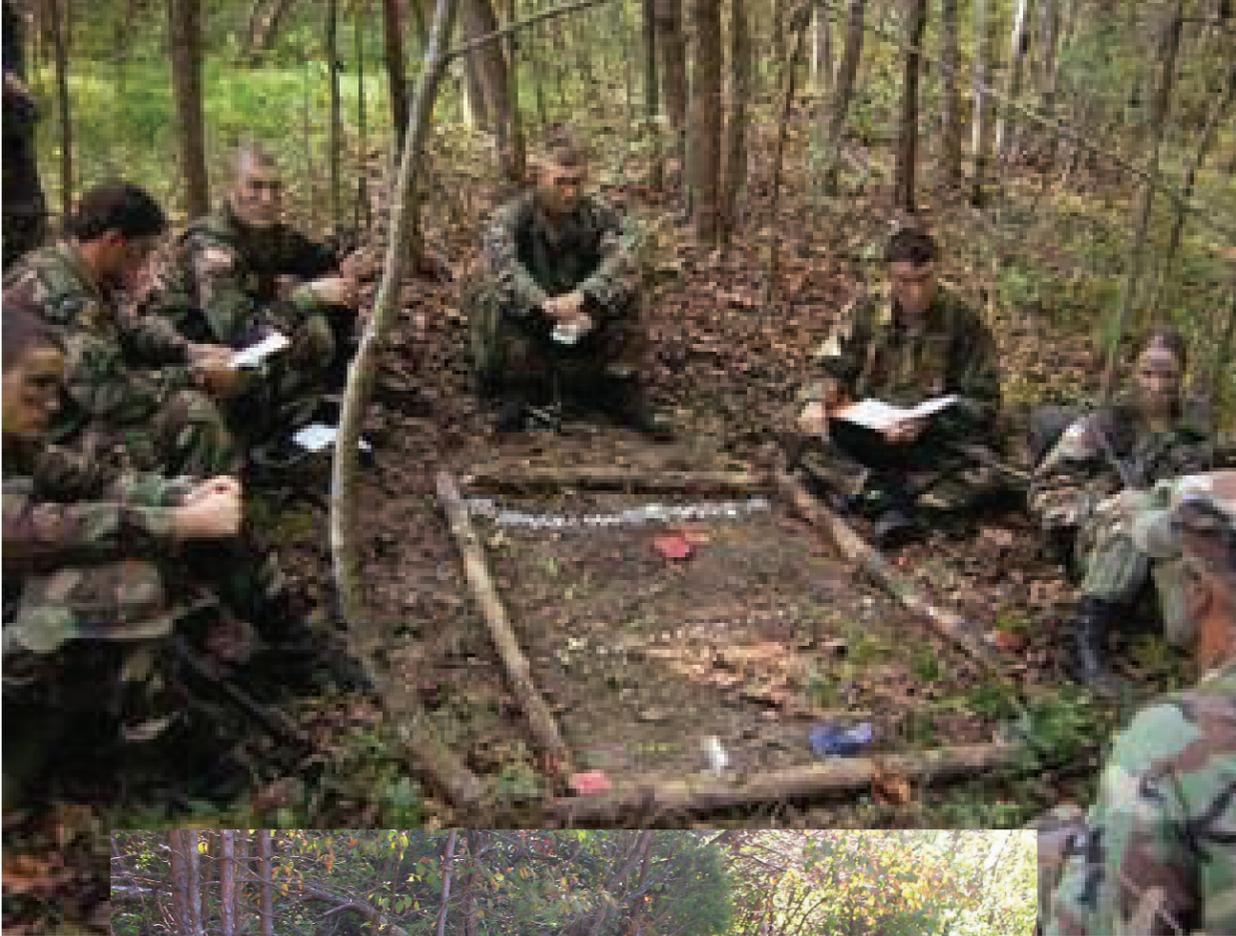
▲ Murray State SMP cadets such as Cadet Brian Sykes assist with teaching classes to fellow ROTC cadets. Sykes showed others how to use their BDU's as a flotation device in combat water survival training.

▼ Maj. Gen. Donald Storm attended the first MSU ROTC Dining Out last November.

All photos submitted by MSU ROTC



in university ROTC programs



- University of Kentucky and Eastern Kentucky University Cadets participate in a table top exercise during an FTX this fall.
- Cadets line the gravel roads of the Barbourville Training Site before a road march. Cadets learned leadership skills during their training.
- Cadets tackle an obstacle course to boost team building at the Barbourville Training Site.

all photos submitted by EKU ROTC



EKU and UK Cadets gain confidence in training

By Cadet 1st Lt. Dante' Steadmon
Eastern Kentucky University ROTC

Nearly 200 cadets from Eastern Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky ROTC programs convened on the Eastern Kentucky Training Site in Barbourville, Ky. last fall. Their mission: to conduct training on confidence and leadership building.

At least 50 cadets that participated in the training exercise are SMP cadets. All of the future leaders brought skills to the training that proved to make the weekend successful.

Cadets trained on various leadership and confidence building exercises. The training began 1 Oct 05 with the arrival of the cadets and two mile road march to the training site. When the training site was reached the cadets were broken down into two main groups; the basic course and the advanced course.

The basic course cadets began work on the basics of field life as well as confidence and team building exercises. The first task for them was to setup and maintain a shelter half to ensure an area of rest for themselves. Then it

was off to rappelling, where the cadets had to trust their own Swiss Seats. The cadets furthered their team building by completing an obstacle course to boost confidence. Every cadet was required to complete the obstacle course within 30 minutes.

The cadets also gained knowledge on grenade assault as well as land navigation. An introduction to the M-16A1 rifle was also given to those cadets with little or no experience with military weapons

The advance course cadets were on a completely different curriculum, their field training exercise (FTX) started with the planning and executions of various patrolling and raid missions. The cadets then received a block of instruction on land navigation techniques and sent off to negotiate the course. The FTX ended with a large AAR that included the range cadre.

The UK and Eastern Cadets left Barbourville more knowledgeable thanks to the experience cadre from the Kentucky National Guard.

“The cadets from both universities have proven themselves to be of the most professional caliber, like every other unit that comes to train out here,” said Sgt. 1st Class Chaz Martin, training site cadre.

HURRICANE RELIEF

After the storm Kentucky responds *National Guard responds quickly to areas devastated by Katrina*

Compiled by Army and Air Guard PAOs
Kentucky National Guard

With a category five hurricane on its way threatening destruction to the Gulf Coastline, Maj. Gen. Donald Storm alerted Kentucky soldiers to prepare to once again, be “in the fight.”

Before the winds even charged land, the soldiers and airmen of the Kentucky National Guard were ready to roll. The Saturday before the storm hit, the entire state was put on alert and soldiers watched from home as the storm made landfall.

“I was anxious to help,” said Capt. James Richmond, Administrative Officer, Charlie Company 201st Engineer Battalion Richmond left Sept. 29 for Alexandria, La.

“Most soldiers join (the Guard) to get a chance to help out their fellow man,” he said, “this time we helped Americans.”

In the first wave, Kentucky sent nearly 1000 soldiers to aid in recovery, security and humanitarian efforts. Soldiers worked long days in filth left by flood waters and the heat of the southern sun.

National Guard units from twelve different states including Kentucky conjoined to form Task Force New Orleans. Many of those soldiers already served in the Global War on Terrorism.

Kentucky’s 138th Brigade served at the command and control headquarters for TF New Orleans. The soldiers assisted local communities with debris removal, medical support and other duties.

“Those soldiers went there and did their jobs – providing safety to the residents in the communities down there, worked hard hand in hand with law enforcement ... and did a great job in saving lives,” Brig. Gen. Lonnie Culver said. Culver served with Kentucky forces in the hurricane ravaged area.

Though the possibility of disease from unsanitary flood waters baking in the sun was a health concern, Staff Sgt. Joseph Osbourne, Charlie Company 201st EN said it’s something soldiers just had to deal with.

“We were taken care of, we had our shots and equipment to help protect us,” he said. “What’s important was giving (the people of New Orleans) something to look forward to – rebuilding life as they knew it. To help them get back to their way of life.”

Osbourne said he’s proud that Kentucky helped during the Nation’s biggest natural disaster.

“It goes to show that in any situation, Kentucky will

keep sending people until they tell us they don’t need us anymore,” he said.

MEDICS KEEP SOLDIERS READY

Medics in the Kentucky Army National Guard were prepared to serve a dual service during their deployment to the hurricane ravaged South.

“We went to take care of our soldiers and make sure they were healthy and capable of carrying out their mission,” Pfc. Ashley Driver, DET 1/1163rd Medical Company said. “But we were also prepared to care for civilians if they needed it.”

Though the unit was equipped and prepared to provide civilians with medical care, it was used to provide services to many soldiers who fell ill or had minor injuries from daily tasks. The company operated at the Convention Center near the riverfront in New Orleans.

The 1163rd set up a 24 hour health care facility for nearly one thousand personnel housed in the Convention Center.

MECHANICS REBUILD MORE THAN MOTORS

Kentucky mechanics left with their units Sept. 29 and 30 – seeing miles and miles of convoy ahead of them. Undoubtedly convoys need the mechanics in order to make it to the destination on time – but civilians in the South relied on the mechanics to provide more than automotive support.

Pfc. Jeffrey Page of the 307th Maintenance said he was excited to help in the relief efforts.

Page said members of his unit provided automotive support to vehicles on the way to Louisiana. Once in the communities of Bell Chase and Slidell, La. the

troops focused on the distribution of emergency supplies and security. The unit was also important in the rebuilding process of a local general aviation airport.

“This is a good deal, some day we may need the favor returned,” said Spec. Joshua Wilkins, 307th Maintenance, the driver of the wrecker shared with Page.

MULTI-STATE EFFORT RESCUES 1,200

Chief Master Sgt. Pat Malone has seen a lot in his 23 years as a para-rescuer. But not even his missions in Iraq and Afghanistan could prepare him for the destruction caused by

Hurricane Katrina.

“This was, by and large, the worst site of devastation I have ever seen in my entire career,” he said. Malone is the



Photo by Sgt. Gina Vaile/KYARNG

Sergeant Lamara Dupree, 1163rd Medical Company marks a truck prior to departing for Southern states ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.



chief enlisted manager for the Air Guard’s 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

“The sheer magnitude of it - and the conditions that our guys worked in were horrific,” Malone said.

Senior Master Sgt. Jon Rosa, a Kentucky combat controller said the New Orleans that greeted them wasn’t the usual place of revelry.

“It was like a scene out of ‘The Twilight Zone,’ to be in downtown New Orleans and hear total silence except for the sloshing of flood waters. I couldn’t believe this was America,” he said.

Over 20 airmen from the Kentucky National Guard Special Tactics Squadron were the first military rescue troops to arrive in what was left of New Orleans. The team joined up with 25 other special tactics troops from across the Air National Guard.

Patrolling the city in Zodiac motorboats and other vehicles, the Kentucky-led contingency rescued 1,292 people.

“We had the ability to go through the city and conduct searches where no one else could reach at that time,” Malone said. “We launched 14 boats a day running 14-hour shifts in the water.”

The water was a concern for the Kentucky airmen, as some troops were treated for rashes and minor chemical burns from the “giant petri dish,” as Malone described it.

“All the folks we rescued down there were so thankful,” said Rosa, noting that the mission

By November, the mission was complete and all Kentucky National Guard soldiers and airmen returned to the Bluegrass.



▲ Two Kentucky Air National Guard special tactics troops confer as an Air Force MH-53 helicopter lands on Interstate 610 to evacuate New Orleans residents.

▲ A combat controller for the Kentucky Air National Guard and a para-rescueman from the Alaska Air National Guard evacuate New Orleans residents via Zodiac rescue boats.

All photos submitted by Kentucky Air National Guard PAO

OUTSTANDING HONOR



Army and Air recognize leaders

Soldiers and Airmen of the year recognized at reception

After passing the boards and competing in various soldiering tasks, the 2006 Kentucky National Guard Airmen and Soldiers of the Year were honored at Churchill Downs during the first annual Joint Forces Airmen and Soldier of the Year Banquet in February.

The Airmen of the Year were selected by boards comprised of chief master sergeants from across the state and the 2005 Airmen of the year. Out of a field of 31 applicants, Master Sgt. Carol Davis of the 123rd Civil Engineering Squadron, was selected as senior non-commissioned officer (NCO) of the year; Tech Sgt. Cutty Parker of the 123rd Services Squadron, was selected as NCO of the year and Airman 1st Class Shawn Ingle, of the 123rd Medical Group, was chosen as airman of the year.

The Army Guard finalists for soldier and NCO of the year competed at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in February. As part of the competition, the soldiers were tested on their

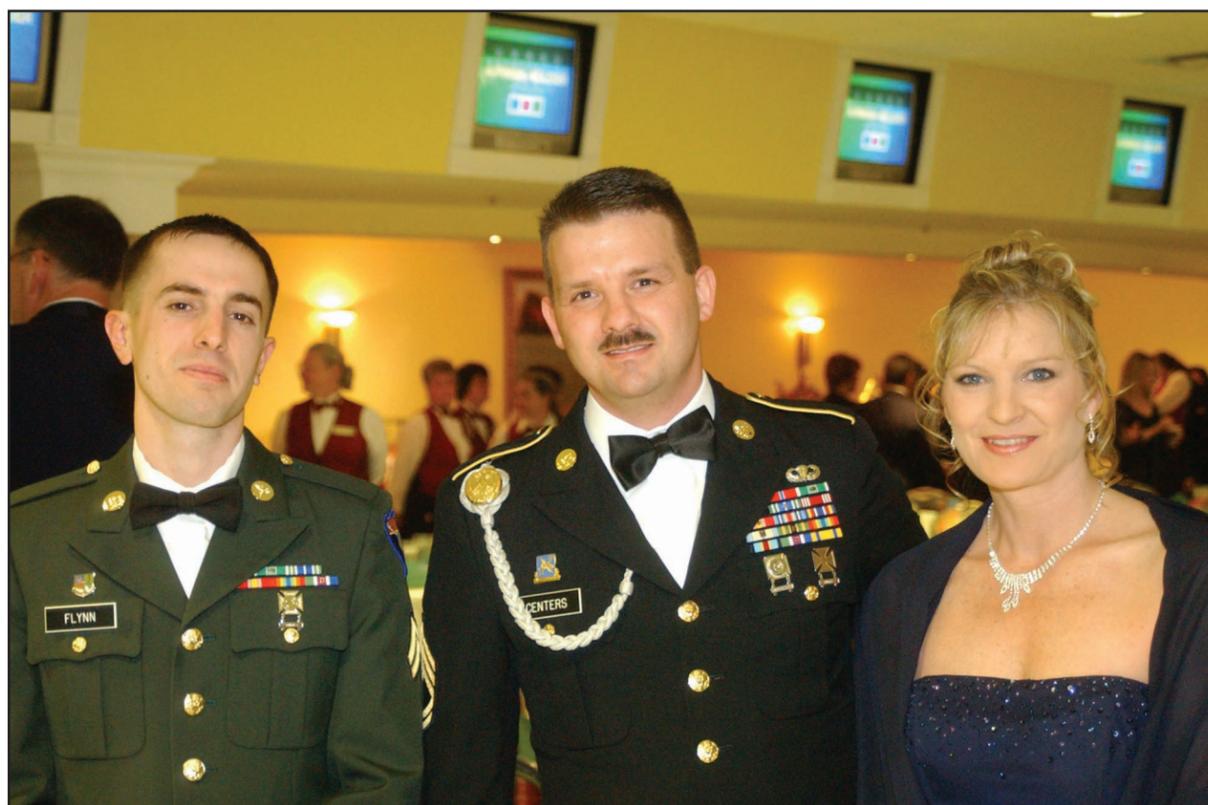
basic soldiering skills; field knowledge and physical fitness.

Specialist Nick Vinson, of the 1103rd Military Police Company (who has since been promoted to sergeant), received the honor of Soldier of the Year; while Staff Sgt. Brett Hightower of the 238th Training Regiment received the honor of NCO of the year.

“These fine leaders can be proud of this great achievement. Their intense competition speaks highly to the levels of training we make sure our soldiers receive,” said State Command Sgt. Maj. Phillip Gearlds.

“This banquet is the first of it’s kind and we hope to continue it in the future to give these young men and women the recognition they deserve for their commitment and work towards our great organization,” he said.

After the banquet, the Army Guard soldiers traveled to Puerto Rico for the First Army South competition.



▲ The Joint Forces Soldier and Airmen of the Year were named at the first ever joint-banquet this February at Churchill Downs. Pictured are: Sgt. Nick Vinson; Staff Sgt. Brett Hightower; Master Sgt. Carol Davis; Tech Sgt. Cutty Parker and Airman 1st Class Shawn Ingle.

◀ Soldier and NCO of the year for 2005, Sgt. Stephon Flynn and Sgt. 1st Class Tim Centers enjoy the evening with Sgt. 1st Class Centers' wife Lyann Centers.

◀◀ Opposite page - Sgt. Nick Vinson and Staff Sgt. Brett Hightower accept their awards from State Command Sgt. Maj. Phil Geraldts.

“I felt such pride to have the opportunity to represent the Bluegrass along with Staff Sgt. Brett Hightower, and I believe we did a great job representing the Kentucky National Guard,” said Sgt. Nick Vinson, Kentucky’s Soldier of the Year.

“I have learned so much that I will carry with me through the rest of my career,” Vinson said.

Kentucky Soldiers 'brand' Kuwait

By Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

For Kentucky National Guard aviators stationed in Kuwait, there is some form of relief to the sand and sun ... just a small piece of bluegrass.

Then again, it's not real bluegrass and it's not exactly small.

Found among bright sun and sand it's a painting of the new Kentucky Unbridled Spirit Brand. Painted on a concrete barrier that's six feet tall and 10 feet long, the spelling of Kentucky in bright blue and the symbolic horse head bring the soldiers back to their Old Kentucky Home.

Specialist Chris Vaught painted the brand on the barrier. The practice of marking a unit's presence has become tradition at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, where Vaught and other members of the 63rd Aviation Group, based in Frankfort, are currently stationed.

"I thought about painting our unit patch first, but then I just thought about the new logo and decided that was something that really related to home," Vaught said.

Vaught, a native of Versailles and Eastern Kentucky University student, claims he isn't an artist. This painting, on such an unlikely canvas, was his first attempt at any form of art. He used paints leftover from another unit's masterpiece on another concrete barrier.

"I painted because it was something to pass the time, and I figured it would show everyone on base who was here," Vaught said.

But Vaught had no idea what he would create would become a centerpiece for conversation.

"One day when I was painting it, a formation of Marines was moving by and two of them broke out of formation and ran to the barrier. 'You're from Kentucky?' the Marine asked me and I said 'yeah this is our state logo' and he said 'I know, I'm from Richmond and my buddy here is from Bowling Green,'" Vaught said.

"So the painting isn't just for the 63rd (Aviation) it's for all the Kentuckians at Camp Buehring," he added.

Vaught said he misses the friendliness of



Photo Submitted

Specialist Chris Vaught stands in front of a concrete barrier adorned with the Kentucky "Unbridled Spirit" brand he painted. Vaught, a student at Eastern has never claimed to be an artist although he is a skilled draftsman. Vaught hopes to add to the barrier before returning to Kentucky.

Kentucky. "You always feel welcomed. No matter where you go, people smile at you or wave. Not that people in other parts of the world aren't friendly or welcoming to others, but Kentucky is just different."

Several other soldiers, airmen and Marines from Kentucky found themselves also missing the overwhelming sense of hospitality found here in the Bluegrass.

"We'd find each other and chit-chat about home and our families and the things that we all had in common just because we we're from Kentucky. That always makes you feel a little better when you're homesick," Vaught said.

Twelve members of the 63rd Aviation Group, based in Frankfort, volunteered for the Kuwait assignment last year. Currently 10 members are still on deployment in Kuwait and each aviator plays an important roll in the daily operations of Camp Buehring. The unit assists with training airmen who will enter Iraq as well as monitoring airspace over Kuwait. The unit was mobilized in April 2005 and has been in Kuwait since July 2005. The aviators are projected to return to Kentucky sometime this summer.

Spending a year

away from family, friends and Kentucky has been hard for the aviators.

"Although the deserts of Kuwait and Iraq have a natural beauty, nothing compares to the grace and beauty of Kentucky," Chief Warrant Officer Dean Stoops, of Frankfort, said.

The mission has taken the Kentucky aviators from Mosul, Balad and Baghdad in Iraq, to Bahrain and an aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf.

To document their travels the aviators have relied on photographs sent home via e-mails to their families. Vaught thought his painting would be just another photograph.

"For me, it was a privilege to do it. I thought we could take our picture by the painting and have those to look back on our 2005 deployment," Vaught said.

"I didn't think in a million years it would have this much effect," he said, noting that the concrete barrier has attracted a few signatures from other active duty Kentuckians stationed on the base. "Now it's like a yearbook."

Just last week, thousands of miles from Kuwait, the painting made yet another impact on one Kentuckian.

The spirit of the Kentucky soldiers moved Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher when he was shown the photo of the Kentucky aviators smiling against a desert sun.

"The 63rd Aviation Group exemplifies Kentucky's Unbridled Spirit. These men and women make daily sacrifices so people in the world are able to experience a freedom and spirit of their own," Governor Fletcher said.

"We are so proud of our soldiers and airmen in the Kentucky National Guard as well our sons and daughters on active duty stationed around the world," he said. "The commonwealth supports you and thanks you for your service."



Photo Submitted

Soldiers in the 63rd Aviation Group, based in Frankfort, are proud of their little piece of home which has become a conversation piece at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Pictured is: Col. Benjamin Adams; Chief Warrant Officer Dean Stoops; Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Copas; Lt. Col. Aaron Barrier; Staff Sgt. Merrit Whitelow; Maj. Brian Abney; Staff Sgt. Marshall Hehl; Chief Warrant Officer Mark Grapin and Lt. Col Greg Long.

KY Engineers catch insurgents with bomb

By Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

TIKRIT, Iraq – Quick thinking Kentucky National Guardsmen captured three terrorists trying to emplace a roadside bomb last month.

Sergeant Nuntawood Smith, Madisonville, Ky., was in the lead vehicle of a security patrol when he observed three males lingering near what appeared to be a disabled vehicle parked on the side of the road with its hood open. The three men began to act suspiciously; one threw items from the car as another man quickly began covering items on the ground with dirt.

“We just happened to be at the right place at the right time,” Smith said via e-mail from Iraq.

Sgt. Smith along with other members of the 130th Combat Heavy Engineer Battalion, based in Madisonville, reacted immediately and prevented the suspected terrorists from leaving the area.

Staff Sgt. Troy Piper, Greenville, confirmed the contents inside the vehicle and in a shallow hole just to the side of the vehicle to be components of a roadside bomb.

“Once I searched the vehicle and discovered what was really going on, I was ecstatic that our team had stopped these insurgents from carrying out their mission,” Piper said. “As my entire team secured the site, I was pleased to learn that Sgt. Smith and his patrol gave the insurgents food and water while they waited for the appropriate authorities to take possession of them.”

Both Smith and Piper attribute their quick thinking to the training they received prior to the deployment.

“Our training at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center was outstanding for the small period of time we spent there,” Smith said.

“We never had this type of scenario in our training, but all of what you do know kicks in. The enemy is always evolving and it’s hard to



Alpha Company 878th EN PAO photo

A Kentucky National Guardsman with the 130th Combat Heavy Engineers, closely guards three Iraqi insurgents. The three were discovered burying an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) by SGT Nuntawood Smith. Quick thinking from the Kentucky team prevented the three terrorists from carrying out their mission.

keep up with them. But our training is what keeps us going,” he added.

“Everytime my team goes out it feels like an emotional roller coaster ride,” Piper shared. “But I trust my team with my life and we still train constantly.”

The Kentucky Soldiers are attached to Alpha Company, 878th Engineers, which is currently assigned to the 505th Engineer Battalion of North Carolina. The Battalion is assigned to the 101st Airborne Division. The company also includes members from the Georgia National Guard. The unit was

mobilized in September 2005 and deployed in December.

Other Kentucky soldiers involved with the mission include: Sgt. Roy Basham, Bowling Green Ky.; Staff Sgt. Ronald Moore, Wheatcroft, Ky.; Sgt. Daniel Holland, Millport, Ky.; Sgt. Samuel Donaldson, Thomson, Ky.; Spec. Scott Lewis, Louisville, Ky.; Spec. Jared Carter, Owensboro, Ky.; Staff Sgt. Sandy Austin, Sgt. Harlan Wilkerson and Sgt. Jared Buntin all of Madisonville, Ky. Also included in the mission were two soldiers from Georgia, Spec. Roy Riner and Sgt. Sam Donaldson.



Alpha Company 878th EN PAO photo



Alpha Company 878th EN PAO photo

▲ SGT Nuntawood Smith’s quick thinking lead to the capture of three Iraqi insurgents who were attempting to emplace a roadside bomb. Smith was also the Soldier of the Month for the 505th Engineers in February.

▲ Kentucky National Guard Engineers stand next to the recovered materials belonging to three insurgents who were captured trying to emplace a roadside bomb in Tikrit. The soldiers are attached to a North Carolina based Battalion and are serving with the 101st Airborne Division.

SALUTE TO FREEDOM



Photo by Spec. Vernis Phipps/KYARNG

Chief Warrant Officer Kevin Wayne and his wife Misty pin each other with Freedom Lapels. Returning soldiers are presented with two lapel pins during the Freedom Salute Ceremony. The first pin, a Defender of Freedom Lapel is presented to the soldier by a special family member or spouse and the Team Lapel is presented by the soldier to the special family member for their support during the deployment.

Defenders of Freedom recognized

Freedom Salute ceremony honors soldiers and family

In December 2003, the Army National Guard launched the “Freedom Salute Campaign,” an unprecedented program designed to recognize Army National Guard soldiers, their families and others who have supported them as they answered the call to duty - both at home and abroad.

The Kentucky National Guard has deployed over 7,000 soldiers in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Noble

Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The freedom salute is a way for those soldiers to be honored and recognize their own family or business for their support during the mobilization.

Each soldier receives an encased American Flag; a commemorative coin; a “Defender of Freedom” certificates and a lapel insignia. The soldier’s spouse and children also receive items recognizing their contributions.



➤ Mrs. Shirley Mattingly of American Legion Post 88 in Corbin, Ky. receives a Center of Influence award for her efforts in organizing the distribution of care packages and pillows from the community for HHC 206th Engineer Battalion and other units. She is the mother of 1st Lt. Brian Mattingly.

➤ First Lt. Brian Mattingly of HHC 206th Engineer Battalion receives his Defender of Freedom Certificate from Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm.



➤ Staff Sgt. Gerald Smith, his wife Judy and son Adam take a family picture after the 2113th Transportation Company Freedom Salute.

➤ Capt. Shelly Beasley, Commander 307th Maintenance Co., thanks Cindy Shanks for her service as Family Readiness Group president for the 307th.

➤ Staff Sgt. George Childers Jr. presents his father Chief Warrant Officer (Ret.) George M. Childers with a Freedom Medal during the 2113th Transportation Company Freedom Salute.



Recruiting in your community

Soldiers get paid for their recruiting efforts

By Sgt. Gina Vaile

Editor

It never hurts to have a little pocket change handy, and for soldiers in the Kentucky National Guard, it's never been easier to get that extra dough. All \$2,000 to be exact.

Thanks to the new Guard Recruiting Assistant Program (G-RAP), soldiers can start pocketing \$2,000 for each new recruit they help to enlist and ship to Basic Combat Training (BCT).

"I think this is a great program and there is no doubt in my mind that Kentucky National Guard soldiers will step forward to help us reach the goals set forth by the NGB," said Kentucky Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Donald Storm.

Kentucky currently has over 1000 active Recruiting Assistants with the potential for that number to climb. Since the program was launched in November, Recruiting Assistants are responsible for enlisting 158 new soldiers into the Kentucky National Guard – that's a rate of five to 10 new soldiers per week.

Recruiting Assistants in Kentucky are on track to receive nearly \$316 thousand collectively, for their efforts in enlisting new



Photo by Gina Vaile/KYARNG

Lieutenant Gen. Clyde Vaughn, along with Governor Ernie Fletcher, announces the launch of the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program in Kentucky at the Capitol Rotunda in November.

soldiers.

The G-RAP was designed to promote strength from within by recognizing and rewarding those soldiers who are motivated enough to help the Army National Guard achieve its recruiting goals. The ARNG hopes to meet an end-strength goal of 350,000 troops nationwide by the end of FY06. The program is administered by Docupak, Inc., a civilian contractor.

Highly motivated soldiers who complete the training to become Recruiting Assistants (RA) use their daily contacts and networks to find prospective recruits in their

communities. Working with the local recruiter the RA will assist with processing the potential soldier and move him towards success.

Upon enlistment of a potential soldier, the RA will receive an initial payment of \$1,000. The second payment of \$1,000 will be received upon shipment to BCT.

Highly motivated soldiers who are interested in this new program should visit <http://www.guardrecruitingassistant.com> for additional information and training or contact the unit recruiter.

THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

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