

THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

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

Volume Eleven, Issue Three
August 2007

Kentucky's finest

*Rea becomes first
female Command
Sergeant Major*



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Guard keeps water flowing at home and
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FROM FRONT LINES

Kentucky Soldier keeps water flowing in Iraqi town



COMMONWEALTH PROTECTION

Quartermaster Unit supplies water to community



Photo submitted

The Kentucky National Guard Marksmanship Team competed in the 2007 Marksmanship Advisory Council Regional Combat Marksmanship Competition, held in June at Camp Butner, N.C. The rifle team took first place, while the pistol team took second. Staff Sgt. Joseph Scott took first place overall in the rifle competition, and Senior Master Sgt. John Seibert took second place overall in rifle competition.

Pictured is: Staff Sgt. Jim Berger; Master Sgt. Travis Keehner, Staff Sgt. Norm Rechel; Senior Master Sgt. John Seibert; Master Sgt. John Martin; Staff Sgt. Joseph Scott; Sgt. B.W. Dearmond; Sgt. Michael Perkins; Sgt. 1st Class Dale Bailey; Sgt. Jeff Ice; Master Sgt. John Black; Sgt. Charles Yankey and Coach Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Reed.



THE COVER

Teresa Rea was pinned as Kentucky's first female command sergeant major. Read more on page 15.

Paying tribute to the finest in the state

Ever since assuming the office of adjutant general I have been witness to the noble character of the people of Kentucky and how they have stepped up to answer the call. This is evident in the civilian community as well as among our brothers and sisters in arms. I've seen it at every troop send-off, every welcome home ceremony, on national holidays and in everyday life. Kentuckians love their military Families, which reinforces my belief that we indeed live in the greatest state in the nation!



Another example of the great support we get from our citizens can be seen with the Kentucky Military Family Assistance Trust Fund. Available to all members of the Armed Forces with a Kentucky home of record, the fund provides up to \$5,000 in a 12-month period for any hardships directly caused by OCONUS deployment by a servicemember. The best news is that this is not a loan, so the money does not have to be repaid!

I encourage you to help seek out any servicemember who might benefit from this program. Remember, I'm not talking about just Kentucky Guard troops, but Airmen, Marines, Sailors and Soldiers across the board! These grants are meant to be used and I'm asking for your help in making sure the money gets to the people that need it.

I want to thank so many people for their hard work in making this opportunity available for our great uniform servicemembers. In particular I'd like to thank Senators Elizabeth Tori and Joey Pendleton for sponsoring the bill. I'd also like to thank Senate President David Williams, House Speaker Jody Richards, Representative Harry Moberly and all the state legislators in both the house and the senate who supported this program. It is indeed the right thing to do at the right time!

For more information on the Kentucky Military Family Assistance Trust Fund contact Cpt. Steven Engels, 502-607-1156.

Donald C. Storm
Major General
The Adjutant General



THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

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Guard members and their Families are encouraged to submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain Bluegrass Guard readers. Send submissions, photos and correspondence to gina.vaile@us.army.mil. Payment will not be made for contributions. Paid advertising will not be accepted.
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From the Editor

Monthly - that's been the goal and now it's reality!

Starting in September, you should receive a Bluegrass Guard every month. I need your help to fill the pages! Send me your stories and photos by the 20th of each month.

If your unit has an upcoming event that you would like to invite us to, please e-mail me 30-days prior to the event. The 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment will field those requests and try to attend as many events as possible.

Thanks so much for your readership!

Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor, The Bluegrass Guard

Corrections

Please report any corrections to:
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Change of Address

All change of address should be made at the unit level by the unit clerk.

Army retiree address changes should be made through Staff Sgt. Jason Pettit at the Kentucky National Guard Personnel Services Branch. He can be reached at 502-607-1613 or jason.pettit@ky.ngb.army.mil.

Air retiree address changes should be made through retired Chief Master Sgt. James Turpin at jturpin@fewpb.net.

The Bluegrass Guard values opinions

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

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

A piece of home



Photo Submitted

Soldiers of Company F, 135th Aviation, sit atop a bunker painted by Kentucky National Guard Sgt. Adam Oed, at LSA Anaconda, Balad, Iraq. Pictured are: Staff Sgt. Kenneth Collins, Sgt. Adam Oed, Staff Sgt. Aaron Flores, Sgt. Michael Lawson, Sgt. Marcie Stone, Spc. Adam Bowsver, Staff Sgt. William Pope, Cpt. Phil Robinson, Staff Sgt. Gary Moriarty, Sgt. Anthony Shick, Master Sgt. Curt Rucker, Sgt. Maj. Alan Miller and Spc. Jonathan Schlaak.

Grants available to Kentuckians

Fund provides up to \$5,000 a year for emergencies to servicemembers

By Sgt. Fred Varney and Sgt. Gina Vaile
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 19, 2007) – Kentucky servicemembers on deployment will have one less worry over their shoulders thanks to the new Kentucky Military Family Assistance Trust Fund.

Available to all members of the Armed Forces with a Kentucky home of record, the fund will provide up to \$5,000 in a 12-month period for emergencies and hardships that are directly caused by deployment outside of the United States. Established as a grant, servicemembers do not have to pay back monies received from the trust fund.

“This provides protection for all of our Kentucky troops, regardless of what uniform they wear,” said Cpt. Steve Engels, program manager for the K-MFAST Trust Fund.

Engels said the fund is intended to be utilized as a last resort for assistance, when servicemembers have no other reasonable access to any other funding source. A maximum of \$2,500 may be approved for a single application, and a maximum of \$5,000 may be approved for a fiscal year.

According to the statute, servicemembers can request funds for necessary expenses such as housing, utilities, groceries, insurance and child care, to name a few.

“We have had one Soldier utilize this fund in the last month,” Engels said. “We want to get the word out there so that others who don’t know about this program, and need it, will have access.”

All K-MFAST applicants must be enrolled in DEERS for verification purposes. Kentucky resident spouses of eligible military members are able to request for assistance through the K-MFAST as well.

Engels said the Soldier to utilize the K-MFAST Trust Fund received money within one week after applying. Engels said the goal is to get the funds out as quickly as possible.

Servicemembers who have recently returned from deployment have an additional 90-day window to apply for assistance with this fund.

“Kentucky’s military Families have made so many sacrifices on behalf of our nation and the commonwealth,” said Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, Adjutant General for Kentucky.

“I am so proud that the citizens of this great state have joined together in support of these unsung heroes. I’m so grateful to Governor Fletcher, Senate President David Williams, House Speaker Jody Richards, Senator Elizabeth Tori, Representative Harry Moberly and all the state legislators in both the house and the senate who supported this program. It is indeed the right thing to do at the right time!”

Kentucky Sen. Elizabeth Tori (R-District 10) sponsored the bill that was filed into law in 2006 and culminated with the filing of the governing administrative regulation on June 25, 2007.

“The military assistance trust fund was without a doubt the right thing to do for our service men and women,” said Senator Tori.

What you need to know about K-MFAST



To qualify for the K-MFAST, the servicemember must either be deployed, or recently returned from deployment within the last 90 days.



A spouse enrolled in DEERS can apply on behalf of the servicemember.



Before you apply for the K-MFAST, make sure you have exhausted all other areas of possible funding. Call the Kentucky Family Assistance Center at 1-800-372-7601 and press option #1 to speak to someone in the FAC. Other means of funding might be available to you.



The K-MFAST is available to all Kentucky servicemembers so spread the word among the military community!



To find out if you qualify for the K-MFAST, you can call the Family Assistance Center at 1-800-372-7601 or Cpt. Steve Engels at 502-607-1156.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!



When you come home from deployment, the last thing you should worry about is if your civilian job is still available to you. If you find yourself in a sticky situation with an employer, do you know where to turn for assistance?

What is the appropriate protocol for a Soldier having an issue with an employer?

First, start with your First sergeant or commander. If they are unable to resolve the problem, seek assistance from your unit or MACOM ESGR representative, then lastly contact your JAG officer. If the Soldier requires further assistance, contact the Kentucky Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Kentucky Committee.

Kentucky's Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve provide Ombudsman services for Soldiers and Airmen that are experiencing problems with their civilian employers due to military service. If our Ombudsman services are unable to resolve your problem, then the Department of Labor will assist in our efforts.

What is the purpose of ESGR?

The ESGR program was established to provide liaisons or mediators between the National Guard and Reserve Forces of Kentucky and their employers, especially during periods of active duty.

Where can I go for more information?



Contact Mr. David Orange, Executive Director of ESGR Kentucky, at 502-607-1099 or david.orange@us.army.mil.

Air Guard supports OEF



123rd Airwing deploys to Baghram, Afghanistan, provides airlift services

By Dave Altom
Editor

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - More than 210 Kentucky Air National Guardsmen deployed in early July in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Airmen were tasked with providing airlift services at the Baghram Air Base in Afghanistan.

The Airmen, assigned to the unit's 123rd Airlift Wing included pilots, navigators, loadmasters, maintenance personnel and various support troops.

The 123rd is tasked with flying missions in the Central Command area of operations, which includes Afghanistan, Iraq and Northern Africa.

Most of the troops will serve on rotations lasting

approximately 30 days before being replaced by follow-on rotations of Kentucky Air Guardsmen.

The wing is expected to complete its participation in the airlift mission by Sept. 10.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 8,818 members of the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard have deployed worldwide in the Global War on Terror.

"I'm extremely proud of our troops for answering the call to deploy for this mission," said Col. George Scherzer, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"Once again, Kentucky's citizen-Airmen have shown their desire to step up to the task and go wherever they're needed, anywhere in the world."

Air Guard's Haight honored in Washington

Air National Guard recognizes top Airmen

By Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFPN) -- The Air National Guard's top six enlisted Airmen of the year were recognized for their achievements when the Air Guard's command chief master sergeant hosted Airmen of the Year Week Aug. 4 to 11.

The honored Airmen are:
Airman of the Year: Staff Sgt. Jesse Perementer, 116th Air Support Operations Squadron, Washington; Noncommissioned Officer of the Year: Tech Sgt. Michael Keller, 179th Airlift

Wing, Ohio; Senior NCO: Senior Master Sgt. Lawrence Taylor, 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron, Oregon; First Sergeant: Senior Master Sgt. Dorothy Pearson, 116th Air Control Wing, Georgia; Honor Guard Program Manager: Tech. Sgt. Wendy Haight, 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky; and Honor Guard Member: Tech. Sgt. Celia Herrera, 107th Air Control Squadron, Arizona.

"I think these Airmen will reflect back on their week here and realize the importance of what this award means and that it's a representation of our entire enlisted force," said Command Chief Master Sgt. Richard Smith, the Air Guard's highest ranking enlisted member and host for the annual event. "We have a great Air Guard enlisted force, all 93,000 plus."

The process began with unit- and wing-level competitions and progressed to state selections. The six national winners were selected by the Air Guard's top leaders from entries submitted by the 54 states and territories. Winners were then invited to bring one guest for an all expenses paid trip to Washington.

It's not everyday you get to visit the Guard's senior leaders at their homes, including Army LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau. The Airmen joined the Army National Guard's Soldiers and NCOs of the Year at Blum's home on Ft. McNair for an evening reception.

"They have a tremendous opportunity and great potential to be anything they want to be," Blum said. "There may be a future command chief or a command sergeant major in this group, or even a future chief of the bureau. I'm immensely proud of them. They are just extraordinary young Americans."

The Airmen went from Washington to Oklahoma City to attend the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States' annual conference.

"This is one of the best groups we've ever had," said Smith. "No matter what your job is, if you do your best, you will be recognized. The most important job you have is the one you have now, so do your best today, and you will progress. I'm living proof of that."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith/ U.S Air Force

The Air National Guard's Airmen of the Year are (from left) Senior Master Sgt. Lawrence Taylor, 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron, Ore.; Senior Master Sgt. Dorothy Pearson, 116th Air Control Wing, Ga.; Tech. Sgt. Wendy Haight, 123rd Airlift Wing, Ky.; Tech. Sgt. Celia Herrera, 107th Air Control Squadron, Ariz.; Tech. Sgt. Michael Keller, 179th Airlift Wing, Ohio; and Staff Sgt. Jesse Perementer, 116th Air Support Operations Squadron, Wash.



Pumping Water

Water flows through Iraqi town thanks to Kentucky Soldier

By: Sgt. Gina Vaile and Cpt. David Thomas

Kentucky Army National Guard Public Affairs Office

QAYYARAH, Iraq – In a war zone, most Soldiers would agree that there are a few things that make their lives a little bit more comfortable: hot chow, timely mail and a shower. During the Iraqi summers, when temperatures can reach into the 140s, a shower is by no means a guarantee.

For one Kentucky National Guard Soldier, showering is so critical, it's his mission.

“Off the FOB, outside the wire, one of the best parts of my job is to maintain the steady uninterrupted supply of raw water from the Tigris River to the city of Qayyarah and the surrounding villages,” said Staff Sgt. Glenn Skaggs, of the 2nd Battalion 123rd Armor.

The steady stream of H₂O also has to make it to Forward Operating Base Qayyarah West Base Complex, Iraq, located 15 kilometers west of the pumping station.

“Water is a very valuable commodity where we are,” Skaggs said.

Until recently, Skaggs said the station was not reliable due to frequent power outages and a shoddy generator.

In early January, he supervised emplacement of new generators at the pump station that has increased its hours of operations. And since then, he has conducted maintenance and fuel missions almost twice per week.

“Being able to provide such a basic commodity, as water, to the people of Iraq is very satisfying,” Skaggs said. “I will be totally satisfied with my progress, in regards to providing water to the FOB, when I can watch the two storage ponds fill up and know that we do not run short of water.”

Skaggs named the two storage ponds the Kentucky Lakes.

Q-West has a raw water storage capacity of 20 million gallons, which could last the installation about 50 days in a dry spell. Skaggs would like for Q-West to pump at least 500,000 gallons a day before the dry, hot season starts in April.

He credits his experience as a full-time mechanic at the Facilities Maintenance Shop 10, in Bowling Green, to giving him the experience and preparation for his new mission in Iraq.

“You had to be flexible at FMS,” he said, “but you have to be really flexible to meet the missions while in Iraq.”

In addition to the water mission, Skaggs manages all the skilled and unskilled Iraqi personnel who work on Q-West. Also assigned to him are six full-time firefighters that live and work on the FOB.

He said thoughts of his hometown, Bowling Green, and of his wife, Robin, and children, Jess, Megan and A.T., help with the long days.

“My wife is the president of our Family readiness group,” he said. “Just knowing that she and my children are safe and at home makes my days go by fast.”

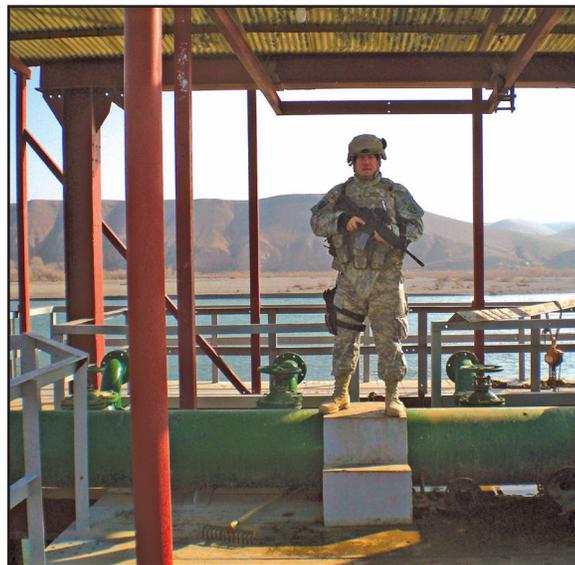


Photo Submitted

Kentucky Staff Sgt. Glenn Skaggs of the 2nd Battalion, 123rd Armor is responsible for making sure water flows to U.S. Soldiers and Iraqis in the area of Qayyarah, Iraq.

Peacekeepers



Afghan Police Chief, Kentucky Squad Leader earn mutual respect

By Sgt. Jim Wilt

Combined Joint Task Force-82 Public Affairs Office

QARABAGH, Afghanistan, July 2, 2007 – The respect a Kentucky National Guard squad leader has for his Afghan National Police counterpart here has blossomed into near brotherhood.

“The only difference between us is the language,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Linneman of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery Brigade.

Linneman, of Florence, Ky., arrived in Afghanistan in March and quickly became friends with Col. Abdul Shokor, a resident of Kabul who serves as the Qarabagh District police chief. Both are leaders, both are 51 years old and both fight against the Taliban.

The U.S. noncommissioned officer said he believes in working beside the Afghan police, not in front of or behind them.

“I love taking them out on patrol with us. This is [Shokor’s] backyard,” Linneman said.

“Taliban sabot,” a phrase meaning “Taliban tomorrow” is often heard between the two leaders. Linneman said the Afghan police get disappointed if their joint patrols don’t find members of the Taliban.

The American said he understands there are aspects of Afghanistan he can never grasp as well as Shokor so he shares the decision-making process with his Afghan friend.

“Whatever chief says goes. What ever I say goes,” Linneman said.

His respect for Shokor is partially based on the Shokor’s war-fighting experience, reflected in the five scars on his body from bullets and shrapnel.

Continued on page 14

Barracks go up at Artemus

By Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

Tents and hooches will no longer be a necessity at Artemus, the Eastern Kentucky Training Site, thanks to the 201st Engineer Battalion.

Four new barracks erected this summer, will provide space for 160 beds -- considered a luxury for Soldiers who have previously trained at the center. The barracks, along with a multi-purpose classroom are scheduled to open in September, while a shower facility is slated for construction.

"This changes the facility from a weekend site to a collective training area," said Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory D. Armstrong.

Located in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains, the Artemus training site averages 10,000 man-days of training each year. The addition of the classrooms and barracks increases the Soldier's quality of life and education assets, Armstrong said.

"We have Soldiers from West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee desiring to add additional training at this facility because of it's location," he said. "The site is perfect for company sized operations and training, and it has become popular with ROTC groups from all regions of the state.

Soldiers from all across Eastern Kentucky assisted with the project that began early this summer. They



Photo submitted

Sergeant 1st Class Jason Owens welds together the arch and the steel to the footer together of one of the barracks buildings at Artemus. Owens, along with other Soldiers of the 201st Engineer Battalion constructed four barracks buildings and a multi-purpose classroom this summer.

gathered training on a special machine known as the MIC 120 ABM (Automatic Building Machine). The machine bends roll steel into arches and seams it together to form an actual structure, according to Sgt. 1st Class Jason P. Owens of Det. 1, 149th Vertical Construction Company.

"These structures are widely used in many theaters of operation," Owens said. "This project has been a great experience for Soldiers of the 201st Engineer Battalion, who recently changed from a Mechanized Engineer unit to a Vertical Construction Company. This has been a great learning experience and a great opportunity for the Soldiers to use their new MOS."

VALUE OF THE MONTH

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



"I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

- First Sgt. Nathan Hale, Revolutionary War

Selfless Service is placing your duty before your personal desires. It is the ability to endure hardships and insurmountable odds because of love of fellow Soldiers and our country.

FREE FALLIN'



Photos and Story by Spc. Cassandra Groce
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The 20th Special Forces Group based in Louisville, Ky., jumped from helicopters July 14 to the delight of their gathered Families at Ft. Knox, Ky.

The detachment plans six jumps a year to maintain airborne proficiency, exceeding the required four jumps per year.

Our unit has a very high out-tempo,” Commander Maj. Bryant Haas said. “For example, since Sept. 11, 2001, we’ve had seven rotations for OIF and OEF. It’s very important that we maintain our proficiency throughout because if a battalion gets mobilized they can reach down to take any single soldier in this unit.”

Prior to the jumps, the Families were allowed to board the Blackhawk and get a brief explanation about what happens while the jumpers are in the air.

“We try to do it with Army aircraft so they can get up close and personal with the Families,” Haas said.

The whole operation is overseen by a jumpmaster who performs safety inspection prior to the jump and tells jumpers when to jump.

“A jumpmaster inspection is a systematic inspection, where the jumpmaster goes from the helmet all the way down to the leg straps,” Jumpmaster Sgt. 1st Class John Holiday said. “There’s approximately 120 points of inspection. There’s a specific sequence we go by to ensure we inspect every single item.”

Soldiers jumped from 1,500 feet, then waited six seconds before deploying their parachutes.

“Hopefully they land in the right place, don’t get injured and walk off the airfield with a big smile on their face,” Holiday said.

No Soldiers were injured during the exercise, and Family and friends of the 20th Special Forces enjoyed a barbecue afterwards.



◀ Sgt. First Class John Holiday, Jumpmaster for the 20th Special Forces Group, based in Louisville, Ky., performs an equipment check on the Soldiers preparing to jump from a helicopter 1,500 feet in the air. The jumpmaster gives a thumbs up to each Soldier, indicating their status and the Soldiers acknowledge it by returning the signal.

Kentucky Airmen get “catch of the day” at tourney

By Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

Bass fishing is somewhat of a hobby for Capt. Kristin Hamilton and her step-son Tech. Sgt. Eric Hamilton, but for two days this spring, it was game-on.

The pair took the prize for “Big Fish” on the second day of 12th Annual Air National Guard Bass Tournament with a 4.60 pound large mouth bass, and came out second place out of 68 teams.

Held in Sevierville, Tn. in April, the competition was open to all active and retired members of the Air National Guard and their Families.

“Fishing is something we both love to do and it was so great to be able to share this experience with Eric,” Capt. Hamilton said.

“It was also fun to share in the fellowship of our sport with so many Airmen from across the country,” she said.



▲ Tech. Sgt. Eric Hamilton and Capt. Kristin Hamilton accept their second place prize from Master Sgt. Ken Meyers, Col. Tim Dearing and Master Sgt. George Sales, organizers of the Air National Guard Bass Tournament.

◀ Tech. Sgt. Eric Hamilton shows off his 4.60 pound large mouth bass, the largest bass caught on the second day of competition.

Engineer officer selected as Outstanding Platoon Leader for 2007

Staff Report

First Lt. Terry Durham of Louisville, Ky., was selected by the United States Army Engineer Regiment as the 2007 Outstanding Platoon Leader of the Year for the entire Army National Guard Engineer Corps.

Durham was awarded the honor for his ingenuity and leadership as an engineer platoon leader in Charlie Company, 201st Engineer Battalion, based out of Cynthiana, Ky. His design skills and oversight while erecting steel fence along the United States border during Operation Jumpstart lead directly the unit’s record setting construction of 2009 linear feet of 15 foot tall steel fence in a two-week period.

Each year the Engineer Regiment recognizes the best of the best in its community. Every engineer unit in the Regiment submits the name and achievements of its best of the best to compete in these distinguished award competitions. Only the finest engineer companies and Soldiers are selected as recipients of these awards. The Soldiers will carry throughout their careers the distinction and recognition of being the Engineer Branch’s best and brightest Soldiers and leaders.

Durham also proudly serves as a full time civil engineer for the Louisville Office of the Army Corps of Engineers.



Beane named Command Chief Warrant

Staff Report

Major Gen. Donald C. Storm is pleased to announce the appointment of Chief Warrant Officer Paul E. Beane as the Kentucky Army National Guard's newest Command Chief Warrant Officer effective 1 June 2007.

In his responsibilities, Beane will take on oversight of the Kentucky Army guard's warrant officer program, supporting the recruiting, retention, continuing education of warrant officers and providing counseling toward professional development.

"I hope to bring a little more esprit de corps to the warrant officer corps in the Kentucky Army Guard," said Beane. "We have a lot of great warrant officers. I want them to get the education they deserve and gain admiration and professional respect.

"I want our warrant officers to feel good about themselves. Above all else I want this to be the best warrant officer program in the Army National Guard."



Kentuckian and Afghani fight side by side for freedom and security

Continued from page 10

Shokor is "pretty gutsy," said Army Staff Sgt. Paul Wilkerson, a forward observer in Battery A. "He gets out with us and dismounts with us."

The Afghan colonel said when he was younger he woke up one day to tanks in his town. Shortly after, he started fighting the Soviet Union as a mujahedeen in a war that would ultimately defeat the Russians and fracture Afghanistan.

The Afghan colonel said he began to fight because he didn't believe in the ideas the Russians had for his country. Soon after the defeat of the Russians, Shokor found himself fighting the Taliban.

"It is our country, we should work for the country," he said. "As a police chief, it is my job to provide security for civilians."

Shokor's desire to help his soldiers and the people of his district is evident to those who work under him.

"He seems like a pretty respectable guy," Wilkerson said. "He takes care of his men. He does what he can to help the people in his district."

Shokor spends most of his time at the Qarabagh District Center. He said he sees his wife and eight children for only two days every two to three weeks. The rest of the time he is here.



Photo by Sgt. Jim Wilt/U.S. Army

Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Linneman, right, talks with Qarabagh District Police Chief Col. Abdul Shokor during a joint U.S. and Afghan formation at the Qarabagh District Center in Ghazni province, Afghanistan, June 15, 2007.

The respect Linneman and his men show Shokor is mirrored in the respect the American squad leader receives from the "chief" and his men.

When the Afghan policemen look for Linneman, they ask for the "commandant" or "grandfather." "Grandfather" isn't a shot at the thin, grey-haired staff sergeant's age. It is a term of respect. It means the Afghans think Linneman is a good man.

The right woman for the job

Rea becomes first female to reach command sergeant major in Kentucky Guard

By Cpt. David Page

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Det. Commander

History was made June 16, when Teresa A. Rea, a Cadiz, Ky. resident, was pinned as Kentucky's first female command sergeant major.

"I am looking forward to the responsibility and challenges ahead," said Rea.

With the promotion, Rea will assume the command sergeant major position for the Headquarters, 238th Regiment (Combat Arms), which provides leadership development courses, such as officer candidate school and the basic noncommissioned officer course, as well as other specialty training for Soldiers. In her new position, Rea will provide leadership and mentoring to the enlisted instructors of the regiment, as well as enforce the standards set through the Total Army School System, which accredits and integrates Active Army, Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve schools to provide standard training and education for the Army.



Photo by Sgt. Gina Vaile/KYARNG

Teresa A. Rea is the first female command sergeant major for the Kentucky National Guard. She brings more than 22 years experience to her new position at the 238th Regiment, located in Greenville, Ky.

"In her career, she has been a mechanic and then a military policeman so she brings a lot of experience to the school house," said State Command Sgt. Maj. Phillip D. Gearlds. "Plus, she has attended various courses under the 238th Regiment so she has first-hand knowledge of the high standards set by the school house."

Gearlds was one of the members on the board that selected Rea for command sergeant major and said she was chosen because of her vast military knowledge and bearing.

"She was selected because she knows what 'right' looks like," Gearlds said. "She not only knows the Army values, she lives them."

Rea had some advice for young female Soldiers in the National Guard. "If you are willing to go to the necessary schools and make the necessary sacrifices, you can become a sergeant major in the Kentucky National Guard."

Rea has been in the military for more than 22 years and has deployed numerous times. Her recent deployments include a tour at Guantanamo Bay in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, where she acted as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the detention operation center, and then again in support of hurricane relief efforts for Katrina.



Photo by Cpt. David Page/KYARNG

Tommy Rea pins his wife Teresa with the rank of command sergeant major during a ceremony held at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center on June 16.

Insurance available to all Soldiers

By Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

Beginning Oct. 1, the TRICARE Reserve Select Insurance, a premium-based health plan, will be offered to all members of the Selected Reserve regardless of any active duty time served.

Previously, only Soldiers who had served a tour of active duty were eligible for the insurance plan, and were only able to purchase insurance immediately following activation, or during the annual open season.

“It’s important that Soldiers know that there is an affordable health care coverage available for all National Guard and Reserve members that may be purchased,” said James Barber, Family Assistance Coordinator for the Kentucky National Guard.

The new TRS plan ends the three tiers and associated six-premium rates once experienced by Soldiers. Now, TRS will be broken down into two pay categories. A Soldier can expect to pay \$81 per month for single coverage, and \$253 per month for Family coverage.

Know the facts

-  All Soldiers of the Selected Reserve are eligible.
-  Premiums for a single Soldier are \$81 per month and \$253 per month for Families.
-  Soldiers who are enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program are not eligible.
-  For more information contact:
 - Richard Gooch 502-607-1085
 - Joan Kivior 502-607-1677
 - Staff Sgt. Chris Ramsey 502-607-1905

or log on to www.TRICARE.mil and search for TRICARE

All current participants in the three tier program must renew their coverage immediately if they wish for the coverage to continue past Sept. 30, according to Barber.

“To participate in the new TRS plan with no interruption in health care coverage, Soldiers must download the new TRS Request form (DD Form

Continued on page 18

Portraits honoring 617th Military Police unveiled at State Capital

Staff Report

On June 26, two National Guard Heritage Paintings were unveiled during a ceremony held at the Capitol in Frankfort, Ky., to honor members of the Kentucky Army National Guard’s 617th Military Police Company who were involved in the March 2005 Battle of Salman Pak in Iraq.

To commemorate the heroic actions of the men and women of “Raven 42,” the National Guard Bureau commissioned two paintings to include a collective representation of the squad during the battle and a portrait of squad member, Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester, the first female to receive the Silver Star since World War II.

During the ceremony, Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein, the “Raven 42” squad leader, and Sgt. Jason Mike, the squad’s combat medic, unveiled the portraits along with Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher and Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, the state Adjutant General, before a packed house in the Capitol’s rotunda.



Photo by Cpt. David Page/KYARNG



Photo by Cpt. David Page/KYARNG

Trouble at Troublesome Creek



Photo by Cpt. David Page/KYARNG

An aerial shot shows the 217th Quartermaster Detachment's operation during its state active duty mission to provide assistance to the citizens of Hindman, Ky., when their wells ran dry in late February. The four Reserve Osmosis Water Purification Units pulled water from Troublesome Creek to feed the Hindman Water Filtration Plant. The units pumped more than 14.5 million gallons of water through the month of May.

Quartermaster Unit purifies water for Eastern Kentucky town

Cpt. David Page

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Det. Commander

What happens when a small town's water supply runs dry? That's right... You call in the National Guard!

Due to extreme drought in the areas surrounding Hindman, Ky., the water wells supplying that city started to run dry this winter. So, on Friday, Feb. 23, the 217th Quartermaster Detachment, a water purification unit based out of Danville, received a warning order from the Joint Force Headquarters to assist the residents of Hindman in their time of need.

"On Friday evening, we got a call from the Kentucky Guard leadership to come down and do a recon because the Hindman Water Filtration Plant was not able to keep up with the demand," said Sgt. 1st Class Mark A. Metcalf, the noncommissioned

officer in charge of the 217th Quartermaster.

The detachment began prepping for the mission and deployed to the area on Saturday. By Sunday, the detachment was set and ready to go with three Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units, capable of producing thousands of gallons of potable water from a variety of raw water sources.

The only thing holding the unit from production was a test from the State Division of Water to ensure the water source, a creek called Troublesome, was able to sustain the demand. Once the okay was given, the 12 Soldiers on duty began 24-hour operations, and the water started flowing into the city's purification plant.

"We provided filtered water to the purification plant so they could sustain operations and also

helped replenish their wells,” Metcalf said.

The 217th Quartermaster remained in Hindman from February 24 through May 11. During that time, the unit pumped more than 14.5 million gallons of water into the city’s filtration plant, which gave the city time to refurbish their wells and begin construction on two additional wells.

“We were there as long as the city officials and water plant needed us,” he said. “The (Knott) county officials treated us like Family while we were there.”



Photo by Cpt. David Page/KVARNG

Staff Sgt. Robert Clark, a Soldier in the 410th Quartermaster Company primes the pumps of the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit in Hindman, Ky.

TRICARE available to all Guard Soldiers

Continued from page

2896-1) from the Guard and Reserve Web site,” he said. “After the form is filled out and signed, the Soldier should mail it along with the first month’s premium to their regional contractor no later than Sept. 30.”

Soldiers who are eligible for the Federal Employee Health Benefits program, or who are currently covered under the FEHB do not qualify for TRS.

Barber said it is also important that Soldiers understand the voluntary disenrollment lockouts.

“If a Soldier voluntarily disenrolls from TRS, he or she will be unable to purchase TRS coverage for up to one year,” Barber said. “They should weigh all of their options before making

a decision.”

For Soldiers who have TRS and it is currently suspended due to active duty orders that run through Oct. 1, Barber said they will be covered under the Transition Assistance Management Program.

“The Soldier’s current TRS Plan will be terminated on Sept. 30. Their TRICARE coverage will not be affected by this action. When their non-premium TRICARE coverage ends, they may purchase TRS, but they must apply within 60 days of the loss of the non-premium TRICARE Coverage,” he said.

For more information about TRICARE Reserve Select and its benefits, visit www.TRICARE.mil.

NEXT ISSUE



Jumpstart update



Uniforms and fundraisers don’t mix!



Disney offer for troops

DEADLINES

Now that The Bluegrass Guard is going monthly, write these dates down to have your photos and stories submitted to the editor!

October issue:
- Sept. 20

November issue:
- Oct. 20

December issue:
- Nov. 20

January issue:
- Dec. 20

February issue:
- Jan. 20

Marathon Team finishes strong



Photo submitted

The Kentucky National Guard 2007 Marathon Team finished sixth among 34 teams at the 30th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon, held in Lincoln, Neb., in May. Pictured are First Lt. Varinka Barbini, Staff Sgt. Michael Embry, Staff Sgt. David Bice and Sgt. 1st Class Allen Davis. Bice and Barbini made the All Guard Team after Bice finished 19th overall, with a time of 2:51:06, and Barbini finished third among females with a time of 3:12:48.

FUNDS AVAILABLE

If your Soldier is deployed and your Family is having a hard time financially, or if an emergency has come up, you need to read the information about the Kentucky Military Family Assistance Trust Fund on page 5.

DEADLINES

Help us fill our pages!

Submit stories, photos or ideas by the 20th of each month and your story might end up in The Bluegrass Guard!

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