

The

Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 14, Issue 2

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



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TO WRITE FOR US**

NEAREST PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



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Cover Story

Cover illustration by Staff Sgt. Jason

The Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative Program is taking the Kentucky Guard by storm. Read what UPAHRs out in the field are writing on page 12.





The Bluegrass Guard

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

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

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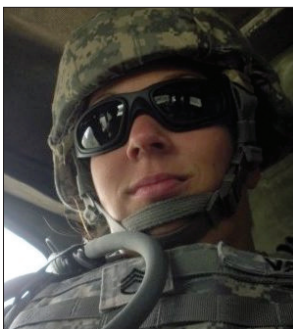
Change of Responsibility

Photo by Maj. Dale Greer, 123rd Air Wing PAO

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general, congratulates the new Kentucky Air National Guard state command chief master sergeant, Chief Master Sgt. James Smith, during a ceremony April 17. Smith replaces Chief Master Sgt. Mark Grant who retired after 30-years of service.

Editor's call

From Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson



Welcome to your new and improved edition of The Bluegrass Guard.

I hope that as you flip the pages you notice a few of the changes: a standard color palette, easier to read fonts and more photos of our Kentucky Soldiers and Airmen providing Unbridled Service to the people of the Commonwealth.

These subtle, but important changes are in an effort to bring you a streamlined product that is comparable to other top-leading publications throughout the military.

You'll still find all the information you are accustomed to, in the same areas of the magazine. But now, with the addition of pages, you will find more.

With more pages, I'm proud to announce The Bluegrass Guard is going quarterly. That means you'll receive four issues each year, packed with important command information and stories about your unit, your training and your Guard.

The Bluegrass Guard staff, along with our Unit

Public Affairs Historian Representatives, strive to find the best articles and photos about Army and Air Guardsmen both here at home and supporting the Global War on Terror.

We welcome your suggestions, story submissions and photos. Send them to kypao@ky.ngb.army.mil by the 15th of each month for consideration for print in The Bluegrass Guard and our website.

Log on to www.kentuckyguard.wordpress.com. There, you'll find photos, stories and videos about your Kentucky Guardsmen in action, which is updated daily.

Finally, we hope you also visit our Facebook site to weigh in on discussions about the Kentucky National Guard.

Tell us what you think about the new design of The Bluegrass Guard, and share your stories with us.

We look forward to hearing from you. 



Letters to the Editor Policy

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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or: kypao@ky.ngb.army.mil

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

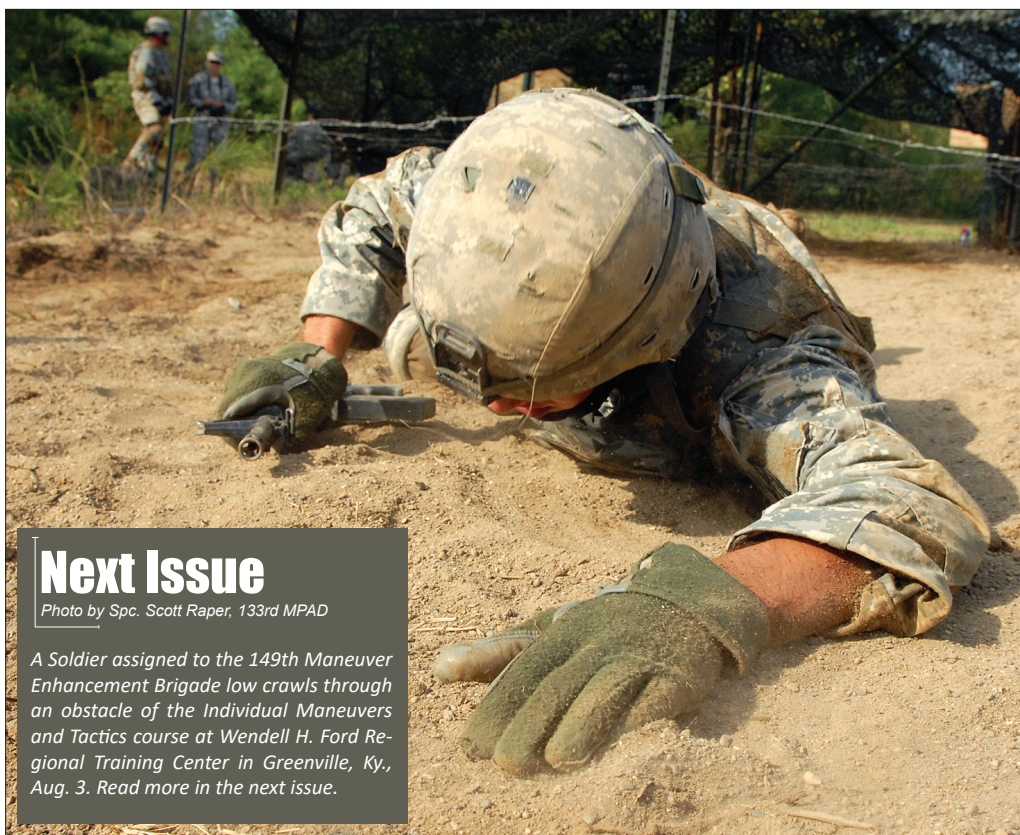
Change of Address

Don't miss an issue

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

Army Retiree address changes should be made through Staff Sgt. Debbie Devine at the Kentucky National Guard Personnel Services Branch. She can be reached at 502-607-1497 or deborah.devine@ky.ngb.army.mil.

Air Retirees should request changes through retired Chief Master Sgt. James Turpin at jturpin@fewwpb.net.



Next Issue

Photo by Spc. Scott Raper, 133rd MPAD

A Soldier assigned to the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade low crawls through an obstacle of the Individual Maneuvers and Tactics course at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky., Aug. 3. Read more in the next issue.

How PAO will ‘make you famous’

By Capt. Andi Hahn

Public Affairs Officer, andrea.hahn@us.army.mil



You already know that Uncle Sam wanted YOU for the U.S. Armed Services.

Did you know that we want to make YOU famous?

As public affairs professionals, it is our duty to tell the story of the Kentucky Guard, protecting the interests of the Commonwealth and the United States.

When you think of becoming the voice of the Kentucky National Guard, what comes to mind?

Being a high-ranking officer or trained spokesperson who talks to the media and interviews all over the world?

Those days are gone.

Today, the public affairs office in Frankfort has a full-time staff of only four people, but a story-telling staff of 63.

And their mission: make YOU famous.

Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini has directed that each unit in the state appoint a Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative. Though being a UPAHR is an additional duty, it's the most important, and in my opinion, the most fun assignment a Soldier in the Kentucky National Guard can have.

The role of the UPAHR is simple: tell the story of your unit.

Every unit in
the Guard has a
UNIQUE
& *valuable*
mission to the
Commonwealth
of **Kentucky.**

Each unit has a unique and valuable mission to the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Whether you are from a transportation company, military police or engineer battalion, the artillery or infantry brigades or from the Air Wing, your unit plays a vital role in the protection of our Constitution and the defense of our Commonwealth.

In March, we held our annual UPAHR conference at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center. After only three days of instruction, 63 Soldiers graduated the course, and have spent the last quarter performing their duties as your subject matter expert in the world of public affairs.


Each drill weekend, your unit trains for its assigned mission. Whether you're an engineer, an infantryman, a medic or a human resources specialist, the public wants to know who you are and what you are doing. Your UPAHR has accepted the challenge to inform them of exactly that.

These amazing Soldiers have exceeded my expectations as a public affairs representative. Thanks to these UPAHRs, our office continues to tell the Kentucky National Guard story to citizens from Paducah to Hazard, and from Louisville to Somerset.

UPAHRs will make YOU famous.

This edition of The Bluegrass Guard contains stories and photos from our UPAHRs from across the Commonwealth. I encourage each of you to find your UPAHR and pat them on the back for a job well done.

I want to thank the commanders for allowing their Soldiers the opportunity to tell their unit story. Many of them can be found on our various Social Media sites as we update them daily with news from the field.

If you have any questions about your UPAHRs duties, or if you are interested in becoming a UPAHR, please give me a call at 502-607-1903, or e-mail the public affairs office at kypao@ng.army.mil. 

Check out the
Kentucky National Guard's
Social Media sites:



www.kentuckyguard.com



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'KYNGPAO' YouTube Channel



'KYNGPAO' Twitter feed



'KYNGPAO' Flickr Photostream

Aerial gunnery qualification



Kentucky aviators complete training requirement while in Kosovo

Sgt. Joshua Dodds
116th PAD, kypao@ng.army.mil


RAMJANE/RAMIJAN, Kosovo – Soldiers from Multinational Battle Group East’s Aviation element took advantage of an aerial gunnery opportunity May 3-5, completing a training requirement while on a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.

About 20 crew chiefs from Bravo Co., 2-147th Aviation Battalion, Kentucky National Guard, took part in the aerial gunnery qualification range, which consisted of firing an M-240B machine gun from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter in various scenarios.

The scenarios ranged from firing while landing to a high speed pass while engaging targets. The coordination between pilot and gunner is part of the challenge provided by this annual event. The flight instructors created tactical scenarios that included

current Tactics, Techniques and Procedures learned from military operations around the globe.

The pilots get a chance to log challenging, tactical flight time, while the crew chiefs qualify on the weapons. The entire crew benefits from the training, especially as it relates to aircrew coordination.

“It went pretty smooth,” said Chief Warrant Officer John Radford, a UH-60 pilot from Burlington, Ky. “These guys are getting familiar with the calls and knowing when to clear the weapon. The quicker we can get these newer guys trained on how the whole system works the better they will be when deployed in the future.” 

Kentucky ADT II trains for deployment

By Staff Sgt. Michael Oliver

133rd MPAD, michael.j.oliver@us.army.mil

CAMP ATTERBURY, In. - Guardsmen from the Kentucky National Guard Agribusiness Development Team II participated in a training exercise at a mock Afghan village at Camp Atterbury, In., May 26, in preparation for deployment to Afghanistan.

The ADT members simulated a visit with provincial leaders to establish relations to further develop the Afghan agriculture structure.

While the agriculture team key leaders discussed operational plans, the force protection team provided security for the meeting. Soldiers said the training exercise gave them real life experience and combat readiness for the Afghan mission.

Lt. Col. Garland Goodrich, a team leader for ADT II and a farmer in his civilian career, transferred from the Virginia National Guard to Kentucky specifically for this mission. Goodrich said the Kentucky Soldiers have learned a lot as a team and not just agricultural training.

“Most of our training at Camp Atterbury has been basic Soldier skills. Our primary mission is agriculture but we are Soldiers first so we’ve got to make sure we have the skill set needed to be safe over there,” he said. 🇺🇸



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Oliver/KYARNG

Spc. Timothy Akers, Agribusiness Development Team II member, pulls security during a meeting with key leaders at a mock Afghan village at Camp Atterbury, In., May 26.

Kentucky Pride



Photo submitted

Bluegrass Soldiers assigned to the Paducah-based 2113th Transportation Company take a break from conducting security force missions for a company photo May 25, at Q-West, Iraq. The unit deployed in February and conducted security force missions in support of the Iraq drawdown. Read about the unit's early homecoming on page 25.

Guardsmen weather springtime floods

Staff Report

In the eastern and western portions of the state, Kentucky National Guardsmen logged numerous hours assisting local officials with cleanup and flood-relief efforts following heavy rains which lead to springtime floods in May.


The 149th Vertical Engineers and 207th Horizontal Engineer Company responded to flooding in the central and eastern portions of the Commonwealth while the 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery assisted in building a wall to prevent the Green River from flooding a water treatment facility in Canmer, Ky., in the west. 



Photo by Sgt. Paul Evans/KYARNG

Engineers from 149th Vertical Engineer Company and the 207th Horizontal Engineer Company clear debris from a road in Olive Hill, Ky., May 7. Torrential downpours flooded the city and other areas in Carter, Bath, Rowan and Lewis Counties in early Spring.



Photo by Sgt. Bryan Plouge/KYARNG

Chaplain takes message to other side of pond

Draper lends helping hand in Germany to children at Hohenfels

By Fredrick Varney
133rd MPAD, kypao@ng.army.mil

HOHENFELS, Germany - Kind and soft-spoken, Maj. Bill Draper, 201st Engineer Battalion chaplain, is always willing to lend a helping hand.

Whether it's saying a prayer for the loss of a loved one, giving calling cards to junior enlisted Soldiers in Hohenfels, or volunteering to support community activities abroad, Draper understands the mission of the Kentucky National Guard.


On April 20, Draper volunteered to support the Army National Guard Affairs Office's sponsored program called Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed.

The program strives to support young people within a faith-based environment. The children come together in the Post Chapel on a weekly basis to engage in bible studies and recreational activities.

"It feels really good to know that a positive impact is being made on the children here," said Draper.

Draper said volcanic activity in Iceland had delayed several strong supporters of the program from being present and he felt compelled to assist in such a great cause.

"It's been a great experience for me," said Draper. "I can't wait to go home and tell my family about helping the young children in Germany."

"The most rewarding part of this experience has been a personal satisfaction gained by helping young people," he said. 





Wing soars through ORI

Inspection tests wartime capabilities, deemed success

By Maj. Dale Greer

123rd Air Wing Public Affairs Officer, kypao@ng.army.mil

The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing scored another entry in the history books May 16-23 when it successfully completed the Air Mobility Command's first-ever homeland-defense Operational Readiness Inspection.

"For the very first time, the U.S. Air Force has validated a Wing's wartime capabilities to defend the homeland by fighting an enemy right here on U.S. soil," said Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"That represents a major shift in the way the Air Force evaluates unit readiness, because it puts the focus in our own backyard, rather than a simulated overseas location where these evaluations are usually staged.

"I'm pleased to say that the 123rd Airlift Wing passed this new test with flying colors. We are ready to perform our mission anytime, anywhere, whether it be in support of our allies abroad or here at home in defense of the United States of America," he said.

The wing received an excellent rating for the inspection, which tested its ability to mobilize personnel and equipment, fly to a remote site, operate in a hostile stateside environment, complete multiple airlift sorties, defend against enemy attacks, and redeploy back home.

The wing's ORI scenario required more than 300 Kentucky Air Guardsmen to establish operations at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., where they merged with about 175 troops from two other units to form the notional 104th Air Expeditionary Wing.

Those additional units were the active-duty Air Force's 317th Airlift Group from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, and the Air Force Reserve's 70th Aerial Port Squadron from Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla.

With the 123rd serving as the lead unit, all three organizations worked seamlessly together to launch multiple theater airlift sorties across the Gulf Coast region, supporting U.S. Northern Command missions and civil authorities while defending against multiple simulated attacks by well-organized terrorists.

The homeland-defense scenario differed markedly from those of traditional ORIs, which task units to deploy to simulated overseas locations and fight conventional military forces, Nelson said.


Extreme weather conditions and several eleventh-hour changes mandated by the non-availability of infrastructure made this particular exercise challenging, Nelson said.

"We didn't flinch, we didn't whine, we didn't push back to any challenge, from changes in taskings, to changes in locations to changes in facilities at the last minute," he said.

"We maintained a great attitude, we operated safely, and we performed our mission with a level of excellence that makes me proud. This is our passion. We come from the Minutemen, when this nation was formed. We pick up arms, and we protect our neighbors and our Families right here in the United States."

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general, was equally pleased by the inspection results.

"AMC didn't need to grade this unit for me to know about its high level of excellence," Tonini said.

"For 41 years, I've known of the excellence of the Kentucky Air National Guard. But this has got to be one of the best days I've had in the 41-plus years I've been in this uniform. I want to thank each and every one of you for what you've done. You did it like the great Airmen that you are." 







Unbridled Storytellers

Making Kentucky Soldiers famous, with each keystroke and click of the camera

By Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, gina.vaile@us.army.mil

Everyone has seen the images – the flag raising at Iwo Jima, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Marine in Fallujah taking a brief smoke.

Whether taken by a military Public Affairs Specialist or a photojournalist from the Associated Press, they tell a story and help the American public understand Soldiers and Airmen, and what they do to defend and protect this great nation.

In March, 63 Kentucky Guardsmen converged on the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center for the second annual Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative conference. Representing units from across the Commonwealth, the Soldiers experienced a fast-paced instructional period that culminated with a practical exercise in which the UPAHRs put their new knowledge to work.

“I’ve learned so much more about what I should be writing, and how to take better photos,” said Pvt. 1st Class Jessica Wilson UPAHR for Detachment 1, 203rd Maintenance Company.

For Wilson, the highlight of the training was a ride on a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, the first ride for this new Kentucky Soldier.

“It was such an adrenaline rush,” she said.


Sgt. Mark Owen, UPAHR for the 438th Military Police Company, based in Murray, said it was rewarding to watch Wilson on her first ride, and cover it as his story for the training exercise.

“When you tell a story, you live it also,” Owen, a civilian broadcast journalist said. “I was able to relive my first Blackhawk ride while she was experiencing hers. It was awesome.”

Owen said the training received at the UPAHR conference is “spot-on” to civilian training in the craft. It’s the UPAHRs job, he said, to highlight the key points for Families, friends, Soldiers and the citizens of the Commonwealth.

“You want people to know things, to be involved,” he said. “Many people can’t be there (for events), and it’s through the eye of the camera and the story of the reporter how they experience it.”

“We’re the voice. We are the eyes and the ears of the military. People won’t know what we are doing unless we speak up,” Owen said.

Armed with cameras and knowledge of how to tell stories, they are trained in the art of making their fellow Kentucky Guardsmen, YOU, famous. 



Aerial Reporting

Photo by Spc. Kenneth J. Koch, 138th Signal Company

Kentucky National Guard Unit Public Affairs Historian Representatives from throughout the state take to the skies above Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center March 27 during the UPAHR training weekend. The UPAHRs assigned to the flight covered aerial shots of the training facility for story packages that were judged by the public affairs staff.

By the numbers

121

units in the Kentucky Air and Army Guard

63

UPAHRs assigned throughout the state

100

cool points given to every UPAHR

9

average stories turned in each drill



Sgt. Mark Owen, UPAHR, 438th Military Police, interviews Pvt. 1st Class Jessica Wilson, UPAHR, Det. 1, 203rd Chemical, at the 2010 Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative Conference at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center March 27.



'Qual with the "Big Dog"



Sgt. Charles Cobb, a Kentucky Guardsman assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, gets ready to fire at his target on a M16 weapons qualification range at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center March 27. Photo by Spc. Lauren Womak/KYARNG

Field Artillery Soldier shoots expert at annual weapons qualification

By Spc. Lauren Womak and Sgt. Tyler Catron

UPAHRs, kypao@ng.army.mil

On a sunny afternoon at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center, Sgt. Charles Cobb, a Kentucky National Guard Soldier assigned to Service Battery, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery loaded his issued M16 for annual weapons qualification.

Being a 13-Bravo supply ammo sergeant from Lexington, Ky., Cobb has the perks of always being around the range. But on March 27, his visit was all business. The annual weapons qualification that every Soldier must complete.

As a 20-year Army Veteran, with Gulf War and Iraqi Freedom deployments under his belt, Cobb achieved the expert level by hitting the targets 37 out of 40 times.

The targets range from 50 meters to 300 meters, and are the size of an average man's upper torso.


"The best technique to use is relax, focus on the target, and

breathe," Cobb said.

Before qualifying, Cobb zeroed his weapon sights. He was the first one in his unit to zero the weapon properly. Giving him ample time to finish the qualification lane.

To zero a weapon, Cobb fired 5 rounds within a three-inch circle. This means steady yourself, breathe properly and focus on the target, he said.

"The most important thing is being familiar with your weapon and to protect yourself and others by using safety precautions," he said.

Cobb said some of his best memories come from the friendships and comradery offered in the Guard. One memory he will always keep was his return home in 2008 from Iraq to his wife, Laura Cobb and three children, Tavis Cobb, Keisha Turner, and Tiana Wilson. 



Into the great blue yonder

UPAHRs take to the air for final project to graduate FY2010 training

By Spc. Kenneth J. Koch
UPAHR, kypao@ng.army.mil

More than 60 Unit Public Affairs Historian Representatives attended training at the annual UPAHR Conference March 27-28 at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center.

After receiving classroom lectures on journalistic and public affairs related topics, twenty of them took aerial tours of the training site to sharpen their reporting skills.

The goal of the flights was to teach the UPAHRs the skills of telling the Soldiers stories under semi-realistic, challenging field conditions. Part of the experience was achieved by allowing attendees the chance to master the fine art of field photography, such as shooting in windy, mobile environments, best typified by the helicopter flight.

The experience was informative and exhilarating for the soldiers involved, even for those with extensive flight experience.

“I get the chance to fly often enough,” Pvt. 1st Class Tyler Shelton said.

“This time, I get to sit back and be the photographer, as opposed to being a flight ops crewmember, so I feel like I got to sharpen my skills as a photographer.”

The UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter was furnished by 63rd Aviation Brigade in Frankfort, Ky., in coordination with the 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, also from Frankfort, which hosted the conference.

In addition to being informative, the flight symbolized the multimedia interoperability of the Kentucky National Guard.


From shooting a live streaming video with-



This time I got to sit back and be the photographer, as opposed to being a flight ops crewmember, so I feel like I got to sharpen my skills ...

— **Spc. Tyler Shelton**
376th Aviation UPAHR



in the helipad’s confines to sending UPAHR’s to classes and interviews around WHFRTC, the attendees were given a broad spectrum of experiences to prepare them for handling the public affairs and historical aspects of their unit’s missions at the home station. 



Crewchief sets standards for excellence

Photos and story By Spc. Joshua Brown and Spc. Amanda Taylor
UPAHRs, kypao@ng.army.mil

Staff Sgt. Nathan Keach, Bravo Company 2-147th Aviation Battalion, Rear Detachment, patiently answered questions from Unit Public Affairs Historian Representatives as he prepared his UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter for takeoff March 27, at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center.

The helicopter was part of a training exercise to give the UPAHRs an opportunity to test their newly acquired interviewing and photography skills.

Keach was active Army for six years before joining the Kentucky National Guard as a 15-T, a Blackhawk Mechanic. With 16 years experience and more than 2,500 hours of flight time, Keach expertly handles the duties of crew chief and answers all our questions.

As a crew chief, he said his primary mission is to troubleshoot and evaluate the aircraft systems so that he can fix any problems in the event of an emergency landing.

As an Army aviator, Keach has deployed multiple times, including Macedonia, Honduras, and support for Hurricanes Katrina and Dean. His most recent deployment was to Kosovo, all the while keeping an average 87-88 percent operational readiness rate.

Keach’s expertise is not limited to the Blackhawk. His career in the Kentucky National Guard has mirrored his lifelong interest in mechanics.

From the time Keach was 8-years-old he has worked on “anything with an engine”, he said, to include tractors, cars, and even weed-eaters. *See Handyman, 16*



Staff Sgt. Nathan Keach leans out of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter preparing for takeoff March 27, at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky.



WHFRTCs long legacy

Training center among region's best

By Spc. Jimmie Dixon
UPAHR, kypao@ng.army.mil

Constructed in 1969 as a 29-acre weekend training site, today the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center has more than 11,000 acres for Kentucky National Guardsmen to traverse and train on a daily basis.

With modern training ranges including the M16, M4 and 9MM marksmanship ranges, as well as a state-of-the-art Close Quarters Marksmanship Range, WHFRTC can qualify more than 200 Soldiers per day – making Kentucky Guardsmen some of the best trained in the United States.

“Our facilities at Wendell Ford provide our Kentucky Air and Army Guardsmen with everything they need to be successful on today’s battlefield,” said State Command Sgt. Maj. Greg Armstrong.

“Wendell Ford is dear to me because it is where I’m from. I worked at the facility for 24 years, and have trained for more than 38 years on the grounds,” he said, “when it was known as the Western Kentucky Training Site.

“As we continue to add to the training ranges and facilities, more and more agencies request to train at Wendell Ford, which is an honor for the Kentucky Guard,” he said. “It’s amazing how much the training site has grown over the last three decades.”

Before WHFRTC, Kentucky Guardsmen were forced to train at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox. With the addition of WHFRTC to the Kentucky training arsenal, Guardsmen no longer rely on Active Duty training lanes to certify on Army Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills.

In addition, numerous local, state and federal agencies also use WHFRTC to

train. Reserve units, college Reserve Officer Training Corps battalions and even some Active Duty units rely on the wooded hills of the training site to stay sharp.

Soldiers visiting WHFRTC will notice a great deal of change of the next fiscal year. Coming in 2011, a Hand Grenade Range and Light Demolition Range.

By 2014, a crew served weapons range will also be added. Long range plans also include a M203 grenade launcher range and AT4 rocket launcher range.

“We provide for our Kentucky Guardsmen the ability to train in an environment that is tactically and technically challenging. In order to do so, we will continue to adapt our training lanes to meet the needs of our units,” Armstrong said. “This way, we’ll remain Kentucky’s premiere regional training site.”



Photo by Sgt. Adam Zuniga/KYARNG

Pvt. 1st Class Cody Bruce, Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, stands ready during an Entry Control Point exercise March 27 at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center. Thousands of troops train at the center each year.



Recent eco-friendly renovations at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center make the facility among the best to work and train in Kentucky for Guardsmen and servicemembers from other branches.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Steven Tressler, KYARNG

WHFRTC obstacle course set to reopen in '10

By Staff Sgt. Steve Tressler and Staff Sgt. Jeremy Wurm

UPAHRs, kypao@ng.army.mil

The U.S. Army obstacle course requires an incredible amount of mental and physical endurance individually, which leads to tougher units collectively. The Army didn't get 'Army strong' by sitting around and thinking about it.

To steal from Nike, they just do it.

Prior to the 2009 Ice Storm, Citizen-Soldiers from all over the Commonwealth utilized the obstacle course at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center to build that unit cohesion.


The storm left the course in ruins, but thanks to the hard work and dedication of the range staff, and Robinson Construction Company, the newly renovated \$225,000 course is slated to open this summer in time for units training at WHFRTC.

The 'O-course', as it's referred to by Sol-

diers, builds mental toughness and physical endurance, while preparing for the post Sept. 11 challenges of today's Army, and the ever-increasing operational tempo of the modern day national Guardsman.

The course is designed to push Soldiers to their limits physically and requires a great deal of stamina, and mental toughness.

Range officer-in-charge, Maj. L. Allen Joiner, knows this lesson first-hand.

"I've done the obstacle course on more than one occasion and I can tell you there were times when my body wanted to quit," said Joiner. "You push yourself mentally to fight through the exhaustion and in the long run it makes you a better leader, and your soldiers see it and want to get there to." 



Staff Sgt. Nathan Keach checks the view from his UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crew chief window before landing at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center March 27.


Continued from 14

Handyman

Keach always ready to fly

As a Department of the Army civilian, Keach maintained nearly every helicopter that the U.S. Army employs and while employed with Temco, in Georgia, he worked on commercial airliners such as the 747 and 727 jets.

When he is not working on engines he loves being with his wife and two sons, watching NASCAR and racing go-carts. He is very proud of the fact that he was the Nextel Cup, Fan of the Week, back in 2005.

With thousands of hours of flight time, multiple deployments and an outstanding operational readiness rate, Staff Sgt. Nathan Keach sets the standard for excellence for the Kentucky Army National Guard and for the United States Army. 



138th stands up QRF, trains at WHFRTC

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Kaiya Wurtele and Cadet Cody Gibson
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As the bright Kentucky sun shined high over head, the Soldiers of the Kentucky National Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery Brigade conducted training at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center, March 27, to become the new Kentucky Quick Reaction Force.

Soldiers conducted entry control point and riot control training, then simulated response to natural disasters the state may be susceptible to.

This is the sixth training event for Soldiers in Alpha and Bravo Batteries since the newly coined QRF received their new mission.

“As the QRF, we are tasked as the first responders for any state mission,” said 1st Lt. Ken Hudson, QRF team leader.

The QRF will satisfy the dual mission of federal and state response, with the state of Kentucky having top-priority of the QRF element.

“Today’s training provided hands on lanes with multiple variables that we will see in the real world,” said Cadet Adam Crawford, who acted as the opposing force in the training scenarios.

According to 1st Lt. Daniel Vanhorn, platoon leader for Alpha Battery, today’s training provided “intergraded real-world scenarios which prepare the troops for missions in the state and abroad.” 🇺🇸



Soldiers assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery practice riot control techniques during training March 27.



Pvt. 1st Class Joshua Bruce wrestles Cadet Adam Crawford to the ground as part of the Quick Reaction Force training at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center March 27.

Lead from the front, set new records



Kentucky Soldier stands out at Warrior Leaders Course



Photo by Capt. Andi Hahn/KYARNG

As the Administrative Assistant to the State Command Sergeant Major, Sgt. Adam Rients is an organized Soldier who pays attention to detail. He graduated from the Warrior Leader Course at Camp Ravenna, Ohio, in April as the Distinguished Honor Graduate for the 147th Regional Training Institutes first-ever WLC.

I wasn't striving to be the distinguished honor grad, but as I noticed my evaluation scores were higher than the majority of my classmates, I started to step it up.

— **Sgt. Adam Rients**

WLC Distinguished Honor Graduate

By Staff Sgt. Stephen Tressler

UPAHR, 138th Fires Brigade, kypao@ng.army.mil

When you're 5 foot, 8 inches, 170 pounds and wear corrective lenses, you can be overlooked pretty easy.

Even easier when you're enrolled in a Warrior Leader Course that processes thousands of Soldiers every year trying to become better leaders.

So how do you stand apart from the rest?

Well, you could earn the highest distinction - Distinguished Honor Graduate - for the first-ever WLC held at Camp Ravenna, Ohio.

Such is the case with Kentucky Army National Guard Soldier Sgt. Adam Rients, 138th Fires Brigade, based in Lexington.

Rients, a combat veteran, turned quite a few heads and received a mountain of attention by way of his performance, work ethic and academic achievements of a 92 percent GPA during the two-week professional development course.

He caught the eye of the commandant of the 147th Regimental Training Institute, who informed Kentucky State Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory D. Armstrong about Rients' performance at WLC.

"I couldn't be more proud of Sgt. Rients," Armstrong said. "He represented the Kentucky Guard well."

Armstrong in turn notified the 138th Fires Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Joey D. Simpson who alerted brigade commander Col. Rodney Hayes.

None of the Soldiers in the unit seemed too surprised about hearing the news.

"If you know Rients, you know that Soldiering to him, is as important as the air he breathes," said 138th Battery Headquarters 1st Sgt. Timothy W. Horan. "He takes it personal and he loves what he does."

Guardsmen honored by KSP

Staff Report

kypao@ng.army.mil

Two members of the Kentucky National Guard Family were honored for their service to the Commonwealth as Kentucky State Troopers May 5, in Louisville.

Trooper Timothy Mullins, also the sergeant major of the 198th Military Police Battalion, of Post 13 in Hazard, Ky., and former Kentucky Guardsman and retired Trooper Richard Miller both received the Governor's Medal of Valor.

The award is the highest honor awarded to officers in the line of duty for acts of heroism.

Mullins and Miller, received the honor for an incident that occurred in June 2006 where they entered a burning building and rescued a stranded man.

Mullins, who has been with the Kentucky State Police for 19 years and the Kentucky National Guard for 23 years, said he was honored to receive this award but said he did nothing that any of the other Troopers wouldn't have done if they had been there.


"I was just at the right place at the right time and did what I was trained to do," Mullins said. 



Photo Submitted

Kentucky State Police Trooper Timothy Mullins, sergeant major for the 198th Military Police Battalion, and retired Trooper Richard Miller, a former Kentucky Guardsman, were both awarded the Governor's Medal of Valor May 5, in Louisville, by KSP Commissioner Rodney Brewer and Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Secretary J. Michael Brown. The Governor's Medal of Valor is the highest honor for police officers.

Accelerated OCS program graduates three lieutenants

By Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney

133rd MPAD, kypao@ng.army.mil

Three Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers raised their right hands and took the Oath of Office as the state's newest military officers during a formal ceremony held April 12th at the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Auditorium.

The 2010 Winter Accelerated Graduates completed a rigorous two-month training course that's designed to improve leadership skills and help prepare them to lead Soldiers on the battlefield.

"The hardest part of the training was not being able to speak to our families," said 2nd Lt. Bradley J. Sumeracki, a Soldier assigned to Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 138th Fires Brigade.

"The course was very intense and there was minimal free time. The instructors really challenge the students at an unbelievably frantic pace."


Col. Stephen A. Robinson administered the oath to the three officers while Brig. Gen. Michael J. Dornbush presented the OCS certificates of graduation. Friends and Family members continued the custom of pinning on the new officers' gold bars of a second lieutenant. 



Photo by Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney/KYARNG

Jackie A. Rachua, Gregory L. Slater and Bradley J. Sumeracki are Kentucky's newest second lieutenants after graduating from the Accelerated Officer Candidate School Program April 12. The three officers were honored at the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet by Brig. Gen. Michael J. Dornbush.



Photo by Spc. Fredrick Varney/KYARNG

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general for Kentucky, pins Spc. Joshua Wayne Roberts, Det. 1, 207th Engineer Co., during a promotion ceremony held April 28, at Kallmunz Castle in Germany. Six Engineers received promotions and two re-enlistments were celebrated during the unit's annual training.

Promotions and success celebrated at castle

By Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney
133rd MPAD, kypao@ng.army.mil

HOHENFELS, Germany– Just 25 minutes outside of Hohenfels, nestled in the heart of Bavaria in a small art colony town called Kallmunz, six Kentucky National Guardsmen were promoted among the ruins of Kallmunz Castle.

It was a fitting spot for the engineers of Detachment 1, 207th Engineer Company to be promoted – the fortified castle overlooks the city with a medieval bridge over the Naab River bearing Masons' marks.

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general of Kentucky, pinned the Soldiers of Detachment 1, 207th Engineer Company during an overseas training deployment.

Promoted were: Spc. Joshua Wayne Roberts of Jackson, Ky., Pvt. 1st Class Steven W. Molands of Campton, Ky., Pvt. 1st Class John C. Thompson of Louisa, Ky., Pvt. 1st Class Justin R. Brashears of Campton, Ky., Staff Sgt. Ronald E. Holliday of Jackson, Ky., and 1st Lt. Dustin W. Pack of Ashland, Ky.

Tonini conducted the re-enlistments of Sgt. Matthew C. Gilbert, Team Leader, Detachment 1, 207th Engineer Company, and Sgt. Mark S. Hunter, Team Leader, Forward Support Company, 201st Engineer Battalion.

"I told my first sergeant that I wanted General Tonini to conduct my re-enlistment at one of the castles here and the unit made it happen for us," said Gilbert.

"It was a great feeling to have the adjutant general come here to support us," he said. "It really meant so much to the Soldiers to be promoted and re-enlist at such a prestigious landmark here in Germany." 🇺🇸

Petraeus awards Kentucky Guardsman



Master Sgt. Richard Southard accepts the Patriot Award from Gen. David Petraeus May 14 at the Armed Forces Dinner held in Louisville. Southard received the award for his role as an Embedded Team Trainer during his deployment to Afghanistan from 2005-2006 when he received a Bronze Star with Valor for combat actions.

FIRE POWER

Field Artillery conducts live fire exercise at Knox

Story and photos by Sgt. Bryan Ploughe

UPAHR, 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery, kypao@ng.army.mil

The 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery celebrated Armed Forces Day weekend with the inaugural firing of the new High Mobility Artillery Rocket System at Fort Knox, Ky., May 13-16.

The battalion used the live-fire exercise as certification on the new weapons system which was issued to Kentucky Field Artillery Batteries in February 2010.

More than 700 spectators of Family, friends supporters and employers of the 623rd FA



witnessed the event.

“This battalion has stepped up to the plate once again, as has come to be the expected standard from these elite Soldiers,” said battalion commander Lt. Col. Jeffrey

Hughes.

Deputy Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Mike Richie, was on hand to call for the closing rounds of fire for the monumental event.

Following the live-fire, Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Batteries displayed unit equipment and history for spectators to enjoy. 🇺🇸



HIMARS SPECS

Weight: 24,000 lbs.

Road Speed: 53 mph

Crew: Three - driver, gunner, section chief

Weapons: Six M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System series rockets -
or - one MGM-140 Army Tactical Missile System

Effective range: 120-186 miles





A HIMARs firing crew loads live pods at an ammunition reload point during the live-fire exercise May 15 at Fort Knox. Each weapon system can hold six rockets with an effective firing range of 120-186 miles.



Launcher Chief, Staff Sgt. Eric McDuffy, prepares for certification during a live-fire exercise at Fort Knox May 15.



Capt. James Meece assists an audience member in calling in fire during the 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery's live-fire exercise May 15.



A Kentucky National Guard High Mobility Artillery Rocket System locks on a target and fires during the 2010 live fire exercise at Fort Knox May 15. The 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery invited Family, employers and supporters of the battalion for the event.



Survey duty

Photo by Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney, 133rd MPAD

Spc. Natasha S. Slone, Mechanic, 207th Engineer Company, surveys the road behind a Military Operations Urban Training site in the Kittennessee Training Area April 19, in Hohenfels, Germany.

EARTH MOVERS

Engineers construct state-of-the-art training lanes at Hohenfels

By: Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney
133rd MPAD, kypao@ng.army.mil

HOHENFELS, Germany – The Joint Multi-National Readiness Center plays an integral role in preparing today's Soldiers with the necessary skills to succeed in the Global War on Terrorism.

In order to continue success on the streets of Iraq and Afghanistan, the JMRC is dedicated to providing top-notch training for Soldiers heading downrange.

More than 200 Soldiers with the 149th Vertical Engineer Company from Cynthiana, Ky., played a critical role in continuing training improvements here by expanding a Military Operations Urban Training Site located within the Kittenese Training Area.

The MOUT Site allows Soldiers to train in a simulated urban environment designed to enhance technical and tacti-

cal maneuvering skills.

"The purpose of the MOUT site is to give mobilizing units a chance to see what a city in Afghanistan might look like," said Sgt. Andrew D. Wigglesworth, Squad Leader, 149th Vertical Engineer Company.

The Kentucky Guard unit spent countless hours over three weeks in April laying block and pouring concrete in an effort to create the real-world scenario for mobilizing Soldiers.

Wigglesworth said the mission provided his Soldiers with a chance to receive crucial hands-on training.

"The team-building concept here has just been amazing," Wigglesworth said.

"Our Soldiers have done a fantastic job and morale has been extremely high."

"It has been really exciting for our young Soldiers to receive top-notch hands-on

training that has helped improve their job skills," he said.

Capt. Terry D. Durham, commander, 149th Vertical Engineer Company, said the improvements made by the Kentucky engineers was substantial.

"The first day we were here, the unit managed to lay around 100 blocks per day, and now as we are nearing the end of the project, that figure has increased to 500 blocks per day."

"I am very proud of all the hard work they have accomplished throughout the course of this training cycle, he said.

Durham said the quality of work from his Soldiers has been excellent, and that everyone has ensured to put safety first.


"The Kentucky National Guard sets the standard for both quality and safety," he said. "We lead by example and pave the road for other units to follow." 



Photo by Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney/KYARNG

Sgt. Johnny Hanners, Team Leader, HSC 201st Engineer Battalion, shovels dirt from a roof top in the Kittenese Training Area April 19, in Hohenfels, Germany.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney/KYARNG

Sgt. Joseph W. Marcum, Heavy Equipment Operator, HSC 201st Engineer Battalion, excavates the roadway behind a Military Operations Urban Training Site April 19, in Hohenfels, Germany.

Welcome home Guardsmen!

By Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson
 Editor, gina.vaile@us.army.mil

The Kentucky National Guard, along with Family members, friends and communities across the Commonwealth, welcomed home more than 270 Soldiers and Airmen this summer.

The Guardsmen served on three fronts, proving that the Kentucky Guard is instrumental in the Global War on Terror, and dedicated to ongoing peacekeeping missions around the globe.

More than 120 Soldiers of the Paducah-based 2113th Transportation Company returned in June from a six-month Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment.

The unit provided security to U.S. and foreign convoys, covering more than 7,000 miles.

The unit returned from deployment early after President Barack Obama promised a troop withdrawal in Iraq by the end of 2010.

Farming in Afghanistan was drastically impacted by the 64 Soldiers and Airmen assigned to the first Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team, which returned from its Operation Enduring Freedom deployment July 2.

The team drove more than 8,500 miles, performed 500 combat missions and completed 79 major projects during its tour of duty.

Aviators of Bravo Company, 2-147th Aviation Battalion, returned July 22, after a year-long peacekeeping deployment in Kosovo.

The Kentucky unit mobilized with 11 UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, supporting slingload and waterbucket, fire-fighting operations, troop transport and hoist operations and medical evacuation missions for US and NATO troops and civilians.

“The Kentucky National Guard is a professional force and we serve our federal mission with pride and determination,” he said. “The success of these returning troops proves that.

“I want to thank our Families for their support during these deployments,” he said.

“You are the backbone for your Soldier or Airmen during these deployments. Your support helps them successfully complete their mission. Thank you for a job well-done.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Aaron Hiller/KYARNG

Jacklynn and Dalton Green await the arrival of their dad, Sgt. Doug Green of Bravo Company, 2-147th Aviation Battalion, at a Welcome Home Ceremony July 22 at the Army Aviation Support Hangar on Boone Center in Frankfort.



Photo by Spc. Michelle Waters/KYARNG

Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans assigned to the 2113th Transportation Company stand at attention during a Welcome Home Ceremony June 20 in Paducah after a six-month deployment.



Thunder rolls from Louisville Air Base



Photo by Senior Airman Maxwell A. Rechel/KyANG

Senior Airman Brandon Rhodes, a crew chief with the U.S. Air Force Strike Eagle Demo Team, climbs into the cockpit of an F-15 fighter jet at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky., April 15.

Rhodes and the Strike Eagle Demo Team are assigned to the 4th Fighter Wing out of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. The team was in town for the Thunder Over Louisville Air Show.

Richmond Readiness Center opens

Photo by Spc. Michelle Waters, 133rd MPAD

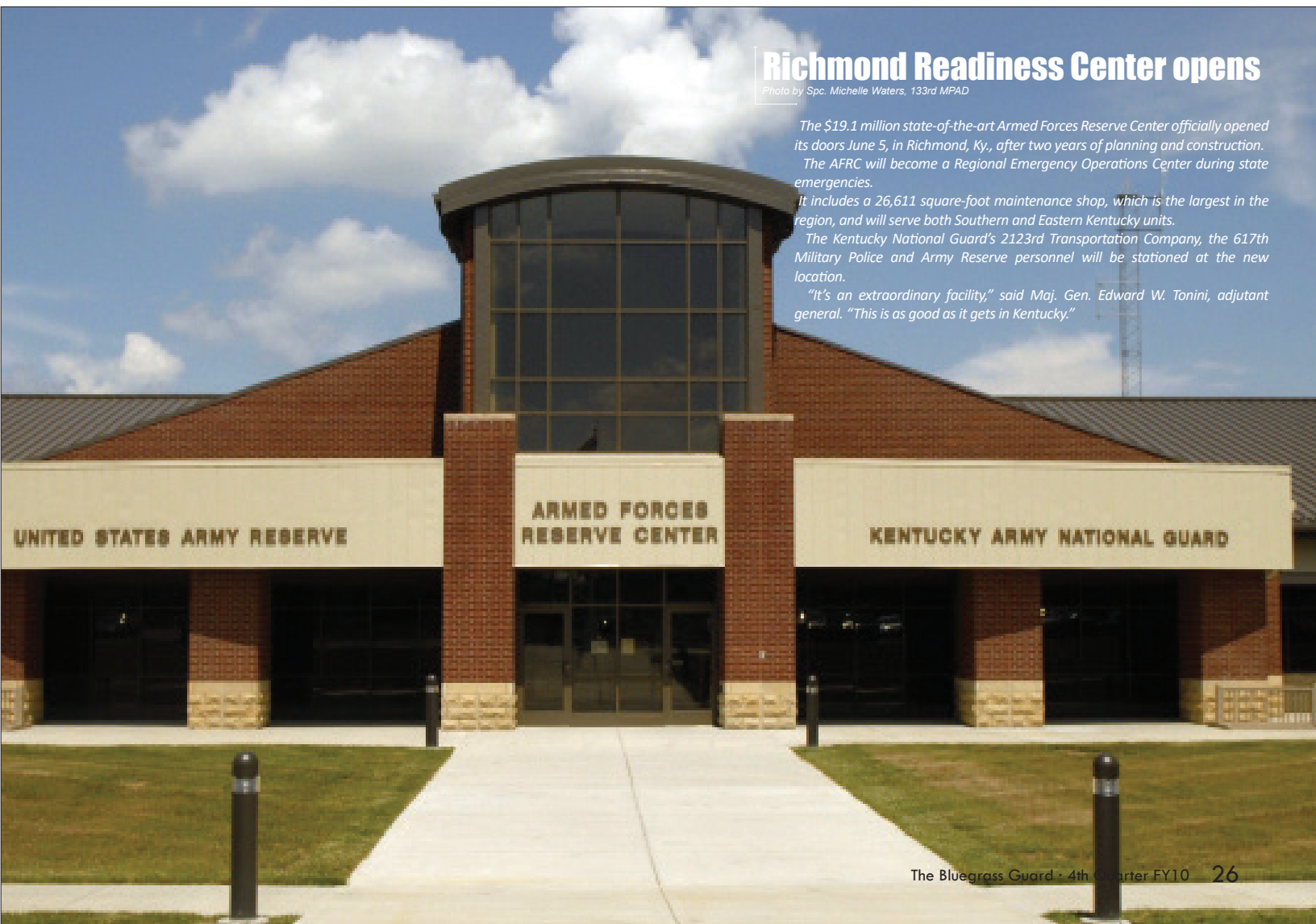
The \$19.1 million state-of-the-art Armed Forces Reserve Center officially opened its doors June 5, in Richmond, Ky., after two years of planning and construction.

The AFRC will become a Regional Emergency Operations Center during state emergencies.

It includes a 26,611 square-foot maintenance shop, which is the largest in the region, and will serve both Southern and Eastern Kentucky units.

The Kentucky National Guard's 2123rd Transportation Company, the 617th Military Police and Army Reserve personnel will be stationed at the new location.

"It's an extraordinary facility," said Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general. "This is as good as it gets in Kentucky."



In Memory of our fallen comrade



Sgt. Randy A. Sigley Jr.

2123rd Transportation Company

April 18, 2010

Afghanistan

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21 — HIMARs inaugural fire

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— Annual Training recap

Marriage Enrichment for Soldiers and spouse
 UPAHR story of the quarter

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Staff Report

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