

The Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 15, Issue 3 - July 2012

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



KY-CERFP
Best in nation

AROUND THE



Tornadoes ripped through Kentucky March 2, and the Kentucky National Guard responded. PAGE 8.

The Air National Guard continues to provide humanitarian relief to Haiti after an earthquake in 2010. PAGE 20



Cover Story

Cover photo by Spc. Will Bolton, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Kentucky National Guard's Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package was recently validation on its mission to quickly respond to CBRNE incidents in the Commonwealth, shattering all records during the evaluation.

WORLD

AND IN OUR PAGES



After moving to another region in Afghanistan, the 176th Fire Fighting Team picks up new mission to train Afghan volunteer firefighters. PAGE X



Kids and Families celebrate Month of the Military Child with games, food and fun. PAGE 3



Kentucky NATIONAL GUARD
Unbridled Service

The Bluegrass Guard

100 Minuteman Parkway
Frankfort, KY 40601
phone: 502-607-5091/1713/1898/1562/1556
fax: 502-607-1264
www.kentuckyguard.com

Command Staff

State Commander in Chief
Gov. Steve Beshear

Adjutant General
Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini

Deputy Adjutant General
WHO IS THIS?

Joint Force, Land Component Commander
Brig. Gen. Joseph M. Richie

Director of the Joint Staff
Brig. Gen. Michael Dornbush

Assistant Adjutant General, Air
Brig. Gen. Mark Kraus

Deputy Commander, JFHQ
WHO IS THIS?

Assistant Adjutant General, Training
Brig. Gen. Stephen R. Hogan

Chief of Staff, Army
Col. Ben Adams

State Command Chief Warrant Officer
Chief Warrant Officer James Simms

State Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Greg Armstrong

State Senior Enlisted Advisor, JFHQ
Command Sgt. Maj. David P. Munden

State Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air
Command Chief Master Sgt. James Smith

Staff

State Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Col. Kirk Hilbrecht

Deputy State Public Affairs Officer
David W. Altom

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Det. Commander
Capt. DesiRee L.P. Ewer

123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Officer
Maj. Dale Greer

Editor
Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson

Assistant Editor
Capt. Stephen Martin

Graphic Artists
Sgt. Taylor Curtis
Sgt. Caleb Riggs

Contributors
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Det.
Air National Guard Multimedia Specialists
Unit Public Affairs Historian Representatives

The Bluegrass Guard is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. The contents of The Bluegrass Guard are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Departments of the Army or Air Force.

The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office.

The Bluegrass Guard is distributed free to all members of the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard, retirees of the Kentucky National Guard and to other interested persons by request.

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.

Payment will not be made for contributions. Paid advertising is not accepted.
Circulation: 11,500

Corrections

Please report any corrections to:
The Bluegrass Guard
100 Minuteman Parkway
Frankfort, KY 40601
PAO@kentuckyguard.com

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
KG-133 MPAD
100 Minuteman Parkway
Frankfort, KY 40601
or: kypao@ng.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@fewpb.net.

Celebrating our military Children

Staff Report, photos by 1st Lt. Mark Slaughter

Public Affairs Office, PAO@kentuckyguard.com

The Kentucky National Guard sponsored a Military Child Appreciation Day April 28 at the American Legion Post 24 in Lawrenceburg. More than 200 children with parents in all Service branches attended the celebration.

Angie Morris, wife of Staff Sgt. Christopher Morris said she was blown away by the event.

"I have a four and six-year-old and was thinking we would only be here for 45 minutes," she said. "I was so impressed and we had a lot of fun. We ended up staying for three hours!"

There was food, games and crafts for the children as well as static displays of Kentucky Guard aircraft and equipment. 



Pfc. Scott Callahan shows Jonathan Olmsted how to properly shoot archery April 28, during the celebration for military children.



Donna Campbell and Hayley Lay show off face paint while enjoying popcorn during the Military Child Appreciation Day April 28, in Lawrenceburg, Ky.

EDITORIAL GOES HERE



By Col. Scott Campbell

149th Maneuver Enhancement Bde. Commander, scott.campbell3@us.army.mil

I need some-
one to give me
an editorial? or
i can pull one
from online
some place.
your call.



GTBXEN B VISION B X FOR KEVETS L DXBTUQM WQKBDLW

Story and photos by Sgt. Cody Stagner

133rd MPAD, pao@kentuckyguard.com

Dan Bowersox, doctor of optometry and owner of Bowersox Vision Center in Shelbyville, Ky., now offers free vision therapy for Kentucky military Veterans suffering from symptoms of traumatic brain injury.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, nearly 800 Kentucky troops were diagnosed with TBI from 2007-2011.

A variety of eye problems can be traced to TBI, such as lazy eye, crossed eyes, double vision, blurred vision, light sensitivity and reading and learning difficulties.

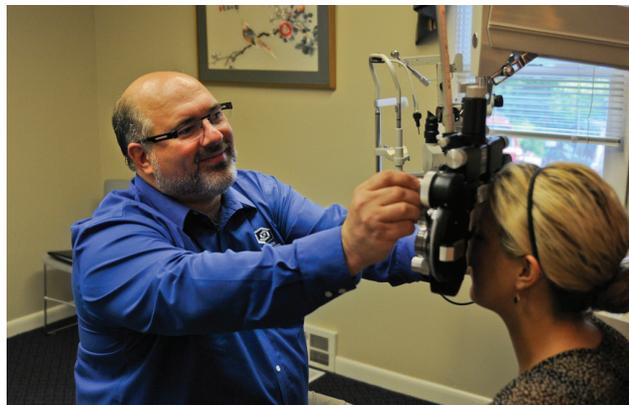
For many Veterans, neuro-optometric rehabilitation – better known as vision therapy – can address these symptoms directly and hopefully bring them back to normalcy.

“In my opinion, TBI is often under diagnosed and goes untreated,” Bowersox said.

“The ability to work depends on the ability to

see. With this program, our goal is to improve our veterans’ quality of life, so they can return to work and to their daily lives.”

Bowersox designed his vision therapy treatment outcomes for three types of patients: small children, athletes and TBI patients. According to Bowersox, children benefit with better grades following treatment, athletes experience enhanced performance and Veterans with TBI report finding some sense of normalcy to their daily lives.



Dr. Dan Bowersox tests the vision of a patient at the Bowersox Vision Center in Shelbyville, Ky. Bowersox now offers free screenings to Veterans suffering from PTSD and TBI.

“A couple months ago, I came in for a regular eye check-up when Dr. Bowersox recommended me for his program,” said Karlas Owens, retired colonel from the Kentucky Army National Guard, 238th Training Regiment. “It was kind of funny – it was like he knew every problem I was having and I didn’t even say them out loud.”

Owens retired after 34 years of service and was injured in 2003 while on



Vision therapist Jessi Drawbaugh guides retired Col. Karlas Owens through a series of vision tests. Owens' vision problems are related to injuries sustained while on duty in Afghanistan, and recently Owens received care from Bowersox Vision Center.

tour in Afghanistan with the U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division.

"I struggled with memory lapse, reading comprehension and headaches, mostly," said Owens. "It was even hard for me to go into bright stores – like Wal-Mart – without feeling uncomfortable.

"My wife was the first to notice the changes after about six weeks," Owens said. "I use to forget some of the smallest things, like remembering why it was I walked into the other room. I would walk back and forth two or three times trying to remember. The memory exercises help a lot."

Some common tools found in a typical vision therapy session might range from simple reading to challenging memory games, or from basic spatial awareness

activities to using 3-D glasses, computers, and a space fixator. All tools work to address differently attained skills but share one thing in common: they train – or retrain – the eyes and mind to focus on working together.

According to Jessi Drawbaugh, vision therapist at Bowersox Vision Center, vision isn't the only thing that improves with the TBI patients.

"I've seen the largest improvement in the social interaction and confidence of our patients," she said. "You can tell just by the way they look when they walk in and their attitudes when they leave."

Drawbaugh said those with post-traumatic stress disorder can also benefit from the vision therapy.

"It is a good thing to do if someone has PTSD, because I feel it

can decrease anxiety and frustration with life," she said.

Soldiers and Airmen are becoming more familiar with the symptoms of TBI and PTSD thanks to mandatory training on both conditions. Noticing the warning signs can help save a battle buddy. For Bowersox, he said the civilian community must recognize them too.

"There has to be more health professionals out there taking lead as part of the solution," he said. "Rather than worrying about how to pay for treatment, we keep it simple; it's a free service with no strings attached.

For more information on the Veterans Vision Therapy program, please call 502-647-3937 for details or to schedule an appointment. 



Horror in the hollers

Guardsmen respond to March tornadoes

By Spc. Brandy Mort
133rd MPAD, pao@kentuckyguard.com

Before the first winds crossed the Commonwealth of Kentucky March 2, the Kentucky National Guard made preparations to keep its Citizen-Soldiers safe and ready to assist in the event local officials would request assistance.

Once the sun rose March 3, the need for Kentucky's Guardsmen was evident across more than 40 of the 120 counties. Ten called for assistance from the Kentucky National

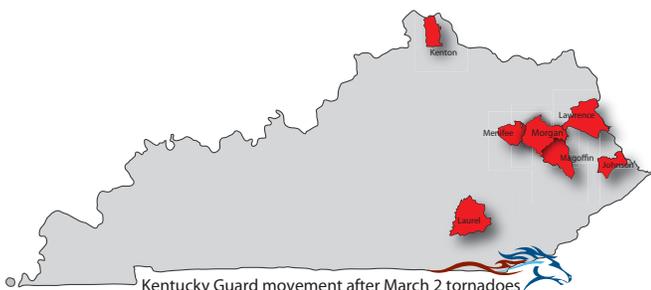
Guard: Kenton, Menifee, Morgan, Lawrence, Magoffin, Johnson and Laurel.

From the sky, in a Kentucky Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, Kentucky's Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson surveyed the damage and visited with residents in the small community of East Bernstadt, Ky., located in Laurel County.

"I've never seen anything as devastating as I saw today in this county," said Abramson. "I'm very proud of the Kentucky National Guard and how quickly they respond to these types of crises."

According to local officials Kentucky Soldiers responded quickly following Friday's storms.

"The deployment of the National Guard was one of the most timely deployments of Guardsmen I've ever seen," said Kentucky State Trooper Capt. Scott Miller, London Post 11. "The Soldiers were ready to go within hours of the disaster."



Kentucky Guard movement after March 2 tornadoes
Graphics by Sgt. Taylor Curtis/KYARNG

Following March 2 tornadoes across the Commonwealth, the Kentucky National Guard responded to seven counties to provide disaster relief.

Approximately 40 Citizen-Soldiers assigned to the 623rd Field Artillery Batteries, many who live locally to the East Bernstadt area reported for duty immediately after the storm clouds dissipated.

Staff Sgt. Joshua Matlock, Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery (HIMARS), said it was heartbreaking to see the people of his community outside what is

left of their houses.

“Unfortunately, you can’t fight mother nature,” he said.

But Matlock and the other volunteers were able to provide assistance to local authorities by pulling security, clearing debris, manning checkpoints and patrolling damaged areas.

“It’s an excellent service we have,” Matlock said of the Guard’s

ability to provide assistance during disaster relief. “If it happened to me, I’d be grateful for this help we are giving.”

The Kentucky Guard supported 220 relief efforts across for more than a week.

According to Kentucky Emergency Management, there were 13 reported tornadoes in Kentucky March 2. 🇺🇸



Surveying damages

Photo by Capt. Stephen Martin/KYARNG

A Kentucky National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter carrying Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear flies over West Liberty, Ky., March 3, to survey damages after a tornado ravaged the Eastern Kentucky community March 2.





Organizing relief

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Ketterer/KyANG

Staff Sgt. Michael Dement, 301st Chemical Company checks a listing of residences with a firefighter during search and extraction operations in West Liberty, Ky., March 3.



Photo by Rank First Last/KYARNG or KyANG

Tech. Sgt. Harold Baker, medic assigned to the KYCERFP checks for survivors in West Liberty, Ky., March 3.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson/KYARNG

Pfc. Kyle Gray provides water to a West Liberty, Ky., resident March 6, during welfare and assistance checks. Gray, along with Pfc. Mary Lewis and Sgt. Sean Durban, all of the 301st Chemical Company, were eager to get their hands dirty after assisting in the area for five days.

Guardisman credits service for saving his life

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson

Editor, gina.vaile@us.army.mil

In 2010, Kyle Gray was in a poor situation. With no place to turn, he packed up his belongings and moved from California to Kentucky and joined the National Guard.

"The Guard kinda saved my life," he said.

A year and some change later, Gray, a private

first class assigned to the Morehead, Ky.-based 301st Chemical Company, was ready to pay it forward.

"Today we got our hands on helping people," he said, wiping the dirt and sawdust on his pant legs.

Gray, along with more than 100 other soldiers assigned to the 103rd Chemi-

cal Battalion, responded to West Liberty, Ky., within hours of an EF3 tornado that ravaged the area.

"The storm wasn't far from me at all," said the Morehead resident. "We were watching the news and I was nervous. I'd never been through this before.

"I'd never seen anything like this before from this side of the TV," he said.

"You see these people suffering from losing their homes and family members and friends and all of their stuff. It's just devastating."

Gray spent the first three days after the storm conducting search and recovery operations, then patrolling the streets to ensure the power company had room to work to get power back to the area.

"All I wanted to do was help," he said.

On March 6, four

days after the storm, Gray was finally able to push back his sleeves and lend a helping hand.

"Have you ever been out in the middle of a lake and realized you couldn't swim? That's how we feel," said Thomas Coder, a disabled retired Air Force veteran.

"When you're in need, you take all the help you can get," he said. "We can relax a little knowing the Army Guard is here."

Gray helped locate large pieces of plywood from debris piles to cover some of Coder's broken windows and holes in the walls left by the tornado.

"I just thank God the Guard is here and can help me," he said.

Which is exactly the mission that Gray wanted.

"I just wanted to let people know we are here for them," he said. "That's why we are in the Guard and I enjoy it." 🇺🇸

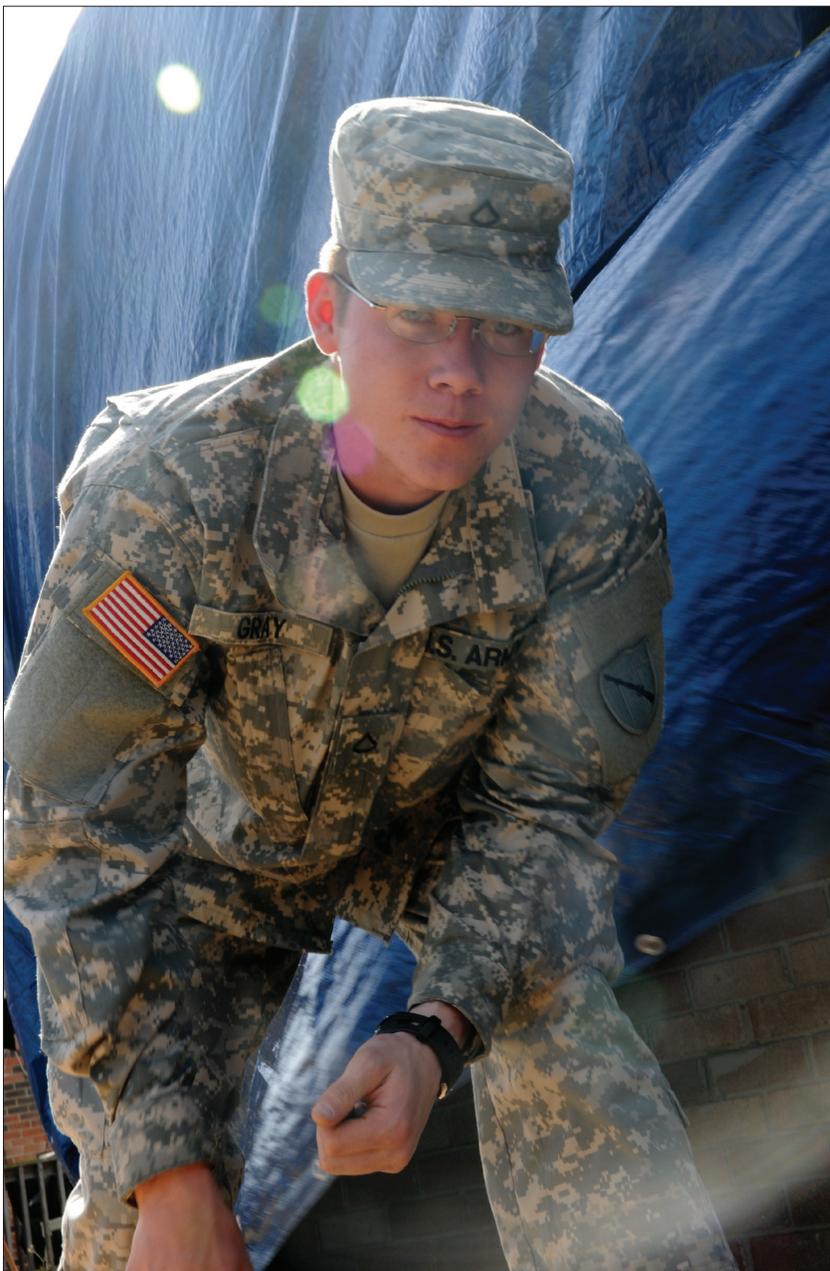
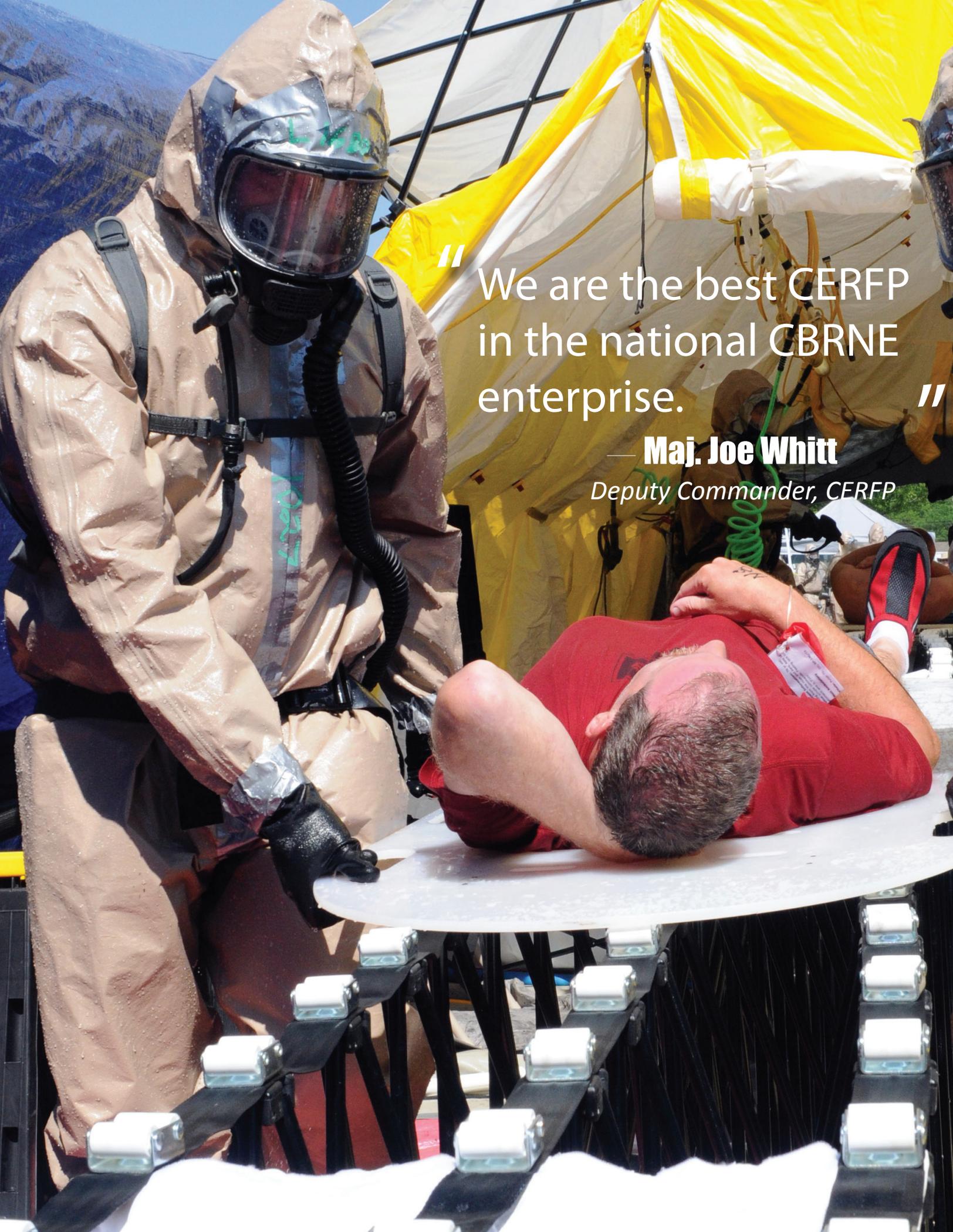


Photo by Rank First Last/KYARNG or KYANG

Pfc. Kyle Gray and Sgt. Sean Durban assist retired Air Force veteran Thomas Coder with cutting scrap wood to board up windows March 6, in West Liberty, Ky.

Pfc. Kyle Gray, 301st Chemical Company, pulls nails out of a piece of plywood, March 6, during tornado relief efforts in West Liberty, Ky.



“ We are the best CERFP
in the national CBRNE
enterprise. ”

— **Maj. Joe Whitt**

Deputy Commander, CERFP



The Kentucky National Guard is leading the way in the Chemical Biological Nuclear Radiological High-Yield Explosives field. With its newly validated CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package, the Kentucky National Guard has again set the standard, and shown the nation how successful our Unbridled Service truly is.

This is the story of the Air and Army Guardsmen who are certified to protect the Commonwealth in the event of a CBRNE incident.



CERFP shatters records, best in nation

By Pfc. Lerone Simmons
133rd MPAD, pao@kentuckyguard.com



BUTLERVILLE, Ind. - Kentucky National Guardsmen assigned to the Chemical Kentucky's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package can call themselves the nation's best after an evaluation May 24 at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Butlerville, Ind.

"This is our culmination event and we wanted to be the best CERFP in the country," said Lt. Col. Joseph H. Gardner, commander of the Kentucky National Guard's Richmond-based 103rd Chemical Battalion.

A joint-effort between Airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing, Louisville, Ky., and Army Guardsmen from the 301st Chemical Company, Morehead, Ky., 299th Chemical Company, Maysville, Ky., and 103rd Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Richmond, Ky., the CERFP is a high-speed team that must be ready to deploy within six hours of a CBRNE attack, with a mission to locate and extract victims, perform mass patient or casualty decontamination and treat and stabilize patients for evacuation.

The team was validated on its ability to perform those tasks by observer controller trainers from the Joint Interagency Training and Education Center.

"When real-world events happen, we want them to safely and efficiently get people out," said Sgt. 1st Class Jared Lane, Observer Controller Trainer, JITEC.

In the event of an attack on the Commonwealth – or one of the eight Southeastern states Kentucky would respond to – CERFP Soldiers and Airmen must prioritize and quickly react.

"We want them to have the skills necessary to correctly assess the situation, then safely rescue and transport all casualties," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Park, observer controller trainer, JITEC.

According to Maj. Joe Whitt, deputy commander of the CERFP, the team received a "T" rating, for trained in 16 collective tasks required to validate a CERFP mission.

"The raters said 'we shattered all the CERFP records,'" he said. "We had multiple best practices that the OCTs said

would be taught to all CERFPs nationwide.

"We beat all the records for the site set up, decontamination throughput, search operations and medical set-ups and treatment throughput.

"We are the best CERFP in the national CBRNE enterprise," he said.

The training and validation of Kentucky's CERFP proves that Kentucky's Citizen-Soldiers Airmen stand always ready to support the Commonwealth.

For Spc. Jason Woodruff, litter bearer, 299th Chemical Company, the CERFP team opened the door for joint-training with his Air Guard counterparts, something he wasn't able to do before CERFP.

"The more training exercises like this, the better we can react," he said.

Kentucky's top senior enlisted advisers said they are proud of the joint-efforts and the hard work the CERFP put into its validation. Command Sgt. Maj. David P. Munden, senior enlisted adviser Joint Forces Headquarters, said the certification is a big deal, and State Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory D. Armstrong agreed.

"This is one of Kentucky's greatest assets that we will greatly benefit from in the years to come," he said. 🐎



Photo by Pfc. Lerone Simmons/KYARNG

Staff Sgt. Matthew Park, Observer Control Trainer, gives instructions on proper transportation of casualties to Kentucky's CERFP Soldiers and Airmen May 23, at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center.

Treatment plan

Photo by Spc. Will Bolton/KYARNG

Spc. Trisha Earle, medic for CERFP, prepares a casualty for release during an external evaluation May 23, at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center. The CERFP was validated on its mission to respond to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks.



Senior NCO pillar of CBRNE

Kentucky's CERFP shines under leadership and knowledge

By Staff Sgt. Rebecca Wood

133rd MPAD, rebecca.e.wood@us.army.mil

Noncommissioned Officers are considered the backbone of the Army and for the Kentucky National Guard's recently certified Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear High-yield Explosive Response Force Package, one NCO in particular is known as the backbone of the Kentucky CBRNE community.

Master Sgt. Duane Miller, safety officer for CERFP, was instrumental in the development of the Kentucky National Guard's 41st Civil Support Team in the 90s. In October 2010, he did the same thing with the CERFP.

"He brings unique CST experience to the table that provides a building block for our Soldiers," said Lt. Col. Joseph H. Gardner II, commander of the 103rd Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, and CERFP commander.

"Because of him, we are ahead of the game because we didn't have to learn everything from scratch," said Gardner. "The reason why we have the best CERFP in the country is because we have people like him."

For the CERFP's evaluation May 24, Miller was responsible for identifying and validating that all sections of the CERFP met safety guidelines before reacting to the scenarios simulating a CBRNE incident.

His years of experience as a medic and operations NCO – as well as his experience as acting sergeant major of the 103rd Chemical Battalion – mean that the Soldiers on the ground stay as safe as possible while quickly reacting to an attack or incident.

"I love working with Soldiers, it's a challenge everyday," said Miller. "These guys are prepared to do their job. If and when something happens, I guarantee these guys will do the same things they trained to do. They

are ready."

And ready they should be. After flying through the evaluation, and obtaining certification as possibly the best CERFP in the nation, the Soldiers and Airmen will soon say goodbye to Miller, who says he plans on retiring after this year.

"This CERFP is my last hoorah. It's good to be going out on this note. I'm very blessed," he said.

And when the day comes that Miller no longer stands in the forma-

tion, his legacy will continue on with Kentucky's CERFP.

"I've worked with him for a long time," said Staff Sgt. Anthony Saylor, training NCO, 103rd Headquarters Battalion.

"He is like a father figure to me," he said. "When people start to stress out, he is the one saying 'calm down, everything is okay. We are going to make it through.' I will personally miss him and I know everyone else will." 



Photo by Rank Spc. Will Bolton/KYARNG

Master Sgt. Duane Miller, safety officer for Kentucky's CERFP, was instrumental in standing up the Kentucky 41st Civil Support Team in the 90s, and more recently the CERFP. His knowledge and dedication helped the CERFP receive an outstanding rating during its validation last month.

Guarding the *Derby*

Assignment puts Soldier in Winner's Circle

Story and photos by Spc. Will Bolton
133rd MPAD, pao@kentuckyguard.com



Louisville's legendary Churchill Downs hosted the Kentucky Derby May 6 for the 138th time – but for 19-year-old Pfc. Kara Denise Bucklew, a Military Policeman assigned to the 223rd Military Police Company, this was her first Run for the Roses.

"The experience has been quite enjoyable," said Bucklew. "I had the chance to meet a lot of different people and see a lot of different things that I would not normally get the chance to see if it weren't for me being here with the Kentucky National Guard."

As an MP, Bucklew was selected and charged with guarding the Kentucky Oaks and Kentucky Derby trophies on Millionaires

Row.

Valued at \$200,000, according to Ronnie Dreistadt, educator at the Kentucky Derby Museum, the trophies are awarded to the owners of the Derby winner after what is known as the fastest two minutes in sports.

"I feel like it's a great honor," said Bucklew, "it's something that a lot of people wish they could do but they haven't been granted the opportunity, so I feel very lucky."

Bucklew was in the Winner's Circle as Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear presented the 18-karat trophy to the I'll Have Another crew: J.Paul Reddam, owner, Doug O'Niell, trainer and Mario Gutierrez, jockey.

"It was awesome, I felt really important," said Bucklew.

Bucklew also said Louisville's Southern hospitality was in full force on Derby Day.

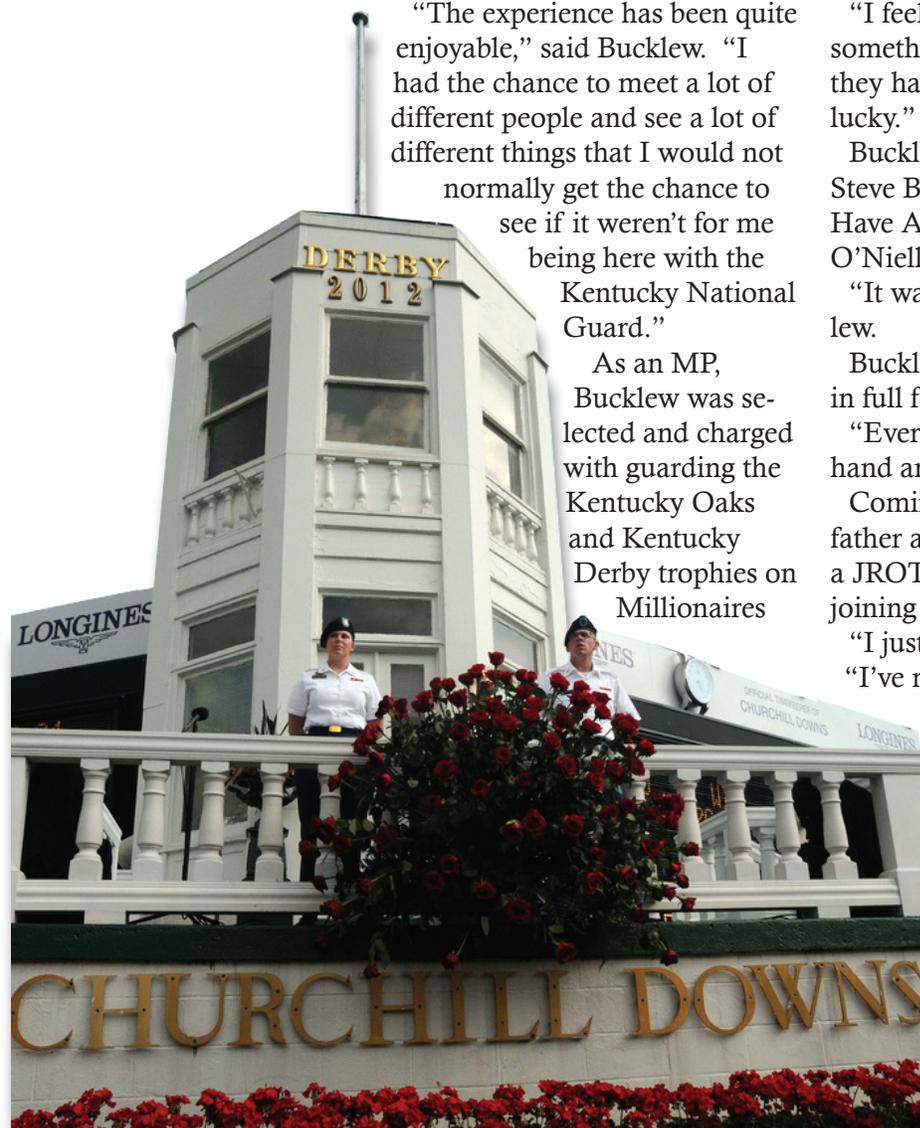
"Everyone seems to want to come up and shake my hand and say 'thank you for your service.'"

Coming from a military background where both her father and grandfather served in the U.S. Navy, Bucklew, a JROTC graduate, was influenced by the prospects of joining the armed forces.

"I just fell in love with the military," said Bucklew, "I've made a lot of friends in the National Guard and it's definitely made me a more independent person."

Bucklew said she is always enjoying new experiences in the National Guard.

"One thing is good and then the next time I'm doing something better." 



ADJUSTING FIRE

Kentucky's Firefighting Team takes on training mission

Story and photos by Petty Officer 1st Class Anthony W. Walker
Afghanistan Regional Support Command West Public Affairs

Most people would be hesitant to rush head-long into a burning building, risking their own safety to ensure the safety of others. The Soldiers of the 176th Firefighting Team, Camp Stone Detachment, not only rush into the fire, they train others to do it as well.

Deployed from their Army National Guard unit, based in Greenville,

Ky., the unit was initially assigned to Camp Bastion, Helmand Province.

Only spending one month at Camp Bastion, the team was initially sent to Camp Stone, in the western region's Herat Province, to provide support for the air operations at the camp.

"We were originally sent up to provide support for the helo operations here at Camp Stone," said Staff Sgt. Wesley LaFortune,

the team leader. "When we arrived, we found that there were other needs on camp that we could support."

One of those needs was as trainers for the Camp Stone volunteer fire brigade. After several fires on the camp and at neighboring facilities, the need for a fire brigade became evident and volunteers answered the call. The arrival of the 176th FFT several months later provided the

volunteers the opportunity to learn from professionals and the firefighters the opportunity to hone their training skills.

The training experience would better prepare the Soldiers of the FFT for their next opportunity, training the Afghan firefighters on neighboring Afghan National Army (ANA) Camp Zafar.

"Right after we arrived and got settled, the Stewardship Section lead, Lt. Col. Aleksiejus Gaizevskis (Lithuania), approached us about the possibility of training the Afghan firefighters," said Sgt. Seth Frost. "We were excited about the opportunity to interact with the Afghans and give them the skills to ensure the safety of their fellow Soldiers."

Training with the Camp Zafar fire department was not only helpful to the Afghans, the fire team also found the experience rewarding.

"It was an excellent opportunity to interact with the Afghans, learn some of their customs and show them some of ours," said Spc. Logan Brumit. "This



Staff Sgt. Wesley LaFortune and Sgt. Aaron Watts demonstrate the proper carry and assist techniques to the Afghan volunteer firefighters in Helmand Province, Afghanistan in March. The 176th Firefighting Team deployed in September in support of contingency operations.

is my first deployment and to have the opportunity to work closely with and train the Afghan firefighters was a great experience.”

For the Soldiers of the 176th FFT, the dedication and devotion to their brothers and sisters in arms and sense of selfless duty come from a long family history of military service, “My family has been Navy Seabees for three generations,” said Frost. “I initially enlisted in the Naval Reserve as a Seabee as well, and then transferred to the Army National Guard for the firefighting program.”

Spc. Matthew Stevens echoed the sentiments. “My father retired as an E-9, so I have always been surrounded by a military lifestyle, it was a natural decision to enlist once I graduated.”

Sgt. Aaron Watts, although initially enlisted with the desire to become a nurse, realized he could also help his fellow Soldiers by becoming a firefighter. “I enlisted out of respect for the service,”

Watts said. “My uncle and grandfather had served and a lot of my wife’s family had also served so enlisting was an easy decision. I wanted to do something to help others and although I originally wanted to become a nurse, fighting fires has been very rewarding and a great way to serve.”

The deployment, the first for the unit and most of the junior members, also gives junior firefighters valuable organizational experience.

“This is the first deployment for a lot of the guys,” said LaFortune.

“When we arrived, there was no established fire department, this has given our younger guys the chance to learn first-hand how



Sgt. Andres Coomer, 176th Firefighting Team prepares a hose for stowage following a training exercise in Helmand Province, Afghanistan in March. The 176th FFT is based in Greenville, Ky., and deployed in September.

to set up and organize a working fire house.”

The organizational experience, coupled with the training experience will serve the team well in their future endeavors as firefighters, both in the military as well as on civilian departments. Following a

hard day of grueling missions, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines of Camp Stone will be able to rest a little easier knowing the selflessly dedicated Soldiers of the 176 FFT have the watch while they sleep. 🇺🇸

Helping Haiti

Air Guard continues efforts started after earthquake in '10

By Master Sgt. Phil Speck

123rd Airlift Wing, pao@kentuckyguard.com

When 45 members of the Kentucky Air National Guard deployed to the Dominican Republic in 2010, they established a critical airlift hub that delivered more than 600 tons of food and medical supplies to Haitian citizens ravaged by a devastating earthquake.

Now, thanks to a humanitarian aid program run by the U.S. Agency for International Development, Airmen from the Kentucky unit are continuing to help their Haitian neighbors.

About 88,000 pounds of food and other supplies were shipped recently for palletizing and uploading to U.S. Air Force transports bound for the Caribbean island nation.

“Our piece of the mission is supporting the delivery of and subsequent airlift of cargo and supplies,” explained Chief Master Sgt. Ray Dawson, air terminal superintendent for the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron. “We assist in coordination of aircraft, buildup of cargo onto pallets for air shipment, inspection of the cargo and loading of the cargo onto aircraft for shipment.”

That effort is part of The Denton Program, an ongoing commodity transportation project jointly administered by USAID, the State Department and the Department of Defense. It allows

private U.S. citizens and organizations to use space available on U.S. military cargo planes to transport humanitarian goods at no charge, USAID officials said.

The supplies that the Kentucky Airmen prepared for shipment were provided by Children’s Lifeline, a non-profit organization based in Clay City, Ky. The group has been sponsoring humanitarian and educational efforts in Haiti since 1989, said Donald Curtis, president and CEO.

The agency feeds more than 8,300 children a day, and supports the education of 7,000 children, he said. It also teaches skills such as sewing, welding and earthquake-proof construction.

“We’ve been bringing in food, school supplies, love bundles and hygiene kits for refugees and children before there was even an earthquake,” Curtis noted. “We have a lot of kids that would have died if we hadn’t been there, and many kids that wouldn’t have an education if we weren’t there.”

Dawson said the Kentucky Air Guard has been involved with the Denton Program for several years and is pleased to continue the unit’s earlier work in Haiti.

“Our Wing was on the front line, back at the base and in the deployed location, back in 2010,” he said. “We witnessed every day the needs and struggles of the people of Haiti. The Denton Program allows us to continue the mission we started in Haiti from our home base.

“The needs of the Haitian people and other countries affected by disasters remain for years after the initial relief efforts cease,” he added. “The men and women of the Kentucky Air National Guard remain committed to providing relief to those in need, any time, anywhere.”

Curtis is grateful for the help, noting that each container shipped by military airlift saves his agency \$10,000.

“I honestly don’t know what we would do without it,” he said. “I’m thankful for the United States of America for offering this kind of program. I think it’s wonderful.”



Photo by Master Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

Staff Sgt. Raymond Graves III, an air cargo specialist with the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, secures cargo netting on a pallet of humanitarian goods bound for Haiti March 13 for Children’s Lifeline.

Air Guard pins 15th streamer of excellence

Story and photos by Maj. Dale Greer

123rd Air Wing Public Affairs Officer, pao@kentuckyguard.com

One of President Barack Obama's top advisors praised the Kentucky Air National Guard for superior achievement March 18, calling the organization "second to none" during a ceremony

honoring the 123rd Airlift Wing for winning a nearly unprecedented 15th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

Also recognized were Kentucky Air National

Guard Headquarters, which accepted its 9th Air Force Organizational Excellence Award; and the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, which received an Air Force Meritorious Unit Award from Air Force Special Operations Command.

"It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here and recognize the great accomplishments of the more than 1,200 Citizen-Airmen in the Kentucky Air National Guard," said Richard Reed, special assistant to the president for national security affairs and senior director for resilience policy. "The missions you perform are critically important to ensuring our nation's security, defense and disaster response, both at home and abroad."

The 123rd Airlift Wing's 15th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award is especially noteworthy. Research indicates that only three other units have ever earned 15 AFOUAs.

"This level of achievement is a testament to the 123rd Airlift Wing's rich legacy of service and excellence, dating back to your founding in 1947," he said. "With six Distinguished Flying Unit Plaques, three Metcalf Trophies, three 15th Air Force Solano Trophies and three Spaatz Trophies,

the 123rd Airlift Wing is among the most -- if not the most -- decorated units in the United States Air Force.

During the award period, which ran from October 2009 to September 2011, the wing deployed 741 personnel to 32 locations in 21 countries. Many were in direct combat or combat-support missions, including 150 Airmen who deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, with five of the unit's C-130 aircraft to fly airlift missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Those Airmen logged an unprecedented 100 percent mission-capable rate while flying 3,600 sorties that transported 41,000 passengers and moved 13,500 tons of cargo, including 3.5 million pounds of airdropped materiel. They also broke multiple monthly records for overall combat airdrops and amount of cargo moved in theater.

"I've had the opportunity to watch elements of this unit in action in the Dominican Republic, and I've certainly spent a fair amount of time dealing with the aftermath of events in Japan," said Reed, who leads the development of disaster-response policy at the White House. "I can tell you: At the end of the day, your work speaks for itself. In most cases, that's either a really good thing or a really bad thing. In your case, it's a damn good thing." 



Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing, pins a streamer on the wing guidon March 18, during a ceremony. The streamer represents the wing's 15th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

THUNDER's Fires

Story and photos by Spc. Will Bolton
133rd MPAD, pao@kentuckyguard.com

Always ready, Always there.

In addition to helping communities around the Commonwealth when the need arises, the National Guard also takes part in celebratory and festive events, such as Thunder Over Louisville firework show which is a big part of the Kentucky National Guard's ongoing community relations.

"If your family only shows up when something goes wrong, you don't know that they're going to be there for you when something good happens," said Army National Guard Spc. Ashley K. Thompson, a signal support systems specialist with the Headquarters Battalion 138th Fires Brigade stationed in Lexington, Ky.

Now in its 22nd year, the Thunder Over Louisville spectacle is a joint operation between all branches of the U.S. armed forces and brings military personnel and civilians together in one place to share a great experience. The National Guard plays a special role in this event by helping to kick off the countdown to the Kentucky Derby.

Kentucky Army National Guard Master Sgt. Bradley R. Harland, the marketing non-commissioned officer for the 2/75th Recruiting Battalion stationed in Frankfort, Ky., said larger events, such as Thunder Over Louisville, offer a unique opportunity for the National Guard to reach out to the community and show gratitude for its' support.

As Citizen-Soldiers, many Guardsmen have strong ties to their local communities as well as other communities around the state. This give and take of support and gratitude mimics the relationship of a family.

"It makes the Guard visible to the public and presents a positive image," said Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Timothy L. Crump, a forward observer for artillery with the 138th Fires Brigade stationed in Lexington Ky. "When people see the National Guard, they think safety and comfort. I think they appreciate that." 🦅





65 years of music, morale

Army Band hosts reunion weekend, celebrates with former members

By Sgt. 1st Class Steve Baker
 202nd Army Band UPAHR, kypao@ng.army.mil

The Kentucky Army National Guard's 202nd Army Band celebrated 65 years of music May 20, with a public concert at Kentucky State University in Frankfort.

The concert featured 19 former 202nd Band members who played with the current members. More than 20 former musicians came home to Frankfort from as far away as Michigan and Florida to attend the anniversary celebration.

"The reunion weekend was a wonderful chance to return to my military family," said retired Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Wallace. "The friendship and music were very special."

The Band played a special tribute to the 108 Kentuckians who have fallen in the Global War on Terrorism.

The 202nd Army Band is looking for musicians to fill the following chairs: trombone, euphonium, French horn, oboe and keyboard. For more information contact Sgt. 1st Class Angela Wilkins at 502-607-5331 or angela.wilkins@us.army.mil.



Members of the 202nd Army Band celebrate 65 years of music at the Kentucky Capitol.

Photo Submitted



Photo Submitted

Former members of the 202nd Army Band: Richard Houghton, Steve Flood, Suzie Kinman, Sharon McGuire Belize, Courtney Spragens, Phil Johnston, Jason Green, John Whalen, Doris Corcoran, Doug Begley, Jim Barber, Linda Allen, Brian Gorrell, Michael Bonza, David Adewli, John Hoover, Dan Long and Ron Baker attend the May 20, anniversary concert of the 202nd Army Band.

Facebook Fan Page

Log on to Facebook and join the 202nd Army Band's page

Look for us on
 your favorite
 Social Media and
 follow us at:

www.kentuckyguard.com

