

The Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 15, Issue 4 - September 2012

Serving the

and Air National Guard



CULTIVATING
a new Afghanistan

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Kentucky NATIONAL GUARD
Unbridled Service

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@kentuckyguard.com.

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

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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.



Kentucky Guardsman Sgt. David Gurule, 20th Special Forces Group, gives a fist bump to a camper at the Kentucky National Guard 4H Youth Camp at Lake Cumberland in Nancy, Ky. Family programs partnered with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, University of Kentucky Agriculture and 4H for the 10th annual youth camp July 20-25. Nearly 200 campers gathered on the shores for a full week of outdoor activities and fellowship.

ENGAGE YOUR COMRADES

The questions you ask, or fail to ask could make a difference



By Command Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelinski-Hall

Senior Enlisted Leader, National Guard Bureau

Every National Guard Soldier and Airman is a valued and important member of the team.

The National Guard is the "home-town team" embedded in communities throughout the United States, territories and the District of Columbia.

The loss of one member cuts to the core of our formations, Families and

the community in which we live.

Although difficult, it's understandable when we lose a servicemember to combat-related injuries, accidents or natural causes. What is not understandable is the loss of life to suicide.

I am asking all Soldiers and Airmen to look out for their fellow comrades-in-arms. Take a few moments and ask the tough questions, get to know your people, listen and watch for signs of distress.

The leading causes of suicide are broken relationships and financial burdens.

As leaders, when you hear about a broken or failed relationship or financial strains, you need to engage immediately. Your direct involvement could make the difference in a Soldier or Airman's life – the difference could be their life.

As a military organization, there are many resources available to help single or married Soldiers, Airmen and families. To name a few, each state has a director of psychological services, chaplain corps and a Military One Source coordinator; they are all ready and eager to assist. The state, brigade and wing Family Readiness personnel have great financial resources to assist with budgeting and financial matters.

All of these services are critically important, but the first responsibility to look out for Soldiers and Airmen lies with us – their leaders.

When it's all boiled down, it's very simple – we have but two jobs: accomplishing the mission and the welfare of our people.

In this age of text messaging, BlackBerries and e-mail, we must not forget that none of these technologies will ever replace the face-to-face, one-on-one contact with our Soldiers and Airmen.

The one question you ask or forget to ask could literally mean the life or death of one of our Guardmembers.

I know your qualities as leaders and your compassion for your Soldiers, Airmen and their Families, and I

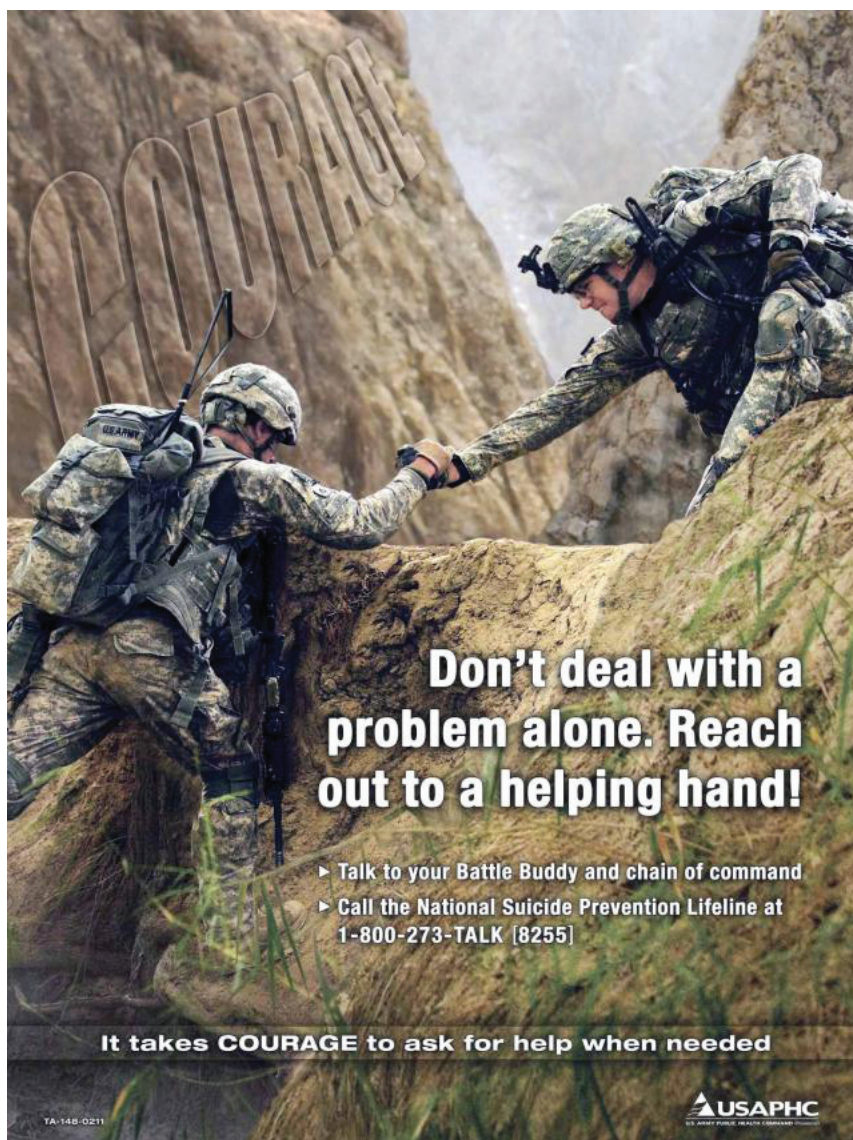
know you will do whatever it takes to help them.

If you as a servicemember or as the spouse/significant other are struggling, please reach out to someone who can help. There is no shame in asking for help – everyone needs a little assistance once in a while.

The loss of one Soldier, Airman or Family member is one too many. We need you – you are important to your Family, the National Guard and to your community.

Taking care of our most valued resource is job one – stay strong.

May God bless you and the United States of America.



Graphic provided by Army G1

Resilience: *Required training that's more than a check-the-block*

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

When the Army required resilience training as a mandatory task, one more certification was required in order to teach it- Resilience Trainer Assistant.

"We put on these classes and I can see that the Soldiers are hungry for this material," said 1st Lt. Rob Cooley, resilience program manager.

"People love this training they want this training," he said. "I go back review the AARs and see nothing but positive."

Positive because resilience training isn't your typical 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Soldiering. Students wear civilian attire and are encouraged to get in touch with their emotions and feelings. Using positive psychology methods, students discuss issues and ways to solve them using techniques and skills taught in the course.

"I think this course is going to help me most in my marriage," said Staff Sgt. Rebecca Roberts, 223rd Military Police Company. "I've learned not to think that people – my husband – can mind-read."

The four-day course included guest speakers Michael Hayes, a Wounded Warrior and current Ohio Valley Wrestler, and Patrick Henry Hughes, a national spokesperson for resilience.

"Guest speakers with a resilient background solidify our message," Cooley said. "Michael Hayes was someone our Soldiers can relate to. He lost his leg and suffered emotional and physical injuries from combat.

"Patrick Henry Hughes and his father are an inspiration to all of us," he said. "Their stories push that resilient message back to our Soldiers."

Students of the course also experienced a day in Louisville "hunting for the good things," in life.

"It was a way for Soldiers to slow down and recognize all the good that is out there to shift their thoughts to positive," Cooley said.

For Spc. Isaac Rhodes, a military policeman with the 223rd MPs, it was an excellent experience.

"My number one takeaway is putting it into




Staff Sgt. John Hought, 223rd Military Police Company, and Sgt. Milford Adkins, Det. 1, 149th Engineers, point to U.S. bases they've been to on the world map at the Island's Exhibit at the Louisville Zoo July 17. The two Kentucky Guardsmen hunted the good things during a resilience exercise for the Guard's resilience program. While the training is mandatory for Soldiers, leaders say the knowledge gained during training will help Soldiers on and off the battlefield.



Kentucky Guardsmen from across the Commonwealth attended the Resilience Training Assistant Course July 16-19 at the Louisville Air Guard Base. Ohio Valley Wrestling star Michael Hayes, a Wounded Warrior, was guest speaker at the training.

perspective," he said.

"If you take it and break it down and see what the problem is it's usually pretty easy to fix it," he said. "And always remember to look for the positives." 

Signature of support

By Tech Sgt. Jason Ketterer

Visual Information, pao@kentuckyguard.com

In April, Gov. Steve Beshear signed into law several bills benefitting Kentucky Veterans and Families of the Kentucky National Guard.

"These bills address several serious concerns affecting Kentucky's Citizen-Soldiers and our Veterans," Governor Beshear said.

"My thanks and congratulations to the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Military Affairs, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, the Kentucky's Circuit Court Clerks and the Tourism Cabinet for their cooperation and hard work in making all of these a reality," he said.

Provisions of the new laws will include financial assistance for Guard Families to adopt children; changes to the Military Family Assistance Trust Fund board to include the appointment of a member of the Kentucky National Guard; salary supplement continuation for police officers who are called to active duty service; Veteran's designation on drivers licenses; establishment of an Iraq and Afghanistan War Memorial Committee and requirements

for Prisoner of War and Mission in Action flags purchased or displayed by public institutions to be manufactured in the United States.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Ketterer/KYANG

Ellie Maggard helps Gov. Steve Beshear sign into law a provision that gives financial aid to Kentucky National Guard Families seeking to adopt children. Ellie is the adopted daughter of Freddie and Chief Warrant Officer Jennifer Maggard.

"The men and women of the Kentucky National Guard are grateful for the support of our Commander-in-Chief, Gov. Beshear, the legislature and the citizens of the Commonwealth for the creation of these laws," said Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general for Kentucky.

"Today's bill signing shows that we have identified several critical needs and have in turn taken direct and effective action to support our Citizen-Soldiers and

Airmen," he said. "Whether they are deployed overseas or supporting our communities here at home, our troops can proudly say that Kentucky is indeed committed to the welfare of the National Guard Family."

For Chief Warrant Officer Jennifer Maggard and her husband Freddie, community outreach coordinator for the Kentucky National Guard, the Guard Family and adoption are both close to their hearts.


"As the mother of an adopted child I can tell you that this bill really hits home," said Jennifer, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot.

"Adoption will become much easier for Guard Families after today's signing," she said April 16 after the celebration at the Capital.

The law will entitle active members of the

Kentucky National Guard to receive reimbursement for a portion of the costs incurred during the adoption process. Qualifying members of the Guard may be eligible for up to \$5,000 to off-set adoption costs of special needs children and up to \$3,000 for a regular adoption. The law took effect July 12.

Citizen-Soldiers who leave their street patrols in the community for the streets of Afghanistan or other duties while on active orders will still receive their Kentucky Law Enforcement Foundation Program Fund salary supplement.

"It is a great help to law enforcement families during deployments," said Guardsman Staff Sgt. Randy Charles, a member of the Frankfort Police Department. "It's good to know that the citizens of Kentucky support police officers who wear the military uniform." 

“

As the mother of an adopted child, I can tell you that this bill really hits home.

— **Chief Warrant Officer Jennifer Maggard**

UH-60 Blackhawk pilot, 63rd TAB

”

Wing gets new commander

By Maj. Dale Greer

123rd Air Wing PAO, pao@kentuckyguard.com

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Col. Warren H. Hurst has been selected as the next commander of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky's adjutant general announced Aug. 7.



Col. Warren H. Hurst

Hurst will replace Col. Gregory L. Nelson, who was named deputy director of strategic plans and policy at the National

Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C. A formal change-of-command ceremony is scheduled to take place at the Air Guard Base in Louisville on Sept. 16.

"The Kentucky Air National Guard has placed great emphasis on building a great bench of leaders capable of maintaining our position as the best airlift wing in the nation," Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini said in making the announcement. "Colonel Hurst will

continue Kentucky's national reputation of unequaled excellence and unbridled service into the future."

Hurst has served for the past five years as commander of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Contingency Response Group, a unit designed to be an early responder in the event of a terrorist attack, natural disaster or other major emergency anywhere within a 400-mile radius of Louisville. The group also is capable of supporting military contingency operations worldwide.

Described as an "airbase in a box," the 123rd CRG has all the personnel, training and equipment needed to deploy to a remote site, open a runway and establish airfield operations so that aid or troops can begin to flow into affected areas. Unit members' training, experience and equipment — including immediate access to the Kentucky Air Guard's C-130 aircraft — mean they can deploy rapidly in any contingency situation to quickly establish initial operating capabilities for humanitarian or military airlift.

The 123rd CRG is one of only 10 CRGs in the entire Air Force and the first fully operational CRG in the Air National Guard.

Tonini credited Hurst's leadership of the unit for setting a new standard of excellence in the disaster-response community and for "developing policy in this high-profile mission area."

Hurst is a command pilot who has flown C-130 combat, combat-support and humanitarian relief operations worldwide while serving for the active duty Air Force and Air National Guard. He has participated in numerous missions, including Operations Provide Promise, Restore Hope, Provide Relief, Joint Forge, Coronet Oak, Red Flag-Alaska, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Prior to assuming command of the 123rd CRG, Hurst served a three-year temporary duty tour on the Tanker Airlift Control Center Battle Staff at Air Mobility Command Headquarters, Scott Air Force Base, Ill. He also has an extensive background in planning and executing expeditionary airlift operations worldwide. Hurst coordinated civil-military air relief efforts during the 2010 Haiti earthquake and served as deputy director of mobility forces to the Pacific Air Forces commander in response to the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis in Japan. 🇺🇸

Kentucky Airman selected for prestigious NGB award for safety

Kentucky Air National Guard Lt. Col. Todd Lally, chief of the 123rd Airlift Wing Safety Office, is the 2011 National Guard Bureau's Air National Guard Outstanding Individual for Flight Safety Award.

The award is presented annually to the top safety professional in the Air National Guard.

According to Col. John D. Slocum, director of safety for NGB, Lally surpassed his peers in showing his exemplary commitment to safety.

"His far-reaching contributions in leading various Safety Investigation Boards has helped improve procedural operations across the Air Force," Slocum said.





FILLING THE FLEET

Bluegrass State gets two C-130s from Volunteers after reassignment

By Maj. Dale Greer

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

The 123rd Airlift Wing added a ninth C-130 to its stable of aircraft July 25 when the unit took delivery of a Hercules transport from the Tennessee Air Guard, and officials expect a 10th plane to arrive here by the end of August.

Both aircraft have been reassigned from the Nashville-based 118th Airlift Wing, which is converting its mission from tactical airlift to remotely piloted aircraft, intelligence and cyber warfare, according to the National Guard Bureau. Other Nashville C-130s are being sent to the Georgia Air Guard's 165th Airlift Wing and the 156th Airlift Wing in Puerto Rico.

It's not clear how long Kentucky will get to keep the aircraft, and no additional manning or funding is initially being provided with the airframes, said Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

But Nelson said he's pleased Kentucky was chosen to receive the aircraft. The 123rd originally had 12 C-130s before losing four to another Air Force-wide redistribution plan in 2005.

"The National Guard Bureau knows that we are interested in growing our wing, and they know we have all the facilities and infrastructure to go back to 12 airplanes," Nelson said.

"We look to use these additional aircraft in support of both Air Mobility Command and National Guard Bureau missions. Every time they give us an aircraft, we're going to fly it, we're going to do the mission and we're going to demonstrate every single day that we're ready to grow our wing."

The Tennessee planes, which once served as WC-130 weather reconnaissance aircraft, are currently configured as Super E models, Nelson said.

Their avionics, radar systems and communications equipment differ from those of Kentucky's H-model C-130s, but the propulsion systems are identical.

Personnel from the 118th Airlift Wing are providing local training here to familiarize Kentucky Airmen with the airframe differences, which Nelson called "minimal." 🦋



Photo by Master Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

Tennessee Air National Guard Master Sgt. Roy Roberts, flight engineer, 118th Airlift Wing, Nashville, Tenn., points out some differences of an older C-130 Hercules to Sgt. Daniel Wormley, a flight engineer for the 165th Airlift Squadron, Kentucky National Guard July 26.

reaches out to Guardsmen, combats unemployment numbers

By Sgt. David Bolton

Assistant editor, david.william.bolton@us.army.mil

Anyone who has ever been job hunting knows that there are numerous obstacles to overcome when trying to secure that perfect position. Finding a company that is accepting applications, meeting the qualification and education expectations, having a well-rounded resume, preparing for an interview, and inquiring about career advancements in the field.

For Kentucky National Guardsmen, there can also be the added dilemma of seeking an employer who understands the military commitment required of them. In all these cases, the Kentucky committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is there to assist Service members and their Families.

"ESGR is an agency that can make the Soldier's return (from deployment) easier in terms of returning to employment," said Harry T. Wiley, State Public Affairs Officer for Kentucky's ESGR committee. "We work with employers and with military Guardsmen and Reservists in Kentucky to find better jobs for Service members who are underemployed or unemployed."

ESGR is a Department of Defense agency that works to gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers. Programs are important because they help to maintain and provide stability for all.

"Our goal with the Employment Initiative Program, is to help Service members and their spouses to stabilize, through gainful employment, the guard and reserve as a community-based defense force in each state," said retired Kentucky Army National Guard Col. Phil Miller, Program Support Specialist for Kentucky ESGR.

ESGR is improving by hosting functions such as Job fairs and Employment Assistance Workshops where attendees can work on resume writing, interview skills, job searches, networking, and effective communication techniques.

"We've had a number of people hired on the spot at these

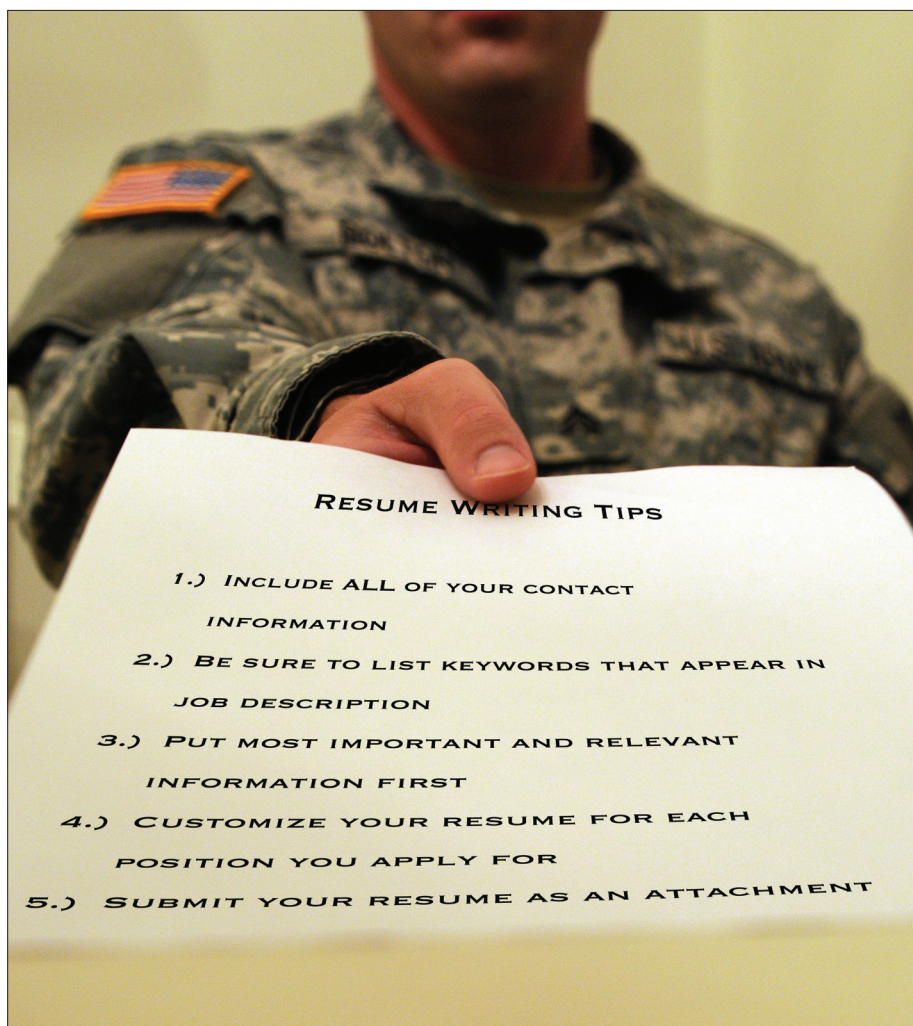


Photo Illustration by Sgt. David Bolton/KYARNG

job fairs," said Miller. "That's the biggest thing is to match the expectations of the Service members with the expectations of the employers."

Currently there are between 50 and 60 companies working with ESGR in job fairs to connect Soldiers and Airmen with employment opportunities. After the job fairs in Lexington and Louisville, Miller said that they were tracking an 80 percent success rate at the 90-day mark of having military personnel employed.

Employers can be recognized by the employee or employee Family member for their support of military employees. Awards include Patriotic Award, Above and Beyond,

Kentucky National Guard Unemployment Rates

Compared to State and National Averages = 1%

National Unemployment Rate: 8.2%



Kentucky Unemployment Rate: 8.3%



National Iraq/Afghanistan Veteran Unemployment Rate: 9.5%



Kentucky National Guard Unemployment Rates: 18.6%



By the Numbers

At the last Hiring our Heroes job fair July 24, ESGR made it a mission to combat the Kentucky National Guard's unemployment rating. Here's how:

- 46:** Employers present
- 59:** Estimated hires over the next year
- 140:** Registered attendees
- 283:** Resumes accepted
- 973:** Seeker/employer interactions

**Numbers do not reflect full-time students*

Statistics courtesy of US Department of Labor and ESGR

Graphic Illustration by Sgt. David Bolton/KYARNG

ProPatria, and the Freedom Award.

ESGR Ombudsmen work with employers and Service members as a liaison to provide information about employee rights under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act laws in instances where service related issues arise.

"We can serve as an independent third party who can help both the Soldier and the employer know more about their respective responsibilities," said Wiley. "ESGR helps negotiate settlements between parties which helps avoid conflict."


For more information about resume and interview tips, go to: www.h2h.jobs or www.e3.ky.gov. To see jobs posted by ESGR, visit the KYESGR Facebook page at Kentucky Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. 



Photo submitted by National College

Kentucky National Guardsmen, along with Service members from other branches, converged on the Hire Our Heroes Job Fair in Florence, Ky., July 24. More than 150-job seekers connected with local employers at the event sponsored by the Kentucky Office of Employment and Training, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve, Kentucky Department of Labor Vets and Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.





SOWING *the seeds of Afghanistan's* FUTURE

Compiled by ADT4 Public Affairs

pao@kentuckyguard.com

When Kentucky National Guard Agribusiness Development Team 4's Capt. Varinka Ensminger organized a training program for Afghan women, she didn't know how quickly it would grow.

"We came up with a class list and weekly we would have between 10-to-12 women who would come in and seek training for a couple of hours," she said.

Topics included agricultural disciplines and plants, building garden boxes, proper watering techniques, composting, mulching and diseases that affect the plants grown in the region.

As Ensminger took down notes of what the women needed to learn, she would prepare the next class.

"They asked questions, and we would cater the next week on things they wanted to learn," she said.

It included topics about women's rights and the local laws.

The Q&As led to the Kentucky Team learning more about the women of the region.

"We found that a lot of them were farmers and widows," Ensminger said.

"They would grow okra and tomatoes," she said.

But as Ensminger and the ADT4 Sol-

■ Continued on next page

diers would teach the women, they wanted more.

"It was gratifying to know that these women wanted to come and they were willing to risk their lives," she said.

SAVING THE SEEDLINGS

With the women came children. Lots of them.

"It started out with five and we ended up with almost 35 kids in one day," Ensminger said. "So it took some extra resources from the ag team to help out."

Enter Specialists Emily Baldwin and Michael Hilario. Accompanied by armed escorts and provided with the use of a classroom in the district, the two became champions for the children.

The Guardsmen passed out supplies to the children. They received supplies, books, radios and curriculum books under the third grade level.

Soldiers, with the help of translators, provided instruction on the Pashtu alphabet, translations to English and numbers, and a weekly radio program while the children's

mothers attended the training provided by Ensminger.

"It became a literacy program for the children," Baldwin said.

So much so that local men would bring their children to experience the organized training and structure because local schools were closed.

According to Ensminger, Baldwin was key to the children's program.

"I enjoyed working with the kids," she said.

After the instruction, coloring books were distributed and

the Soldiers would teach the children how to color. And Baldwin said a little more of Kentucky than just the long rifle patch was injected into the program.

"We tried to teach them horseshoes. That was awesome," she said.

"They loved what we were helping them do," she said.

"They could tell that we were making progress and a commitment to them."



Photo by Capt. Varinka Ensminger /KYARNG

Spc. Courtney Stewart, ADT4, assists a child with a new backpack during a distribution of school supplies in southern Afghanistan April 7.



Photo by Spc. Emily Baldwin /KYARNG

Spc. Michael Hilario, ADT4, assists an Afghan child with the alphabet April 28. Hilario worked with the children as their mothers attended agricultural development training.



Photo by Spc. Courtney Stewart /KYARNG

Spc. Emily Baldwin goes over the Pashtu alphabet with a young Afghan girl in Southern Afghanistan April 14. Baldwin volunteered to assist with a children's program after more than 30 children accompanied their mother to training provided by Kentucky ADT4's Capt. Varinka Ensminger.

Milkin' 101

Dairy projects teach Afghans the importance of treated milk

By Sgt. Paul Evans

ADT4 UPAHR, pao@kentuckyguard.com



Photo by Sgt. Paul Evans/KYARNG


Staff Sgt. Chris Campbell and Capt. David Liciardello unpack milk sterilization supplies in southern Afghanistan July 5. The Agribusiness Development Team 4 conducted dairy training in the Zharay District, Kadnahr Province, to educate farmers about potential diseases from untreated milk.

The Kentucky National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team 4 recently educated residents in Zharay District, Kandahar Province about the importance of removing diseases from the milk supply.

"Dairy is an important part of the Afghan culture, as well as nutrition," said Capt. David Liciardello, veterinarian advisor. "The milk here is not processed, so there's a large amount of disease transferred, particularly to children."

Brucellosis, a disease that affects multiple organs, the heart and joints, is a major concern with unpasteurized milk. The Kentucky Soldiers spent six days providing information to the Afghan farmers on how to sterilize the milk and clean cattle to avoid passing the disease.

The farmers were provided milking kits to help them with the dairy production.

"They've also been told how to feed their cows better so they get higher production for more milk," he said, which will bring more profits to the district farmers. 

Security Force escorts Animal Planet film crew



Photo by Sgt. Paul Evans/KYARNG

Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Dunning answers questions from Cico Silva while Scott Stoneback films footage for an Animal Planet program. The film crew gathered footage of military working dog teams.

The Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team 4's Security Force was tasked with providing escort protection for the Animal Planet's Ten100 production company while it filmed footage for an upcoming show that highlights military working dogs.

Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Dunning was primary security guard for the military working dog team.

"They were a great bunch of guys," he said. "It was a good experience for us."

Sgt. Charles Nelson and his working dog Zack will be featured in the show, but are already like Family to the ADT4 team.

"Zack's been with us on several missions, and so has Sgt. Nelson," Dunning said. "It's a great morale booster for the guys and he does his job well."

A lasting legacy

40 years of service to the Kentucky Guard comes to a close

By David Altom

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office, david.altom@us.army.mil

When Joe Wilkins joined the Kentucky National Guard in 1960, he had no idea that the path he began would lead him to playing a key role in Kentucky's military legacy. After a one-year mobilization during the Berlin Crisis and selling men's clothing while attending college, he thought his military career would be short-lived.

"When I joined the Guard it was my intent to serve three years and get out," said Wilkins. "My best friend who joined with me followed through with our plan."

But fate had other plans for him. Wilkins, who recently retired as the civilian director of facilities for the Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, was a major influence in the development of the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center, the Guard's flagship training site in the Western Kentucky, as well as Bluegrass Station in Central Kentucky.

Often referred to as the "NTC of the East" – a reference to the National Training Center in California – WHFRTC is a 12,000-acre facility built on reclaimed strip mine land in Muhlenberg County. Where temporary shacks and house trailers once stood, a fully equipped and dynamic military installation is now in full swing, complete with multiple classroom buildings, shooting ranges, maintenance and long-term storage facilities as well as a mess hall and medical station. Thousands of Kentucky National Guard troops, active duty members from all branches of service and even civilians have trained at the facility.

"I have to credit Major General Bob DeZarn for his vision to make a lot of my dreams for the Wendell Ford Training Center become reality," said Wilkins. "I am grateful to all of the professionals that I've worked with, from our troops and state employees to agencies like the state finance cabinet. I've been fortunate to work with a lot of good people."

Bluegrass Station was an economic development project taken on by the department in the wake of closing down the old Lexington-Bluegrass Depot Activity. Under Wilkins' tenure there the facility's occupancy grew to more than 90 percent, attracting military contractors and

equipment redistribution programs and bringing thousands of jobs to Kentucky. "We did a lot of great things at both of those facilities," said Wilkins. "It was a lot of hard work, but it was fun and it brought prestige to the National Guard and the state of Kentucky."

Brig. Gen. Mike Richie, assistant adjutant general, said that Wilkins' wisdom and leadership were instrumental to his success.

"Joe has a fatherly leadership style that is authentic and persuasive," said Richie. "He was able to see the big picture, put together all of the pieces and then convince you this was the right thing to do. The proof is in his legacy at the Wendell Ford Training Center and what he did at Bluegrass Station."

"It has been my privilege to have been nurtured and mentored by Joe," said State Command Sgt. Maj. Greg Armstrong. "I have long admired his positive actions and gentle professional manner. He has provided countless positive impacts on Kentucky Guardsman from young enlisted to our most senior general officers during his career."

Wilkins' legacy with the Kentucky Guard lives on with his sons, Lt. Col. Brent Wilkins, Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Wilkins, his daughter Spc. Susan Wilkins and daughter-in-law Sgt. 1st Class Angela Wilkins. But for now, Wilkins plans to keep busy in his retirement.

"I'm looking forward to spending time with my hobby, collecting and repairing antique clocks and traveling about these great United States with my wife, Frances." 🇺🇸



Joe Wilkins



Photo by Dave Altom/KYARNG

Brig. Gen. Mike Richie congratulates Joe Wilkins during a retirement ceremony at Boone National Guard Center Aug. 8. Wilkins was honored for more than 40 years of service to the Kentucky National Guard.

Welcome home 1204th



Photo by Sgt. Scott Raymond/KYARNG

By Capt. Stephen Martin

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FLORENCE, Ky. — The Kentucky National Guard honored 225 Soldiers from the 1204th Aviation Support Battalion returning from Kuwait Aug. 18, at a welcome home Ceremony at the Florence Freedom Baseball Field in Florence, Ky.

“These Soldiers served honorably,” said Lt. Col. Tom Roach, 1204th ASB Commander. “From Iraq to Kuwait to Qatar to Jordan and Afghanistan, they’ve added to the historic legacy of the Kentucky National Guard.”

While in country, the 1204th’s mission was to provide logistical, maintenance and signal support for military operations in the Persian Gulf Region.

Spc. Daniel Morrison, from Florence, Ky., deployed with the Headquarters Support Co., 1204th ASB and couldn’t wait to get back to his family.

“It feels great to be home, to see

trees and grass, not the sand blowing in your face all day,” said Morrison.

“First thing I want to do is get a nice, fat steak.”

The 1204th ASB is made up of more than 600 Soldiers from Kentucky, Alabama, Florida and Maryland. The unit departed Kentucky Aug. 26, 2011 and spent several weeks at Fort Hood, Texas before deploying to Kuwait.

“From the recovery of millions of dollars worth of equipment from Iraq, to sustaining air operations in theater, to providing world class medical care to troops over-


seas, the 1204th exceeded all expectations and showcased the Kentucky Guard like never before,” said Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general of Kentucky. 



Photo by Sgt. Scott Raymond/KYARNG

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general of Kentucky, speaks to the Soldiers of the 1204th Aviation Support Battalion during a welcome home ceremony at the Florence Freedom Baseball stadium in Florence, Ky., Aug. 18. The Soldiers spent nearly one year in the Persian Gulf in support of Operations New Dawn and Enduring Freedom.



Worth their weight in Gold

By Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney
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FRANKFORT, Ky.- Eleven second lieutenants raised their right hands and swore an oath of office to become the Kentucky National Guard's newest officers at the Kentucky State Capitol in Frankfort, Ky., Aug. 25.

Officer Candidate class 54-12 endured a rigorous 18-month training program in order to graduate as the new group of Kentucky National Guard leaders. The officer candidates were tested in key areas such as physical fitness, leadership abilities, land navigational skills, and operational orders.

"The hardest part of the OCS program is definitely the mental aspect," said distinguished honor graduate 2nd Lt. Martin A. Goldey. Goldey was presented with the Erickson Trophy for

attaining the highest overall standing in leadership, academics and the Commandant's evaluation in the class. The Erickson Trophy is awarded in honor of retired Maj. Gen. Edgar C. Erickson, former Chief of the National Guard Bureau. Each state's officer candidate school grants the trophy annually.

Other awards included:

Physical Fitness Award Second Lt. Donald Prysi for the highest score on the Army Physical Fitness Test

National Guard Association of Kentucky Award Second Lt. Carson Gregory for the highest academic average


Association of the U.S. Army plaque Second Lt. Christopher Cook for leadership standards

Class 54-12 President 2nd Lt. Scott A. Hill said finishing the OCS program

meant a great deal for him. While he's held leadership roles as a teacher and volleyball coach, he said but nothing compared to having the opportunity to lead his fellow Soldiers in the Kentucky National Guard.

"I can't think of anything more honorable than serving one's country as an officer in the United States Army, especially the Kentucky National Guard," said Hill.

The traditional custom of having friends and Family pin the newly promoted officers was observed and each Soldier designated one non-commissioned officer to render their first salute.

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Kentucky's adjutant general, served as the keynote speaker for the graduation ceremony, while the 202nd Army Band participated by playing both the National Anthem and "My Old Kentucky Home." 

Faded Glory

Remembering the forgotten war

Story and photos by Sgt. David Bolton
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Banners hang from a street lamp in the city of Chatam-Kent, Ontario July 9, 2012. The banners draw attention to the two centuries of peace that Canada and America have enjoyed since the end of the War of 1812.

With the War of 1812 Bicentennial fast approaching, Kentucky State Command Historian John Trowbridge set out to visit and document a number of historic sites important to Kentucky's involvement in the war.

Traveling to several battlefields and posts throughout Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and even Canada, Trowbridge sought to gain a better understanding of the impact that this war had on the Commonwealth.

Working with other historians, local experts, and government officials, Trowbridge reviewed old documents, photos, and accounts of the men who served their country 200 years ago. From the battles in New Orleans to the bloody campaigns in the old northwest territories of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana, all

the way to the northern battles of Canada, the Kentucky militia fought to protect America and its citizens.

In addition to understanding the significance of the role Kentucky militiamen played in the war, Trowbridge has begun work to locate the gravesites of fallen Kentucky militiamen and is trying to repatriate the remains back to Kentucky. Placing markers showing Kentucky's role in the War of 1812 is also a goal of Trowbridge.

Documenting the historical impact of the precursor to the modern-day National Guard is an on-going process. To read more about Trowbridge's travels and the journey to understand the significance of the Kentucky National Guard to the War of 1812, check out the three-part series entitled 1812 Bicentennial on kentuckyguard.com.



Historians from Kentucky and Canada, as well as local Canadian contributing members, review documents which may lead to the possible burial sites of Pvt. William Hardwick and Pvt. Foster Bartlett, two Kentucky Militia Service members killed during the War of 1812. The meeting took place at the old armory at Fort Malden in Amherstburg, Ontario July 9, 2012.



One of two cannons located inside the confines of Fort Meigs in Perrysburg, Ohio that were used as anti-enemy artillery for the Americans during the War of 1812.

307th ready for transition



Unit ready to apply training and hit the ground running

By Sgt. Dale Elliott

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CAMP DODGE, Iowa – Sacrificing being with their Family on Mother’s Day, Soldiers of the 307th Component Repair Company maintained high standards at this year’s annual training.

For five years now the Central City, Ky., based unit has attended the National Maintenance Training Center (NMTC) in Camp Dodge, Iowa. The 307th’s trip West was quite different from years past as the unit transitions from a component repair mission to a sustainment maintenance level mission.

A sustainment mission is less technical and the 307th has already been performing the vast majority of this new work, according to unit commander 1st. Lt. Timothy Lee.

“The transition will be an easy switch for the 307th,” said Lee. “The unit is ready to hit the ground running on its new mission. I feel that we will make a complete and smooth transition and be fully ready to exercise our compe-

tence and skills at a deployable level.”

This year the 307th validated on food service operations, maintenance control operations, automotive on system component maintenance, ground support equipment maintenance, allied trades fabrication operations, water purification maintenance, supply supporting activity, shop supply operations and tool room operations.

While at the exercise the ground support equipment platoon brought a 60KW generator into full operation, a job that should have taken 40 hours took only 12. Three other rotations had failed to repair this particular job. Cadre of the NMTC told unit leadership that the 307th always performs above all expectations.

“I do not think we could receive better training anywhere else in the Army System for this units mission,” said Lee. “Camp Dodge has provided the 307th with an excellent bridge to the future.” 🌉

Seasoned Soldiers pin warrant



By Sgt. Scott Raymond

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The Kentucky National Guard appointed two new warrant officers to its ranks during a ceremony at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, Aug. 21. Kentucky's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini presided over the event.



Robert Boatman

Warrant Officer Robert Boatman of the 103rd Brigade Support Battalion has served in the military for nearly 18 years. The Lawrenceburg, Ky., native, has served in the Kentucky National Guard since 2003. Boatman completed his warrant officer school in 2011, but waited until a position opened up for his appointment. His wife Mechelle pinned his new rank on his uniform.

Boatman said he believes his new rank will open new doors and take him further in his career as he hopes to go as high as he can.

Warrant Officer Timothy Collins, also with the 103rd BSB, joined the Kentucky National Guard in 2001 after serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. The Russell Springs, Ky., native, worked as the administration non-commissioned officer,

and will become an Active Guard and Reserve Manager for the Human Resources Office in Frankfort. Collins celebrated at the ceremony with his wife Lora and their two sons, Ethan and Elijah.

"Becoming a warrant officer has been a career goal for me," said Collins. "I did this to do bigger and better things for my profession and myself."

State Command Chief Warrant Officer James Simms spoke of the importance of warrant officers in the service and of the quality Soldiers joining that elite group. Referring to Boatman and Collins, Simms called them examples of the leadership and expertise needed in the Kentucky Army National Guard.

Currently there more than 190 warrant officer authorizations with 148 total warrant officers in the Kentucky Army National Guard. The small group of Soldiers is recruiting to fill its ranks with experts in their field. Boatman said if he could say anything to those thinking of becoming a warrant officer, it's about the experience one can bring.

"Learn everything you can," he said. "And bring the traits a good NCO, it's what makes a good warrant officer."



Lora Collins pins her husband, Timothy.



Photo by Rank First Last/KYARNG or KYANG

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general, presides over a ceremony for Kentucky's newest Warrant Officers Timothy Collins and Robert Boatman at Boone National Guard Center Aug. 21. Mechell Boatman, Ethan, Elijah and Lora Collins and Chief Warrant Officer James Simms also participated.

GOIN' GREEN

Kentucky National Guard Boasts 'Net Zero' Facility

Story and photos by Sgt. Scott Raymond

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ARTEMUS, Ky. –Located near Barbourville, Ky., the buildings at the Kentucky National Guard's Harold L. Disney Training Center are unique and may even be considered an oddity as they sit in the middle of Kentucky's coal country. But the 851 solar panels at the training center represent a positive impact the Guard is making for the Commonwealth and the environment.

The 550-plus acre training center is the first of its kind in the Kentucky National Guard to become a net-zero site. The term "net-zero" means that more energy is produced at a site than the site uses to sustain itself. Along with the reduction of energy used, there is also a financial advantage for Kentucky.

Capt. Joseph Sloan, Designs and Programs Manager for the Kentucky National Guard said the energy production could produce a surplus of energy, giving the Guard a credit toward their monthly energy costs.

"We're managing the budget, so this helps supplement the utility bill," said Sloan. "But it's also the right thing to do for the environment. It's the responsible thing to do."

According to the National Guard Bureau in

Washington, D.C., Kentucky currently ranks first in the entire National Guard in energy reduction, and third in energy production.

"Everywhere, we're checking windows, lighting, insulation and improving what we can, based on balancing the need and getting the greatest bang for the buck," he said.

Last year, for example, site officials said they accommodated more than 15,000 Soldiers, police officers, boy scouts and athletic teams for training.

Sloan said plans for more of the energy-absorbing panels are in the works, spreading the benefits through different regions of Kentucky. Installation is currently scheduled for the newest readiness centers, one recently completed in Owensboro, and the future site in Burlington, in Northern Kentucky.

The solar panel additions will continue the Kentucky Guard's effort to shrink its environmental footprint across the Commonwealth.


"We're going green, saving energy and not costing the government as much," said Sgt. 1st Class Chaz Martin, non-commissioned officer in charge of training at the center. "And now that we are net-zero, we're making that much bigger of an impact on the Kentucky Guard." 



Photo by Sgt. Scott Raymond/KYARNG





Sgt. 1st Class Chaz Martin, non-commissioned officer in charge of Harold L. Disney Training Center discusses solar panel installation with a photographer from Photon Magazine June 7.



Sgt. Joseph Mattingly of Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 376th Aviation walks between barrack buildings at the Harold L. Disney Training Center in Artemus, Ky., June 7, 2012. Solar panels installed on the buildings at the center are responsible for producing all the energy needed to power the buildings for use by units training at the site.



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