

The Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 16, Issue 5 - January 2013

Serving the men

Army and Air National Guard



Through a SOLDIER'S EYES

AROUND THE



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Cover Story

Cover photo by Sgt. Cody Stagner, Medical Outreach Coordinator

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Kentucky NATIONAL GUARD
Unbridled Service

The Bluegrass Guard

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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.a.devine4.mil@mail.mil

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

Guarding America

Kentucky officials celebrate 376 years of national militia

Staff Report

Photos by Sgt. Scott Raymond

The Kentucky National Guard celebrated the 376th birthday of the National Guard Dec. 13, at Fort Knox.

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general, and Maj. Gen. Jeffery Smith, commanding general of Fort Knox, cut the traditional birthday cake in front of distinguished guests and a color guard provided by the Bluegrass Challenge Academy at Fort Knox.

Phillip Williams, dressed in the traditional Minuteman uniform, received a certificate from Col. Craig Ekman, senior National Guard advisor.



EXPANDING TBI BENEFITS

VA seeks to expand list of service-related TBI effects

By VA Public Affairs

The Veterans Affairs Department plans to published a proposed regulation in the Federal Register that would change its rules to add five diagnosable illnesses that are secondary to service-connected traumatic brain injury.

“We must always decide veterans disability claims based on the best science available and we will,” Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said. “Veterans who endure health prob-

lems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence that ensure they receive benefits earned through their service to their country.”

VA proposes to add new subsection to its adjudication regulation by revising 38 CFR 3.310 to state that any veteran with service-connected TBI who also has one of the give illnesses, then the illness will be considered service connected as secondary to the TBI.

Service connection under the proposed rule depends in part on the severity of the TBI (mild, moderate or severe) adn the period of time between the injury and the onset of the secondary illness. However, the proposed rule also clarifies that it does not preclude a veteran from establishing direct service connection even if those time and severity standards are not met. It also defines the terms mild, moderate and severe, consistent with Department of Defense guidelines.

Comments on the proposed rule are accepted until Feb. 7, officials said, and final regulation will be published after consideration of all comments received.

VA’s decision is based on a report by the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine’s “Gulf War and Health, Vol.7: Long Term Consequences of TBI.

In the report, IOM’s Committee on Gulf War and Health concluded that “sufficient evidence of a casual relationship” — the IOM’s highest evidentiary standard — existed between moderate or severe levels of TBI and diagnosed unprovoked siezures, officials said.

The IOM found sufficient evidence of an association between moderate or severe levels of TBI and Parkinsonism; some dementias, depression and diseases of hormone deficiency that may result from hypothalamo-pituitary changes. The report also associated depression with mild TBI.

For more information, visit www.dvbic.org, or www.publichealth.va.gov and search for Gulf War hazards. 



Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

What is Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a disruption of function in the brain resulting from a blow or jolt to the head or penetrating head injury. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI.

The severity of TBI can range from mild, also known as concussion, to severe involving an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia.



It is a major health issue for the military. Unlike other injuries that change appearance, you cannot see a brain injury.

Causes of TBI:

- Falls
- Motor vehicle traffic crashes
- Struck by/against events
- Assaults
- Blasts

Risk Factors:

- Males have twice the risk as females; highest risk is for males age 15-24
- Contact sports
- Risky behavior such as speeding, not wearing protective equipment etc.

If you have a known or suspected traumatic brain injury or concussion, seek evaluation from an appropriate health care professional before returning to duty or sports. This fact sheet is not a substitute for a medical evaluation.

There are various ways to protect yourself and reduce your risk of sustaining a traumatic brain injury:

- Always use safety equipment such as a seat belt or helmet when you operate a motor vehicle.
- Make sure protective equipment is properly fitted and kept in good condition for proper functioning.
- Always use appropriate and fitted protective equipment when playing sports because TBI injuries frequently occur during athletics and physical training.

Symptoms of Mild TBI (also called Concussion):

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Excessive fatigue (tiredness)
- Concentration problems
- Forgetfulness (memory problems)
- Irritability
- Sleep problems
- Balance problems
- Ringing in the ears
- Vision changes

References:

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center: (800) 870-9244 – www.dvbic.org
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: (800) CDC-INFO – www.cdc.gov/injury

Rehabilitation & Reintegration Division (R2D)
Office of The Surgeon General, Army Medical Department, Health Policy & Services
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To Serve and Protect

By David Altom

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Longtime employees and visitors at the Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort have noticed significant changes at the facility over the years, what with increased unit activity and various construction projects. This is something to be expected considering the expanded role of the Kentucky Guard both overseas and here at home.

One of the most obvious — and often misunderstood — of these changes is at the front gate. Long gone are the days of the open post concept; today's post-9/11 reality includes presenting a photo ID and going through a security check on the way to the office.

"Our main mission and goal is to protect the personnel and assets on this facility," said Larry McCord, supervisor of the Boone Center Security Force. "It sounds like a simple task, but there's a lot more to it than most people can even begin to imagine."

It used to be that the public image of security was Barney with his bullet in his pocket getting a cat out of the tree. The fact of the matter is that the face of security has transformed dramatically in the past decade. The rise in domestic terrorism and workplace violence make the days of criminal mischief and vandalism almost seem nostalgic.

"Today we have groups that don't like the military," said McCord. "This isn't just overseas, but right here at home. At any given moment someone who wants to do us damage. We're here to stop them."

And while you'll see the team conducting patrols around the facility and making visits to the various buildings, McCord says the first line of defense at Boone Center is the front gate, better known as the access control point.

"Our team deals with the public every single day, 24/7," he said. "They've got to have the right mindset and public aware-

ness to do this job, to know what's going on in the vehicle and the people coming through the gate."

The team's training is among the best available, said McCord. "We work with the Kentucky State Police bomb squad, the Frankfort police department, Department of Defense police at

Fort Knox and even federal homeland security."

"Every part of training we do is imperative to our mission," said Brady Murphy, security shift supervisor.

"There's never enough training. Everything we do makes us the force we are today. We're always hungry for more."

The quality of the training is an important factor in team morale and performance, said security specialist Ginger Starrett.

"We are definitely better qualified and better prepared to do our job," she said. "Knowing that we have world class training gives us the

confidence to do the job right."

The security team has been recognized as one of the best in the world by the Department of Defense and was recently nominated for the Governor's Ambassador Award. It's also received the Employer Support of Guard and Reserve Patriot Award for supporting team members who belong to the Kentucky National Guard.

"We never take our eyes off our mission," McCord emphasized. "Our goal is to respond to a crisis here at Boone Center in a matter of minutes to save lives and take care of our people. We take that very seriously."

"We have to be right 100% of the time," said McCord. "The bad guys have to be right just once. We can't do it all or see it all, but I guarantee our team will do its best."

But when the dust clears their focus is specifically on their security mission. 🇺🇸



Photo by David Altom/KYARNG

James Comer, area chair for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, presents Security Chief Larry McCord with the Patriot Award Nov. 15, at Boone National Guard Center with Mike Jones, executive director of the Office of Management and Administration.



Photo by Sgt. Scott Raymond/KYARNG

Security specialist Ginger Starrett takes aim with a M9 pistol under Chief Larry McCord's supervision Nov. 7, at the Frankfort Police Department small arms range. The Boone Center Security team conducts training and qualification with service weapons several times per year, more than the state requirement of a yearly qualification.



Photo by Sgt. Scott Raymond/KYARNG

Boone Center Security Chief Larry McCord, gives instruction to Boone Center security forces during a weapons qualification Nov. 7, at the Frankfort Police Department small arms range.

Energy Efficient

By Master Sgt. Phil Speck

123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs, philip.speck@ang.af.mil

The 123rd Communications Flight recently installed new network servers at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base that will reduce energy consumption by up to 84 percent while maintaining the same level of performance, officials said.

"This initiative is one of many being implemented to help conserve energy at the Air Guard Base," according to Tom Spalding, an environmental technician for the 123rd Airlift Wing.

The U.S. Air Force is the largest energy consumer in the federal government, and the Kentucky Air Guard is constantly looking for new ways to conserve energy, Spalding added. Under an executive order, federal agencies have established a goal of reducing energy consumption by up to 3 percent annually.

"The 123rd Airlift Wing is fully committed to improving resiliency, reducing demand, assuring supply and fostering an energy-aware culture," said Lt. Col. Robert Hamm, vice wing commander. "Our overriding concern is securing energy for the future."

One way the base ensures energy conservation is through the use of "smart meters" on each building. The meters record continual usage of electricity and natural gas, then feed the data into a report that helps officials identify usage patterns and opportunities for increased efficiency.

"There is a little broadcast station on each building that sends metrics to a central computer that helps us create a monthly report on each building's energy usage," Spalding said.

Interior lighting has been upgraded across the base, too. New bulbs use less energy but produce the same amount of light. The 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron also is on constant watch for opportunities to improve insulation and weather stripping around windows and doors.

While base officials continue to identify systemic solutions for energy conservation, Spalding encouraged every Airman to do his or her part with simple actions that can become part of a daily routine.

Replace inefficient items.
If a piece of equipment is too loud, hot or old, it's probably a good indication that it is not efficient.

Turn off lights in unoccupied rooms.



Connect all computer peripherals (but not the computer itself) to a power strip and turn the strip off at the end of each day.

Graphic by Sgt. Taylor Curtis/KYANG



Photo by Master Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

Tom Spalding, an environmental technician for the 123rd Airlift Wing, checks a gas meter Oct. 12, at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base. Many of the meters on base wirelessly transmit energy-usage data for monthly reports, helping officials identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption.

Record attendance at Family Day



Photo by Rank Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel/KyANG

By Senior Airman Vicky Spesard

123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs, pao@kentuckyguard.com

Bounce houses, games, a popcorn stand and a fire truck lined Thor-oughbred Express Blvd. as Airmen, Family members, guests and volun-teers converged onto the Kentucky Air Guard Base Oct. 21 for the 123rd Airlift Wing's 2012 Family Day.

Col. Warren Hurst, wing commander, greeted more than 500 spouses and children during a welcome address in the Fuel Cell Hanger.

"We are very excited to have all of you here to share this day with us," he said. "Our Families play a vital role in our mission and make sacri-fices every day to support what we do here. This day is about celebrating that family spirit."

Guests were treated to motivational speaker Kay Frances' humorous look at military life, followed by the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus in a miniature C-130.

Following the theme of "Christmas in October," a small AAFES store was set up in the hangar by the Fort Knox Post Exchange. Uniform items, electronics, perfumes and many other items were available for purchase.

On the main activity field, Family games including a duck pond and bingo, face-painting and washable tattoos rounded out the afternoon.

A picnic-style lunch was served and several prizes were raffled off, too.

"Today was a great day," said event coordinator Dave Rooney, pro-gram manager for the 123rd Airlift Wing's Airman and Family Readiness Group. "The amount of Family members who came out to support their Airmen and spend the day here is tremendous. We had so many volunteers who came to help (and) more activities for Families to take part in. It was a very successful event."



Photo by Rank Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel/KyANG



Photo by Rank Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel/KyANG



Photo by Rank Senior Airman Vicky Spesard/KyANG

Tech Sgt. Nick Sanders, training manager, 123rd Maintenance Operations Flight, talks with Patricia Krausman of the University of Kentucky, Oct. 21. Many schools and government agencies were on hand to present Airmen and their Families with information.

Capt. Jarret Goddard takes a picture of his daughters, Mary-Kate, Madison and Kiersten, during Family Day 2012. Families participated in a range of activities including Christmas in October and a picnic lunch.

Adarius Hite, son of 2nd Lt. Angela Hite, paints pictures during Family day at the 123rd Airlift Wing Oct. 21.

Appalachian ChalleNGe

in full swing

By Capt. Stephen Martin

Public Affairs Officer, stephen.d.martin1.mil@mail.mil

“It’s easily one of the hardest and, at the same time, most rewarding jobs on the planet,” according to the Commandant of the Appalachian ChalleNGe Academy, Gary Lee.

The Academy kicked off its first official year this fall.

U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers and Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general for Kentucky, visited the newly launched academy in Harlan, Ky. to see how the students and cadre were progressing Nov. 1.

Both Rogers and Tonini received a one-over-the-world overview from the key leadership on the progress of the organization.

“Understanding the dynamics and history of the teenage students here is our biggest challenge,” said the director of the program, Croley Forester.

The academy’s mission is to train and mentor selected at-risk youth between the ages of 16 and 18, to become contributing members of society. Based out of the old schoolhouse in Harlan, it’s a 24 hour a day, 7 day week program. The 68 students currently enrolled eat, sleep, and go to school all in the same building.

Lee, a former Guardsman, has been working for the National Guard youth challenge project for the last six years and sees a lot of potential in this Eastern Kentucky program.

“My heart is to see lives changed. The goal of this program is to simply do that for these teenagers.”

To get into the academy requires a lengthy application process and is purely volunteer. Once you’re selected, you spend the next 22 weeks working side-by-side with your fellow cadets re-learning how to “do life,” Lee said.

After participants graduate, they are enrolled in a one-year mentor program to help with the transition back into the real-world.

Rogers, also a veteran of the National Guard, told the cadets to “stick with the program and great things will happen for you. If you don’t, you’ll always regret it.”

For more information about the ChalleNGe program, visit <https://www.ngycp.org/site/state/ky2/> 



Photo by Capt. Stephen Martin/KYARNG

Appalachian ChalleNGe cadets salute Old Glory during Retreat, signifying the end of the duty day Nov. 1, at the Harlan, Ky., academy. The ChalleNGe program encourages the enrolled cadets to become contributing members of their society.



Photo by Will Daniels/Appalachian Challenge

Cadets from the Appalachian Challenge academy in Harlan, Ky., conduct a ruck-run Nov. 1. The Appalachian Challenge program trains and mentors selected at-risk youth between the ages of 16 and 18 to become contributing members of society. Recently, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, adjutant general, and U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers visited the academy to witness the progress.



Photo by Capt. Stephen Martin/KYARNG

Through a SOLDIER'S EYES

Story and photos by Cody Stagner

Medical Outreach Coordinator, cody.j.stagner.ctr@mail.mil

*"I hear the choppers coming,
They're flying overhead.
They've come to get the wounded,
They've come to get the dead..."*

The lyrics above are not from a scene in the latest big war film. Ask any Soldier to read this aloud and not only can he add the beat as sung in cadence by marching troops, but he will probably add the two-word chorus next, and without question.

Ironically, Soldiers motivate themselves with rhymes like this Airborne Ranger cadence, rather than react gloomily to the death and destruction read literally between such lines.

This behavior is not a brainwash from the yelling and screaming drill instructors as portrayed on TV. Contrarily, a Soldier's mindset stems from unique training, experience and military culture, which can be misunderstood by members outside the military community.

Misconceptions like the one above are also evident when Service members seek assistance in behavioral health. This same mindset of being strong and tough creates the stigma of Service members feeling a call for help is a sign of weakness.

But, when they do reach past this stigma other barriers continue to keep them from receiving the best available care.

To reduce these barriers, the Kentucky National Guard teamed with Kentucky's Division of Behavioral Health to offer a first-of-its-kind immersion program in the Commonwealth.

During Kentucky's Operation Immer-

sion, behavioral health professionals were invited to Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky., Nov. 14 -16, for a behind-the-scenes look at military culture. The Immersion candidates stayed in barracks, ate military chow, conducted training and completed Soldier's tasks. The goal: to improve behavioral health care for Service Members and Veterans living in Kentucky.

"Access to care is the largest problem surrounding behavioral health in the Kentucky National Guard," said Col. Michael Gavin, state surgeon for the Kentucky Guard. "We need more services available, and we need our providers to know how to reach out and find additional support. Operation Immersion gave Kentucky a chance for its providers to learn better ways to treat and service the military at the same time as networking with their peers."

Sgt. Maj. Steven Woods and his team from the Pre-mobilization Training Assistance Element (PTAE) ran the Immersion team through the Field Leadership Reaction Course to teach teamwork and conducted fitness exercises each morning. The professionals also conducted marksmanship training using the Engagement Skills Trainer and Virtual Convoy Operations Trainers before using the knowledge at the urban combat training lane.

Each exercise, Woods said, "causes team members to have to give up some of their comfort levels and learn how to depend on





and support others.”

Micah Thompson, a marriage and family therapist associate from Paducah, Ky., enjoyed the simulation ranges at WHFRTC the most.

“The EST and VCOT simulators gave a priceless closer look at what Service men and women are really exposed to and have trained for,” Thompson said.

Although lives were obviously not in real danger, the urban combat scenario was the climax of a deployment experience. Intense engagement with opposition forces — members of the PTAE — conveyed heightened levels of adrenaline, fear and anxiety as experienced by Service members in combat roles overseas.

“I have lived in a military town most of my life,” said Noelle Fenske, a suicide prevention specialist from Elizabethtown, Ky.

“While I have always had great respect for Service members, it is easy to get used to them and forget their sacrifices when they are part of your community. Operation Immersion was a reminder of just how much our Service members do for our country.”

From the battlefield to the classroom, Operation Immersion staff kept the behavioral health providers busy. Classroom instruction focused key points on suicide prevention, post-traumatic stress, resilience, traumatic brain injury, military culture, Service member’s stories and more.

“I work with Service members regularly,” said Fenske. “This event has given me tools that will help me to better relate to the Service members I work with. The experience was truly a privilege that I will remember for a lifetime.” 🦅

- Sgt. 1st Class Clifford Marbrey helps Wanda Beckley, a behavioral health professional, navigate the Field Leadership Reaction Course Nov. 14.
- Maha Almuhareb is helped by other behavior health professionals through a tire obstacle Nov. 14, at the Field Leadership Reaction Course at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center.





IED Hunters

Kentucky Soldiers use experience, train Japanese on C-IED tactics

By Staff Sgt. Veronica McMahon

CJTF-HOA Public Affairs Office, cjtf-hoapao@hoa.usaficom.mil

CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti — Japanese Ground Self Defense Force members teamed with Soldiers from Kentucky Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion 138th Field Artillery Regiment to conduct counter-improvised explosive device training Nov. 29, 2012, at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

This event helped foster mutual understanding between U.S. and Japanese forces and improved their ability to conduct integrated contingency operations in support of their mutual national interests and the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa mission to promote security and stability throughout East Africa.

"Today we were doing part two of our counter-IED with the Japanese," said U.S. Army Sgt. Bobby King, 2/138th FAR course instructor. "It was mostly hands on. We created two

dismounted and one mounted IED lane for training. They have never had any training like this, so it was an honor for me to be the first guy to train them on this."

The training in total was four days and the Japanese service members were very receptive to what was taught, according to King.

"[The U.S. Army] is very good," said JGSDF 1st Lt. Yamato Kuzuhara, unit training monitor. "They have missions involving many risks, so we have a lot of respect for the U.S. Army."

The U.S. Army members gave instruction to the Japanese Soldiers and built sand tables where they used toy Soldiers to demonstrate the exercises they were about to do. Then they provided an opportunity for Japanese troops to observe them perform a "React-to-Possible IED" battle drill while conduct-

ing a dismounted patrol. This demonstration included a complete cordon of the area and the simulation of calling an EOD team to neutralize the threat.

“I think this training opened them up to the different types of attacks that could happen,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Kenneth Wininger, 2/138th FAR training non-commissioned officer. “The more information we can share with each other the different tactics we can each learn and the more equipped we both can be.”

The goal of the training was to teach the Japanese how to identify possible IED indicators. The JGSDF members successfully participated in the various training courses and both teams hope to continue working together in the future, according to King.

“I think partnering with the Japanese gives us more camaraderie as a team,” King said. “It brings us closer together and makes both sides more eager to work together in the future.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Ruano/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Oscar Ortiz, Kentucky Army National Guard 2nd Battalion 138th Field Artillery Regiment executive officer, secures a tactical vest to Japanese Ground Self Defense Forces Sgt. Kawamoto Yuji, Security Forces member, during the counter-improvised explosive device and explosive ordnance disposal training on Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Nov. 30.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Veronica McMahon/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Army Sgt. Bobby King, Kentucky Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery course instructor, explains how to conduct counter-improvised explosive device recovery to Japanese Ground Self Defense Force members at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Nov. 30. The training helped foster mutual understanding between U.S. and Japanese forces and improved their ability to conduct integrated contingency operations in support of their mutual national interests and the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa mission to promote security and stability throughout East Africa.

Wheel Chair Revival

By Capt. Daniel Van Horn

Task Force Longrifles PAO, pao@kentuckyguard.com

“We can fix that” isn’t the motto of Task Force Longrifles maintenance section, but what they have fixed while deployed to the Horn of Africa should make them proud of their work.

During a recent community assessment meeting, Capt. Mark Slaughter, chaplain, and Chaplain Assistant Sgt. Thomas Mathews met Farah Abdillahi Elmi, president of the Association De Handicaps, a local organization that provides personal care, equipment and education for people with disabilities in downtown Djibouti city. During a presentation by the president, one picture stood out from the rest; a pile of rusting wheel chair parts rising six feet off the ground.

“I was astonished at the number of useless wheelchairs in the association’s compound, several could be restored with minor repairs, although most needed major work,” Slaughter said after witnessing the picture. “I knew if we got those wheelchairs in the right hands, it wouldn’t be long before they were being utilized once again.”

Slaughter knew the skilled men of the Task Force Longrifles maintenance section would be the perfect fit for the job. After a quick phone call coordinating the pickup of the wheelchairs, everything was set in motion to make life-altering impacts for many disabled Djiboutians.

Mechanics Sgt. Charles Vanmeter, Sgt. Arthur Dunn, and Spc. Gabriel Wolney, received their first batch of semi-functioning wheel chairs Nov. 10. “At first, all I saw was a pile of scrap-metal. It wasn’t until we started digging through it that we found some usable parts,” said Vanmeter. “After assessing what we had, we began the process of piecing together one wheelchair at a time like a puzzle. When we didn’t have a part we simply got creative.”

Using items ranging from zip-ties to sandbags, the Soldiers became expert scavengers, picking parts from several broken wheelchairs to complete just

one.

“It was overwhelming,” said Dunn after receiving the first batch of wheelchairs. “Some of them looked like they had been through a war.”

In keeping with the Warrior Ethos, the Soldiers never quit despite the many obstacles, lack of parts and their sweat soaked uniforms.

After completing the mission, the Soldiers returned a truck-load of fully functioning, cleaned and working wheelchairs from Camp Lemonnier to the gates of the Association De Handicaps compound. Their hard work was rewarded with warm smiles and handshakes from many grateful Djiboutians.

“The people were thrilled to see the life restored back to these wheelchairs,” said Wolney, after delivering the first load of chairs.

Task Force Longrifles leadership said the wheelchair revival will continue throughout the deployment, calling the mission “one of the defining reasons we are here.” 🇺🇸



Photo by Capt. Daniel Van Horn/KYARNG

Spc. Gabriel Wolney shakes hands with the Association De Handicaps president Farid Abdillahi Elmi after a successful delivery of three repaired wheelchairs Nov. 27. The Task Force Longrifles worked to reassemble broken wheelchairs from old parts and provide usable equipment for local citizens.



Agribusiness Development Team 5 deploys, keeps Unbridled Service alive

By Capt. Stephen Martin

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Approximately 39 members of the Kentucky National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team 5 departed for Afghanistan Oct. 23, 2012.

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general for Kentucky, and the Kentucky National Guard Command Staff joined friends and Families of the team members at the Kentucky State University Demonstration Farm in Frankfort to send the unit off.

"This mission is certainly unique," said Tonini. "The ADT mission was designed to rebuild Afghanistan's economy and give stability to its government."

"Because of our background in agriculture and the stellar reputation of the Kentucky Guard, we've led the way in providing these skillsets to the Afghan people."

ADT 5 will take the reins from Kentucky's ADT 4 who has been in Afghanistan since February. The mission of this team is to continue the work set forth by the previous four Kentucky units in assisting local Afghans in becoming agriculturally self-sufficient and develop their agriculture marketplace.

In addition to agriculture activities, ADT 5 will also be instrumental in coordinating an effort with the Kentucky F.F.A. (Future Farmers of America), Kandahar University in Afghanistan and non-profit organizations to create programs



Photo by Capt. Stephen Martin/KYARNG

Col. Bob Hayter, commander Agribusiness Development Team 5, speaks to Soldiers, Airmen and Family members during the unit's departure ceremony Oct. 23, in Frankfort, Ky. The unit replaces ADT4.

to improve the incomes of Afghan farmers.

The team is made up of Airmen, Soldiers and civilian agricultural specialists with a variety of skills and backgrounds in agriculture matters.

Col. Bob Hayter is the commander of ADT 5 and feels fully prepared for the mission they're about to embark on.

"We have 5 more weeks of training before we put boots on the ground in Afghanistan and I know we could go today. We're that ready." 🇺🇸

Search and Recovery

Air Guardsmen set standards at Patriot 12 exercise

By Master Sgt. Phil Speck

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Members of the Kentucky Air Guard's Fatality Search and Recovery Team brought their expertise to Volk Field, Wis., this summer to train other disaster-response officials during a key national exercise.

More than 1,100 military and civilian emergency responders participated in the event, known as Patriot 12, a National Guard scenario held July 13-20 to simulate the damage caused by a major earthquake.

The primary mission of Kentucky's FSRT was to train a Fatality Search and Recovery Team from the Indiana National Guard, according to 2nd Lt. Jonathan Fairbanks, the officer in charge of the Kentucky unit. The Indiana team, which has just been stood up, had never fielded its equipment before.

"We showed them everything, from the initial setup and the initial brief from the on-site commander, all the way through the end of the exercise and cleaning everything up afterwards," Fairbanks said.

The Kentucky team was hand-selected for the task by Brad Whitlinger, lead exercise planner for the National Guard Bureau, because he knew the unit was experienced, fully capable and could integrate well with other teams, Fairbanks said. FSRT teams from Arizona and Minnesota also provided training to the Indiana group.

Fatality Search and Recovery Teams are charged with locating and recovering the remains of victims killed in hostile action or natural disasters. Team members have special training and equipment that allow them to operate in a broad spectrum of dangerous environ-

ments, including those contaminated by nuclear, biological or chemical agents.

During Patriot 12, all four FSRTs conducted training on the proper donning and doffing of personal protective equipment and the use of gear like litters and tents.

They also trained on proper procedures for handling remains in contaminated and uncontaminated areas.

Actors added a dose of reality to the rubble-strewn environment, requiring FSRT members to interact with simulated victims, injured survivors and distraught family members who were frantically searching for loved ones.

Fairbanks said he was extremely pleased with the performance of his members, who had to balance the challenges of responding to exercise inputs in a dynamic environment with the need to train the Indiana unit while integrat-



ing with FSRTs from two other states.

“What I thought was going to be our biggest challenge -- integrating with the other teams -- actually was our biggest strength,” he said. “When you bring in four teams with four different ways of doing things, sometimes you run into issues. But we didn’t really have that.”

Master Sgt. Krista Lindsey, non-commissioned officer in charge of Kentucky’s FSRT, said the exercise helped prepare the team for real-world deployments in which members will be required to work with a broad range of disaster-response officials.

“This was a great training experience since it is very likely we’ll be working with other units and augmentees in a mass-casualty environment,” Lindsey said.

Lindsey and Fairbanks both noted the crucial nature of the FSRT mission, which ensures that the remains of deceased citizens are recovered with dignity.

“I tell my team there aren’t very many jobs more important than ours,” Fairbanks said. “We ensure

they get to bring their loved ones home, to get a proper resting place.”

Lindsey agreed.

“Our job as the Fatality Search and Recovery Team is essential because we are there to maintain the dignity of the family’s loved one with respect at the

scene of a mass casualty, in both a chemical and non-chemical environment,” she

said. “Our team is prepared to operate knowing that we support the local authorities and we can bring our capabilities, processes, procedures and lessons learned from our training to effectively support each mission.”



Photo submitted

Fatality Search and Recovery Team officer in charge, 2nd Lt. Jonathan Fairbanks talks with Arizona Capt. Paul W. Jefferson during Patriot 12 exercise July 15.



Photo submitted

Senior Airman Shelby Basham discusses strategy with other Fatality Search and Recovery Team members and the coroner during a disaster-response training exercise in July.

EXCELLENCE

Starts here



MATES facility sets standards, receives Army honors

By Sgt. Scott Raymond

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On the edge of the Fort Knox garrison, military vehicles and equipment sit in clean, straight lines next to ordinary maintenance buildings that line the roads. A majority of those vehicles are ready for service, thanks to the extraordinary work of the Soldiers in those buildings who maintain them.

One such building is the Kentucky Army National Guard's Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site (MATES), whose Soldiers were recently recognized for running one of the best maintenance facilities in the National Guard.

In competition with 13 other states, the Kentucky facility placed first to win the 2012 Army Award for Maintenance Excellence (AAME) for their region, in the TDA (Table of Distribution Allowances) Small category.

"This award is a true measurement of everything this facility has accomplished, from maintenance to safety to community involvement," said 1st Lt. Timothy Lee, Assistant MATES Superintendent.

In August, the site submitted its packet



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Greg Scott/KYARNG

Master Sgt. Aaron Young, surface maintenance mechanic inspector assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 233rd Field Artillery, troubleshoots an electrical fault in a M1078 vehicle at MATES, Fort Knox. The facility employs 51 Kentucky Guardsmen and supports Kentucky units and neighboring states.

for consideration at the National Guard level. Shops across the country were graded on mission readiness, training, hazardous material management, resource management and recycling, to name a few categories.

Lee said changes put into effect over the past year have really made an impact in the overall operation. "We have redefined our workflow process," he said.

"Redefined everyone's jobs and job duties and implemented an inspection section for all aspects of work."

Improvements in cost savings and site management have produced numbers worthy of national attention. The last eight months of the fiscal year saw a 300 percent increase in productivity per person over the previous year. All while 15 Soldiers of the 51-man workforce were deployed overseas.

Lee said they are working toward cost savings by changing the way they order parts. Instead of ordering whole repair kits for vehicles, individual parts were ordered.

In complying with the Army Oil Analysis Program, which addresses the usage of vehicle and equipment fluids, Lee estimates that Kentucky saved \$51,000 in man-power in just one year, while saving around \$105,000 in products.

The site also has decreased its electrical needs thanks to installed solar panels that help provide power to the building. The panels contributed to a decrease of 31.5 percent in electric energy usage. Their inventory has nearly 400 less prod-

ucts on hand than last year.

“We have truly been able to do more with less in this fiscally constrained environment,” said Lee.

A number Lee said the whole MATES is proud of is its 96.6 percent organizational readiness rate from last year. This means that only 3.4 percent of the entire fleet was down for maintenance for more than one month consistently. This covers vehicles and equipment used in support of drill weekends, annual training periods or pre-mobilization training during the year for Kentucky units as well as National Guard units from Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Indiana and North Carolina.

“Our participation in the AAME competition has had great command emphasis and has been a critical ingredient to establishing an organizational culture that highlights the necessity of a rock-solid maintenance program,” said Lt. Col. Timothy Pickerrell, MATES Superintendent. “I am honored to lead this facility and to be a part of this hardworking group of technicians.”

1st Sgt. Douglas Hall is also proud of his Soldiers at the MATES, and gives a lot of credit to the leadership for “keeping everyone on track”. He said his command’s collective effort to improve the operation and boost morale is well received in the building and increases the motivation of the Soldiers to do a better job.

“Because of the way everything is organized and flows so well, we have maintained productivity,” said Hall. “Each shop is seeking even more work.”

Hall isn’t shy about acknowledging the accolades, knowing he’s part of a special operation that represents the Kentucky National Guard on a national level.

“If you want to see what a successful maintenance operation looks like, look at us.”

In addition to the MATES facility, the Central City-based 307th Component Repair Company also won first place in their regional unit category and will participate nationally later this year in an Army-wide competition. 🐾

MUDRUN

dirt, grime and a heckuva good time

Staff Report

LEXINGTON, Ky. — The Kentucky National Guard hosted the inaugural WUKY/University of Kentucky Reserve Officer Training Corps Bluegrass Mud Run at Commonwealth Stadium in Lexington, Ky., Sept. 22, 2012.



The adventure run consisted of a 5K course with more than 20 challenges.

More than 400 participants ran, dove, swung and plunged through the obstacles while a crowd of more than 500 cheered them on. Funds raised by the event went to support ROTC at the University of Kentucky.

Lexington Sports reporter, Mary Jo Perino was on hand as the master of ceremonies and honorary starter. 🐾



Photo courtesy of Kentucky National Guard Recruiting and Retention

MudRunners manage the monkey bars during the inaugural Bluegrass Mud Run in Lexington, Ky., Sept. 22. Proceeds from the Guard-sponsored event support the University of Kentucky ROTC program.

Kentucky proudly maintains the National Guard's OH-58 fleet with **Unbridled Service**

Story and photos By **Sgt. Scott Raymond**

Public Affairs Office NCOIC, scott.raymond2.mil@mail.mil

It is often thought that a warrant officer in an Army Aviation unit is only a pilot. That is certainly not always the case. The aviation field also demands that experts are on hand as maintenance technicians to ensure that those pilots have a working aircraft to fly.

In the Kentucky National Guard some aviation warrant officers are not only keeping Kentucky Guardsmen in the air, but they're also working to keep pilots in quality aircraft nationwide.

Chief Warrant Officer Three Jay Calcaterra, an aircraft maintenance supervisor for the 351st Aviation Support Battalion works daily at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Frankfort, Ky. He confirmed that not everyone in the hangar is a pilot, calling he and other maintenance supervisors, "the walking warrants."

"We determine which aircraft fly, how long they fly and what maintenance is required after they fly it," said the Lawrenceburg, Ky., native.

Calcaterra said they have an extremely important job in the hangar, and that is to manage aircraft and the people who work on aircraft.

The Kentucky Guard's fleet of UH-60 Blackhawks and OH-58 Kiowa helicopters, and their operational readiness is the responsibility of Calcaterra and Chief Warrant Officer Two Ryan Thompson.

They said it takes a seasoned expert to meet the demands of

what they are asked to do, but in referring to their warrant officer training, they rely on their abilities and the proficiencies of their staff to provide that expertise and keep Kentucky aircraft in the skies.

In 2011, the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C., was looking for a solution for the maintenance of all OH-58s flown by the Guard. They needed a hub where the aircraft could be properly and efficiently maintained to keep them flying. NGB looked to a state with a solid history of excellence in aviation.

"It's because of our reputation, our work ethic and our operational readiness rates that we were asked to do this," said Thompson. "Everyone knows we are always willing to step up and support the mission of NGB."

With the amount of flight hours being put on a diminishing fleet of OH-58s nationally, NGB asked Kentucky to become the center though which all maintenance issues would stream. Kentucky's Army Aviation originally only had four OH-58s of their own, but now they were asked to care for a lot more. Regardless of their home assignment, helicopters with any issue would be flown or transported to Frankfort to go through Thompson's "phase".

Thompson said the facility would normally put six helicopters through maintenance phases each year. Since February 2012, they have received, tested, worked on, and put back into service 23 OH-58s, across the country. That's nearly a 400 percent increase and the year isn't over yet.

He said Kentucky has worked with 16 different states in repairing their helicopters, transferring the aircraft back and forth to as far away as Arizona and Hawaii.

A phase begins with a test flight, if possible, to determine the faults or discrepancies, anything from broken radios to weak engines. The aircraft would then be disassembled from the nose to the tail and those problem areas would be fixed and required inspections completed. Upon its reassembly, the helicopter would be released for test flights to assure the problems were resolved, resulting in an "almost new" aircraft.

"I would never send out something that I wouldn't give my own Soldiers," said Thompson.

According to Thompson, the



Spc. Tim Amyx, Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 376th Aviation, works on an OH-58 helicopter at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Frankfort, Ky., Sept. 18. Kentucky's AASF is the maintenance hub for all of the National Guard for the aircraft.



Kentucky Guard flies more hours in OH-58s than any other state. Thousands of hours of flight-time are given annually to support the state's counter-drug program and in-state unit training missions.

In addition to operations in the Commonwealth, OH-58s repaired by the Kentucky Guard are transferred to the U.S. State Department as well as flown in support of the Southwest border mission, Operation Guardian Eye.

Calcaterra, Thompson and the Soldiers in the hangars in Frankfort manage the maintenance of 75 percent of all OH-58s flying in the National Guard. Thompson said it's a fine example of the Kentucky Guard preparing for and meeting the needs of the Guard as a whole.

Thompson believes the mission will last as long as OH-58s are flying for the Guard. In the meantime, Kentucky will remain nationally, a proven maintenance hub as well as an OH-58 parts hub.

The increased workload has benefitted some Soldiers with

full-time work, which the warrants said creates an invaluable amount of experience for young aircraft mechanics. Thompson estimates that his Soldiers are getting as much hands-on training in two-weeks as some traditional Guardsmen serving on weekends would get in 15 years. In addition to the new airframes coming through, the experience for these Soldiers is the biggest gain of this mission said Thompson.

The warrants both said they couldn't have done it without the support of Kentucky National Guard leadership. Thompson said Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Kentucky's Adjutant General and Col. Michael Ferguson, 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade Commander, agreed to take on the mission and have consistently backed the mechanics' efforts while promoting the quality work done by Kentucky Guardsmen.

"We take pride in what we do here," Thompson said. "We have the experience and know-how to pull this off."

"It's a lot of work, a lot of hours, but we don't have a reduction in our capabilities. This has been a whirlwind success." 🇺🇸

ESGR honors Humana

By Master Sgt. Phil Speck

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Humana Inc. was honored Nov. 1, as a finalist for the the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award during a ceremony at its corporate headquarters in Louisville, Ky.

The award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. government to employers for their support of employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserves.

Robert Silverthorn Jr., a retired Army major general and chairman of the Kentucky Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, presented the honor to Humana chairman and CEO Mike McCallister.

“Today’s event, while it focuses on the National Guard and Reserves, represents another opportunity for Humana to say ‘Thank you’ to all our military-affiliated associates and their families,” McCallister said. “Humana understands the importance of the healthcare needs that the Guard, Reserves and their families face, especially in this time of extended deployments.”

In accepting the award, McCallister noted Humana’s progress toward its goal of hiring 1,000 former servicemen and servicewomen or their spouses by late 2014. The company has hired 928 veterans and spouses to date.

Master Sgt. James Tongate, a Humana employee and loadmaster in the Kentucky Air National Guard’s 165th Airlift Squadron, also spoke at the event.

“I’m proud to be a part of a company that strives to help those that have sacrificed for their country,” Tongate said.

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of ESGR to recognize exceptional support from the employer community. In the years since, 160 employers have been honored with the award.

ESGR was established as a DoD agency 40 years ago. It develops and maintains employer support for Guard and Reserve service, advocating for relevant initiatives, recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of applicable laws, and resolving conflict between service members and employers.

Paramount to ESGR’s mission is encouraging the employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce, officials said. 



Photo courtesy of Humana

Mike McCallister, chief executive officer of Humana, looks on as Master Sgt. James Tongate, a Humana employee and loadmaster assigned to the 165th Airlift Squadron, Kentucky Air Guard, speaks during a ceremony Nov. 1, at Humana’s Louisville-based corporate office. Humana was recognized as a finalist for the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest recognition given by the U.S. government to employers for exceptional support of employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.