



# The Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 16, Issue 2 - August 2013

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



**FINAL FLIGHT  
OF THE  
SHERPA**

*Air Guard inspection passed*

*Army-wide award for WHFRTC*

*95th birthday for warrant officers*

# AROUND THE



Soldiers of the 1/149th Infantry compete in an assessment for Army schools. PAGE 10



Morgan's Men of the 1/623rd develop quality maintenance while deployed to Jordan. PAGE 11

Air Guardsmen deploy in support of Operation Coronet Oak in the Caribbean. PAGE 8



## Cover Story

Cover photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

The Kentucky National Guard said goodbye to a pair of iconic aircraft that have served the Commonwealth for years. PAGE 12

# WORLD

AND IN OUR PAGES



Kentucky Guardsman takes public affairs career to Nepal. PAGE 23



Kentucky Soldiers show support for fellow Guardsman during Autism Awareness Month PAGE 17



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## The Bluegrass Guard

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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](mailto:deborah.a.devine4.mil@mail.mil)

Air Retirees should request changes through retired Chief Master Sgt. James Turpin at [jturpin@fewpb.net](mailto:jturpin@fewpb.net).

# Skatepark tagged by Guard

**By Spc. Brandy Mort**


*133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*



A skate park may be the last place you would expect to see uniformed members of the military, but the Kentucky National Guard has other ideas. As skateboards rolled by on the slope and edges of the park, Soldiers and Airmen gathered around a large mural in its final stages of completion. Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini and Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 75th Recruiting and Retention Command were on hand at the Louisville Extreme Park in Louisville, Ky., April 20, 2013 for the painting and installation of the piece, a new National Guard mural.

Kentucky along with four other states were selected to house the Guard murals based on a

nationwide competition among the National Guards of the 54 states and territories. Louisville's Extreme Park was chosen due to the uniqueness of its full pipe and historical significance in the skating world. The date was decided upon to coincide with all the festivities of Thunder Over Louisville.

"The murals are part of a social media campaign," said J.C. Newton, Marketing Director for the Kentucky National Guard. "I submitted a one page paper on why Kentucky deserved a mural and we were selected. The ability to link the painting with Thunder, through the efforts of our marketing office and the Kentucky Derby Festival was too good to pass up." 



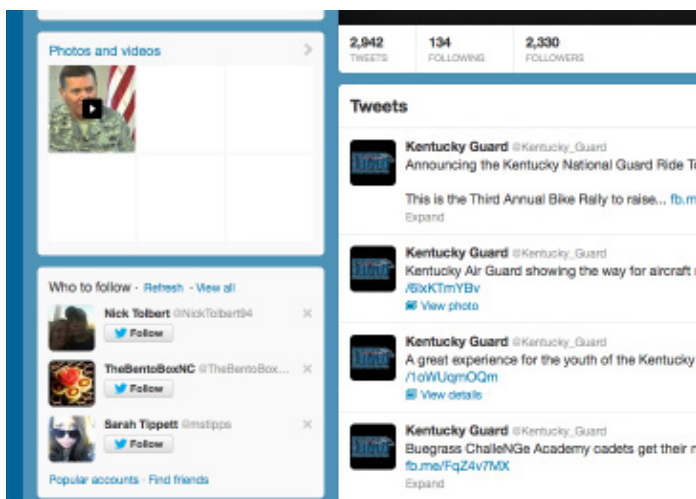
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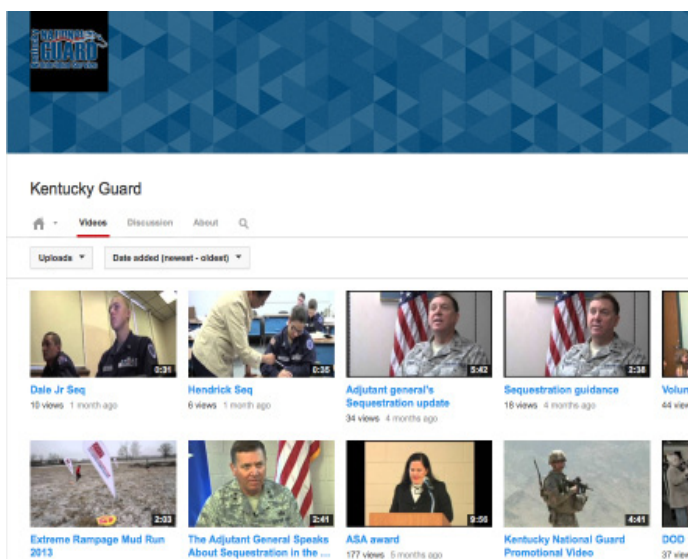
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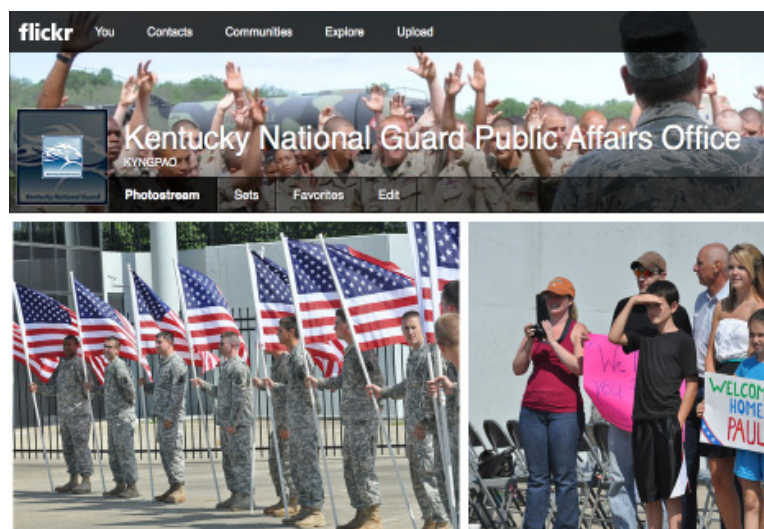
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# WHFRTC WINS Environmental Award

By Pfc. Sarah Anderson

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center, one of more than 60 facilities in the Kentucky National Guard, has gained national recognition in light of its environmental and fiscal restrictions to the Department of Defense. Katherine Hammack, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment presented the Natural Resources Conservation award for large Army installations to the Kentucky Guard training center, Feb. 22, 2013 for its commitment to protecting the environment and becoming more sustainable. Kentucky's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini joined the staff at the Greenville, Ky.-based training center along with members of the Kentucky Guard command staff to receive the award.

"This is a great day for the Kentucky National Guard, and for Kentucky," said Tonini. "It's not often that we are blessed with such recognition from Washington. This award symbolizes not just our care and concern for the environment, but our stewardship to the taxpayer dollars."

Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center has gained recognition for many of its environmental success including; pallet recycling program, sponsorship of the Hunters Feeding the Hungry program, partnership with the American Chestnut Foundation, and prescribed burn management program. These projects, among others that the Kentucky Guard leadership is proud to share with local, state and federal agencies exemplify the cooperation to cost-effectively improve the environment.

"The training Center's native grass restoration program has had a positive impact on wildlife populations," said Hammack. "As mentioned, the successes recognized here today have saved the army a great deal of money."

The site will go on to compete with the Navy/Marine Corps, Air Force and other Defense agencies for the Secretary of Defense Environmental Award later this year.



To read more about WHFRTC and the award, visit [www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com)



# Soldier's best friend

**By Sgt. Matthew Thomason**  
*Agribusiness Development Team 5*

The afternoon sun was beating down as soldiers from Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team 5, gathered for training conducted by Military Working Dog Teams in order to better understand their counterparts and the abilities they possess. Since their arrival to country, ADT5 has been utilizing the invaluable asset of the MWD teams and has established a great working relationship with the handlers and their dogs. Today would be a lesson to remember, as members of ADT5 would now gain a greater understanding of the professionalism and dedication of both the handlers and the dogs themselves.

The training began with a demonstration of the capabilities of the dogs in finding explosives. C4, a high explosive, was buried in a large search area out of the view of the MWD's. Dart, a black Labrador, was let off his leash by his handler and the search began. Within a matter of minutes, Dart had found the buried explosives and lay down, a signal to his handler he had found something.

"I've been on six deployments and this is the first time I've worked with Military Working Dogs," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Harris, Security Forces platoon sergeant. "Personally, I prefer dog teams because it allows me to move much faster when dismounted. Handlers train and work together every day, so it makes it easy to use different teams each mission."

Spc. Morgan Vinson, a Security Forces team member, was the first brave soul to volunteer to be attacked by one of the dogs. He donned a protective jacket and was given a quick safety brief by one of the handlers. He then participated in several role plays where he played an aggressor and was suppressed by the MWD. One such role play was a situation where Vinson was a suspect who decided to run from the Military Police. The dog waited patiently until instructed by the handler to attack. Like a flash of lightning, the dog bolted

after Vinson, quickly catching up and latching onto his arm. The power of the dog biting Vinson's arm was enough to knock him off his feet.

"It's like a strong force hitting you, but I knew I was protected by the suit," said Vinson about his experience. "I felt very confident in the dog's ability and it helped me realize the ability and obedience of the dogs. It was pretty cool."

At the end of the day it seemed that everyone had a new respect for the dogs and their handlers. It was also a fun way to incorporate training with entertainment. The day ended with a group picture and lots of petting and wagging tails.

After all, what dog doesn't like a little attention? 🐕



# Air Guard unit named best in Nation



By Senior Airman Vicky Spesard  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Contingency Response Group has been named the Air National Guard Contingency Response Unit of the Year for 2012.

The group was chosen for the honor over six other contingency response units, including five airlift control flights, said Col. Mark Heiniger, commander of the 123rd CRG.

The group also set new standards of excellence last spring when it moved a record amount of cargo while becoming the first contingency response unit in the Air Guard to be verified by the U.S. Transportation Command as fully capable of operating a Joint Task Force-Port Opening — a logistics hub that combines an Air Force Aerial Port with an Army trucking and distribution unit.

“Getting recognition from the National Guard Bureau is validation that our unit’s willingness and ability to grow is important,” he continued. “It takes each member of our unit working above and beyond their normal duties to achieve this award.”

Described as an “airbase in a box,” the 123rd CRG is designed to be an early responder in the event of a terrorist attack, natural disaster or other major emergency.

It has all the personnel, training and equipment needed to deploy to a remote site, open a runway and establish airfield operations so aid can flow in.

“The men and women in this unit are amazing,” said Lt. Col. Dave Mounkes, deputy commander of the 123rd CRG. “We can call them at any hour, and they will respond immediately. When we get the call for assistance, our mandated response time is 36 hours, but our folks get it done in less than 24 hours.”

It is this dedication and belief in the CRG mission that gained the attention of the National Guard Bureau.

“The 123rd CRG is a very strong group with a vast array of capabilities,” said S. Scott Duke, chief of Airfield Operations Division at the NGB. “The airfield operations board was very pleased to select the unit and recommend that they compete at the national level for this prestigious award.”



To read the full story of the CRG's recognition, view it at [www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com).



# Airmen deploy in support of U.S. Southern Command

By Airman Joshua Horton  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Nearly 50 members of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing deployed to the U.S. Southern Command, July 6 to support Operation Coronet Oak, a mission that provides vital airlift capabilities throughout the U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility.


The Airmen, who departed aboard two Kentucky C-130 aircraft, provides theater airlift services for U.S. military and government operations across the Caribbean and Central and South America, according to Lt. Col. White, mission commander.

"Coronet Oak's main purpose is to support Southern Command and primary mission is the alert," explained White, a pilot in the wing's 165th Airlift Squadron. "A plane and crew are placed



in Bravo Alert, to respond to anything that happens. It could be an embassy evacuation, or something like the earthquake in Haiti."

The deploying Airmen comprise the first rotation of nearly 100 Kentucky Air Guardsmen who will support Coronet Oak this year. One more rotation will follow later this summer, when the wing's role is scheduled to be handed off to another unit, said White.

Coronet Oak is a year-round operation that is supported entirely by Air Mobility Command Guard and Reserve C-130 units. 

To read more about Operation Coronet Oak, search it on [www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com).



# The quest for badges



**By Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond**  
*Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs*

Photos by 1st Lt. Thomas Ormsby

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry travelled to the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky., for a 3-day drill, April 5-7. The weekend included more than just a typical training schedule however, thanks to the Mountain Warrior Assessment Program. For 22 Infantrymen, it was a chance to compete for coveted slots for attendance to notable Army schools such as Airborne and Air Assault. These courses offer specialized training that few Soldiers receive during their careers along with the chance to wear more of their “resume” on their chest.

“This assessment enables us to identify Soldiers with significant physical and intellectual skills who would be a good fit for our Scout Platoon, Sniper Squad, or as a student at a demanding course, such as Ranger or Air Assault,” said 1-149th commanding officer, Maj. Jeffrey Cole.

The 22 Soldiers volunteered for the opportunity with the top performers given the first options for the schools. The designed assessment included the Army Physical Fitness Test with a modified 5-mile run, the confidence course, weapon qualification and a 12-mile road march with equipment.

“These Soldiers are not only mentally and physically sharp, but they also possess an internal will to succeed that will help carry them through arduous experiences,” said Cole. “This training event requires their very best and a deep commitment to persevere, but, in the end, they are better for having done it.” 🇺🇸



To read more about the 1/149th's assessment, view it at [www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com)



# Maintenance Dependability

Photos by Warrant Officer Melissa Propes

**By Sgt. Bryan Ploughe**

*623rd Field Artillery Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative*

Maintenance of mission essential equipment is challenging and educational at an installation in southwest Asia that is currently supporting several hundred individuals and is looking to expand to more than double its current population.

Currently the Kentucky National Guard's 1st Battalion 623rd Field Artillery is responsible for and maintains 68 different pieces of equipment. In addition to their own gear they are supporting incoming and transient units' maintenance needs as well. With that scenario the Soldiers said it presents several challenges as well as educational opportunities.

"Our mission here in Southwest Asia is a critical one," said Master Sgt. Aaron Young. "Our mechanics and the support team are excited about having this opportunity to demonstrate their current abilities as well as to expand their knowledge on equipment that they are familiar with, as well as not so familiar with."

The eight regular members of the maintenance team keep the regular checks and services caught up, let alone the "surprises" that continually arise. Although they have scheduled working hours, some of this equipment runs 24 hours a day to help support the installation in operations. Due to that, it is not out of the ordinary for any member of the team to get a wake-up knock at their door, informing them that they are needed for support at any given location on the installation.

Spc. Shawn Masden has quickly become proficient in troubleshooting and repairing the facilities power generation equipment. Much of the generator powered equipment is essential to operations or life support and cannot be without generator power for long. Through Masden's experiences here, he has learned to troubleshoot with accuracy and make repairs quickly. He has quickly learned the issues that he can fix on the spot or if it is an issue that requires more in depth attention, and if it requires replacement with one of the float generators that he also maintains to keep essential equipment operating. Although the generators are meticulously maintained, they are a high demand item and they continually require regular attention.

"Although this is his first deployment, he has the mind set

and the abilities of a seasoned veteran in his areas of expertise," said Warrant Officer Melissa Propes, the battalion automotive maintenance technician.

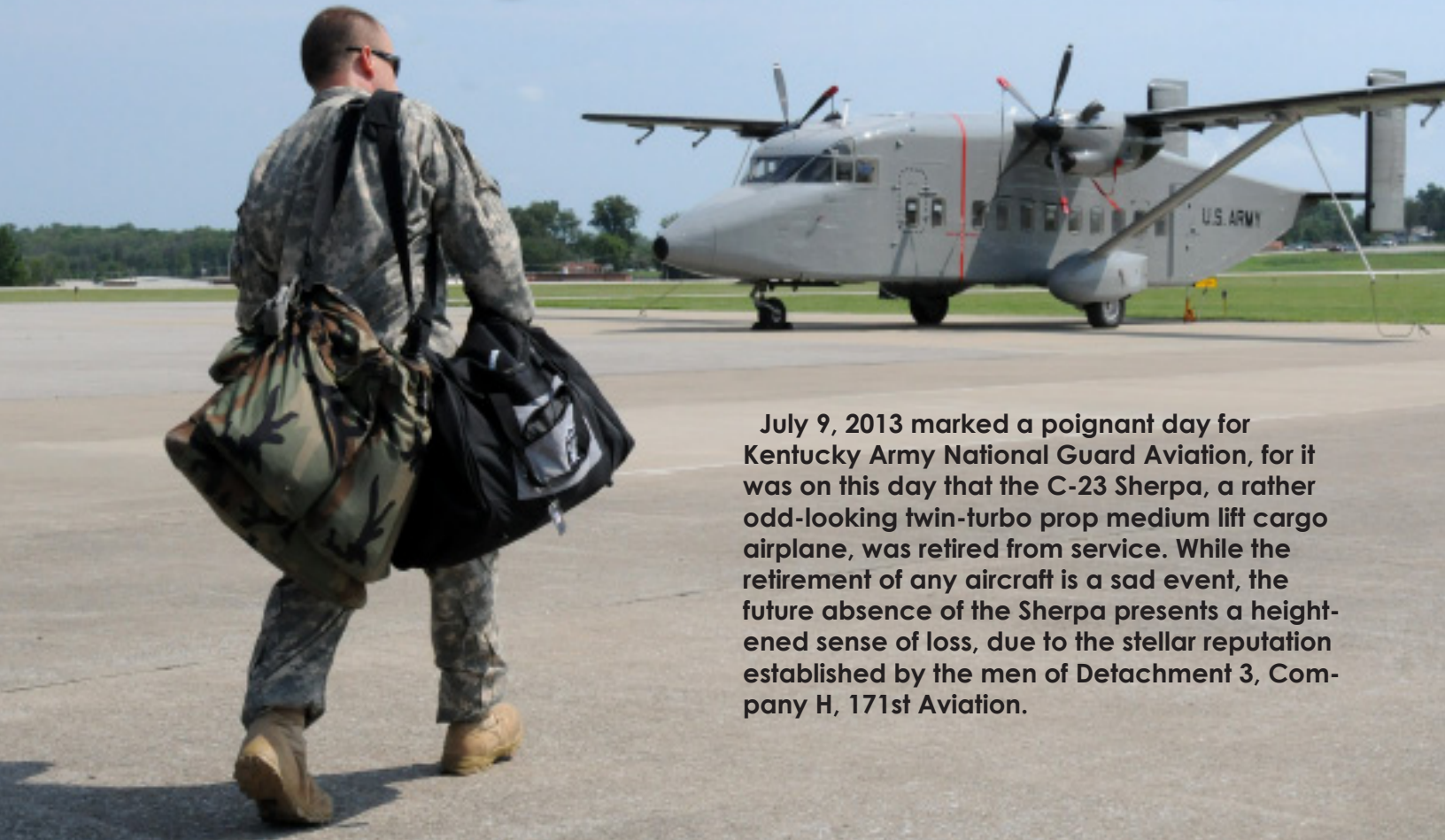
Most of the battalion's equipment being maintained is available back in the states for familiarization and hands on training. But there is one piece that due to its cost and high demand in operational areas is not readily available stateside for training. The MRAP, or Mine resistant ambush protected vehicle, is a highly specialized piece of technically advanced equipment that the maintenance team is quickly becoming acquainted with.

"To have the opportunity to become familiar with the vehicle and get some real world hands wrench time on this vehicle is a privilege," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Long.

This particular vehicle has a level of protection for Soldiers that is unmatched in the type of situations that it is meant to endure. With the armor strategically placed on this vehicle, regular maintenance is more of an issue, due to the removal of plates and so on, just to be able to access the areas that require attention. 🇺🇸



# Final flight of the Sherpas



July 9, 2013 marked a poignant day for Kentucky Army National Guard Aviation, for it was on this day that the C-23 Sherpa, a rather odd-looking twin-turbo prop medium lift cargo airplane, was retired from service. While the retirement of any aircraft is a sad event, the future absence of the Sherpa presents a heightened sense of loss, due to the stellar reputation established by the men of Detachment 3, Company H, 171st Aviation.

Soldiers of Detachment 3, Company H, 171st Aviation packed up the two Sherpas one final time for their last flight in the aircraft following the farewell ceremony. The incomparable aircraft have had illustrious careers in Kentucky including three deployments to Iraq. Soldiers have called its tenure a unique experience and one they won't soon forget. Det 3's commander, Chief Warrant Officer Harold Grider couldn't believe it was all over.

"The C-23 has been an uncommon experience for our Army aviators," said Grider. "What we do is geared toward an air force mission, we fly cargo planes in the U.S. Army, and it has been a great experience. We've been flying for 12 years and it's an unfortunate day for the crews and for the Guard."

The Sherpa has been flying in the U.S. Military since 1985, but the time had come to retire the aircraft from operation. Over the past few years, several other Guard units across the country have also retired their C-23s. It is expected that the mission of the planes will be handled by larger cargo planes and helicopters.

The Soldiers aren't the only ones that will miss the aircraft in Frankfort. Cheyenne Beatty and Charlie Quire are civilian contractors with M7 Aerospace, who work on the planes.

Beatty has been with the unit for 13 years and had nothing but positive memories of his years working with the C-23s. Quire has only been on the job for a year, but the impact of his work will stick with him as the only job he enjoyed coming to every single day.

"It meant a lot to us to support this mission," said Quire. "I like the crews, all the guys, the experience, I just wanted to support the military. And it's a shame to see them to go, they are great aircraft." 🇺🇸

"It's been a great adventure," said Grider, "We've flown all over the globe in this thing, and again, it's just an uncommon opportunity for our aviators to get this type of flying experience." 🇺🇸





By Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond  
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

## ***The C-23 Sherpa in Kentucky***

- **April, 1997 - First Sherpa arrived in Kentucky**
- **August, 1997 - First Operational mission flown**
- **1997-Present - Supported numerous parachute operations for U.S. Navy SEALs, U.S. Army Delta Force and various Special Operations units.**
- **1999 - Only C-23 unit in Army dedicated to transport Apache helicopter transmissions during grounding of fleet**
- **2001 - First C-23 unit to support special forces operations following 9/11**
- **2005 - Supported relief efforts following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita**

### ***Performance by the numbers***

- **7,300 passengers moved**
- **840,000 lbs. of cargo moved**
- **1200 missions flown**
- **20,000 paratroopers supported**
- **7,800 hours flown**

**36 total months deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn**



On the day of the final flight, crew members of the past and present gathered to bid farewell to their beloved aircraft.

To read more about the Sherpa in the Kentucky National Guard, visit [www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com)

# Warrant officers celebrate 95 years

By Spc. Brandy Mort  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The U.S. Army defines a warrant officer as an officer appointed by the Secretary of the Army, based upon a sound level of technical and tactical competence. The warrant officer is the highly specialized expert and trainer, who, by gaining progressive levels of expertise and leadership, operates, maintains, and manages the Army's equipment support activities, or technical systems for an entire career.

In the past 90 years, Kentucky's Warrant Officer Corps has grown from one to over 140 highly trained professionals that serve in 15 various occupational disciplines in fields such as aviation and chemical-biological and radiological warfare and electronic warfare.

The Kentucky National Guard's Warrant Officer Corps celebrated their 95th Birthday with a ceremony July 9 at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, Ky.

In July 1918 the first Warrant Officer Corps was established in the U.S. military when an act of congress established the Army Mine Planter Service as part of the Coast Artillery Corps. In World War I, they were responsible for mine defenses in major ports. Vessels ranging in size from small motor boats to 1,000-ton ocean-going ships were used to lay and maintain minefields.

The first warrant officer was appointed to the Kentucky Army National Guard March 6, 1922.

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini con-


siders warrant officers a vital asset to the Kentucky National Guard.

"Warrant Officers have always been a chief resource in the Kentucky National Guard," said Kentucky's Adj. Gen., Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, "I'm proud to support them in any way I can."

A warrant officer is different from a commissioned officer because they stay in one specific career field. Events such as the birthday celebration brings warrant officers from different fields together.

"It's warrant officer heritage to have everyone come together," said Warrant Officer Pete Ralston and Aviation Maintenance Technician, "Events are a great way to socialize, network, and get things done."

While July 9, 2013 marks the 95th birthday of the Warrant Officer Corps, Chief Warrant Officer James Simms, State Command Chief Warrant Officer, looks beyond the celebration.

"The future is bright for Warrant Officers," said Simms, "Every day, there are more and more warrant officer positions opening up in many different fields." 

To read more about the Kentucky National Guard's Warrant Officer Corps visit [www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com)



# Busting myths of the warrant officer

By David Altom

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

**Myth #1.** Warrant officers are not “real officers.”

~ **False:** Warrant officers are highly skilled, specialty officers, and while the ranks are authorized by Congress, each branch of the uniformed services selects, manages, and utilizes warrant officers in slightly different ways. Warrant officers can and do command detachments, units, activities, vessels, aircraft, and armored vehicles as well as lead, coach, train, and counsel subordinates.

According to Chief Warrant Officer Ryan Turner, who runs the Kentucky Guard’s warrant officer recruiting program, “The warrant officer’s main job is to serve as a technical expert, provide skills, guidance, and expertise to commanders and organizations in their particular field.”

**Myth #2.** Only the Army has warrant officers.

~ **False:** The United States Navy and the Marine Corps have warrant officers, as does the Coast Guard and the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. The United States Air Force inherited the warrant officer ranks from the Army Air Corps at its inception in 1947, but stopped appointing warrant officers in 1959.

**Myth #3.** All warrant officers are pilots.

~ **False:** Not so, says Turner. “Warrant officers in the Army are the technical experts, combat leaders, trainers, and advisors in more than forty basic military occupational specialties. They serve across the active component, the Army National Guard, and the U.S. Army Reserve.”

Warrant officers also command the Army’s waterborne and sea-going vessels, most Army Bands and as aircraft commanders of most Army Aviation aircraft. In addition, they may be found in command of various small units and detached teams such as special forces and criminal investigation detachments.

**Myth #4.** Warrant officer training is a piece of cake.

~ **False:** Well, depending on your point of view. There are three basic approaches to becoming a warrant officer: 1) The six-week active resident course at Fort Rucker, Ala. 2) Distance learning plus four and a half weeks (if you are an E-5 with Warrior Leader Course) or 3) Through the 238th Regimental Training Institute, completing distance learning, five drills and a two-week annual training period. No matter which direction take, there are classes in leadership, tactics and military history and protocol, along with extensive physical training and testing.

According to Chief Warrant Officer Rick Skelton, TAC officer with the 238th RTI’s warrant officer candidate school, the training ain’t easy, but it’s not insurmountable, either.

“At one point it was actually one of the toughest schools in the army,” said Skelton. “It’s still pretty rigorous. We just finished a 6.2 mile ruck march with a fifty pound pack. You’ve got to have your head in the game, but you can do it. You just have to want to be there.”

**Myth #5:** The warrant officer corps is an archaic and dying breed.

~ **False:** “The warrant officer corps is alive and well and growing,” said State Command Warrant Officer Chief Jimmy Simms. “Just recently the Kentucky Army National Guard has received authorization for new warrant positions in electronic warfare, putting us ahead of the curve in this growing field. Artillery targeting is another warrant officer field that is growing, as are warrant positions in special forces. So, yes, we are a powerful force in the Guard and we’re getting stronger every day.”

# WLC in Africa

## Warrior Leaders Course a success for Kentucky Guardsmen overseas

By Staff Sgt. Steve Tressler  
Task Force Longrifles Public Affairs

Every enlisted Soldier Army-wide who wants to continue being promoted and more importantly, to eventually lead other Soldiers must at some point attend Warrior Leader Course. Some deployed Soldiers have to wait until they return home to attend this mandatory step in their career progression. But for members of the 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, WLC came to them in the Horn of Africa.

Task Force Longrifles is proud to announce that 58 out of 62 Soldiers graduated from the intensive, March 2013 edition of WLC, conducted here at Camp Lemmonier. The unit shared more pride in the fact that the distinguished honor graduate of the course, Sgt. Bradley Osbourne is one of their own.

WLC is usually a month-long course that teaches Soldiers the basic skills to lead small groups of Soldiers. It is also a course that is offered at several locations in the U.S., but this is only the second time in 10 years it has been offered here to Soldiers. The Texas National Guard and the Kentucky National Guard were

the only states to make the school available to their Soldiers while here at Camp Lemmonier.

The instructors said this group was a little easier to instruct and train than normal. "This unit already had great cohesion and it was evident that the working relationships of the Soldiers were already established. This made it easier for us because we didn't have to manage those relationships the way we normally would in the U.S. with a class full of Soldiers who don't know one another," said Assistant WLC Commandant Master Sgt. Rick Ewert.

Task Force Longrifles Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Gividen pushed to get WLC brought to Africa for his Soldiers. He said the reason behind bringing the course to the Soldiers here, rather than waiting until they got back to the U.S. was simple, "We [leadership] wanted to get as many young Soldiers through the course as possible."

WLC is not MOS (military occupational specialty) dependent, every Soldier must attend if they have any desire to




WLC Honor Graduate, Sgt. Bradley Osbourne

be promoted. It's an intensive school with the primary emphasis on leadership skills. It also prepares Soldiers to advance to the rank of staff sergeant.

The Soldiers of Task Force Longrifles were able to attend this course here in Djibouti thanks to the officers and the NCO corps already in place within their units. The NCOs covered down on their mission so that the junior Soldiers could attend.

"Our command truly came together and stepped up to the plate to cover down on shifts and work longer hours to be able to make this all possible for us," said Sgt. Alexa Becerra with Task Force Longrifles.

"Being able to complete this milestone for my career while deployed was a great opportunity for me," she said. "Going through the Warrior Leader Course here in the Horn of Africa was a very unique experience; one that not many Guard Soldiers will be able to say they had." 



To read more about our  
Soldiers in Africa, visit  
[www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com)



# 149th VCC “lights it up blue”

Soldiers show support for fellow Guardsman in Afghanistan during Autism Awareness

By Spc. John Rader

149th VCC Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative

Deployed Soldiers of the 149th Vertical Construction Company got together to raise awareness for autism by hanging blue lights outside of their living quarters in Afghanistan. The Guardsmen of Kentucky will now join over 60 countries worldwide with the Autism Speaks “Light it up Blue” campaign for Autism Awareness.

The Engineers of the 149th used what little resources they had when it came to making blue lights to hang. Using only a box of blue signal lights, several empty water bottles, and a can of blue spray paint, the engineers were able to fashion enough blue lights together to show their support.

While autism has been a buzz word for a number of years, efforts to promote autism awareness have helped families of children on the spectrum receive the proper care, resources, and services they need, which Sgt. Gary Forsyth of the 149th VCC, and parent of a child with autism has found out first hand.

“It wasn’t until about 18 months after she was born, that we noticed Norah wasn’t up to par with her communication skills as most children her age. At

first we assumed it was a delay in speech or a development delay,” said Forsyth

At an 18 month checkup with the pediatrician, the Forsyth’s addressed their concerns about Norah’s speech development because she had few words, which she would use sparingly. Norah also had a tendency to mouth or eat nonfood items. The doctor suggested a program through Kentucky that helped with childhood development disorders called First Steps.

“We got her in the program and she started speech therapy once a week, occupational therapy every other week, and developmental intervention once a month,” said Gena Forsyth.

Finally after being on a waiting list for six months, Gena and Gary had an appointment for an intensive level arena evaluation for Norah on Dec. 11, 2012 at New Perceptions, with a developmental pediatrician from Children’s Hospital. There, a team of therapists spent time consulting with the Forsyth’s about their concerns and then took turns playing with and observing Norah.

“It was a day that I will never forget,” said Gena. “After just a few hours, we received the diagnosis that Norah was

on the autism spectrum. It was a hard thing to hear, even though deep down, it wasn’t a huge shock. Personally, I spent the next couple of days in a fragile state, but then like a switch, I was over being upset and was ready to tackle this head on.”

Through working with Norah more and seeking all the therapies available to them, they had begun to isolate what types of areas Norah needed to be worked on with.

Gary and Gena put together a directory of references and contacts that they used to find out all the resources available to them through the state and the Kentucky National Guard for other families with children on the spectrum.

“We put this directory together because we spent a lot of time feeling lost,” Gary said. “We were not sure what resources were available to us. I feel it’s a starting guide for the beginning stages for parents who have a child with autism. I passed it on through my chain of command at the unit, in hopes it will assist someone else in the future.”



# ... with flying colors

## 123rd passes wing-wide inspection

By Maj. Dale Greer

123rd Airlift Wing Chief of Public Affairs

The 123rd Airlift Wing successfully completed its first Consolidated Unit Inspection May 22, passing all five evaluations conducted by officials from the National Guard Bureau and Air Mobility Command.

"You are an awesome team," the wing commander, Col. Warren Hurst, told unit members during an inspection out-brief held in the Base Annex.

"You've done an outstanding job, and I want to thank you for all the hard work and the additional hours that you put in preparing for these inspections."

"You did this among budget cuts and pending furloughs. We didn't stop deployments, we didn't stop going out on exercises, and you had to figure out how to balance all this with a new inspection program."

More than 100 inspectors descended on the base to examine a broad range of wing functions during the eight-day review, executing five different evaluations: an Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health Compliance Assessment Management Program, or ESOHCAMP; a Logistics Compliance Assessment Program, or LCAP; an Aircrew Standardization Evaluation Visit, or ASEV; an Airfield Operations Compliance Inspection, or AOCI; and a wing-wide Compliance Inspection that covered 10 additional graded areas. Those areas were personnel and services; intelligence; operations and plans; logistics and installation/mission support; information dominance; the surgeon general; information protection; contracting; financial management; and public affairs.

Hurst noted that AMC inspectors recognized dozens of Airmen for exceptional performance and identified several wing programs as benchmarks of excellence.

"I am extremely pleased and proud of your performance all across the board," he said.

CUIs represent a new approach to inspections by combining what previously would have been multiple self-contained evaluations staged at different times.


**For more information on the 123rd Airlift Wing, visit [www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com)**



# EXTREME RAMPAGE

## MAN OF STEEL STYLE

Photo essay by Spc. Brandy Mort  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Four Kentucky National Guardsmen, Sgt. 1st Class Dillon Blevins, Staff Sgt. Joe Herrington and Sgt. Daniel Dornbusch, Recruiting and Retention non-commissioned officers, and Pvt. Grant Mahoney, chemical specialist with the 299th Chemical Company, “live life to the extreme,” during the Extreme Rampage obstacle course challenge held in Clay City, Ky., June 15. The course measured physical and mental ability with rough terrain and various amounts of obstacles. These “Super men” show what hard work and determination are all about. 



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# Unique unit praised by Army

The Soldiers and Airmen of the 41st Civil Support Team don't train just to pass

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

The Kentucky Guard's 41st Civil Support Team is a 22-member unit with a huge responsibility. The small group stands ready to augment local or regional terrorism response capabilities in events that are suspected to involve weapons of mass destruction. They are trained to provide support to incidents including the use of chemical, biological or radiological agents.

Every 18 months the unit is put through a multi-day exercise, a TPE, or Training Proficiency Evaluation. Soldiers and Airmen of the 41st concluded their newest TPE April 9-12. Observers from U.S. Army North came to Kentucky to gauge the unit's effectiveness in potentially hazardous and difficult situations. The unit impressed, achieving a passing score from the graders after only one day of training. Team members said they didn't train to just pass.


"The purpose of this validation is to test the unit on its full spectrum of capabilities," said commanding officer, Maj. John Cline. "It's all in order to ensure that we are prepared to respond to the Commonwealth's needs in any required all-hazard event."

Air Force Staff Sgt. Joseph Cloutier said the 41st has been the assignment of his career in the military and that he enjoys the unique mission. And with such uncommon skill sets, Cloutier knows the challenges of their jobs and the necessity of the extensive training routines.

"This exercise shows our capabilities, but also our limitations, so it proves what we can and cannot do out there," he said.

According to Maj. Kris Morlen, deputy commander of the 41st, the unit is a highly skilled group of well experienced professionals. Several members have been with the unit since its inception more than 12 years ago. Morlen is the newest member, having only been with the 41st for less than two years, but certainly understands the importance of the training event.

"This gives us the opportunity to showcase the skills of our team members," he said. "It's a point of pride for us to do well here."

Morlen also has respect for the quality of work done by the unit. The leadership of the 41st say they get a lot of 'You guys are good. 



*"It's a point of pride for us to do well here."*

Staff Sgt. Joseph Cloutier

For more information on the  
41st CST,  
visit [www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com)



By David Altom  
 Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

## Soldier an honor graduate in more ways than one

Pvt. Darrick White is a man with a purpose. A high school dropout with issues at home, he was determined to do something to get out of the rut and make a difference in his life. He got word of the Kentucky National Guard's Youth ChalleNGe program and decided that might just be the ticket.

"I heard about the Youth Challenge program and saw that as a way of getting my life going," said White. "It turned out that I really enjoyed it. I learned so much there. I can tell you for sure that it definitely helps get you straight and set you up for what comes later in life."

White loved the experience so much that at the end of his 22 weeks at the Appalachian Challenge Academy in Harlan he was selected the honor graduate.

His next step? Join the National Guard, of course.

"I wanted to do something to serve and this seemed the best route for me," he said. "I really like it a lot!"

White joined up last January and went to basic and advanced individual training at Fort Sill, Ok. where he was once again ranked as his class honor graduate.

"What you've done is a significant accomplishment," State Command Sgt. Maj. Armstrong told White during a recent visit with senior Guard leaders at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort.

"By taking the initiative the way he has, this young man has done something that not many people could achieve,"

said Armstrong. "It speaks to his courage and his determination to do something positive with his life. That, to me, is very impressive."

White also received a coin from State Command Chief Warrant Officer Jimmy Simms, the ranking member of the Kentucky National Guard's warrant officer corps. Simms encouraged White to keep up the good work and stay on course.

"We definitely need people like this in the Guard," Simms said. "To come so far in such a short amount of time, and on your own initiative, that's awesome! I know for sure I can use more like him in the warrant officer corps."

White is currently assigned to Detachment 1, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion 149th Infantry where he serves as a forward observer. 🇺🇸

For more information about the  
 Youth ChalleNGe  
[www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com)

# Speedway welcomes NGYF

Story and photos By Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Persistent rain showers did little to dampen the spirits and excitement of a group of teens at the Kentucky Speedway this past weekend. The young men and women are current and former cadets with the National Guard Youth Challenge programs. They were given a full-access pass to all NASCAR had to offer at this year's Quaker State 400 race at the track in Sparta, Ky.

As part of the National Guard Youth Foundation – the national nonprofit that supports Challenge – and the Challenge program's relationship with Hendrick Motorsports, several cadets, foundation officials and members of the National Guard were invited to the track to see Dale Earnhardt Jr. drive the number 88 Chevrolet with a special National Guard Youth Foundation logo on his car.

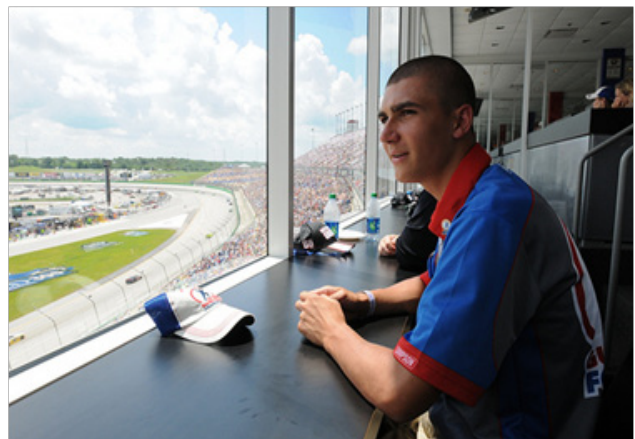
"We are honored and deeply appreciate the opportunity to partner with Hendrick Motorsports and Dale Earnhardt Jr. to raise awareness of the Challenge program," said Gail Dady, National Guard Youth Foundation Board of Directors President. "The Hendrick Motorsports team went to an extraordinary level to make this an unforgettable experience for the cadets."

The excitement began Friday morning with a press conference announcing the sponsorship and highlighting the Challenge programs. Rome Meade, a graduate of the Appalachian ChalleNGe Academy in Harlan,

Ky., sat with Dady, Earnhardt Jr., and Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini in the press room at the track for the interaction with media. Meade said he was proud to have Earnhardt drive for the program, acknowledging that many more people will know about the program after the race.

In between the rain drops, Meade and his fellow cadets were treated to garage tours, a meet and greet with Earnhardt, Rick Hendrick, owner of Hendrick Motorsports and also University of Kentucky Basketball coach John Calipari.

During the meet and greet, Earnhardt told the cadets and the crowd that relationship he has had with the National Guard has been one he has had a lot of fun with and takes very seriously. He said he was honored to drive his car with the foundation logo in the race and remains excited to be a part of the program. 🇺🇸



# Whirlwind career has its benefits



By Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond

*Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs*

When Capt. Andrea Hahn enlisted into the Kentucky National Guard, serving outside the Commonwealth was a small thought in her mind. A chemistry major at Eastern Kentucky University, the idea of serving her country and her new found home in Kentucky (she's originally from Montana) were strong motivators. And the education benefits didn't hurt either. But the military and life in general has ways of surprising us all.

In March of 2013, Hahn added to the bewilderment of her career as she agreed to become a public affairs liaison in Nepal for a peace-keeping exercise.

After eight years in uniform, multiple overseas deployments and dedication to a professionally gratifying career in public affairs, Hahn is content in her role in the Kentucky Guard. And she's still surprised by what the Guard has and continues to do for her.

"I never thought in my wildest dreams it would take me to

Iraq twice, Afghanistan, Ecuador, Germany, Nepal and soon Cuba," said Hahn. "The opportunities this organization has given me has been life-changing and I'm so grateful and proud to call myself a Kentucky guardsman."

Hahn worked as the public affairs liaison to the U.S. embassy in Nepal, coordinating the production and marketing of stories, photos and videos of the exercise back out to participating countries. She helped manage a mobile public affairs detachment (MPAD) from the Oregon National Guard there providing the coverage.

"I advised and assisted the MPAD team to gather and produce stories, articles and videos on each country represented. It was my job to ensure all product was marketed to the right audience. We were able to produce 30 print stories and 15 videos highlighting the exercise, the countries and the soldiers participating in it. We worked overtime to send the stories back home to their countries, as well as publish them locally for Pacific Command and the host nation of Nepal."

"It was an experience that is hard to put into words unless you have lived it," she said. "I was literally exposed to the world and reminded how huge it is. But at the same time, I watched so many different nations, cultures and people come together and work to achieve the same goal of promoting peace around the world. It was incredible."

Hahn said the fact that five of the six team members were from the National Guard really highlights the qualities and the reach of the Guard. Many believe that Guardsmen serve only their state and occasionally serve in combat zones. But for five Guardsmen a half a world away from home, they are just doing their job. A job they love and one that allows them the opportunity to experience once-in-a-lifetime moments – sometimes more than once. 🇺🇸



# KENTUCKY'S OWN "SOLDIER OF STEEL"

**Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond**  
*Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs*

When Service members are tasked with a job, a school or training, they may have travel far from home. Even in the National Guard, some Soldiers' assignments take them around the world. For one Kentucky National Guard member, the mission was on a movie set in Hollywood, Calif.

In a coordinated effort, Warner Brothers Entertainment partnered with the National Guard to market the upcoming Superman movie, "Man of Steel." Soldiers from around the country were selected to assist with and appear in a National Guard advertisement appearing in conjunction with the movie's marketing campaign. A total of 22 Guardsmen from 18 states converged on Hollywood for the week-long shoot, including Kentucky's own Pfc. Kierre Brown.

The 21-year-old from Frankfort, Ky., is an infantryman with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry. Brown also works full-time with the Kentucky Guard's Recruiting and Retention Command. He and the 21 other Soldiers were chosen out of more than 4,000 applicants for the unique assignment.

"I loved my trip to Hollywood," said Brown. "From the moment I stepped off the plane and met Kareem Abdul Jabbar to the last night of being there and hanging with the entire cast and crew for we had become such great friends."

The 1-minute-long spot depicts the Citizen-Soldiers, just like Superman's alias, Clark Kent, as ordinary individuals who at any moment could be the hero needed in difficult times. Brown said the filming was a unique adventure and not unlike military training at times. Brown is one of the Soldiers on the roof of the building helping the family be hoisted by a helicopter.



"It was intense," he said. "We had a director and set people telling us where to be and when and to do this here. It got to be pretty hectic and we had to look good for the camera at the same time."

"I was able to be a part of the making a movie commercial, and see what it takes to make just a mere 1 minute and 24 seconds of footage. Now I know it takes a lot."

In his role as an actor, Brown said the Hollywood treatment was pretty nice — staying in a very nice hotel, having his own make-up and wardrobe assistant, meeting "Man of Steel" director, Zack Snyder — but the food, gourmet selections from a food truck, was his favorite part.

Hollywood antics aside, Brown said the opportunity to represent the National Guard to the world was a humbling experience. And working with and making friends with the other Soldiers was the highlight of the trip. Brown has only served in the Kentucky Guard for 18 months. So far he has accomplished a lot to be proud of, but like any good, forward-looking Soldier, he's keeping his eyes on what's next.

**To view more on this story, and all of the stories in this issue visit [www.kentuckyguard.com](http://www.kentuckyguard.com)**