

The Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 17, Issue 3 - JULY 2014
Serving the men and women of Kentucky's Army and Air National Guard

MISSION ALWAYS



AROUND THE



JFHQ - Col. Steven King took charge of the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center garrison during a change of command ceremony March 23. King brought a new look to WHFRTC as the garrison officially became their own command with the establishment of a distinctive unit insignia and shoulder sleeve insignia.



63rd TAB - Col. Mike Ferguson relinquished command of the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade and welcomed Lt. Col. Michael Stephens as brigade commander during a change of command ceremony at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, Kentucky, June 7.



75th TC - In a sign of things to come, Soldiers of the Kentucky National Guard's 75th Troop Command gathered for a change of command ceremony May 17 at the future home of the brigade, the Butler Reserve Center in Louisville, Kentucky where Lt. Col. Bryan Howay assumed command from Col. Mike Abell.



138th FiB - "After being off the guns for several years, our focus now is getting back to Field Artillery fundamentals," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Lisle, Howitzer Section Chief at Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery. "It's amazing to see this level of excitement from our guys."



238th RTI - 238th Officer Candidate and Kentucky State Police Detective Cassandra Mullins received the Kentucky State Police Citation for Bravery in Frankfort, Kentucky, May 14.



An aircrew from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Squadron flies a Kentucky Air National Guard C-130 Hercules over the mountains of Alaska during a training scenario as part of Red Flag-Alaska May 15, 2014. Photo by Kentucky Air National Guard Senior Airman Robert Buchberger, 165th Airlift Squadron.

E GUARD

AND IN OUR PAGES

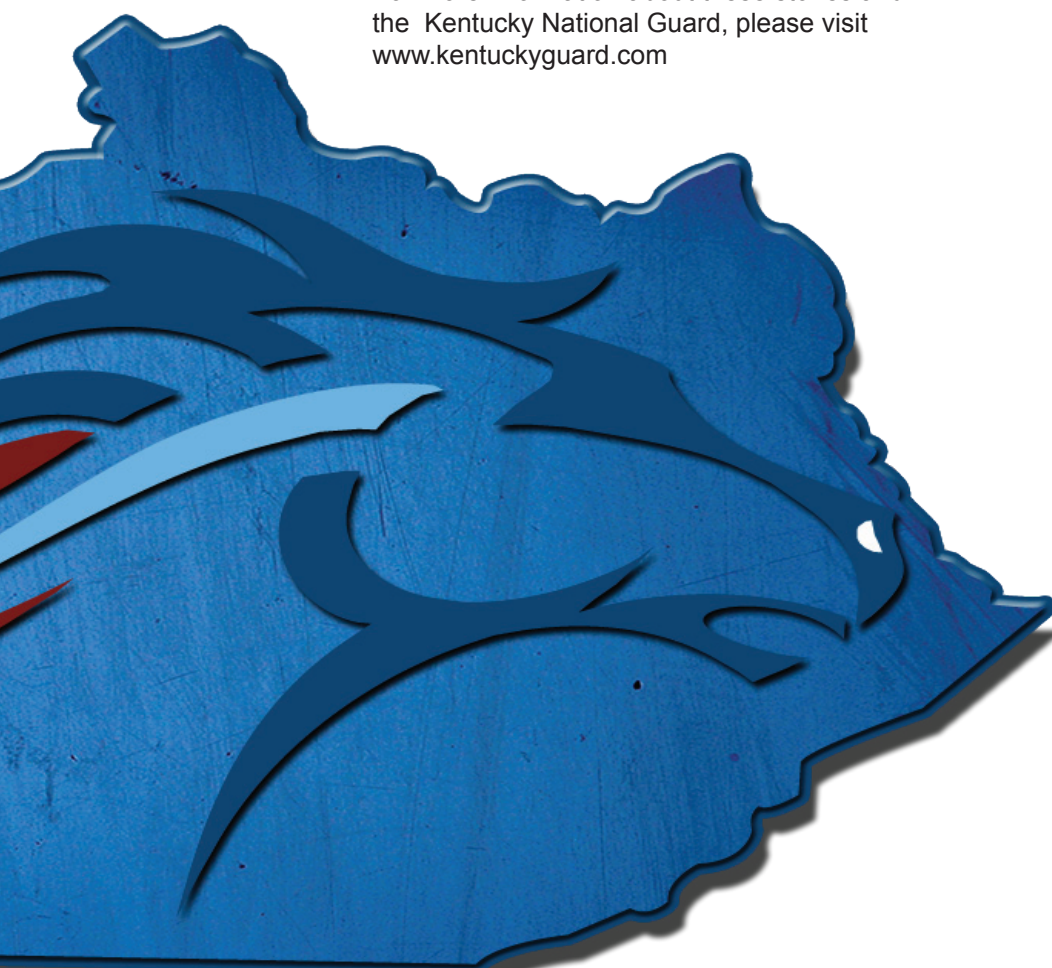


123rd AW - Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III, director of the Air National Guard, toured the Kentucky Air Guard Base April 11-13, meeting Airmen from units across the 123rd Airlift Wing and kicking off Thunder Over Louisville, one of the largest air show and fireworks displays in North America.



149th MEB - For two minutes each spring, the eyes of the world are on the Bluegrass State for a race called The Kentucky Derby. Amidst all the energy and excitement, Kentucky's National Guard Soldiers make their presence known.

For more information about these stories and the Kentucky National Guard, please visit www.kentuckyguard.com



The Bluegrass Guard

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

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

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

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Letters to the Editor Policy

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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.

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IN THIS EDITION



Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson joined Adjutant General Edward W. Tonini and members of the Kentucky Army National Guard's aviation community for the inaugural roll out of the Guard's newest acquisition, the LUH-72 Lakota helicopter at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, Ky., April 24.

Read more on Page 8



It has been more than 25 years since a female has served as a chaplain in the Kentucky Guard. A fact Maj. Angela White says contributes to the idea that things happen for a reason. White was sworn in as a major and the second female chaplain in the Kentucky National Guard during an appointment ceremony in Frankfort, Ky., Feb. 21.

Read more on Page 10



Soldiers of the Kentucky National Guard's 207th Engineer Company assisted in construction improvement to Camp McKee, a Boy Scout Camp in Montgomery County, Ky., April 5-19, 2014. The small group of engineers spent their days working with Boy Scout officials to improve several basic needs of the camp.

Read more on Page 18



Staff Sgt. Kenneth Soto, a Kentucky Air National Guardsman who was deployed to Southwest Asia as a security response force leader for the 387th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, was awarded the Air Force Achievement Medal for heroism Jan. 21.

Read more on Page 21

Best of the Best

Staff Report

with contributions from Capt. Jason Mendez

Capt. Ryan Hubbs, 1st Battalion 149th Infantry Regiment, recently competed in the Army's Best Ranger Competition this past April. This multi-day test of endurance is considered the toughest competition our military conducts to distinguish the best of the best. This competition is open to all Airborne Ranger qualified Soldiers from across all branches of the military. Based on the recent performance of National Guard teams, the Best Ranger Competition offered to increase the number of Guard teams from two to four. Capt. Ryan Hubbs earned a spot to try out during the National Guard's Best Ranger Assessment held last November at the Warrior Training Center at Fort Benning, Georgia. The 18-hour assessment included multiple runs, an obstacle course, 16-mile ruck march, Ranger Physical Fitness Test, 1200 meter swim, and various skills testing. In the end, Capt. Hubbs was selected to join one of the four National Guard teams that would compete alongside 46 other active duty teams to determine the best of the best.

What was the most challenging part of the competition?

Completing the foot movement (Road March) at the end of Day 1. Having to carry the additional items such as 45 pound sand bags, 5-gallon water cans, and 60-pound ammo crates made the movement extremely difficult. Especially given the hilly terrain and the fact that most of the movement was conducted on gravel tank trails.

Best workout leading up to the competition?

The hardest work-out we had was on Friday, four weeks out from the competition. We ran 8 miles in 56 minutes, Swam 2,600 meters (doing a variety of drills), and did an 18 mile road march with a 65-pound ruck, Fighting Load Carrier and weapon in 3hrs and 51min. The route included two hills that carried a constant incline for over a mile. Then we went to the gym and did some upper body lifting.

What was your favorite part of the competition?

The train up leading to BRC. Being around other highly motivated Guard Soldiers and learning how to train for an endurance event was a lot of fun. I also enjoyed all of the support I had from my friends and family who either came down to watch me or watched the competition on the live feed. My favorite event was the Combat Water Survival Assessment.

Any additional remarks?

The caliber of Soldiers that competed on the National Guard Best Ranger Competition Team was outstanding. I remember doing a four mile run in ACUs out to King's Pond and making fun of one of my buddies for coming in last by a couple minutes even though his average pace per mile was 6 minutes, 43 seconds.

What does that mean to you?

This tells me that we often set the standard way too low in our units; expecting Soldiers to just be able to pass a physical fitness test. Soldiers need to be challenged and our standards need to be raised. There are elite Soldiers in the National Guard and there is no reason why we can't have an entire battalion full of elite Soldiers in the Kentucky National Guard.



Breaking

Ground



Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Kentucky's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini was joined by hundreds of current and former Citizen Soldiers and Airmen, friends and family members to celebrate Memorial Day by breaking ground for the Kentucky National Guard Memorial in Frankfort, Kentucky, May 26.

After years in the works, construction of the memorial will begin this summer. 1st Lt. Joshua Witt, board member of the Kentucky National Guard Memorial Fund said the moment is a long time coming.

"We have come together finally on Memorial Day 2014 for the event we dreamed of five years ago," he said. "This is the chance for us to recognize the reality of a \$1.3 million fund-raising goal for a project that represents the sacrifice of more than 140 Kentucky Guardsmen that gave their lives since 1912."

Witt called the memorial a fitting tribute to Kentucky's fallen. The memorial will feature a 22-foot wide granite stone in the shape of Kentucky bearing the names of Kentucky National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who have died in the line of duty. So far, 148 troops have been identified to have their names engraved on the stone.

One of those names to be etched is Sgt. James Sherrill who was killed April 3, 2005 in Bayji, Iraq while serving with the 2113th Transportation Company. Sherrill's mother, father and daughter attended the groundbreaking and agreed that the memorial will bring strength to them and peace of mind.

"I think this will mean a whole lot to us," said Sherrill's father, William. "This memorial will be a big part of his memory, it's going to be really beautiful."

"Even after nine years, it's like we are still part of the family," he said. "It really gives us a great feeling knowing that so many people remember and honor our son."

Volunteers with the memorial fund are hopeful to dedicate the monument on Veterans Day later this year. 



Family members of fallen Kentucky Guardsmen are joined by friends, former and current Kentucky Guardsmen during the national anthem at a ground breaking ceremony for the Kentucky National Guard Memorial in Frankfort, Ky., May 26, 2014.

William and Beatrice Sherrill point out the picture of their son, Sgt. James Sherrill to Alexandra Sherrill, James' daughter at a ground breaking ceremony for the Kentucky National Guard Memorial in Frankfort, Ky., May 26, 2014.



BASIC TRAINING BOUND

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Michael J. Oliver

B. Co. Det. 1, 2/75th Recruiting and Retention Battalion

More than 200 of the Kentucky National Guard's newest recruits prepared for their future trip to Army Basic Combat Training during a field training exercise at Grant County High School in Dry Ridge, Kentucky April 5-6.

"Our training prepares the new Soldiers for the rigorous and physical training they will encounter at Basic Combat Training and they will be ahead of their peers when they go to their individual basic and advanced training," said Capt. Travis Riley, commander of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 75th Recruiting and Retention.

As part of the Kentucky Guard's Recruit Sustainment Program, new enlistees are trained in the routine Soldier skills and Army Values. The recruits drill one weekend a month, just like traditional Guardsmen, in preparation for what is to come.

"The field training exercise is a great opportunity to change up the schedule a bit," said Riley. "We bring them all together, get them outdoors all day and give them an even better taste of what's next."

The highlight of the day, for most, was muscling their way through a mile long obstacle course, and building team cohesion with relay events.


"Today's training was tough but I'm glad we are doing it so I



Kentucky National Guard recruit Pfc. Jacob Perkins of Crittenden, Ky., climbs through an obstacle during the Bravo Company Recruit Sustainment Program annual field training exercise at the Grant County High School Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps complex in Dry Ridge, Ky. April 5, 2014.

can be ready and pass basic," said Pvt. 1st Class Emily Tillman of Hebron, Kentucky.

The annual event was conducted by Soldiers with Bravo Co.'s Recruit Sustainment Program. This year, they received help from Grant High School's Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps as cadets from the school led the recruits through the JROTC obstacle course.

"This gives me pride and a sense of accomplishment knowing that I may have helped somebody prepare for their basic training," said Pvt. 1st Class Jacob Perkins, Grant County H.S. JROTC Cadet from Crittenden, Kentucky.  **More**, Read full story at KentuckyGuard.com

First-Time Collaboration

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Anderson

238th Regiment Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative

In a unique combination of future Army leaders, Soldiers with the Kentucky National Guard's Officer Candidate School trained alongside cadets from ROTC programs in the commonwealth during a field exercise at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Kentucky, April 10-13, 2014.

"The weekend is a consolidation of ROTC Students and our OCS candidates to refine and help develop skills that are relevant to today's battlefield with regards to student taught lanes training," said Lt. Col. Todd Neal, commander of the 2nd Modular Training Battalion, 238th Regional Training Institute. "Hopefully it will also develop other skills for them to become better officers."

Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Black, Military Science Instructor at Western Kentucky University said working with unfamiliar faces would serve them well in their careers and would remind them that they are not alone in their chosen path.

"Ultimately, the exercise allows them to come together as a team, rely on the

person to their left and right... know that it is not just them going through this and difficult training by themselves. This isn't something they can gain from a classroom," said Black.


According to Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Kennedy, Operations Non-Commissioned Officer for the 238th, the blending of the Soldiers was a first in Kentucky and that it was not only a benefit for the training environment, but also as a cost-saving method for the ROTC departments.

"The ROTC programs had been looking for a closer, more economical way to conduct their field training and exercise, they immediately accepted the invitation,"



Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Black (right), a military science instructor at Western Kentucky University gives guidance to a ROTC cadet during a field training exercise at the

said Kennedy. "We are very optimistic that we can develop this into a re-occurring annual event."

"The groups of future officers will, without a doubt become better lieutenants because of this training exercise," said Capt. Lincoln Ward, Assistant Professor of Military Science at WKU. "The partnership we have established here between the programs is one we look to sustain and expand in the coming years." 



KENTUCKY UNVEILS NEWEST AIR ASSESTS

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

Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson joined Adjutant General Edward W. Tonini and members of the Kentucky Army National Guard's aviation community for the inaugural roll out of the Guard's newest acquisition, the LUH-72 Lakota helicopter at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, Kentucky, April 24.

The American-made LUH-72A Lakota light utility helicopter was specifically selected and equipped to support the Kentucky National Guard's homeland security mission. Soldiers of Frankfort-based Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 376th Security and Support will operate the aircraft in their missions to include supporting federal, state and local law enforcement agencies

"I could talk all day about the capabilities of this aircraft, but I will simply say that it increases our ability to respond," said Col. Michael Ferguson, commander of the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade.

Ferguson said the new aircraft will strengthen the Guard's capacity to respond to emergencies and natural disasters. The Lakota will replace the aging OH-58 Kiowa helicopter.

"These are exciting new aircraft, not only does it look cool, it is cool," said Tonini who described several technological advances on the helicopter as unlike anything the Kentucky Guard has had before.

Abramson called the new helicopters a sign of the Kentucky Guard's commitment to the Commonwealth.

"When the adjutant general told me, 'this is really special, this

will give us great capabilities we didn't have before, they give us a cutting edge opportunity to be responsive and responsible when people of Kentucky are in need,' I very much wanted to be here today," he said.

"Unbridled Service, that's what you all provide each and everyday, and to be able to do the job you do, you need the equipment, and the equipment is here once again with these new Lakota helicopters," said Abramson.

The first Lakota arrived in Kentucky last October, three more are on the ground now, with the final two expected to be delivered in the coming months. 🇺🇸



Col. Michael Ferguson, commander of the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade, informs Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson of a computer system in a LUH-72 Lakota helicopter in Frankfort, Ky., April 24, 2014

DID YOU KNOW?

No ACUs in civilian Airports

AR 670-1, PARAGRAPH 3-7 A states:

“Personnel on official travel and traveling by commercial travel means will wear the service uniform or appropriate civilian attire. Soldiers may wear the combat uniform on commercial flights only when deploying/redeploying or on rest and recuperation leave to and from a combat theater. However, Commanders may authorize service or utility uniforms for Soldiers when traveling by commercial travel for emergency leave or casualty assistance duties.”

For Air Guard guidance, refer to:
AFI 36-2903.



National Suicide Prevention Hotline:

800-273-8255

Family Assistance Center:

800-372-7061

KYNG R3SP Facebook Page:

www.Facebook.com/KYNGR3SP

KYNG Director of Psychological Health:

Floyd Hunsaker, 502-545-8275

Air Guard Director of Psychological Health:

Linda Ringleka, 502-413-4070 or 502-994-1953

Many other resources are available. For details/

requests, please contact the KYNG Suicide

Prevention Program Manager:

1st Lt. Josh Daugherty, 502-607-1252



Per MEDCOM Regulation 40-51, “The use of any legally obtained prescription drug will not be considered illegitimate use unless that use is beyond a clearly defined expiration date. Schedule II-V prescriptions will expire six months after last date dispensed.”

What does this mean? Any medication more than six months old is unauthorized. If you test positive for a prescription medication, you will be processed for administrative separation from the KYNG, *unless* you have a valid prescription.

FIRST FEMALE CHAPLAIN IN 25 YEARS

Story by Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Angela White knew at a young age she wanted to wear a uniform and serve her country. So one day when she saw a Marine Corps recruiter at her high school in Montana, she walked up and said she wanted to enlist. The recruiter told her no.

Twenty-five years later, White was sworn in as a major and the second female chaplain in the Kentucky National Guard during an appointment ceremony in Frankfort, Kentucky, Feb. 21.

It has been more than 25 years since a female has served as a chaplain in the Kentucky Guard. A fact White says contributes to the idea that things happen for a reason.

"I was called to join the military," she said. "God has healed me in so many ways. God revealed to me my way, this is what I was meant to do. If you feel called by God, He will make a way for you. It's the truth. And Kentucky is a fine place to be as a woman in the chaplaincy."

White never understood why the Marines didn't even give her a chance. She would later walk to a recruiting station and into the Air Force office. After several years of service as a bomber mechanic, then an Army nurse, the adventurous mother of two began her next chapter in uniform.

"I was off on an adventure when I wanted to be a Marine, and it was exciting to work on big aircraft,

and I've always cared about people, so that was the nursing step. Now I'm off on an adventure with people I care about," she said, trying to make sense of her own career steps. "The military life is a challenge, we all have an adventurous spirit, and God loves that."

White said the path to becoming a chaplain was challenging, but credits her family's support as her driving force, recalling the constant encouragement she received from them.

"My husband is my biggest fan. My daughter would put little notes in my bags when I left for training that said 'Mommy, you're going to do great!' I keep one of those in my wallet today."

White is married to Kentucky Air Guardsman, Lt. Col. Jamie White, a pilot with the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"We're so proud of her," said Jamie. "She has accomplished a lot, she's always been on the edge in the military, never being afraid of a job, and she's been preparing for this for the past twenty five years."

She will serve as chaplain for the 1204th Aviation Support Battalion in Burlington, Kentucky. Chaplain (Maj.) Bill Draper, 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade Chaplain said White is just who the Kentucky Guard needs to serve in such capacity.



Courtesy Photo

Angela White is promoted to the rank of first lieutenant by her husband, 2nd Lt. Jamie White (left) and 2nd Lt. John Stitch during a promotion ceremony in 1997 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond, Kentucky Army National Guard

Army Maj. Angela White is sworn in as only the second female chaplain for the Kentucky National Guard during an appointment ceremony in Frankfort, Ky., Feb. 21, 2014.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond, Kentucky Army National Guard


Air Force Lt. Col. Jamie White pins new insignia to the uniform of his wife, Army Maj. Angela White during an appointment ceremony in Frankfort, Ky., Feb. 21, 2014. Maj. White is the first female chaplain with the Kentucky Guard in 25 years.

“Chaplain Angie White’s prior experience as an active duty enlisted Airman, Soldier and officer will help her build solid relationships with Soldiers and staff members alike,” said Draper. “This will enable her to provide religious support that is both intentional and genuine.”

Lt. Col. Yong Cho, State Chaplain for the Kentucky Guard swore White in during the ceremony and said it was a good day for the Guard. Cho also spoke of White’s unique background and how it will help her in the future.

“All of the chaplains are happy for her and her family today, it has been a faithful road for her,” said Cho. “Chaplain White’s skills and military service will only enhance her ministry and she will bring diversity to the Chaplain Corps.”

White is glad that she has accomplished her newest challenge and doesn’t concern herself with the minority aspect of her position, just the way forward.

“I’m so excited to start my journey, it’s finally here,” she said. “There are a lot of great female chaplains out there, maybe it just wasn’t the right time here. It may be nice to hear that I’m the first in a long time, but this is about being a chaplain, being part of a family and working with Soldiers.” 



I’m so excited to start my journey, it’s finally here.

— **Maj. Angela White**

Chaplain, 1204th Aviation Support Battalion





A Kentucky Air National Guard C-130 flies over Alaska on May 9, 2014, in support of Exercise Red Flag-Alaska. More than 100 Kentucky Airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing participated in the exercise from May 7 to May 23.

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Phil Speck

123rd Airlift Wing

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska—More than 100 Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard completed 10 days of intense combat training here, May 23, airlifting 35,000 pounds of essential cargo and airdropping 280 Army paratroopers into enemy territory while facing attacks from hostile aircraft and surface-to-air missiles.

The training, part of a regular Pacific Command exercise called Red Flag – Alaska, exposed Kentucky’s C-130 aircrews to a “hyper-realistic training environment” that will strengthen their preparation for combat missions in any setting, said Col. Robert Hamm, commander of Kentucky’s Louisville-based 123rd Operations Group.

“The fast pace and high tension of the exercise required our Airmen to maintain constant focus despite being mentally and physically fatigued throughout,” Hamm said. “It was as close as it gets to the stress they’ll have to endure in actual combat.

“Our guys accomplished every one of their learning objectives, and I think it opened up a lot of their eyes about how serious this is — about how different (combat) is from the way we train locally because we can’t create the same conditions back home.”

Among those differences were the ability to train alongside escort and strike aircraft while facing threats from aggressors in the air and on the ground. Kentucky’s three C-130s were escorted into and out of hostile territory by F-15 and F-22 fighters, whose mission was to eliminate enemy aircraft and

surface-to-air missile batteries, Hamm said.

The Kentucky Airmen also had the opportunity to navigate challenging mountain terrain in the Pacific-Alaska Range Complex where the exercise was staged, and to interoperate with a full spectrum of assets from AWACS to A-10s, working with each of these units to plan and execute every mission.

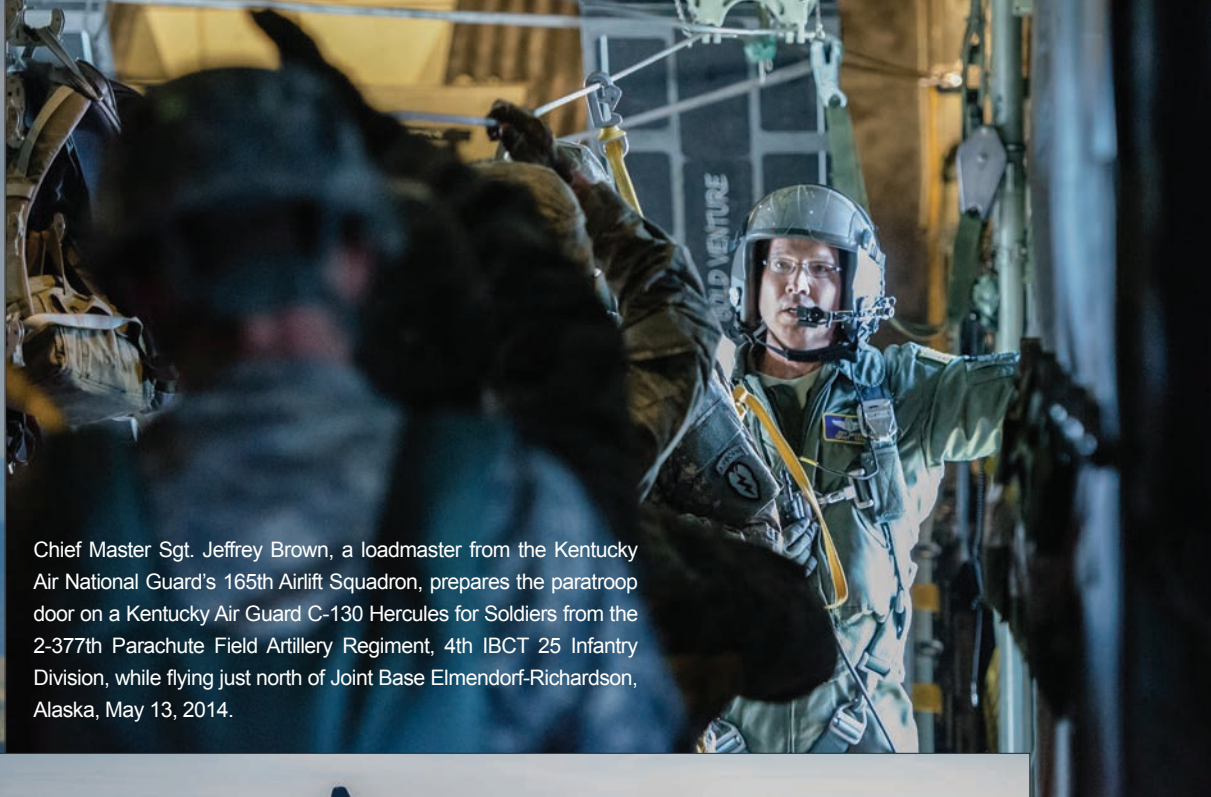
Lt. Col. Matthew Quenichet, director of operations for the 165th Airlift Squadron, was pleased with Kentucky’s performance in such an intense environment.

“It was a big accomplishment just to survive the sortie, hit your time-on-target, make your landing, pick up your cargo, and get it to the end of the vulnerability zone,” he said.

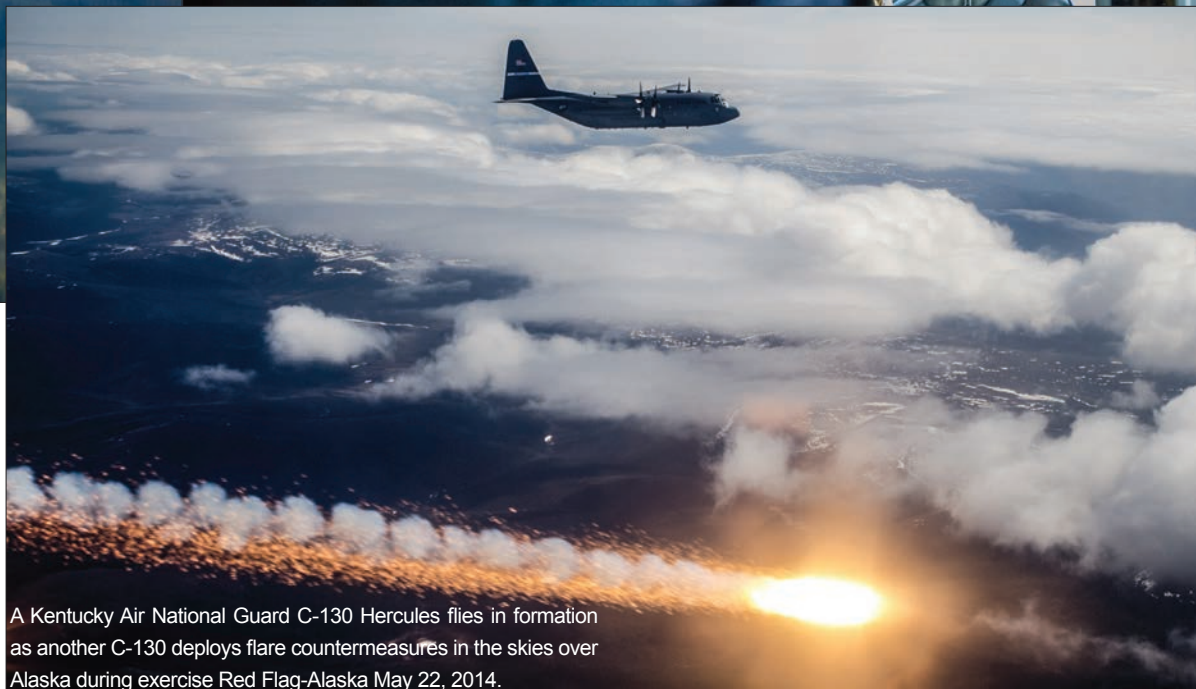
That vulnerability zone is where the simulated war took place. Aircraft from JBER and Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, would meet there to begin the conflict. Units took turns being allied forces or aggressors, while C-130 crews executed various scenarios in which they had to fly through treacherous terrain, land on dirt-strip runways, pick up cargo, and airdrop cargo or Army paratroopers.

This exercise marked the first time that Army forces were integrated into the training, and the Kentucky Air Guard became the first Air Force unit ever to drop paratroopers into an airfield for a simulated seizure during Red Flag – Alaska.

“There was a lot of apprehension going into this,” Quenichet said. “People were not sure what to expect, but they were excited. It was a lot for people to take in. The idea



Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Brown, a loadmaster from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Squadron, prepares the paratroop door on a Kentucky Air Guard C-130 Hercules for Soldiers from the 2-377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, 4th IBCT 25 Infantry Division, while flying just north of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, May 13, 2014.



A Kentucky Air National Guard C-130 Hercules flies in formation as another C-130 deploys flare countermeasures in the skies over Alaska during exercise Red Flag-Alaska May 22, 2014.

was to throw more challenges at the aircrews than they would ever see in actual combat.”

Two groups of Kentucky Airmen participated in the exercise, Quenichet added. Highly experienced aircrews with extensive combat exposure in Afghanistan; and brand-new co-pilots, engineers and loadmasters who had never seen anything like it before.

“It may have taken the new aircrews an entire career to get this kind of experience, but they got it in their first couple of months in the airplane here,” Quenichet said. “We worked together as a team to get a game plan and accomplish this mission. Once we were en route, it wasn’t a simulator. It was real airplanes flying through incredibly challenging terrain, facing actual threat systems. The only difference between the scenarios here and real combat was that there weren’t pieces of metal flying at you.


“By the end of the exercise, all our aircrews were right where they needed to be.”

Lt. Col. Kevin Allred, commander of Detachment 1, 353rd Combat Training Squadron, said the event was one of the smoothest Red Flags he’s seen.

“I’m very impressed all the way around,” Allred said. “From the deployment to getting into town, they were all over everything. All of your crews were fired up to be here — that’s really fun to watch. I think everyone got really good training out of it, because they wanted to be here.”

Allred also said he was pleased by how smoothly the Army integration went, adding that officials plan to build on the airfield-seizure scenario in future exercises.

Hamm credited the 353rd with providing excellent support throughout Red Flag — a factor that helped the Kentucky Airmen maximize their training opportunities.

“The 353rd Combat Training Squadron provided outstanding support for a phenomenal exercise,” Hamm said. “There was no tension, and we got everything we asked for. We couldn’t ask for better support from those guys.” 



Airmen from the Kentucky National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing are presented with medals during an award ceremony at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky., Jan. 12, 2014. The awards recognized the Airmen's heroism and meritorious service in Afghanistan.

AIR GUARDSMEN HONORED FOR HEROISM IN AFGHANISTAN

Story by Maj. Dale Greer

123rd Airlift Wing Chief of Public Affairs

Eight Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard were honored with prestigious medals here Sunday for their heroism and meritorious service in Afghanistan, where they engaged enemy forces in lethal combat and helped build a sustainable farming economy.

The adjutant general of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, presented the medals during a ceremony held before a standing room-only audience of more than 400 coworkers, friends and family at the 123rd Airlift Wing. The decorations, all earned for recent deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, included the Distinguished Flying Cross, The Bronze Star Medal with Valor and the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

"One of the best parts of my job is recognizing the unbelievable accomplishments of our Kentucky National Guard Servicemen and women," Tonini told the audience. "This ceremony certainly celebrates the accomplishments of these award recipients, but it also is a reflection of

what I think is the best damn airlift wing in the United States Air Force."

Capt. Nathan Tingle, a combat rescue officer assigned to the wing's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight over Afghanistan on May 26, 2011.

The first of the two combat controllers, Tech. Sgt. Jeff Kinlaw, earned a Bronze Star Medal with Valor for heroism while engaged in ground operations against the enemy near Kamdesh Village, Nuristan Province, from April 11 to 16, 2012. The second combat controller to be honored, Tech. Sgt. Robert Bonello, earned a Bronze Star Medal with Valor for heroism while engaged in ground operations against the enemy in Faryab Province on April 14, 2012.


On that date, Bonello served as the primary Joint Terminal Attack Controller assigned to an Army Special Forces Team. While conducting a time-sensitive air assault mission, his team was directly engaged by enemy forces.

Of the five remaining honorees, four

were deployed to Afghanistan as part of the Kentucky National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team V, a multi-disciplinary group whose mission was to foster a sustainable agriculture-based economy.

Lt. Col. Dallas Kratzer II earned a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement as the executive officer and Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team liaison officer, Forward Operating Base Pasab, Kandahar Province, from Nov. 25, 2012 to Oct. 1, 2013.

Master Sgt. James Oliver earned a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement as the Maiwand District Team Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge and Regional Command South Stability Division liaison officer, Forward Operating Base Pasab, Kandahar Province, from Dec. 1 2012 to Oct. 1, 2013.

Master Sgt. Zakiya Taylor earned a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement as the Panjwai District Team Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, Kandahar Province, from Dec. 1, 2012 to Oct. 1, 2013. 

Signal Soldiers put to test, showcase talent

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

The Army has a plethora of communication systems. Soldiers with the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade's signal section participated in a multi-state communication exercise in Pensacola, Florida, March 7-9 to ensure that they could connect as many as they could in a potential crisis situation.

In a true test of interoperability, the Kentucky Soldiers flew to Florida, thanks to the Illinois Air National Guard and the



Kentucky Army National Guard Master Sgt. Craig Anderson works to set up satellite systems during a communication exercise in Pensacola, Fla., March 7, 2014.

Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing, to validate their equipment and skills for Task Force 46, a Michigan National Guard command.

"This exercise showcases the talents of this unit and the quality cooperation of a variety of assets," said Capt. Joseph Fontanez, officer in charge of the Kentucky delegation.

Fontanez

said the exercise took into consideration all the logistics of responding to an incident, but it was still primarily an exercise in communicating. The unit's goal was to send a forward command and control element within 24 hours to establish lines of communication between military units and local emergency responders for potential life-saving operations.

A variety of units including aviation, medical, chemical and signal make up the response under Task Force 46's command and are based in Kentucky, Alabama, Florida and Michigan. Michigan is also home to the headquarters element for the Command and Control CBRN-E Response Enterprise Bravo.

Each unit had their own roles and objectives to be validated for the exercise, but Fontanez said there was opportunity for more. As part of a first time test of their "24-hour response system" the Soldiers worked with Airmen with Kentucky's 123rd Airlift Wing to pack up all the gear and equipment, including loading two Humvees into a C-130 and expedite their arrival in Florida.

"We play our part here and the team does a fantastic job, but we certainly tested the limits of our readiness for this exercise," said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Means. "We tried something new and it worked well for us."

The Kentucky Soldiers also worked to connect back to Frankfort, Kentucky and finish the circle of communication from home station to field environment.

Maj. Gen. Burton Francisco, Task Force 46 Commander was on hand to oversee the exercise and stressed the importance of exercising communication abilities of the units and how critical communication is for the task force.

The communication exercise is in preparation for the much larger Vibrant Response exercise held each August at Camp

Atterbury, Indiana. The unit will participate in other exercises prior to the annual event, but the Soldiers said the size of this exercise in Florida was invaluable for them and their jobs.

"These exercises are very beneficial for us in this field because our skills are perishable," said Chief Warrant Officer Scott Goode. "We have to maintain our equipment and remain proficient in all the different radio systems and technologies. This is a great tool for keeping the unit sharp and ready to go at all times." 

■ **More.** Read full story at KentuckyGuard.com



Soldiers with the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade get assistance from Airmen with the Illinois Air National Guard in loading communication equipment into a C-130 at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky., March 7, 2014.

Mother and Commander

Soldier fills dual roles at home and abroad



Courtesy Photo

Maj. Bobbie Mayes speaks with a participant at a women's poultry course taught by members of Kentucky's Agribusiness Development Team in Afghanistan, 2010.

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Anderson

238th Regiment Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative

Army Maj. Bobbie Mayes is the first female commander of the Kentucky National Guard's Officer Candidate School program. She was also the first female to serve as a Tactical Training Officer for Kentucky's OCS in Greenville, Kentucky.

Mayes said she has two of the best jobs on earth, one at home and the other in uniform. The success that she has achieved has been anything but easy, but her two roles prepare her for the best of what both have to offer.

"Being a mom is much like being a commander," said the mother of two boys. "When your kids are acting, growing and behaving in a positive light things run pretty smooth, but the moment you get a call from the principal's office or you find something they aren't supposed to have, it is time for discipline."

"I love my troops and I love my children and I am a very fortunate person to have the opportunity to do what I do."

Mayes has served in uniform since 1992, primarily as a military police officer. With tours of duty at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and with Kentucky's Agriculture Development Team in Afghanistan, Mayes has held many positions in her career. She doesn't bother herself with the importance of being the first female Teaching, Advising and Counseling (TAC) officer or OCS commander, to her, it's about doing your best at your job.

When asked about being the first woman to serve in those positions, Mayes said, "The cool thing about this is that nobody really made a big deal out of it. I measure this as success."

"Throughout history, a big deal is usually made of folks who have broken a certain barrier or glass ceiling. The attention they are given is great, however, in my case without the attention, I see this as being very successful."

Mayes' husband, Maj. Jacob Mayes agrees that her jobs are similar, knowing when to turn the "drill sergeant" on and off.

"She relishes in her continual commitment to shape and mold those who follow her into something better."


Being the best at her job has provided Mayes a solid reputation with members of the Kentucky Guard and with future officers in the ranks. Not just as a female Soldier, a woman in uniform, but as a leader.

"If someone just sees you as the OCS Commander, then they see you as one person, not male, female, black, white, short, fat, etc. They see you as a leader because of merit, perseverance and the leadership you give them."

"I can say that being at the Regiment, I have never felt more like myself because of the caliber of folks I get to work with and being able to produce the finest Soldiers in the world. Who wouldn't want my job, I am pretty lucky."

Col. Hal Lamberton, commander of the 238th Regiment said the best thing about Mayes is the quality she brings to the OCS program in professionalism and responsibility.

"There is no gender issue with her as the commander because she does the job of teaching, advising, and counseling the OCS candidates that well," said Lamberton.

"Major Mayes is not seen as a female TAC Officer Commander but as the TAC Officer Commander. The officer candidates, unit cadre, and others outside the unit view her as reliable, responsible, and caring. Which I believe are desirable qualities of all officers regardless of gender." 



Courtesy Photo

Maj. Bobbie Mayes with her family, husband, Maj. Jacob Mayes and sons, Joshua and Zachary.

Proud to be a: Mother Woman Journalist Soldier

Commentary by Sgt. Brandy Mort
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Ribbon, lace, high heels and gowns are usually what a little girl dreams of. However, for this girl, my sights have always been set on fatigues and combat boots.

Being in the military is a family tradition on my father's side. The Mort family has had a man in uniform dating back at least to the Civil War. The ones I knew were my great-grandfather, grandfather and father. I was my father's only child, so I felt that it was my duty to carry on our family legacy.

The drive to make my father proud has led me to be who I am today. I was recently promoted to sergeant, and I couldn't be happier. I am excited to be able to be a positive influence on junior enlisted Soldiers and teach them what I have learned throughout my military career.

When I first joined in 2010, I had no idea just where this job would take me. In my first year, I traveled to Reno, Nev. for a Public Affairs Conference. I was also given the opportunity to work the Kentucky Derby. During the Derby I was on the sideline as the winning horse passed the finish line.

I have also traveled out of the country during my time in the military. I covered the Yama Sakura mission in Osaka, Japan. At the time, I was a newly promoted specialist. My goal during this mission was to take everything I learned and keep the drive going when I returned home.

While I was in Japan I learned how to have a quick turn around when it came to my stories as a journalist. That tool led me to be one of the first people to report on the devastating storms that hit West Liberty and surrounding areas in Eastern Kentucky in 2012.

As if that wasn't a whirlwind of an experience, I also became a mother during my time as a Soldier. My son has taught me how important it is to be on the top of my game at all times. Whatever I do for myself, I also do for him. Having a child only pushed me further to make him and the rest of my family proud.

My family has always been a driving force for my military career. If I didn't have them supporting me I don't think I



Photo by Sgt. Brandy Mort, Kentucky Army National Guard

Sgt. Brandy Mort was recently promoted into the noncommissioned officer corps and said it's all thanks to her drive to be the best Soldier for herself and her family.

would be where I am today. My stepfather was a member of the 63rd Theatre Aviation Brigade for more than 20 years and retired as a staff sergeant. That rank is the highest that anyone in my family has reached. His drive and determination makes me want to stay in for as long as I can, and beat his rank.

I may have just earned my stripes, but I can assure you that I am far from the end of this journey. I plan to serve this great country for as long as I can. I may be the only woman in my family to wear the uniform, but that doesn't hinder me from showing them what I am made of. I am proud to be a mother, a woman, a journalist and a sergeant. 🇺🇸



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

Kentucky Army National Guard Sgt. Brandy Mort shows off her new rank to her son, Jayden, following her promotion ceremony in Frankfort, Ky., March 1, 2014.

BUILDING WITH THE BOY SCOUTS

Story by 1st Sgt. Levi Henderson, 207th Engineer Company
Contributions from Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond,
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office



Sgt. Harold Johnson with the 207th Engineer Company explains the HYEX earthmoving capabilities to Boy Scout troops at Camp McKee in Montgomery County, Ky., April 12, 2014.



Pfc. Matthew Joseph with the 207th Engineer Company uses a chainsaw to remove trees to expand a parking area at Camp McKee, a Boy Scout camp in Montgomery County, Ky., April 9, 2014.



Sgt. Nathan Goff with the 207th Engineer Company works on a drainage ditch at Camp McKee, a Boy Scouts camp in Montgomery County, Ky., April 9, 2014.

Soldiers of the Kentucky National Guard's 207th Engineer Company assisted in construction improvement to Camp McKee, a Boy Scout Camp in Montgomery County, Kentucky, April 5-19, 2014.

The small group of engineers spent their days working with Boy Scout officials to improve several basic needs of the camp.

"The quality of training at this project was right on par with our unit's current training program," said 1st Lt. Levi Henderson, officer in charge of the project.

Henderson said the smaller scope and adequate time frame to complete the mission allowed younger Soldiers more training time to improve their heavy equipment operation skills, and was beneficial to junior NCOs as it provided the opportunity to improve their construction management and leadership proficiency. The NCOs were given the intent, then given the empowerment to use their Soldiers, equipment, and judgment necessary to complete the task at hand.


"As long as the end result met the design standard, we felt one of our most important job was to get our Soldiers the training, experience, and tools necessary to make future leaders in our unit," said Henderson.

Heavy equipment was brought in to improve water drainage, stabilize a creek bank, expand a parking area and upgrade a dirt road for better entry into portions of the camp. The project's intent was to ensure access to and safety within Camp McKee.

"This camp gets a lot of use and we are able to help improve its future, so we are helping change the lives of kids around here," said Sgt. 1st Class Woodrow Hughes, project noncommissioned officer in charge.

"This was all a voluntary project, all these Soldiers wanted to be out here," he said. "It is a good morale boost and a prep for our annual training. We are getting everyone in the mindset of doing their job and helping out the community."

Camp McKee annually hosts more than 1,500 scouts according to Ken Green, the on-site camp ranger. Boy Scout officials were happy to have the Soldiers helping out. Henderson said the cooperation was a all-around positive experience that benefitted the overall project. The project also involved several local construction companies that donated materials for the improvements.

"This was a unique project in that it allowed our key leaders at the lower level to coordinate and plan with other non-governmental agencies and the actual stakeholder, in a partnership to complete the mission," said Henderson. "It was a honor to work with the Boy Scouts and hopefully we can return to assist them with other future projects here." 

Guard couple help others develop “Strong Bonds”

Story by Chief Warrant Officer Joseph P. Lyddane
138th Fires Brigade

As the Kentucky Army National Guard continues to conduct operations in support of the war on terror, the Soldiers and families thereof continue to combat their own conflicts in the form of reintegration. The spouse who remains home assumes the daily tasks as if nothing changed when in reality they now have acquired the responsibilities of the father, the mother, comforter, disciplinarian, bill payer, banker, to name a few.

The acceptance of divorce in American society as a ‘way out’ has impacted Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, and Sailors alike and created staggering divorce rates amongst all branches. This reality has altered or in some instances removed the meaning of marriage all together.

For those willing to put forth the effort, there is a program that allows military couples to police themselves and essentially, start where they left

off. Chaplain Phil Majcher is a Kentucky National Guard State Support Chaplain as well as the 149th Fires Brigade chaplain. Together with Tami, his wife of 23 years, he conducted a Strong Bonds Marriage Enrichment Seminar in Covington,

Kentucky, Jan. 24-26, 2014, but with a different emphasis than their predecessors.

“The thing that impresses me the most is that the military acknowledges that the strength of family increases and supports the readiness of the Soldier,” said Majcher. “‘Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage’ taught us some fundamental differences between men’s brains and women’s brains. Other programs, like PREP, taught us



Courtesy Photo by Phil and Tami Majcher

how to communicate without having our differences escalate out of control.” Tami echoed her husband’s sentiment. “The military believes so much in this that they are willing to invest in this program to support the family.”

One enthusiast of Strong Bonds is State Command Sergeant Major Thomas Chumley, who was on hand to see some of the training. He expressed the importance of marriage, making reference to his wife of over thirty years.

“As a husband, I have found, with the support of my wife, our bond makes a world of difference for me to accomplish my mission,” said Chumley.

“A relationship requires good communications to work. A good marriage takes thought and work and they don’t just happen overnight. Military life puts a lot of stress on marriages and this is the reason the Kentucky Guard leadership supports the Strong Bonds program.”

The seminar incorporates and offers advice that covers most of the problems that marriages experience during reintegration. The topics of personality conflicts, sexual misunderstandings, society misconceptions, forgiveness, and the differences between men and

women’s brain configuration not only helps couples understand why things are not the same as they were prior to deployment, but helps resolve some of the problems they have experienced in the past, as well.

■ **More**, Read full story at KentuckyGuard.com

Married Couples

(FY 2014)

8-10 August at Dale Hollow Lake State Park

5-7 September at Cumberland Falls State Park

(FY 2015)

5-7 December at Cumberland Falls State Park

23-25 January at Embassy Suites, Covington, KY

3-5 April at Lake Barkley State Park

29-31 May at Dale Hollow Lake State Park

18-20 September at Embassy Suites, Lexington, KY

Singles

(FY 2014)

19-21 September at Embassy Suites, Lexington, KY

(FY 2015)

20-22 February at Ramada Plaza, Louisville, KY

Family

(FY 2014)

22-24 August at Scottsville-Center for Courageous Kids

(FY 2015)

21-23 August at Scottsville-Center for Courageous Kids

*Dates subject to change

Tentative FY15 KYARNG Strong Bonds Weekends

Contact CH Phil Majcher at 502-607-1942

philip.v.majcher.mil@mail.mil for registration information.

- All attendees must be a current KY Army National Guard member and/or listed in the DEERS system.
- Strong Bonds events are attended ILO drill or in volunteer status at the discretion of your commander.
- Lodging, meals, and materials are provided by the Strong Bonds program.
- Childcare is available for all events, but you must register your children prior to attending event.

Please submit the following info for registration as applicable: Date of event requested, Soldier’s name, rank, gender, spouse’s name, gender & email. If you will need childcare, please submit Soldier’s unit, email, phone number and address.

Air Guardsmen, please contact your unit chaplain for similar opportunities.

Always ready, always there

Kentucky National Guard Soldiers pull man from burning vehicle

Staff Report

With Contributions From local news stations

Three Kentucky National Guard Soldiers are being hailed for taking part in the rescue of a motorist along I-64 in Franklin County Jan. 12.

Sgt. Andrew Mehlretter, Spc. Daniel White and Spc. Kevin Karrer were all on their way home following drill weekend around 5:45 p.m. Sunday when an SUV rolled several times before bursting into flames.

Raymond Burdett of Ontario, Canada, was the only person in the vehicle. The three Soldiers were joined by several civilians and drug Burdett to safety while the car burned. The driver was unconscious when he was pulled out, but gained consciousness by the time medics arrived. He was flown to UK Hospital where he was listed in stable condition.

Witnesses said Burdett was in pretty bad shape after the accident and may not have survived at all had it not been for the help of the Soldiers and good samaritans.

24-year-old Army vet James Mcarter was one of those who assisted in the rescue. He said the victim was initially unconscious and bruised so badly he couldn't open his eyes. Mcarter used his knife to cut the seat belt and helped pull the driver out while another man extinguished the flames. He said the expertise of the uniformed combat medics made for a swift rescue.

"We had one guy counting out numbers while we were lifting, and the other guys telling us what we were going to do. The directions happened in a matter of seconds. It's something you feel you just have to do in the moment. You've got to get it done," Mcarter said.

Mehlretter and White are combat medics with the 1163rd Medical Company based in Shelbyville and Karrer is a military policeman with the 617th Military Police Company in Richmond. The medics were traveling east on I-64 while Karrer was traveling west when they happened upon the accident.

"This is second nature for me to do this kind of thing," said Karrer, who is also a volunteer fire fighter in his community. "Once we saw the car was on fire our only concern was getting him out alive."

"What we did, we were trained to do," said White. "I don't know any Soldier that wouldn't have done the same thing."

Franklin County Sheriff Pat Melton had high praise for the Kentucky Guard Soldiers.

"Their heroic actions were just phenomenal," he told the media. "They probably saved this guy's life. It's awesome that they not only give to their country, but they give to their community. It was brave of them to stop and help."

"I'm humbled by their actions," he said.

"Being Guardsmen, we are part of our communities every day," said Karrer. "We've got jobs and often don't even live near a military installation. But we're still Soldiers and can be called up at any time. This was one of those times."

"That's the value of the Guardsman," said Mehlretter, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. "That's what we do. You raise your hand, take that oath, you serve the people of the United States. Especially when it's in the community." 🇺🇸



Courtesy Photo, WKYT

Sgt. Andrew Mehlretter, Combat Medic, 1163rd Medical Company, assisted in the rescue of the driver of a burning vehicle Jan. 12, 2014.



Courtesy Photo, Kevin Karrer

Spc. Kevin Karrer, Military Police, 617th MP Company, assisted in the rescue of the driver of a burning vehicle Jan. 12, 2014.



Courtesy Photo, WKYT

Spc. Daniel White, Combat Medic, 1163rd Medical Company, assisted in the rescue of the driver of a burning vehicle Jan. 12, 2014.

WWII female pilot recalls days as a WASP

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Vicky Spesard
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Florence Shutsy Reynolds, a former member of the Women Air Force Service Pilots corps during World War II, visited the 123rd Airlift Wing March 22 in celebration of Women's History Month.

"It truly is my honor and pleasure to have you here at our base to represent women pilots," said Col. Barry Gorter, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, after presenting Reynolds with a certificate declaring her Honorary Wing Commander for the day. "You are one of many of the brave women who performed a dangerous mission and did a job that many people felt, at the time, women shouldn't be doing. You have helped pave the way for women in our services today."

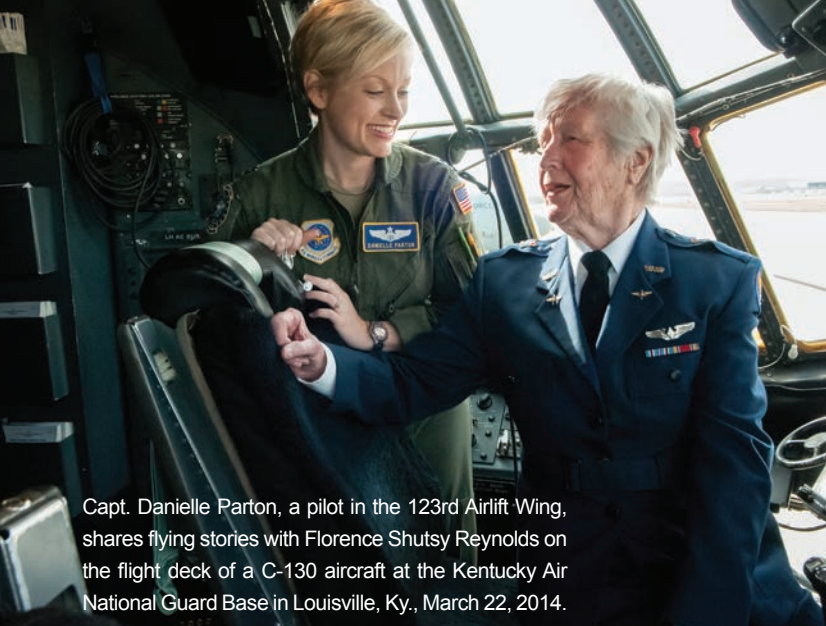
WASP's primary focus was to reassign the responsibility for flight operations over the

United States from male to female pilots, freeing the men to go to war. Because some military leaders believed that women pilots would damage the reputation of the male-dominated military, however, the program was quickly disbanded and brushed aside when the war ended, Reynolds said.

"It was a time when women were not even encouraged to go to work, let alone fly airplanes," she explained.

Trying to get the word out about the WASP program and the contributions that she and her fellow WASP veterans made is one of the reasons Reynolds accepted the invitation to celebrate National Women's History Month with the Kentucky Air Guard.

"I was very excited to be invited to the base to share my




Capt. Danielle Parton, a pilot in the 123rd Airlift Wing, shares flying stories with Florence Shutsy Reynolds on the flight deck of a C-130 aircraft at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky., March 22, 2014.

story of the WASP program," said the aviator, dressed in a replica WASP uniform that she wears when touring to promote her fellow flyers. (Her original uniform is in a museum.) "It is always wonderful to meet other pilots and, most of all, other women who have the opportunity to fly."

During her honorary day as wing commander, Reynolds toured the base, got an extensive look inside a C-130, ate lunch with wing members and gave a lecture about the WASP

program.

"She truly is an inspiration to all of us," said Staff Sgt. Shelby Basham, a member of the Kentucky Air Guard's Fatality Search and Recovery Team.

"To see the women here who are trained and who fly as equals is very gratifying," Reynolds said, wiping tears from her eyes. "My message to them is to keep dreaming. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do something, and always fly as high as you can." 

■ **More**, Read full story at KentuckyGuard.com

ALWAYS A DEFENDER

Story and photo by Senior Airman Desiree W. Moyer
386th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA- Staff Sgt. Kenneth Soto, a Kentucky Air National Guardsman who was deployed here as a security response force leader for the 387th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, was awarded the Air Force Achievement Medal for heroism Jan. 21.


"Security forces personnel are trained to respond on and off duty to people in need," said Soto, whose home unit is the 123rd Airlift Wing in Louisville, Kentucky.

Soto was in his hotel room during a college band trip to Hartford, Connecticut, when he heard a disturbing commotion next door. He decided to intervene when he heard a young lady screaming in agony.

Being unarmed and off duty wasn't a deterrent in Soto's eyes, because gaining entry to the victim's room and confronting the perpetrator was his only option, said Soto.

"Once I actually saw the victim, it was an abysmal sight," he said. "She was unconscious and bleeding profusely."

According to the award citation, Soto administered first aid, and safeguarded her and the scene until local authorities arrived.

"I know for a fact that if any of the defenders I have had the privilege to serve with were there, it would have gone down the same way," Soto said. 

■ **More**, Read full story at KentuckyGuard.com



Col. John Klein Jr., 386th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, awards an Air Force Achievement Medal to Staff Sgt. Kenneth Soto, 387th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron response force leader, at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia. Soto, deployed from the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard, was presented the medal for his response while off duty to a domestic violence incident in March 2013.

TRAIL OF MEMORIES



National Guardsmen from the 2123rd Transportation Company, Kentucky Army National Guard, cross the finish line after walking the historic Minute Man National Park during a 26.2 mile ruck march to honor fallen service members and raise money to assist their surviving family members, April 19, 2014.

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jerry Saslav, Mass. Nat. Guard
With Contributions by Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

More than 300 heads bowed in remembrance as Steve Fiola said, “The primary reason we are here is to pay tribute and to honor our fallen.”

A diverse group of men and women gathered on a small hill overlooking the North Bridge, where 239 years earlier men of the Massachusetts Militia had turned back the British Army on the opening day of the American Revolution. The people who gathered on April 19, 2014, were Soldiers,

Airmen and a U.S. Marine representing the active duty, National Guard and Reserve components as well as military cadets, veterans and citizens.

They had come together from many parts of the country to take part in a charity event, the Tough Ruck to raise money for the Military Friends Foundation, a private organization that

assists military families in need. As the historical reenactors kept alive the memory of April 19, 1775, the people on the hill prepared to keep alive the memory of those no longer living in a very military way; they would march 26.2 miles wearing their military uniforms and carrying rucksacks weighing on average 30 to 40 pounds.

Continued on next page

High School Student Honors Legacy of Fallen Guardsman

Story and photo by David Altom
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

For Dillon Walker it was more than just another school assignment. The Western Hills High School student wanted to do something special for his senior project, so he chose military appreciation as a theme. Little did he know his efforts would affect so many.

In 2006 Walker’s uncle, Master Sgt. Clinton Cubert, was hit by an IED while serving with the Kentucky Army National Guard’s 2113th Transportation Company in Samarra, Iraq. Cubert died April 16, 2006 of complications from his injuries. Walker’s fondest memories of his uncle preceded his tragic death.

“I was about nine or 10 when that happened,” said Walker. “I remember visiting at the hospital and helping take care of him, helping him with his physical therapy and talking to him, just spending time with him. He was a great man,” said Walker.

Fast forward to today. Walker’s assignment led him to the Kentucky Department of Military Affairs and the Military Records and Research Branch. There he was given a unique mission, one that hit him in his heart: identifying the

names of Kentucky National Guard members who have fallen in the line of duty.

“It’s a daunting task, and an important one,” said Department of Military Affairs Jason LeMay, who has been accumulating the list of names for the memorial. “We started out with more than 500 potential names and we’ve confirmed about 150 so far.”

More than 300 names still have to be vetted and it all has to be done before the first of July so the stone cutters can begin etching the monument in time for the November dedication. Walker found more than 60 potential candidates while conducting his research project.

“We’re so proud that a young person would take on such an important responsibility,” said Col. Charles Jones, Deputy Adjutant General for Kentucky. “Dillon’s service to these fallen troops and their families reflects the honor of his uncle’s legacy.”

Walker plans to attend the Memorial Day groundbreaking ceremony for the memorial that will display his uncle’s name. It’s just another step in honoring a man he holds in such high esteem.



Col. Charles Jones, Deputy Adjutant General for Kentucky, presents Dillon Walker with an Honorary Kentucky Guard certificate in recognition for his work in identifying fallen troops.



Wearing a race bib with the number 203 on it, Staff Sgt. Jarred Turner, truck driver, 2123rd Transportation Company, Kentucky Army National Guard, walks along the historic Minute Man National Park during a 26.2-mile ruck march to honor fallen service members and raise money to assist their surviving family members, April 19, 2014.

Many rucksacks were adorned with large streamers bearing the name of a service member no longer living.

Due to security concerns, backpacks and rucksacks were banned from the course. Fiola, one of the core members of Tough Ruck, a private organization, reached out to the National Park Service and the Trustees of Reservations and received permission to start and end the ruck at the historic Old Manse museum and conduct the majority of the march on the trails of the Minute Man National Historic Park.

The 297 ruckers left as a group just after 7 a.m. and began what for many would be a six hour and 26.2 mile journey on the road.

“Marching this event was so worth the trip,” said Spc. Michael Orr, 2123rd Transportation Co. “It was very gratifying for us and everyone around us. It was great seeing everyone in Lexington, Concord and Boston so patriotic. So many were out cheering us on.”

“We finished together, that was our goal when we left Kentucky,” said Orr. “This was my first ruck march since basic training, so our training really helped us and kept us together.”

Col. Andrew Lawlor, staff judge

advocate, Joint Force Headquarters, Massachusetts National Guard, and his son Jackson stayed together.

“Toby Keith said ‘I’m not as good as I once was, but I’m as good once as I ever was,’” said Lawlor, as he and his son headed to the finish line.

That was a sentiment shared by many of the ruckers.


“The feet are a little painful; but all the support from the community, especially the Gold Star Families really made it special,” said Staff Sgt. Jarred Turner, truck driver, 2123rd Transportation Company, Kentucky Army National Guard, “they kept us motivated.”

Turner was part of a group of five Kentucky Army National Guardsmen who drove up together to ruck the course; they stayed together throughout the route.

As the ruckers crossed the finish line, they were met by Gold Star Mothers and other volunteers who placed Boston Marathon medals over their heads. The medals were donated by the Boston Athletic Association.

As they removed the rucks that they had carried for so many hours, many of the service members were already looking forward to next year.

“I like this route better, with all the history that’s on this route ... it’s very humbling,” said Spc. Adam Ayer, fire support specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment.

“Soldiers belong on this trail.” 

■ **More.** Read full story at KentuckyGuard.com



Photo courtesy 1st Lt. Carson Gregory, 2123rd Transportation Company

Soldiers of the Kentucky National Guard’s 2123rd Transportation Company participated in the historic Tough Ruck march, coming in at 7hrs, 34 min. Pictured left to right are: Spc. Shawn Miller, Staff Sgt. Jarred Turner, 1st Lt. Carson Gregory, Sgt. Kyle Carroll and Spc. Michael Orr.

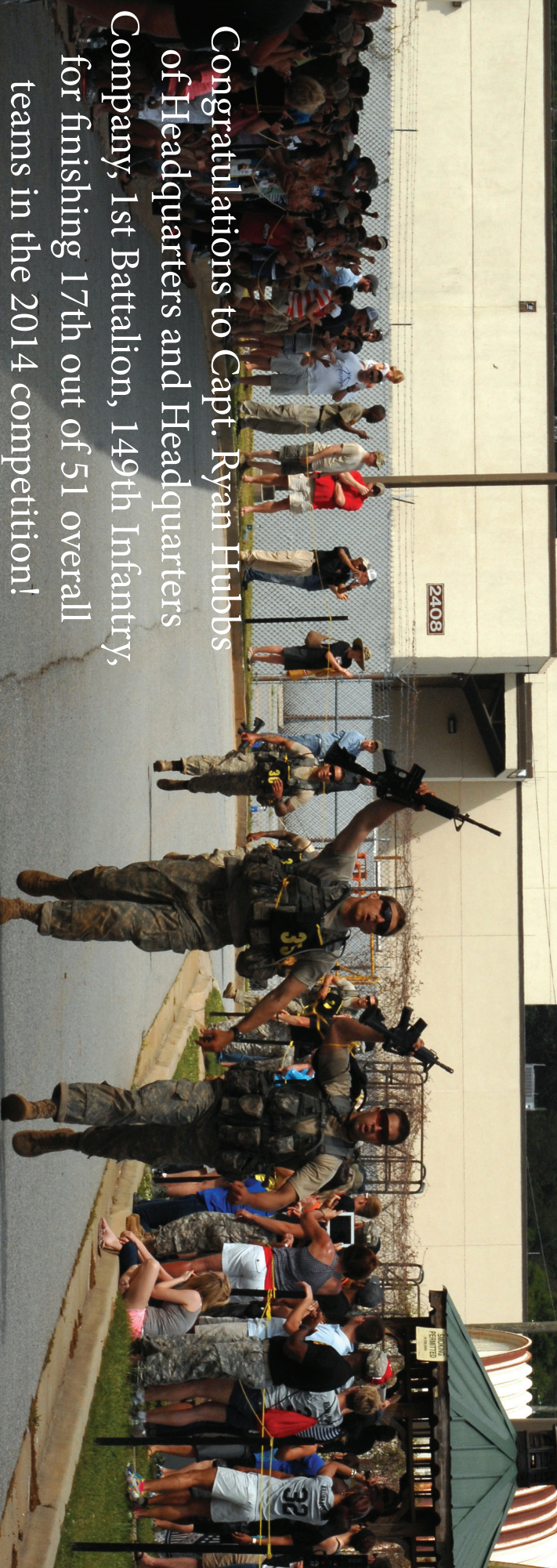


BEST RANGER COMPETITION

RANGERS
LEAD THE WAY

RANGER

Not for the Weak
Or Fainthearted



Congratulations to Capt. Ryan Hubbs
of Headquarters and Headquarters
Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry,
for finishing 17th out of 51 overall
teams in the 2014 competition!