



# Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 21, Issue 1 - January 2018

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



## Weathering the Storm

**Kentucky Guard supports hurricane-hit neighbors**

p.12

**Kentucky hosts successful  
139th NGAUS Conference**

p.20

**Understanding  
Blended Retirement**

p.19



# AROUND TH



**JFHQ** - The Kentucky Army National Guard welcomed its sixth command chief warrant officer as Chief Warrant Officer Dwight Harlan assumed responsibility from Chief Warrant Officer Dean Stoops during a ceremony in Frankfort Dec. 20.



**63rd TAB** - The 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade returned to Fleming Armory in October as renovations to the former Army Aviation Support Facility were completed. Brigade staff offices now fill the building originally built in 1971.



**75th TC** - The Kentucky Medical Detachment deployed a team of providers, nurses, and medics to Vicenza, Italy for overseas training in September. The detachment provided access to primary care services for Soldiers, retirees and their beneficiaries at the Vicenza Health Clinic located on Camp Ederle.



**138th FAB** - Lt. Col. Dennis Hawthorne, commander of the 138th Field Artillery Brigade is promoted to the rank of colonel by his wife and Brig. Gen. Scott Campbell Oct. 27.



**WHFRTC** - Lt. Col. Joe Lear took command of Kentucky's Garrison Training Command from Col. Steve King during a ceremony at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Sept. 16.



## On the Cover:

Members of Det. 1, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 238th Medevac hoist a patient to their UH-60 Blackhawk during a medical evacuation mission in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, Sept. 10, 2017. The unit deployed to the USVI immediately following hurricane Maria and are credited with evacuating 17 patients for emergency medical care. (U.S. Army National photo by Sgt. Stephen Parker)



# THE GUARD



**149th MEB** - Lt. Col. Derrick Frodge relinquished command of the 206th Engineer Battalion to Maj. Michael Lawson during a change of command ceremony at Fort Knox, Ky. Nov. 19.



**123rd AW** - After more than 30 years of service to the Air National Guard and U.S. Air Force, Brig.Gen. Steven Bullard, Air Chief of Staff was officially retired in a ceremony in Louisville, Oct. 22.



## IN THIS EDITION...

- 6** Eating like a warrior
- 8** The battle for the 2018 Best Warrior title
- 22** Challenge Academy celebrates milestone graduation

Want more Kentucky Guard news? Visit [www.kentuckyguard.dodlive.mil](http://www.kentuckyguard.dodlive.mil) today!



### Bluegrass Guard

100 Minuteman Parkway  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
Phone: 502-607-1713/1898/1903  
[www.kentuckyguard.dodlive.mil](http://www.kentuckyguard.dodlive.mil)

### Command Staff

**State Commander in Chief**  
Gov. Matt Bevin

**The Adjutant General**  
Maj. Gen. Stephen R. Hogan

**Deputy Adjutant General**  
Brig. Gen. Scott A. Campbell

**Assistant Adjutant General, Army**  
Brig. Gen. Benjamin F. Adams III

**Assistant Adjutant General, Air**  
Brig. Gen. Warren Hurst

**Chief of Staff, Air**  
Brig. Gen. Charles Walker

**Director of the Joint Staff**  
Col. William A. Denny

**State Command Chief Warrant Officer**  
Chief Warrant Officer Dean Stoops

**State Command Sergeant Major**  
Command Sgt. Maj. David Munden

**State Command Chief Master Sergeant,**  
Command Chief Master Sgt. Ray Dawson

### Staff

**State Public Affairs Officer**  
Maj. Stephen Martin

**133rd Mobile Public Affairs Det. Commander**  
Capt. Gus LaFontaine

**123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Officer**  
Capt. James Killen

**Editor**  
Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond

**Assistant Editor**  
Stacy Floden

**Graphic Designers**  
Sgt. Cody Cooper  
Sgt. Shanna Rice

**Contributors**  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

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

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

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

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 [pao@kentuckyguard.com](mailto:pao@kentuckyguard.com).

Payment will not be made for contributions. Paid advertising is not accepted.

Circulation: 11,500

Please report any corrections to:

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs  
100 Minuteman Parkway  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
[pao@kentuckyguard.com](mailto:pao@kentuckyguard.com)



# Firearms expert honored in new exhibit

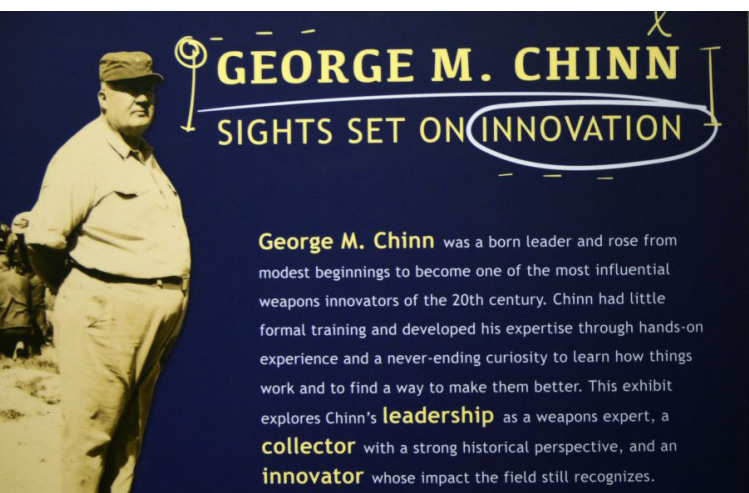


Photo courtesy of Kentucky Historical Society

Story by Pfc. Nasir Stoner

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Kentucky Historical Society held a ceremony to open a new exhibit at the Kentucky Military History Museum for former KHS Director and military weapons innovator George M. Chinn Sept. 28.

“This exhibit heralds Colonel George Chinn’s unique and lasting contributions to the Nation and the heritage of the Commonwealth through his innovative spirit, passion for weapons technology, and his love of Kentucky history,” said Col. Alan Denny, Chief of Staff for the Kentucky Army National Guard. “The exhibit has literally been a lifetime and more in the making, and I’m excited to finally see it realized.”

During his upbringing in Frankfort in the early 1900’s, Chinn became fascinated with and very knowledgeable about firearms and how to disassemble and reassemble them. He first disassembled a Gatling gun at age five and was able to reassemble it without any help.

Throughout his life journey Chinn went from a football player at Centre College, to football coach, to restaurant owner, to a weapons expert in the U.S. Marine Corps, achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel. He made great contributions to World War II as a go-to military weapons expert and innovator and had various accomplishments throughout his career.

After retiring from the military, Chinn continued to consult with the Navy who called on him to document and improve military weapons.

“After his service in the Marines, George Chinn became Director of the Kentucky Historical Society, where he revived the Kentucky Junior Historical Society and helped sustain the Historical Marker program,” said Denny. “He stepped down as KHS director and became deputy director so he could serve as the director of the newly formed Kentucky Military History Museum.”

Chinn was able to bring a wealth of knowledge along with his personal collection of weapons, establishing one of the best collections of military firearms in the nation.

“It was suggested between the military department and the historical society that the historical society move its military artifacts into the arsenal so it could become a museum,” said retired Maj. Gen. Richard Frymire. “Colonel Chinn was the executive director of the historical society and I was the Adjutant General and we had a partnership.”

The new exhibit, “George M. Chinn: Sights Set on Innovation” is located in the museum’s newly dedicated Maj. Gen. Richard Frymire and Mrs. Phyllis Frymire Gallery, honoring their service and generosity to the museum. While serving as adjutant general, Frymire oversaw the opening of the Kentucky History Museum in 1973.

The Kentucky Military History Museum is located at 125 East Main Street in downtown Frankfort. For more information, visit [www.history.ky.gov](http://www.history.ky.gov).

## Letters to the Editor Policy

The Bluegrass Guard values opinions

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

The Bluegrass Guard  
KYNG Public Affairs  
100 Minuteman Parkway  
Frankfort, KY 40601

or: [PAO@kentuckyguard.com](mailto:PAO@kentuckyguard.com)

We reserve the right to edit letters for tone, length, clarity and factual accuracy.

## Change of Address

Don't miss an issue

All change of address requests should be made by the unit clerk using RCAS for all current Army or Air National Guardsmen. The Bluegrass Guard is mailed out via alert roster addresses at the unit level.

Army Retiree address changes should be made through the Kentucky National Guard Personnel Services Branch at 502-607-1497.

Air Retirees should request changes through retired Chief Master Sgt. James Turpin at [jturpin1945@gmail.com](mailto:jturpin1945@gmail.com).

Look for the KYNG on  
your favorite social  
networks and follow us







# 207th returns home

Photos by Stacy Floden

Story by Maj. Stephen Martin  
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

More than 160 members of the Kentucky National Guard's 207th Horizontal Engineer Construction Company, based out of Hazard and Jackson, Kentucky, were honored by friends and family after returning from a nearly year-long deployment to Central Asia at the Lexington, Kentucky airport Nov. 9.

The unit was greeted by hundreds of friends and family from across the state as well as Kentucky's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Stephen R. Hogan.

"I want to tell you I'm proud of you, you've made Kentucky proud, you've made yourselves proud and you've made your unit proud," remarked Hogan. "Thank you for your service, and family and friends, thank you for your sacrifice. Welcome home."

Commanded by Capt. Brian Ladd, the 207th assumed the mission to support force protection and over-the-horizon projects throughout the CENTCOM area of responsibility in late spring of 2017.

During that time, the 207th completed over 100 work orders, 38 projects worth over \$9 Million in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Freedom's Sentinel spread throughout six countries in Central Asia. The teams were distributed in groups of 4 to 18 Soldiers with very limited resources and were able to accomplish far more than they anticipated.

"From the very beginning of our tour, the 207th exhibited the workhorse mentality of our own 201st Engineer battalion and lived the motto of the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 'never defeated,'" said Ladd. "Because of this, we were assigned the most difficult and challenging missions and



in every instance we impressed our customers with the speed and quality of our work.

Our reputation spread quickly through our area of operations, to the point where we were being asked for by name; and as a result of our efforts, we received numerous medals and accolades. 1st Sgt. Vaughn and I's most important achievement though is that the entire unit will return home safely with no serious injuries."

The unit raised the Theater Provided Equipment (TPE) to 85% with a 90% Operational Readiness Rating and personally increased their Annual Physical Fitness Test pass rating and height weight requirements to above 90% while deployed.

The unit had two departure ceremonies in Eastern Kentucky before mobilizing. Community events were held on Dec. 13th and 14th of last year, with the Soldiers leaving Kentucky just before Christmas.



# FITNESS corner

Will Lawhorn

Athletic Trainer & Strength Conditioning  
Coach, 123rd Special Tactics Squadron

## EATING LIKE A WARRIOR

### **The first step is to evaluate what you are currently eating.**

There are many apps like MyFitnessPal that can help you, find one that works. Ask yourself, 'Did you feel energized after eating or did you feel sluggish? Did you eat just enough to feel satisfied or did you eat so much that you can't stand up after?' Track for a few days so you have a better idea of what you are eating and how your food intake could be impacting your performance positively or negatively.

**Diet is extremely important in order to lose weight.** I get asked often what I think about the latest 'diet craze'. KETO, Low Carb, Intermittent Fasting, Paleo, and the Vegan diet to name a few. These diets can be effective, but the reason is the same for each one. Every diet works in the short term because it forces you into a caloric deficit. That means you are using more calories for your daily activity than you are consuming. The best diet for you is the one you can maintain long term. 2000 calories a day is for the average person.

**Eating to Lose Weight:** If you want to gain weight add 500 calories a day to this total. If you want to lose weight subtract 500 calories a day. **A good rate of fat loss or muscle gain is .5-1% of your bodyweight a week.** If you haven't been eating healthy for month or years and you feel discouraged don't be. Make little changes at a time and try to stick to them. **Aim to eat healthy 80% of the time** and it will show benefits to your appearance and performance.

Next **determine your macronutrient intake.** Macronutrients consist of protein (1 gram=4 calories), carbohydrates (1g=4 calories), and fats (1g=9 calories). Protein is necessary to build and repair muscle as well as maintaining your immune system. Look for grilled over fried, skinless over skin. Excellent sources are fish, chicken or turkey breast, lean red meat, low fat dairy, and eggs. **One serving should be about the size of a deck of cards.** Protein intake should be .6g/lbsBW-1g/lbsBW. Carbohydrates are the fuel that give the body energy to complete high intensity activities. You should opt for the 100% whole grain variety and avoid the enriched and refined variety. Good sources of carbohydrates are oatmeal, brown rice, high fiber cereals, quinoa, and 100% whole wheat bread. **One serving should be equal to the size of your fist.** Carbohydrates should be adjusted day to day based on your activity level (.5g/BW off day, 1g/BW low day, 1.5 moderate day, 2g/BW high days). Fats are necessary for nutrient absorption, to decrease inflammation, and to improve satiety and mental clarity. Choose unsaturated fats and omega 3 fats and avoid trans fats. Sources of healthy fats include pecans, almonds, walnuts, seeds (flax, chia, pumpkin), avocados, and fatty fish. **A serving size should be equal to the tip of your thumb.**



**Fruit and Vegetables: Eat a rainbow.** Fruit and vegetables provide natural vitamins and minerals that contribute to the health of the entire body. Aim for 3+ colors at every meal. **A serving size is ½ a cup or the size of both palms together.**

**Tips going through the supermarket:** Stay in the **outside aisles** of the grocery store. Buy foods with expiration dates. Avoid shopping in the center aisles as these foods will be more processed and less healthy for you. Try to avoid foods that have ingredients that you can't pronounce. Have a shopping list of healthy foods going in. **Eat before you go grocery shopping.** Everything looks good when you're hungry. Your wallet and waistline will thank you if you eat first.

**Supplementation:** Supplements are something to fill in the cracks in your diet. Not something to make up for a poor diet. Avoid pre-workout supplements. They may make you feel like you can run through a wall but that effect is coming almost entirely from the caffeine in each serving. Caffeine can absolutely improve performance, but save it before a big event to maximize the benefits. I do recommend fish oil, Vitamin D3, creatine, beta alanine, and a good protein supplement (whey, casein, soy).

**Pre-workout nutrition** sets you up for success during your training. If you are going in hungry you won't perform well and if you are going in just having eaten McDonalds you won't perform your best. Eat a meal, 3-4 hours before you workout, and then a smaller snack 1 hour before training. Something that won't upset your stomach and has a 1:1 to 2:1 ratio of carbohydrate to protein.

**Post workout nutrition** is **just as important** as your pre-workout nutrition. It helps you to refuel and recover from your hard training session. Depending on the intensity of your workout you want to consume a 1:1, 2:1, or 3:1 ratio of carbohydrates to protein. This can be in the form of **whole foods like greek yogurt, berries, and granola** or in shake form like 100% whey protein with a carbohydrate source in the shake like maltodextrin. **In order to maximize your recovery, it is important to refuel as soon as you can.**

**Drink water.** Being fully hydrated will improve your energy, performance, and mental clarity. Choose water over soda or other sugared drinks. You should get .5-1 fluid ounce of water per pound of bodyweight a day.

*Will Lawhorn is currently the Head ATC and Strength and Conditioning coach with the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron. Since graduating from Pennsylvania State University, Will has worked as a Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) with a variety of athlete populations. He has served as an athletic trainer with Penn State, the Baltimore Orioles, Chicago White Sox and Baltimore Ravens.*

# FIREFIGHTERS HEADED OVERSEAS



**By Pfc. Nasir Stoner**  
*133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

The Kentucky National Guard held a departure ceremony for the 178th Firefighting Team deploying to the Middle East at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky., Sept. 23, 2017.

"Remember who you are and remember you are an American Soldier," said Maj. Gen. Stephen R. Hogan, the Adjutant General of the Kentucky National Guard. "Remember that you are a Kentuckian, and remember you are a Greenville Fireman."

The 178th Engineer Firefighting Team is made up of six Soldiers led by Staff Sgt. Matthew Stevens, who also deployed to Afghanistan with the 176th Engineer Firefighting Team in 2011. The unit is deploying in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

"Fighting fires is one of the most hazardous professions," said the Honorable Jan Yonts, Mayor of Greenville. "It requires physical strength, stamina, extensive training, courage, and selfless concerns for the welfare of others."

"For some of you this will be your first deployment," said Capt. Scott Blackburn, the Company Commander of the 178th Firefighting Team. "Remember to rely on your training and leadership and know that we are back here in Kentucky waiting to get you whatever you need."

"We are going to the Middle East and our mission is an aircraft mission," said Stevens. "We will be training foreign soldiers as well as a fire brigade down there."

The 178th Engineering Firefighting Team is comprised of six qualified Soldiers in positions such as station chief, lead firefighter, fire truck driver, and firefighter.





# FIERCE COMPETITORS

## Soldiers battle it out for 2018 title of Best Warrior

Photo by Sgt. Taylor Tribble

Story by Capt. Josh Daugherty

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kentucky Guardsmen proved why they were deemed worthy to represent their respected brigades as they competed in the very challenging Best Warrior Competition (BWC) at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky., Oct. 25-28 to determine who would be the 2018 Soldiers of the Year.

"This isn't easy; this is a tough, tough competition," said State Command Sgt. Maj. David Munden in his opening remarks to the competitors. "Leave it all out there. Don't go home with any doubt that you didn't do all that you could do."

And the Soldiers did just that.

Competitors endured sub-freezing temperatures, rain and demanding physical and mental challenges over the course of the competition. Events ranged from weapons qualification, land navigation, a 12-mile foot march, a 3-mile combat run, stress shoot, close combat in urban operations, the obstacle course, media engagement, written exam, essay writing, board interview and dozens of Army Warrior Tasks, just to name a few. When it was all over, each Soldier had totaled more than 20 miles of running and marching in full combat uniforms.

"It was hard, it was exhausting mentally and physically but

what helped get me through it was the other competitors," said Pfc. Catherine Zembrodt from the Main Command Post Operational Detachment (MCPD), 101st Airborne Division and winner of the Soldier of the Year. "Despite the competitive nature of the event we all helped each other get through it."

When asked what he would recommend to other Soldiers wanting to qualify for the BWC, winner of the Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Hughes from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry, said, "Don't take this competition lightly. You are competing against the best of the best. Be humble, you will learn things that you didn't know before or find out where you are weaker and can improve."

"I was surrounded by fierce competitors," said Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Winner, Sgt. Jordy Brewer from Alpha Company, 1/149th. "There are great Soldiers here and I've never been around this many Command Sergeants Majors. It was really motivating."

This year, it was a sweep for the 75th Troop Command as all three of the competition's winners were from units within that brigade. Munden singled out the brigade for this accomplish-



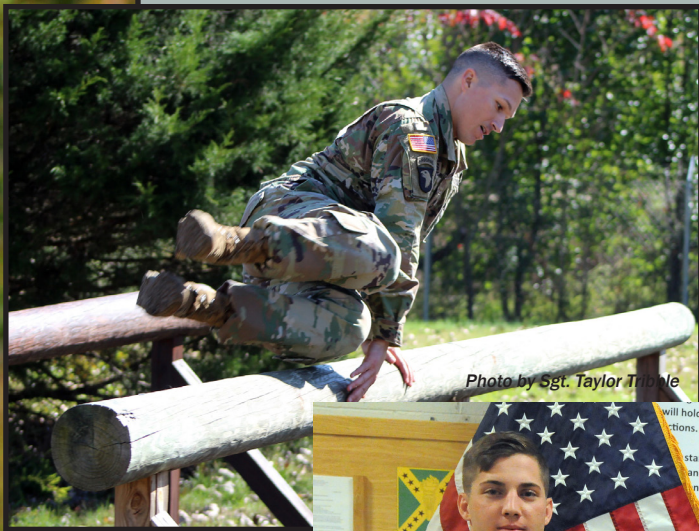


Photo by Sgt. Taylor Tribble



Photo by Capt. Josh Daugherty



Photo by Sgt. Taylor Tribble

(L-R) Sgt. Jordy Brewer - NCO of the Year  
Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Hughes - Senior NCO of the Year  
Pfc. Catherine Zembrodt - Soldier of the Year



Photo by Sgt. Taylor Tribble

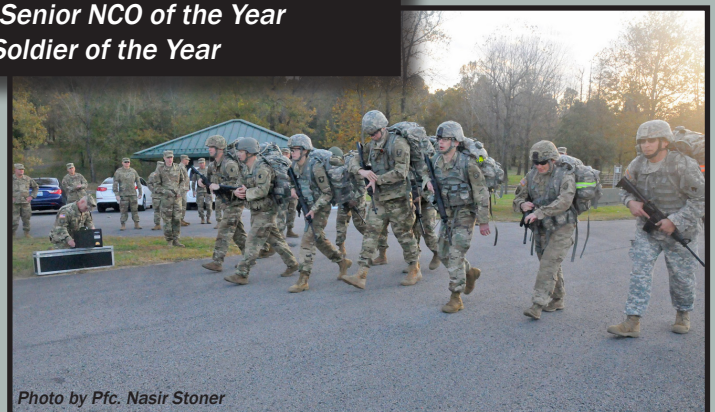


Photo by Pfc. Nasir Stoner



Photo by Capt. Josh Daugherty

ment in an indirect way of challenging the other brigades in next year's competition.

For the infantry battalion, this makes three years in a row they have had at least one competitor win their respected division and the second year in a row where they have had two of the three winners.

Munden also spent time thanking and acknowledging all those who supported the event stating, "This was the best ran BWC he had witnessed."

For the Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer winner, they will compete at the Southeast Regional BWC next April in Tennessee.





By Stacy Floden  
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

# 200 MILE MEMORIAL

## Infantry battalion march in memory of fallen commander

Soldiers of the Kentucky National Guard's 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry conducted the Inaugural Mountain Warrior Memorial Ruck March Dec. 1-3, from Ravenna, Kentucky, to Middlesboro, Kentucky.

The 202-mile ruck march was held in honor of Lt. Col. Jeff Cole, former commander of the infantry battalion who passed away from cancer in 2015.

The march began on a Friday morning with a flag folding ceremony in Ravenna and continued for the next 51 hours as more than 220 Soldiers passed each of their armories en route to Middlesboro.

Local citizens and family members joined the Soldiers for the last 1.5 miles through the streets of Middlesboro. Among them was Cole's widow, Christi Cole.

"The idea the Guard would conceive of something like this was amazing to me," she said. "Jeff would be very honored, but completely blown away that they would want to do something this huge. This holiday season has been especially hard for me and this weekend has been a really bright spot. It has made me remember, but it has also been something I could rally around. Just seeing these guys remember Jeff and his legacy, it's just really powerful."

Teams from each company of the infantry battalion, nicknamed the "Mountain Warriors" completed five separate marches connecting their home armories. Charlie Company marched from Ravenna to Mt. Vernon. Bravo Company from Mt. Vernon to Somerset to London. The Forward Support Company from London to Barbourville. Headquarters and Headquarters Company from Barbourville to Pineville. Alpha Company from Harlan to Pineville. Delta Company from Pineville to Middlesboro.

"Our goal with this event is to provide the communities our armories reside in with the opportunity to see our Soldiers performing our military tasks and giving back to the fallen Soldiers of the past," said Lt. Col. Eddie Simpson, commander of the 1/149th. "This event is our way of turning our December drill into a fun packed event that incorporates all of the Lines of Effort by the Adjutant General."

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Stephen Hogan has challenged Guardsmen of the commonwealth with his lines of effort; to remain qualified and fit, to retain operational readiness, remain relevant to the national mission of the National Guard and to foster quality connections with Kentucky communities.

Following the ruck, the memorial flag was presented to Cole during a memorial ceremony held at the Middlesboro Armory.





# Lesson exchange with state partner

By Spc. Sarah Gossett

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

A small group of Kentucky National Guard leaders from the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry embarked on a mission to Djibouti Sept. 20-28 to continue building Kentucky's relationship with the nation as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP).

The Kentucky infantry Soldiers were introduced to two organizations in the Djiboutian Armed Forces during the visit. The first was the Djiboutian Republican Guard (La Garde Républicaine Djiboutienne), a section of the Djiboutian Army that provides security missions for the highest Djiboutian state authorities and the public, as well as missions of training, cooperation and assistance, both locally and abroad. The second was the Djiboutian National Gendarmerie (Gendarmerie Nationale Djiboutienne), a police-like branch of the Djibouti Armed Forces that is in charge of public safety among the civilian population.

Capt. Michael Moynahan, commander of Delta Company, 1/149th, Command Sgt. Maj. Benzie Timberlake and Sgt. 1st Class David Olszewski met with members of the Djiboutian Republican Guard to share standard approaches to infantry tactics, including basic marksmanship fundamentals, squad movement techniques, detainee searches and traffic control point operations during their first two days in Djibouti. In return, a few of the Republican Guard's weapons instructors and their squads demonstrated their own tactics and techniques.

"We're so technologically advanced that we tend to forget how we would do things analogically," said Maj. Christopher Hettinger, Bilateral Affairs Officer for the State Partnership Program in Djibouti, "We have a tendency to get stuck in how we do things, so it's nice to see how someone else does it."

By the end of the second day, platoons from the Republican Guard were performing new squad movement techniques. The Kentucky infantrymen chose to focus on instructing the leaders within the Djiboutian ranks how to lead the formations, then supervised while Djiboutian sergeants led their own subordinates rather than leading the drills themselves.

The Kentucky Soldiers began their meeting with the Gendarmerie by reviewing what weapon systems their force prefer to use. Since many of their preferred weapon systems are U.S. made, Col. Ibrahim Elmi Kaib from the Gendarmerie said they were honored to have members of the Kentucky Guard there



to help.

"There is no better way to learn about U.S. weapons than from U.S. Soldiers," said Maj. Hoummad Liota Hoummad, Chief of Cabinet for the Gendarmerie.

YouTube videos were used to bridge the gap of translation and answer questions and answers during the exchange. After the Kentuckians and members of the Gendarmerie discussed these needs over rifles and croissants, both sides began passionately

discussing marksmanship and urban combat tactics. This excitement prompted tours of the training facilities, including the range, a unique shoot house, and a room clearing demonstration.

The Kentucky infantrymen said while Kentucky Soldiers may not be able to learn new combat tactics from the Djiboutian forces, the benefits of this partnership are still very much balanced. There is still much to be learned about leadership, cooperation and adaptability through the international experiential opportunities that this partnership provides. They believed members of the Kentucky National Guard would greatly benefit from participating in this type of exchange since so few of our Soldiers today have been exposed to operations in austere environments while dealing with host nation forces.

"The ability for Soldiers to have exposure to different cultures and foreign armies is very valuable," said Moynahan. "Guard Soldiers in 2017 do not operate in a vacuum when they conduct overseas operations. All U.S. military forces must learn how to operate with allies that come from different cultures and backgrounds in order to achieve common goals."





# UNBRIDLED RESPONSE

Staff Report

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria made the 2017 hurricane season one of the most costly. It was the first time three category four storms have hit the United States mainland since weather records have been kept.

As defenders of the homeland, the National Guard answered the call to assist local communities. From Friendswood, Texas to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, nearly 300 Kentucky Guardsmen mobilized to augment local agencies, provide search and rescue capabilities, deliver relief supplies and help begin the recovery process.

More than 40,000 Guardsmen from 40 states were deployed for relief effort operations before, during and after the storms.

## Kentucky Response by the numbers

Guardsmen deployed - **290**

Kentucky Air Guard flight hours - **585**

Kentucky Army Guard flight hours - **88**

Air evacuees - **1,000 (St. Maarten)**

Water rescues - **333 (Houston area)**

MEDEVAC'ed patients - **17 (USVI)**

Cargo processed - **7.2 million pounds  
(Puerto Rico)**

Police patrol hours - **14,000 (St. Thomas)**







Courtesy photo



Courtesy photo

Photo by 1st Lt. John Kerr





## AIRMEN SAVE LIVES IN TEXAS

By Senior Airman Ryan Conroy  
24th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs

To assist in rescue efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, 38 Special Tactics Airmen from the Kentucky and Oregon Air National Guard deployed to Southeast Texas to provide critical disaster relief.

Airmen with the 123rd and 125th Special Tactics Squadrons exercised their personnel rescue and global access capabilities to provide critical relief to those stranded by Hurricane Harvey. The 123rd deployed from Louisville, Kentucky, and the 125th from Portland, Oregon.

"It's like the Nile formed in neighborhoods throughout the Houston area – we're talking 4-6 feet of standing water stranding people who can't swim, families with children and drivers who are unaware of the depth of water on the roads," said Maj. Aaron Zamora, director of operations with the 123rd STS and the mission commander.

Following an airfield assessment, the operations center immediately deployed ground-based boat search and rescue teams to start coordinating with military and civil authorities who are conducting rescue operations.

"The area we're working in is completely inundated with hundreds, if not thousands, of requests for rescue," said Tech. Sgt. Brian Davis, intelligence analyst with the 123rd STS. "Since we're such a small team with a specialized skill set, we find the people who are most in need and look for people who need specialized rescue."

In addition to personnel recovery mission sets, the Airmen in the field were tasked with exercising command and control by opening and coordinating helicopter landing zones for supplies and medical evacuations, said the mission commander.

"When we hit the ground, we went outside the box, started problem solving and realized we have all these different tools at our disposal to be more effective," said Zamora.

The number of rescues currently stands at more than 330, but they aren't worried about metrics, the mission commander said.

"We try not to get caught up in the numbers, and I told my team before we arrived that our mission is to go to Texas and do the most good by helping as many people as we can," Zamora said.



## AIR SUPPORT IN CARIBBEAN

Story by Maj. Stephen Martin  
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

The Kentucky Guard Medevac responded to the call for support to the Virgin Islands the day after Labor Day for hurricane relief operations. Det. 1, Charlie Co of 2nd Battalion, 238th Medevac out of Frankfort, Kentucky, flew out of the 123rd Air Wing Base in Louisville and began search and rescue and lifesaving operations immediately across the various Islands down south.

"We were called to a urgent transfer from the island of St. Croix to St. John where a patient had suffered a serious laceration on their arm," said 1st Lt John Kerr, Platoon leader for the Medevac unit. "The call came to us from the clinic on the small island and it was late at night with very little moonlight available. Power was still out throughout the island but we knew the location quite well."

Once we landed at the clinic both flight medics went inside to meet with the doctors on site and to get the PCR (patient care report). Once they had the information the flight medics loaded the patient and we departed for San Juan International Airport in Puerto Rico where they had set up a Triage to help patients. The flight took about 35 minutes and the flight medics were able to stabilize the patient so we could arrive to the triage. We landed in San Juan and we were successful in saving the patient and get them the medical care he needed."

The unit flew 88.6 hours in support of passenger and patient movement as well as evacuating themselves to Puerto Rico when Hurricane Maria ripped through just a couple of weeks later. They then returned to the Virgin Islands for follow-on support.

All-in-all, the aviation Soldiers were able to move 17 patients over the month long deployment and facilitated 3 rescue-hoist missions to critical care facilities.

"I believe we have been training up to a moment like this for the past few years," said Kerr. "Our medics are extremely well trained and specialized in all scenarios. We had the best equipment and support from not only the Virgin Islands but Kentucky as well. It felt great to be able to fully utilize our training to assist those who need it most. I am very proud to be a Kentucky Guardsman and even more to be in such an amazing unit."





## AIRMEN FUNNEL RELIEF TO PUERTO RICO

**By Lt. Col. Dale Greer**  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

More than three-dozen members of the Kentucky Air National Guard processed 7.2 million pounds of humanitarian aid through a cargo hub they established in San Juan, Puerto Rico Sept. 23, working around the clock to download relief supplies from hundreds of aircraft and prepare the aid for distribution across an island ravaged by Hurricane Maria.

"As the only contingency response group in the Air National Guard, we have a very specialized mission set," said Col. Bruce Bancroft, commander of the 123rd CRG. "Our primary purpose is to deploy to the location of an event like a natural disaster and open an aerial port of debarkation — typically at a non-functioning airfield — so relief supplies can flow in."

Thirty-nine Kentucky Air Guardsmen, augmented by one troop from the Mississippi Air Guard, arrived at Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport Sept. 23 to find an airfield without reliable power and few functional services.

"Conditions were pretty rough," he said. "The electricity was down, water was being rationed, and the roads were largely impassible. Light poles were down, power lines were down, trees blocked the roadways."

Despite the challenges, the Airmen quickly established full operational capability and received the first plane-load of humanitarian aid the next day. Since that time, the group has downloaded 7,234,020 pounds of cargo from 268 aircraft, according to Maj. James Embry, the group's director of operations.

The 123rd CRG also processed 3,887 passengers arriving from a variety of agencies, including the Department of Defense and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to assist with relief efforts.

"Our greatest success has been the transition from an aerial port of debarkation - receiving and staging a lot of arriving supplies - and turning that into a distribution network that moves the humanitarian aid off the airfield. It's extremely important for me to look at my cargo yard and not see any pallets. While we were still building this operation up in the first few days, there were a lot of pallets here that weren't out there helping people, and now we don't have that issue. The cargo is moving off this airfield quickly, and it's getting out there to help people who need it."

## MPs SECURE STREETS OF USVI

**By Staff Sgt. Tosha Cobler**  
940th Military Police Company

Approximately 120 Soldiers from the Kentucky Army National Guard's 940th Military Police Company deployed to St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands Oct. 1-27, where they assisted with support to civil authorities in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

"We are so very proud of every Soldier of the 940th and the job they do. They are always there to answer the call, regardless of the mission," said Lt. Col. John Blackburn, commander of the 198th Military Police Battalion. "We're glad things came together for us to help the people of the Virgin Islands. Being a part of the team providing support is a proud moment for the 940th and the Kentucky National Guard."

The 940th mission set included presence patrols, critical site security, traffic control and curfew enforcement.

Kentucky MPs worked with local Virgin Island Police Department (VIPD) to enforce curfews, performing an estimated 14,000 joint patrol hours. With extensive damage across the island, security was required at shelters and infrastructure sites. Soldiers also worked traffic intersections across the island as nearly 80% of the island was without power leaving few traffic lights operable.

"This was not only a MP mission, this was a National Guard mission and the 940th played a crucial role in support of local authorities," said Capt. Jared Stakelin, commander of the 940th. "The relationship we built with the Virgin Islands Police Department will be a lasting one and a quality learning experience for this unit."

"Sure we provided what assistance we could to help the Virgin Islands recover, but we are a better MP company because of this mission and the people we interacted with."

The 940th was augmented by members of Kentucky's 223rd, 438th and 617th Military Police Companies, and the 1103rd Military Police Detachment.

"It's missions like these that are the reason I joined the National Guard," said Private Dean Gollar. "The people of the Virgin Islands were in need in a big way and we were able to use our training to help them. Everyone there was so happy to have us around, I think we made them feel safe. It was a great experience and I really feel like we made a positive difference."



# Hunt named STS officer of the Year

## 1ST NATIONAL GUARDSMAN TO RECEIVE AWARD



**Story by Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton**  
*123rd Airlift Public Affairs Office*

1st Lt. Bryan Hunt, a special tactics officer with the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, has been named the U.S. Air Force Special Tactics Officer of the Year — the first Air Guardsman to receive the accolade.

The honor, presented Aug. 24 in a ceremony at the Pentagon, is well-deserved, according to his former commander, Lt. Col. Sean McLane.

"While I'm not surprised that Bryan is performing at such a high level, I am very happy that the entire special tactics community realizes it," said McLane, who recently stepped down as commander of the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron and will retire from the Kentucky Air Guard in December.

"We really are a total force, and a Guard guy getting that award reflects that. This is not the kind of award you're just going to hand out to somebody who isn't your best performer. To recognize Bryan Hunt as the best special tactics officer across the total force — that really says something."

Hunt said he was humbled by the honor, which he views as a reflection of every Airman in the squadron.

"I think it kind of speaks to the caliber of the unit, the leadership and the people of this unit," he said. "It reflects on not just us, but the 123rd Airlift Wing and Air National Guard as a whole and how they support us here at the Special Tactics Squadron."

According to McLane, Hunt makes "consistently good decisions well above what someone would expect of a new lieutenant" and delivers a "superior product" on the battlefield.

"His training plans always meet command guidance and he always ensures that his men are organized, trained and equipped to accomplish the mission — and I didn't give him a lot of guidance to do that," McLane said. "It's up to him to figure out all the non-specified tasks, and all the little things that will make that happen. When his Airmen deploy, they're superior to anyone with the same time in grade and service because their training plans and instruction are superior. Bryan

makes sure that happens."

Hunt enlisted in the Florida Air National Guard's 125th Fighter Wing as an intelligence specialist in 2003. After leaving Florida in 2006, he joined the Kentucky Air Guard as a combat controller with the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron and was commissioned in 2014.

As a combat controller, Hunt has deployed multiple times in support of various named and unnamed military operations, including Operation Enduring Freedom, where he served as the sole terminal attack controller for several U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps special forces. During his deployment for Operation Inherent Resolve, Hunt and his team were responsible for the elimination of hundreds of insurgent fighters and the destruction of countless pieces of equipment.

"He's always been a superior performer," McLane said. "You could see it even when he was a staff sergeant. He's a courageous decision maker, he's got high moral standards, and he's always thinking and planning ahead. He does not equivocate. He thinks before he speaks, and he considers the second and third-order effects of his decisions. There's a systematic approach to everything he does that maximizes efficiency."

Hunt credited the award to the leadership of his unit and his fellow Airmen.

"As a leader, you'll never know everything, and you have to surround yourself with people who are extremely intelligent and probably better than you at many things," Hunt said. "I think that's what makes a good leader: the ability to utilize all of your resources to the maximum extent."

"I believe that's what this unit does probably better than everything," Hunt continued. "We have all of the right people in the right places. They are all extremely easy to work with. They communicate well and are, in my opinion, above their peers in every facet of the Air Force and the Air National Guard. I would put them up against anybody, any day of the week."



# A DAY AT THE RACES

## Churchill Downs honors Gold Star Families

**By Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane**  
*133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Around 800 families who have lost loved ones in service to their country gathered together at Churchill Downs for the eighth annual Survivor Outreach Services luncheon Nov. 5.

The Kentucky National Guard and Humana Military hosted this event to bring families from around the country together for an afternoon of lighthearted fun, face painting, live music and horse racing with the best view of the track.

During the event, Wells Fargo and the Military Warrior Support program presented Melissa Jarboe the keys to a new mortgage free home as a gesture of appreciation to her husband, who died during his third deployment after being hit by a sniper in Afghanistan in 2012.

"These events are so important to Gold Star families like mine," said Jarboe. "We can still be a part of something great and that's our American military. Even though he (her husband) isn't physically here, I know emotionally, every time I see the flag wave I feel his presence."

She added that just being around men and women in uniform, helps her feel her husband's presence as well. As for her home, it will help continue her healing process.

"Getting this mortgage free home from Military Warrior Support program is great because I recently adopted two children, one, a little boy to help carry on my husband's name, so this is something for our family to grow and start a new path and a new chapter in our lives," said Jarboe.

Military Warriors is a 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization

that supports wounded Service members and surviving family members. Up to this point, they have given 380 homes away to Service members and their families.

Helping heal the broken pieces is the goal of events like this and is the focus of the ones who put time into planning the event.

"Our shared loss brings us together," said Donna Engerman, Survivors Outreach Services Manager, United States Army Installation Management Command and a survivor herself. "We're a family and that is the bond that brings us together but the main point of this day is to have fun with each other."

And that fun could be seen on the faces of everyone in the stands as they watched the horse's race or in the children's eyes as they were getting their faces painted.

Kentucky's adjutant general was in attendance as well as commanders and leadership from 16 other states.

"This event is known as the jewel of its kind," said Maj. Gen. Stephen R. Hogan, "I am proud we can share this with our neighboring states and it's a great thing we can do for our Gold Star families."

Also during the event, Folds of Honor 5K Scholarship recipient Hannah Davis shared her memories of her father, Jeff Davis, a UH-60 Blackhawk pilot who died while doing maintenance on one of his helicopters when she was three. She said the program helped her finish her education at Michigan State University.

More than 600 Kentucky military service members have given their lives in the defense of the nation since 9/11. Eighteen Kentucky Guard Soldiers have died in a theater of war in that time, 14 in Iraq and four in Afghanistan.





# OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

*To complain without fear of reprisal is the right of any Soldier, civilian, or family member seeking Inspector General help.*

## PURPOSE OF THE IG

1. **Advise** the Adjutant General on matters that effect morale and mission accomplishment
2. **Teach**, coach and mentor the chain of command and NCO support channel
3. **Provide** assistance to Soldiers, Airmen, civilians, and family members
4. Professionally **develop** the force through training and teaching
5. Conduct **inspections** and investigations to uphold



## CONTACT THE KYNG IG

**866-843-5944**

**ng.ky.kyarng.mbx.ig-office-office-mailbox@mail.mil**

## BEFORE YOU CALL



**Give your chain of command a chance to solve the problem.** Many problems must be addressed to the chain of command for resolution anyway.

**If IG assistance is needed, contact your local IG first.**

IGs at higher commands will normally refer the case to the local IG for action.

**Be prepared before talking to the IG.** Go to the state GKO website or search Google and fill out an AF 102, if Airman, or a DA 1559, if Soldier, explaining your issue. Also, gather appropriate documentation regarding your issue.

**Be honest and don't provide misleading information.** IGs will discover the truth quickly in

most cases and there are penalties for knowingly providing false information.

**Keep in mind that IGs can only recommend, not order a resolution.** Only Commanders can order; the role of the IG is to advise the Commander.

**Don't expect instant action on your request...Be patient.** Investigations take time, and IGs tend to have heavy workloads.

**Be prepared to take "No" for the answer.** In any case, Yes or No, the IG will explain

## WHAT THE IG OFFICE CAN DO FOR YOU

- Provide recommendations IAW established standards and available resources
- Help prevent issues before they become problems
- Will work with the command team whenever possible and when given consent by the complainant IOT resolve issues





# BERS

**Blended Retirement System**

## Opt-In Eligibility Choices

*if*

**Serving as of December 31, 2017**

*then*

**ACTIVE COMPONENT  
Fewer than 12 Years  
or  
RESERVE COMPONENT  
Fewer than 4,320 Points**

*can*

**Do Nothing and  
Stay Covered  
by  
Legacy System**

*or*

**Choose  
Blended  
Retirement  
System**

**OPTIONAL  
TSP  
CONTRIBUTION  
WITH  
NO  
MATCHING**

**OPTIONAL  
TSP  
CONTRIBUTION  
WITH  
1% AUTOMATIC  
CONTRIBUTION  
AND UP TO  
5% MATCHING  
CONTRIBUTION**

**Defined Annuity  
2.5%  
x Years Served  
x Retired Pay Base**

**Years  
Served  
=  
Retirement  
Points  
360**

**Retired  
Pay Base  
=  
High  
36 month  
Average**

**Defined Annuity  
2.0%  
x Years Served  
x Retired Pay Base**

**Receive  
benefits only  
after  
retirement**

**Receive  
benefits  
even if you  
DON'T  
retire**

**VISIT  TO OPT IN / OUT**  
**January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018**

**For More Information VISIT  
<http://militarypay.defense.gov/blendedretirement>**





# KENTUCKY HOSTS 139TH NGAUS

By Staff Sgt. Lerone Simmons  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The National Guard Association of the United States officially began its 139th general conference, themed “America’s National Guard: The Indispensable Force,” with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Kentucky Expo Center in Louisville Sept. 8, 2017.

For Col. Michael Stephens, the director of aviation for the Kentucky Army National Guard and the emcee for the ribbon-cutting ceremony, the annual NGAUS conference, which lasted to Sept. 10, serves a great purpose for the National Guard as an organization, and those who work closely with the National Guard.

“It provides face to face collaboration to better develop systems and products for the military, and further serves the interest of the nation by providing the best military capability that we can, while maintaining economic stewardship for the taxpayer by National Guard leadership from all 54 states and territories coming together with industry partners,” said Stephens.

As the Executive Director of National Guard Association of Kentucky, Chief Warrant Officer (Retired) Jim Sims also explained the importance of hosting the conference in Kentucky.

“It’s a great opportunity for them to come see what Kentucky is all about; the leadership role of Kentucky, and the civilian side of those who support the Kentucky National Guard, how it affects the community and how the communities stand behind what we do. You can see that from the different sponsorships and the people that give donations,” said Sims.

Echoed in the words of Stephens, the conference theme, “The Indispensable Force,” reinforces the importance of the National Guard and its key role relating to national security and maintaining a proper working relationship across all services and components of the United States military.

As part of this effort, the conference featured a myriad of speakers including; Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin, United States Senate Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell and

Chief of National Guard Bureau Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel.

The speakers spoke throughout the conference at business and officer professional development sessions, special addresses, Q & A’s, and award ceremonies which encompassed topics regarding operations at home and abroad, new military equipment, fiscal and day-to-day challenges, and future roles of the National Guard.

Aside from the speaker-oriented events, the conference encouraged participants to fellowship with each other by hosting several receptions, luncheons and mixers to allow Guardsmen to learn about and from each other.

These involved locations such as Churchill Downs, downtown Louisville, Louisville Expo Center and hospitality rooms at various event hotels.

“In comparison, each conference is unique in itself. Here in Kentucky we try to highlight very Kentucky things: Churchill Downs, bourbon, good people, and all the factors that make Kentucky what it is,” said Brig Gen. Benjamin F. Adams III, Chief of the Joint Staff. “We believe we put our best foot forward to show the thousands of people that came to Kentucky what makes Kentucky great.”

According to Maj. Gen. Jim Hoyer, adjutant general of West Virginia and NGAUS Chairman, Kentucky did a superb job in hosting this year’s conference.

“I think it’s an exceptional example of the citizens of the commonwealth, the city of Louisville, and the Kentucky National Guard to be gracious and wonderful hosts for this event and make sure we had all the things we needed as well as great hospitality to build bonds and relationships with each other,” he said.

“We’ve been having this conference since 1878 to make sure that Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen have the things that they and their families need, to be able to do what the citizens of this country expect of us.”

As Kentucky showed the rest of the country what it has to offer, NGAUS will now look to next year’s national conference in New Orleans, Louisiana in 2018.



# HUMBLE VALOR



By Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Heroes are made in an instant and for a local Army National Guardsman, instant reactions and military training saved lives and he was recognized for his heroics Sept. 8.

Governor Matt Bevin and Maj. Gen. Stephen R. Hogan were on hand to award Staff Sgt. Michael R. Tester the Kentucky Medal for Valor for his actions last year. Tester serves as a supply non-commissioned officer with Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery in Glasgow, Kentucky.

On Sept. 14, 2016, as Tester was at his home in Summersville, Kentucky with his father, they witnessed a crash involving two vehicles from his driveway. The collision sent one of the vehicles into an end-over-end roll. The second vehicle continued along the highway and fled the scene. Without thought of his personal safety, Tester immediately ran to the overturned vehicle as his father ran into the house to have Tester's wife call 911.

Upon arriving at the vehicle, Tester found two passengers, one conscious and one unconscious. Upon asking the conscious victim how many persons were in the vehicle, he found out there was a third passenger in the car.

By this time, Tester's wife and father, along with a few other individuals who stopped to help were on the scene of the wreck. Tester loudly announced there was another passenger they needed to locate. As Tester's wife began monitoring the two passengers, the rest of the group began searching in the darkness along the highway for the third passenger.

Tester located the third passenger entangled in a fence along the side of the roadway. He quickly evaluated the passenger's injuries, he wasn't breathing. With the help of another individual, they removed the passenger from the fence and laid him on his back. He performed CPR for several minutes until emergency medical services and the Summersville Volunteer Fire Department arrived. EMS monitored the vital signs while

Tester continued to administer CPR.

Despite the magnitude of his actions, Tester himself doesn't look at himself as being a hero.

"I did what I would expect anyone in that situation to do, anybody with the capacity. I didn't do anything that most people wouldn't do every day," he said. "Especially with our law enforcement officers, what I did, they stand ready to do every day when they put the uniform on."

His unit commander has seen the potential in Tester going back to his first day in the guard.

"Sergeant Tester is an all-star Soldier," said Lt. Col. Lawrence Joiner, commander of the 1/623rd. "I've been acquainted with him since 2004 and I was his commander when we deployed to Iraq. I knew from that point he was going to do great things."

The Kentucky Medal for Valor award is the highest military award the state of Kentucky can give out to its Soldiers.

"It's a very humbling experience especially given the circumstances," said Tester. "I can't express how grateful for the honor and opportunity. I just did what any other Soldier would have done in this situation."

There is no doubt his decisiveness, leadership, and knowledge on how to evaluate a casualty were key factors in securing the scene and providing much needed assistance prior to the arrival of emergency services.

Tester is a great role model for fellow Soldiers in his unit as well as other Guard members. His commander saw his potential to be great and would like to advise other Soldiers to be like Tester, and to follow his lead.

"Do your job, that's what he does every day. He doesn't worry about glory and fame, so I'd tell other Soldiers, to first, be sure you look like a Soldier every day and then go to work and do your job and the glory and fame will come later," concluded Joiner.



# ChalleNGe Academy celebrates milestone

By Staff Sgt. Scott Raymond

Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Cadets have graduated from the Kentucky National Guard's Bluegrass ChalleNGe Academy since 1999. More than 3500 teens have passed through the graduation line, taking important steps toward improving their lives.

September 23, 2017 marked another graduation, and a milestone step for the academy as 96 more cadets graduated during a ceremony at the Stithton Baptist Church in Radcliff, Kentucky. For the first time in its history, BCA graduated 12 cadets with their high school diploma in hand. Thanks to a partnership with the Eminence Independent School District.

"This graduation will be the first of many in the future that are two graduations in one ceremony," said Brig. Gen. Charles Jones, Director of BCA. "This has been a long term goal of the Kentucky National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program and only possible through the great support of the Governor, Lt. Governor, the commitment and dedication of the Eminence Independent School District staff and many here within BCA."

Jones added that BCA is one of the very few Youth ChalleNGe Academies across the nation now awarding a high school diploma to deserving graduates. It comes at a fitting time as the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe (NGYC) will celebrate its 25th anniversary in October.

BCA signed the partnership with Eminence Superintendent Buddy Berry in a ceremony hosted by Lt. Gov. Jenean Hampton in March. Hampton and her staff were instrumental in creating the partnership and were on hand again for the graduation, handing out awards and speaking with cadets.

In her commencement speech, Hampton challenged the cadets to believe they could be better than they are today, to reject low expectations and change how they see themselves in the world.

"My staff and I took it upon ourselves as a challenge to make this happen," said Hampton. "I am so pleased to be here at this first commencement where they're handing out diplomas, and I was thrilled to be a part of that."

Troy Hampton serves as the deputy director of the academy and said the growth of the program and its impact will continue to have life-long benefits for attending cadets.

"Today is the culmination of eight years of hard work and putting the right people in the right places to make this happen," he said. "This partnership and the legitimacy of awarding diplomas will tie us into schools easier and help those kids that may be slipping through the cracks. The future looks really bright for this academy."

For those cadets not earning diplomas, the academy stills serves its true mission of providing the spark to put teens back on track. That's exactly why Cadet Angel Cox went to BCA. After falling behind in high school grades, Cox met with a BCA recruiter and thought it was right for her.

"Graduating here means I can pick up where I left off and excel at what I am doing," she said.

Not all cadets chose to be there, like Asiimwe Ironside, who said he wasn't happy to hear of his parents' decision to send him to BCA. Adopted from Ghana, Ironside came from a rough childhood and according to his father, Kevin, Asiimwe had trouble adjusting to society and trusting those who cared for him. Kevin said his son's transformation into a disciplined and respectful young man is night and day.

"Graduating is not just walking the stage, it is the first step for me going out in the real world, applying what I have learned at the academy," Asiimwe said. "There were 96 different people here and



we learned to work as a team and when to be a leader and when to be a follower."

BCA and the Appalachian ChalleNGe Academy in Harlan, Kentucky are both part of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program designed to offer a free alternative education program to at-risk youth between the ages of 16 and 18 which can provide the opportunity to redirect their future.







**The National Guard can take you further**

# KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD

NATIONALGUARD.com

## **KY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS**

- State tuition up to \$50,000
- Federal Tuition up to \$4,000/yr
- \$375 Monthly GI Bill
- \$200 Monthly GI Bill Kicker
- Testing Reimbursement
- \$50,000 Loan Repayment
- \$240,000 Health Professional Loan Repayment

## **COMMUNITY COLLEGE: TUITION UP TO \$30,000**

### **KCTCS**

120 + Undergraduate and  
Certificate Programs  
16 Campus Locations

### **MOREHEAD STATE UNIV.**

Additional National Guard  
Benefits:

FREE Dorm Room: Member of  
ROTC

FREE Dorm Room: Transfer  
student; 3.0 GPA and Guard  
member

### **WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIV.**

Additional National Guard  
Benefits:

WKU: Textbooks For Troops  
Program: Provides free books  
for military students, veterans  
and eligible dependent students  
enrolled at Western Kentucky  
University.

Room and Board: ROTC offers  
room and board for ROTC  
members. This benefit is com-  
petitive and is not guaranteed.

## **RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES: TUITION UP TO \$50,000**

### **UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY**

94 Undergraduate Programs  
79 Graduate Programs  
ROTC Program

### **UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE**

62 Undergraduate Programs  
79 Graduate Programs  
ROTC Program

## **COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES: TUITION UP TO \$40,000**

### **NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIV.**

85 Undergraduate Programs  
22 Graduate Programs  
ROTC Program

### **MOREHEAD STATE UNIV.**

70 Undergraduate Programs  
25 Graduate Programs  
ROTC Program

### **MURRAY STATE UNIV.**

148 Undergraduate Programs  
39 Graduate Programs  
ROTC Program

### **EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIV.**

81 Undergraduate Programs  
35 Graduate Programs  
ROTC Program

### **WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIV.**

215 Undergraduate Programs  
56 Graduate Programs  
ROTC Program



# YOUR DA PHOTO MATTERS

This is a visual representation of your ERB/ORB. You are ultimately responsible for how you are viewed by your evaluators. Set yourself up for success & make sure you look like the Soldier that you know you are.

Below are some of the items that should be addressed to really make you stand out among your peers.

## HAIRCUT & SHAVE

*Do you look like a Soldier should?  
Be above the standard*

## CLEAN & KEPT UNIFORM

*Ensure shirt, tie, jacket and pants are tidy, wrinkle-free and presentable*

## AR 640-30

*Regulation to follow for your DA photo*

## CORRECT BRANCH INSIGNIA

*Must match your current unit of assignment*

## RIBBONS & AWARDS

*Keep all current and straight. Must match your ERB/ORB*

## SPACE BETWEEN ARM & UNIFORM

*Not in the regulation, but shows a tapered, physically fit look*



If your DA Photo is more than ONE YEAR OLD - Schedule a new one  
Appointments are made at [www.vios.army.mil](http://www.vios.army.mil)