

# Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 24, Issue 1 - January 2021

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



## WARRIOR MENTALITY

*Soldier competition strengthens force p. 8*

*COVID-19 Response  
Update p. 10*

*Defying the Odds  
p. 14*

# AROUND THE GUARD

## AND IN OUR PAGES



**ON THE COVER** - A Soldier participating the Best Warrior Competition 2020 for the Kentucky National Guard navigates through smoke as he attempts to clear buildings and find simulated victims during the competition at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center Sept. 24, 2020. Photo by Spc. Brett Hornback.



**JFHQ** - Soldiers participated in the new IWQ training during their November drill weekend. The Soldier were able to get a lot of great experience to learn the new qualification standards which will help them going forward.



**149th MEB** - The Headquarters Headquarters Company, 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade has now joined the list of many other National Guard organizations that use "Airbeam" tents. According to National Guard magazine, Airbeams are tubes that are inflated with air, up to 40 to 60 pounds per square inch to form a tough and sturdy framework for a tent. (Courtsey photo)



## BLUEGRASS GUARD

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### KENTUCKY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

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#### QUALIFICATIONS

- 90 semester hours from an accredited college/university
- Minimum GT score of 110
- AR 600-9 for height and weight
- Pass a Chapter 2 commissioning physical and PHA
- Commission prior to 42nd birthday
- U.S. Citizen

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**138th FAB-** Col. Ronnie Barnes relinquished command of the 138th Field Artillery Brigade honored to Col. Andrew J. Bates during a change of command ceremony Sept. 19, at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky. (Photo by Capt. Michael Reinersman)



**123rd AW -** Col. George H. Imerde III (center), incoming commander of the 123rd Mission Support Group, receives the group's guidon from Col. David Mounkes (left), commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, during a change-of-command ceremony at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky., Nov. 14, 2020. Imerde previously served as the 123rd Security Forces Squadron commander and antiterrorism officer for the 123rd Airlift Wing. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton)



**63rd TAB-** The Brigade promoted two of its leaders this past quarter to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Congratulations to Lt. Col. Chip St. Charles and Lt. Col. Stephen Martin. (Photo by Staff Sgt Benjamin Crane and courtsey photo)



**238th RTI -** The officer cadidate School is a great place to lear to lead Soldiers from the Front. With classes that will be strating in March, the time is now to start your journey as the next military officer.



**75th TC -** CW2 Dustin Lewis was presented the Team Expedition compass. Chief Lewis has had a tremendous impact on the Soldiers of the 75th Troop Command. We congratulate him as he starts his new journey as the Enlisted Branch Chief.

## IN THIS EDITION

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## LETTER FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Spc. Vanessa Guillen disappeared from Fort Hood on April 22, 2020 and her remains were not found until June 30th. If you are not familiar with the Guillen investigation, the details surrounding her disappearance are horrifying and whatever created the climate to allow this to happen is unacceptable. Please hear me when I say that our service members and our families are our greatest asset and we need to treat each other accordingly.

In order to achieve the kind of culture that fosters dignity and respect for all of our people, this must be more than a once-a-year PowerPoint briefing. Our leadership at all levels must infuse this topic into our regular training and make it a regular conversation.

While it is often easier to learn from other's mistakes, it can be difficult to recognize those faults in your own house before they become larger problems. I understand we do not live in a perfect world. Yet this organization cannot tolerate racism, sexism, hazing, bullying, gender identity, sexual orientation, discriminatory behavior, harassment, sexual harassment or sexual assault. When these behaviors present themselves, it is imperative we stop them immediately.

In an effort to ensure we're doing all we can to address these issues, I've directed members of our leadership to

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**WE HAVE SIGNIFICANT  
WORK TO DO TO REGAIN  
OUR SERVICE MEMBERS'  
TRUST IN OUR SHARP PRO-  
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ACHIEVED ITS MANDATE  
TO ELIMINATE SEXUAL  
ASSAULTS AND SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT IN OUR  
RANKS.**  
”

comb through the Fort Hood findings and see where we can improve our own procedures. The U.S. Army is doing this as well.

Secretary McCarthy said, “People are our greatest strength, our most valuable asset, and our most important weapon system. While the independent review focused on the command climate and culture at Fort Hood, the findings contained in the committee’s report impact the entire Army and more than 1.2 million Soldiers. In response, we’ve created the People First Task Force to study the committee’s recommendations and map out a plan to tackle them.”

We look forward to those results as well as what our own leadership comes up with.

Our Airmen, Soldiers, Civilians and their Families deserve to work and live in safe, healthy environments where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The challenges at Fort Hood have forced us to take a critical look at our systems, our policies, and ourselves. This is not just about metrics, but about possessing the ability to show compassion for our teammates and to look out for their best interest.

We have significant work to do to regain our Service members’ trust in our SHARP program, which hasn’t yet achieved its mandate to eliminate sexual assaults and sexual harassment in our ranks.

We, the Kentucky National Guard, are committed to preventing sexual harassment and assault. This intolerable behavior erodes our unit cohesion, hurts our organization and negatively impacts our mission to serve and protect America.

**BRIG. GEN. HAL LAMBERTSON**  
ADJUTANT GENERAL



Story by 1st Lt. Cody Stagner; photos by Sgt. Jeffrey Reno, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Advanced persistent cyber threats, such as email phishing, identity theft, insider threats, hacking, or spreading fear and inciting terrorism, are becoming more sophisticated.

Cyber Shield 2020 ran from Sept. 12-27 and aimed at mitigating these threats by cyber criminals with a defensively focused tactical cyber exercise.

Besides Guardsmen, they chose participants from law enforcement and the cyber protection industry to ensure the training met the requirements of our nation's defense information infrastructure.

Twenty-nine members from Kentucky joined hundreds of other cyber professionals from the Army and Air National Guard, the Navy Reserve, and the commercial industry.

"This year, we had nearly 700 participants from 41 states," said Maj. Dayna Sanders, the IT branch manager for the Kentucky National Guard.

Sanders has been the J3 (Operations Officer) for the past three Cyber Shield events.

"Even though we are in a pandemic, our state brought more Guardsmen than last year," the eight-year participant of the national exercise said.

Nearly all Kentucky Guard's major commands took part in the training. The majority came from Kentucky's Defensive Cyber Operations element from the state's headquarters, and the 175th

Cyber Protection Team, which returned from a year-long deployment to Washington, D.C., earlier this year.

To minimize the risks of spreading and contracting COVID-19, Soldiers spent training time at home in a non-traditional classroom environment.

"The first week was all about training and best practices from the commercial and defense industries," said Sanders. "We worked with Homeland



Security, the FBI, many commercial organizations like Lexmark and Microsoft. Then, we also had two participants working with us from our Commonwealth Office of Technology and their security operations center there."

Unique to this year, after the first couple of in-person instruction days, the cyber teams were free to go home and continue their training. With the introduction of Microsoft Teams, an online video conferencing and chatting software platform, participants from across the nation stayed within a keyboard's reach from each other.

"The online working environment used throughout the exercise worked great to keep our teams communicating. But it brought one of the greatest challenges I had experienced in my career," she said.

"As a leader, I must be able to talk with people over [Microsoft] Teams and have chat conversations. Without face-to-face interaction, I learned how much leadership was not taking place," said Sanders.

Personal interaction allows for immediate feedback during a conversation.

"The other challenge for me was not being able to assess the Soldiers. Communicating by text and teleconference doesn't give you that. I can't see their facial expressions or judge the mood they might be experiencing. I can't tell if a Soldier is having problems at home. And if they are at home, I have that feeling they might miss out and not able to focus and leverage on the learning opportunity [of this event]."

Meeting and working with others in person during a team event also gives participants the chance to build camaraderie and lasting friendships, she explained.

The cyber professionals met in week two for the culminating event.

"For the last event, they gave us the task to help a large, made-up corporation named Prestige Worldwide. We had to assess their network," Sanders said. "they gave us access to their networks, where we ran scans over their system."

The 91st Cyber Brigade out of the Virginia National Guard managed the cyber network that tested the skills of the information technology professionals, much like how a firing range tests the shooting skills during an individual weapons qualification event.

Some of the largest issues we have in the Kentucky Guard are malicious software attacks and data loss. Cyber protection teams lower risks associated with these threats by focusing the training on defense-in-depth techniques that overcome these attacks. At Cyber Shield 2020, they witnessed, firsthand, the effectiveness of maintaining multiple layers of security on our networks.

"This event also served as a validation exercise for the defensive cyber operations elements and the cyber protection teams," she said. "The next step is to get measurable metrics to see where we can improve on the state level."

## LETTER TO EDITOR POLICY

*The Bluegrass Guard values opinions*

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

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

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Don't miss an issue

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

Army Retiree address changes should be made through "Retiree Services" at the Kentucky National Guard Personnel Services Branch. He can be reached at 502-607-1497 or patricia.d.smith16.mil@mail.mil.



Kentucky National Guard



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# FITNESS CORNER

## SPRINT.DRAG.CARRY.

### WITH SGT EMILY HERNANDEZ

The sprint-drag-carry is a test of strength, endurance and anaerobic capacity. It is the fourth of six events in the Army Combat Fitness Test.



Focus on getting full extension on your back leg. Develop hamstring strength with isometric and eccentric exercises.



Bent knee hip thrust are a great exercise to contract hamstrings and can add weight at your own pace.



Stay low for speeding up at the start and slowing down to make the turn.



Acceleration is key. Incorporating sled push/drag in your weekly workout routine.



GHD (glute-ham-developer) start with partner assisted negatives.



Conduct 45 degree hip extensions. Keep tension on hamstrings, slow decline for a 3 second movement and snap back to starting position.



Maintaining proper posture and a strong core is crucial to success in the carry portion of this event.



Keep core tight, spine aligned, shoulders back and head forward.



Practice overhead plate carries for 25 meters intervals and keep abs engaged.





## The KYARNG Marathon team

is accepting applicants now for anyone interested in participating with the National Guard Marathon team. It's preferable to have run a marathon within the last 12 months and provide that time but not required. Please provide your longest distance run to date and your time run if you do not have a marathon completed. Selected runners will be put on orders and per diem for participation.

Marathon Coordinator CW4 Allen Davis  
W 502-607-3852 or C 270-256-1452  
[allen.n.davis.mil@mail.mil](mailto:allen.n.davis.mil@mail.mil)

## The KYARNG Endurance team

is accepting applicants now for anyone interested in participating in the Endurance (Obstacle Course style) race August 13-16, 2021. Participants can compete for the All-Guard National Team. It's preferable to have run an obstacle-course style race (Spartan Race or equivalent) in the last 12 months and provide that time but not required. Please provide the following 2 items: 1. Any obstacle races you've completed & your time and 2. Your ACFT score. Selected participants will be put on orders and per diem for participation. Suspense for interested Soldiers is April 1, 2021.

Contact: Endurance Coordinator CW4 Allen Davis W502-607-3852  
or C270-256-1452  
[allen.n.davis.mil@mail.mil](mailto:allen.n.davis.mil@mail.mil)





Photo by Spc. Brett Hornback

# BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION 2020

By Spc. Brett Hornback, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Nine Soldiers rose to the occasion to compete for the honor of winning the Best Warrior Competition at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center Oct. 21-25. Each day of the competition consisted of at least three events that tested the aptitude, physical endurance and mental resilience of the participating noncommissioned officers (NCO) and junior-enlisted Soldiers.

The group of Soldiers thrived within the atmosphere of competition while still maintaining a strong sense of solidarity. Due to the physical demand of the continuous events, physical taxation could be seen on the face of the competitors as they pushed their bodies to the limits. In moments where resilience was required, words of encouragement could be heard from Soldiers of all ranks.

Events such as call for fire and the night land navigation forces Soldiers to implement the training they receive during their military career. It shows the importance of their individual readiness.

“The Best Warrior Competition was designed to give individual Soldiers the opportunity to evaluate and/or reaffirm the skills they’ve learned as an Army professional,” said Sgt. 1st Class Paul England, a training NCO with the Kentucky National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery.

According to England, the performance of every Soldier in the competition is recorded and discussed with the Soldier’s brigade to discuss potential areas of improvement for training; therefore, allowing the competition to grow Soldiers in individual and corporate settings. Strong Soldiers make for a strong and unified Kentucky National Guard.

While implementing skills they learned, the Soldiers provided encouragement to other competitors, but the motivation to win still remained. “Most Soldiers compete because they want a challenge, to have fun, prove their skills, and to have the opportunity to soldier,” said Master Sgt. Anthony Kennedy.

Senior NCO of the Year went to Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Scott with Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery. The NCO of the Year for this competition went to Staff Sgt. James Weitzman with the 103rd Brigade Support Battalion, and Spc. Dakota Michel of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry, was awarded Soldier of the Year.

Michel, a college student pursuing a triple major and an employee with his family-owned business, says he prioritizes his duties within the guard to hold himself to the highest standard.

He encourages others to do the same. “Winning has definitely given me confidence in who I am as a Soldier,” said Michel, “I’m motivated to keep developing into an even better Soldier, and I’m hoping this win will give that same drive to others in my unit.”

Army National Guard traditions, like the Best Warrior Competition, are the a driving force for every Army generation. They evoke Soldiers of all ranks to stay diligent and pursue and maintain a ‘warrior spirit.’



Photo by Spc. Sgt. Benjamin Crane

Senior NCO of the Year: Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Scott with Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery. The NCO of the Year: Staff Sgt. James Weitzman with the 103rd Brigade Support Battalion, and Soldier of the Year: Spc. Dakota Michel of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry.



Photo by Spc. Brett Horback



Photo by Spc. Brett Horback



Photo by Spc. Brett Horback



Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## A Commentary



by Spc. Jesse Elbouab, 133rd Mobile  
Public Affairs Detachment

**C**ovid-19 and the onset of a global pandemic have forced us to retreat in our daily lives. For many, this has been a year of loss, struggle, uncertainty, and agitation. However, through a time of mandatory social distancing, the call to respond to the community has never been higher for the men and women that serve the Commonwealth.

Historical years change the course of the future. They force us to re-evaluate, adapt, and evolve. There are historical years of hardship, and there are historical years of advancement, but this year, 2020, has been unlike so many others.

"Never before has the Kentucky National Guard been needed more than right here, right now, at home," said Brig. Gen. Hal Lamberton, Kentucky's 53rd Adjutant General. "While not all of us are medical experts, I believe we are looked to as a source of

balance, safety, and security in our communities. That's why we are sought out. When we face issues such as this pandemic, the need for reassurance and stability is even greater. I am proud of the work we have done and will continue to do as we progress toward safer times. For now, we must remain vigilant and focus on being good leaders and stewards of good choices within our communities, our units, and homes."

Kentucky had its first official COVID positive case on March 6 at UK's hospital and the Governor, Andy Beshear, declared a state of emergency within the Commonwealth. On March 13, he activated members of the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard to "State Active Duty" to begin providing critical support. After a few weeks the federal government decided the response needed to be bigger than each state's input, and Kentucky's service members transitioned to federal military orders along with the rest of the nation's National Guard.

"Our Guard troops have been a phenomenal resource," said Steve Hensley, director of Kenton County's Homeland Security and Emergency Management. "Whether it's with traffic control, moving equipment, or assisting with the clean up afterward, whatever we need or ask of them, they address the issue immediately with a smile on their faces."

Since March, we've logged 55,277 man-days (a combination of both State Active Duty and Federal Orders support duty status), for a total of 442,216-man-hours.

Soldiers and Airmen are responding in various capacities around the state. Food banks, assisting with testing sites, storing, shipping, receiving, personal protective equipment for essential workers, and long care term facilities are the primary focus.

"One of the nice things about the Guard is that we are Kentuckians helping fellow Kentuckians," said Army Lt. Col. Jessica Garrett, logistics planner for the Kentucky National Guard. "That's a unique aspect, and I know everyone is happy to be here and do what we've trained to do."

The peaks and valleys of Covid-19 coincide with determining the volume of 'boots on the ground' response. Our peak day of support occurred early in April when we had 890 military personnel on full-time orders. Currently, there are approximately 150 service members actively on orders responding to the ongoing needs of the Commonwealth.

Early in the mission, food banks across the state played a significant role in getting food to Kentuckians struggling for various



reasons. Simple day-to-day tasks like getting groceries became a potentially life-threatening situation for our higher-risk neighbors.

"8,600 boxes are sent each month to senior citizens in 42 counties, and we simply could not continue this mission without the help of the Kentucky National Guard," said Jamie Sizemore, Executive Director of Elizabethtown Operations.

While some missions have remained ongoing, others have served their purpose and are considered complete at this time. During early spikes of the virus, service members assisted with hospital security for 11 different hospitals in the state, predominantly in Louisville.

Another primary task that service members undertook early on is the full logistical, administrative and medical support to the Alternate Care Facility or Field Hospital at the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center in Louisville. Hundreds of service members were on 24-hour standby for weeks. Thankfully, the ACF was never needed, and the site was "moth-balled," ready to be stood back up as soon as the state requires it.

"There are two things that come with our job, to protect and to serve. We are doing the service part of this operation," said 1st Lt. Corey Oney; who serves as a Blackhawk helicopter pilot in the Kentucky Army National Guard and oversaw one of the Drive Thru Testing Site teams that provided support across the state.

Perhaps one of the most important ways we are still "serving" is by assisting with Long Term Health Care Facility support across the state. Service members are providing logistical and administrative support

in a non-medical capacity. Facilities are understaffed, overworked and our neighbors are suffering as a result. Service members have stepped in to assist where needed.

"You can't imagine the feeling of relief to have the National Guard step in and essentially say, 'Let me lighten the load for you for a bit. You look weary, and your shoulders must be tired from caring such a heavy burden,'" said Elise Hinchman, the vice president of Marketing and Development at Sayre.

Soldiers and Airmen were called upon to support more than just the Covid-19 response this year though. The Commonwealth of Kentucky utilized service members to assist with both the Primary and General election days, among numerous other missions to include civil disturbance and critical search and rescue.

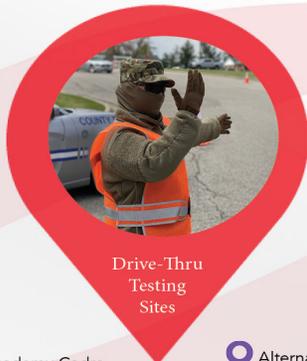
"I appreciate all of the hard work from the Guardsmen. The Soldiers are aiding us in meeting our numbers each day, said Lt. Jason Joseph, Kentucky State Police. "The collaboration has been phenomenal, and for that, I am grateful."

We are an organization that stands ready, regardless of the task, the duty, or the mission. The men and women that serve the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard take their role as "Citizen-Soldiers" to heart. When called upon, we stand ready.

As the year comes to a close, it is clear that Covid-19 will not disappear when the clock strikes midnight on December 31, 2020. The President has authorized continued federal support by the National Guard through March 2021. We will continue to serve Kentuckians, as Kentuckians.



## Kentucky Army & Air National Guard 2020 COVID-19 Response



- Patient Movement
- Challenge Academy Cadre
- Alternate Care Facility
- PPE Donation Hotlines
- Hospital Security
- Temperature Screening
- Non-Congregate Sites
- PPE Warehouse Security



Kentucky Guard Soldiers and Airmen supported LMPD after activation for state active duty. They protected critical infrastructure and the lives of the public in various locations throughout the city of Louisville, Ky., Sept. 26, 2020. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane)

# TASK FORCE THUNDER RETURNS TO LOUISVILLE TO SUPPORT LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Story by Capt. Michael Reinersman,  
138th Field Artillery Public Affairs

The year 2020 continues to be one to remember as the Kentucky National Guard completed another mission to support the commonwealth. For the second time this year, Governor Andy Beshear asked Guardsmen to assist the Louisville Metro Police Department.

From Sept. 23-28, the Kentucky Guard formed a National Guard Response Force. Their mission was to augment LMPD and protect critical infrastructure sites, provide an official presence of support within the commonwealth, and enhance the safety of citizens in and around Louisville. Guard leadership kept command and control during operation.

“Our efforts are a tailored response to the ongoing civil disturbance in the city, and at the request of the governor. Let’s not forget we are a part of this community, too.”

Having Soldiers provide security at essential government sites enabled LMPD to do front-line law enforcement, which was critical during the daily protests that were ending in various violent demonstrations.

“Reacting to a civil disturbance is undoubtedly the most difficult job they can ask the Guard to do,” said Brig. Gen. Robert Larkin, Assistant Adjutant General for Kentucky. “We have gained a lot of experience this year while providing support to LMPD.”

The 138th Field Artillery Brigade, with headquarters in Lexington, led Kentucky’s NGRF mission. Supporting units came from 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery in Lexington,

**“We are here to support the city of Louisville & protect its citizens.”**

-Brig. Gen. Hal Lamberton, Kentucky’s Adjutant General.

761st Firefighting Team out of Greenville, 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade out of Frankfort, 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade out of Richmond, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry out of Barbourville, and the 198th Military Police Battalion, 75th Troop Command and 123rd Airlift Wing, all out of Louisville.

The Domestic Operations personnel coordinated with LMPD and the governor’s office to identify sites as critical to the city’s infrastructure. Assessing the sites started weeks before the mission.

“We shifted to static site security and transportation support, and that made the role of the Soldiers stronger,” said Col. Andrew Bates, commander of the 138th FAB. “Our enhanced knowledge of the community, mapping capabilities, command, and control lead to a successful team effort.”

Bates, a Louisville resident himself, took command of the 138th just three days before being activated as Task Force Thunder’s commander.

He said the success of the task force comes

from its supporting units. They integrated from other brigades and provided logistical support to each other.

Local media and other citizens often approached Soldiers and Airmen to inquire about the Guard’s role. Their presence, although misunderstood, made the local populace feel safer



A Kentucky Army National Guard Soldier with Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, stands guard at the intersection 8th and W. Jefferson St. in Louisville, Ky., Sept. 24, 2020. Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane

GET UP TO A

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REENLISTMENT BONUS

TEXT "RETENTION" TO 95577

in their day-to-day lives.

Sgt. Clayton Thomas, assigned to the 203rd Forward Support Company, said an employee at the Holiday Inn Express was afraid to come to work until she saw a humvee parked outside.

"Our goal is to make sure we can keep everyone safe," said Thomas.

Many Airmen and Soldiers, like Thomas, said they were proud to serve their community and keep their fellow citizens safe.

A Louisville native, Pfc. McKayla Farlee of 203rd FSC, was in a response team watching over the Advocacy Center on 7th and Jefferson Streets. She said, "We understand this is a strange environment, but I have lived in Louisville my entire life, and this is my community I am protecting."



Pfc. Karolina Espinoza, assigned to Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 238th Field Artillery, fixes riot gear in Louisville, Ky., Sept. 25, 2020. (Photo by 1st Lt. Cody Stagner)



Soldiers from the Kentucky Army National Guard stand ready to protect key infrastructure from potential rioters in downtown Louisville, Ky., Sept. 25, 2020. (Photo by Spc. Jesse Elbouab)

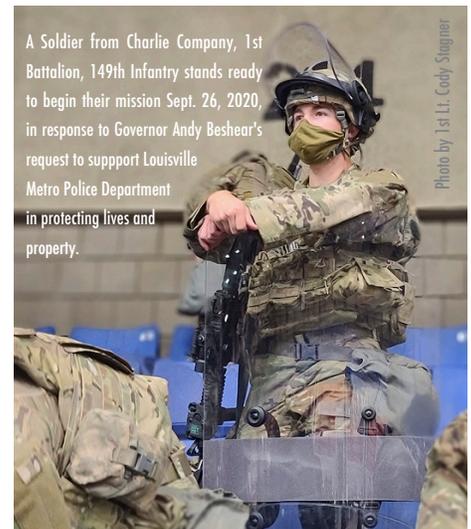
Many Soldiers from the task force are from Louisville. Having personal knowledge of the area made their role easier.

"This isn't something we do every day. We're not here to choose sides," said Farlee. "I just want everyone to go home safely."

The governor activated many of the same Guardsmen earlier this year following a similar wave of violence that hit the city.

"From the last time, we grew as a team and became much more comfortable working with law enforcement," said 2nd Lt. Michael Haney, a platoon leader in Alpha Battery, 2/138th FA.

"Our job is very similar, but we simplified things from what we learned back in June. Many of us went to the same locations every night. This made us feel more organized and much more efficient for this mission."



A Soldier from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry stands ready to begin their mission Sept. 26, 2020 in response to Governor Andy Beshear's request to support Louisville Metro Police Department in protecting lives and property.

Photo by 1st Lt. Cody Stagner

# Defying the Odds



## How one Soldier rose up from humble beginnings to owning her own dentistry practice

By Capt. Cassandra J. Mullins, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kentucky Army National Guard Major Mitisha Martin was still a small child who wore pigtails and dresses, the first time she remembered seeing her mother's boyfriend slam her mom across the kitchen table.

Her voice cracks as she reaches back into a dark place of experiences long since locked away, describing these memories as they flood her — flashes of violence filled with broken glass and screams. Martin, whose father was murdered when she was just four years old, remembers being overwhelmed by fear

and helplessness, with no way to defend her mother and no one to turn to.

Today, that frightened child is gone. In her place stands a leader who is described by those who know her as “fierce” and an “inspiration”. While she faced obstacles from a young age, Martin credits the Kentucky Guard for helping her reach her life-long dream of becoming a dentist, and co-owner of her own dentistry practice in Louisville. Martin, who has served in the Kentucky Guard for 24 years, is currently in Poland on her second deployment. She is deployed with her unit, the 1163rd Area Support Medical Company, and is doing what she loves, working as a dentist.

“Growing up, I never would have dreamed in a million years that I would be a dentist,” she said. “I want others to know, they can do it too. Whatever your dream is — no matter how big it is — you can do it. You just have to be willing to dig in and fight for it. To **never give up.**”

Martin admits when it comes to chasing dreams, it is not always easy.

“There is work involved,” she said. “Achieving success may not happen overnight.”

She praises her mother for instilling a drive and determination in her to never give up. As a child, Martin watched her mother work

two jobs at times to make ends meet while raising her and her two siblings. And, when her mother couldn't afford lights for their Christmas tree, she strung up popcorn.

“Mom always found a way to give us everything we needed,” said Martin. “She was very strong from all the adversities she had to go through. She's one of my heroes.”

As a child growing up in Bowling Green, Ky., Martin describes herself as a mix between a girlie girl and a tomboy.

“I wanted to climb trees, but I wanted to wear a dress while doing it,” she said.

In elementary school, her teachers would ask her what she wanted to be when she grew up and she always responded by saying a doctor.

“They would ask me





what kind and I had no idea," she said. "I just knew I didn't want to be a nurse like the girls. I wanted to be a doctor like the boys."

Martin said camping, firing weapons and the uniform – were all things that appealed to her and ultimately led to her joining the Kentucky Army National Guard at the end of her first year in college at Western Kentucky University. She was 19 years old, entangled in an unhealthy relationship, and admittedly was not ready.

"My heart and my head were not in the right place when I went to basic training," said Martin, who left basic training after barely a month, receiving a discharge from the military.

She returned home working jobs at local restaurants and spending long hours in a factory sewing collars on shirts. She felt defeated. "Yet, life has a funny way of placing you where you need to be and giving second chances."

#### A Gift from God

Martin describes what happened next as a gift from God. She said she met a dentist from church, who was also a black female, and she began working for the dentist as an assistant.

"Seeing her work and how far she had come and what she was accomplishing was such an inspiration to me," said Martin. "In my life, I had never seen a black doctor except on TV, with *The Cosby Show*."

Martin said she was also moved and inspired by the profession itself and how dentists were able to really help people and change lives.

"You fix people's teeth and they hug you and cry because they are so thankful," she said. "You can see the difference it makes in people and their confidence and their overall quality of life. Making that difference is so rewarding. I didn't find the dental field, it found me."

"Thank God for second chances," she added.

#### A Second Chance

Martin knew right away she wanted to be a dentist, but that would require finishing her undergraduate degree and going to dental school—not simple tasks.

in the Kentucky Guard was driving Humvees for a transportation unit in Bowling Green. She served as an enlisted Soldier for 10 years, using benefits from the Guard to pay for her undergraduate degree from Western Kentucky University and working her way as a Soldier into a medical unit in the Kentucky Guard.

Martin became a commissioned officer upon acceptance into the University of Louisville's School of Dentistry. She utilized benefits from the Guard to help pay for dentistry school. Today she serves as a dentist for the Kentucky Guard and she owns her own dentistry practice with a close friend in Louisville, Kentucky.

"The guard gave me a second chance at life," she said. "I don't think I could have done it without that help. I just don't think I could have afforded it."

Martin said the Kentucky Guard was the right fit for her over active duty because it allows "the best of both worlds."

"As a Soldier, we get to give back to our country and communities—and we also get to enjoy civilian life," she said.

She hopes her story motivates other young women across the Commonwealth and beyond.

"I just want girls and young women to know that women are awesome," she said. "Don't be afraid to go out there and do these things that some may think are generally geared toward men. We are women. We can do this. We can do anything."

Martin admits she encountered many struggles and obstacles on her journey. She said her advice to overcome those is to keep trying, keep pushing forward. For her, dental school meant long nights of studying.

During the entire program, she was only able to fail and re-do one class. She said she failed a class during her first semester meaning the rest of the school she had to pass every single class, which added significant stress.

"There were a lot of tears along the way," she said. "There were times I didn't know if I could do it, but that's when I would reach out to others for help. I

have an amazing husband, family and support system — and a strong prayer relationship with God," she said, adding that the Kentucky Guard also offers resources and assistance for Soldiers as they plan their careers.

In addition, in 2015, Martin was deployed to Afghanistan where she assisted in operating an emergency dental clinic. During the deployment, she missed her child's 16 birthday.

In balancing the obstacles that life throws along the way, she is quick to praise her husband, whom she refers to as her best friend, and their children for supporting her throughout the years. She also says she could not have made it to where she is today without her business partner.

But those who know Mitisha best, say she's the inspiration.

"She is so determined with everything she sets her mind to," said business partner Dr. Kristin Harris, who has known Martin since the two attended dental school together in 2004. "I admire her ability to give 100 percent to every project she starts, and the dedication she has to both her career and her family

equally. That balance can be difficult, but she seems to carry it with ease."

With 24 years of service and soon to be two deployments under her belt, Martin could retire from the Kentucky Guard. However, she continues to serve the Commonwealth and her country.

"If I got out today, every time I would see someone in uniform, I would instantly miss it," she said. "Every time I put on the uniform I get a sense of pride just putting it on. I'm doing something worthwhile. That keeps me in." 🌿



She also knew she could not afford school on her own.

"That's when I turned to the Guard and begged for a second chance," she said.

Ultimately, Martin was granted a waiver to join the Kentucky Army National Guard again—and this time around, she graduated basic training with honors in the top 10 percent of her class. In addition, she received the highest physical training score of her class and was named Soldier of the Cycle.

Upon graduation from basic training, her first job





Two Airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing embrace during a homecoming where more than 90 Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard returned to their home base in Louisville, Ky., Nov. 18, 2020, after completing a four-month deployment to the Middle East. The Airmen, who arrived aboard Kentucky Air Guard C-130 Hercules aircraft, operated from an undisclosed air base while flying troops and cargo across the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility in support of Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom's Sentinel. (Photo by Master Sgt. Phil Speck)

# KENTUCKY AIR GUARD COMPLETES DEPLOYMENT TO PERSIAN GULF REGION

By Master Sgt. Phil Speck, 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

More than 90 Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing returned home Wednesday after completing a deployment to the Persian Gulf region, where the unit has been supporting Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom's Sentinel since June.

The group was the final rotation of Kentucky Air Guardsmen to return from a mission that saw them fly troops and cargo across the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility, according to Lt. Col. Penn Brown, director of operations.

The unit completed 4,948 combat sorties aboard its C-130 Hercules aircraft during the deployment, delivering 15,000 passengers and 10,158 tons of supplies and equipment to locations across the theater.

Brown said the unit's Airmen also observed several milestones, including the first-ever airdrop of several dozen high-illumination flares.

"We worked with CENTCOM to develop the tactics and procedures to ensure a safe aerial delivery that met the U.S. Air Forces Central Command commander's desired effects," Brown said.

"Additionally, we seamlessly integrated the C130J weapon system from another Reserve Component unit into the same squadron as our KYANG C130H weapon system. This is the first time both weapon systems have been integrated into a single squadron in the AOR, and it was incredibly successful."

Integrating both aircraft created extra challenges for maintenance Airmen because of the complexity of managing two different airframes, but readiness rates remained extraordinarily high.

"Our maintenance Airmen's efforts achieved incredible results, cancelling only four of the 800 missions tasked to the deployed unit," Brown said.

While deployed, the unit achieved a 99 percent mission effectiveness rate, even while rotating new crews and staff members from other Reserve Component units into and out of the AOR every month.

In addition to CENTCOM operational sorties, the unit executed humanitarian relief missions to Lebanon following the massive warehouse explosion in Beirut in August.

"One of the unique aspects of this deployed squadron was that it was completely manned by the Reserve Component," Brown said. "Our ability to take what has traditionally been our Reserve forces and seamlessly integrate into a deployed operational flying squadron showcases what makes the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve forces great: citizen Airmen from units all across the country, who volunteer to leave their civilian life and

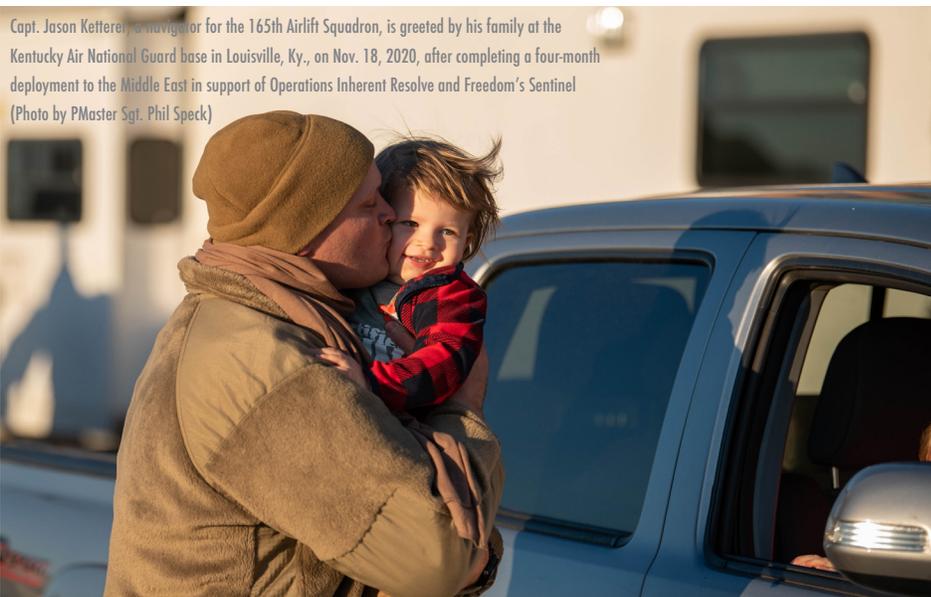
deploy for a rotation, and their experience allowed us to operate at such a high level under combat conditions.

"Our experienced Airmen are a true force multiplier for the total force."

Col. Dave Mounkes, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, echoed Brown's praise.

"I'm very proud of this group of Airmen," he said. "They successfully completed challenging missions in a tough environment, particularly during this global COVID pandemic. Their professionalism, capability, and honorable service under these circumstances is another example of the 123rd Airlift Wing's long history of service and excellence — and they could not have done it without the support and sacrifices of their families and civilian employers, for whom we are all so thankful.

"Well done, and welcome home." 🇺🇸



Capt. Jason Ketterer, navigator for the 165th Airlift Squadron, is greeted by his family at the Kentucky Air National Guard base in Louisville, Ky., on Nov. 18, 2020, after completing a four-month deployment to the Middle East in support of Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom's Sentinel (Photo by PMaster Sgt. Phil Speck)

# LEADERSHIP PROFILE:

By Spc. Jesse Elbouab, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



"It's funny that you mention family," said 19-year-old Heather, daughter of 1st Sgt. Naarah Stallard of the 223rd Military Police Company. "I remember running around that armory as a toddler, and people tell me all the time, 'I remember when you were just this big' (indicating small stature with her hands). I don't always remember them, but I remember growing up there."

On Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020, Naarah Stallard assumed the position of first sergeant for the 223rd MPs at the Buechel Armory in Louisville, KY.

"In some ways, I feel like we did it," Heather added. "Even though she did all the hard work."

Stallard smiled, "Without family, there is no support, and I could not have done it."

Stallard never had dreams of being an upper-enlisted Non-Commissioned Officer for one of the most active and respected units in the Kentucky National Guard. She never intended to join the military in the first place.

"I had plans to go to college, get a degree of some sort, and get on with life," Stallard said casually.

However, after just a year and a half of college, the money ran out, and Stallard had to make some tough choices. Opting against student loans, she sought out an Air Force recruiter and considered joining the military to continue her education goals while serving a short contract.

Negligently, the Air Force recruiter scheduled their meeting over a lunch hour, and when Stallard arrived at the office, the Airman was not there. Noticing her lurking about was an Army recruiter next door who assured her that the recruiter would be back, and she was welcome to sit and wait. After an hour and half of waiting, Stallard, feeling quite annoyed and disrespected, decided to walk next door and speak with the Army recruiter out of curiosity.

"Would you know it? By the time the Air Force recruiter came back from lunch, I had already signed the papers to join the Army, and we shook on it," she laughed. "I was determined that day to join the military, and I did."

Just like that, the new plan was in motion. She intended to serve for five years, get a degree, and then get on with life. That's not how it went. At the end of the five years, Stallard confessed: she had fallen in love with the Army.

She had not achieved her education goals due to deployments and the

active-duty lifestyle, but she was happy. She even reenlisted. After a few more years of active duty, she found herself at the end of another contract but was in a much different place in life. She was pregnant with Heather and decided to "take a leave of absence from active duty."

She had a new life plan. She would join the Kentucky National Guard, stay home for a few years raising her daughter, go back to college, and return to the Army once Heather was of school age.

That is not how it went.

Stallard was assigned to the 223rd MPs in Louisville. She quickly found a military home and a sense of professional purpose--which was different from what she experienced on active duty. She was on missions like Thunder over Louisville and the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs. It was exciting for her.

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Carrier of the

198th Military Police Battalion states the following concerning Stallard's impressive Guard career.

"Her duty-performance is exemplary and in keeping with the highest standards of honor and professionalism," said Carrier. "Within her career, she has accomplished numerous tasks for the battalion and her personal life. Her strong work ethic and dedication to succeed has earned her The Adjutant General's Security Excellence Award, not once but twice.

According to Carrier, she served in multiple roles in the 198th MP BN. She served as Readiness NCO at the 223rd MP CO, Assistant Operations NCO for the 198th MP BN, and currently the Operations NCO for the 149th MEB. Most recently, she also completed the Antiterrorism basic and advanced courses.

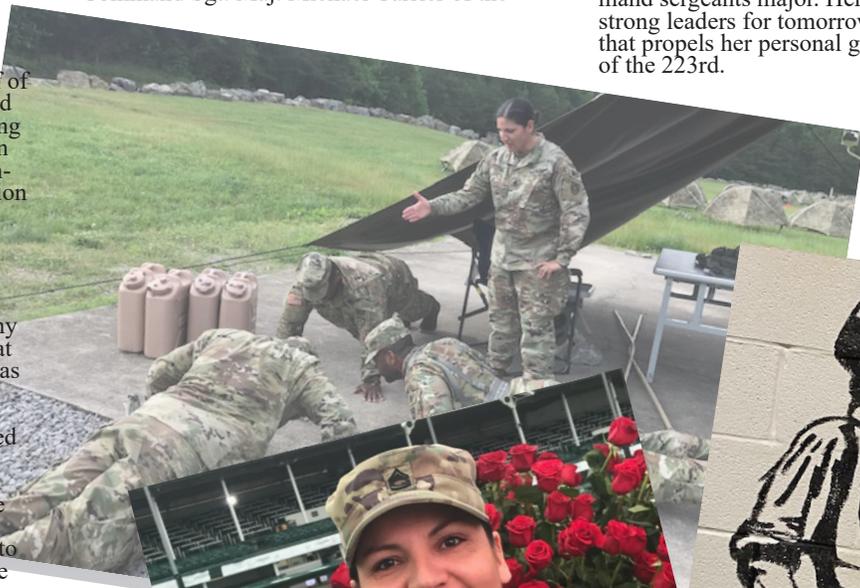
"She is a tremendous asset in physical security and Antiterrorism," Carrier added. "Her knowledge and experience are unmatched. She is a dedicated and loyal senior noncommissioned officer. And I would like to mention; she has accomplished this much in her professional and personal life, all while raising a family of three."

Stallard is the right leader for the job. She attributes her leadership strengths to the mentors who have encouraged, motivated, and believed in her career.

There was a moment of professional stagnation in Stallard's career. As a staff sergeant, E-6, she was not progressing in the way she wanted.

According to Stallard, Retired Command Sgt. Maj. John Sallee once said to her, "I see potential in you," She recalled from a previous conversation during his retirement celebration. "You're going to make it. Just hang in there, invest in your soldiers, and you will get promoted. You will be a leader somewhere."

As 2021 approaches, she looks forward, optimistically, to her career. She is mentoring her Soldiers to become the next generation of Kentucky Guard's first sergeants and command sergeants major. Her desire to develop strong leaders for tomorrow is the motivation that propels her personal goals and dreams. of the 223rd.



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Lt. Col. Varinka Ensminger 2020 (photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Varinka Ensminger)

# RUN WITH *Heart*

## Guard Marathon Team Bids Farewell To Their Leader

After the Lincoln, Neb., race officially canceled, the National Guard promoters sought an alternative location to host the time trials. Luckily, the Omaha race was still on the schedule.

In September 2020, more than 137 Soldiers from across the country gathered in Omaha to compete for the coveted All Guard Marathon Team. The Kentucky Army National Guard Marathon Team brought eight Soldiers to represent the commonwealth, with Ensminger leading the team for the last time.

Of those eight Soldiers, three Kentucky Guardsmen qualified for the national team; Johnson, Parker, and Ensminger. Ensminger not only qualified but swept the field as the top female finisher.

Parker's story is also worth noting, as running is relatively new to her. She once claimed to struggle while keeping her weight down and felt defeated about her body. Parker had just started running when she met Ensminger. Ensminger immediately encouraged Parker to join the Kentucky Guard marathon team. Six years later, Parker finally committed to it and that decision changed her life.

"I knew in the back of my mind I wanted to do it, and I wanted to push myself for it," Parker said. "She [Ensminger] just had a way to encourage you and motivate you; no matter what your fitness level is; no matter what you can or can't do. When we met, she showed how she believed in me. And before long, I started to believe in me, too. So, I joined the [marathon] team. Even though it took a few years, the family we have has pushed me to get to that level. I owe it to them; they helped me make the All Guard Team."

The marathon team's family element directly reflects Ensminger's drive and passion for the team. Ensminger is affectionally referred to as "Mom" by the next generation of team runners. Her legacy is one that the team hopes to maintain and grow for years to come.

"Running has brought so much good into my life. As I look in the mirror, I am proud of what I see. I look around my house and see all the awards and pictures; it overwhelms me with gratitude. I hope the running distance won't intimidate other Soldiers. Give it a shot because it's incredible what your body can accomplish when you put your mind to it," said Ensminger.

Story by Spc. Jesse Elbouab, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

"When your legs get tired, just run with your heart," said Sgt. 1st Class Amy Parker of the Kentucky Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion. With an emotional stir in her voice, she credited the quote to her mentor, teammate, and long-time friend, Lt. Col. Varinka Ensminger.

After 14 years of running with and coordinating efforts for the Kentucky National Guard Marathon Team, Ensminger of Joint Force Headquarters will transition to a new assignment that will distance her from the running group.

"She [Lt. Col. Ensminger] is very unique, and I'm truly grateful to have been a small part of her life," said Ensminger's teammate and successor, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Allen Davis of the 307th Support Maintenance Company. "She is a leader that puts the Soldier first and is not afraid to get the work done to accomplish the mission. The skillset and professionalism she brought to the Kentucky Guard will be missed and is extremely hard to replace."

Runners from the Kentucky National Guard Marathon Team have been competing in the annual qualification race to be a national team runner since the first time-trial took place 36 years ago in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Soldiers that make the All Guard Marathon Team travel and compete in races throughout the year, representing the National Guard and interacting with communities across the nation.

"I made it to the All Guard Marathon team both years since joining the Kentucky team two years ago," said Spc. Corey Johnson, a collegiate runner and medic with 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry. "I've run in Idaho, North Dakota, and New York City. I made it to D.C. with the Kentucky team, and we traveled to Nebraska three times, now. I get paid to travel and run; it is definitely a great feeling."

Traditionally, the qualifying race is hosted in May, but races across the country canceled or rescheduled after the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the globe. As the year continued and government offices slowly opened back up, it was uncertain if Ensminger would get to run in her last season with the team.



The Kentucky Army National Guard Marathon Team presented Lt. Col. Varinka Ensminger with a gift, Sept. 20, 2020, while at the National Guard Marathon Team Qualifier held in Omaha, Neb. Kentucky's marathon team from left to right: Maj. Ron Shashy, Sgt. David Lee, Maj. Stephen Strack, Lt. Col. Varinka Ensminger, Sgt. 1st Class Amy Parker, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Allen Davis, Spc. Corey Johnson, and Sgt. Chad Terry. (courtesy photo)



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## KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD ENDURANCE TEAM COMPETES FOR THE ALL GUARD TEAM

Story by Lt. Col. Varinka Ensminger and Spc. Jesse Elbouab

Soldiers from the Kentucky National Guard competed in the inaugural All-Guard Endurance Team 2020 Qualification event at the Nebraska National Guard Greenleaf Training Site in Hastings, Neb., Aug. 29-30.

The endurance team, specializing in long-distance obstacle races, spawned to broaden recruiting by engaging a multi-dimensional athletic population. The desire is to bring on potential recruits that are regular competitors or have interests in obstacle races, such as Savage Race, Spartan Race, Tough Mudder, and American Ninja Warrior. These events consist of strength, speed, physical and mental agility, and focus on skills relative to the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT).

The Kentucky National Guard Endurance Team comprises two members from the Kentucky Marathon Team, Spc. Korey Johnson from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Allen Davis of the 307th Support Maintenance Company, and two

members of Kentucky's Army Ten Mile teams, Sgt. Chad Terry of Detachment 1, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-149th IN, and Sgt. David Lee also from A Co., 1-149th IN.

Colorado Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Mark Jones helped coordinate the first endurance team event. The event brought National Guard Soldiers together from around the country to compete for a chance to be on the national All Guard Team.

Jones was initially a marathon team member before getting involved with the development of the endurance team. Jones said the ACFT implementation is just one example of how this is a significant transition period for the military. The endurance team is a way to capitalize on recruiting and retaining more versatile Soldier and Airmen athletes in the National Guard.

The All Guard Endurance Qualification Course involved two full-day events.

Sixty-one male and ten female competitors fiercely tackled the grueling course for a spot on the All Guard Team. Sgt. Lee led the team, placing 27th in a time of 2:06:14, followed by Sgt. Terry in 31st place with a time of 2:09:31. Spc. Johnson came in 33rd with a time of 2:13:44, and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Davis rounded out the teams finishes at 40th with a time of 2:22:26.

Johnson was one of the fastest distance runners competing that day, but the strength and

power events humbled him. He stated the experience gave him a platform to elevate his athletic skillsets.

Davis was the sole qualifier for the All Guard Endurance Team and earned 2nd place in the 50-55 age category. Davis has competed in military sports competitions for more than 20 years and prides it as a unique and desirable privilege the guard offers.

"Endurance training has become a major part of my life and has improved my overall quality of life," said Davis. "Ultimately, it has given so much more than expected."

In addition to the Endurance team, the Kentucky Army National Guard has a marathon running team.

For the past 36 years, runners from the Kentucky National Guard Marathon Team have competed for their spot in the All Guard Marathon Team.

The Soldiers that make the national-level marathon team travel and compete at events nationwide, representing the National Guard, and interacting with host communities. For an avid runner, it is a dream come true.

Any Soldier interested in joining the Endurance Team or the Marathon team is encouraged to reach out to Chief Davis at (502) 607-3851 or by emailing allen.n.davis.mil@mail.mil.

## THE STORY OF TANDY CLAUS

There was a little-known, top-secret, and clandestine mission held during the Christmas holiday season of 1926, in which Tandy Ellis played a major role.

His identity and involvement would remain a secret for nearly forty-five years, until the story finally appeared in the pages of the Dec. 19, 1971, edition of *The Courier-Journal Magazine*.

In the article, retired Louisville newspaperman Malcolm Bayley described behind-the-scenes events regarding the six weeks leading up to Christmas 1926. Mr. Bayley worked for *The Courier-Journal* and the *Louisville Times* during the holiday season of 1926 when he was placed in charge of the Reindeer Project.

The Louisville newspaper business in the 1920s was very competitive; editors would try anything to sell papers. In 1926, the *Louisville Times* and *Courier-Journal*, in one of their promotional schemes to sell more newspapers, bought eight tiny reindeer from the Lomen brothers of Alaska. The Lomen's would supply a team of Alaskan reindeer and an Eskimo to care for the animals and be Santa's driver.

One of the first difficulties Mr. Bayley had to overcome was finding someone to play the part of Santa. He was unable to find anyone local and hesitated on hiring someone from outside the area. He finally contacted his old friend James Tandy Ellis of Ghent. General Ellis was something of a public figure at the time and was hesitant to play the role. But, Bayley was finally able to sell him on the idea by promising to keep his identity secret. Bayley kept Ellis's public appearances to a minimum and paid him a larger salary than Bayley, himself.

Throughout his entire performance as Santa, General Ellis remained incognito. Each morning, the General would arrive at the costumer's shop, where he dressed in a back room. He would then take a taxi to Santa Claus Park in downtown Louisville for that day's activities.

Santa, Topkuk the Eskimo, and Santa's reindeer visited schools in the Louisville-Jefferson County and Southern Indiana areas during the week and were on exhibit every evening until Christmas Eve, including Saturdays and Sundays.

On Nov. 20, 1926, Santa made his grand entrance into Louisville during the annual Thanksgiving Day Parade. On this their first appearance, Bayley related to the following story:

"The team was hitched up by Topkuk, our Eskimo, and Santa climbed aboard. The calliope started playing, and off we went—or should have. The darn reindeer wouldn't pull the harness! Mr. Lomen hadn't told us about this. They weren't even broken to a halter. But, Topkuk was equal to the emergency. He took the reins, attached them to the lead deer's halters, and literally dragged deer, sleigh, Santa Claus, and all about 20 miles up and down the streets of Louisville until they reached the corral.

"Dasher, Dancer, Prancer and Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Dunder, and Blitzen had a lot fancier names before they reached home base—some of them uttered in choicest—but, fortunately not understandable—Eskimo.



Before making another trip, Bayley came up with the idea of hiring a scenery flat, a 40-foot long truck used to haul theatrical scenery for road companies. He had constructed on the flat a winter scene, complete with Eskimo igloo. Mounted on the flat, Santa, Eskimo, reindeer, and sleigh could be whisked over the country in no time."

In his narrative, Bayley stated that General Ellis nearly walked out on him during an out-of-town engagement at one-point. Santa and his helper usually stuck their plan. They drove into town in the mounted sleigh, in all their glory, and drove out the same way. When the weather was biting cold, Bayley would stop outside of the town and let Santa ride in the heated car with him.

Bayley continued with the story, "We were a little late pulling out of Seymour, Indiana, one afternoon and was anxious to make Bedford and the high school there by 4 p.m. All the grammar-school kids in town would be waiting for us, packed into the gymnasium. We had one brief stop scheduled on the way to Bedford, at Brownstown, 13 miles out of Seymour.

"I was in so much of a hurry that I had driven six miles out of town before I remembered that we had left Santa in the sleigh. I stopped, and he clambered down slowly. As he approached with a half-frozen, stiff-legged gait, I could see he was not the same jolly, good-natured fellow who had left half Seymour laughing and waving good-bye.

Something more than the keen wind seemed to make him more red-faced than usual. Actually, he was so cold—and his face so stiff—that it was 15 minutes before he could limber up his tongue and lips sufficiently to curse me out in round Kentucky oaths."

Needless to say, Santa refused to appear at Brownstown and Topkuk the Eskimo had to stand in.

The general did not fully forgive Mr. Bayley for this incident until later that evening when Bayley managed to get Ellis a dish of spareribs and sauerkraut for his dinner.

General Ellis played Santa up to the 24th day of December, when he handed out toys to 3,000 children at the Strand Theatre in Louisville, during Santa's Party hosted by *The Courier-Journal* and *Louisville Times*.

In speaking of General Ellis' performance as Santa, Mr. Bayley had this to say, "The old boy could handle a crowd like a swamp-root doctor in a medicine show. He had the kids eating out of his hand. At every school, they crowded around him to hear his stories. They would even desert the Eskimo and the reindeer to hear him."

The identity of the 1926 Santa remained the secret of Mr. Bayley until his article in 1971, thirty years after the death of his good friend, James Tandy Ellis.



Ryan Hunter

# MEDEVAC DEPLOYMENT



**"This** was a unique deployment," said Capt. Jonathan Strayer, commander of Detachment 1, Charlie Company 2-238th Aviation Regiment. "Our aviation personnel were spread out across Afghanistan, providing critical Medical Evacuation support to our fellow deployed service members and allies as well as helicopter maintenance support. We had Kentucky Guardsmen working tirelessly at almost every base across the country. Commanding a unit like this overseas in combat had its own set of challenges; Not only did our team have to maintain proficiency and readiness at our Forward Operating Base, but we also had to make sure our other soldiers were safe and well at their FOBs."

He went on to say, "During the roughly three months we spent at our outpost, we performed numerous training missions, coordinated joint medical and flight training with Marines, Airmen, Special Forces, and

civilian contractors, and kept our aircraft maintained to a high standard despite very limited resources.

The highlight of our time in theater however, was the

## **6 MEDEVAC missions**

we completed in support of American servicemembers. Ranging from spur-of-the-moment urgent calls, where taking off more than 15 minutes after receiving the mission was unacceptable, to routine calls, where careful aircrew planning a coordination meant we could be better prepared for any scenario; we took all manner of calls and executed every one without any mishaps or accidents. I'm sincerely proud and honored to have worked alongside every member of this team. This mission would not have been a success if not for their hard work and dedication to the mission, and the Soldiers to their left and right." 🇺🇸



The Kentucky Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion exceeded the state's assigned end strength goal for this last fiscal year.

"Recruiting for the military has had its challenges across the nation this year, but I'm proud to say our Kentucky Army National Guard not only met our recruiting numbers, but we exceeded them," said Brig. Gen. Hal Lambertson, Kentucky's Adjutant General.

Within the National Guard, only 14 of the 54 states and territories made their enlisted mission. The Active Duty Army fell short of their enlistment goal.

"This is a testament to Kentucky's patriotism and perseverance," said Lambertson.

"Central Kentucky, to include Lexington, had the highest number of enlistments, meeting 120% of their mission. This is a record number out of that area," according to Lt. Col. Darin Bussabarger, Kentucky Army Guard Recruiting and Retention commander. "We saw excellent recruiting across the entire Commonwealth and are pleased with the response our recruiters are getting."

Our goal is to both complete our mission and serve our Kentucky communities."

Kentucky's recruiters diligently exceeded the recruiting mission during an unprecedented year. Throughout 2020, the Kentucky National Guard served the Commonwealth and the Nation amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, election cycle, and deployments both stateside and overseas.

Along with 1,200 Airmen of the Kentucky Air National Guard, Kentucky has more than 6,500 Soldiers stationed at approximately 50 different locations across the Commonwealth.

The Army National Guard has up to \$20,000 bonuses for a variety of jobs, and offers education assistance, affordable healthcare options for service members among other benefits. To learn more about joining the Kentucky Army National Guard team, please visit: [www.nationalguard.com/KY](http://www.nationalguard.com/KY). You can also text "KYGUARD" to 95577.



# THE LAST WORD

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## Long-term health care receives Guard support during pandemic

By 1st Lt. Cody Stagner, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs, photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane

The Kentucky Guard has been utilized in several missions across the commonwealth since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. From drive-thru COVID-19 testing sites and food banks to civil disturbance and aid given to communities during the elections, our service members have been there for each call.

Adding to a historical year, the Kentucky Guard continues to rescue our communities in need. This time, Airmen and Soldiers are joining hands with several understaffed long-term health care facilities to protect the lives of residents at these locations.

“The Kentucky National Guard is poised to help long-term health care facilities across the state who are operating in counties in the red due to COVID-19 saturation,” said Lt. Col. Travis Carpenter, Kentucky National Guard director of military support. “Our professional team of service members will operate within agreed-upon constraints to help facility leadership free their current employees up to focus on the residents who call the facilities home.”

The activation of Guardsmen comes as positive tests of the coronavirus reach all-time highs, and health care is seeing spikes in coronavirus-related operations.

According to Elise Hinchman, the vice president of Marketing and Development at Sayre, they are a nonprofit standalone facility without extra staffing available from sister sites.

Hinchman said, “You can’t imagine the feeling of relief to have the National Guard step in and essentially say, ‘Let me lighten the load for you for a bit. You look weary, and your shoulders must be tired from caring such a heavy burden.’”

“Currently, we’re answering the call for assistance from facilities in Lexington, Louisville, Edmonton, Mayfield, Paducah, Inez, and Hopkinsville,” said Brig. Gen. Hal Lamberton, Kentucky’s Adjutant General. “We recognize the need could come from anywhere in the state, and

we will adjust our focus and effort as the requests for help arrive.”

We’re all part of Team Kentucky, like Gov. Beshear says, and our morale is high. We’re honored to help these Kentuckians out,” said Noe. “As soon as we heard the numbers and had an understanding of how many people contracted COVID here, we realized how dangerous it could be for them. Some have died, unfortunately, but we’ve all been energized and ready to go help them take down the numbers of this virus.”

Airman First Class Kaylin Dotson, a services flight Airman out of the 123d Force Support Squadron, volunteered for the mission at Seneca Place.

“None of us expected the pandemic, but we are all honored to help,” she said. “It’s a good, rewarding feeling, and I’m sure others feel that way because we weren’t told to do this. We are all volunteers.”

With help from the Kentucky Guard, Seneca Place residents can rest more comfortably in a cleaner environment, and the staff has more time to focus on the residents’ health care.

“We sanitize every high-touch surface, like doors and windows—and anything you can think of—to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” Dotson said. “I believe that being here for just a week has shown how important sanitizing is throughout this pandemic.”

The Kentucky Guard will continue to support long-term health care facilities and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 throughout the commonwealth.

According to Lamberton, “Since the start of this pandemic, the Kentucky Guard has been, and will continue to be, an effective organization aimed at responding to our fellow Kentuckians and aiding in the Governor’s efforts to stomp out the spread of COVID-19.”

## 149th Infantry Deploys to Louisville



Story and photo by 1st Lt. Cody Stagner, Public Affairs Office

Kentucky National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry, also known as the “Mountain Warriors,” augmented units from the KSP and Louisville Metro Police Department Saturday, Sept. 26, in an effort that may have saved lives by deterring an unlawful standoff at Jefferson Square Park.

“Some protesters have been progressively non-compliant to the LMPD after the city-wide curfew, and some have used plywood as shields and weapons to bait the LMPD into a fight. They also have set things on fire. We need more shields out there tonight,” said Burnett during a joint-mission rehearsal with KSP, LMPD, and the Kentucky Guard Sept. 26.

The Mountain Warriors were activated with the 138th Field Artillery Brigade. Their purpose was to augment the LMPD and protect against violence and damage at more than 20 locations. Overall command and control of Guard operations remained under 138th FAB and Task Force Thunder commander, Col. Andrew Bates, while Lt. Col. Jason Penn lead the Mountain Warriors in their unique civil disturbance response force mission.

Violence in the city escalated after the Kentucky Attorney General’s announcement that no LMPD officers were being indicted with murder charges for their involvement in the death of a Louisville citizen, Breonna Taylor. Violent activists looted several local businesses, smashed in windows, and set a library on fire. They also shot two police officers.

“I and Col. Bates were on the ground with Soldiers at the time and didn’t get the operational view of everything,” Penn said. “But from on the ground, the 9 o’clock curfew began, and we didn’t see anybody. We thought the operation was not a success. But according to the LMPD operations manager, as soon as we got out of our vehicles, the violent protesters and rioters moved out. They quickly dispersed rather than staying to start a fight or trying to burn down the city.”

The Kentucky Guard and KSP’s presence deterred a group of violent individuals that planned to wreak havoc on the local police force and the streets of downtown Louisville. The city was saved for the moment, and a turning point had begun.

With tensions on the rise, the KSP and Kentucky Guard stood by, ready to protect and serve the city if needed.

“There’s a fine line too,” added the battalion commander. “It is our job in the military to remain apolitical. The military is an organization that provides a safe harbor for everyone.

When we are doing a show of force, we really aim to protect the lives of the civilian populace. And people sometimes misinterpret that. But the goal for everything we do is to protect life.”



## Guardsmen, Athlete

Story by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane, Public Affairs Office

1st Lt. Bryan Fuller, the assistant S2 (Intelligence, security, and information operations) for the 138 Field Artillery Brigade and community president of first Southern National Bank (on the civilian side) is also a baseball player. In early 2020 Fuller found out about the opportunity to play baseball and compete again through an old college friend of his from Campbellsville University where he played baseball for 4 years as a relief pitcher.

Due to the pandemic creating and drastic change to the Major League Baseball season, cancelling all the Minor League games, The Lexington Legends had to figure out a way to make baseball happen this year for them.

"This was all brand new due to the (COVID) sanctions and the Minor League Baseball season being cancelled," said Andy Shea, President and CEO of the Lexington Legends. "The part that was truly unique for us was fielding a roster because we've never necessarily done that being an affiliate of the Houston Astros for 12 years and the Kansas City Royals for 8 years."

To get players for the teams, they had open try-outs, as well as picking up former professional baseball players such as former Cincinnati Red, Brandon Phillips, and former Boston Red Sox pitcher and Lexington native, Robbie Ross.

With the leagues being brand new and the time frame so short, upper management wanted to get the local community involved so it was important that the players also have a tie back to the area as well.

Fuller ended up pitching in 6 games, getting one win, while throwing nine innings, striking out 12 batters and allowed only three earned runs to give him an earned run average of 3.0.

He also walked three batters, and gave up five hits, four for singles and one double.



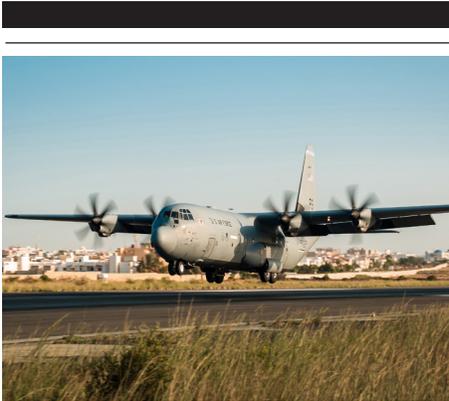
## Marksmanship Team Shows Well in Competition

Members of the Kentucky Guard marksmanship team traveled to Camp Buckner, NC to compete in the MAC3 Regional Championship Sept 13-17, 2020.

The Kentucky "A" team took 3rd place overall, consisting of Master Sgt. Michael Dement, Master Sgt. Edwin Garcia, Staff Sgt. Shahid Iqbal, and Sgt. Brown. Master Sgt. Garcia took 3rd Place overall Rifle and Pistol. Sgt. 1st Class Edward Cole took 2nd Place overall Rifle and Pistol. MSG Michael Dement took 1st Place Rifle overall. Sgt. 1st Class Cole took 1st Place Rifle overall.

Congratulations to all the participants!

There will be another competition held at Wendall H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky., Feb 20-21, 2021.



## Kentucky Air Guard to receive C-130J

Story and photo by Col Dale Greer, 123rd Airlift Wing

The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing will soon receive C-130J Hercules aircraft from the United States Air Force, Gov. Andy Beshear and Kentucky's Congressional Delegation jointly announced today.

The unit, based at Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport, is expected to begin receiving eight of the C-130Js in 2021, pending the outcome of an environmental assessment. The C-130J is the most current model of the venerable airframe and will replace eight C-130H aircraft the wing has been flying since 1992. Three other Air Guard units — in Texas, West Virginia and Georgia — also were selected to receive C-130Js.

The newest aircraft will reduce manpower requirements, lower operating and support costs, and provide life-cycle cost savings over earlier C-130 models, according to Col. David Mounkes, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing. Compared to older C-130s, the J model also climbs faster and higher, flies farther at a higher cruise speed, and takes off and lands in a shorter distance.

Major system improvements include an advanced two-pilot flight station with fully integrated digital avionics, color multifunctional liquid crystal and head-up displays, and state-of-the-art navigation that includes a dual inertial navigation system and GPS.

Brig. Gen. Jeff Wilkinson, the Kentucky National Guard's assistant adjutant general for Air, said the decision to base the aircraft in Kentucky is a testament to the 123rd's legacy of superb performance in missions all over the world.

"The selection is a reflection of the wing's culture of excellence and strong operational impact to both overseas contingencies and homeland domestic operations," Wilkinson said. "The 123rd Airlift Wing was selected because we will make the most impactful use of this capability for the Guard and the United States Air Force."

The 123rd Airlift Wing just completed a four-month deployment to the Persian Gulf region last week, during which its aircrews flew 4,948 combat sorties to deliver 15,000 passengers and 10,158 tons of supplies and gear to locations across the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility.



## COVID19 Vaccine Arrives

Story by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane and photo by Spc. Jesse Elbouab, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers and airmen can now get the COVID-19 vaccine should they want it. The Moderna vaccine was picked up by the Kentucky National Guard and they have started administering it to its troops.

According to Col. Chris Howell, deputy commander of clinic operations for the Medical Detachment. Over 42 Soldiers were giving the vaccine in the first day alone.

"At this monumental time for America, and for the state, our mission right now is to attempt to vaccinate all our National Guard Soldiers and Airmen," said Howell.

The amount of vaccine will come out in phases as the number of troops line up to get vaccinated. Right now, the vaccine is available on a volunteer basis to Soldiers and Airmen 18 years old or older.

"Once we are start to give as many vaccinations as we are given, then we will reorder for what we anticipate coming down the pike," added Howell. "If there are 300 vaccines needed, we are, we are going to order that once we get the final number from the unit that we're doing the PHA on. That's how many were ordered to do that, they will get a PHA and they will also get the vaccination as well."

For now, the Medical Detachment has received about 11 to 13 vials of the vaccine from the CDC that can be store for up to 30 days in refrigeration.

Top guard leadership lined up to get their shot in hopes that others will follow their lead.

"This is what leadership does, you stand up and set the example," said Lamberton. "I think the sooner we all can get the vaccination, the sooner we all can get back to some level of normalcy."

Lamberton shared that he had reservations about getting frontloaded for the vaccine due to how it might look to the lower ranking Soldiers and Airmen or as he says the 'Rank Has Privilege' crowd but decided that being one of the first to get the shot would be a good to lead the way in hopes that others would follow.

"It's about protecting our immediate family, and it's about protecting the other folks around us even if they aren't immediate family," said Lamberton. "Just doing things like this, and it may sound kind of corny, sets the example, not just in our ranks for the Guard but to the rest of the Commonwealth."



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## Tag Vision Statement

Since its inception, the Kentucky National Guard not only stood ready as an alert fighting force to defend Kentucky and America against those who would destroy our Democratic way of life but this volunteer citizen Army also served in times of national disasters and domestic concerns. The Kentucky National Guard, like other state's National Guard, was known under various names but has the distinction of being one of the oldest military forces in the United States. Its inception dates back to 1775, when Kentucky was known as Fincastle County, a part of western Virginia. In 1776 the Virginia General Assembly abolished Fincastle County, organizing three new counties: Montgomery, Washington, and Kentucky. In 1792 the latter jurisdiction was admitted as the 15th state, the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Today, the Kentucky National Guard continues its service to the Commonwealth and to the nation - just as it has for over two hundred and twenty-eight years. Whether to help a neighbor in need or to defend our nation around the world, the citizen-soldiers of the Kentucky National Guard offer their time, their skills, and their dedication.

The skill and proficiency with which the Guard served Kentucky further contributes to the fact that it is, and will continue to be, a necessary and indispensable organization for the continuing existence of the Commonwealth.

The Kentucky National Guard Mission - our purpose: to provide relevant & ready forces that are manned, equipped, and trained as an Operational Reserve to the Department of Defense for the Multi-Domain Environment in the Warfight and for Federal & State response in domestic operations.

Given the dual nature of the types of operations the Kentucky National Guard could be committed to for future operations it is imperative that we have a clear and coherent vision of where we want to be in the coming years in preparation for all possibilities, domestic & for-

eign, and remain capable of accomplishing our mission in the future.

As such, the Kentucky National Guard Vision - our future end state - is as follows: The Kentucky National Guard of 2030 se: to provide a professional military team that is reliable and responsible to Federal and State authorities. We are supported by a community triumvirate of Guard, Family, and Employers encompassing all personnel in the Air National Guard, Army National Guard, and Department of Military Affairs. Everything we do in the military is team focused. We bring people together from different backgrounds, knowledge base, and experiences for a common mission mindset and purpose. Once we've formed every Airman, Soldier and Civilian has a role in that team.

**The  
 Kentucky  
 National Guard  
 continues its service  
 to the Commonwealth &  
 to the nation - just as it  
 has for over  
 228 years.**

Our organizational and individual Values, as part of the Kentucky National Guard Team are: Loyalty, Excellence, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity Personal Courage

In everything we do there are four Imperatives for each of us to follow: Airmen, Soldier and Leader Development. Individual and, Unit Fitness. Take pride in our units. Make a Better Force (leave the organization better than you found it)

The Kentucky National Guard must continually assess the lower value activities to discontinue and search for ways to improve what we must do, in order to free up time, money, and manpower for our top priorities. Trusting and empowering subordinate leaders will facilitate both reform and greater performance.

In all of these efforts, we will ensure that our Airmen, Soldiers, Civilians and their Families enjoy the professional opportunities and quality of life they deserve. From the top down we must also remain committed to the Kentucky National Guard Values. The National Guard is at its best when we work and fight as one team, and our Values, coupled with our Imperatives, will guide and serve us well as we face the challenges ahead.

## Fight as Kentuckians

  
 Haldane B. Lamberton  
 Brigadier General  
 Adjutant General

  
 Andrew G. Beshear  
 Governor  
 Commander in Chief