

# Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 25, Issue 1 - May 2022

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

## TWISTED METAL

*Kentucky Soldiers and Airmen  
aid in tornado cleanup*

*Airmen Save Infant  
from Drowning p. 15*

*Four Decades of Service  
p. 17*



# AROUND THE GUARD

## AND IN OUR PAGES



JFHQ



ON THE COVER - Sgt. Dennis McClarity, a member of Kentucky's CERFP search and extraction team, works with Lexington Fire and Rescue helping clear debris off the pile of rubble that was the Mayfield Consumer Products facility in Mayfield, Ky., Dec. 13, 2021. (Photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Benjamin Crane)



75th TC



**JFHQ** - Governor Andy Beshear and other state leaders were on hand to help Kentucky Guardsmen break ground for the new Joint Force Headquarters building on Boone National Guard Center Oct. 26. The project is expected to be complete in the Summer of 2024. (Photo by Jesse Elboub)



**149th MEB** - Sgt. Taylor Crane speaks with General Daniel R. Hokanson during his visit to survey the damage that was caused in Mayfield and across Western Kentucky. Soldiers with the 198th Military Police Battalion escorted him and the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Haldane B. Lamberton through Mayfield. (Photo by Spc. Brett Hornback)





**138th FAB** - Command Sergeant Major David Page takes responsibility of the 138th FAB. CSM is the most senior enlisted member of a color-bearing Army unit. The CSM is appointed to serve as a spokesman to address the issues of all Soldiers. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Scott Raymond)

**63rd TAB** - Lt. Col. Adam Kearney took his final flight Mar. 3, 2022, at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Frankfort. After the flight he was recognized by Col. Gary 'Dewayne' Lewis, who presented him with a gift of his appreciation for his many years of service. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)

**75th TC** - The Mountain Warriors have remained extremely busy during their deployment in Kosovo. From Delta Soldiers attending the Regional Advise and Assist Course to Charlie Soldiers conducting RQ-11B Raven Small Unmanned Aircraft System training, there has been little downtime.

**123rd Airlift Wing**- Col. Bruce Bancroft, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, speaks to hundreds of Air Guardsmen during a ceremony celebrating the wing's fifth Curtis N. "Rusty" Metcalf Trophy at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky., Dec. 5, 2021. Bestowed annually by the National Guard Association of the United States, the trophy recognizes the airlift or air refueling unit that demonstrates the highest standards of mission accomplishment. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Joshua Horton)

**238th RTI** - The 238th Training Regiment has a new colonel in charge as Lt. Col. Allen Joiner was promoted to full bird Colonel by his family in the presence of Kentucky National Guard Leadership, colleagues, and future Officer Candidate School hopefuls.



## BLUEGRASS GUARD

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The Bluegrass Guard is distributed free to all members of the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard, retirees of the Kentucky National Guard and to other interested persons by request. Guard members and their families are encouraged to submit articles meant to inform, educate or entertain Bluegrass Guard readers.

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

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## A LETTER FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Our National Guard is the most community-based service or military component in the US Department of Defense. Active-Duty DoD installations are made up of numerous forts, camps, and bases around the world and have their own community in and around that facility, but no other service reaches more communities than the National Guard.

Today our military makes up less than 1% of the population. Because of this, most of our citizens have little indirect contact to any service member let alone direct contact.

Because of our geographic dispersion, we touch more communities across the 54 states and territories than any other part of the DoD.

By virtue of our Kentucky Guard armories, training camps, and airbase spread throughout the commonwealth, we

**“ I WANT ALL OUR VETERANS AND ALUMNI TO STILL FEEL AS IF THEY’RE A VIABLE PART OF OUR ORGANIZATION. WE ARE BETTER BECAUSE OF YOUR EFFORTS AND SERVICE. YOU ARE STILL PART OF THE KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD. ”**

come into contact with greater numbers of Kentuckians than our active-duty brothers & sisters in the state.

The point I’m getting to is that the National Guard, especially the Kentucky National Guard is a community unto itself.

To all our brother and sister Kentucky Guard Veterans, we hold a bond; a bond that goes beyond the time of our wearing a uniform. So, all our veterans should continue to feel as if they’re a part of our community and a part of our organization.

Towards that end, this coming Memorial Day we are hosting an open house for our KYNG veterans and alumni on Boone National Guard Center.

This event will take place after our annual Memorial Day Ceremony at our Kentucky National Guard Memorial. We’ll share leadership and organizational updates, information pertinent to veterans along with other relevant information.

This will be a time for us to come together and be reminded of why our organization is as strong as it is.

*I want all our Veterans and alumni to still feel as if they’re a viable part of our organization. We are better because of your efforts and service. You are still part of the Kentucky National Guard.*

If you have any questions or would like to RSVP to this event, please contact Mr. Adam Rients at 502-607-1098.

★ **MAJ. GEN. HAL LAMBERTON**





## KENTUCKY GUARD DISPLAYS VERSATILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

READ THE FULL STORY ON OUR WEBSITE AT KY.NG.MIL

Story and photo by Sgt. Matt Damon, Kentucky  
National Guard Public Affairs

Since August 31, 2021, Kentucky National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have augmented hospital staff across the Commonwealth performing non-clinical tasks during a COVID-19 pandemic surge. Soldiers arrived at The Medical Center at Bowling Green not knowing what tasks they might be asked to complete, and within a few short days, began functioning as though they were seasoned employees of the hospital.

This allowed hospital employees to be reallocated or be afforded a much needed break. Per hospital staff, for every patient, a team of seven to eight employees is needed in order to provide proper care. This is not just the individual providing the hands-on care to the patient; this is the team behind the scenes. "Right now, my teams are understaffed approximately 800 man hours for current staffing needs," said Fred Genter, vice president of supply chain for The Medical Center. "Would we have gotten all the work done? At some point we would have

hoped. Would patients have been in less than ideal circumstances in the interim? 100%. The Guard has had a direct impact on the treatment of patients."

"The Guardsmen assisting the lab have been tremendous," said Stacie Bledsoe, laboratory director for The Medical Center. "We have been fortunate to have members of the Guard, Alex, Susannah and Lorenzo. With them receiving and scanning the samples in, we have been able to process the samples in a timely manner."

Guardsmen have been relied on to learn and perform numerous unfamiliar tasks. The Guardsmen have been unfazed and focused on their tasks at hand. From the moment the Guard arrived at The Medical Center, they have been integrated into members of the care team.

"It is refreshing to see how professional, courteous and willing the Soldiers are," said Dennis Chaney, vice president of ancillary services at The Medical Center. "I am very impressed with their maturity and willingness to work. There is this

willingness to come in here and just help."

The Guardsmen have also provided support with the hospital's sitter support team. The sitter support team is used when a patient is identified as a fall risk, or may just require additional monitoring, to include patients with Alzheimer's and dementia. These sitters provide 24/7 observation for the patients, and Guardsmen have covered several rooms for the past six weeks, redirecting hospital staff to other critical need areas.

"Several members of the National Guard have been faithful to this part of the caretaking model," said Chaney. "This is a huge part of reducing patient falls and addressing patient safety. This particular area may not be very engaging, but it is a necessary part of the care team. From the first morning that the team met, the expectations were put forth and the Soldiers were just willing to do whatever needed to be done."

Genter continued to reiterate the sitter's role as part of the care team.

"There is no amount of training that can prepare you to be a sitter," said Genter. "It is one of the more difficult jobs for the Guardsmen. You're spending 12 hours a day, in a room with someone in pain. It takes a special effort for the folks that were assigned to this duty."

The Guard has answered the call no matter what the task was.

"To see the Soldiers come in everyday ready to work and at a moment's notice, ask them to do something else," said Bledsoe.

For the Soldiers here, this is not the first time that they have been in an unfamiliar team environment. From the first moment that the Soldier steps off the bus at the reception station at basic combat training, the team system, or battle buddy system, is instilled. This team effort being committed to something larger than one's self is shown every day at the hospital.

"We could not have gotten through this without the Guard, bottom line."

### 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:

Mail The Bluegrass Guard  
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E-Mail KYNG.PAO@mail.mil

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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 Personnel Services Branch at 502-607-1497 or email nicholas.j.sheridan.mil@army.mil.

Air Retirees should request changes through retired Chief Master Sgt. James Turpin at jturpin1945@gmail.com.



Kentucky National Guard



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# FITNESS CORNER

with Sgt. Matthew Lee

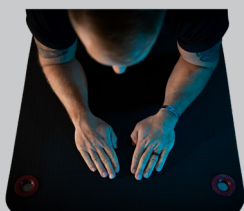
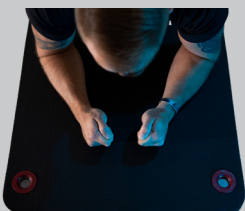
photos by Andy Dickson

“I THINK THAT THE PLANK IS A GREAT TEST OF CORE STRENGTH AND DOING THEM REGULARLY CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN POSTURE, BALANCE AND COORDINATION.”



## Tips

- When planking, to achieve proper form, bring your belly button up towards your spine. Tighten core.
- Focus gaze on something close (6 inches away) to avoid straining neck.
- Practice every day. Determine your starting point. Even if it's only for 30 seconds a day, PRACTICE! Try adding 15-30 seconds incrementally each week.



(Note: Plank must be executed on your elbows. Hands may be close to each other but not interlocked.)

# The Plank

Lee is a part of the All-Guard Endurance Team and has been a part of the team since January, 2022.

Lives in Frankfort, Ky.

Currently working towards a Masters Degree in Emergency Management

Serves with the 41st WMD-CST in Louisville, Ky., as a survey team member.

Joined the KYARNG in 2016 and was in the Marines for 10 years prior to that.







# KENTUCKY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD HOSTS SIGNAL AND CYBER SYMPOSIUM

Story by 1st Lt. Kaitlin Baudendistel, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

Soldiers from the Kentucky Army National Guard attended the Signal and Cyber Leader's Symposium at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort Jan. 22-23, 2022.

The symposium focused on establishing a community for all members of the signal and cyber fields, as well as sharing knowledge regarding opportunities and career paths in an open forum.

"Establishing this community of purpose allows a low density MOS to know and reach out to their colleagues and gain a knowledge of promotion opportunities and positions," said Maj. Stephen Young, symposium organizer.

A key takeaway from this event was award presentations.

The awarding of the Silver Order of Mercury by the Signal Corps Regimental Association to three Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers; Maj. Timothy Ball, Sgt. 1st Class Steven Richardson, and Staff Sgt. Brian Bingham, marking the first time that Kentucky Soldiers received these awards.

The Silver Order of Mercury is awarded to those select few who stand above their peers and have made conspicuous long-term

significant contributions to the U.S. Army Signal Corps and the Association (SCRA).

Following the symposium, Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Barker was awarded the Bronze Order of Mercury, which recognizes those people who have demonstrated the highest standards of integrity, moral character, professional competence and selflessness, and who have contributed significantly to the promotion of the Signal Corps and the Signal Corps Regimental Association.

"Signal leaders know that the J6 is in their foxhole with them all the way, from career management, to planning and promotions," said

Young. "To come in and have that no non-sense briefing on where I can go in the state of Kentucky as a signal leader, whether you're there because you love the signal world or you want to get promoted."

1st Lt. Shannon Bush attended the symposium and spoke on how beneficial it was.

"It's easy in your day to day job to not think about your long term career goals," said Bush. "This was also a great way to network and share products with other signal leaders."

This symposium also highlighted the importance of signal and cyber to the force.

"If you don't communicate, you can't operate," said Young. "Every unit and every MOS must

communicate. As many have said in the past, if you don't communicate, you're only camping."

Col. John Blackburn, KYARNG chief information officer, added that this symposium also encouraged signal and cyber leaders to be more engaged in the planning of missions.


"We really pushed hard for these leaders to get with their commander's and planning officers from the get go. How do you become an operational part of the plan as opposed to just a service?"

Blackburn's answer to that was to be proactive in the planning stages and voice possible issues before they happen.





# TWISTED METAL



**O**n the night of December 10, 2021, many western Kentucky residents' lives were changed forever when a large tornado hit. One whose path was exceptionally long, traveling 168 miles, before it lifted off the ground. Homes and businesses were destroyed and the lives of 77 Kentuckians were taken. The Kentucky Guard was called upon and responded within hours of the storm.

**Story by Spc. Harrison Moore  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

Spc. James Smithson, 22, a truck driver with the KYARNG, helps remove the Kentucky state flag from among the debris of the Graves County Courthouse in his hometown of Mayfield. The town was one of the most damaged when several tornadoes touched down in the state December 2021. (Photo by Spc. Brett Hornback)





**K**entucky Air and Army National Guardsmen were activated in support of tornado relief in various locations to include Mayfield and Dawson Springs, Ky. on Dec. 11, 2021.

Members of the 123rd Airlift Wing's Search and Rescue Team, the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP), and the 438th Military Police Company mobilized to the region for search and rescue missions, road clearing and law enforcement support.

"This is the most devastating, most deadly tornado event in Kentucky's history," said Ky. Gov. Andy Beshear in a news conference Saturday afternoon.

Beshear said that he feared that at least 70 people were dead and many were missing due to the severity of the storm since Mayfield, Ky., saw most of the devastation per evaluations of the area after the storm.

Beshear declared a state of emergency allowing every resource to be deployed. The National Guard was positioned to search for survivors in multiple counties.

More than 240 guardsmen from the National Guard had already been activated since early Sunday, Dec. 12.

"The National Guard is here to support in any way that we can and we have worked alongside multiple fire departments and police departments. Everyone has been working together during this dark time," said Spc. Jonah Crockett, from the 301st Chemical Battalion.

Crockett is part of the Kentucky National Guard's CERFP team working together with the community of



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Scott Raymond

Mayfield for disaster relief.

The CERFP has the experience and equipment to provide a full spectrum of disaster-response and recovery operations, from medical evacuations to explosive ordnance disposal.

The Guard provided

military assistance and disaster-relief, rescue and recovery capabilities as directed by the governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky to help Mayfield and surrounding counties.

The Guard brought many special capabilities and resources such as: Special Tactics pararescue, contingency response, Critical Care Air Transport Teams, a Fatality Search and Recovery Team, and a CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package.

"We have been here since 8 a.m. this morning. We started looking through fallen houses downtown and then moved over here to the candle factory to help with search and rescue," said Captain Safety Officer Tiffany Newcomb, Salem Fire Department.

"The National Guard has brought dogs and rescue teams and they have jumped in and helped in any way they can. Several Guard members are downtown as well cutting trees and clearing roads just doing what has to be done," said Newcomb.

"We want to make sure everybody is being safe with all of the downed power lines and trees. Another job has just been getting people in and out of the area that are coming to help," said Sgt. Justin Sims, 438th MP.

"Many of the roads were blocked off and MPs have helped secure the roads and let authorized personnel in so they can continue the mission," said Sims.

"Everyone worked tirelessly to try and help this community," said Newcomb.

President Joe Biden declared a state of emergency order in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and ordered Federal assistance to supplement the commonwealth.

"The Guard has been working alongside fire, police, and other emergency response teams and we are truly coming together to help Mayfield and this state during this unfortunate time," said Sims.

If you want to donate, go to: <https://secure.kentucky.gov/formservices/Finance/WKYRelief>.



"We Just Went"

## KENTUCKY GUARDSMAN JUMPS INTO ACTION TO HELP NEIGHBORS

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane

Tornadoes spawned over the western part of Kentucky and affected at least six of the surrounding states leaving many without power and homes triggering the National Guard's activation Dec. 11, 2021.

One of those Guardsmen activated, Spc. Zach Neisz, a resident of Dawson Springs living about 8 miles north of where the tornadoes touched down.

Immediately after the storm hit, he and his brother-in-law got in a car and headed to the affected areas to assist first responders extricating people from the rubble that was once their home.

"I grabbed my trauma kit and my flashlight, and also I grabbed an ax from the trunk of my car and we just went," said Neisz, with the 130th Engineer Support Battalion. "We helped the first responders pull people out of the debris off Keigan and Pine Street. It was something out of a Michael Bay film, it was crazy. You could just hear moans and groans through all the debris on both sides of the street. We just searched houses and searched for people."

Neisz spent the next 27 hours aiding local law enforcement, helping search for people needing help and rescuing them from being trapped in their homes.

Staying home and doing nothing was never an option for him.

"I couldn't sit back and not do anything," he said. "It's devastating to see my town this way, this is one of the smallest towns in the area, so we didn't have a lot to lose, but what we did lose, was major aspects of the town."

He considers himself lucky and blessed since his house suffered little damage and his wife and ten-month old baby are safe.

"I hate it that it hit so close to home but I'm glad that I am here and that I'm able to make a difference."

READ THE FULL STORY ON OUR WEBSITE AT [KY.NG.MIL](http://KY.NG.MIL)



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Scott Raymond

Spc. Dakota Woolston with the 2061st Multi-Role Bridge Company works to clear a tree from a road in Dawson Springs, Ky. Dec. 18, 2021.



# SENTRY STORM

## 123RD CRG COMPLETES MANY FIRSTS WITH WEST VIRGINIA EXERCISE

Story by Master Sgt. Phil Speck | 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

More than 20 members of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Contingency Response Group participated in a unique training exercise involving members from across the Department of Defense.

The exercise, named Sentry Storm and held in July, provided training opportunities for multiple units from the Army and Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy and Civil Air Patrol.

According to Master Sgt. Kyle Goins, chief for the Contingency Response team, many firsts came out of the event, which also tasked members of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

"This is the first time that we've participated in an exercise with the 123rd STS, and it was great being able to see how they operate and for them to see how we operate," Goins said. "It's amazing to me that the CRG and the STS are located in the same area of our base but have never worked together before."

During the exercise, the 123rd STS performed an airfield seizure, taking control from adversaries and securing the property. The airfield was then handed off to the Contingency Response team to set up an air transportation



Airmen prepare to hook a sling load to a U.S. Navy MH-60S Seahawk. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Vincent Santos)

hub that can process supplies and cargo arriving and departing via airlift — marking the first time this hand-off has occurred during a training exercise.

Another first for the Contingency Response team was the use of Method B Combat Offloads. This alternative technique employs barrels to off-load cargo pallets from aircraft instead of forklifts or K-loaders. It is sometimes used in austere locations that lack standard offload equipment.

Sentry Storm tested a wide variety of capabilities, including the lifting and staging of High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, combat search and rescue, integrated C-130 aircraft formations, airdrops, dirt landing zone operations, sling load operations, aeromedical evacuation, helicopter lifts and forward operating base ground training.

Senior Airman Samuel Jenkins of the 123rd CRG said the broad range of training opportunities substantially enhanced his real-world experience.

"One of the things I love about the CRG is you're not stuck to what your AFSC is," he said. "Instead of being behind a computer reading reports all day, I was able to go out and do helicopter sling load operations."

The hilly terrain of West Virginia added a challenging aspect to the mission and required constant creative thinking.

"It's always good to find out what works and what doesn't work, speaking practically. The book can say it one way, but in the real world that might not always be how it works perfectly."



Airmen perform an engine-running offload from a C-130 Hercules. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Vincent Santos)



# Kentucky Air Guardsmen featured in national ad campaign

Story and Photos by Tech. Sgt. Joshua Horton  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Senior Airman Kennedy Powell, a medical technician from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Medical Group Detachment 1, is filmed tending to simulated patients at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky., on April 16, 2021.

Three Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard are being highlighted in a new national ad campaign funded by the National Guard Bureau.

The campaign, titled "Serve Your Way," was created by GSD&M, a marketing and advertising company, and features video commercials, radio spots and other media to be featured on multiple platforms, said Norah Rudyk, vice president and group account director for GSD&M.

"We're developing all different types of videos which will run on local stations, stream digitally, be used for social media and all different types of platforms," Rudyk said.

The three Airmen are Senior Airman Andrew Lucero, a pararescueman from the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, Senior Airman Kennedy Powell, a medical technician from the 123rd Medical Group Detachment 1, and Lt. Col. Stephen Sample, an emergency medicine physician from the 123rd Medical Group Detachment 1.

"Being able to represent something that's a big part of my life, something bigger than myself — it's definitely an honor and privilege to be able to do this," Powell said. "The Kentucky Air National Guard has given me so much and forced me to grow as a person, so it's only right that I can help encourage others to join as well."

In addition to the three selected Airmen, the campaign features various interviews and radio spots from several other Airmen in the Kentucky Air National Guard. The media began appearing on local outlets over the summer.



Lt. Col. Stephen Sample, an emergency medicine physician from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Medical Group Detachment 1, is filmed tending to simulated patients.

According to Rudyk, GSD&M worked with Air National Guard Recruiting to determine which bases around the country would work best for the campaign.

"We had quite a few different Airmen submit their questionnaires," Rudyk said. "From there, we determined based on diversity, career fields and background which ones would best be part of the bigger, holistic story that we wanted to tell."

According to Lucero, volunteering for the campaign was a way to give back to the organization which provided him the opportunity to serve his way.

"I've always wanted to help people," Lucero said. "The Guard allotted me the opportunity to serve my country in my own way. I think it's pretty amazing getting to receive all this incredible training and converting those skills to be able to help people in ways that are really unimaginable."

According to Rudyk, GSD&M has been working with the Air Force for 20 years and the Air National Guard for more than a year. "We are looking forward to starting this new relationship with the Air National Guard the same way we



A member of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron is filmed by members of GSD&M, a marketing and advertising company.

have been with active duty," Rudyk said. "In our company, we like to say we have embraced the Air Force — we try to bleed blue. We're looking at this holistically from a total-force effort, so it's a great way to communicate to prospects about all the different ways to serve."

Members of the Connecticut Air National Guard also are featured in the campaign.

To see the videos, visit: <https://www.goang.com/serve-your-way.html>





## Kentucky Air Guard Security Forces strengthen skills in Colorado

Story and Photos by Master Sgt. Phil Speck, 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Thirty-three Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Security Forces Squadron travelled to Colorado Springs, Colo., May 17 to strengthen their

land navigation in an extremely challenging environment on top of a mountain.

"It was raining so hard that they couldn't see each other," Myers said. "It really forced them to rely on team techniques."

While here, the squadron trained in domestic operations and urban warfare environments in mountainous terrain and at higher elevations, forcing them to rely on peak physical fitness to complete the mission.

"This was an environment that was built for special operations," Myers said. "So it was a tip-of-the-spear training situation that caused them to really use their skillsets to truly complete the mission."

The unpredictable training environment helped prepare squadron members for a broad spectrum of real-world missions, Myers added — a key lesson due to the fact that the squadron often is tasked with missions no one envisioned and that they have not planned for.



Airman 1st Class Emmanuel Collins, a fireteam member in the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Security Forces Squadron, takes up a defensive posture during a field training exercise.

specialized skills during nine days of field exercises at Fort Carson.

According to Chief Master Sgt. Greg Myers, chief of the 123rd SFS, the unit traveled to Colorado because it offers training facilities and a challenging environment not available back home.

"Fort Carson offers new, unique challenges that our members have to work through," Myers said. "It's not the same training location that they're used to, where they can forecast how everything's going to go and predict the outcome."

For example, the Guardsmen performed



Tech Sgt. David Getty, fireteam member in the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Security Forces Squadron, executes a simulated mission in an urban environment.





“The operations tempo now at home is at the highest pace we’ve ever encountered; We’re doing missions we had never expected to do,” he said.

Myers said the unit needs to continue to think outside of the box in a way that forces its members to

squadron’s NCOs went into great detail to make sure everyone learned the skills being taught, no matter how long it took.

“In technical school, you only really learn the basics,” she said. “Whereas here, they went in depth and everybody put in the effort to make sure you understood it a hundred percent.”

Myers said the event also helped build a “family-centered” environment and esprit de corps where Airmen can rely on each other personally and professionally.

“You learn to work through difficult times, love your brother and sister, and care for them as if they were your own,” he said. “These types of events push team building, self-care, and care for others to a new level. It’s something you can’t capture on training records.

“Our squadron motto is know your job, do your job and take care of the family. These events teach and create muscle memory for all three of those tasks.”

Airman 1st Class David McCray, a fire-team member from the 123rd SFS, agreed.

“You have to trust everybody on your team,” he said. “You can’t be one person trying to run everything.

You have to fall back when your team members need you.”



Members of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Security Forces Squadron execute a simulated mission in a urban environment.

enhance their training.

“This exercise really helped motivate our Airmen to understand the environments they could work in, point out weaknesses and how to better operate to turn weaknesses into strengths. Additionally, it gave them the chance to really come together as a team to learn how to truly rely on each other in austere environments.”

According to Tech. Sgt. Michael Leek, a fireteam member from the 123 SFS, the training was very different from what they see at home in Louisville.

“Taking guys from close to sea level and bringing them up here into the mountains and training at 6,000 feet — it really says a lot when you saw nobody quit or give up,” Leek said. “We all pushed for excellence and accomplished every task every day.”

Airman 1st Class Kiara Rager, a fire-team member from the 123 SFS, said the



Members of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Security Forces Squadron execute squad movement exercises at Fort Carson, Colo., May 20, 2021. More than 30 Airmen from the unit travelled here to strengthen their specialized skills during nine days of field exercises at several different ranges.





Photo by Tech. Sgt. Joshua Horton

## Air Guard director meets Airmen at 123rd Airlift Wing

Story by Dale Greer, 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The director of the Air National Guard arrived in style at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base here Friday, landing aboard a new C-130J Super Hercules being delivered from the Lockheed-Martin factory in Marietta, Georgia.

Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh, accompanied by his wife, Dianne, then spent the next two days touring the base, meeting with Airmen and learning more about the unique mission sets of the 123rd Airlift Wing, which range from tactical airlift and explosive ordnance disposal to special tactics and the only operational contingency response group in the Air National Guard.

The wing, which just earned its 19th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, is currently transitioning to the modern Super Hercules aircraft, replacing eight C-130H transports dating to the mid-1990s. Friday's delivery marks the third such arrival for the 123rd.

The highlight of Loh's visit was a "town hall" style meeting in which he fielded numerous questions from Airmen. Loh also took the opportunity to thank the Airmen and their families for their service, and to discuss his five top priorities — readiness, partnerships, people, force structure and policy.

"If you hear nothing else today: Thank you," Loh told the audience. "But it's not just you. I want you to go home tonight and thank your families and your friends who support your service in our United States military. We don't do this alone; we do it as a community."

When it comes to readiness, Loh stressed the importance of both personal and organizational preparation.

"Am I ready to go to combat in a moment's notice?" he asked. "Will I be lethal when I get there? Will I be mentally resilient? And then there is the readiness of my entire unit in order to deliver combat air power for America."

"The National Guard has been called to do just about everything" over the past two years, Loh said, from responding to fires, earthquakes, floods and tornadoes to helping fight COVID while providing direct support to a full spectrum of U.S. military operations overseas.

That kind of flexibility would not be possible if the Air Guard weren't especially good at building and maintaining partnerships, he said. These start at the local level, with most Guard members holding down jobs in the civilian sector. But they also include close working relationships with local government agencies and emergency responders, state government agencies and the governors of the respective states and territories. From there, the Guard's partnerships grow to include federal agencies, the United States Air Force, its major commands and even foreign allies through the State Partnership Program, which pairs individual Guard units with independent nation-states.

Of course, none of this would work without a continued focus on the Guard's people, Loh said.

"The people side of this is absolutely critical, because we've got to get that right," he told the audience. "It's not just you, but it's your families. It's the employers. It's making sure you have the right tools."

At the same time, the Guard needs to recapitalize its nuclear enterprise and modernize its force structure, Loh said.



A new U.S. Air Force C-130J Super Hercules aircraft arrives at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base with the director of the Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh, on board as unit leadership renders a salute. (Photo by Dale Greer)



# Blue Rescue

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

## Kentucky Air Guardsmen save infant from drowning

Three Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron saved the life of a drowning infant at the Mary T. Meagher Aquatic Center here March 15.

According to Master Sgt. Devin Butcher, a combat controller with the 123rd STS, the team had just finished unrelated training at the center when he noticed that a civilian swim instructor was holding an infant.

"I'd seen him there multiple times before, but this time he had strange look on his face — an 'I need help' look on his face. Clearly he was someone who was in shock," Butcher said. "Then I observed an infant in his hands that was blue, with mucus coming from the nose and mouth, which is what's apparent for a drowning victim."

He took the baby and performed some quick assessments before realizing the baby was not breathing on his own. Butcher then handed the infant off to Tech. Sgt. Ryan Penne, a pararescueman with the 123rd STS, who with Master Sgt. Elmer Quijada started performing CPR.

"I didn't know necessarily what was going on," Penne said. "I just had a baby put in my arms that was unresponsive and blue and cold. So, I started going through the medical procedures to try to revive him."

Butcher said what happened next was clearly a united team response.

"I looked at another teammate of ours and told him to call 911 and looked at one of the lifeguards and told him to go and grab their (automated external defibrillator) Butcher said. "The team just started huddling and doing all their different roles. We had guys who were grabbing hypothermia blankets, we had individuals who were getting oxygen."

According to Butcher, the baby started slowly coming to after a couple minutes. His color started coming back as the baby was starting to be able to breathe on his own. They put oxygen over his nose and mouth, just to help him facilitate the breathing, and then wrapped him up in the hypothermia blankets to keep the baby warm.

"It was definitely a team and joint effort. There was absolutely no one person. It was 'right place, right time.' I mean, if it would've been three minutes before or three minutes after us walking out, I don't know what the situation would've been like."

Civilian emergency medical technicians soon showed up and took the baby to a nearby hospital. The boy is doing well.

Butcher and Penne both agreed that their military medical training, instilled through years of work as combat EMTs, was key to helping save the infant.

"The training just kicked in," Butcher said. "People say that, and it's a cliché, but it's really true. Being able to assess a situation very quickly and realize if there's somebody that needs help or there's an action that we



can do to make a situation better — it's all instinctual," Butcher said.

Quijada, a pararescueman, agreed.

"We train to work under intensely stressful conditions and respond quickly to life-or-death situations," Quijada said. "Whether it's a combat situation or a drowning infant, stress is stress. I'm grateful for the training the military has provided me, and for team to react the way they did."

Butcher called the resolution of the event a "blessing and a miracle."

"We were there at the right place at the right time. That's the unique thing about the Air Guard: We get to be civilian Airmen. Any time we get to help the community, it's phenomenal. The outcome here was an absolute miracle, and I'm grateful for that."

### Loh continued

"Thirty years of continuous mobilizations and conflict has worn out the jets on our ramps," He said. "And so we have to do a conventional modernization. Getting the right number of resources into a long-term plan and getting that over to the White House, over to Congress, and then having Congress fund us and make us whole — that's tough. We're sitting on a lot of legacy platforms."

"And then finally, we need to get the policies right," Loh said, hitting his fifth priority. "We have to make sure that in every one, from the highest level Secretary of Defense policy, all the way down to the instructions that I sign and I write, we can take care of our drill-status Guardsmen."

"I never want to get to a point where I have an active duty-only mindset or an active duty-only way of doing business, or the policies in place mean I can't get a drill-status Guardsman to come into the formation. The National Guard is what allows us to fight a 30-year war of continuous mobilizations and not lose the will of our people."

"Thanks again for all you do. We're all part of the nation's defense, that foundation for America. You live it every day. Go Guard."



# Romanian DV visits Boone Center

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin  
Crane, Public Affairs Office



Romanian Army Lt. Gen. Tomita-Catalin Tomescu visited the Kentucky National Guard's headquarters Feb. 17, 2022. During the visit he met with Maj. Gen. Haldane B. Lamberton and senior leaders who briefed him on how the Kentucky National Guard served the commonwealth and the nation and covered what the Guard mission was. They also talked about similarities between their military's role in their country and the Guards role in the U.S.



## YOUR SERVICE MATTERS

KENTUCKY  
**ARMY**  
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GUARD



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CONTACT YOUR UNIT RETENTION NCO



# LEADERSHIP PROFILE:

KENTUCKY WARRANT OFFICER  
CELEBRATES OVER FOUR DECADES  
OF LEADING AND TEACHING

**TOP SECRET**  
MATTOX, D.  
W05



Story and above photo Sgt. 1st Clas  
Benjamin Crane, Kentucky National Guard  
Public Affairs Office

Chief Mattox currently serves as the only qualified UH-60 Maintenance Examiner, a Maintenance Test Pilot, Instructor Pilot, and Instrument Examiner on both models of Blackhawk aircraft presently in Kentucky Aviation and recently received a plaque from the Adjutant General commemorating his achievement. **“Forty years is certainly a long time to wear the uniform, I’m blessed from having the health to keep wearing the uniform and I guess I must be doing a decent job or they would have found a way to tell me it’s time for you to leave.”** Ironically nick-named, ‘Danger Dave’ has seen a lot in his four decades of service to the military, but he says that he has enjoyed every moment of it and was glad that his family was able to attend this milestone event in his illustrious career that has seen him serve in the Active Army, Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. “I thought this was an opportunity for me to have them here

and express my gratitude for their supporting me throughout my career.”

A career that started well before cell phones, internet and compact discs. “Forty years is certainly a long time to wear the uniform, says Mattox. “I’m blessed from having the health to keep wearing the uniform and I guess I must be doing a decent job or they would have found a way to tell me it’s time for you to

leave.”

Deciding to join the Army after high school was an easy decision for him since he had wanted to fly helicopters but knew his parents didn’t have the funds to send him to flight school.

“I can remember being in the fifth grade and seeing a small helicopter land at my elementary school and thinking, ‘Wow, that is really cool!’ I want to do that someday. As I got towards the end of high school, I realized my family wouldn’t be able to help put me through college or a local flight school, but there was the Army with their ‘Be all that you can be’ slogan that impressed me,” he said.

Mattox was 17 years old when he enlisted into the active duty Army in the late summer of 1981 after graduating high school in Pendleton County, Ky., he soon left for basic training in Fort Jackson, S.C., a where he celebrated his 18th birthday. After he graduated his advanced individual training as an AH-1 Cobra Attack Helicopter Repairman at Fort Eustis, Va. He went to his first duty station with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Since he wasn’t able to go directly to flight school, he became an aviation mechanic. He served his three years of active duty time

with the 101st Airborne at Fort Campbell, Ky., and also had an overseas deployment.

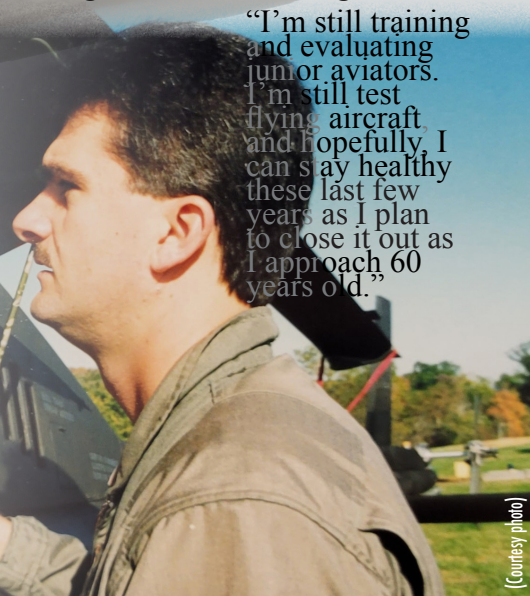
“My time at Fort Campbell was great and the 101st is an awesome unit and a big adventure,” said Mattox. “But after arriving in Germany and working on a deuce and a half (a 2 ½ ton truck) scraping rust and painting it for my first 45 days there instead of working on aircraft, I said I’m done with active duty—surely the state of Kentucky has helicopters and a chance for me to fly.”

Shortly after his return to the states, he found a recruiter on Boone National Guard Center. And with that, he started his career off in the Kentucky National Guard, less than one month after separating from active duty.

His career has seen deployments overseas and missions that have ranged from fighting fires to stopping the drug trade in the commonwealth. One of his favorite memories was when he was with the Joint Support Operations (JSO) teams working with the Kentucky State Police searching for marijuana fields.

“It’s been a great career, and I appreciate everything the Army has given me the opportunity to do. I’m planning to continue serving and

“I’m still training and evaluating junior aviators. I’m still test flying aircraft and hopefully, I can stay healthy these last few years as I plan to close it out as I approach 60 years old.”



\*FOR MORE OF THIS STORY, VISIT [HTTPS://KY.NG.MIL/NEWS](https://ky.ng.mil/news)





# Units headed to Kosovo take part in departure ceremonies

Soldiers of the 438th Military Police Company participate in their departure ceremony held in Murray, Ky., prior to their deployment to Kosovo Jan. 5, 2022.  
(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)

Story and photos by Andy Dickson, and Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Public Affairs Office

**S**oldiers from the **1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Brigade** were joined by friends and family for a departure ceremony at Lexcity Church in Lexington, Ky., on Jan. 6. The unit will be deploying to Kosovo in support of Operation Joint Guardian.

Led by Lt. Col. Jason Mendez and Command Sgt. Major Will Long, Units from Barbourville (Headquarters & Headquarters Co.), Middlesboro (Delta Co.) and Ravenna (Charlie Co.) will make up Task Force Mountain Warrior to provide security operations throughout the region.

"The past several years as we've been preparing for deployment, we've had a number of state missions that the battalion has taken part in," said Mendez, the commander of the 1st Battalion. "Our Soldiers and families have had to demonstrate resilience and a level of sacrifice that further speaks to their commitment to both our state and federal missions. For that, we are all truly grateful."

Col. Timothy Starke, the 75th Troop Command's brigade commander also spoke about the value the Kentucky National Guard brings to this overseas mission.

"Stability in Europe is incredibly

important for our national interests and those of our allies," said Starke. "I, personally, am very proud, though not at all surprised, that the mission is being entrusted to the Kentucky National Guard's only infantry battalion."

The unit's combat history goes back to the Mexican War; starting with the Battle of Buena Vista. Since then, the unit fought on both



sides of the Civil War, World War I, and World War II to include New Guinea, Leyte, and Luzon.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment has deployed three times in support of the War on Terror - Operation Noble Eagle in 2001, Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005-2007, and Operation New Dawn 2011-2012. On Wednesday, the Kentucky National Guard also said farewell to members of the 438th Military Police Company, out of Murray, Ky., who will deploy to Kosovo as well to provide Military Police Liaison Officer support for Operation Joint Guardian.

Also being deployed to Kosovo and having their deployment ceremony across Kentucky at the Barn at White Oaks in Murray, Ky., a day earlier, was the **438th Military Police Company**, Jan. 5.

The 438th MP Co., based out of Murray, Ky., will be heading to

Kosovo for a year-long mission to provide Military Police Liaison Officer Support to Operation Joint Guardian.

The unit is comprised of Soldiers trained in force protection, anti-terrorism, area security, and police intelligence operations.

"Every deployment, every mission we conduct is important," said Brig. Gen. Brian Wertzler, Deputy Adjutant General for Kentucky. "The 438th MP Company will support NATO and provide military based combat support operations in support of the Kosovo Force Regional Command East. Their primary missions will include keeping law and order, provide security, conduct anti-terror operations and civil support operations. Their deployment size may be small, but their impact on mission will be great."

He went on to say that the force behind the force was the Soldiers family members and he thanked them for keeping things going at home.

"As much as this departure ceremony is for the Soldiers, it's also for you," said Wertzler. "It's a way for us to personally offer each of you our sincere appreciation for the hardships that you may endure while they're gone. We recognize the challenges that come when we leave you behind to take care of children and







on hand to see the 438th off. He too thanked the families and showed his appreciation for what they do while their Soldiers are away.

"You have allowed your loved ones to step away from home a lot in the last year," said Maj. Curtis Persinger to the crowd of family members. "Please stay involved. Please stay engaged. Take your time and reach out to the 438th's readiness group."

He continued.

**"I cannot put into words how proud I am of this group as they move on to Kosovo. I can't wait to receive good reports while you're deployed. But in the meantime, the rest of us will continue to hold the line."**

It has been 15 years since this unit was called upon to leave the Commonwealth of Kentucky. But according to the 438th's commander, his Soldiers are more ready than ever to take on whatever they will face overseas.

"This profession is for the courageous, persistent and mentally tough," said 1st Lt. Samuel Nein, commander of the 438th. "No better words describe the men and women who sit before us today. Soldiers of the 438th MP company, we are prepared, we're ready and we will succeed whenever the opportunities presented."

He also challenged his troops to be the standard that others will look to.

"We will perform our duties with integrity, loyalty and honesty. We will develop a personal example of high standard and results," he said.

The 438th will be joining up with the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, and they will first be



maintain the household. We're all sincerely grateful for the sometimes thankless long hours and dedicated hard work that you provided to your family and ultimately to the nation. Thus, allowing them to perform their duty in a professional manner. Your sacrifices to their service is greatly appreciated by us all."

The commander of the 198th Military Police Battalion was also

going to Fort Bliss, Tx., for a three month train-up prior to arriving in Kosovo.

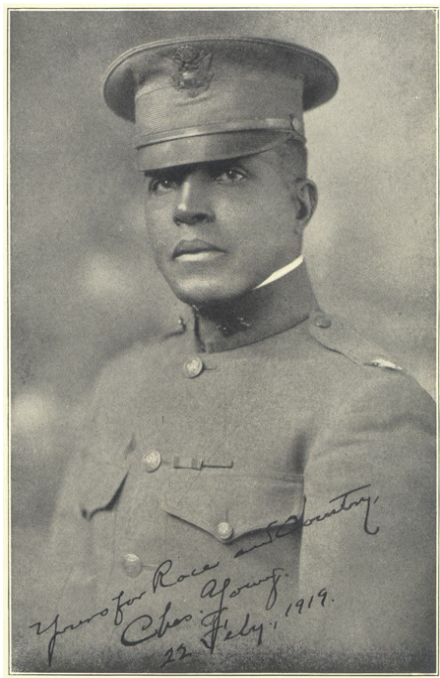
The unit has mobilized twice since Sept. 11, to Cuba in 2002 and Iraq in 2007. 🇺🇸

Kentucky Army National Guard, Command Sgt. Maj. Will Long addresses his battalion at the 1-149th Infantry Battalion's deployment ceremony at the Lexcity Church in Lexington, Ky. on January 6th, 2022. Long and his Soldiers are deploying to Kosovo in support of Operation Joint Guardian (Photo by Andy Dickson).





# KY NATIVE CHARLES YOUNG POSTHUMOUSLY PROMOTED TO BG BY U.S. ARMY



worked with and mentored Sgt. Maj. Benjamin O. Davis, the first black Soldier to earn the rank of general. Young also taught military science and would fight with honors in the Philippine-American War in which he fought with courage and professionalism.

When the war with Spain kicked off in 1898, Young was promoted to major and became the commander of the 9th Ohio Battalion, U.S. Volunteers.

In 1904, he was the only African-American officer serving in a diplomatic post in Theodore Roosevelt's administration as the military attaché in Haiti and the Dominican Republic and in 1912 to 1916 would serve as a military ambassador in Liberia.

However, in July 1917, Young was forced to medically retire and promoted to colonel for his service. Young disagreed and, to show his fitness, made a historic 500-mile horseback ride from Wilberforce to Washington, D.C.

During World War I, Young was assigned to Ohio and later to Illinois to train young black Soldiers for the war. Eventually, Col. Young was assigned back to Liberia.

While on a mission to Nigeria, Young became ill and was transported back to Liberia where he died of a kidney infection on January 8, 1922.

Brig. Gen. Charles Young, while not having served in the National Guard, exemplified the meaning of professionalism and bravery of Kentuckians, especially being born at the height of the Civil War.

Story by Andy Dickson, Kentucky National Guard Command Historian

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear announced that the U.S. Department of Defense has approved the posthumous honorary promotion of U.S. Army Col. Charles Young to Brigadier General on Feb. 1, 2022.

In February 2020, Gov. Beshear recognized the promotion of Young on the state level and submitted a letter to President Joe Biden to have the honorary promotion be instated on a federal level.

On Nov. 1, 2021, Under Secretary of Defense Gilbert Cisneros Jr. approved the request and Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth informed Young's family of the approval on January 19th, 2022.

"Charles Young was a pioneer, especially in his military career, but also throughout his life," said Beshear. "I was honored to promote Col. Young to Brigadier General in the commonwealth two years ago, and I am pleased to announce that that honor has now been extended to the entire U.S. Army."

Young was born in Mays Lick, Ky., on March 12, 1864 to Gabriel and Armintha Young, both of whom were enslaved. In the same year, Gabriel escaped and joined the 5th Regiment, U.S. Colored Heavy

Artillery, a Mississippi Union unit.

Young and his parents soon relocated to Ripley, Ohio where he was able to study academics, foreign languages and music. By age 17, he had graduated high school with honors and taught elementary school for two years.

Despite scoring the second highest on the entrance exams at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Young was not selected to attend. However, a candidate dropped out and the following year, he received his acceptance letter. Young was not only the ninth African-American to attend the academy, but he was also the third to graduate.

As a 2nd Lieutenant, Young was assigned to the 9th Cavalry at Fort Robinson, Neb., where he faced "isolation and hostility" as black officer. A year later he was transferred to Fort Duchesne, Utah where the environment was much friendlier. It was here that Young's career began to take hold.

While stationed in Utah, Young



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# KENTUCKY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD STRONG BONDS EVENTS

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The core mission of the Strong Bonds program is to increase individual Soldier and Family member readiness through relationship education and skills training.

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FROM THE CHAPLAIN

## LIFE SUPPORT

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bill Draper  
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William.c.draper6.mil@army.mil

### The Strategic Importance of Spiritual Readiness

The Army emphasizes a wholistic fitness regimen for body, mind, and spirit (FM 7-22, Holistic Health and Fitness, dated October 2020). As Soldiers, we are accustomed to maintaining physical and medical readiness. But oftentimes, spiritual readiness is often overlooked. However, the strategic importance of spiritual readiness impacts personal resiliency and unit readiness.

The Army defines spiritual readiness as "the development of the personal qualities needed to sustain a person in times of stress, hardship, and tragedy. These qualities come from religious, philosophical, or human values and form the basis for character, disposition, decision making, and integrity" (FM 7-22, 3-6). Spiritual fitness promotes personal resiliency by providing hope during loss, increasing performance under pressure, making sense out of tragedy, and achieving victory over adversity.

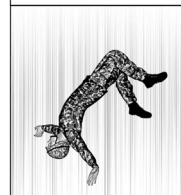
Readiness is the capability of the Army to conduct the full range of military operations. It is cumulative result of manning, equipping, training, and leading.

The burden of individual readiness lies to a degree with the Soldier. For General George C. Marshall spoke of the Soldier's spiritual fitness and personal resiliency

and its impact on unit readiness when he said, **"The Soldier's heart, the Soldier's spirit, and the Soldier's soul are everything. Unless the Soldier's soul sustains him, he cannot be relied on and will fail himself, his commander, and his country in the end."** Or as the aforementioned field manual states, spiritual readiness "enables collective and individual readiness" (3-5). In essence, unit readiness is



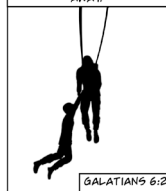
"SUICIDAL THOUGHTS TO ONE'S MIND, IS LIKE JUMPING OUT OF AN AIRCRAFT WITHOUT A PARACHUTE."



"DON'T LET YOUR BATTLE BUDDY DOWN...SWOOP INTO ACTION!"



"...BECAUSE THE BRINGING OF HOPE, CAN BE ONE CONCERN AWAY."



GALATIANS 6:2

fueled by personal resilience which is in part is sparked by spiritual readiness.

In the uncertain days we live, the readiness traits of strength, competency, and actions (or Be, Know, Do) must be continually mastered and used. Our calling as Soldiers is to be prepared to fight before combat begins. Total Army readiness demands that we are prepared physically, mentally, and spiritually.

At all echelons and for all ranks, the Kentucky National Guard Chaplain Corps is always ready and always there to support you on your spiritual journey. Pro Deo et Patria, CH (COL) Jay Padgett



# THE LAST WORD

TO READ THE FULL VERSION OF THESE STORIES, VISIT KY.NG.MIL OR 123AW.ANG.AF.MIL



## National Guard Bureau leaders visit Kentucky Guardsmen

Story and photos by Spc. Danielle Sturgill 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kentucky National Guard leadership welcomed National Guard Bureau's senior leaders on Jan. 23-24, to recognize Guard members for their efforts and thank them for supporting local communities in western Kentucky.

National Guard Bureau's Senior Enlisted Advisor, Chief Master Sgt. Tony Whitehead and Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. John T. Raines III, along with Kentucky's State Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Withers, Air National Guard Chief Master Sgt. James Tongate, met with Soldiers in Mayfield and Murray, Ky., to encourage the troops to share thoughts about their experience with the tornado response mission.

"It's a great feeling for the Soldiers to know their voices are being heard," said Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Raby, operations sergeant for the 438th Military Police Company. "They work without question or wavering. I think the best thing so far has been knowing that senior leadership cares."

Approximately 700 Soldiers from the Kentucky National Guard answered the call to support emergency management personnel across 15 counties. The mission has been to clear roadways of debris, conduct relief operations, and other civil support tasks.

"We take care of our community and our own, because our home is our area of operations," said SEA

Whitehead. "We're Guardsmen, this is just what we do."

The tornado first reached Mayfield Dec. 10 at approximately 9:26 p.m., spending three hours on the ground and covering a total of 165.7 miles.

All the Soldiers are volunteers," said Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Toncray, liaison officer for the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. "They want to see the mission out till its end. Their concern is for the community to be in a better place so that we can step off knowing that we did all we can do and move on to the next mission."

Toncray estimated that the Mayfield Fairgrounds point of distribution site had initially received around two thousand pallets worth of food, water, and other resources.

The senior leaders concluded their Kentucky visit on Jan. 23 with a professional development discussion with enlisted Soldiers at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, Ky.



## Thunder Air Show returns to banks of Ohio River with KYANG aircraft



Story and photo By Dale Greer, 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The Thunder Over Louisville air show will return to the banks of the Ohio River April 23 for the first time in three years with a salute to the United States Air Force, organizers announced here Thursday.

"We can't wait to be back at the waterfront for Thunder Over Louisville this year and celebrate one of our favorite traditions together again," said Matt Gibson, president and CEO of the Kentucky Derby Festival, for which Thunder serves as the kick-off event. "After a couple of years away, we're bringing Thunder back home to one of the best venues on the continent."

The air show and fireworks display, which has drawn up to 1 million spectators to the waterfront in past years, was cancelled outright in 2020 because of COVID-19. A scaled-down air show with no public attendance was telecast from Bowman Field in 2021, while fireworks displays were staged at various locations around the community rather than downtown.

This year marks a reversal to previous form with the slogan, "The Legend Returns." Officials promise an extensive display of military aircraft, including the U.S. Air Force's F-22 Raptor and C-17 Globemaster demo teams, F-16 Fighting Falcons, A-10 Thunderbolt IIs, the B-2 "stealth" bomber, and the Kentucky Air National Guard's brand-new C-130J Super Hercules — all in addition to the return of the largest fireworks display in North America.

The 2022 show will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United States Air Force and Air National Guard, said Wayne Hettinger, who



has served as Thunder's lead organizer since its inception in 1990.

Historical aircraft scheduled to perform include the P-51 Mustang, F-86 Sabre, F-100 Super Sabre, and the Commemorative Air Force's B-29 Superfortress, B-24 Liberator and B-25 Mitchell.

"We've been working on this particular show for five years because we knew the 75th anniversary of the Air Force was coming up," Hettinger said. "You're going to see the best air equipment that this country has. We'll be able to do an entire history of the Air Force."

The Kentucky Air Guard is again serving as the base of operations for Thunder's military aircraft, providing logistical and maintenance support from its facilities at Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport.

"It's a pleasure for the Kentucky Air National Guard to serve our awesome community in any way, and Thunder is a very special way for us to do that," said Lt. Col. Josh Ketterer, a Kentucky Air Guard pilot who coordinates the participation of military units for the show each year.



## Band Commander receives Legion Of Merit

Story Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Public Affairs Office, photo by Spc. Caleb Sooter: 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Friends and fellow Soldiers were on hand to see their commander awarded for his service to the 202nd Band by the Adjutant General at the band's headquarters building in Frankfort Feb. 26, 2022.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Greg Stepp received the Legion of Merit from Maj. Gen. Haldane B. Lamberton, in recognition of his service to the band.

Stepp has served the nation and the commonwealth for nearly 30 years.

"To receive this honor is remarkable and humbling," said Stepp. "The exceptional team which I assembled was highly skilled and energized to make remarkable strides for Army National Guard Bands across the 54 states and territories."

He added.

"The people I have met and worked with across the 54 and across COMPOs continually influenced me and accepted my influence to create better opportunities within the Army Band program and specifically the Army National Guard Band program."

## New BAOs for Ecuador and Djibouti

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Public Affairs Office



The Kentucky National Guard has two new leaders heading up the State Partnership Program as their Bilateral Affairs Officers for Ecuador and Djibouti.

Air Force Capt. Joshua Selby will be the BAO in Ecuador responsible for planning and executing future subject matter expert exchanges, key leader engagements, and exercises between both the Kentucky State Partnership Program, US SOUTHCOM, and all branches of the Ecuadorian military.

"It means so much to be here in Ecuador, working to strengthen partnerships and develop new opportunities for future exchanges with the Ecuadorian military," said Selby. "I'm especially proud to bring both my enlisted and officer experience as a Kentucky Air National Guardsman to this very dynamic environment. This is a very unique experience as a captain and for my family."

Army Maj. Eric Green will be the BAO in Djibouti responsible for developing relationships with counterparts in the Djiboutian military and determine what professional development and operational areas their military would like to focus on. Once the areas of focus are determined he will work with the HN to develop the annual engagement schedule. After the schedule is built and while continuing to build on the relationship, the BAO should begin facilitating and coordinating travel and logistics for the engagement teams.

"It's a great opportunity to do something I wouldn't otherwise be able to, said Green. "I've always

wanted to visit Africa but I wasn't able to until I joined the Guard and volunteered for SPP engagements. I love to travel and experience other cultures so this is a great way to do that."

He went on to say that, "This position is also a good way to learn about the overall U.S. strategy in this area, how we're competing, and if our efforts are well received."

## PAO NCO wins National Award for News Article

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Public Affairs Office



The Kentucky National Guard would like to recognize Sgt. Matt Damon, the National Guard Bureau's national winner for best news article featuring how the Kentucky Guard displayed versatility and professionalism during their COVID-19 mission.

Our state level winners who qualified for the national level were: Sgt. Jessie Elbouab for layout and design, feature photo and feature video; Staff Sgt. John Stephens for training documentation photo and multi-media video; Capt. Cassandra Mullins for feature article; Sgt. Damon for news photo and news article; and Staff Sgt. Andrew Dickson for news video and training video.

For the Air Guard, Tech. Sgt. Joshua Horton earned first place for photo-journalism in the Air Guard division of the 2021 Department of the Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Douglas W. Morrell Media Awards.

Lt. Col. Dale Greer, as a technician, was named runner-up Civilian Photographer of the Year for a package of 13 photos depicting the 123rd Airlift Wing's support to COVID-19 response, the Thunder Over Louisville air show and several other events.

Staff Sgt. Clayton Wear took home two awards. Second-place information story and third-place feature photo for his coverage of Maintenance University and the Wing's response to a tornado that devastated parts of Western Kentucky.

Congratulations to these Soldiers and Airmen for their outstanding work in telling the Kentucky National Guard story. 🇺🇸





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Phone: (502) 607-1000  
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# YOU'RE

# INVITED!



## Memorial Day Ceremony

May 30th, 2022  
at  
Boone National Guard  
Center Memorial

10:00 a.m.  
100 Minuteman Parkway  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

## Kentucky National Guard Retiree and Alumni Open House

Auditorium  
Building 112  
Boone National Guard  
Center  
100 Minuteman Parkway  
Frankfort, Kentucky  
40601

May 30th, 2022  
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

