

Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 25, Issue 2 - October 2022

Serving the Commonwealth of Kentucky's Army and Air National Guard

Kentucky Soldiers and Airmen respond to help flood victims in Eastern Kentucky's

HISTORIC FLOODING

AXE Program p. 6

Airmen Train in Sweden p. 12



AROUND THE GUARD

AND IN OUR PAGES



ON THE COVER - A crew chief with B Co., 2/147th 'Renegades' Aviation Assault Company, surveys the flooded areas looking for victims during their flood relief efforts in response to the governor declaring a state of emergency in eastern Kentucky on July 29, 2022. Photo by Sgt. Jesse Elboub



JFHQ - In addition to ranges, at home station Soldiers began completing diagnostic ACFT. The Soldiers with Headquarters are constantly working to maintain the standards and new training guidances pushed down from Department Of the Army by leading from the front! (Courtesy photo)

149th MEB - Members of the Army National Guard from 10 states, including six from the 103rd Chemical Battalion, participated in the Mass Casualty Decontamination (MCD) conducted by the Army Interagency Training and Education Center (AITEC) in Las Vegas, NV., from July 11-14, 2022. (Courtesy photo)



BLUEGRASS GUARD

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138th FAB - Soldiers from the 138th Field Artillery Brigade participated in a Raven Small Unmanned Aerial System (SUAS) training event May 13-15, 2022. The Raven SUAS program fits into the Army's modernization strategy by improving long range precision fires and enabling the 138th FAB to penetrate and neutralize enemy capabilities. (Courtesy photo)



123rd Airlift Wing - The 123rd Airlift Wing welcomed its eighth C-130J Super Hercules aircraft to the Kentucky Air National Guard Base on Aug. 25, completing the unit's transition from legacy C-130H transports. The wing had been flying H models since 1992. It said farewell to the last of those on Sept. 24, 2021, and began receiving new J models from Lockheed-Martin Corp. on Nov. 6. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Chloe Ochs)

63rd TAB - 751st Troop Command's command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Logsdon is retiring after his almost 30 years of service to the Kentucky National Guard and the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan Wilhoit)



238th RTI - Warrant Officer Candidates conducted a 10 km ruck march and the Sing and Song tradition. This ceremony is a tradition that originated in the 1950s that marks the class's advancement to the next phase of their course (Photo by Lt. Col. Carla Raisler)

75th TC - U.S. Army Spc. Jacob Holley (left holding flag), an infantryman assigned to C. Co., 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, and others from first platoon pose for a photo with a flag belonging to Holley's grandfather in Hohenfels, Germany Feb. 23, 2022. (Photo by Sgt. Matt Damon)

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A LETTER FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

On July 28, 2022, the men and women in the Kentucky National Guard (KYNG) were again called upon to assist their fellow Kentuckians. This time it was due to severe flooding in Eastern Kentucky brought about by heavy rainfall in a short period of time.

Within the next 24-hours, Soldiers and Airmen were airlifting people off of housetops, flooded homes, and moving them to safer areas. Over the next 72 hours Aviation assets from the KYNG, Tennessee NG, West Virginia NG, along with folks from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Kentucky State Police rescued, airlifted, and moved 1350 folks away from flooded areas to safer environments.

In the subsequent days almost 400 men and women of the KYNG were involved with not only rescue missions but the subsequent sustainment of necessary food and water

“ WHETHER ITS RESPONDING TO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES, THE COMMONWEALTH, OR THE NATION, THE KYNG PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE WITH THE SKILLS, EQUIPMENT, AND EFFORTS OF EACH OF OUR SERVICE MEMBERS. ”

to those in the impacted areas.

Pictures from our Public Affairs folks that were shown on local media sources reflected our hoist operations. In these photos, if you didn't notice it, you would see members of the KYANG Special Tactics Squadron (STS) being airlifted to their rescue efforts by KYARNG UH-60 Blackhawk crews. This is a terrific example of both components of the KYNG coming together in response to our community needs.

While we've had multiple deployments of KYNG Airmen and Soldiers over the past two decades our working together through training periods and subsequent real world operations enabled us to become an even more effective force.

Whether its responding to our local communities, the Commonwealth, or the Nation, the KYNG plays a significant role with the skills, equipment, and efforts of each of our service members.

The profile, visibility, and pride of serving in the KYNG is a tribute to each of you and your efforts in your dedication to our Commonwealth.

A senior member of our State Government told me the KYNG is the solution to all of our problems. That may have been a little bit of an overstatement but to have our senior government leadership feel that way about the service and professionalism we share to our communities and Commonwealth is something of which everyone in the KYNG can feel proud. I'm proud to serve with you.

★ MAJ. GEN. HAL LAMBERTON



Ecuadorian Army's demining effort gets new, updated equipment

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Allison Stephens
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

SANGOLQUÍ, Ecuador — Ecuadorian civil engineers recently welcomed a team of Air National Guard, active duty Air Force and civilian personnel here from U.S. Southern Command to observe, train and equip a battalion of demining soldiers.

The visiting group, led by Senior Master Sgt. Matthew Wilt, transferred more than \$1.3 million in equipment to the Ecuadorian Army's 68th Battalion Feb. 25 to help clear the last portion of border still mined in the southern part of the country.

"It's an amazing feeling to work with these soldiers to accomplish this effort to provide them new and innovative equipment and foster relationships built with our state partners," said Wilt, superintendent of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight.

The Kentucky Guard and Ecuador are part of a cooperative military-to-military exchange effort administered by the National Guard Bureau. Called the State Partnership Program, it facilitates cooperation between U.S. National Guard units and foreign allies, fostering enhanced understanding across all aspects of civil and military affairs.

The equipment package includes 16 portable solar panels that both lighten the load and provide a rechargeable capability in the field. Additionally, the package features four storage batteries, the largest of which will provide 1,250 watt-hours to recharge the deminers' sensory equipment.

The light-weight equipment is easier for the deminers to haul as they trek deep into the jungle. Other materials provided include electronic tablets for hazard mapping, protective suits, and field kits with shovels, mats and cordon materials.

In addition to the equipment, Wilt said the team conducted important training with the 68th Battalion's 60 deminers, including land navigation and plotting, information and data gathering, and information management.

This effort has been years in the making, supported and sourced by the Civil Affairs and Humanitarian Assistance Directorate at U.S. Southern Command.

"After 11 years without a Humanitarian Mine Action engagement with Ecuador, the U.S. Southern Command is very happy and honored to again support the Ecuadorian military in their humanitarian demining operations aiming to render their beautiful land mine-free by the year 2025 so their population can return to it and use it again for crop farming and raising livestock," said Dr. Jose Castro, U.S. Southern Command program manager, who oversaw the training and transfer.

Ecuadorian Army Lt. Gian Tapia, commander of the 68th Battalion, said the initiative is greatly appreciated.

"For a commander, this is valuable innovation and very important support," he said. "We receive this equipment with the best of intentions, and rest assured it will be put to good use. The equipment is very useful, and the technology and innovation is very important."

U.S. personnel also gained a great deal from the interaction.

"I enjoyed the opportunity to teach the Ecuadorian Army on the use of equipment they have not seen," said Tech Sgt. Oscar Morales, non-commissioned officer in charge of training at the 7th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas.

Morales, who speaks Spanish, was instrumental in helping ensure that teaching points were correctly translated from English.

"I am grateful that Senior Master Sgt. Wilt reached out to the EOD community for Spanish speakers for this mission, and that I was useful in translating throughout my time with the team."

Tech Sgt. David Bernal, team leader for the New Jersey Air Guard's 177th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight, said the experience to help his Ecuadorian partners was a privilege.

"The U.S. military and Guard forces are uniquely positioned to share our technology and experience with our partners."

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THE REST OF THE STORY



LETTER TO EDITOR POLICY

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

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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All change of address requests should be made by the unit clerk using IPPSA 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.

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FITNESS CORNER

AXE PROGRAM

5 TENANTS OF H2F

PHYSICAL READINESS - the ability to physically engage with and destroy the enemy

NUTRITIONAL READINESS - the ability to recognize, select, and consume the requisite food and drink to meet the physical and nonphysical demands of any duty or combat position

MENTAL READINESS - the capacity to adapt successfully in the presence of risk and adversity.

SPIRITUAL READINESS - the ability to endure and overcome times of stress, hardship, and tragedy by making meaning of life experiences.

SLEEP READINESS - Sleep readiness is the ability to recognize and implement the requisite sleep principles and behaviors to support optimal brain function.

“This is not a fat camp”

“The truth about optimal wellness is that it can be found through the five pillars of Holistic Health and Fitness. These are taught at the Axe Course to Soldiers who are struggling to perform, as well as to experts and Master Fitness Trainers to continue educating them to perform at their very best.”

- 2ND LT. BRENTON ABSHIRE, REGION 3 H2F COORDINATOR



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Kentucky Guard signal leaders swap knowledge, build relationships with counterparts in partner nation Djibouti

Story and photos by Capt. Cassandra Mullins, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

DJIBOUTI CITY, Djibouti – Although the early-morning sun was still low in the sky, temperatures were already hovering near 100 degrees, as a small group of Kentucky National Guard signal leaders made their way in utility vehicles across the rugged, barren terrain of sunbaked Djibouti, a small country in East Africa.

This drive was just a small part of the journey for the Kentucky Guard Soldiers who traveled more than 15,000 miles for this mission, August 11-19, to meet with Djiboutian military signal counterparts and to continue building Kentucky’s relationship with the nation as part of the National Guard’s State Partnership Program.

But it was, perhaps, in this moment, during the hour-long ride from Camp Lemonnier to a Djiboutian military facility, that the impact and the importance of the mission was felt by the Kentucky Soldiers. From their windows, the Soldiers watched as small children emerged from tents and make-shift lean-to structures in villages along the route, grinning at the sight of the familiar U.S. military uniforms and stretching their arms high to waive — their faces brightening as the Kentucky Soldiers waived back.

“It didn’t use to be this way,” said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Fox, of the 6th Battalion, 2nd Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB), who is stationed at Camp Lemonnier, a base that hosts the only enduring U.S. military presence in Africa. “When I first arrived, the children would throw rocks at us, but we’ve come a long way in building relationships and establishing partnerships since then. They know we are here to help, and they can trust us and can count on the U.S. military.”

Fox and the SFAB team serve as liaisons to Djiboutian Armed Forces and have put a great deal of effort into bringing in needed military expertise, as well as personally connecting with the Djiboutian service members and residents of the villages outside the fortified walls of Camp Lemonnier.

He said Kentucky’s partnership with Djibouti has been

instrumental in helping his team build that trust.

Djibouti is particularly important because of its strategic location in the Horn of Africa at the mouth of the Red Sea. A significant amount of the world’s trade and natural resources flow through the area, making Djibouti a key U.S. partner to



KYNG Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Reno, middle, assists Djiboutian Armed Forces Cpl. Mahad Hoch, right, and Cpl. Mahad Adaweh, both assigned to Battalion d’Intervention Rapide, with installing and using updated software that will enable Djiboutian Armed Forces to utilize faster capabilities on their radios.

security, regional stability, and humanitarian efforts across the region.

Since the forming of the state partnership in 2015, the Kentucky Guard has sent engineers, infantry Soldiers, and high-ranking leaders, among others, to exchange ideas, knowledge, and best practices with Djiboutian Armed Forces. The Kentucky Guard has also hosted Djiboutian Armed Forces’ leaders in the Commonwealth.

The National Guard’s State Partnership Program is a Department of Defense security cooperation program that also serves as a mechanism for training National Guard personnel. The program has been building relationships for more than 25 years and now includes 85 partnerships with 93 nations around the globe.

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ALWAYS READY,



Army and Air National Guard in Eastern Kentucky

Story by Andy Dickson Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

As rain continued to hit most of the eastern part of the state, Kentucky Army Aviation crews carried on their mission of search and rescue and move on to air dropping supplies to Kentuckians in need.

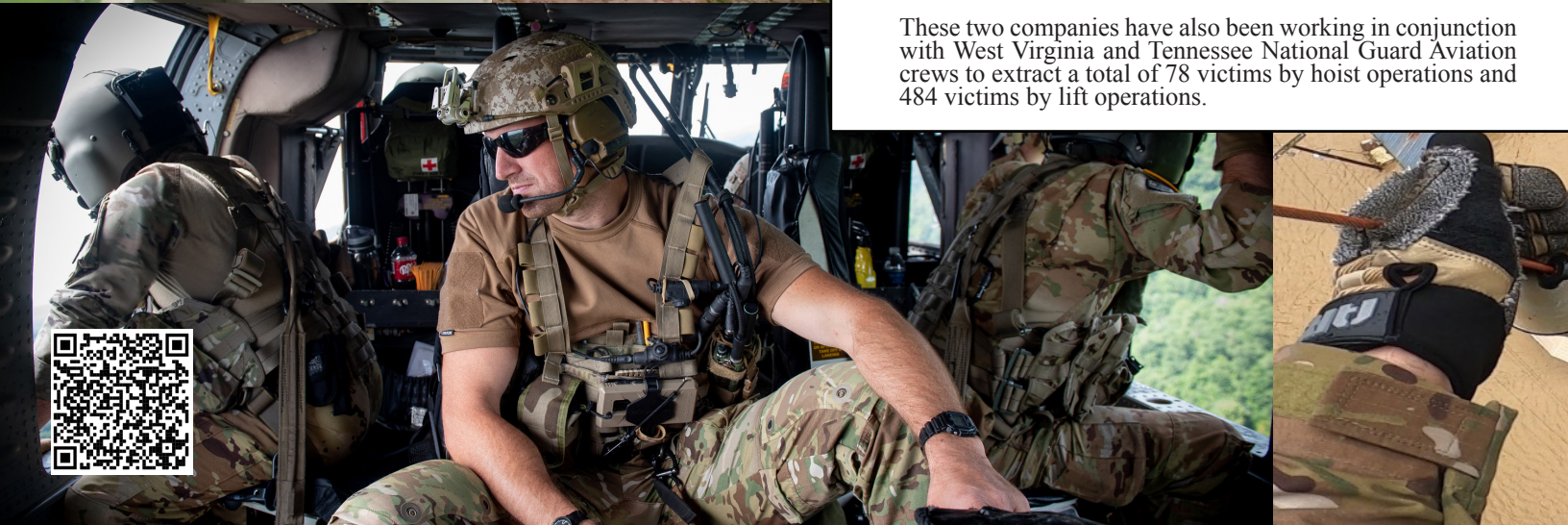
Pilots and crews from the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade as well as the 123rd Airlift Wing's Special Forces Tactics, worked non-stop from July 28-Aug 1 to support communities using a combination of UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and UH-72 Lakota helicopters.

Detachment 1, Charlie Co. 2/238th Aviation Regiment, MEDEVAC performed hoist operations during this time; hoist operations use a wench and cable system to lower a crewmember to rescue victims in areas the helicopters cannot land.

Operations where the Blackhawk could land, crews assisted in loading residents onto the helicopter to be taken to safe sites.

The Lakota aircraft were used in conjunction with the Blackhawks to spot possible victims and relay their locations to the Blackhawk companies. In some circumstances, the Lakotas were able to assist in moving residents to safe locations.

These two companies have also been working in conjunction with West Virginia and Tennessee National Guard Aviation crews to extract a total of 78 victims by hoist operations and 484 victims by lift operations.



ALWAYS THERE

conduct rescue operations during flooding

BY THE NUMBERS

- 78 - Kentucky National Guard Hoists
- 28 - Tennessee National Guard Hoists
- 12 - West Virginia National Guard Hoists
- 2 - SAR dogs used
- 400 - Man hours put in by all three states over 7 days
- 484 - Total people rescued
- 1250 - Structures searched
- 40,00 - Gallons of fuel used
- 50, 896 - Cases of water distributed



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THE REST OF THE STORY

HEROES AROSE FROM THE FLOOD



Kathleen Thomassy-Mills
SGT, 207th Engineers

Thomassy-Mills is currently a temporary technician working at the Hazard armory as the 207th Engineer's readiness non-commissioned officer. Due to the flooding that hit her family's home in July, she lost everything, forcing her and her husband and children to live in a camper that was provided by her grandfather that is sitting in her neighbor's front yard. But despite all that, and even not having uniforms to wear since hers were washed away in the flood waters, she only took a week off before returning to work, showing her dedication and selfless service.

During the night of July 28 and 29, rain caused the water of aptly named, Troublesome Creek, to rise and flood her family's trailer which sat about 20 yards from where the creek was. She was home asleep with two of her five children and her husband Derek when her sister Brittany called and woke her up.

As she jumped up to look outside, she saw that the water from the creek was as high as she had seen it so she decided to wake her husband up.

She woke up her children, one who is 3 years-old and the other a 9-month-old, packed some clothes for the next day and grabbed the diaper bag before she headed out to her car. By that time the water had risen to over ankle deep forcing her to walk through the water to get to her car.



David Hall
SSG, 207th Engineers

Hall works full time for the Guard at the Field Maintenance shop in Jackson, Ky., and he figured that he would probably need to get there since it had flooded in the past. As he was getting ready to head to the shop that is about a half hour away from his home, he received a disturbing call from one of his Soldiers that changed his plans.

"About two o'clock (AM) I went outside and looked and the water was higher than I had ever seen it," said Hall. "But it still wasn't in my yard, so I thought we're probably okay. And then at about three, one of my Soldiers that lives nearby called me said he was trapped in his house. He said that he had a boat, but it didn't have a motor and just needed me to bring a rope and I said, 'Yeah, I got you.'"

But when he started to leave to find some rope, he noticed the water had reached the steps of his house and his attention immediately switched over to his family.

"That's when I was like, okay, this is way worse than it's ever been," he said. "I turned around and told my wife, 'Hey, go ahead and get the kids and the animals, get in the car and go to your mom's.'"

As his wife started gathering up the, Hall left to find the rope and return quickly so he could go help his Soldier and then head to work.



Ronnie Banks
SGT, 207th Engineers

He's a full-time technician as a production controller at FMS 6, which sits on the North Fork Kentucky River, whose waters rose to over 43 feet on July 28.

Banks was at the armory in Jackson as it flooded, while his family dealt with their own escape from the floods

His originally from Harlan County but recently moved to Jackson in May with his wife Holly and their two children.

When he left his home Thursday morning, there wasn't water on any of the roads leading to the armory from his house. When the flooding happened last year, a few of the roads had standing water on them, so he wasn't even thinking it would be an issue for his home or work.

With the rains slowing down after a full night of rain before, the Soldiers at the armory didn't think anything of the water levels as they continued moving equipment.

As Banks worked, he prayed that his family would be safe since he wasn't there with them.

Meanwhile at Banks' home, his wife had gotten the children out of the house, as well as their cousin who was visiting, to a hill behind their house where a fellow Guardsmen who lived nearby, was able to rescue them in his kayak and get the to a fry spot.



Cecil Harris
SGT, 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade

William 'Cecil' Harris is a fuel supply specialist (92F) who has been in the Kentucky Guard for almost 13 years.

He spent three days refueling aircraft by himself during the height of the flooding. A week later he was given the chance to fuel Marine One for the president.

"The first three days-Friday, Saturday, Sunday-were pretty hectic, said Harris. "You're talking about fueling Black Hawks from the Tennessee Guard, Kentucky Guard and West Virginia Guard.

According to Harris, a UH-60 takes around 360 gallons of fuel to fill up and allows the aircraft about two and a half hours of air time on a normal day. From when he started his mission Friday to the next Monday, he used 10,000 gallons.

During the two days he said that he had to do 'cold' refuels with the Black Hawks since he was by himself. A cold refuel is when the aircraft comes to a complete stop and has to shut down its rotors opposed to a 'hot' refuel where the helicopter keeps its systems on and rotors going while it's fueled so it can take off again right away.





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Special Tactics Squadron train for arctic warfare in Sweden



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

GRUBBNÄSUDDEN, Sweden — Fifteen Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard recently completed an arctic warfare training course here during two weeks of field exercises at the Swedish Subarctic Warfare Center.

The group of combat controllers; pararescuemen; special reconnaissance personnel; search, evasion, resistance and escape Airmen; and support troops traveled to Sweden in January to build upon existing relationships with their European partners, said Senior Master Sgt. Sascha Kvale, a combat controller flight chief for the 123rd Special tactics Squadron.

“One of our squadron missions is to support the active duty — specifically what’s going on in Europe right now. So we’re building relationships with our European partners. We have a relationship with the Swedish Special Operation Group joint



Airmen with the 123rd STS fire their M4 rifles while on skis at a range



Master Sergeant Joshua Busch, a combat controller with the 123rd STS, collects gear in the “ice bath” of a frozen lake.

terminal attack controllers and the Swedish Subarctic Warfare Center. We’ve joined them for training for the past two years.”

According to Swedish Army Sgt. 1st Class Frederick Ragnarsson, head instructor at the warfare center, the 123rd came to Sweden because the Swedes have one of the best training courses in the world for arctic environments.

“I think we have a good partnership going on,” Ragnarsson said. “We try to facilitate good training for the guys and make them better warriors in this kind of environment.”

Kvale said the arctic training is a necessary course to familiarize his Airmen with operating in the brutal conditions of freezing temperatures.

“Nothing works here like it does in Central Command, Afghanistan and Iraq. Everything



Airmen with the 123rd STS engage targets during an ambush exercise.

is much more complicated, and sophisticated equipment often doesn't function. Sometimes our GPS devices' batteries die within an hour. All of our batteries get cold-soaked, so when you put a new battery in, it still doesn't work. Also, if you're not maintaining weapon systems appropriately, they can freeze up completely. "Sometimes it's just the old-school, simple things that work best here."

The training is a basic fundamentals course in which special tactics Airmen learn how to set up patrol bases, perform small unit tactics and execute dismounted patrols — all on skis, which some of the operators had never used much before.

"Just moving from point A to point B in this environment is so much more complicated than anything we've done before," Kvale said. "Here we conducted

ambushes with rockets and machine guns, things we've been doing for years, but just because of the environment it became much more complicated."

"The basic stuff is what you need to survive out here," he said. "To begin with, in order to transport yourself, you need to go by skis. You need to be quite disciplined in order to maintain your physical fitness. To just maintain your daily tasks is a struggle out here."

Kvale agreed.

"We don't inherently understand how to operate in the arctic or the subarctic like this. And



Tech. Sgt. Austin Sanders, a pararescuer with the 123rd STS, looks through the sights of a Carl-Gustaf recoilless rifle.

until you come out here and experience it, there's no way to explain it to somebody. Just the simple process of staying warm enough to not die is weeks and weeks of practice in itself."

Staff Sgt. Keith Schneider, a combat controller with the 123rd, said that something as simple as choosing the best clothing can be a challenge.

"It's tough to start cold, but that's one of the things that they really they teach out here. But once you start working and moving, you start warming up. The biggest challenge for me is just the clothing — what to wear and when to wear it, and how to keeping everything dry."

Leadership from the 123rd and the Swedes both agreed the course was successful, with each team learning something new from the joint training.

"The training went really well," Ragnarsson said. "I'm impressed with the guys. They have a really good spirit going. It's a good group of guys and they pushed themselves and had great progress from day one and up. I mean, it's a real steep learning curve. Some of the guys have never been on skis, and now to they can go places on skis, bringing their stuff, the webbing, the weapons and all the team gear."



An Airman with the 123rd STS melts snow with a field stove.



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Participants for MREP 2022 work together on team building exercises at Camp Nymindagab July 5, 2022. MREP is a program that houses almost 130 participants from 6 different nations, to increase interoperability, strengthen partnerships, and to enhance professional development between allies.

Military Reserve Exchange Program: National Guard & Reserve Growing Partnerships to Last a Lifetime

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Ryan Wilhoit, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Military Reserve Exchange Program (MREP) was hosted at Camp Nymindagab, Denmark July 1-8, 2022 by the Danish Home Guard (DHG). Over 50 reservists and National Guard members from 18 different states and Puerto Rico, combined with around 90 military members from four countries including, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania took part in this joint, multinational program.

The MREP, selects United States National Guard and Reserve members from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. The selected participants are part of a one-for-one exchange of personnel from a NATO allied country.

The goal of MREP is to integrate participants into the host-country's reserve forces, in order to increase interoperability, strengthen partnerships, and to enhance professional development.

"The Danish Home Guard Training Center is an amazing training facility, they open their doors once a year for U.S. service members participating in MREP to attend their Leadership Course, Basic Instructor Course and Advanced Instructor Course," said U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Patricia Labandeira, Air National Guard (ANG) MREP Program Manager. "As the MREP Program Manager for the ANG, I was honored to attend the Basic Instructors Course this year, it is an experience I will never forget!"

Participants were selected for one of three courses offered during the MREP based upon rank and leadership skill levels. The three courses offered for U.S. troops in 2022 were the Leadership, Basic Instructor and Advanced Instructor Course.

The Leadership Course covers topics such



Participants for MREP 2022 show off their different patches as they train together at Camp Nymindagab July 3, 2022.

as teambuilding, 'the role of a leader', self-awareness, National Guard structure and objectives, communication, conflict management, motivation and team leadership development.

In contrast, the Basic and Advanced Instructor Courses cover varying levels of preparing lessons, self-evaluation, learning theory, joint experiences, didactics, methods of evaluation, presentations, and a certification for instructing.

"The Basic Leader Course has placed me outside of my comfort zone," said U.S. Army Sergeant Joshua Richardson, Indiana Army National Guard. "I have learned how to become a better leader and my comfort level interacting with others has increased."

The MREP also partners with the National Guard and Reserves to train members of the DHG on U.S. teaching styles. One of the courses taught by the U.S. was the Common Faculty Development Program – Instructor Course (CFDP-IC), a course designed to develop adaptive instructors who teach, train, counsel, assess, evaluate, and facilitate learning for Army personnel. This year four members of the South Dakota National Guard, Master Sgt. Trent Edburg, Master Sgt. Jeremy Brady, Staff Sgt. Joshua Nilson and Staff Sgt. Joshua Lunzman, were selected to teach CFDP-IC principles and methods to a group of DHG Soldiers.

"The Military Reserve Exchange Program strengthens partnerships with our NATO allies through relationships and cultural understanding," said U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Ian Stegherr, Senior Enlisted Leader, ANG operations. "The personal interactions had through exchanges like the Danish Home Guard Basic Instructor course might be critical to the success of these Senior NCO's in future conflicts."

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THE REST OF THE STORY





Walker promoted to major general in Capitol Rotunda ceremony

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Charles M. Walker, the Kentucky Air National Guard's chief of staff, was promoted to the rank of major general during a ceremony held in the Capitol Rotunda here March 12.

Walker — who since 2021 has also served as director of the Office of Complex Investigations at the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Virginia — will now work exclusively at NGB, effectively ending his 16-year tenure with the Kentucky Guard.

OCI investigates allegations of sexual assault that are not thoroughly scrutinized by civilian or military law enforcement agencies because of jurisdictional issues or other legal reasons.

Lamberton presented Walker with a Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal, followed by a pinning ceremony to attach new rank insignia to Walker's uniform. Pinning the general were his wife, Suleena, and J. Michael Brown, secretary of the Executive Cabinet for the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



"It is indeed my honor and my privilege to stand before you today, humbled and completely overwhelmed by this moment," Walker told an audience of family, friends and colleagues.

"This is really recognition of all the people that have sewn

something positive in my life over 32 years as a military officer. I am so pleased to have known and worked with all of you. It's not my deeds — it's your teamwork and your dedication and your willingness to put up with my faults and overcome them — that have allowed me to succeed."

Walker also expressed appreciation for the support of his family.

"To both my daughters, there's about three years of their lives that I've missed because of my Guard service," he said. "But they've been so incredibly supportive and understanding. They're both phenomenal children — the best a father could ask for.

"My wife, Suleena, has always put up with the military and my crazy notions of putting things off. This January, when we were on our 25th wedding anniversary, three days of it was consumed with preparing for testimony before Congress. And the fourth day was testifying before Congress. And she put up with that. So, for that, I owe you big."

Walker received his commission through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at Auburn University in December 1990. He served on active duty for seven years, primarily in personnel and communications posts, before separating from the Air Force in 1998 to pursue a civilian career as an attorney. In 2004, he returned to the military as a staff judge advocate in the Air Force Reserve, then transferred to the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing in Louisville in October 2005. During his tenure with the Kentucky Guard, Walker held positions as staff judge advocate; two temporary postings as judge advocate at U.S. Northern Command's Combined Air Operations Center; and Chief of Staff — Air, Joint Forces Headquarters, Kentucky National Guard.



In his closing remarks, Walker challenged Kentucky Guard leadership to maintain a course of excellence.

"Being a Kentucky Guardsman has truly been the highlight of my 32 years of military service, and this is a fine organization. I hope that you will continue all that we know to do in Kentucky: think differently, be diverse, understand that the force multiplier we have is giving everyone an opportunity at the table. Diversity of thought is what we need. This organization is too important to our nation not to be the absolute very best that we can be.

"I am deeply honored and humbled to call Kentucky my home."

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THE REST OF THE STORY





Courtesy photo

Kentucky National Guard Welcomes New Military Judge

Story by Lt. Col. Carla Raisler, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Military attorneys from all branches of the Department of Defense attended the Military Judge Course at The Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School where they received advanced schooling required to qualify as military judges at courts-martial.

Army Lt. Col. Richard Couch, a JAG Officer for the Kentucky National Guard and Assistant Clay County Attorney in Manchester, Kentucky was officially robed during an investiture ceremony July 1, 2022.

Couch has over 20 years of experience as an attorney and has served as a Judge Advocate for the Guard for 16 years. Army Col. Jason Shepherd, staff judge advocate, believes that Couch is uniquely qualified to be a military judge.

“Lt. Col. Couch was selected for this position because of his experience both as a judge advocate, and as a prosecutor” Shepherd said. “As a judge advocate, he is a senior leader who has experience in some of the most challenging roles as a judge advocate can serve in. As a civilian prosecutor, he has tried some of the most serious cases, to include death penalty cases.”

Military judges preside in trials, interpret the law, assess the evidence presented, and control how hearings and trials transpire in their courtrooms. Topics covered during the Military Judge Course include military criminal law, trial procedures, defenses, instructions, evidence, current military judicial issues and professional responsibility.

The Military Judge Course is the most difficult course at the Judge Advocate General’s School. It requires rigorous study by the Judge Advocates who attend and an extensive background and experience in criminal law.

“It was the hardest course I have ever taken,” Couch recounted. “I would not have passed if it was not for my criminal law experience on the civilian side. It has given me a greater appreciation of what judges do and the inherent fairness of the military criminal justice system.”

While civilian law experience was paramount to his success; he had to spend much of his time during the course reacquainting himself with the military justice system. That is because the military justice system is separate from the civilian court system.

For Kentucky Guardsman, there is the Kentucky Code of Military Justice (KCMJ) which closely aligns with the Uniform Code of Military

Justice (UCMJ). Kentucky Guardsmen are subject to the KCMJ at all times and in all places, however, the UCMJ only applies to Service Members when they are in a Title 10 active duty status.. The KCMJ is comprised of a set of criminal laws and includes many that are punishable under



Army Col. Jason Shepherd (left), Army Lt. Col. Richard Couch, and Army Col. Natalie Lewellen participated in an robing ceremony after Couch completed the Military Judge Course at The Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School in Charlottesville, Va. on July 1, 2022. (Courtesy Photo)

civilian law (e.g., murder, rape, drug use, drunk driving, etc.). It also gives commanders the authority to punish other conduct that is related to good order and discipline in the military. Offenses of this nature include absence without leave, disrespect towards superiors, malingering, conduct unbecoming of officer and sexual harassment.

Shepherd believes that having the ability to convene courts-martial in Kentucky will benefits both Soldiers and commanders.

“It gives commanders a stronger military justice tool than nonjudicial punishment for more serious disciplinary issues,” Shepherd said.

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LEADERSHIP PROFILE:

SOLDIER PERSEVERES TO BECOME A FIRST IN KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD

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

It is a rare occasion when a new Soldier, fresh from basic training shows up to his unit Ranger and Airborne qualified. It is so rare; it has never before been done in the Kentucky National Guard.

But for the young Pfc. Tristian Hines, of Somerset, Ky., who will be joining the 1-149th Infantry, he was Ranger qualified before he even received his unit's patch at First Formation July 21, 2022.

"I had no idea it hadn't been done before," said Hines. "I just felt like it'd be wrong to waste an opportunity. I wanted to test myself and see if I could handle it."

Hines was able to go to Ranger School as part of the Ranger Training Leadership Initiative (RTLTI) program, a program in which only National Guard Soldiers qualify for. He was the first Kentucky Guardsman to successfully complete the process.

The RTLTI is a program where National Guard Soldiers are recruited out of their Infantry or Calvary One Station Unit Training (OSUT). OSUT Soldiers stay with the same class throughout Infantry training. Unlike many other MOS', Soldiers do not have to move to another installation after BCT to complete AIT.

"We give them a direct pipeline to Ranger school," said Capt. Josh Neville, Special Projects Officer and commander for the



Pfc. Tristian Hines poses with a bottle buddy after their completion of Ranger School.

TOP SECRET
HINES, TRISTIAN
PFC

RTLTI, ARNG Warrior Training Center at Fort Benning, Ga. "We'll bring them to RTLTI for 28 days and if they graduate, then they'll go to the Ranger Training Assessment Course (RTAC) and finally on to Ranger school."

He added that the unique thing about the RTLTI is that it is the only direct pipeline to Ranger School right out of OSUT.

Hines was nearing the end of basic when he was approached by some Rangers and felt that it was a path in which he was very interested in taking. When he was presented the opportunity to be in the pipeline, he took it.

"They came out about two months before our OSUT graduation, the cadre that came in was talking to us about Ranger School," said Hines. "They handed out this pamphlet and



Pfc. Tristian Hines, who will be joining the 1-149th Infantry, gets his unit patch from Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Williamson, readiness NCO the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Brigade during First Formation July 21, 2022.

one of the things I paid attention to was it said, 'this isn't for the weak or faint hearted' and that just stuck with me because I always pray for motivation and discipline to get to the next goal."

For Hines, who is a highly motivated Soldier, he credits family examples that gave him strength and the values to never quit.

His perseverance stuck out to his peers as well as the Ranger cadre, especially Neville, who was able to give him his Ranger tab personally.

"I was fortunate to be able to pin on his Ranger tab" added Neville. "It took him a while, but he never quit! We are incredibly proud of him."



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)

"The fact that I decided to take on this challenge and say that I was going to live by the Ranger creed. I have to hold myself to that standard now."

As for what it means to Hines to have completed the feat of Ranger school before he even met his unit, his answer is wise beyond his years.

"Just being a Ranger qualified leader. Although I'm a PFC, I still look at it as though I need to set the example. It doesn't matter what ranks are around me," he said. "The fact that I decided to take on this challenge and say that I was going to live by the Ranger creed. I have to hold myself to that standard now."

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Pfc. Tristian Hines, of Somerset, Ky., poses for a photo after his completion of Ranger School.



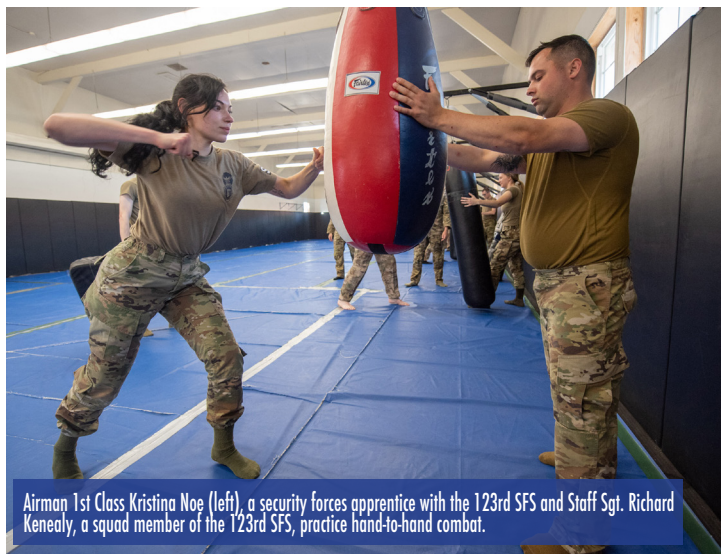
LAW & ORDER

Security Forces conduct specialized law-enforcement training in California

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

CAMP SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif. — Twenty-two Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard’s 123rd Security Forces Squadron recently conducted a week of training here focused on supporting law enforcement.

“We worked on domestic operations, which included riot control, peaceful protestors and how to deal with them; how to react when a riot breaks out; the techniques and tactics to control rioters; and how to secure spaces and clear people off areas



Airman 1st Class Kristina Noy (left), a security forces apprentice with the 123rd SFS and Staff Sgt. Richard Kenealy, a squad member of the 123rd SFS, practice hand-to-hand combat.

that we need to,” said Nelson, unit training manager for the 123rd SFS.

Airmen also were able to conduct simulated traffic stops and employ non-lethal bullets during the training, which took place May 16 to 22.

“Traffic stops are some of the most dangerous interactions that law enforcement officers can have,” Nelson said. “Using the munitions and police vehicles really enhances the training value there, because the officers realize that they can be shot at any time. They have to approach things much more tactically.”

Tech. Sgt. Cameron Blankenship, a lead instructor with the 123rd SFS training office who also works in civilian law enforcement, explained that real-world incidents helped him design training for the Airmen. Blankenship incorporated multiple scenarios he has encountered in real life at his civilian job.

“I’ve probably made thousands of traffic stops over the past couple years,” he said. “I’ve done a lot of things wrong, I’ve done a lot of things right. I’m trying to help a lot of the newer generation learn from some of my mistakes that I’ve made in real life and really try to focus on the safety aspects of traffic stops.

“Just talking them through their mistakes, talking through my mistakes and then formulating a good plan to safely navigate those kinds of situations was really beneficial to not only myself — to just get those good reps in, in a controlled environment — but for them as well.”

The squadron also employed a warehouse setup for troops to practice room-clearing techniques and neutralize active shooters.

“We focused a lot on ‘shoot, move, communicate’ — how to engage as a fire team, clear a building out, move as a team to destroy enemy targets while there are potential innocent bystanders in the way,” Blankenship said.





Members of the 123rd SFS practice room-clearing techniques.

“An active shooter is probably our biggest threat at home station. Unfortunately, we live in a world where our threat more than likely is not going to be terrorist — it’s going to be one of our own. I think this has really set good foundational skills for everybody to go into one of these situations.”

Squadron members also participated in combative training.

“We worked on hand-to-hand skills because you never know when you might be taken to the ground and presented with an attacker who’s trying to smash your face in and take your weapons,” Nicholson said. “The ‘fight house’ there offered us a unique opportunity to work on those skills.”

“The ‘shoot, move, communicate’ drill has to be one of the biggest successes. I saw the troops become way more proficient from day one to day three on that training block.”

Some Airmen in the squadron have attended specialized tactical training taught by former special forces operators, and they brought that experience with them to Camp San Luis Obispo.

“They’ve taught our guys how to do it, and they’re continuing their training. And then they’re passing that knowledge down to our younger Airmen,” Nicholson said. “Because of the knowledge base that was shared with the Airmen there, I could definitely see the improvements through the team as they continued to practice and hone their skills.”

“There’s nothing quite like the potential for being shot with simulated munitions. It raises adrenaline. And when you go through

an adrenaline-inducing situation with other people, it builds up a camaraderie and a team spirit that other things can’t deliver the same way.”



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EDDIE WARD: RELUCTANT PILOT, PIONEER IN AVIATION

This is a short excerpt from a historical piece that was posted in full on our website and was put together by John Trowbridge

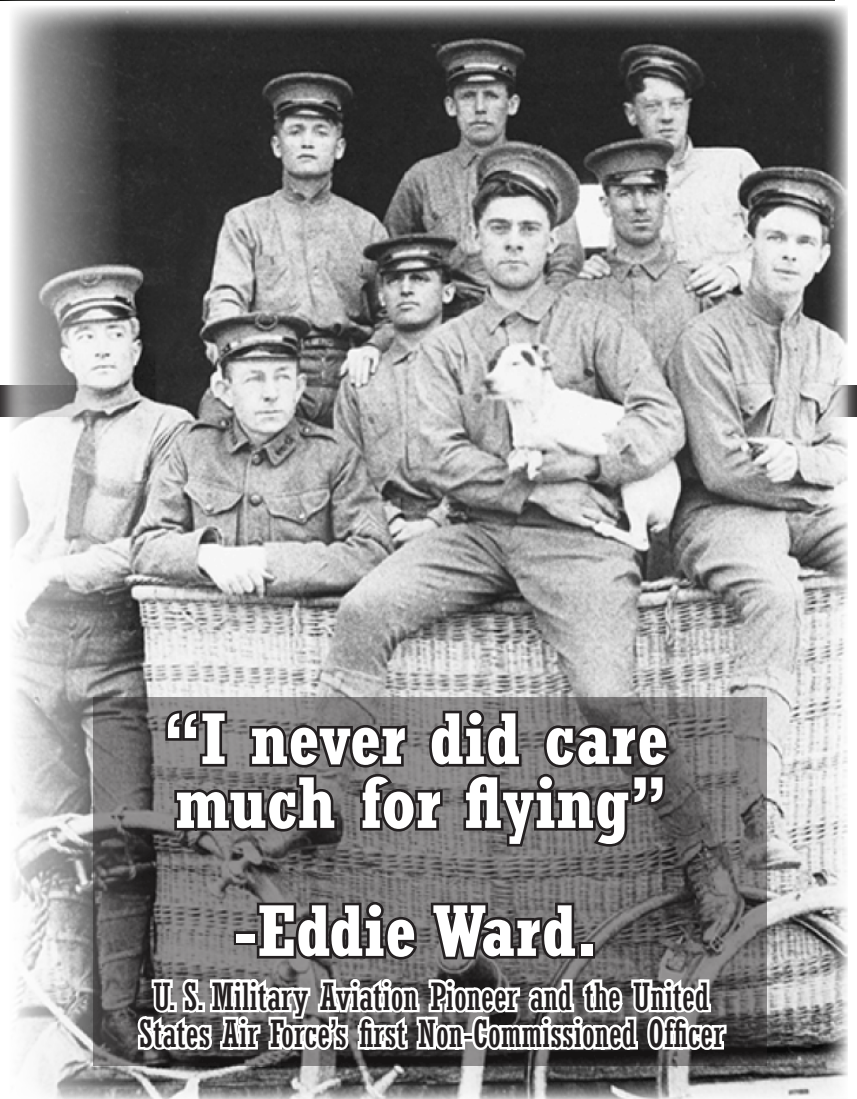
September 18, 2022, marks the 75th anniversary of the United States Air Force. On this day back in 1947, the Air Force was established as a separate branch of the United States Military. However, the history of U.S. military aviation stretches back even further, to April 1861, when the Army became interested in balloons as a means of observation on battlefields during the Civil War.

The following article is the story of a Kentuckian who was at the very beginning of our modern military aviation program, in 1907, and assisted through some the monumental events and developments which led the way to establishing today's Army Aviation and the United State Air Force.

Although he spent most of his military career in the field of aviation Edward "Eddie" R. Ward of Pine Knot, Kentucky, made the comment, "I never did care much for flying," during a 1960 interview. Although he did not know it at the time of his service, Eddie Ward was destined to become a pioneer in the history of U. S. military aviation.

Eddie Ward was born in Pine Knot, McCreary County, Kentucky on November 23, 1881, the only son and oldest child of James S. and Parzida Brown Ward. Eddie had six siblings: five younger sisters, Minnie E., Luella, Alice, Etta Mae, Rosetta and brother William. His father, James, had served as a Private with Company E "Lynchburg Rifles", 11th Virginia Infantry Regiment, CSA, during the Civil War. In the early 1870's James had moved to Kentucky from Virginia, working for the Cincinnati Southern Railroad, but eventually went to work as a coal miner.

Eddie would initially follow his father's footsteps and began work as a railroad signalman. However, on August 21, 1901, Eddie enlisted in



"I never did care much for flying"

-Eddie Ward.

U. S. Military Aviation Pioneer and the United States Air Force's first Non-Commissioned Officer

the U.S. Army at the age of 19. He was initially assigned to the 74th Company, Coast Artillery at Fort Williams, Cape Elizabeth, Maine. In 1906, he was transferred to Fort Omaha, Nebraska, to pre- pare for the

On July 2, 1907, Corporal Edward R. Ward and Private First Class Joseph E. Barrett of the newly organized Balloon Division, U.S. Army Signal Corps were the two men selected (War Department Special Order No. 154, 2 July

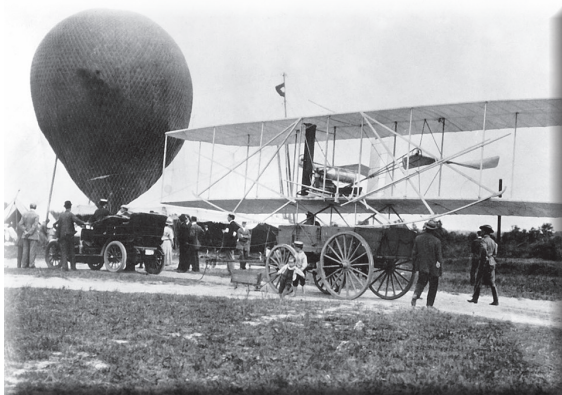
opening of an Aviation Cadet training school for the Army Balloon Service, which was about to be established.

In June 1907, the commanding officer of the Signal Corps at Fort Wood on Bedloe Island (present day Liberty Island) in New York Harbor, was ordered by the War Department to detail two Enlisted men to attend a school of practical balloon instruction at the [Albert] Leo Stevens' Balloon Factory, on Ninth Avenue, in New York City. Stevens had been appointed instructor to the Signal Corps in the "handling of aerostats" (tethered observation balloons) for the U.S. Balloon Corps, in 1907.

1907). The two soldiers were to learn the fundamentals of balloon fabric and the manufacture of buoyant gasses, the two became the first technically trained American Airmen in history, and for Eddie Ward, the first Non-Commissioned Officer of the United States Air Force and Army Aviation. Barrett who was not fond of ballooning deserted the Army and rejoined the Navy in September of 1907 leaving Ward as the sole enlisted soldier assigned to the Aeronautical Division. This was the beginning of Ward's career in military aviation and the first of several significant milestones in military aviation.



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Decker promoted to brigadier general as KYANG chief of staff

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Mary S. Decker, chief of staff for Joint Force Headquarters—Air, Kentucky National Guard, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in a ceremony in Louisville.

The adjutant general of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Army Maj. Gen. Haldane B. Lamberton, praised Decker for her dedication and commitment to excellence, noting that she first joined the Air Force in 1987 as an Airman Basic—the lowest possible grade—before rising through the ranks with steadily increasing levels of responsibility and leadership.

“We’re blessed here in the Kentucky National Guard,” Lamberton told an audience of nearly 100 family, friends and colleagues who gathered for the ceremony, held beside a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft in the Maintenance Hangar at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base. “We’ve got leaders in the NCOs and the warrant officers and the officers, but it’s a pyramid-type organization. The folks who move up to the senior

leadership positions—they’re folks who have special skills or abilities or a level of dedication that not everybody has.

Decker now follows in the footsteps of Maj. Gen. Verna D. Fairchild, a nurse who became the first woman to serve as a general officer in the Kentucky Air National Guard, and the nation’s first female assistant adjutant general for Air, a post she held from 1993 to 1999.

Decker expressed her appreciation to Lamberton, her family and her coworkers for their support through the years.

“I’m very honored and grateful that you selected me to serve as your next chief of staff,” Decker told Lamberton. “I’m looking forward to being part of your leadership team to help shape the future of the Kentucky Air National Guard. When I joined the Air Force in 1987 as an airman basic, I never dreamed I would be standing here today in front of you as a brigadier general. However, I would not be standing here today if it wasn’t for leaders who believed in me and leaders who challenged me over my career.”



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FROM THE CHAPLAIN

LIFE SUPPORT

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bill Draper
Deputy State Chaplain
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By CH (COL) Jay Padgett,
Kentucky Army National Guard

Good Soldiers are necessary for a strong Army. A strong Army is necessary for the preservation of those God-given and inalienable rights which can be lost through weakness. Our American rights then are dependent upon the strength of our religion.

– CH (MG) Francis Sampson, 12th Army Chief of Chaplains (1967-1971)

Father Francis Sampson chronicled his service as a paratrooper and regimental chaplain of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division in his book *Paratrooper Padre*, first published in 1948. The quote from Sampson resonates with relevance after seventy-four years. After jumping into the carnage of Normandy, Bastogne, the Ardennes, and twice surviving as a POW, Sampson was convinced that a strong spiritual life provides a source of strength and perseverance.

Today, the Army is implementing the Holistic Health and Fitness System (H2F) to increase individual and unit readiness across five domains: Physical Readiness, Nutritional Readiness, Mental Readiness, Spiritual Readiness, and Sleep Readiness. “Spiritual readiness is the ability to endure and overcome times of stress, hardship, and tragedy by making meaning of life experiences.”

Spiritual resiliency is integral to a holistic approach to life and to Soldier readiness and like CH Sampson said, it is necessary for good Soldiers and a strong Army.





THE LAST WORD

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Kentucky Artillerymen step up, help battle buddy in need

By Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

Kentucky National Guard Soldiers of Bravo Battery, 2-138th Field Artillery Battalion recently came together to help out one of their former Soldiers when they saw he had a major need.

Three years ago, Spc. Akir Jackson was involved in an automobile accident in January 2019 and sustained a traumatic brain injury. Since the accident, he has been bound to a wheelchair and unable to walk. Recently, Jackson got a bigger motorized wheelchair but it was going to be too big to access his house.

“In April, I received a call from a family friend of Spc. Jackson stating that he was about to receive a new motorized wheelchair and it would not fit through the side of his house,” said Army Capt. Logan Forrest, 2-138th Field Artillery Battalion battery commander. “After following up with his mother, Angela Jackson, she requested assistance to build a ramp in the front of their house. In that moment and without hesitation, I said YES!”, because I knew our unit would answer the call, because that is what we do, we help people in need, especially our own!”



Those who worked with Jackson say that he has a heart of gold and was a Soldier that made those around him better. So it was no surprise to have so many individuals want to step up when they heard that Akir was going to be receiving a new motorized wheelchair that wasn't going to fit the current ramp situation that the Jackson's had.

“One of my priorities since taking command has been to ensure we stay connected with Jackson and his family,” said Forrest. “Bravo Battery has a strong family culture and it is nested in our DNA to always lend a hand when needed. Even though he no longer wears the uniform, he still is a part of our family.”

The original plan Forrest had was to find a non-profit organization that could provide either the material and/or labor for the ramp, because he knew of many programs that specialized in helping disabled veterans. After reaching out to various organizations, their requests kept leading to dead ends. That's when he decided to put out a message to the Soldiers in his unit.

“As expected, many Soldiers jumped to volunteer,” said Forrest.

But one Soldier who went above and beyond was Staff Sgt. Chase Austin.

Austin, who owns his own construction company and is a childhood friend of Jackson, said that he would do whatever was needed to help his friend out. He donated not only his time and expertise, but also his tools and materials.

“It means a lot for me to be in a position to help anyone. I try to live my life with high standards and morals and helping Jackson was just the right thing to do. I didn't even think twice about it.”

Kentucky Air Guardsman part of Air Force team that won Halo esports competition

By Senior Airman Madison Beichler
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Trey Christenson, a technical sergeant in the Kentucky Air National Guard, was attending an esports gaming competition at the beginning of May to see some friends compete, when a chance meeting led him to assist the United States Air Force team in taking the win by the end of the month during the first official Halo Infinite esports competition in the Department of Defense.

At a Halo Sporting Championship event in Kansas City, Mo., in early May, Christensen, an aerial porter with the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, had an unexpected encounter with the founder of Air Force Gaming, Capt. Oliver Parsons. Parsons told Christenson about the Halo Infinite competition for the DOD, mentioning a last-chance qualifier and recommending that Christenson participate.

After qualifying, Christenson and his team competed in the United States Air Force's final round at Patrick Space Force Base, Fla., May 17 to 23. After taking the win in the Air Force finals, the team advanced to FORCECON22 at the Tech Port Center in San Antonio, Texas, to score the DOD title in the final contest May 28 to 29.

Christenson says three things went into the Air Force team's win: teamwork, attitude and strategy, which came naturally to the Airmen on his team.

“With the Air Force, there was a lot of teamwork focus instead of individual play, which I feel is prevalent already in the Air Force in general,” Christenson said. “Second was trying to maintain a humble attitude. We went in trying to show what we can do, not just to win. Esports is going to grow, so it doesn't matter to me who won. It was great to win, but this is much bigger than the event and myself.”

His win came as no surprise to his fellow Airmen at the aerial port, according to Master Sgt. Charles Wilding, Christenson's supervisor.

The flexibility of the Guard and support from his coworkers allowed Christenson to participate in the competition with relatively short notice.





Gold Star Families enjoy Riverboat ride

By Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

Several hundred Gold Star Families were treated to fun, food and great views of the Ohio River as the Kentucky National Guard and Survivor Outreach Services hosted their annual Riverboat Ride on the Ohio with BB Riverboats June 12.

As the Belle of Cincinnati floated down the Ohio River, children got their faces painted, ate ice cream and got to sit upfront helping steer the boat with captain Allen Bernstein.

Bernstein and his daughter, Terri, owns the riverboat company and are also a Gold Star Family. Terri lost her husband who was a Kentucky National Guardsman in 2007 while he was deployed to Afghanistan.

“It’s a great day that we look forward to every year”, said Allen Bernstein. “Hosting this event helps us connect with and give back to the other Gold Star Families.”

According to David Orange, one of the coordinators with Survivor Outreach Services, Gold Star Families from Georgia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois were represented at this year’s event.



Operation HEROes Hosts Kentucky’s First All-Female Honor Flight

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

An all-women veteran group boarded an A320 Airbus out of the Blue Grass Airport for Washington, D.C., June 11, 2022, for an historic all-female veteran honor flight.

“Normally, we fly World War II, Korean, and Vietnam veterans here to D.C., to visit their memorials,” said Ashley Boggs Bruggeman, Honor Flight Kentucky flight director. “Today is significant as we are flying nothing but women- 134 female veterans from across the commonwealth, honoring their service and the legacy they leave for future generations of women.”

“I really just don’t have words, which I will say is very unusual,” laughed Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nancy Christiano, retired Kentucky Army National Guard. “They have done honor flights for a while. To be selected to be on the first all-female flight is an honor. We always had to work harder for the same things -- I’m just a little overwhelmed, and it is all so wonderful.”

Of the 134 service members on board, the Kentucky National Guard was represented by 17 Soldiers and Airmen. This special occasion allowed Kentucky veterans from Vietnam through Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom to meet for the first time.



Spaulding concludes distinguished military career after 35 years

By Dale Greer, 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Chief Master Sgt. Gary L. Spaulding was retired from the Kentucky Air National Guard during a ceremony here June 12, concluding a 35-year career of distinguished service to the Commonwealth and nation.

Spaulding, military personnel management officer for the Air Component at Joint Forces Headquarters — Kentucky, also received a Meritorious Service Medal and Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal at the event, which was attended by more than 100 friends, family and colleagues.

Maj. Gen. Charles Walker, who officiated, called Spaulding “the life, the soul and the conscience” of the Kentucky Air Guard for more than three decades.

“There is no one I’ve served with in that time who has had as great an impact as Gary Spaulding has had on an organization,” said Walker, director of the Office of Complex Investigations at the National Guard Bureau and a former chief of staff at Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard.

“Gary Spaulding has been able to build relationships, not only at this organization, but at every level in the National

Guard,” Walker told the audience, seated before a C-130 Super Hercules aircraft in the Maintenance Hangar at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base.

“And they’re real because he’s a real person who treats everyone with dignity and respect. If I could say one thing about him, he sets the standard for human beings and treating people like they matter.



Guardsmen aid in water shortage

By Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Public Affairs Office

Around 20 Kentucky Guard Soldiers have been helping assist with the water shortage in Crittenden County June 24-July 2.

The Soldiers with the 2061st Multi-Role Bridge Company as well as the 206th Engineer Battalion, 201st Engineer Battalion, and 103rd Chemical Battalion have been working with Kentucky Emergency Management on efficient ways to source water from local rivers due to the recent low levels from Old Town Lake, which is the town’s water source.

On July 1, Jeremy Slinker, director for Kentucky Emergency Management, flew out with Army Lt. Col. Curtis Persinger, Director of Military Operations, to view the area and meet with city leaders.

During their visit, they were able to discuss a way forward for the community and see the work the Guard Soldiers were doing first hand.

“Thanks to the might and strength of the Kentucky National Guard, and all others that are assisting in Marion, everybody’s giving everything they got, I would say the situation is going well considering,” said Slinker. “We’re really fighting a tough battle on keeping the city in water, which is our ultimate goal until we can get a more, although temporary, but a more substance fix to the water issue, other than hauling it or giving out bottled water.”

A state of emergency was declared for the town due to the levee containing the city’s water reservoir being compromised, and the city facing a critical shortage of water. Per order of Gov. Andy Beshear, the Kentucky National Guard was called on to provide equipment and operators to support the movement and distribution of water to mitigate the local shortage and support state and county emergency management efforts.



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HAPPY
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The U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor Demo Team from the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base, Va., performs an aerial demonstration over the Ohio River in downtown Louisville, Ky., April 23, 2022 as part of the Thunder Over Louisville air show. Photo by Dale Greer