

# Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 23, Issue 2 - May 2020

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



**TEAM KENTUCKY**  
**GUARD ANSWERS UNPRECEDENTED**  
**CALL WITH COVID-19 RESPONSE**

# AROUND THE GUARD AND IN OUR PAGES



ON THE COVER - Spc. Fred Spanier, with the 103rd Chemical Battalion, stops to pose for a photo as he helps out at one of the two local Northern Kentucky food banks Apr. 7, 2020 as part of the Guards the COVID-19 response.



**JFHQ** - Col. Bryan Howay is promoted to the rank of Brig. Gen. at a ceremony on Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, Ky. Oct. 19, 2019. Brig. Gen. Howay assumes his new role as the Director of the Joint Staff over the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard. (Photo by Maj. Stephen Martin)

**149th MEB** - Soldiers with the 206th Engineer Battalion participated in the Norwegian Ruck March alongside Soldiers from Norway while deployed to the Middle East in October, 2019. (Courtesy photo)



**138th FAB** - Col. Ronnie Barnes, 138th Brigade commander, presented a heritage print to Lt. Col. Mike Woodson, 2/138th Battalion Commander, at St. Barbara's Ball, Dec. 1, 2019. The heritage print depicts significant moments in the history of the National Guard and its ancestor units to inspire present-day National Guard Soldiers and Airmen. (Photo by Capt. Michael Reinersman)

**75th TC** - Sgt. Jacob Viestra, with the 1-149th Infantry Battalion, conducts a vehicle familiarization drill with Mountain Warriors to ensure mission readiness as part of the Patient Movement Dispatch Site in Williamsburg, KY. (Photo by Spc. Austin Tarter)

**63rd TAB** - Chief Warrant Officer Steve Knight's UH-60 Blackhawk pulls through the water cannon spray creating "angel wings" after his final flight at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Frankfort, Ky., Feb. 28, 2020. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane)

**123rd AW** - A Kentucky Air National Guard C-130 Hercules flies over the commonwealth of Kentucky as part of Operation American Resolve on Friday, May 1, 2020. The 123rd Airlift Wing sent two C-130s for the aerial demonstration that is a nationwide salute to all those supporting COVID-19. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Phil Speck)

**238th RTI** - Ranger instructors with the Warrior Training Center at Fort Benning worked in conjunction with the 238th Regional Training Institute to conduct a fast paced and challenging Light Leaders Course that consisted of classroom training, situational training exercise lanes, land navigation and close quarters marksmanship, March 6-15, 2020 at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville Ky. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane)

## IN THIS EDITION

- 12 Alternate Care Facility
- 14 Soldiers Support Food Banks
- 15 Troops Assist with Drive-thru Test Site



## BLUEGRASS GUARD

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## LETTER FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

As the 53rd Adjutant General for the Kentucky National Guard, I'm genuinely honored to assume the responsibility and serve with the men and women of the Air & Army National Guard. In the past 19 years, post 9/11, we've grown as a reliable, responsible, and professional military force. With the quality of Airmen, Soldiers and Civilians we have in the Kentucky Guard, I'm proud to be with them.

Whether we are traditional or fulltime members of the KYNG, our family, friends, and neighbors know that we serve and look to us as *representatives* of the military. This is especially true during this time in our state and national response to the Corona Virus (COVID-19) outbreak. I've received numerous inquiries from family and friends, as I'm sure many of you have as well, asking about the National Guard's involvement with the Commonwealth's efforts to stem the spread of the contagion. While not all of us are medical experts, I believe we are looked to as a source of balance, safety, and security in our communities. That's why we are sought out. So as some of our members respond through a variety of mission sets to meet the state and our community's requests for aid, I ask that you be cognizant of how we present ourselves. We really do set an example for others to follow in our respective communities. Our *professionalism* and conduct, both in and out of uniform does have an impact on the others around us. How we present ourselves, how we communicate, and how we show respect to the public has a calming influence on them. This is a credit to each one of us as individuals and collectively to the Kentucky National Guard.



As we respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond I ask that each of you look out for your own well-being. Each of us are just as vulnerable as the general population whether we are on a mission or at home. The preventative measures we can take are simple and easy. These include social distancing of 6 feet and avoiding handshakes and instead consider an elbow bump. Demonstrate personal hygiene to include hand washing. The use of soap and water and a two-minute scrub of our hands before and after touching objects and after toileting is the primary means of reducing transmission. Also, sneezing or coughing into the crook of our elbow and the use of hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available will all reduce spread of the virus. *Remember* these actions aren't just to lessen your likelihood of contracting the virus but so that you do not spread it to others. If you have a fever or other symptoms of illness, call in to your supervisor, stay home and contact your Primary Health Care provider.

Lastly, I want everyone to be wary of the rumor mill. It's very easy for false and malicious rumors to be spread, especially in this environment of dealing with a pandemic which impacts on all of our lives. For any information you hear, always look to the source. Seek out *credible* information channels such as the military, a government website, or established news network. The information on most social media websites is not controlled or authenticated in anyway it has become a primary source of unfounded rumors.

Over the many years I have served in the military, I have come to realize just how many folks look to the National Guard as a source of *stability and reassurance*. When we face issues such as this pandemic, the need for reassurance and stability is even greater. So, again, I ask that each of you serve as leaders in your respective communities by virtue of how you present yourselves and show respect to others.

BE PROFESSIONAL. SET THE EXAMPLE.

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

“THE NEED FOR  
REASSURANCE AND  
STABILITY IS EVEN  
GREATER IN THIS  
PANDEMIC.”



## CYBER TEAM WRAPS UP FIRST DEPLOYMENT

Staff Report

A unique unit within the Kentucky National Guard has returned from the Washington D.C. area after spending the last year conducting cyberspace operations in support of US Cyber Command.

The 13-member unit is a part of the 175th Cyber Protection Team, which consists of Soldiers from Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. They joined other states in rounding out an organization called Task Force Echo.

“These Soldiers have a skill set that is unique to the Guard and one that they excel in due to both their military and civilian experience,” said 75th Troop Command Brigade Commander, Col. Douglas Clay. “This new war fighting domain is one that we're still trying to wrap our heads around and I'm proud to

say our Soldiers are at the tip of the spear. We couldn't have deployed a stronger group of Soldiers for such a vital mission.”

The 175th CPT was formed in 2016 drawing Soldiers with skills and technical backgrounds from their civilian jobs. Many of these Soldiers study and work in cyber, computer science, information technology, and engineering careers for companies within the Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia region. The individual team members have each completed numerous training programs in preparation for the deployment.

After returning back to the Commonwealth, these Soldiers will continue to provide support by training future team members and preparing for missions under state authorities. 🇺🇸



## ARE YOU CYBER SAFE?

As the world continues to change, cyberattack techniques become more advanced and dangerous. Our Cyber Team is looking to anticipate and prevent these attacks by empowering you with tips to protect your data and systems. Here's just a few to keep in mind:

- Use a strong password for both military and personal accounts--preferably with multifactor authentication.
- Do not give out critical information such as your password, credit card information, or healthcare records through email.
- Protect your digital identity by using strong passwords, limiting your social media sharing by changing settings to friends only, and closing old accounts.
- Protect yourself while traveling by keeping an eye on your belongings, do not connect to unsecure public WiFi, and make sure to have a password or pin on all your devices.

BLUEGRASS GUARD

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

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

*Don't miss an issue*

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

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

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





The G1/G9/HRO sections have not let COVID-19 and teleworking keep them from getting better physically. Until everyone is back in the office and back to normal operations, the G1/G9/HRO has started an initiative called “Tele-Workout”. At the beginning of each week, a workout is published and everyone has until the following Sunday to complete it. The requirement is for everyone to submit a photo as proof. Storyboards of their results were posted from each week. This has definitely increased morale in the midst of COVID-19 restrictions.

College sports has been affected in a major way since the outbreak and they too have had to move to more of a tele-workout format. These are the new normals that athletes and Soldiers have had to adjust to with a worldwide pandemic ongoing. We were able to talk to a strength coach from a local university and see how they are handling the changes and see how we all can sty fit through this.

Story by Maj. Gus Lafontaine

After concluding their season by clinching bowl wins for two years in a row, the University of Kentucky football team has high ambitions for the 2020 season. However, there is uncertainty about the future of college football. Will a season begin on schedule this fall? Will players compete in vacant stadiums? Will there even be a college football season? How does a team prepare in this moment? University of Kentucky head strength coach Mark Hill offered his expectation for the team.

“There’s always something you can do. Even if you’re stuck in the house for 24 hours there’s always something you can do.”

He added, “we’re focused on what you can do as opposed to what you don’t have and what you can’t do.”

The Kentucky Army National Guard is in a similar position. The Army Combat Fitness Test becomes the physical fitness test of record beginning in October, 2020. Does the state of affairs with regard to COVID-19 change that? According to Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Withers, not at all.

“The Army has suspended the requirements of the ACFT until further notice, but as Soldiers we must remain disciplined in maintaining our personal physical fitness standards and be prepared for a test of record later this year.”

Understandably, some Soldiers will wonder how they will conduct physical training in an environment where gyms from Boone National Guard Center to their local fitness facility are closed. Group activities, including Army-sponsored physical training sessions, are off limits. Kentucky’s football team faces the same facility, equipment, and gathering limitations. Hill says the key is to create opportunity rather than create excuses.

“At the end of the day it’s about accountability, we always talk to our guys about being accountable. First to themselves and then to their teammates. We talk about it all the time in this program.”

Hill has prescribed his players a variety of body weight exercises featuring push ups, burpees, bodyweight squats, bodyweight lunges, couch dips, and sprints on the sidewalk.

Staff Sgt. Zac Casey, Kentucky Army National Guard ACFT NCO, also suggest bodyweight exercises as an effective physical fitness tool during this time.

“I am asked repeatedly during this time about workouts without equipment. I tell everyone that they are the machine.”

Casey recently launched an Instagram account on behalf of Kentucky’s Attack Exercise through Education (AXE) program to educate Soldiers about fitness during a time of quarantines and facility closures.

READ FULL STORY AT [KENTUCKYGUARD.DODLIVE.MIL](https://kentuckyguard.dodlive.mil)



## BROTHERS IN ARMS

Story by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane

With the recent promotion of Chief Warrant Officer 5 Donald Harlan, now the Kentucky National Guard has two top warrants touting the same last name.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Dwight Harlan is currently the State’s Command Chief Warrant Officer and Donald is the Senior Personnel Warrant in the personnel (G-1) office.

Born in Louisville in 1964, and raised in Bremen, Ky, a young Donald and Dwight spent a lot of time hunting and camping together and playing around on their family farm, their dad was a coal miner who worked in and around where the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center sits today, and was a tanker in the KYARNG as well.

The twin brothers have had similar careers starting the day they both went to basic training at Fort Knox at 17 years of age. The brothers were put into what was called a Buddy Platoon consisting of Soldiers from Kentucky and Louisiana.

“We got singled out a lot for being twin brothers,” said Donald. “We had a good time still despite it.”

After basic training, they even joined each other at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, Donald, as a welder and Dwight as a machinist.

“While I was a welder with the 307th Maintenance Company, my sergeant asked me to help out in the orderly room and I of course said yes despite me not having any experience but it kept me off KP (kitchen) duty,” shared Donald during his promotion ceremony.

Thus started his transition to the personnel side.

As both men progressed in their career working as with the Guard as either federal technicians or Active Guard Reserves (AGR), both men have stayed close and have used each other as sounding boards when one had questions or issues with each other’s jobs despite Donald switching to the administrative and personnel section.

Each of the brothers spent more than 15 years working as enlisted Soldiers in their respective career fields. They moved from Greenville to Frankfort and around the state of Kentucky to take on different responsibilities

until they got their opportunities to join the warrant officer cohort.

Dwight was the first of the two to become a warrant officer and was a huge supporter of Donald when it was his time to go through the Warrant Officer Candidate School.

“I had always wanted to be a warrant officer, said Dwight. “It gave me upward mobility and a chance to progress my career.”

As for Donald, he had always looked up to the warrants that he worked with. Their knowledge of their job and the Army as a whole made an impression on him to the point where he decided that he wanted to be the one who others looked up to like that.

“They were always the one who would be able to quote chapter and verse and they were always the experts,” said Donald, “I told myself, I want to be that good, I want to be that guy.”

“It’s the best rank in the Army,” said Dwight about being a warrant officer. “You get the benefits of being a commissioned officer and also you still get the benefit of growing up as an NCO, so you learn from both worlds.”

“It allows you to better able to understand the needs of the Soldier and relate with them in that way,” added Donald.

But as the subject matter experts, they had to be ready for the challenges that came with the responsibility.

“You have to have the right answers,” said Dwight. “You have to be ready and proficient in your trade to give them (Soldiers/commanders) the right answers.”

As for advice they would give to any Soldier trying to make the best out of their National Guard career, both men agreed that you have to look for opportunities and when they come up, take it.

“You have to be willing to move and take the opportunities that are out there, Sometimes it means taking the job nobody wants and make the best of that opportunity,” said Donald.

The brothers also deployed around the same time in 2011 and even crossed paths when they were going through Kuwait with their respective units.

When the two men can, they still like to go camping or work on cars together when they can find time. Both of their families stay really close and spend as much time as they can with each other.

“We still work on cars together and sometimes pull tractors, stuff we did as kids,” added Dwight.

Both Harlan’s are planning on making it to forty years of service with the National Guard and once they hit that milestone, perhaps see what lies ahead.

“We’re not in any hurry to leave,” said Dwight. “We are planning for retirement but we enjoy what we’re doing.”



# YES, MA'AM!

Story by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane

Brigade training officers in the Kentucky National Guard have been very influential in the ways Soldiers get equipped to fight and accomplish their missions.

As the Kentucky Guard celebrates Women's History Month and continue recognizing the contributions of our female Soldiers across the commonwealth, our female brigade training officers are showing what strong leadership looks like.

It is critical that brigade training officers plan, resource and coordinate for challenging, relevant and effective training that meets the commander's intent. It is important that they have appropriate training and exercises so that Soldiers not only get to train in their occupational specialty but feel valued in the National Guard organization. They exist to ensure that the Soldiers are taken care of.

"I am constantly in awe of the Soldiers I serve with and their ability to maintain two very full careers in both the military and civilian world," said Maj. Jennifer S. Watson, 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade training officer.

Serving in their civilian capacity as well as doing their job as military training officers has its challenges but these three have

overcome obstacles every time.

"The Kentucky Army Guard has afforded me so many unique and challenging opportunities, from company command of the 2123rd Transportation Company, with rotations to the National Training Center and JRTC, to being the FIRO (Force Integration Readiness Officer), Mobilization Planner, numerous battalion and brigade positions, and now most recently, the 149th MEB brigade training officer," said Watson.

Watson has been in the National Guard for almost eight years with five years of prior service in the active duty Army. She joined the military as a recipient of a ROTC scholarship but has stayed in the military for the camaraderie, teamwork, and her Guard family.

"I was introduced to the Guard by my daughter's principal at the time, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Ron Ballard, and I was excited about the idea of directly serving my community through the military," said Watson.

Watson believes the National Guard is family to many who serve in its ranks, some following in the footsteps of their own family members who also have served.

"My family has a long lineage of service in the military, most

recently being my grandfather in the Army Air Corps in WWII, my father in the Navy in Vietnam and my brother serving overseas with both the Marines and Army," said Maj. Shannon Maloney, brigade training officer with the 138th Field Artillery. "I decided to serve partly as a way to pay for college but also because service to the country is an important part of my lineage and something I feel strongly about; I feel that every citizen should serve their country in some capacity."

Maloney has been in the Kentucky Guard for 10 years now. She moved to Kentucky in 2010 from Washington where she went to Gonzaga University and was born and raised in Casper, Wy.

Serving the country is a selfless act that these Soldiers embody and they lead by example. This is important as they face the many challenges in their dual National Guard missions serving the country and the commonwealth.

"I think the biggest challenge for our organization currently are competing requirements," said Capt. Jessica Miller, 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade training officer. "We have several different missions, in the 63rd TAB alone we have our federal mission where our units must train to achieve mission essential task proficiency to prepare for overseas deployments. Then we have our state-side mission where we support the Commonwealth of Kentucky during disaster relief such as the forest fires in Eastern Kentucky in November of 2016 or the Ice Storm of 2009."

Miller just passed her 20-year mark in the military; she joined as a junior in high school at 17.

"I wanted to be a part of something bigger than myself. I wanted to give back to my community. I wanted a challenge physically, mentally, and emotionally," said Miller. "I wanted to honor my grandfather who served as a Marine during WWII."

In addition to providing aid during the recent corona virus pandemic, the importance is greater than ever that the Soldiers are prepared to fight whatever mission is put before them.

"The current uncertainty in the national and international arena and the possibility of facing a near-peer threat requires our force to be highly trained and flexible," said Maloney. "We continue



Above: Capt. Jessica Miller, 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade training officer, completes MEDEVAC flight training with the unit she had the opportunity to command.

Below: Maj. Shannon Maloney, brigade training officer with the 138th Field Artillery talks to an EOD Soldier while training with the Jordanian Military with 1/623rd FA BN during her deployment to Jordan in 2013.

to ask more and more of our Soldiers and leaders inside the organization at the same time that civilian organizations are also asking more of their employees. We as full time leaders inside the Kentucky Guard need to be willing to go above and beyond for our traditional Soldiers by ensuring that their time is valued, training is worth while and challenging, and their benefits are in place."

Handling the dual nature of dealing with civilian and military struggles is something that the Guard as a whole deals with on a daily basis.

"What we do well is the balancing act of creating training that can accomplish multiple tasks that support more than one mission or requirement. We only have a limited amount of time with our Soldiers, so how we as leaders choose to train within that limited time is what matters the most and will have the biggest impact to our organization and the individual Soldier," added Miller.

Another challenge that these officers face, is keeping the highly trained Soldiers in the Guard.

"The recruiting pool continues to get smaller so retaining the Soldiers we have is of utmost importance," said Maloney. "I believe that the 138th works hard to make our Soldiers believe they are valued, train in their MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) and ensure their time and efforts are rewarded. Our training efforts are focused on the mission at hand and we challenge their leaders to do better everyday."

With their only being four brigade training officers in the Kentucky Army National Guard, the female Soldiers make up 75 percent of that training force.

"The leadership of this organization holds training in the highest regard," said Lt. Col. Robert Andersen, Kentucky National Guard's state training officer. "Majors Maloney, Watson, and Capt. Miller were the obvious choice for their positions; they are steadfast professionals and well-regarded team players."



Left: Maj. Jennifer Watson, 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade training officer promotes Spc. Jameshia Johnson during training at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin Calif., with the 2123rd Transportation Co., July 2015.



# FIND YOUR WHY

TEXT "KYGUARD" TO 95577



Chaplain Capt. Tyler Shields participating in a WWII Memorial ceremony in Jackson, Ky., July 13, 2019



## FIRST KENTUCKY CHAPLAIN NOMINATED FOR MACARTHUR AWARD

Story by Stacy Floden

He joined the Kentucky National Guard right out of high school in 2006 as an 11B-Infantryman and then branched as a field artillery officer after college. After attending seminary, Capt. Joshua Tyler Shields branched into the Chaplain corps. And now he has been nominated as the 2019 General Douglas MacArthur Leadership award for Kentucky.

"This outstanding young Soldier will go forward and compete nationally, amongst his peers from each state for the prestigious General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award," said Brig. Gen. Hal Lamberton, Kentucky's adjutant general. "He is among the best officers that our organization has to offer and we are confident that he will represent Kentucky with the highest degree of excellence."

A total of 28 awards are distributed across

the active Army, National Guard and Army Reserves. For the Army National Guard division, only seven officers will be selected for the nationwide award (6 officers and 1 warrant officer).

"Being nominated for this award is a tremendous honor which I don't take lightly. There are several exceptional company-grade officers in the 103rd Company Battalion and across the state," said Shields. "For me, as a battalion chaplain, to receive this nomination is humbling."

Chaplain Shields is the first Kentucky National Army Guard chaplain ever nominated for the MacArthur award.

"His accomplishment is a testimony of the quality of chaplains who serve in the Kentucky Army National Guard Chaplain Corps," said Col. Jay Padgett Kentucky National Guard

state chaplain. "Tyler is the epitome of a Soldier's chaplain whose character and competence undergird his caring and calling as a servant-leader. To say that we are proud of Chaplain Shields is an understatement."

The nomination process consists of the brigades sending packets to the state level where they are reviewed. The candidates go before a board where they are questioned about themselves, Gen. McArthur and leadership. Then the state adjutant general selects one individual to compete at the national level.

"Captain Shields was an easy choice as our nominee. He is a combat multiplier who represents what is best about our battalion and the Kentucky National Guard," stated Maj. Joseph Fontanez, 103rd Chemical Battalion administrative officer. "His connections to Soldiers, families, and the community are unparalleled. We are very excited he was selected as the best officer among a phenomenal group of leaders and look forward to his performance at the national level."

Shields is very involved with his community. He volunteers with several programs and organizations that help feed, clothe and love on some of the less fortunate in the state, particularly in the southeast. "Over the years, I have tried to take advantage of different training opportunities and that has given me a well-rounded resume. Other than that, I try to do my job to best of my ability for our Soldiers and their families. I'm here for them. I don't do the work for recognition or accolades, but if you do your job well for the right reasons those things will sometimes follow."

Shields will now compete with his peers from the other states and territories at the national level. The program was introduced in 1987 to recognize company-grade officers who demonstrate the ideals for which General MacArthur stood - duty, honor and country.

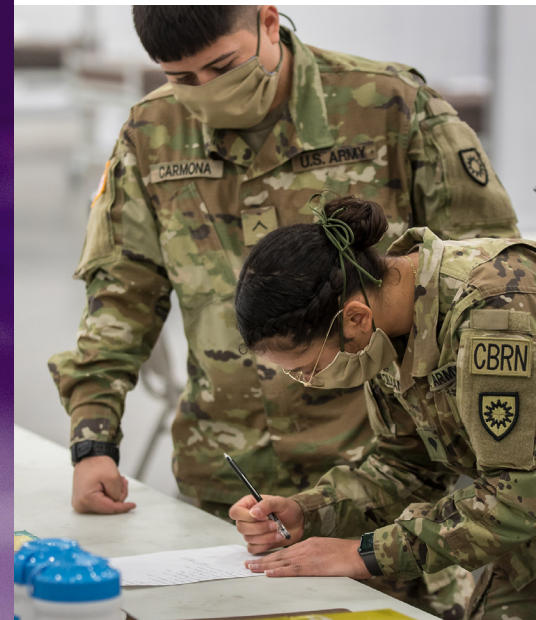


Capt. Jason Selby of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron sets up hospital beds and clinical space at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky., April 13, 2020.

# ALTERNATE CARE FACILITY

Story and photos by Dale Greer

More than 230 Airmen and Soldiers from the Kentucky National Guard spent four days turning a cavernous exhibit hall into an Alternate Care Facility in Louisville, Ky., for patients recovering from COVID-19.



The 288-bed site, located in the South Wing of the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center was ready to accept patients Mar. 15, according to Army Lt. Col. Jessica Garrett, commander of the joint Army and Air National Guard unit that is providing clinical services. Her team of nearly 200 troops includes 82 doctors, nurses and medics who stand ready to provide around-the-clock medical care here, should area hospitals reach capacity.

The facility, which can be expanded to 2,000 beds, was designed to treat patients who are in their final days of recovery and don't need intensive medical care, explained Garrett, commander of the Kentucky Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package, also known as CERFP.

"These are patients who are able to walk," Garrett said. "They can provide self-care with minimal assistance, such as go to the bathroom or take a shower, and are fairly self-sufficient."

The Kentucky Air Guard's Lt. Col. Kevin Howard said he expects patients to stay for no longer than seven days, at which point they would no longer test positive for the virus and will be released to go home.

"If we can take these patients here, local hospitals will have beds for the more urgent patients," said Howard, a medical doctor for the Department of Veterans Affairs and commander of the Air Guard's Louisville-based 123rd Medical Group Detachment 1. "So that way, our hospitals' capabilities are available for patients that need a higher level of care."

Howard's staff includes a broad range of physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses and medics who normally

work in civilian hospitals and clinics when not performing military duty. Besides practitioners from the Kentucky Air Guard, the team also includes clinicians from the Kentucky Army Guard's Shelbyville-based 1163rd Army Medical Support Co.

"The staff I have here are all excellent providers and more than capable of handling this mission and taking care of our patients in this facility," he said, adding, "It's an honor and privilege to be able to help."

"One of the nice things about the Guard is that we are Kentuckians helping fellow Kentuckians. That's a unique aspect, and I know everyone is happy to be here and do what we've trained to do."

Garrett agreed.

"We're proud to come in here and help Kentuckians in any way possible," she said. "If you talk to any Guardsman, Air or Army, they are 100 percent Team Kentucky. They want to be out in the community helping. That's the whole reason we serve."

Air Force Maj. Jarret Goddard — who led a team of 39 Kentucky Guardsmen that built the facility in just 2 ½ days — said he was thankful for the broad range of agencies supporting the effort.

"The design phase of this project began about a week ago in collaboration with multiple entities," said Goddard, operations officer for the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron. "From the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to Kentucky Emergency Management and the Kentucky Department of Public Health, it has been a real team effort."

"Being able to help our fellow citizens is a pretty rewarding thing for all of us."



Over 70 Soldiers from around the State joined the COVID-19 response by helping at “no touch” food banks that serve donated food to hungry families Apr. 7.

They helped pack bags and boxes of food, moved pallets and loaded up cars in Lexington, Louisville, Elizabethtown, Covington and another location in Northern Kentucky, Wilder.

“We’re supporting the governors’ mission in providing local support to agencies,” said Maj. Phil Mix, 103rd Chemical Battalion’s operations officer, whose Soldiers were helping with the Free Store Food Bank in Wilder. “We are here at the local food bank making sure we are able to support Kentuckians who are in need and we want to make sure we continue to have a presence and work closely with our communities.”

The National Guard has stepped up in many different ways around the state and this is just another way that the Guard can make a difference in their neighbor’s lives in times of crisis.

Due to the age of the food bank volunteers that are having to self-quarantine because of their high risk factors from the virus, there is a big need to have extra hands to aid in all the work that is increasing.

“Many of our volunteers are over 60 and for obvious reasons, we’ve asked them to stay home,” said Michael Halligan, CEO of God’s Pantry food bank in Lexington. “The National Guard’s help came at

the perfect time.”

The Soldiers worked rigorously throughout the day while being conscious to keep their social distancing.

“We’re still working as a 103rd chemical team, we just have to be six feet apart and we’re still fighting an enemy, its just that the enemy is a billion times smaller,” added Mix.

For the Soldiers, getting to help during this time is personal and allows them to feel like they are not only helping others but those that are close to them.

“My grandpa is a vet and he’s sick right now. If he catches the virus then it would be bad,” said Spc. Grant Simmons, with the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, helping at Feeding America, Kentucky’s Heartland food bank in Elizabethtown. “I think about other people’s grandparents and I’m proud to be in the process of helping them, too.”

The Soldiers will continue their mission at these food banks for the next several weeks to keep the supply chain going and make sure that the food banks can continue their service to the communities.

More than 28,400 National Guardsman from every state in the nation has answered the call to help in response to the COVID -19 pandemic. 🇺🇸



# TROOPS ASSIST WITH DRIVE-THRU TEST SITE

Story by Sgt. Destini Keene, 2112th Transportation Company Unit Public Affairs Representative

Members of the Kentucky Army National Guard began providing support to local agencies at one of Kentucky’s COVID-19 drive-thru testing sites at Summit View Academy, Apr. 15-18.

Fifteen Soldiers from the 2112th Transportation Company, 138th Field Artillery Brigade are providing traffic control for the testing site and are working alongside Kentucky Emergency Management, Kroger Health, Kentucky State Police, Kenton County Police, and the Independence Police Department at one of four Kentucky’s pop up testing sites.

The site has averaged over 200 tests a day for the last three days, helping to get to Governor Andy Beshear’s overall goal of conducting 20,000 tests over the next five weeks.

“It’s been cool to watch these many agencies come together and do one solid job to help

everybody in the community,” said Sgt. 1st Class James “Chris” Feighery, a platoon sergeant with the 2112th.

According to Feighery, the Soldiers received the call up on Easter Sunday and by 2pm they already had 15 Soldiers willing to step-up and help.

For the Soldiers, the call to action was something they were excited for and had been waiting to receive.

“I feel that it’s my duty as a National Guardsman to serve the community and what better time to do so than now,” said Sgt. Nykel McCrary on assisting with COVID-19 drive-thru testing site. “I am proud of how fluid and effective this testing site is.”

Assembling and managing all the many agencies has been a tough task but it’s something that the Director of Homeland Security says

has been made a lot easier with the National Guards help.

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

The interoperability between the Soldiers that are working alongside with Kentucky State Police and all the other agencies is a necessity that makes the whole operation flow smoothly.

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

The state intends to open more testing sites throughout Kentucky and the Soldiers of the 2112th will be along for each phase. As of now, the unit will be heading to Somerset, Ky., and help with operations at that test site.

These Guardsmen will also share their lessons learned as test sites around the state are launched. 🇺🇸





# SOLDIER BY DAY, COMPETITIVE GAMER BY NIGHT

Story by Pfc. Brett Hornback; photo by Sgt. Alan Royalty

When it comes to exploring the new realms of entertainment, one Kentuckian has embraced the world of video streaming on a new platform called Twitch.

"I'm not really great at the games; I'm just really entertaining," said Sgt. First Class Paul England.

England is a training non-commissioned officer with Kentucky Army National Guard's 623rd Field Battalion at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Kentucky. When he is not preparing Kentucky National Guard Soldiers for unknown battlefields, he can often be found entertaining viewers on the virtual battlefield.

Using the video streaming platform Twitch, England broadcasts himself live while playing video games like PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds, Rainbow Six: Siege, and Call of Duty.

With his many responsibilities in the Kentucky National Guard, England began playing video games as a way to unwind and maintain mental resilience.

"This helps me get away from the stress of everyday life and allows me to do what I enjoy doing, while connecting with friends I don't typically get to see," said England.

Due to England's engaging personality, he has gained some recognition in the world of videogame streaming and Esports, and broadcasts to thousands of subscribers. Esports, an activity in which video gamers play competitively in individual games or tournaments, has opened up doors for England within the Guard. He is now one

of nine Soldiers in the National Guard selected to be on the National Guard Bureau's National Esports Team.

England said that discipline and a good support system of his wife and family have been key to his success as a Guardsman and Twitch streamer.

England was tasked with creating a Discord page, and then subsequently selected to represent the Army National Guard as an official streamer. Discord, a site with over 14 million active users that connects video gamers with similar interests, allows players to speak and communicate in a variety of ways within a group chat room.

With a platform on both Twitch and Discord, England has been able to connect with gamers in the Guard, and has harnessed his reach, making him a more effective military leader.

"As an NCO in the Guard, it can be difficult to make connections with junior Soldiers, so you take advantage of the time you have to build those connections so that they come to trust you with issues," said England.

With the ability to communicate with others and his disciplined gaming routine, he leads by example in the Guard and within the gaming community. By sharing his abilities and talents, England has expanded his reach beyond the limits of his local community and even his state.

When England goes live during his activation, March 23, he will be boosted to the front page/carousel of Twitch, making him the first National Guardsman to ever have an individual stream boosted. 🙌



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# RENEGADES CLOSE OUT DEPLOYMENT



Story by Chief Warrant Officer Stefanie Crask

Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment “Renegades” is currently deployed overseas in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Spartan Shield located in the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations and currently serving under the Army Reserve commands of 8-229th Assault Helicopter Battalion and the 244th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade.

The mission set has included Air movements, Air assaults, External Sling Loads, HERO flights, Naval Deck Landings, and Medevac Chase Operations. They have flown in five different countries and under three Task Forces within the CENTCOM Theater. Bravo Co. has flown the highest total of any flight company in the Brigade, flying over 3200 hours over the course of eight months.

“It has been a very dynamic theater where aviation units were asked to provide a wide range of capabilities, over huge areas of operation,” said Capt. Terrell McClard, Company Commander.

One of their biggest strengths as a company has been the ability to remain flexible as the demands of the mission constantly changed over the course of the deployment. Bravo Company quickly stood out as the company that could always accomplish the mission no matter what obstacle or change was thrown their way. They have set the standard.

Their hard work, dedication and professionalism have demonstrated the dependability of the Kentucky Army National Guard, allowing positive relationships to foster with partner forces within the Task Force. Not only did they create a positive reputation for themselves and the organization, they grew in their capabilities as a unit as well as individuals.

“This opportunity to deploy to a combat theater has provided the unit the capability to grow and hone their aviation skills on a daily basis in a dynamic complex environment,” said 1st Lt. Jacob Conner, platoon leader with the 2/147. “This opportunity has allowed us to build a level of readiness that will greatly benefit the Kentucky Guard when we return and set the unit up for success for years to come.”

Over the course of the deployment so far, a total of ten Soldiers have been promoted. Stefanie Crask, Joseph McKnight and Joseph Krestan were all promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer 3. Christopher Jones, Richard Singleton, Christopher Norris and Tyler Whittaker were promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer 2. Nathan Crotti was promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant and Logan Kruthaup and Craig Browning

were promoted to Sergeant.

They also progressed three new Air Mission Commanders: Christopher Englen, Anthony Ewers and Jacob Conner while Stefanie Crask, Michele Ewers, Tyler Kramer and Christopher Norris were all progressed to Pilot in Command.

“We had a really junior group when we left home, but we worked hard, bonded and successfully completed our mission. All of us should be proud of the job we came to do and be honored to carry on the long standing military service of the Kentucky National Guard,” Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hagan.

Not only did they learn their individual jobs better, they learned about themselves too.

“This deployment has given me countless learning opportunities and chances to grow personally and professionally,” said Sgt. Craig Browning. “I have been blessed to spend this time around such great people.”

The unit is currently welcoming their replacements and getting ready to hand over the responsibility to A and C Company 2nd Battalion 147th Aviation Regiment out of Minnesota and Iowa. 🇺🇸



# MANGUASTA 19 KENTUCKY AIR GUARD PROVIDES AIRLIFT IN ITALY

Story and photos by Senior Airman Chloe Ochs

More than 35 Airmen and two C-130 Hercules aircraft from the Kentucky Air National Guard’s 123rd Airlift Wing provided airlift for U.S. and Italian airdrop operations throughout exercise Mangusta 19, held here Oct. 28 to Nov. 7.

The Italian bi-lateral national exercise is designed to promote readiness and interoperability among NATO allies and to strengthen the strategic partnership between the United States and Italy, officials said.

Mangusta 19 incorporated members from the Italian Air Force, paratroopers from the Italian Army and members of the U.S. Marine Corps from the Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 252 to train alongside the Kentucky Guardsmen.

Master Sgt. Charlie Wilding, a parachute rigger and the 123rd’s lead logistics non-commissioned officer in charge, described his interactions with the Italian Army rigging force as a mutual learning experience.

“We taught them how we do it, but then took certain things away from them that we’ll definitely be implementing at home,” said Wilding, an air transportation specialist with the 123rd. “The language barrier made it a bit difficult at the beginning, but once we started to rig, it seemed like the job itself had its own language, and we didn’t need to

talk that much. It was very nice to work with them. They’re good people.”

In addition to building cohesiveness and tactical understanding, the exercise also provided a good training opportunity for Kentucky’s traditional Guardsmen, according to Tech. Sgt. Chris McCord, a crew chief with the 123rd Maintenance Group.

“As a traditional Guardsman, the best opportunities for me to learn my job proficiently are on the road,” McCord explained. “I take these trips to spend time learning my job and becoming more and more comfortable with it. Repetition is what I need to be able to get it down.”

Mangusta 19 exemplifies how the U.S. works side-by-side with our NATO allies, training to meet future security challenges as a unified force, said Maj. Scott Benningfield, the 123rd’s air mission commander. The training contributed to developing and improving air readiness and is significant in maintaining security, he added, calling the exercise an extremely valuable experience.

“I think it was a very good thing that we did this,” said Benningfield, a navigator in the wing’s 165th Airlift Squadron. “We learned so much through our direct integration with the Italians. It was good to see how other places operate.” 🇺🇸



# WHAT IN SAM HILL IS GOING ON?

## THE STORY OF KENTUCKY ADJUTANT GENERAL SAMUEL EWING HILL

Story by John Trowbridge



This old time euphemism has been attributed, by various sources, to numerous individuals, one of which was Kentucky Adjutant General Samuel Ewing Hill, born on Jan. 30, 1844, in Morgantown, Kentucky. Hill was appointed, the 16th adjutant general by Gov. Simon Bolivar Buckner, serving in the position from Sep. 30, 1887 to Aug. 30, 1891.

Hill was the youngest of six children of Daniel S. and Malinda Ewing Hill, both of Butler County, Kentucky. In his youth, Sam was raised in Ohio County, Kentucky, where he received his education in the old Harford Seminary. At the age of sixteen he began working on a farm.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Sam's brother, John, organized Company G, Twelfth Kentucky Cavalry, and U.S.A. Sam joined his brother's company on Aug. 20, 1862, at Owensboro, Kentucky, and was appointed the orderly sergeant. On Nov. 18, 1863, Captain John W. Hill, was killed in battle at Knoxville, Tennessee. Sam was elected captain upon the death of his brother, and was referred to as the "boy captain," as his commission was given a few days prior to his 20th birthday.

During his service Hill attained many accomplishments including: the pursuit of Confederate Cavalry leader, Gen. John Hunt Morgan during his Indiana-Ohio raid; his company served under Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside, in eastern Tennessee, 1863-1864; as well as Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman in the Atlanta campaign in 1864. His company participated in Gen. George Stoneman's expedition and raid on Saltville, Virginia in 1864, and served in several other engagements during the war. It was noted that Capt. Hill never missed a campaign with his company or spent a day in the hospital. By war's end he had received a brevet promotion to major.

Maj. Hill and his command were mustered out of the service at Louisville, Kentucky, on August 23, 1865. Sam returned to Hartford after the war and entered the law office of the Honorable Henry D. McHenry. He was admitted to the Kentucky bar in the spring of 1866, continuing his studies until October of that year, when he was admitted to the senior class of the Louisville Law School. He graduated in the spring of 1867, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Laws. Returning to Hartford he entered into partnership with Judge Jesse W. Kincheloe, a partnership which lasted until Jan. 1872, when he entered into partnership with his former mentor, H. D. McHenry, with whom he remained for several years. On Oct. 12, 1869, Hill married, Naomi Baird, of Hartford.

### SENATOR

Hill entered into politics and in 1877, was elected state senator from Ohio County, serving until 1881. His eight senatorial district was composed of Ohio, Butler and Muhlenberg Counties. In 1885, he was again elected to the same office and served until 1887. He served as chairman of the joint committee on education in the Kentucky General Assembly and was a member of two of the law committees of the state senate. For many years he served as a member of the state and county Democratic committees. In 1882 and 1887, there had been talk of Hill running for lieutenant governor, it was not until the 1887 election that he formally announced himself as a candidate for the position, however he soon withdrew claiming he did not have the time to campaign.

On Aug. 30, 1887, Simon Bolivar Buckner was sworn in as the 30th governor of Kentucky, one of his first appoints was that of Hill as the adjutant general. During the Civil War, Buckner had served as a general in the

Confederate Army, while Hill had served on the side of the Union. At the time of his appointed, Hill was a state senator. An uproar in some papers across the state called for Hill's resignation as senator, at the time, Hill could legally hold both offices. Due to the continued pressure from the media, Hill resigned his senatorial seat on Dec. 1, 1887.

### FEUDS

When Buckner took office a number of feuds had been raging for a number of years in eastern Kentucky. The governor immediately began receiving pressure from the citizens and political parties in the state to put an end to the on-going violence.

Soon after his appointment as adjutant general, Gov. Simon Bolivar Butler directed Hill to go to Rowan County to learn the history of the feuds, the current situation and what could be done to put an end to the fighting once and for all.

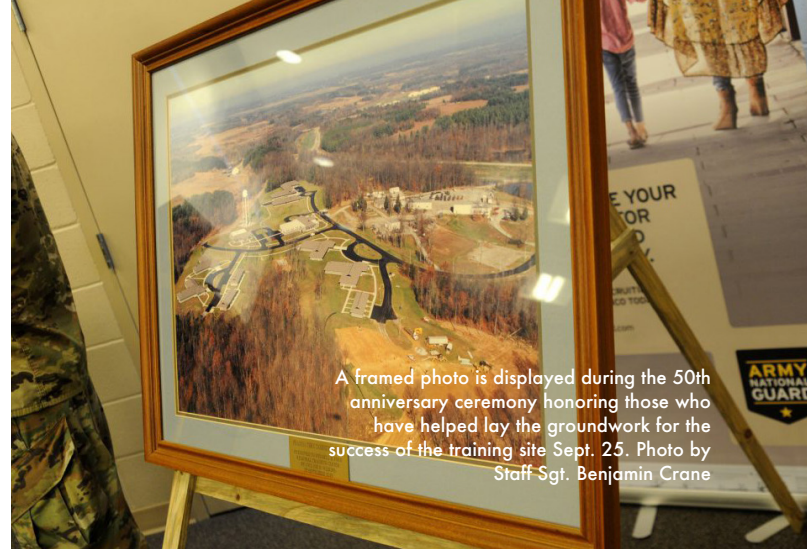
Newspapers around the country were attentive to Hill's mission and eagerly awaited word of what was happening in the hills of eastern Kentucky. As time passed, with no word, journalists and the public were asking, "What in the Sam Hill is going on up there?"

Soon after his investigation of the situation in Rowan County, Hill submitted his findings and recommendations to the Governor.

During his tenure as the adjutant general, Hill had faced numerous issues from the feuds which had plagued the state for a number of years, civil and political disturbances, and natural disasters.

Hill would make numerous trips to Washington, attempting to acquire Kentucky's \$600,000 Civil War claim.

[READ FULL STORY AT KENTUCKYGUARD.DODLIVE.MIL](#)



A framed photo is displayed during the 50th anniversary ceremony honoring those who have helped lay the groundwork for the success of the training site Sept. 25. Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane



# TRAINING CENTER CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY

Staff Report

Kentucky's main training center for the Kentucky National Guard celebrated its 50th anniversary with a ceremony honoring those who have helped lay the groundwork for the success of the training site Sept. 25.

Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center (WHFRTC) is constructed on 8,500 acres of reclaimed strip-mine land and features live-fire ranges, hardened bivouac sites as well as many other necessary amenities to make it an effective training site for the Soldiers in the region.

The training center is named after Wendell Ford, U.S. Senator and 53rd Governor of Kentucky and only sat on 29 acres when it

first opened.

"This celebration is a reflection on what WHFRTC used to be to what it is today, a coal mine to a training center," said Lt. Col. J.B. Richmond, Garrison Training Center deputy commander. "In the early 1990's the National Guard Bureau and Kentucky leadership developed this area as the regional training center for the Kentucky National Guard."

The site is versatile and flexible to the ever-changing needs of the Guard.

The site also has complete year-round accommodations, to include barracks and quarters for nearly 500 troops, a 400-seat dining hall, a drill hall and modern learning

center for computer simulator training.

"The vision the leaders had 50 years ago and how it's evolved has made it a first-class combat training center," stated Brig. Gen. Scott Campbell, deputy adjutant general. "WHFRTC is our own premier training site that supports our Guard right here in the commonwealth."

Other features of the training site include their controlled humidity storage complex, complete maintenance facilities for military equipment, an engagement skills training center, an obstacle course and a 4,200 ft. grass runway that a C-130 Hercules could land on. 🌱

Above: Aerial view of the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center.

Top Left: The crowd listens to Chief War-warrant Officer 5 Joe Wilkins (ret.), training site supervisor, talks about his memories working at the main training center for the Kentucky National Guard during its celebration of its 50th anniversary honoring those who have helped lay the groundwork for the success of the training site Sept. 25. Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Crane.

## THE LAST WORD...

\*FOR THE FULL STORIES, GO TO WWW.KENTUCKYGUARD.DODLIVE.MIL



## 1163RD ASMC GETS TRAINING PRIOR TO DEPLOYMENT

Story by Alexander Hellmann, Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Scott Raymond

As America fights to stave off a virus, at home Soldiers of the 1163rd Area Support Medical Company are preparing for deployment to Poland as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve in support of European allies in June 2020.

The 1163rd ASMC was recently activated to support the COVID-19 response in Kentucky, working with several agencies including FEMA, Department of Public Health, Kentucky Emergency Management and local medical communities to set up the state's first Alternate Care Field Hospital or Alternate Care Facility (ACF) with capabilities to care for 250-2,000 COVID-19 patients.

"Having the 1163rd to support our home state with the skill sets we have is pretty awesome," said Maj. Stephanie Fields, commander, 1163rd ASMC.

While on mission at the ACF, the 1163rd ASMC is simultaneously readying themselves for the upcoming mission overseas. Soldiers are receiving medical training in the form of practicing sewing wounds using pigs' skin and reviewing practices to keep potential casualties breathing and stable.

"When you think of health care, you get the health care providers and all the high speed equipment, but it's the logistics that you don't think about, such as food for patients, beds, monitoring, and transporting," said Fields. "The headquarters is the sustainment piece, medical logistics that includes vehicle and generator mechanics, signal, and all the Soldiers that keep the hospital running and moving so our physicians can do their job."

Within four hours of being on site they can receive patients in the hospital as well as have ambulances operational for patient evacuation.

Less than thirty days after the completion of

their current COVID-19 domestic operations mission, the 1163rd ASMC will be deployed to assist, protect, and defend NATO allies in Poland in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Pfc. Morgan Ryan, a medic, is a student at The University of Kentucky studying human nutrition and aspires to join the physician's assistant field during her career.

"I didn't think I would go on a deployment so quickly, but I couldn't think of a better time and I'm excited," said Ryan.



## FIREFIGHTERS GET SET FOR THEIR DEPLOYMENT TO ROMANIA

Story and photo by Sgt. Nasir Stoner

The 176th Firefighting Team is preparing to deploy to Romania in the next few weeks at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky., May 14.

The unit is deploying to conduct fire protection operations on an air base there.

The 176th FFT is made up of seven Soldiers led by Staff Sgt. Matthew Martin, station chief. This will be the first deployment for all seven Soldiers.

"We are very excited as this is our first deployment for everyone," said Martin. "We're glad to get to go to Romania and do our job."

"The 176th are our best trained firefighters in the state," said Lt. Col. Mark Nichols, 206th Engineering Battalion Commander. "We have full confidence in them going overseas and doing a great job and accomplishing their mission."

Due to the ongoing global pandemic caused by COVID-19, the Guard did not hold a departure ceremony like usual. However, they do hope to have a ceremony for their return.

"I'm sure it is hard for them to not get to experience a departure ceremony on their first deployment," said Nichols. "I hope we can pay them back and have double the warm welcome when they come back so they get to experience the love and support of the community."

Despite the pandemic creating some obstacles

and recent changes, the Soldiers feel they are well prepared for the deployment.

"I feel like it's going to be a good deployment," said Sgt. Travis Keown, crew chief. "We have a really good group of guys who are efficient at their jobs and always willing to do work."

## AVIATION UNIT DEPARTS FOR DEPLOYMENT TO AFGHANISTAN



Story by Maj. Gus LaFontaine, Photo by Sgt. Nasir Stoner

Members of Det. 1, Charlie Company 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment MEDEVAC departed to Ft. Hood, Texas for pre-mobilization training.

The aviation detachment held a small departure ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility on Boone National Guard Center. The unit will provide Blackhawk medical evacuation support while in Afghanistan.

Deputy Adjutant General Brig. Gen. Rob Larkin addressed the company during the departure ceremony. Larkin lauded the experience of the 238th by recognizing that a majority of the company's Soldiers had previously deployed.

He acknowledged the importance of the medical evacuation mission in his address to the group.

"You guys will be coming out to save the day for our forces. Do the absolute best job that can be done."

Capt. Jonathan Strayer, Det. 1 commander, said, "I'm confident in our group that is deploying for this mission after successfully completing our training."

He cited the extended period of time that was dedicated to training as reason for his confidence in his Soldiers.

"We've had the same group training together for the last couple of years. We put our heads down and concentrated on completing the training events that we needed to do. As a result, we built a cohesive team."

When asked about his goal for the upcoming deployment, he replied, "We're going to support the mission and bring everyone home safely."



## KENTUCKY GUARD PROMOTES NEWEST GENERAL

Story and photo by Maj. Stephen Martin

The Kentucky National Guard promoted from its ranks the newest General in the U.S. Army, Brigadier General Robert J. Larkin.

Brig. Gen. Larkin was pinned by his wife, Tracy and his son, Aidan, in a small ceremony in The Adjutant General's office on Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, Ky.

"Normally when we get the opportunity to promote our service members to the rank of general, it's a grand occasion," said Brig. Gen. Hal Lamberton, Kentucky's adjutant general. "But under the current circumstances, we felt that it was necessary to keep the ceremony small. I also need to put my new general to work immediately for the COVID response, so we couldn't wait."

A civilian firefighter by trade, and currently the Battalion Chief for the Lexington Fire Department, Larkin is intimately familiar with service to the country and to the commonwealth.

"The citizens of Lexington are served by some incredible leaders in our Fire Department, and that certainly includes Battalion Chief of Special Operations Robert Larkin," said Lexington Mayor Linda Gorton. "Chief Larkin has accomplishments at some of the highest levels of service in the City, and for our country. Congratulations, General Larkin, and on behalf on the City of Lexington, thank you for your service."

For Lexington Fire Chief Kristin Chilton, Larkin's contribution to the Fire Department has been exceptional.

"Battalion Chief Rob Larkin is the most senior member of our department. As such, there is no doubt that he serves as a leader not only in title, but also because of the example he sets. Chief Larkin is a reliable and trusted resource who leads our Special Operations Bureau, and is also instrumental in preparing many of the department's operational plans. We are proud of Chief Larkin and congratulate him on this tremendous achievement!"

Larkin will serve as the Kentucky National

Guard's Assistant Adjutant General - Army and will be directly responsible for the Kentucky Army National Guard's posture and continued development answering directly to The Adjutant General.

During his remarks, Larkin recognized the significance of the situation at hand across both the nation and state and committed to doing his part to help.

"First and foremost, if I owe anything to anyone for this opportunity it would be to those who've mentored me along the way and to my family for their support," remarked Larkin. "Regarding the crisis we've found ourselves in, this pandemic is something we've never seen before, but I know we will get through it and I know the Kentucky Guard will be instrumental in the support. We will continue to be 'mission first, people always.'"



## MARINES ASSIST GUARDSMEN WITH CREW-SERVED WEAPONS

Story and photo by Pfc. Brett Hornback

The Kentucky Army National Guard and the Virginia Marine Corps Reserve joined forces Jan. 11-12.

Soldiers with Kentucky Army National Guard's 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade participated in a crew-served weapons class instructed by Virginia Marine Reservists.

Gunnery Sgts. Matt Logan and Gilbert Stubbs, trainers with the Marine Corps Reserve Training Unit in Quantico, Va., led the class.

Stubbs, who primarily trains Marines, said he was excited for the opportunity but unsure of what he should expect.

The first day of training, Logan and Stubbs instructed Soldiers on how to disassemble and reassemble the M249, M2 50. Cal. 240B, and MK19 weapon systems. They also taught the Soldiers skills they will need to be combat ready with crew-served weapons in theater.

The following training day, Soldiers with

only 8 hours training on the weapons began to instruct other Soldiers who were new to the class.

"As far as progress goes, it couldn't have been better," said Stubbs.

With the help of the Virginia Marine Corps Reserve, 63rd TAB now has instructors, who are competent in crew-served weapons, within its ranks.

"Joint operations is where it's all at moving forward," said Stubbs. "We're stronger together."

## SEARCH & RESCUE CANINE ASSISTS WITH TORNADO RECOVERY

Story by Master Sgt. Phil Speck

A pararescueman from the Kentucky Air National Guard and his specially trained search-and-rescue dog, Callie, played a key role in Tennessee earlier this week when they searched for survivors following devastating tornadoes that struck the Nashville area early Tuesday.

Master Sgt. Rudy Parsons of 123rd Special Tactics Squadron searched debris fields with Callie later the same day, covering approximately one square mile in five hours. Callie, a Dutch shepherd and the only certified search-and-rescue dog in the Department of Defense, is able to clear rubble piles in minutes using her keen sense of smell, saving hours or days over traditional search-and-rescue methods, Parsons said.

"Although we didn't find anyone during our search, we saved rescue crews hundreds of hours of triaging their efforts while searching through the destruction," he added. "It was a great opportunity for Callie to use her skills to help during a real-world disaster."

The search area was located in Cookeville, Tennessee, about 75 miles east of Nashville. It was the site of one of the tornadoes that caused a five-mile line of destruction across middle Tennessee, claiming 24 lives.

While on site, Parsons and Callie worked with local law enforcement, the sheriff's department, local emergency medical services, and county and state fire departments. The Federal and Tennessee Emergency Management Agencies also assisted with the search.

Callie was one of two "live-find" dogs searching for survivors that could have still been buried by downed structures and debris, Parsons said. Cadaver dogs also were on-site looking for the deceased.





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“The true Soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.”

– G.K. Chesterton

