A person in a camouflage uniform is standing next to a memorial table. On the table is a framed photograph, a white helmet, and a pair of tan boots. The background shows another person in uniform.

The Bluegrass Guard

Volume Eight, Issue Seven

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

May 2004

A Hero Remembered

Photo courtesy of the South Bend (Ind.)
Tribune Photo/FRED DODD

TAG reflects on the loss of a hero

As I am sure you are now aware, 1st Lt. Robert L. Henderson, from Det. 1, 2123rd Transportation Company, was killed April 17th when the convoy he was leading was attacked by enemy forces in southern Iraq.

Though the loss of this great patriot is indeed tragic, his heroic actions and personal bravery undoubtedly saved the lives of other Soldiers. Lt. Henderson, even after being wounded, continued to drive his vehicle out of the ambush site and then was able to position it so the Soldiers with him could return fire. His quick actions helped prevent other vehicles from entering the ambush site and in doing so there is no doubt he was personally responsible for saving the lives of many of his comrades.

It is clear to me that Lt. Henderson was a well trained, dedicated and selfless Soldier who put the safety of his fellow Soldiers above his own, and for that we owe him our thanks and eternal gratitude.

During his memorial service in Bowling Green, more than 100 military personnel were on hand to grieve the loss of a brother-in-arms and to show support for Lt. Henderson's family. The ceremony reminded me of just how much we -- the Kentucky National Guard -- truly are a family as well. Soldiers are our most precious resource, and their families are our backbone. Our families sacrifice as much as we do, and, as in this situation, sometimes more.

Lt. Henderson, like so many members of the Kentucky National Guard before him, responded to the call of his nation to try to help liberate millions of people who have never known freedom. Sometimes our fellow countrymen take for granted what we have, but for those of us who wear the uniform, we are acutely aware



Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm presents Lt. Henderson's wife, Lisa, with a flag during the memorial service. (Photo by Capt. David B. Page, State Deputy PAO)

of the price of freedom. Freedom really is something worth living and dying for. If we stay the course in Iraq and Afghanistan, we can help those people understand why we are willing to sacrifice our lives to help them be free. We must continue to support these missions and see to it that the job is complete, not because our elected officials tell us so, but because we owe it to people like Rob Henderson to finish what we have started.

Donald C. Storm
Major General
The Adjutant General

The Bluegrass Guard

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KyARNG suffers second combat loss

The sharp reports of a 21-gun salute rang out followed by the sad notes of Taps being played by a white gloved bugler on April 27 in Bowling Green as a crowd of more than 500 civilians and 120 military personnel gathered to say goodbye to a fallen hero.

1st Lt. Robert L. Henderson II, 33, of Alvaton, KY, was laid to rest at J.C. Kirby Funeral Home.

Henderson was killed on April 17th in Iraq when the military truck convoy he was traveling in was attacked near the southern Iraqi city of Diwaniyah.

Henderson is the second Kentucky Army National Guardsmen to die in combat since the start of the war in Iraq. He is the first officer to be killed in combat since the Korean War.

At the time of his death, Henderson was assigned as a platoon leader in the Owensboro-based Detachment 1, 2123rd Transportation Company. The 2123rd, a Heavy Equipment Transport (HET) truck unit, was mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom in December and deployed to Southwest Asia in January 2004.

Towards the conclusion of the service, the Kentucky National Guard State Chaplain Col. Roger Dill quoted from Gen. Stonewall Jackson for the mourners, "My religious beliefs teach me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time of my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to always be ready no matter when it may overtake me."

For his actions in combat, Henderson was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device and the Purple Heart.

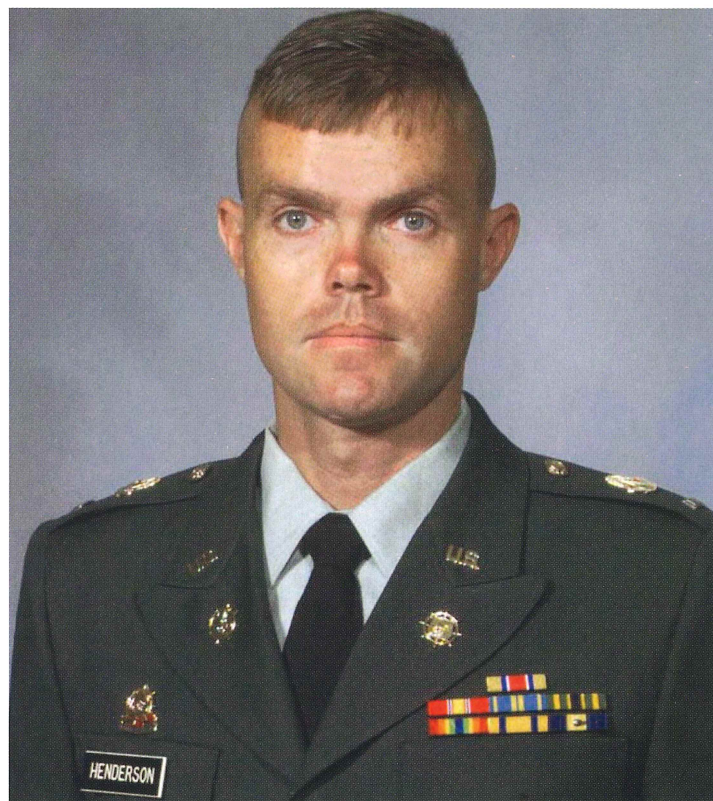
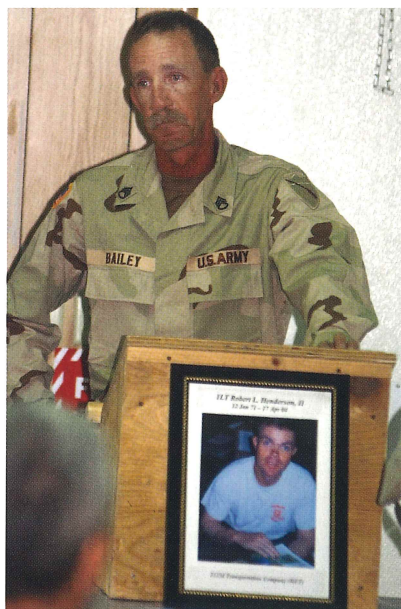


Photo of 1st Lt. Robert L. Henderson II

He is survived by his wife, Lisa, and his mother Lillian Henderson. Lisa is expecting the arrival of the couple's first child in July. The family has established a college fund for the baby. Anyone wishing to donate can send a check to the "Peyton Henderson Baby Fund," in care of Integra Bank, 1018 Chestnut Street, Bowling Green, KY 42102-0966, or at any of the bank's locations in Bowling Green or Franklin.



Staff Sgt. Michael J. Bailey was part of a memorial service held in Kuwait by members of the 2123rd to remember their fallen brother. (Photo courtesy of the South Bend (Ind.) Tribune Photol FRED DODD)

Pallbearers carry a fallen hero (Photo by Capt. David B. Page, state deputy PAO)



2004 Soldier/NCO of the

Story by Sgt. Jon Wilke
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Some of Kentucky's best Soldiers recently gathered at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center for the annual KyARNG Soldier of the Year and NCO of the Year competition.

Prior to the two-day competition, KyARNG Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Gipe welcomed the 16 competitors and briefed them on their weekend, which kicked off the next morning with an Army Physical Fitness Test. The Soldiers then had to "zero" their M-16A2 service rifles without assistance and fire 40 rounds at various distances for score. After a short preparation period, the competitors were transported out into the Western Kentucky countryside for a surprise event, which consisted of a 50-question written exam on basic soldiering common tasks, a five kilometer road-march

and an obstacle course.

The groups were split up for the second day of the contest. While the enlisted Soldiers answered questions from a seven-member board, the NCOs completed a rugged land-navigation course that required them to find the checkpoints and complete CTT tasks at nearly every station. Due to the difficult contours of the course, many Soldiers passed just yards away from the checkpoints. In the afternoon, the groups switched and it was the NCOs turn to answer questions from the board.

Later that evening, the participants gathered at a formal banquet, relaxed and awaited the results. Gipe and other Kentucky sergeants major attended the event to support their troops. Gipe said that no matter who won, "You can all be very proud of this great achievement. For all of you to get to this level of competition says a lot."

"This is the first year we've done the competition this way. Before Soldiers just sat on the boards and answered questions," said Gipe. "What we do here will mirror to all levels below (in Kentucky)."

Gipe and other state leaders hope to conduct this multi-event competition every year.

(Above left) Competitors nervously await their turn to do push-ups.

(Below) Cpl. Wall fires a round out of his M-16A2 during the SOYINCO of the Year competition.

(Lower left) Staff Sgt. Wheeler looks for the next checkpoint on the land navigation/CTT course.

(Lower right) Participants race against each other to finish first during the "surprise" five-kilometer road march.

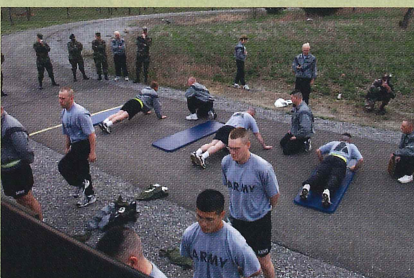
(Above) Kentucky's Soldiers "zeroed" and fired their weapons without assistance or coaching before and during the marksmanship event.



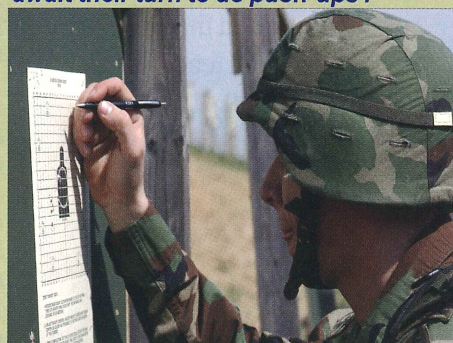
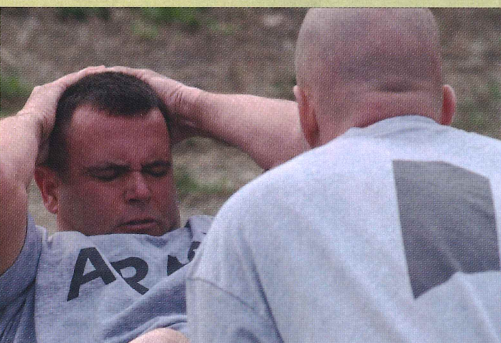
(Upper left) KyARNG Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Gipe addresses the SOYINCO of the Year participants the night before the competition.



(Left) Kentucky Soldiers and NCOs begin the two-mile run of their APFT.



(Below) Sgt. 1st Class Henderson squeezes out extra sit-ups during the final few seconds.



Year Competition

Story by Spc. Charles Westmoreland
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Pfc. Zachary C. Cornett and Sgt. 1st Class Clyde A. Henderson were chosen as the KyARNG Soldier and NCO of the Year. Cornett serves as an automated supply specialist with F Company, 135th Aviation, 63rd Aviation Group. Henderson is a platoon sergeant with the 223rd Military Police Company.

A steadfast commitment to the military and the dedication to succeed was the drive for these guardsmen to train for the rigorous competition.

Both Cornett and Henderson lead active lives in the civilian world when not in uniform.

Cornett is a junior, majoring in foreign language and international economics at the University of Kentucky. He also works part-time.

Henderson is equally as busy as a husband and father of four. He is also the owner of A&P Lawn Service and will soon return to the University of Louisville to complete his degree in Mechanical Engineering. His oldest son, Chris, is also in the Army and is currently serving in Iraq.

Despite the many hours of hard work for the competition, neither Soldier is willing to accept full credit for the recent success.

"My unit gave me their full support," Cornett said. "They helped me study and prepare for the competition by setting up practice boards for me."

Henderson said that representing the military police corps was a part of his inspiration to compete, but it was his wife, Patricia, who was his biggest supporter and key to his success. Through their actions, Henderson and Cornett both disproved the old cliché of "weekend-warriors."

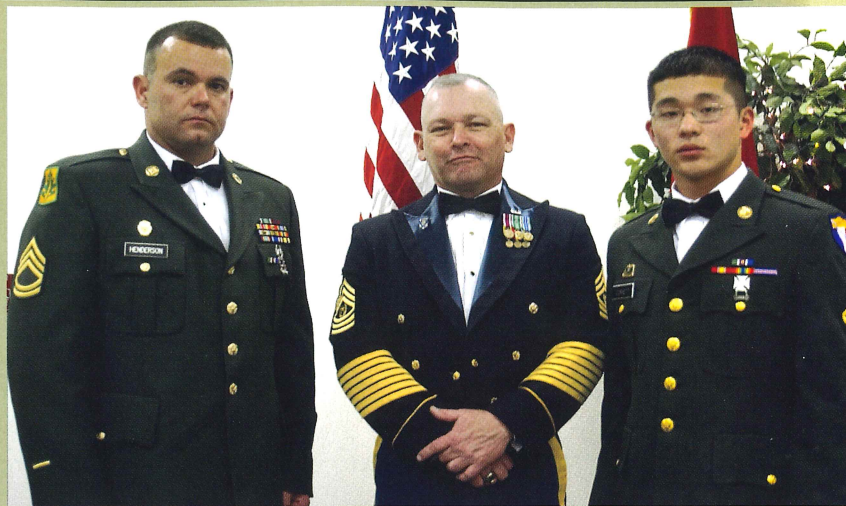
"Meeting and competing with the other Soldiers and NCO's reminded me that Guardsmen are as proficient as their Active Duty counterparts anytime," Henderson said. "I always stress this to my Soldiers."

The board members overseeing the competition selected wisely, as both Soldiers proved their merit once again. At the First Army South competition in St. Augustine, Fla., on April 5, both Soldiers represented the Kentucky National Guard with distinction.

Cornett was chosen as the Soldier of the Year for First Army South and will move on to the First Army competition held at Ft. Stewart, Ga., in July. Henderson was selected as the runner-up for NCO of the Year honors.

(Above right) Competitors attempt to beat the nine-second time requirement to don and clear their protective masks.

(Above left) Already exhausted from the road march, Staff Sgt. Taylor swings over an obstacle as he rushes toward the finish line, while (below) Staff Sgt. McCormick negotiates an obstacle by diving head first and rolling safely over.



(Above) Sgt. First Class Clyde Henderson and Pfc. Zachary Cornett, the 2004 winners of the Soldier of the Year and NCO of the Year competitions, stand proudly with KyARNG Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Gipe.



(Right) Staff Sgt. Hawkins hurriedly disassembles an M-16A2 service rifle as part of the land navigation/CTT course.



(Right) During the last day of competition participants felt the heat from board members who grilled them about military history, military knowledge and current events.



Program targets recruit losses

By Spc. Kyle Key
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Kentucky Army National Guard is launching an aggressive campaign to keep new recruits motivated, involved and learning while waiting to complete Initial Entry Training.

In 2003, approximately 177 non-prior service Soldiers or Reserve Enlisted Personnel (REP) were lost while awaiting training, during training or awaiting split-option training. These losses cost the KYARNG an estimated \$13,983,000 and caused critical MOS slots to remain vacant across the state.

Recognizing the severity of the problem, Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, the Adjutant General, has prompted a revision of the regulation outlining Recruit Sustainment Programs (RSP) in the state. Kentucky National Guard Regulation 350-4, developed and implemented on Sept. 1 1981, was revised in February 2004 to modernize the training as well as give units the basic tools to train REPs at the unit level. The regulation also establishes RSP Coordinators at the unit level to train REPs and implement the RSP program.

On March 27-28, 2004, 83 Soldiers, who were nominated as Unit RSP Coordinators, completed the 2004 RSP Cadre Development Training Workshop in Lexington.

RSP Coordinators are required to create, implement and sustain a RSP as their primary duty. Appointments are for a minimum of 12 months from the date of appoint-



Maj. Gen. Donald Storm speaks to a group of REPs with A Co. 1/149th Inf., located in Harlan, during a unit visit March 20. (Photo by Capt. David B. Page, state deputy PAO)

ment. Master Sgt. Freddie J. Wilkerson stated that while the position will require extra attention and effort, the benefits would be immeasurable.

"We're not taking away from your units," said Wilkerson. "With this program, your unit will be at 125 percent strength!"

Wilkerson said that the position also strengthens the unit team and relieves readiness NCOs by requiring RSP Coordinators to manage administrative paperwork and training records for REPs.

At the final training session assembly, KyARNG Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Gipe encouraged RSP Coordinators to keep recruits wanting more.

"They joined because they want to train," said Gipe. "Take them out, train them hard, and give them something to talk about when they go back to school. These REPs will be the shining light of their basic training companies."

"The unit must adopt and buy into the program. Its success depends on support from your unit and chain of command."

The new unit level RSP Program replaces the Kentucky Enlisted Academy Pre-Basic Program (KEAPP), which was conducted at the Wendell H. Ford Training Center in Greenville and the Blue Grass Army Depot in Richmond. Wilkerson said rappelling exercises, helicopter orientation flights and other "high-speed" events associated with KEAPP would continue to be conducted twice a year.

All KyARNG units are required to have an RSP program established by Sept. 30. If anyone has questions concerning the program, please contact Maj. Shontelle Adams, the operations and training officer for the Recruiting and Retention Battalion at (502) 607-1239.

123rd Civil Engineers Squadron returns

By Tech. Sgt. Amy Mundell
Cargo Courier Editor

More than 400 family members and friends gathered near the Kentucky Air Guard flightline March 11 to welcome home 48 airmen who had been stationed in Iraq since November.

The troops — all members of the wing's 123rd Civil Engineers Squadron — arrived on two Kentucky C-130s and were greeted by the flag-waving, cheering crowd.

As the suntanned faces of the men and women stepped off the aircraft, emotions ran high with smiling faces and tears.



1) Forty-eight Kentucky airmen returned home March 11 after spending four months deployed to the Air Force compound at Baghdad International Airport in Iraq. While deployed, the troops provided base maintenance for the compound and other tenant units. (Photo by Senior Airman Philip Speck/KyANG)



More than 400 family members and friends welcome the CES troops home. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Dennis Floral/KyANG)

of her squadron have repeatedly deployed into harm's way — but only a few troops at a time. This deployment was different — the squadron went as a team.

"They stepped up to do what we've been training to do — some for as many as 20 years," Colonel Allen noted.

While deployed, the unit's fire fighters, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, heavy equipment operators and land surveyors worked to maintain the camp's electrical power, shelters and sanitary facilities, as well as fire-fighting and chemical-warfare-defense abilities.

They would finally be reunited with their loved ones after a four-month deployment to the Air Force compound at Baghdad International Airport — a place their squadron commander called "very dangerous."

As the celebration eventually began to slow and the crowd began to dwindle, their commander, Lt. Col. Connie Allen, said she couldn't have been prouder of her troops.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, members



Master Sgt. Robert Patton, a civil engineering operations manager, reunites with his grandson at the Kentucky Air Guard base March 11. (Photo by Senior Airman Philip Speck/KyANG)

Army Aviation soldiers deploy for Iraq, Afghanistan

Six Soldiers from Co. F, 135th Aviation Regiment deployed last February in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Assigned to an aviation unit in Iraq, these troops will provide aviation maintenance and support for approximately one year.



Pictured are Pfc. Andy Ditz, Spc. Jessica Gillespie, Spc. Greg McMakin, (back row) Spc. Matthew Wells, Spc. Jason Remer and Spc. Peter Duchette.

Eight Kentucky Army National Guard soldiers from Detachment 11, Operational Support Airlift Command (OSACOM) deployed in March in support of Operation Enduring Freedom effective March 21, 2004. The unit's final destination will be Afghanistan, where they are expected to serve for approximately six months.



Pictured (left to right) are: Staff Sgt. Tom Goosey, Sgt. Michael Hagan, Chief Warrant Officer James Chanley, Chief Warrant Officer Shawn Gabhart, Chief Warrant Officer Gerald Carroll, Chief Warrant Officer Joseph Mattingly, Chief Warrant Officer Darrell Knight and Chief Warrant Officer Delynn Gibson.

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Reserve Component Civilian Employment Information Program Begins

Courtesy American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, March 31, 2004 - A new Defense Department reporting system has begun so members of all seven reserve components can register their employers.

DoD decision-makers need to know the civilian employers and government agencies of the department's approximately 1.2 million National Guardsmen and reservists, officials explained. The database will, among other things, give officials a better idea of who should, and should not, be mobilized for national emergencies, they said.

The database is called the Civilian Employment Information Program, and it is the way for all Guard and Reserve members to comply with the law that requires them to inform DoD of who employs them and how they are employed when not performing their military duties.

"This program will make it possible for defense officials, including those responsible for mobilizing our traditional Guard and Reserve members, to know who can be called up for active military duty without jeopardizing the civilian forces responsible for safeguarding our country," explained David Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

Members of the Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and Navy Individual Ready Reserve can now enter their employment data on the new Defense Manpower Data Center Web site. Members of the Army Reserve, Navy Selected Reserve, Marine Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve will be able to enter their employment data on their existing personnel reporting systems.

To register their CEI information, reserve component members should go to their respective service's CEI program Web sites, officials said.

"The goal is to maintain a 95 percent accurate data base for the Selected Reserve," explained Thomas Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, "and to maintain 75 percent accuracy for the Individual Ready Reserve database. The department is required by law to maintain adequate and current personnel records on members of the reserve components, including each member's civilian occupational skills."

The law also requires all members of reserve components to notify appropriate defense officials about any changes in their civilian employment.

The Civilian Employment Information Program, Chu explained, will require all Guard and Reserve members to list on the database their employment status, their employer's names, their employer's complete mailing addresses, their civilian job titles, and their total number of years in their current civilian occupations.

The requirement on the part of the guardsman or reservist to provide CEI data is not a violation of the Privacy Act, added Hall. CEI is the extension of existing personnel data records, and is covered under previous Privacy Act systems notices, he said.

Unlike previous military service efforts to voluntarily gather employer data, registering employer data in the CEI program is mandatory. Guard and Reserve members who knowingly fail or refuse to provide that information, or who knowingly provide false employment-related information, may be subject to administrative action or punishment, officials said.

CEI Registration Site for the Army and Air National Guard, Air Force and Coast Guard Reserve

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/Guard-ReservePortal>