



The *Bluegrass Guard*

Volume Nine, Issue Five

serving the Soldiers and Airmen of the Kentucky National Guard

February 2005

**Welcome Home
2123rd TC!**



New State Command Sergeant Major "got something" for troops

First I want to publicly thank MG Donald C. Storm for his trust and confidence in my selection for this position and for giving me this opportunity to serve Soldiers in such an awesome capacity. Second I want to start off by telling you that I am thrilled to be part of this time honored Corps, which is known as "The Backbone of the Army".

I am just a common Soldier with a simple focus, and that is taking care of Soldiers, Airmen and their families. To me there is nothing more important. One of my favorite quotes is from President Abraham Lincoln: "Common-looking people are the best in the world: that is the reason the Lord makes so many of them."

I have a very important message for the Soldiers and Airman of this great organization, especially those who have just come home from a deployment. We need you to stay in the Kentucky National Guard! Your experience, your knowledge, your expertise, are all invaluable in training our incoming troops. The lessons learned from the field, from combat, can and does save lives. Not since World War II have we had so many experienced professional troops in our ranks and we need you to stay on and help make the Kentucky Guard even better.



I also want to address the families of our great Soldiers and Airmen for just a moment. Whether you are a husband or a wife, mother or father or child of a Guard member, we are so grateful to you for your service, not just to your loved one, but to our great state and our nation. I cannot tell you how much your support affects our ability to do our mission. I know you've heard this before, but the families of our Soldiers and Airmen mean so much to what we are doing. In so many ways you go beyond the call of duty. You are true heroes and patriots, and I cannot say enough to thank you for everything you have done.

I've been to a couple of homecoming ceremonies so far, and I have been touched by what I've seen. I wish every Kentuckian, every American, in fact, could attend these events and see just what they're getting for their tax dollars! The challenges and hardships of these deployments can be measured by the joy and happiness that comes when a returning Guard member comes off that plane and into the arms of their loved ones. Those of you who've been there know what I'm talking about.

Again, I am happy and proud to be your State Command Sergeant Major and I can guarantee that at some time – probably in the near future – we're going to meet. It is my intention to get around the state as much as possible and see as many troops as I can. We have a lot of work ahead of us and I want to clear the way so our great Soldiers and Airmen can focus on what's important. Together we will make a great team. It is my honor to be in the fight with you.

Phillip D. Gearlds

Phillip D. Gearlds
CSM, JFHQ, KYNG
State Command Sergeant Major

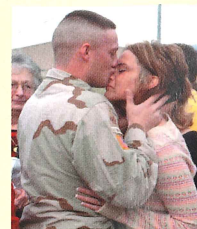
The Bluegrass Guard

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Cover photo: SPC Ryan T. Brown, with the 2123rd TC, embraces his girlfriend after a year deployment

Photo by
PFC Michael P. Pfaff



Ky Soldier reenlists in hospital bed

By CPT David Page
Deputy State PAO

Election Day in Iraq is one day a Kentucky Army National Guard Soldier will never forget.

SSG Barry S. Holt and other members of the Kentucky Army National Guard's 617th Military Police Company were conducting mounted patrols along Main Supply Route in Baghdad on January 30.

While on patrol, Holt, a squad leader, responded with his team to the discovery of an improvised explosive device. When the squad arrived on the scene, they helped secure the area until an explosive ordnance disposal team could come to detonate the device.

After device was successfully detonated, a call came over the unit's radio to return to base. At that time, six other vehicles from the 617th joined Holt as they prepared to convoy back to the base camp.

Sensing his team was tired and weary, Holt offered to drive. Holt's vehicle was placed in the lead and the convoy spun into motion.

On the vigilant journey home, Holt's team consisting of SPC William T. Hoy, SPC Rachael E. Roloson, and SPC John E. Owens, scanned the streets for any signs of potential trouble.

As Holt's up-armored HUMVEE passed over a pothole in the road, an explosion erupted from a platter charge IED placed in the hole. The explosion was so intense, the windows in the up-armored HUMVEE splintered and shrapnel breached the firewall on the driver side of the vehicle, lodging a shard of metal behind Holt's left knee and fracturing his tibia.

When the IED detonated, Hoy was in the gunner's mount. The blast shot fragments of glass into Hoy's hand and wrist, and he also was hit in the forearm by debris from the explosion.

The strike to his forearm hurt badly, recalls Hoy. "It felt like it was broke," said Hoy.

After the explosion, the convoy came under small arms fire from the three o'clock position. Owens, who was on the left side of the vehicle, and Hoy began to immediately return fire in the direction of the contact.

With the convoy in trail, Holt said he



SSG Barry S. Holt raises his right hand as he reenlists from his hospital bed in Iraq. (photo courtesy of the 617th MP Company)

knew he had to get the vehicle out of the kill zone.

Badly wounded, Holt sped away so the vehicles behind him could move. He drove the vehicle out of kill zone and then stopped at a rally point.

Three medics came to Holt's aid. They started working on him as the rest of the convoy provided security.

"If I had not been in an up-armored HUMVEE, I would not be here today," said Holt. "Plus, the goggles that I was issued saved my eyes when the windows blew."

Holt and Hoy were air med-evacuated to a hospital in Baghdad. The doctors there said the shrapnel, the size of a golf ball, was the largest they had removed from someone Holt said. While at the hospital, Holt underwent surgery to remove the shrapnel.

"The medical crews -- from the medics on site to the doctors and nurses in the hospital -- took great care of me," said Holt. "They made sure I had everything I needed. They really take care of the Soldier."

Hoy was treated for his cuts and bruises, and was released back to the unit.

This team's story of bravery and courage is amazing, but what transpired following this attack is truly a testament to the warrior spirit of Kentuckians.

While recovering in hospital, Holt asked the company commander of the

617th, CPT Todd M. Lindner, if he could reenlist.

"He (Holt) told me he wanted to reenlist the night he was injured," said Lindner.

So, before Holt was released from the hospital in Baghdad and sent to Germany for additional treatment, he was sworn in by an officer from the hospital as he lay in bed.

This is Holt's second tour in Iraq. He was a member of the 223rd Military Police Company from the Kentucky Army National Guard that served in the early months of the liberation of Iraq. When the 617th was called to service, Holt

OCS Program prepares leaders

'Warrior Ethos' Emphasized in Training

By Officer Candidate Kyle Key
133rd MPAD

GREENVILLE, KY— Currently, more than 1,500 Kentucky National Guardsmen are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and 6,000 have been mobilized since September 11, 2001. As the demand steadily increases for combat ready units to fight in the War on Terror, the Kentucky Army National Guard continues to cultivate leaders to guide Kentuckians in battle.

According to Officer Candidate School Company Commander MAJ Timothy L. Pickerrell, the Kentucky Army National Guard OCS program is developing Army leaders to meet the challenges of the modern day battlefield.

"The OCS program has become a world-class organization with enhanced training that includes; four field training exercises in convoy operations; air insertion/offensive operations; defensive operations with engineer assets; and advanced weapons training," Pickerrell said. "We are training the Officer Candidates for real-world missions."

As a part of the Total Force, the Kentucky Army National Guard incorporates the Army's training emphasis on the "Warrior Ethos" or warriors with character. Pickerrell said this revived emphasis has been a boost to the OCS program. "It has elevated our program even more," said Pickerrell. "We are preparing a leader experienced in warfare, who is trained to conduct himself in a professional manner, during the conduct of warfare."

The OCS program is not for everyone. The Kentucky Army National Guard OCS Program is divided into four rigorous phases utilizing a combination of classroom and field exercises to develop Officer Candidates into Army leaders over an eighteen month period. The program requires personal and physical discipline to stay in shape between each drill and to make preparations to meet each task on the training matrix.

Pickerrell described a potential candidate as a Soldier who "wants to develop the leader within them and a person who is physically and mentally prepared to lead



Officer Candidates simulate first aid to repair a "sucking chest wound" during an opposing force ambush. (Photo by Maj. Timothy L. Pickerrell)

their Soldiers to and through the killing fields and emerge on the far side prepared to do it again."

Potential candidates go through a qualification weekend each January to ensure that they meet the basic physical, educational and character qualifications to be accepted into the program.

Once cleared, Officer Candidates report to the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center (WHFRTC) to begin Phase Zero in March. This phase consists of four Inactive Duty Training weekends and serves as a conditioning period to prepare Officer Candidates for Phase I. Officer Candidates will hone their land navigation skills, drill and ceremony skills, troop leading procedures and learn required knowledge to be used for the OCS program.

After successful completion of Phase Zero, Officer Candidates transition to Phase I, a two-week annual training at Ft. McClellan, Ala., in the sweltering heat of June. Officer Candidates must successfully complete day and night land navigation courses, participate in field leadership exercises and conduct training related to Operations, Training Management and Leadership doctrine.

In July, Officer Candidates return to WHFRTC for Phase II of OCS, which consists of twelve IDT weekends. Officer Candidates arrive on Friday afternoon, make their bunks, set up their footlocker

and hanging displays and draw supplies. Intensive academic learning and testing, five-, eight- and 12-mile ruck marches, physical training and tactical field exercises comprises just a portion of hurdles that Officer Candidates must pass.

Toward the end of Phase II, Officer Candidates hope to reach senior status and put their skills to the test during Phase III at Ft. McClellan, Ala. Besides the graduation ceremony on the steps of the Kentucky State Capitol Rotunda, Phase III is the final step in the OCS commissioning process. This two-week phase covers troop leading procedures, the leadership reaction course, the final field leadership exercise, infantry squad tactics and a tactical exercise without troops.

The current class, OCS Class 47-05, which will graduate in August 2005, began with 39 Officer Candidates and has been narrowed down to 12. Leadership standards are high and while TAC (Teach, Assess & Counsel) Officers assess candidates' abilities to meet the expectations of a Second Lieutenant, the stress and pressure remain at a constant.

OC Adam Fleming from Vine Grove said OCS is definitely a Hooah school. "The training I am receiving is the hardest, most challenging military or civilian training I have ever experienced," said Fleming. "The combination of physical, mental,

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(Cont'd from page 4)

and emotional stress challenges me to my limits yet keeps me coming back for more with the ambition and drive to improve upon accomplishing the missions and tasks at hand."

OC Susan Matsubara, a student at the University of Kentucky, said OCS stresses that fulfilling obligations is a critical part of being a good officer. "Before I started OCS I had my own conceptions of what makes a good leader."

"OCS is teaching me that being a good officer is not about charisma or reinventing the wheel; it's about completing the mission, doing your duties as an officer, making the tough decisions, and maintaining the respect from your Soldiers by doing the right thing," said Matsubara. "OCS is giving us all the tools we need to be successful, and it is our job as Officer Candidates to utilize those tools to become outstanding lieutenants."

Officer Candidates not only receive leadership training, they are paid as an E-6 and also are eligible for tuition assistance and the Montgomery GI Bill Kicker as well.

Motivations for the program go way beyond the tangibles. According to Fleming, his motivations are family, and being an encouragement to others. "I want to be that officer who inspires and motivates others to become their best," Fleming said.

Matsubara stated that the respect for the position of an officer and the responsibility that comes with it is a major inspiring factor. "There is no greater responsibility than that of [your Soldiers'] lives," Matsubara said.

The KYARNG 238th Regiment was initially organized as the Kentucky Military Academy in 1956 and continues to be the primary source of junior officers supporting the Kentucky Army National Guard. While OCS enlistment option recruits are accepted



Officer Candidates rehearse for an air insertion from a UH-60 Blackhawk at WHFRTC. (Photo by OC Kyle Key)

into the program without prior service, KYARNG's Recruiting and Retention Manager, LTC Rondal L. Turner stated the Guard OCS program is significant in transitioning experienced NCOs into the officer corps as well.

"I think [NCOs] have to possess that desire to go to that next level in leadership," Turner said. "We've got some fine young folks out there. I feel good about the Guard for the future."

Since its founding, forty-six classes, numbering more than 1,000 Officer Candidates, have graduated from the OCS program.

For information on the Kentucky Army National Guard's Officer Candidate School program and other commissioning opportunities, contact CPT Paul J. Wirth, KYARNG Officer Strength Manager at (502) 607-2662.



COL James Head, commandant of the 238th Regiment (Combat Arms) and CSM George Thompson honor Mrs. Linda Fox, wife of SFC (ret.) Michael Fox, during a recent Freedom Salute ceremony held at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center. The former manager of the WHFRTC dining facility, Mrs. Fox was recognized for her support of the Soldiers of the 238th during Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Mrs. Fox genuinely loved and had great concern for all the Soldiers who came through this training site," said SFC John Thompson, 238th PS NCO. "And everyone loved her in return. She recently left us to enjoy her husband's retirement and she is greatly missed."



LTC Donald R. Conover speaks following his acceptance of command of the 75th Troop Command during ceremonies at Fort Knox. Conover takes over for COL Joseph M. Richie. Based at Bluegrass Station in Lexington, the 75th Troop Command coordinates and supports the training and operation of approximately 2,500 soldiers assigned to the following Kentucky Army National Guard Combat Support units: Kentucky Medical Command (Lexington); 201st Engineer Battalion (Ashland); 198th Military Police Battalion (Louisville); 206th Chemical Battalion (Richmond); 41st Civil Support Team (Louisville); 103rd Chemical Battalion (Owensboro); 206th Engineer Battalion (Harrodsburg)



Families await the arrival of planes bringing the 2123rd Transportation Company home.



The first plane arrives, and Soldiers depart to see their families for the first time in several months.



SPC Keith E. Peach holds his son, Mason Peach, after the unit arrived at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base.

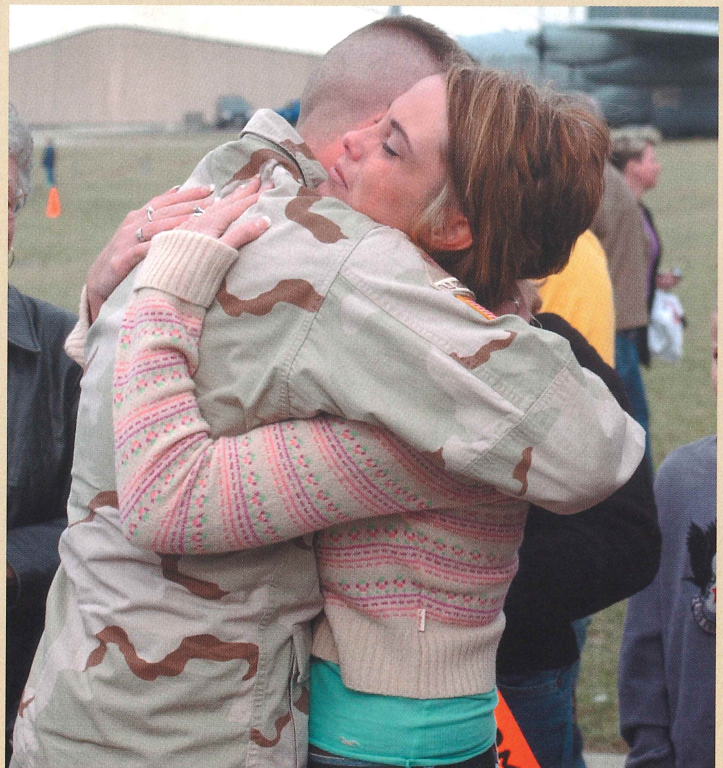
2123rd Transportation

*Photos by PFC Michael P. Pfaff
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Governor Ernie Fletcher and Kentucky Adjutant General Donald C. Storm, as well as other state and local officials, joined together to welcome home the 287 members of the 2123rd Transportation Company (Heavy Equipment Transportation), from the Kentucky Army National Guard Sunday, Feb. 6.

The 2123rd Transportation Company (Heavy Equipment Transportation), based in Richmond with detachments in Owensboro and Louisville, mobilized on Dec. 10, 2003, for Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of the ongoing global war on terrorism. While in Iraq, this unit's mission was to transport tanks and other heavy equipment throughout the theater of operation.

Shortly after 10:45 a.m., four airplanes landed just minutes apart at the Kentucky National Guard Air Base, located off Grade Ln. After the last aircraft arrived, a short welcome home ceremony was conducted for the Soldiers, families and friends in a large hangar on the base.



SPC Ryan T. Brown hugs his girlfriend for the first time after being deployed to Iraq for more than one year.

on Company returns



SGT David L. Newby reunites with his children before the welcome ceremony begins in the Air National Guard hangar.



Pictured (left to right) are MG Donald Storm, CPT Kristal M. Schloesser, Gov. Ernie Fletcher and 1SG John S. Brough.



Governor Ernie Fletcher thanks the 2123rd Transportation Company for their service during the ceremony.



SSG Michael A. Roberts greets his niece, Kaliah Moore.



MG Donald C. Storm escorts Mrs. Lillian Henderson to the Kentucky State Capitol Building where her son, 1LT Robert Henderson of the 2123rd Transportation Company, was honored when both the State Senate and the House of Representatives adjourned in his memory. A native of Warren County, 1LT Henderson died on April 17, 2004 during an ambush in near Diwaniyah, Iraq. He is survived by his wife, Lisa Henderson, and their son, Peyton Joshua Henderson.



CPT Kristal M. Schloesser, commander of the 2123rd, stands in front of the formation during the ceremony.

Briefly News

\$6K bonuses aim to cut RC officer shortage

by Gary Sheftick

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Feb. 16, 2005) -- A new affiliation bonus of \$6,000 is now available to officers and warrant officers leaving active duty and signing up for service with National Guard or Army Reserve units.

In addition, an accession bonus of \$6,000 will also be available to some newly commissioned officers who choose critical specialties with the Guard or Reserve.

The new bonuses are aimed at eliminating a shortage of 10,000 company-grade officers in the Guard and Reserve, said Col. Mark Patterson, Officer Division chief in the Directorate of Military Personnel Management, G1. The shortage is mostly at the captain level and is split about 50-50 between the Army Reserve and National Guard, Patterson said.

Officers who received ROTC scholarships or a West Point education are not eligible for the accessions bonus, Patterson said. Those receiving any other type of bonus coming off active duty are not eligible for the affiliation bonus, he said.

The National Guard and Army Reserve leadership have not yet announced which branches will be considered critical for the purposes of the accession bonus. Each component will identify their critical shortages and then announce which specialties will qualify for the bonus, Patterson said.

The affiliation bonus, on the other hand, is open to qualifying officers and warrants coming off active duty in any branch, going to any position in a reserve- component unit. All ranks are also eligible.

Officers in the Individual Ready Reserve who have never served in a Selected Reserve unit are also eligible for the \$6,000 affiliation bonus, Patterson said. The bonuses are paid after the officer reports to the RC unit, he explained.

The Army has also asked Congress to include in the 2006 Defense Appropriations Act a college loan repayment program for officers, Patterson said, similar to the one now offered to enlisted Soldiers.

"We recognize this is a tough recruiting environment," Patterson said. "We're at war."

But he went on to say that he is confident that the new incentives will cut back the officer shortfall in the reserve components.

Bill to provide death benefits to Guardsmen, Reserves approved by House panel

Courtesy LRC E-News

FRANKFORT - Kentucky members of the National Guard and the military reserves killed while called up by the president would be eligible for a death benefit under a bill passed today by the House Seniors, Military Affairs and Public Safety Committee. House Bill 222, sponsored by Rep. Mike Cherry, D-Princeton, would give \$75,000 to the relatives of Guardsmen and reservists killed while serving their country. A similar death benefit already exists for Guardsmen killed while serving within the state.

"Losing a loved one is just as painful whether it was the president that signed the paper to make it happen or the governor," said Rep. Tanya Pullin, D-South Shore, who co-sponsored a similar bill.

The current federal death benefit for Guardsmen and Reservists who are killed in action is \$9,000. "Sometimes that \$9,000 won't even cover the soldier's funeral expenses," said Rep. Rick Nelson, D-Middlesboro.

The bill will now be forwarded to the House for the chamber's consideration.

SMA: 100K Soldiers to change jobs in Transformation

by Tech. Sgt. Jim Moser

TAMPA, Fla. (Army News Service, Feb. 11, 2005) -- More than 100,000 Soldiers will move from "Cold War" jobs to positions such as military police and civil affairs as part of Army Transformation, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston said.

Preston visited MacDill Air Force Base Feb. 7 to meet with U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command troops. He held two enlisted calls and spoke at a luncheon where he presented awards to top Soldiers in the joint commands, the National Guard, Army Reserve, Recruiting Command and ROTC.

"We have a lot of troops in 'Cold War' jobs," Preston said. "I call these 'high density low demand' fields. The Army is going to rebalance those people to 'high demand low density' fields like military police and civil affairs. Somewhere between 100,000 to 115,000 Soldiers will transform to new positions."

During the enlisted calls, Preston covered topics such as Army Transformation and the performance of the Army Guard and Reserve units deployed overseas.

"Two things transformation gives our Soldiers and their families are predictability and stability," he said. "We have grown the Army by three brigades and by 2006 this number will increase to 10. These new brigades and the ones already transformed in their respective divisions will have a 'three-year lifecycle.' Troops in these brigades will remain together -- train, deploy and redeploy as a team over a three year period. So when a soldier goes to one of these new brigades, he or she can plan on being with the unit for at least three year stay at a given location. When the three years are up, Soldiers can PCS to a new base or possibly remain where they are for another cycle."

It is not new news that the Army National Guard and Reserve are heavily engaged, Preston said. Citizen Soldiers are on the ground in Iraq, Afghanistan and other theaters around the world.

The sergeant major pointed out at one time the Guard and Reserve were the Army's poor relation.

"In the past the Guard and Reserves received the hand-me-downs and leftovers from the active-duty Army," Preston said. "But not anymore -- 40 percent of our forces in the Iraqi AOR are Guard and Reserve. They are highly trained and well equipped professionals. I'm proud to serve with them, and we couldn't do the mission without them."

"I'm very proud of what our Soldiers are doing," he said. "I hope when they finish their tours, they can look back and say 'I helped make the world a safer place.'"

2005 Kentucky National Guard State Marathon Team announced

Qualification time & race:	
CSM Eric Schumacher	3:07:47 2004 Marine Marathon
SFC Allen Davis	3:35:55 2004 National Guard/ All Sport Lincoln Marathon
SSG Michael Embury	3:47:47 2004 National Guard/ All Sport Lincoln Marathon
Alternates:	
SSG Michael Burbine	4:13:42 2004 Louisville Marathon
SFC Diana Mortenson	4:27:35 2004 National Guard/ All Sport Lincoln Marathon

For more information call or e-mail SFC Mortenson. (502) 607-2417, DSN (502) 667-2417, (Diana.Mortenson@ky.ngb.army.mil) The teams wishes to thank all who tried out and encourages all to try again next year. The team is open to both Army and Air Guard.

Ky brothers pass baton in Iraq

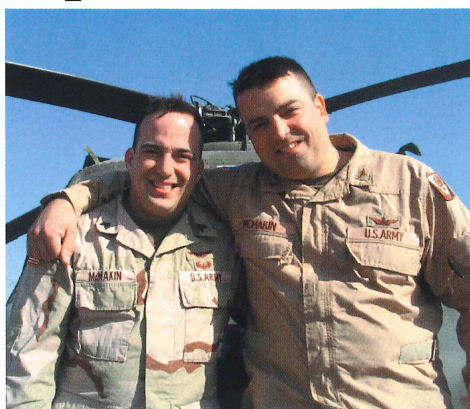
Story and photo by

CPT Phillip Robinson, F Co. 135th AVN

CW3 George McMakin III and SGT Greg McMakin, brothers from Frankfort, Kentucky faced the prospect of not seeing one another for more than two years as they each completed deployments in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Their re-union, however brief, came sooner than expected as the brothers were able to spend a few hours of quality time conducting maintenance test flights in Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

SGT Greg McMakin, a member of Company F, 135th Aviation (AVIM) had been working as a floor mechanic, maintaining UH-60 Black Hawks full time for the Kentucky Army National Guard until December 2003 when he volunteered for an OIF II deployment. He has been mobilized with Company L, 151 Aviation (AVIM) since then and has been serving at Camp Anaconda, Iraq since February 2004.

When Detachment 1, Company B, 1-189th Aviation received mobilization



CW3 George McMakin III (right) poses with brother, SGT Greg McMakin (left) in Iraq.

orders nearly a year later, CW3 George McMakin III, a civilian airliner pilot for COMAIR, volunteered. Prior to this deployment, CW3 McMakin was serving as a UH-60 Black Hawk maintenance test pilot for Echo Company, 135th Aviation in the Kentucky Army National Guard. He departed for his mobilization station

in September 2004, destined for Camp Anaconda, Iraq.

Unfortunately, the two brothers were going to pass each other without knowing the others whereabouts. SGT McMakin was conducting port operations with his unit in preparation for their redeployment while his older brother was completing the final preparations to enter Iraq, a mere 83 kilometers away in Kuwait.

They found each other through the Black Hawk program manager representatives in Kuwait. While conducting a unit visit in Camp Buehring, a representative asked his standard question, "What can we do for you?" CW3 McMakin responded, "Find my brother for me. He is in Camp Doha."

The two brothers were united for a brief visit in January 2005 as the units were transitioning from OIF II to OIF III. Two great Americans, two brave soldiers, two brothers, passing the baton in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Five guardsmen awarded Bronze Stars

By SPC Charles L. Westmoreland

133d Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Five Soldiers from the 223rd Military Police Company of the Kentucky Army National Guard received Bronze Star Medals in an awards ceremony Feb. 5 at the Buechel Armory in Louisville. The awards were to honor the Soldiers for valorous service during a nine-month tour in Iraq supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 223rd mobilized in late December of 2002, and returned to the states in November of 2003.

Two of the recipients, SSG Boyd H. Davis and SGT Matthew J. Sanders, were honored for their bravery in attempting to rescue SGT Darrin Potter and other soldiers whose vehicle missed a turn and plunged into Baghdad canal.

Potter and one other soldier from Pennsylvania drowned in the incident, but thanks to the efforts of Potter's fellow MPs, other soldiers in the vehicle were rescued.

The ceremony was about more than just honoring bravery, but also about paying respect to a fallen comrade.

Potter's parents were at the ceremony and following the awards, presented the unit with a stone marker with Potter's name engraved on the side. The marker was placed around a tree in front of the 223rd's headquarters to permanently acknowledge Potter's dedication to the military.

As the marker was being placed in ground, the 180 members of the 223rd began to swell with emotion.

"I'd trade in my Bronze Star and everything else I've ever received from the military just to have him here," Sanders said. "It's hard to lose a soldier and a friend."

MG Donald C. Storm, adjutant general for the KYARNG,



Soldiers from the company place SGT Darrin Potter's marker in the ground as lasting tribute to a fallen comrade.

presented the awards and thanked the soldiers for their sacrifices in the name of freedom.

"This generation standing before us gets it," Storm said. "SGT Darrin Potter understood that this was about his future and the future of our children and our grandchildren."

The Bronze Star recipients were: 1SG John D. Sallee, CSM David P. Munden, SGT Abraham Erhart, SSG Boyd H. Davis, SGT Matthew J. Sanders.

SFC Tony W. Simpson was awarded the Army Commendation Medal.

Kentucky Air Guardsmen deploy to bottom of the world

By 1st Lt. April Conway
Support Forces Antarctica

MCMURDO STATION, ANTARTICA — Most Kentuckians got their first taste of winter this season when an arctic storm front dumped up to six inches of snow and ice on the parts of the state a few days before Christmas.

For Master Sgts. Jeff Romig and Scott Wanner, however, the chilly white stuff had been a daily part of their routines since mid-November, when they first arrived at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, a scientific outpost located on the bottom of the world.

The Kentucky Air Guardsmen deployed here as part of Operation Deep Freeze and Support Forces Antarctica, both of which are tasked with supporting the National Science Foundation and the many research projects that take place in Antarctica each austral summer.

Sergeant Romig, a member of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Aerial Port Squadron, volunteered for his six-week rotation after seeing a request for cargo inspectors come down through the National Guard Bureau. He believes an open mind and willing attitude earned him the experience of a lifetime.

"It's amazing here," he said. "The job that's done in this environment by so many different people from different backgrounds is great."

Similarly, Sergeant Wanner heard about Deep Freeze two years ago and kept it on his radar screen.

"My goal is to hit every continent (while serving on military deployments)," he said. "Antarctica is my fourth — and probably the toughest one to get."

While military duty at McMurdo isn't necessarily foremost in the public's mind, Operation Deep Freeze has been a mili-



Master Sgts. Jeff Romig and Scott Wanner inspect a series of pallets before they're loaded onto a LC-130 for transport out of McMurdo Station. (Photo by 1st Lt. April Conway/SFA)

tary staple since 1957 and largely a Guard mission since 1998.

The 109th Airlift Wing from Scotia, N.Y., flies LC-130 aircraft that have been modified with skis, allowing them to take off and land on the slick ice and compacted snow that is up to two miles thick at the South Pole.

Sergeant Wanner, who deployed here for five weeks, was impressed by the joint nature of the mission, which is overseen by the U.S. Transportation Command.

"We've got people here from the Mississippi, Washington, California, Maryland, Ohio, New York and Nevada Guard units," he said.

"Along with the active-duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve, Navy Sealift Command and, later in the season, Coast Guard cutters, it's really a total-force mission."

Both Sergeants Romig and Wanner are seasoned aerial port troops, but their joint cargo inspection duty was unlike anything they'd ever imagined.

"We're working cargo with civilians from the U.S. Antarctic Program, with New Zealand Defense Force people and with ramp folks from Raytheon," Sergeant Romig said.

"Many things are done with a handshake instead of a form, but it's friendly and, more importantly, it works."

The hours are long. Most days, the men were in the warehouse at 3 a.m. and worked until 5 p.m. or later. Sundays were the only days off.

While much of life on the ice is structured, both found time to take in other activities like hiking trips into the many



Airlift into and out of McMurdo Station is provided by the New York Air Guard's LC-130 transport aircraft, which feature modified landing gear. Special skis have been fitted to the planes' wheels to allow for landings on packed ice. (Photo courtesy Senior Master Sgt. Barry Wright.)

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(Cont'd from page 10)

valleys and peaks that surround McMurdo.

Both also visited the historic areas on Ross Island, including some of the camp huts used by Antarctic explorers more than 100 years ago.

"I liked putting myself in the shoes of the early explorers and imagining myself in that era," Sergeant Wanner said.

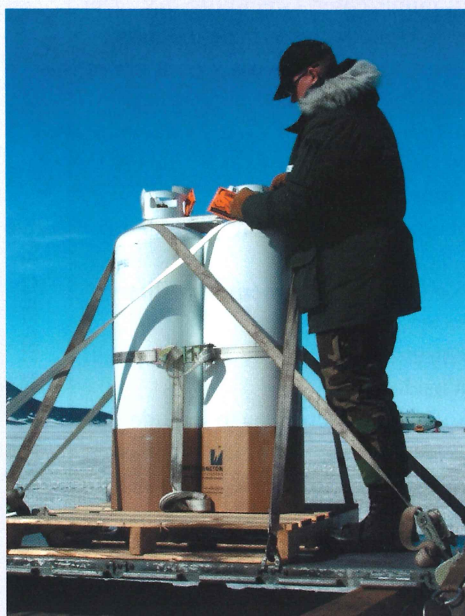
"Their experiences down here are so different than ours, but in a way, just the same."

Other polar pursuits took on new meaning below the 60th parallel.

"We went sledding one day and I scared myself with how fast we got going," Sergeant Romig said.

"There aren't any trees or bushes to slow you down."

Duty lengths for military personnel range from five weeks to six months.



Master Sgt. Jeff Romig checks the restraints on a pallet of petroleum distillates headed to a deep field Antarctic site. (Photo by 1st Lt. April Conway/SFA)

The military community, however, makes up only a small portion of McMurdo residents in the summer.

Hundreds of scientists, researchers, heavy equipment operators and those simply wanting to experience life on the harsh continent make up the diverse population of the station.

On any given day, a lunch table in the dining facility may host the foremost ozone depletion expert in the world, an Air Guard mechanic, a university professor working as a custodian on the ice and a professional dive instructor from Hawaii who now gathers mollusk specimens from frigid polar water.

"The personalities here are very different from military folks but very friendly," Sergeant Romig said.

"Everyone has been new here at one time or another and has helped out any time I've asked."

Airman gains naval experience at South Pole

By Capt. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Officer

Senior Master Sgt. Barry Wright's recent deployment to Antarctica gives new meaning to the phrase "career broadening."

The Kentucky Air Guardsman, who is serving as the safety manager for Support Forces Antarctica through the end of February, is part of a small cadre of U.S. military personnel that supports research conducted by the National Science Foundation at McMurdo Station.

The military presence includes members of the Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force, Air Force Reserve, U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard, all under the control of the U.S. Transportation Command.

"This is truly a joint operation that's fast-paced and diversified," Sergeant Wright said.

"You get to do a lot of things that you wouldn't normally have the opportunity to do, like learning about ship operations and pier fleet operations.

"The other day, I learned how to moor a ship and cast lines. That's something an E-8 would probably never do unless he or she joined the Navy or Coast Guard.

"But we're all one team here, and you have to fill in where you can to get the



Senior Master Sgt. Barry Wright helps moor the Nathaniel B. Palmer in McMurdo Sound. The icebreaker is used by the U.S. Antarctic Program as a scientific research vessel. (Photo courtesy Senior Master Sgt. Barry Wright.)

Sergeant Wright also had the opportunity to assist aircraft maintenance troops, which he described as an "interesting" experience.

"The flightline is 10 miles out on the ice, and working conditions are always a challenge," he noted.

Flight operations include airlift sorties flown by the 109th Airlift Wing of the New York Air National Guard, which transports passengers and cargo aboard modified LC-130 aircraft.

The planes' landing gear are fitted with special skis that allow the aircraft to land on packed snow or ice, Sergeant Wright said.

Other airlift is provided by C-141 rotators based at Christchurch, New Zealand.

Sergeant Wright's deployment, which began in mid-January, is his second to Antarctica. He also deployed in support of the scientific mission in last year.

"Last year was a learning experience," said Sergeant Wright, who normally serves as ground safety manager for the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"This year, I pretty much hit the ground running because the learning curve wasn't as steep.

"It's the chance of a lifetime, and I encourage everyone to take advantage of it if given the opportunity."

Youth Camp announced

The Kentucky National Guard Family Program Youth Development Week will be held July 10-16 at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center, Greenville, Ky. The Youth Development Week will be in a camp-type setting and is open to legal dependents of Kentucky National Guard members, both Army and Air, and other children as listed below. Applications will be accepted and prioritized as follows:

1. Children of Kentucky National Guard members
2. Grandchildren of Kentucky National Guard members
3. Children and Grandchildren of Kentucky Guard retirees.
4. Children of National Guard members of other states that currently reside in

Kentucky.

5. Children of State and Federal Employees Kentucky Department of Military Affairs (KYNG).

The camp is open to campers ages 9-14 and counselors ages 15-21. The camp will be accepting approximately 107 campers and 18 counselors.

The Youth Development Week will consist of a variety of activities to include drill and ceremonies, flag etiquette, team building exercises, first aid, anti-drug classes, gun safety, rappelling, archery, swimming, fishing, sports, a Field Training Exercise (FTX), and much more.

Campers will be assigned to platoons according to age, and will have a counselor and camp staff with them at all times. Medical personnel will be available 24-hours a day. Applications for campers, counselors, and staff may be downloaded from the home page of the State Family Program web site at www.familyreadinesscenter.org.

All applications must be received at the address on the application no later than April 15. All applicants will be notified of selection or non-selection by May 15. Those selected will be mailed a packet with additional information and instructions.

A \$75.00 application fee for campers and counselors is due with the application. Check or money order only, please. Checks and money orders will be made to: KYNG FP Quality Of Life Fund. Refunds or returned checks will be sent to anyone who was not selected.

If you have any questions please call the numbers on the application form, or call SGT Catherine Griffith at 800-372-7601 or email catherine.griffith@ky.ngb.army.mil.

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History of the Ky Guard now on DVD

by CPT David Page
Deputy State PAO

In June of 2003, COL John Heltzel tasked CW4 Dewey Pope with doing a historical video of the Kentucky National Guard that would cover the entire period from its conception of the Kentucky Militia in the 1700's to the present.

Pope put together a historical committee consisting of: John Trowbridge, Tom Fugate, COL (ret) Al Alfaro, Nicky Hughes and Jason LeMay. The committee met several times over several months and decided to redo "The History of the Kentucky National Guard" originally produced by John Trowbridge and other historical state personnel in 1991. The committee reviewed the video with Jason LeMay updating the script and set a production date in July to start the new production.

Russ Hatter, another state historical society employee, was selected to do the voice over as he had an extensive radio and television background. Nicky Hughes and Pope collaborated on the musical score, which was taken from several selections of the 202nd Army Band and Saxton's Cornet Band recordings.

Pope and Trowbridge next spent several days going over slides used in the previous video and selecting new slides to cover the period from Desert Storm to the present War in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Pope edited the video, along with Trowbridge's direction, on a digital non-linear system which made this the first program of this type to be done completely in a digital format and produced on DVD for distribution.

The program was finished in October of 2003. Pope designed the cover and graphics, which were taken from the opening scenes shot at Fort Hill in Frankfort, Ky. in which a revolutionary soldier walks

into the frame dissolving into the modern day Kentucky Guardsman (the soldier used is 1LT Dean Kendrick).

"I wanted to create a "Ken Burns" type of production with slides zooming, panning and dissolving from one to the other," said Pope.

The DVD literally covers the very beginning of the Kentucky Militia and takes the viewer on a tour of Kentucky's involvement in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War (Kentucky had several soldiers to fight and die at the Alamo), The Civil War, The Spanish American War, The 1915 Mexican Expedition against Pancho Villa, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the attack on America on 9/11, Troop deployments to Afghanistan and finally Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The DVD also features the Kentucky Air National Guard and its conception in the late 1940's.

Because of the extensiveness of this production, the DVD won an "Award of Merit" from the Kentucky History Center in spring 2004 and also an "Award of Distinction" from the national Videographer's Awards during summer 2004.

Pope just received word in January that the DVD had won "Best Documentary" in the DOD Visual Information Production Award Program competition in fall 2004.

"We are very proud of this production," said Pope. "Like the liner notes of the DVD state, most people who drive by the armories in their hometowns have no idea of the legacy of service and sacrifice represented by our Kentucky National Guard."

To receive a copy of the "History of the Kentucky National Guard" DVD, call Mr. Pope at (502) 607-1361.