

THE CARGO COURIER

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Vast majority report favorable wing climate

Survey response from hundreds of Airmen shows some room for improvement but no major issues

By Maj. Dale Greer
Chief of Public Affairs

The survey results are in, and participants overwhelmingly agree: The 123rd Airlift Wing has a positive climate largely free of negative factors that impact unit cohesion and job satisfaction.

According to the wing's Air Force Equal Opportunity Climate Assessment Survey, conducted by the base Equal Opportunity Office in August and September, nearly 90 percent of respondents reported a "favorable" climate in the areas of perceived discrimination, cohesion and pride, and equal opportunity.

The wing earned somewhat lower ratings — in the mid-70 percent range — for motivation, morale and supervisory support, indicating areas for improvement, said Col. Greg Nelson, wing commander.

"I'm pleased to report that the results of this survey are overwhelmingly positive," Nelson said. "That tells me we're doing a lot of things right despite the high operation tempo of the past 10 years. But it also tells me we have room for improvement in a few key areas."

Two of those areas are communication and the relationship between full-time employees and traditional Guardsmen, survey results show.

"Communication has always been a challenge for the military because of the operational security constraints we face, but the wing is going to announce a number of initiatives this year to address some of those concerns and improve our ability to communicate seamlessly with both the full-time

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Cohesion and Pride



Perceived Discrimination



Tonini begins second term as Kentucky's adjutant general



Courtesy The Governor's Office

Kentucky Supreme Court Chief Justice John D. Minton Jr. swears in Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini for a second term as adjutant general of the Kentucky National Guard Dec. 13 while Tonini's wife, Carol, looks on. The ceremony was held in the Capitol rotunda in Frankfort, immediately following the governor's oath of office.

By Lt. Col. Kirk Hilbrecht
Kentucky National Guard Director of Public Affairs

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Gov. Steve Beshear re-appointed Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini as Kentucky's 51st adjutant general during a private swearing-in ceremony in Frankfort's Capitol rotunda Dec 13.

Pursuant to state law, the ceremony was held just past midnight, immediately after Beshear took the oath of office to begin his second four-year term as governor. Tonini also served as adjutant general during Beshear's first term, from 2007 to 2011.

Tonini has been an officer in the Kentucky Air National Guard since 1970 and is only the second blue-suiter to serve as adjutant general in state history. The other was Maj. Gen. Richard L. Frymire, who served as Kentucky's top military official from 1971 to 1977.

Prior to serving as adjutant general, Tonini was chief of public affairs and, later, chief of staff for Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard, in Frankfort, Ky.

He also served as creator and director of a Pentagon program designed to recognize the crucial support provided to military personnel by family members and civilian employers.

2012 — The Year of Improvement for the 123rd

Happy new year, and welcome to the first Unit Training Assembly of 2012. I sincerely hope everyone enjoyed some well-deserved quality time with family and friends.

I hope you've returned well-rested and ready for a challenge. I hope you are ready for 2012 — The Year of Improvement. This year, I challenge the 123rd Airlift Wing to look at all our processes and identify ways we can improve everything we do.

Why is 2012 "The Year of Improvement"? Last month, your group commanders and I briefed the results of our Climate Assessment Survey. Thank you again for participating, and thank you for candidly telling us your concerns. Maj. Dale Greer wrote a great article in this Cargo Courier providing an overview of the survey, and we will provide additional details to you via military communications channels.

The good news is, overall the 123rd Airlift Wing is doing great! But, more importantly, you identified two primary areas we need to work on: 1) Communications; and 2) The relationship between our full-time and traditional force. That's the first reason for 2012 — The Year of Improvement.

A second reason is our upcoming Unit Compliance Inspection in 2013. If we start now, we will be completely prepared for all aspects of this evaluation. The earlier you begin studying for a test, the better you will perform. Last minute cramming sessions don't have a good track record.

But the main reason for 2012 — The Year of Improvement is our current operation tempo combined with the fiscal reality of reduced availability of resources this year. The 123rd Airlift Wing has performed at close to 100 percent capacity since sometime in 2003. We will not reduce operations in 2012. We will return to the



**Col. Greg Nelson
123rd Airlift Wing Commander**

theater supporting AEF/ECS taskings while preparing for multiple compliance inspections in 2013. This year we also will have to perform our mission with a possible decrease in resources. Consequently, the only way I know to help ourselves is through improving our processes: improving how we do what we do.

If we continue to run full-throttle, with no increase in manpower or equipment, we have to figure out better ways to perform the individual tasks within our mission. The only way to do that is to look at everything we do through the eyes of process improvement. We all remember the Total Quality Management programs in the 1990s, and we know about the Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century program. I don't particularly like the names or labels of these

programs, but I firmly believe in what they represent — process improvement.

Quality is a measure of excellence, a quantitative measurement of processes in order to eliminate defects and deficiencies. TQM, AFISO21 and other systems are available to help evaluate our processes. The bottom-line is that we will have to improve our processes in order to remain the best tactical airlift wing.

2012 — The Year of Improvement will task all Airmen in the 123rd Airlift Wing. I don't have all the answers now, nor will I ever have all the answers. Command Chief Master Sgt. Curtis Carpenter, Col. Steve Bullard, Lt. Col. Robert Hamm and I will ask everyone in Wing Headquarters to look at how we support the wing. We will try to dissect everything we do in order to improve our communications and support to the wing. I will ask our group, squadron and flight commanders to work with our chiefs, first sergeants and supervisors to quantify and measure methods and procedures in their organizations with the goal of eliminating waste and redundancy; along with ensuring communications with, and inclusion of, all our Airmen, full-time and traditional.

Lastly, I ask every Airman in the 123rd Airlift Wing to accept this challenge. Be a part of 2012 — The Year of Improvement. If you are a "Black Belt" in your civilian capacity, please let us know how we can use your skills. Help us build the checklist and self-inspection programs in order to quantify, measure and improve what we do in preparation for our upcoming deployments and inspections.

Thanks in advance for your assistance with this. Happy new year and welcome back. The 123rd Airlift Wing stands ready!

— Col. Greg Nelson

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Our office is located in room 1160 of the Wing Headquarters Building.

We welcome your feedback. Please contact the Public Affairs Office directly if you have suggestions for articles or photography. Publication deadline for submissions to the next issue is Jan. 14.

123rd Airlift Wing Editorial Staff

Wing Commander.....Col. Greg Nelson
 Chief of Public Affairs.....Maj. Dale Greer
 Public Affairs Manager.....Master Sgt. Philip Speck
 Photo Editor.....Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora
 Senior Staff Writer.....Tech. Sgt. D. Clare
 Staff Writer.....Master Sgt. Diane Stinnett
 Staff Writer.....Tech. Sgt. Jason Ketterer
 Staff Writer.....Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel

Address: 1101 Grade Lane, Louisville, KY 40213-2678
 Phone: (502) 413-4484 • Fax: (502) 413-4676
 E-mail: allen.greer@ang.af.mil

An electronic version of the Cargo Courier is available at the Kentucky Air Guard's Web site — www.123aw.ang.af.mil

Capitol Salute

A Kentucky Air National Guard C-130 Hercules flies over the state Capitol Building Dec. 13 as part of the inauguration ceremony for Gov. Steve Beshear, who was being sworn in for his second four-year term as the Commonwealth's top elected official.

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Oliver/
Kentucky Army National Guard



Recruiting offers rewards for referrals

New program provides incentives ranging from backpacks to TVs

Cargo Courier staff report

Current and retired members of the Air National Guard can now refer potential recruits to the Guard and collect rewards if those individuals decide to join.

The new Air National Guard Referral Rewards Program offers incentives ranging from backpacks to high-definition televisions, said Master Sgt. Tommy Caruso, Base Recruiting Office Supervisor.

“The program was created to reward current and retired Air Guard members who are helping bring new Airmen into the unit,” Caruso said. “It’s based on a tiered system of rewards, so that the incentives increase in value as you make more successful referrals. Special incentives also are offered for critical career fields.”

To participate in the program, current members and retirees must visit www.Refer2ANG.com

and sign up. Each participant will receive a Referral Rewards Welcome Kit with everything the participant needs to get started, including his or her Referral Reward Program Code.

“The RRP code is what the referred lead will need to give to their recruiter while starting the accession process,” Caruso explained. “This code is unique and will be the key to getting participants their credit for the referral.”

The welcome kit also includes tips on finding qualified candidates, personalized business cards with contact information and the participant’s RRP code, and a Referral Rewards Membership Card that lists the RRP Code and The Airman’s Creed.

Participants can start referring leads by handing out their personalized business cards, Caruso said.

Rewards are redeemed via a tiered system. After a participant’s first recruit joins, the participant can choose a reward from the first tier. When the second recruit joins, he or she can pick a reward from the second tier, and so on.

The more new Airmen a participant

finds, the more valuable the rewards.

The first tier offers a choice of a backpack, duffel bag, tool or executive leather kit. All the items are customized with the Air National Guard logo. The second tier offers such items as a custom fitness kit or a tailgate package. Third-tier rewards include custom luggage or a stainless kitchen set, while fourth-tier incentives include a grill or golfing set.

Fifth-tier rewards, offered to participants who bring in five recruits, include a 3D, 40-inch Blue-Ray home theater system or two different gaming kits that include a game system and 40-inch high-definition television.

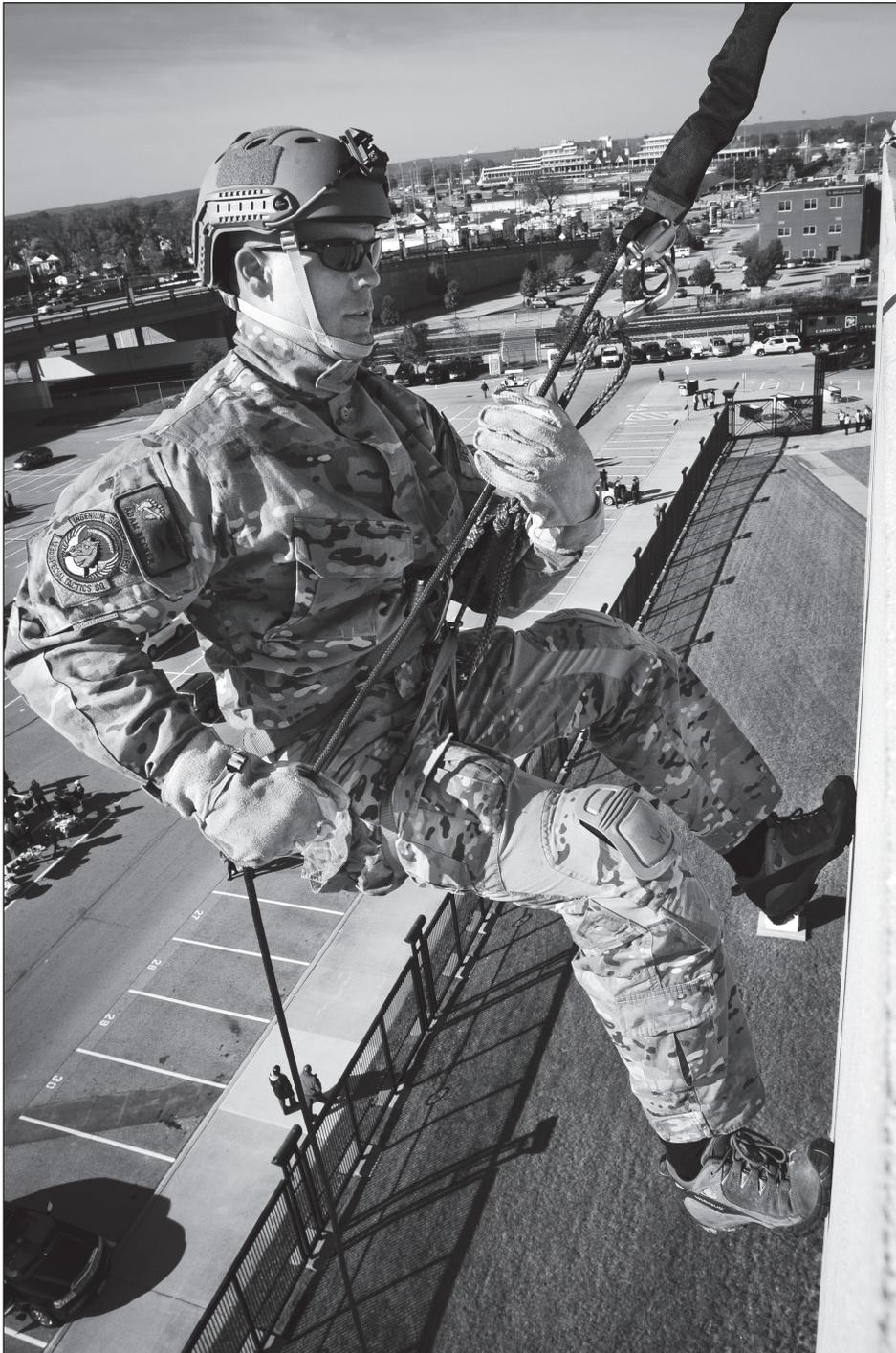
Certain hard-to-fill jobs are designated as critical AFSCs, Caruso noted. “If you find a recruit to fill one of these positions, you would be eligible for premium rewards.

“But no matter what positions you fill, you can receive some pretty amazing items.”

For more information on the program, stop by the Base Recruiting Office or visit www.Refer2ANG.com.

Outdoor Education

Pararescue troops showcase rappelling skills at U of L's Cardinal Stadium



Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel/KyANG

Staff Sgt. Adam Becker, a pararescueman from the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, rappels down the side of University of Louisville Cardinal Stadium prior to the school's football match with Pittsburgh Nov. 12. The demonstration was part of the school's annual Military Appreciation Day.

**By Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs**

Members of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron rappelled down the side of University of Louisville Cardinal Stadium Nov. 12 in a public demonstration of their tactical capabilities.

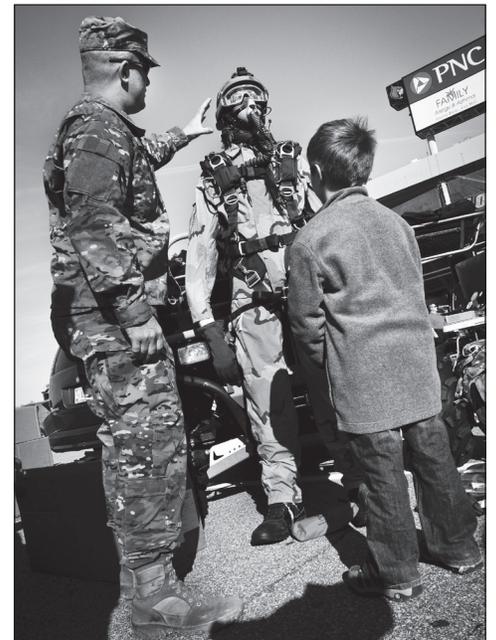
The demonstration, held just prior to kick-off for the Cardinal's football match-up with Pittsburgh, helped raise public awareness of the unit's mission, said Staff Sgt. David Covell.

It was one of several events offered by military units in the area Nov. 12 as part of the university's annual Military Appreciation Day.

"This was a great opportunity for the squadron to show the public some of our capabilities," Covell said. "Being a college student at U of L, I'm really happy to be able to support both my school and my unit."

The squadron also set up static displays of equipment, including all-terrain vehicles and parachute gear.

Recruiters from the Kentucky Air and Army National Guard staffed displays at the event as well.



Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel/KyANG

Tech. Sgt. Jason Likens of the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron explains high-altitude parachute gear to a potential recruit Nov. 12 at U of L Cardinal Stadium.

International military officials tour base

Group interested in dual nature of Ky. Air Guard's state and federal missions

By Master Sgt. Philip Speck
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Military officials from five European countries toured the 123rd Airlift Wing Nov. 14 to learn about the Kentucky Air National Guard's dual role of supporting both federal and state missions.

The group, which was comprised of military and government officials from Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom, participated in the tour as part of the International Visitor Leadership Program. The program was created by the U.S. State Department to develop stronger relations with the international community, said Eran Huber of the World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana, which coordinated the local visit.

The visitors were first briefed about the 123rd Airlift Wing and its general mission capabilities. Next, they were taken on a tour of the 123rd Contingency Response Group and given a briefing on the unit's disaster-response capabilities by the CRG commander, Col. Warren Hurst. The visit then concluded with a tour of aircraft maintenance facilities and a static display of the Kentucky Air National Guard's workhorse transport plane, the C-130 Hercules.

1st Lieutenant Mate Toth, a member of the Hungarian military and an aide de camp at the NATO Center of Excellence for Military Medicine, was most impressed with the Contingency Response Group, a self-sufficient unit capable of quickly establishing an airbase in an austere location so military airlift can begin flowing into an area affected by disaster.

"What is most amazing for me," he said, "is that you are offering a capability package — the capability of getting in and operating an airbase for a short amount of time, and bringing everything that you need."

The other visitors were Nioley Veskov Nikolov, deputy minister's assistant for the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria; Lt. Col. Anthony Cudmore, officer in charge, International Security and Defense Policy, Office of Strategic Planning, the Irish Defense Forces; Dalibor Pavolka, head of



Photos by Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Lt. Col. Robert Hamm, vice commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, briefs five international military officials about the dual mission of the Kentucky Air National Guard Nov. 14 (above). The officials, who also toured a static display of a C-130 aircraft (below), were visiting as part of a leadership program affiliated with the U.S. State Department.



the Multilateral Relations Section for the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic; and Rachael Elkins, HMG Strategy and Governance, Civil Service Fast Stream, United Kingdom.

"We were very excited to host the International visitors for their tour of the base,"

said Lt. Col. Robert Hamm, vice commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, who served as host for the event and briefed the visitors during the tour. "I found the visitors very motivated to understand what the Air National Guard does, and very interested in the dual-role mission sets and dynamics of the National Guard."

Climate

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and traditional force.

“We’re also looking at things we can do to enhance the interoperability of our full-timers and our drilling reservists, who are the heart and soul of the Kentucky Air Guard. We cannot accomplish our mission without our traditional Guardsmen, and our full-time force needs to ensure we do everything we can to support them.

“2012 is going to be ‘The Year of Improvement,’ and you’ll see everyone across the wing working to enhance, improve and streamline our processes and working relationships.

“I want to thank every Airman who participated in this survey for helping leadership better understand the areas we need to focus on to improve our human relations climate,” Nelson added. “People are our number-one asset, and our Airmen should have the best possible working environment in order to grow and support our mission.”

Unit climate assessments are used to assist commanders in assessing the positive and negative factors of the human relations climate in their organizations, according to Maj. Latonia Trowell, wing equal opportunity officer. The EO office is required to conduct surveys every four years, within six months of assignment of a new commander or upon request.

The latest survey drew anonymous responses from 413 Airmen, which represents 38.6 percent of wing personnel. That’s a large enough sample size to be statistically relevant, Trowell said. Moreover, the participants’ demographic breakdown is a “mirror image” of the wing’s percentage of assigned men, women, races and ethnicities, Nelson said.

The wing earned its highest mark — 89.9 percent favorable — in the area of “cohesion and pride,” which covers such factors as whether Airmen like their jobs, feel valued and comfortable in the work environment, and have pride in their duty section.

The next highest score — 89.8 percent favorable — was in the area of “perceived discrimination,” followed closely by a score of 89.5 percent favorable in the category of “command equal opportunity/equal employment opportunity policy” and 86.9 percent favorable in the category of “overt discriminatory behaviors.”

The two lowest scores were in “supervisory support” (78.4 percent favorable) and “motivation and morale” (75.6 percent favorable). Supervisory support includes such factors as whether Airmen have open communica-

tion with their supervisors, performance feedback is offered in a timely fashion and on-the-job mentoring is provided to junior troops. Motivation and morale touches on such topics as recognition for good work, the fair administration of discipline and the absence of favoritism in the workplace.

Nelson noted that the wing’s ratings exceeded the average scores of both the Air Mobility Command and the U.S. Air Force in all six categories of evaluation, and they substantially exceeded them in three of the six areas.

The wing’s group commanders all said they were pleased with the feedback provided by the survey.

“The results showed that, despite a very high operation tempo, our members take pride in their wing, enjoy their jobs and are very motivated,” said Col. Barry Gorter, commander of the 123rd Operations Group. “While there are certainly areas we will work to improve, the overall results were very positive. I feel blessed to be part of such a great organization.”

Col. Jeff Peters, commander of the 123rd Mission Support Group, said the survey “indicated that over 90 percent of our folks enjoy their jobs.”

“This is a great number and an amazing result when provided in the context of the numerous deployments and inspections we have supported in the past 10 years,” he added. “However, we have some work to do in specific areas, and I will be working with my squadron commanders within the Mission Support Group to develop action plans to address the concerns from the assessment.”

Col. Warren Hurst, commander of the 123rd Contingency Response Group, called the survey “an excellent additional tool to help measure the health of our organization” and said the feedback will help guide future initiatives.

“Our goal is to use the climate assessment to address concerns and strive for continuous improvement,” he noted.

Col. Ken Dale, commander of the 123rd Maintenance Group, echoed those sentiments.

“The survey provided group commanders with a way to take the pulse of our units and identify areas for improvement,” he said. “We’re not perfect, but we should always strive for perfection. The climate survey will get us closer to that goal.”

Col. Steve Bullard, the wing’s vice commander and acting commander of the 123rd

Command EO/EEO Policy



Overt Discriminatory Behavior



Supervisory Support



Motivation and Morale



Graphics by Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Medical Group, said he was “pleased to see the pride — both in ourselves and in our individual units — that was so clearly demonstrated in our climate assessment.”

“I was most pleased with our overwhelmingly

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Vets4Warriors offers new counseling options

By Tech. Sgt. John Orrell
and Army Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON — In an effort to face the unique challenges of providing peer counseling, the National Guard unveiled its newest initiative, Vets4Warriors, during a ceremony on Capitol Hill Dec. 13.

Vets4Warriors, a toll-free, peer-to-peer counseling hotline, will provide Guard members and all Reserve Component members with the ability to speak with counselors on the phone or on-line.

As former service members, the counselors will be able to provide empathy, understanding and a wide variety of tools to help the modern-day service member fight the fight on the front lines and the home front, said Army Col. Gregg Bliss.

“(This is) a peer support hotline that allows service members of any Reserve Component to call the center 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and discuss any issues, challenges or problems they have with a peer counselor,” said Bliss, the Army National Guard’s Soldiers and Families Support Division chief.

“(Service members can speak with) somebody who’s been in the military, somebody we believe ... will perhaps have a better understanding of what some of their challenges and issues may be, and then either provide them with referrals or recommendations on how they could they could resolve their issues or even just talk to them and listen to them.”

Bliss said that having a program dedicated to strictly anonymous, peer-to-peer counseling is a key step in letting people know there’s no stigma in asking for help and it’s okay to not be okay.

“You have got to be open, honest and candid if you’re having challenges, and share them with somebody who you believe is there or willing to support you,” he said. “We expect most of our Soldiers, at some point and time in their career, to have some challenges that are bigger than themselves, and the only real thing that we ask you to do is acknowledge that.”

Once the service member reaches out to Vets4Warriors, the counselor will try to match them to any of the resources available.

“We’ve coordinated a lot of the support

services currently available, especially those away from the installations, because we’re looking for accessibility and convenience, (but) we can’t promise that every service is available to every service member based on where they live,” Bliss said.

“We’ve been working with a lot of the national support agencies to come up with a pretty comprehensive listing,” he added. “So based upon the challenges you have, we will do our best to refer you to somebody who’s in the vicinity to provide you with some of the service support you’re looking for.”

The program, to be run by the Army National Guard, will be based at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in Newark, N.J., which has an extensive background relating to this type of helpline.

The university created a similar program designed for law enforcement members in New Jersey.

“The past experiences and research ... (show) that peer support is a very effective way of really helping people decompress or deal with issues or resolve challenges,” Bliss said.

“There’s an inherent understanding of what the individual may be going through, plus you have the empathy and the mutual camaraderie when talking to a peer.

“We think this is a great way of doing it — kind of leveraging the Soldier-to-Soldier model ... to develop a more structured peer-to-peer program.”

Even with the ability for service members to have this support, Bliss said Vets4Warriors is not a suicide-prevention hotline, nor does it offer clinical behavioral health services.

“This is just a hotline you can call, as a service member, and talk to somebody with a comparable background.”

He added that the strength of the program is its anonymity, so that service members can talk to counselors about a wide variety of topics and not have to worry about retribution.

“It had to be anonymous, it had to be a relationship between the service members and their peer counselor,” Bliss said. “And while (it is) encouraged (that) you utilize your peer support network and your family and your chain of command, it’s not a requirement,” he said.

“The organization and the Guard leader-

ship firmly embrace the fact that our (Guard members) will have challenges, they will be under stress, they will have issues that they can’t deal with alone, and we fully expect and encourage them to ask for help,” Bliss said. “There’s no stigma from the organization.”

But that anonymity will only work if the service member takes the first step, makes the call and is completely truthful, he said.

Gen. Craig McKinley, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, believes that with how fully operational the Guard has been for the last 10 years, it is important to find any and all means to help Guard members be resilient.

“Since 9/11, more than 660,000 National Guardsmen and women — some multiple times — have served side-by-side with their active-duty counterparts to defend this nation,” McKinley said.

“Now, some of these service members need our help to properly and safely reintegrate back with their loved ones and employers. This unique program will give our Guard and Reserve veterans the care and support they so selflessly earned.”

New Jersey Sen. Frank Lautenberg, who is also an Army veteran, agrees with McKinley’s sentiment and said the peer-to-peer program is an unprecedented approach to veterans outreach.

“We can’t just stand behind our military on the battlefield; we must also stand behind them when they return home,” he said. “Too many veterans are coming home with mental wounds, and they are suffering in silence.”

Lautenberg, who championed the program to President Barack Obama, Defense Department officials and the National Guard after its success in New Jersey, said he is looking forward to the positive results the program is expected to have on a broader scale.

“This peer support line will mean that our veterans have help with their concerns and questions before they reach crisis levels. We won’t rest until military and veteran suicides are a thing of the past,” he said.

“The help line at UMDNJ in New Jersey has been a tremendous success, and I applaud the Defense Department and (the National) Guard Bureau for embracing it and using it as a model to help military men and women in every state.”

To learn more about Vets4Warriors, or to speak with a counselor, call 1-855-VET-TALK (838-8255) or visit www.Vets4Warriors.com.

123rd Airlift Wing
Public Affairs Office
Kentucky Air National Guard
1101 Grade Lane
Louisville, KY 40213-2678

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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positive response to knowing how to care for our wingmen who need assistance and our understanding of our military mission,” he continued. “We pledge to take our feedback constructively and use it to improve on communication, supervisory support, mentoring and all the highlighted areas to make our Kentucky Air National Guard the best possible working environment for all of us.”

The way forward is clear, Nelson said.

“Overall, I believe we are on the right track,” he said. “I wish we were doing everything perfectly, but I’m glad our Airmen used the climate survey to candidly identify areas for attention. We will use our year of improvement in 2012 to move the 123rd Airlift Wing one step closer to perfection.”

For more information regarding the wing’s 2011 Air Force Equal Opportunity Climate Assessment Survey, a full statistical analysis is available on the base local area network — Y:\2011_Climate_Survey.

Holiday Happiness



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Makayla and Katelyn Powers, granddaughters of the Kentucky Air Guard’s Lt. Col. Mary McCaulie, chat with Santa during the annual Children’s Christmas Party, held Dec. 11 in the Base Annex. Hundreds of children, Guardsmen and their family members turned out for the event, which also featured games and door prizes.