

The Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 15, Issue 2 - April 2012

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

THE DUSK OF
OPERATION NEW DAWN

AROUND THE



18 Staff Sgt. Daniel McSpadden prepares to load a magazine during a rifle competition at Camp Santiago Joint Maneuver Training Center, Puerto Rico, Jan. 14.



8 Master Sgt. Brian Bauer, a flight engineer assigned to the 165th Airlift Squadron, releases a parachute canopy during a water survival training exercise at Taylorsville Lake, Ky.



Cover Story

Cover photo by Sgt. Scott Raymond, 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

Pfc. Charles Elliott, 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, stands strong during a sandstorm in Iraq Oct. 19, 2011. The 149th MEB deployed in support of Operation New Dawn, the historic and monumental mission of U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq. Read more about the brigade's strength on p.9

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AND IN OUR PAGES



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Kentucky NATIONAL GUARD
Unbridled Service

The Bluegrass Guard

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We hope you have looked forward to receiving this issue and notice a few changes inside. The Bluegrass Guard staff has redesigned the magazine to give you a more professional looking and streamlined product. Don't see your unit in here? Find out who your Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative is and let that Soldier

or Airman know you want to see your efforts in the magazine.

Have a photo or story to share? Send it to PAO@kentuckyguard.com and then look for it at www.kentuckyguard.com, on our Facebook page and here in the pages of The Bluegrass Guard.

— **Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson**
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Letters to the Editor Policy

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Don't miss an issue

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

Army Retiree address changes should be made through Staff Sgt. Debbie Devine at the Kentucky National Guard Personnel Services Branch. She can be reached at 502-607-1497 or deborah.devine@ky.ngb.army.mil.

Air Retirees should request changes through retired Chief Master Sgt. James Turpin at jturpin@fewpb.net.



Next Issue

Photo by Spc. David Bolton, 133rd MPAD

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Harold Baker, a medic with the 123rd Airlift Wing's Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package out of Louisville, Ky, surveys the damage done to the city of West Liberty, Ky., March 3 after severe storms devastated the area March 2.

STRENGTH AND HONOR



By Col. Scott Campbell

149th Maneuver Enhancement Bde. Commander, scott.campbell3@us.army.mil

There are 54 National Guard organizations in the United States. Only one was selected to lead

the historic mission of closing down U.S. operations in Iraq.

Kentucky, along with our brothers and sisters from Virginia and Utah, closed out the U.S. military's nearly nine-year operation in Iraq. The assignment was a testament to the quality of our Soldiers and the respect they command at the national level.

The Kentucky National Guard does an excellent job preparing and supporting our units during deployment. Coupled with the outstanding relationship we forged with the units from Virginia and Utah, the conditions for our success were set before we entered theater.

I told our troops early on to embrace the significance of the mission, to understand our role in history and be comfortable with it. I didn't want them to be overwhelmed by it or allow it to consume them, but be willing to accept their place as a contributor to a significant time in U.S. and Kentucky military history.

Ours was a relatively short deployment, but I don't think any brigade in

Iraq was asked to operate in a more fluid and dynamic environment. Post conflict drawdown of forces, peaceful transition of responsibility and withdrawal of a large force are complex tasks the U.S. Army does not have a recent history of executing.

The good news is our Soldiers never let the strategic level importance of this mission – nor the constant stress we were all under – to negatively impact their performance. They understood the whole world was watching us to make sure we did it right. What the world saw was a well disciplined and organized joint force successfully execute a complex mission.

Complicating our efforts were the insurgents that picked up attacks in an attempt to show the world we were disorganized and leaving in defeat.

Thanks to these great Citizen Soldiers of Task Force Legion, the enemy failed.

Those who have been with me awhile have heard me talk about successful leaders that are intuitive, adaptive, flexible, and aggressive. Our mission in Iraq was a perfect proving ground for all those leadership traits. I saw Soldiers, NCOs and officers make decisions daily with strategic level implications. We did not have time for a deliberate decision-making process; junior leaders had to be

empowered to make timely adjustments to the plan. Obviously mistakes were made along the way but the greater mistake would have been inaction with a not later than Dec. 31, 2011 withdrawal date looming ever closer. I was more than willing to forgive mistakes of commission to prevent acts of omission.

When we crossed that berm into Kuwait for the last time we halted at the border to clear Kuwaiti customs. The relative silence and sober atmosphere that permeated our two day road march south was broken as Soldiers hugged each other, smiled and cheered, knowing they were finally out and the conflict was coming to a conclusion. Many of us looked back north and reflected on the ultimate sacrifice paid by nearly 4,500 American service members and 14 Kentucky Army National Guardsmen.

Their sacrifices brought us to that day. Their memories will live on in our Soldiers and our service to this great nation and the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

To paraphrase the Deputy Commanding General of the 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Legion was asked to do the impossible and did so with overwhelming success. This is a testament to the quality of Soldiers from Task Force Legion and the Kentucky National Guard.

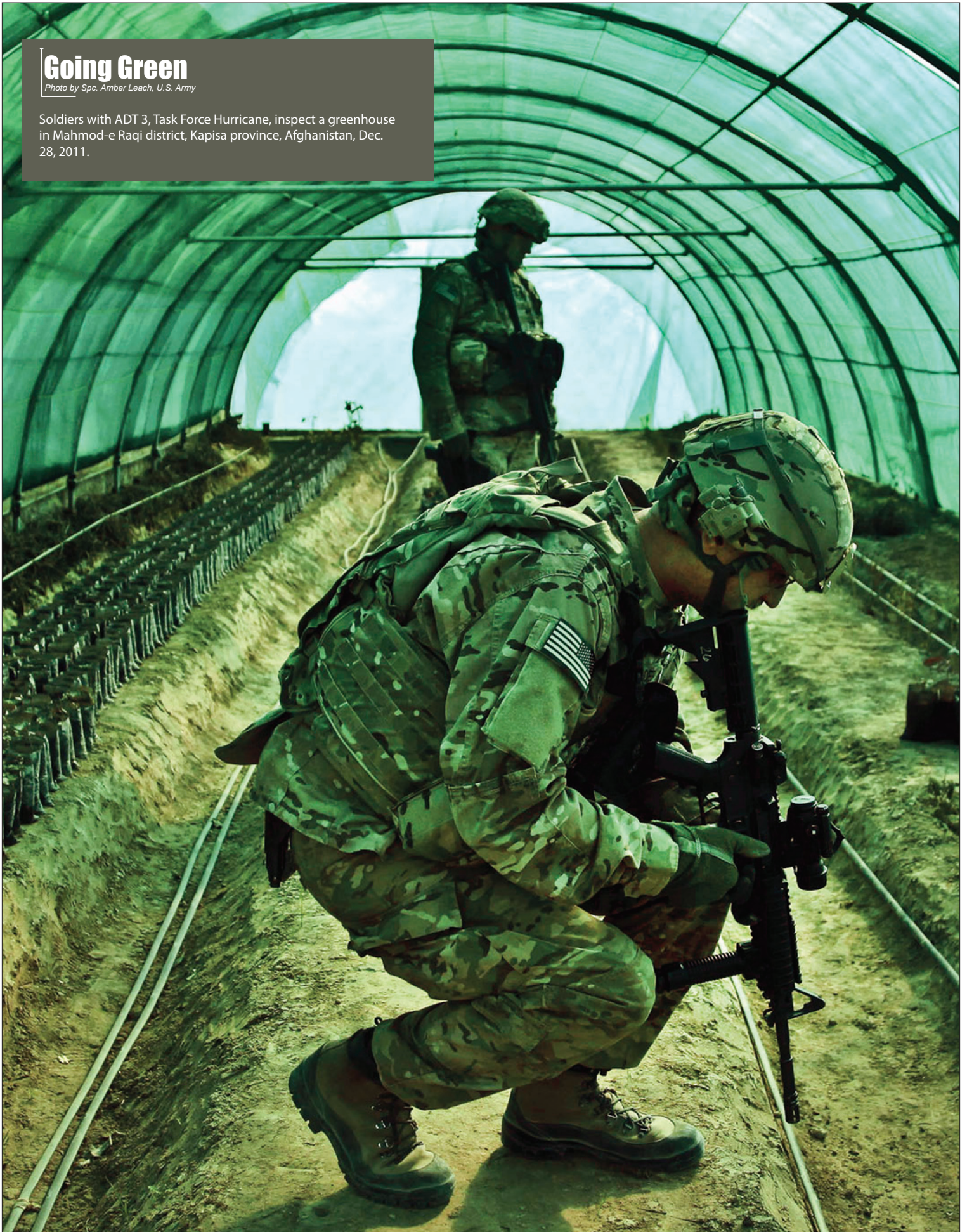
Strength and honor! 



Going Green

Photo by Spc. Amber Leach, U.S. Army

Soldiers with ADT 3, Task Force Hurricane, inspect a greenhouse in Mahmod-e Raqi district, Kapisa province, Afghanistan, Dec. 28, 2011.



Life on THE FARM

Agribusiness Development Teams assist Afghan farmers

Story by: Staff Sgt. Paul Evans

Kentucky ADT 4 Unit Public Affairs Historian Representative, PAO@kentuckyguard.com

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PASAB, Afghanistan— Talk to a Kentuckian around this small military base in the mountains of southern Afghanistan, and you will very likely get a feel for the nervous, excited vibe here.

For Soldiers of Kentucky's Agribusiness Development Team 3, who served the people of Afghanistan since April 2011 by teaching more effective farming and business methods, the excitement is centered on finally going home. Meanwhile, ADT 4, who arrived during the first week of February 2012, looks forward to building on ADT 3's success helping the Afghan people.

"It's been different (serving in Afghanistan), I can say that much," said ADT 3's Sgt. Darrell Buchanan, a 37-year-old native of Owensboro, Ky., before adding, "I think we're leaving it (the mission) in good hands."

"We're more than ready to take over the mission. We trained really hard over the past few months," said Sgt. Amanda Behling, a 25-year-old from Louisville, Ky.

While ADT 4's mission will be the first of its type to teach farming in southern Afghanistan, ADT 3 spent their last few months in country helping get ADT 4's living accommodations set up the south. The Team also helped establish contacts and get ADT 4 familiarized with routes before beginning the process of handing over operations to their replacements.

"It's been a challenging last couple months for our deployment," said ADT 3 Commander Col. Neil Mullaney, a native of Louisville, Ky., referring to their move from northern to southern Afghanistan.

"ADT 3 has gone above and beyond to make this as comfortable as it possibly can be. They moved (south) to come here and set up shop for us and they've done an excellent job," Behling stated.

As 2012 progresses, Kentucky's Agribusiness Development Team 4 will take on the difficult task of continuing to build on the good reputation established by their predecessors before Kentucky ADT 5 takes over the mission in late 2012.

"We focused a lot on education and capacity... we did do some individual improvements for farmers as well," Mullaney reflected. "But in order to have a long-term sustainable impact, we knew that was through education, so that's what we really focused on."

"I think the key thing that ADT's can do is close the loop on the value chain," explained Mullaney about the issues faced in their mission. "Afghan farmers have been farming for thousands of years... we're not teaching them anything new. The problem is their post-harvesting techniques, getting goods to market, basi-

cally completing that value chain."

Buchanan took a few minutes to reflect on lessons learned in Afghanistan from his perspective. "I've learned to not take as many things for granted anymore. Little things that used to annoy me with the kids before seem trivial now. I've just learned a lot about appreciating what you have because it could always be a lot worse," recalled Buchanan. "ADT 3's been a great team, though. I've enjoyed everybody here," he added, noting his excitement at getting home to his wife, kids and 8-month-old daughter.

Buchanan's parting advice for ADT 4 was simple. "Always keep your eyes and your ears open, because you can always learn something new every day. If it gets to the point that you think you know everything, that's probably when you're going to get hurt," said Buchanan.

"I think Col. Barrier (ADT 4 Commander) and his team are going to do a fantastic job," concluded Mullaney.


In the end, both Afghanis and Kentuckians will likely continue learning from one another during the Agribusiness Development Team's 4th rotation, even if ADT 4 has big shoes to fill replacing its predecessors. 



Photo by Staff Sgt. Paul Evans/KYARNG

Tech. Sgt. Bucky Harris, a resident of Middlesboro, Ky. rested with an axe during a work day in southern Afghanistan of Feb. 16, 2012.

Airmen conduct life-saving training at Taylorsville Lake

By Master Sgt. Phil Speck
123rd Air Wing Public Affairs Officer,

TAYLORSVILLE, Ky. — Kentucky Airmen spent some time at Taylorsville Lake in June 2011 for work, not for recreation.

More than 120 aircrew members and intelligence specialists from the Kentucky Air National Guard conducted life-saving land- and water-survival training at the Kentucky state park.

The training, which included land navigation and emergency egress from a downed aircraft, is required for aircrew members every three years, said Lt. Col. Ronald Whelan, commander of the 123rd Operations Support Flight. It builds on an extensive three-week combat-survival course that all aircrew members must complete in Spokane, Wash., as part of their initial training.

“The scenarios we train for are certainly the kinds of things we hope will never happen in real life, but we need to be prepared for them,” Whelan said.

“The idea is that our reactions will become second-nature in the event of a real emergency.”

Chief Master Sergeant Joan Hazel, who helped organize the training, said repetition is key.

“We hear stories, over and over again, about how this information comes back to the forefront of crewmembers’ brains

during real-world emergencies and they’re able to use their knowledge,” said Hazel, superintendent of the Kentucky Air Guard’s Aircrew Flight Equipment Section. “It’s really good stuff.”

The Airmen conducted training including radio usage, compass-reading, land navigation, concealment techniques and firecraft — the use of flares and other incendiary devices. Instructors also provided a “hanging-harness” course, which teaches aircrew members how to extract themselves from trees if their parachutes get snagged after jumping out of a plane, Hazel said.

Water-survival training gave aircrew members the opportunity to deploy and use rubber survival craft such as a 20-person boat or a one-person raft. Students were then pulled across the lake by



Photo by Senior Airman Max Rechel/KYANG

Senior Airman Micah Haddix, a loadmaster with the 165th Airlift Squadron, prepares to release himself from a parachute suspended in a training rig.

a motorboat to simulate what it would be like if they had landed in the ocean by parachute, and the tides had begun to drag them across the surface of the water by pulling on the parachute canopy. Students were required to release their canopies to stop the dragging action.

“Training like this gives us the opportunity to get out here and work with equipment that we don’t get to work with that much,” said Capt. Casey Clark, a C-130 pilot with Kentucky’s 165th Airlift Squadron. “I’ve really appreciated the enthusiasm of the flight-equipment folks we come out here to work with.”

Honoring Heroes

Gov. Steve Beshear and Medal of Honor recipient Dakota Meyer unveil the Medal of Honor Plaque March 15 at the Kentucky Capitol rotunda. The Plaque, honors the 60 Kentuckians who have received the Medal of Honor. The plaque will remain on display at the Capitol next to the statue of Abraham Lincoln. Read more in the next issue.



Photo by Capt. Stephen Martin/KYARNG



The Kentucky National Guard's 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade was charged with the historic mission of closing down U.S. Operations in Iraq. Nine years after combat operations began in Iraq, Kentucky Guardsmen were some of the last ones out. This is their story.





End of an Era

Photo by Capt. Andi Hahn/KYARNG

Col. Scott Campbell, 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Commander and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Johnson, case the brigade colors representing the end of mission for the unit in support of Operation New Dawn at Victory Base Complex, Iraq, Nov. 28.



CASING OF THE COLORS

Story and photo by Capt. Andi Hahn

149th MEB Public Affairs Officer, PAO@kentuckyguard.com

The 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade took on a historic and monumental mission last year that brought a close to Operation New Dawn and the end of the war in Iraq. On Nov. 28, it cased its colors, signifying an end to the mission.

The 149th MEB served as the last garrison command of the largest and most intricate U.S. base in all of Iraq, Victory Base Complex. Its mission was to provide base defense operations and force protection for all of VBC as well as life support operations to sustain all tenants on the camp during the withdrawal of troops.

“We asked the 149th MEB to do the impossible,” said Brig. Gen. Paul J. LaCamera, deputy commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division.

“We asked them to close the biggest base in Iraq while still providing life support and force protection to the significant population of Service members and civilians that still remained. And they did it with overwhelming success.”


Victory Base Complex became synonymous with the heartbeat and the center of gravity for U.S. operations during the Iraq campaigns. VBC consisted of more than 60 miles of perimeter, 20,000 acres, 19 separate camps and housed 24,000 Service members and civilians at the height of this 2011.

The most challenging mission for the brigade was transferring authority of all VBC to Iraq. This included transitioning several of the camps inside VBC to the Government of Iraq, Iraqi Ground Forces Command, Iraqi Special Operations Forces and the 6th Iraqi Army for force protection upon withdrawal from the base.

Col. Scott Campbell, 149th MEB commander, said it was a momentous accomplishment for Task Force Legion and a significant contribution to the overall effort.

“We gave back the base better than we found it; peacefully transitioning the terrain we once fought for back to the sovereign nation of Iraq,” Campbell said. “This is a huge milestone.”

In the four months the 149th MEB was in command of garrison operations, it managed the contract that provided power to more than 6,000 personnel on VBC during the drawdown. It provided contracting officer representative support to 23 contracts valued at \$470 million dollars and processed more than 600 work orders for tenants on the base.

“The 149th MEB accomplished a lot during their short, but critical time in Iraq,” LaCamera said. “I am humbled and honored to have worked alongside the leaders and Soldiers of Task Force Legion.” 

CHARLIE COMPANY CREW COMPETITION

Infantry NCO challenges Soldiers with PT competition

Story and photos by Sgt. Scott Raymond
149th MEB, PAO@kentuckyguard.com

For Soldiers, most days begin with a little physical training. A run or lifting some weights usually satisfies most.

But when your day begins with pull-ups, then dips followed by changing a tire in full battle rattle, on to a tire flip and finishing with a run, it is probably more than just PT.

Soldiers of 1st Platoon, Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment found out just how much more during a company competition at Victory Base Complex in Baghdad Nov. 4.

"The idea was to give the guys a little morale boost," said Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Roberge. "We did it to build some crew cohesion and also to refine the skills and abilities of each crew."

It wasn't just Kentucky Guardsmen who competed for strongest team. Word got out about the intense competition and an active duty unit, 123rd Brigade Support Battalion from 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, also participated.

"It doesn't always happen. We are constantly running missions, so to have everyone here at the same time is what we were hoping for, a nice change of pace for the guys," Roberge said.

The competition was a simple idea - teams of three compete in an event and are rewarded with points based upon their place of finish. The team with the most points wins. The efforts given to complete

the challenges were not so easy.

The morning began early with pull-ups and dips. Following breakfast, with full gear weighing them down, teams were timed in their task of changing a tire on their MRAPs. After the last lug nut was secured, the event was ahead of schedule.

"We set aside 20 minutes per team for the tire changing," said Roberge. "I didn't imagine we would have Soldiers finish in five or even three minutes. It's very impressive how some of these Soldiers work."

A short rest period preceded the next round, a combined task. Each team had to flip a 400-pound MRAP tire 50 meters, then choose one member to dash to a pile of disassembled weapons and put each one back in working order. Yet again, Soldiers exceeded expectations and quickly finished to keep the day on track.

The mixture of competition and training was about more than just winning and the Soldiers were aware of the relevance of the tasks.

"All this helps; it puts you under pressure to be the best team," said Pfc. Nicholas Hayes.

"Outside the wire you are under pressure too, so this helps us prepare both mentally and physically."

A written exam was thrown in to test the

Outside the wire you are under pressure too, so this helps prepare both mentally and physically.

— Pfc. Nicholas Hayes
Competitor

Soldiers' knowledge of infantry fundamentals and to allow their lunch to settle before the culminating event.


Signal Hill is a prominent landmark on VBC. A run up, down and around is roughly three miles. But a simple run just would not fit into this contest. Upon completing the three miles, each team then grabbed a water filled fuel can and dashed once more to the top and back down to finish the event and the day.

Once at the bottom and in true athletic competitiveness, Pfc. Robert Schram said, "I want to go Disneyworld!"

"It feels good to have it over and done with," said Sgt. Dathan Cottrell.

"I am proud of my team. They did a real good job," he said. "It was as hard as I thought it would be."

Almost 50 Soldiers competed in the event.

"It was for bragging rights. And it showed they're capable of doing some amazing things and that they can really work as a team," said Roberge. 



Soldiers of Charlie Company flip a 400 pound MRAP tire 50 meters during a timed event Nov. 4.



Soldiers of Charlie Company tighten lug nuts on a MRAP during a timed competition Nov. 4.



Soldiers finish the final leg of the Charlie Crew Competition at Victory Base Complex Iraq Nov. 4.

CHILL MODE

Kentucky Airmen fly South for the winter to support scientific research

By Tech Sgt. Jason Ketterer

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The term “flying South for the winter” usually invokes thoughts of tropical climates and sunny beaches, but the reality couldn’t be more different for two Kentucky Air National Guardsmen.

Tech. Sgt. Raymond Graves and Master Sgt. Jason Smith, both assigned to the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron here, flew way South in support of Operation Deep Freeze in Antarctica in December, providing assistance to the McMurdo Station scientific research facility located at the bottom of the world.

Blanketed by snow and buffeted by freezing temperatures, McMurdo Station is operated by the National Science Foundation and conducts research into such subjects as astrophysics, biology, geology and climate systems, according to the foundation’s web site. The facility is kept functional thanks to Operation Deep Freeze, which tasks the New York Air National Guard’s 109th Airlift Wing with flying resupply missions and airlift sorties across the region using C-130 aircraft that are fitted with landing skis, Graves said.

Graves and Smith are augmented the 109th from mid December to late February. They inspected cargo slated for transport or airdrop at McMurdo Station and several other, even more remote sites.

“The mission ensures that the supplies the scientists need to survive and perform their research roles are safe for air movement and that the supplies reach them in the quickest possible timeline,” said Master Sgt. Jason Smith, noncommissioned officer in charge of joint inspection and rigging for the operation’s fourth rotation of the 2011-12 season.

Smith and Graves’ responsibilities also included traveling to remote camps to inspect cargo. After traveling to the geographic South Pole, for example, Graves inspected outbound cargo for proper packing and restraint.

“At these camps, they have trained contractors who know how to build cargo and restrain it to pallets for military airlift, but they are not manned with a military representative to inspect their cargo prior to getting on the plane,” noted Graves, NCOIC of joint inspection and rigging for the operation’s third rotation of the 2011-12 season.

“Another responsibility is to ensure that enough parachutes are




Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ray Graves/KyANG

Master Sgt. Jason Smith reads a shippers declaration for dangerous goods to ensure that a 400-gallon liquid oxygen tank is properly prepared for flight Jan. 18. Smith deployed in support of Operation Freeze at McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

packed and enough emergency food and fuel are rigged in case there was the need for emergency airdrop support,” he added.

The fact that Kentucky Airmen were selected to augment Deep Freeze is a source of pride for both troops, who say it reflects well on their unit’s can-do reputation.

“I believe we were asked by the 109th specifically because on several occasions we have worked together with their personnel and we continue to have a great working relationship with their members,” Graves said. “They understand our level of commitment and dedication when it comes to how we approach any mission.” 



Deep Freeze

Courtesy Photo

The Kentucky Air National Guard's Tech. Sgt. Ray Graves inspects outbound cargo on an ice runway Dec. 28, 2011, while deployed to McMurdo Station, Antarctica. Graves supported Operation Deep Freeze as noncommissioned officer in charge of joint inspection and rigging for the third rotation of the 2011-12 Deep Freeze season.



UK CALLING UWAIT

Staff Report

Photos by Sgt. Scott Raymond, PAO@kentuckyguard.com



Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, adjutant general, and Coach John Calipari, University of Kentucky men's basketball coach, video-conferenced with members of the Kentucky National Guard's 1204th Aviation Support Battalion Feb. 14. The Soldiers are on deployment in Kuwait.


Kentucky's star forward, Anthony Davis, also made an appearance.

During the visit, Tonini and Beshear presented Calipari with an Honorary Guardsman certificate.

"Guys, I really appreciate it," Calipari told the Guardsmen. "I tell you, we're so proud of all of you over there, and what you do, and the courage you have."

"I can't believe to tell you how impressed, and what you do, not many can do it," he said. "And to stand up for all of us here, and to make the Commonwealth proud, which is what you do for all of us, we thank you."

For the Kentucky Guardsmen overseas, the event was memorable.

"Everyone here is on cloud nine," said Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Walton, 1204th ASB. "We all want to thank the governor and his wife for making this happen for the 1204th ASB. A special thanks also goes out to Coach Cal and Anthony Davis." 

SUCCESS IN JAPAN



A team from the Kentucky National Guard's 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment augmented the U.S. Army Japan's Yama Sakura 61 exercise to provide public affairs support. The YS61 PAO included Hideo Kawada, Maj. Randall Baucom and Airman 1st Class Laura Yahemiak and was augmented by the Japan 5 team of Sgt. 1st Class Michael Oliver, Spc. Josh Bennett, Staff Sgt. Fredrick Varney, Spc. Brandy Mort and Staff Sgt. Rebecca Wood. The team deployed for 22 days in January.

Staff Report

133rd MPAD, PAO@kentuckyguard.com

A team of Kentucky National Guard journalists recently supported the Yama Sakura 61 exercise, a bi-annual, bi-lateral computer simulated command post exercise held at Camp Itami, Japan.

The exercise is designed to strengthen ties between the U.S. Army and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force.

While the five Guardsmen assigned to the 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment told the stories of U.S. and Japanese forces while on ground, it strengthened their own abilities as public affairs

professionals.

"This mission has helped me work under pressure and produce products with a quick turn-around," said Spc. Josh Bennett, a broadcaster for the unit.

"That's something I wasn't use to before coming to Japan."

Given the name Japan 5, the team produced 19 news stories including 9 print articles and 10 video productions.

"MPADs, I have found, come in all shapes and sizes," said Maj. Randall Baucom, chief of public affairs, U.S.

Army Japan and YS61 PAO.

"The 133rd is one of the top two National Guard MPADs I have worked with in my nine years as a public affairs officer."


The unit's commander, Capt. DesiRee L.P. Ewer agreed.

"Our Soldiers are professional and dedicated to telling the story and making our Soldiers and Guardsmen famous," she said.

"Whether it is an exercise in Japan, Germany or Kentucky, the 133rd MPAD is able to provide a quality product and deliver our message to

the American people and the world. My Soldiers are the best of the best."

For one Japan 5 member, the overseas deployment for training allowed the journalists to grow professionally but also as leaders in a multi-cultural environment.

"I'm very proud of the job accomplished by the 133rd MPAD during Yama Sakura 61," said Staff Sgt. Frederick Varney, print journalist for the 133rd MPAD, "We have represented the unit, the state, and the Kentucky National Guard well." 

SUCCESS IN SIGHT

Kentucky Marksmanship Team competes in Caribbean

By Sgt. Scott Raymond

Public Affairs NCO, PAO@kentuckyguard.com

CAMP SANTIAGO, Puerto Rico – As snowflakes and daily temperatures dropped across the Bluegrass, several Kentucky Guardsmen enjoyed a warm alternative in the Caribbean.

Members of the Kentucky National Guard Marksmanship Team traveled to the tropical climate to compete in the 2012 Puerto Rico State Match.

“It’s a chance to meet with military and civilian professionals, to build relationships and to gain more experience in different kinds of matches,” said Staff Sgt. Eric Dean, a state marksmanship coordinator. “Kentucky has been competing in Puerto Rico for about 20 years.”

The Puerto Rico National Guard sponsors the annual event at Camp Santiago Joint Maneuver Training Center in the southern city of Salinas. A mixture of Soldiers and civilians competed in four full days of shooting with both rifle and pistol matches.

Teams from North and South
Carolina, Texas, New
York and

Mississippi also competed against Puerto Ricans on their home turf.

The ranges were busy with the sporadic gunfire from the well-aimed rifles and pistols of the competitors throughout the event. With striking mountains rising as the backdrop, targets were hung at distances of up to 600 yards for the .223 service rifle shooters. Matches included prone, standing and sitting positions. Within earshot of the rifle rounds, those with pistols walked between the 25 and 50-yard line to check their shots. Pistol matches included .22 LR, 9mm and .45 ACP ammunition.

“The wide variety of rounds and events helps us out with the fundamentals of marksmanship,” said Dean. “We do some things differently here, but all in all, it’s great practice for us.”

Practice for one Soldier is exactly what was needed to return to routines and comfortable territory. Chief Warrant Officer Greg Scott deployed last year to Iraq with the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. Having just returned in December, the reintegration continues for Scott. And a shooting match in the Caribbean is a good start, as he took third in the Rifle Marksman Class.

“This is my first chance to get back into the swing of things,” said Scott. “It’s a special feeling to get back to some hobbies here at home. And, hey, it’s Puerto Rico!”

Both rifle and pistol teams brought home awards from the match. Each team placed third in the overall results. Individually, Sgt. Joel Ray Campbell of the 41st Civil Support Team finished second in Rifle Master Class.

Team members represented the long rifle on their shoulder patch well, setting a high note to begin the





Capt. Steve Smith, 41st Civil Support Team, fires his Colt 1911 at the 2012 Puerto Rico State Match Jan. 13.

competitive season.

"This match is a pre-cursor to state, regional and national matches ahead of us," said Dean. "It's a great beginning. And it's in the tropics, certainly better weather than Kentucky right now, so it's a really nice experience."

If you think that the team was provoking some jealousy, you may be right. The annual trip to Puerto Rico is also a recruiting tool for the team to showcase the opportunities for future shooters.

"The Marksmanship Team is always looking for the next best shooters," said team coach, Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Reed. "I know we have quality Soldiers out there with the skills to compete with this team."

Each year the team organizes the Kentucky State Match to find talented shooters across the Commonwealth and give them the chance to represent their unit. This year's match is scheduled for May 24 – 25 at Fort Knox.

In addition to Puerto Rico, the team competes annually in several matches across the southeast and actively pursues new opportunities for competition.


Interested Guardsmen should contact Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Reed by phone at 502.235.4262 or by e-mail at charles.h.reed@us.army.mil. 



Photo submitted

Members of the Kentucky National Guard's Marksmanship Team placed third in the Rifle and Pistol competitions at the annual Puerto Rico State Match Jan. 13-15, at Camp Santiago, Puerto Rico. The team is looking for Soldiers to represent their unit on the squad for future competitions.

Soldiers make impact on Afghan women

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Oliver
 133rd MPAD, PAO@kentuckyguard.com

The Kentucky National Guard Agribusiness Development Team 3 left an impact on the women of Afghanistan.

The Directors of Women's Affairs in the Provinces of Kapisa, Pawan, and Panjshayr conducted its very first Tri-Provincial Women's Council meeting with the help of the ADT 3 female engagement team.

The FET mentored the three Province DoWAs on how to prepare and execute each council meeting, meant to educate the Afghan government leaders on women's affairs and how to better meet the needs of the Afghan women.

Capt. Carla Getchell and Capt. Paula Thrush led the FET for ADT3.

"These women are stronger when they are united," said Getchell. "They can start working together to solve one another's problems."

Projects for the team included a honey bee and poultry training center, fish farm, cold storage, solar food drying, kitchen garden and livestock for villagers.

"I hope that these women will continue to work alongside each other to make their lives better in everything they get to do," said



Photo submitted

From left to right: Capt. Carla Getchell, Staff Sgt. Jane Rothstein, Sgt. Heather Carrier, Sgt. Claudia Rector, Capt. Paula Thrush.

Sgt. Claudia Rector. "I hope that their courage is passed down to their daughters and granddaughters and that one day they will pick up the torch and run with it."

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