

# Bluegrass Guard

Vol. 24, Issue 2 - September 2021

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

## STRENGTH *through* PARTNERSHIPS



*Kentucky Engineers  
train in Djibouti*

*Tradewinds 2021  
p. 8*

*9/11  
20 Years later p. 20*



# AROUND THE GUARD

## AND IN OUR PAGES



ON THE COVER - Sgt. 1st Class Bradley Rouse, of the 577th Sapper Co. inspects gear with Djiboutian soldiers on August 23, 2021, during a State Partnership Program mission in Djibouti City, Djibouti. (Photo by Sgt. Jesse Elbouab)



**JFHQ** - Col. Brian Wertzler poses with his family after he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in a ceremony at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort, May 16, 2021. He now holds the position of Assistant Adjutant General for the Kentucky National Guard. (Photo by Spc. Danielle Sturgill)

**149th MEB** - Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 206th Engineers won the Itschner Award for best engineer company and 2nd Lt. John Cecconi of 207th Engineer Construction Company won the Munson Award for best engineer platoon in the Army National Guard. (Courtesy photo)





**138th FAB** - Lt. Col. Steve Mattingly assumed command of the 138th Field Artillery Brigade during a change of command ceremony in Lexington, Ky., Sept. 12, 2021. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Scott Raymond)



**63rd TAB** - Sgt. Paul Psiones with Bravo Co. 2/147th Assault Helicopter Battalion positions a fire fighting water bucket for takeoff at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, July 19, 2021. (Photo by Spc. Danielle Sturgill).



**75th TC** - Timothy R. Starke became the Kentucky National Guard's newest Colonel in the presence of family, friends, fellow Soldiers, and Airmen during a ceremony at Bowman Field Armory in Louisville, June 30, 2021. (Photo by Sgt. Jesse Elboaub)



**123rd AW** - Brig. Gen. Hal Lamberton, adjutant general for Kentucky, cuts a ribbon held by Col. David Mounkes, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, and Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Wilkinson, assistant adjutant general for Air, Kentucky Air National Guard, during the dedication of a new Response Forces Facility at the Air National Guard Base in Louisville, July 30, 2021. (Photo by Master Sgt. Phil Speck)



**238th RTI** - Warrant Officer Candidates take part in a four-mile foot march June 13, at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky. The event was preparing the candidates for their record 6.2 mile foot march, a graduation requirement for Phase 1 of the program. (Photo by WOC William Watson)



## BLUEGRASS GUARD

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## IN THIS EDITION

- 7 State Partnership Program in Djibouti
- 11 MXU in Puerto Rico
- 17 Leader Profile: Drill Sergeant Mary Carter

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**IN THE PAST 20 YEARS, MORE THAN 3,820 SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN IN THE KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD DEPLOYED TO AFGHANISTAN. WHILE ALL OUR MEMBERS SERVED HONORABLY AND MADE A POSITIVE IMPACT THROUGH THEIR SERVICE, SEVERAL PAID THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE.**

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To all our Kentucky Guard Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom-

With our country's departure from Afghanistan, questions have come up as to whether Operation Enduring Freedom was worth the time, treasure, and sacrifice made by our military members and families. In short, my answer is YES.

We can highlight the completion of several objectives during our mission in OEF.

First: Capture or kill Osama Bin Laden - Accomplished.

Second: Destruction of terrorist training camps and their infrastructure in Afghanistan - Accomplished.

Third: The cessation of terrorist activities in Afghanistan - Accomplished.

There have been no acts of terrorism enacted on our soil by foreign enemies since Sept. 2001.

For those of you who remember September 11, 2001, as a country, we were shocked, angry, fearful, and anguished over the loss of almost 4,000 innocent lives. The use of airliners as suicide missiles aimed at our country's institutions of government, commerce, and trade horrified our people. Commercial air traffic changed forever following 9/11, with new security measures implemented to prevent further attacks.

I remember when then-President George W. Bush addressed the nation at the site of the World Trade Center and said, "I can hear you, the rest of the world can hear you and all the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon," referring to the military response we as a nation would lead. Not long after, we saw images of Special Forces Soldiers on horseback, fighting Al Qaeda and Taliban forces. This was just the beginning of our retort to extinguish such evil.

*In the past 20 years, more than 3,820 Soldiers and Airmen in the Kentucky National Guard deployed to Afghanistan. While all our members served honorably and made a positive impact through their service, several paid the ultimate sacrifice. We honor our fallen:*

1. CPT Clayton Adamkavicius, HHC 1/149th INF, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan, April 20, 2006



## A LETTER FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

2. SSG Nicholas R. Carnes, A Btry 2/138th FAB, Lewanne Bazaar, Afghanistan, April 26, 2007

3. SGT Daniel Wallace, C Co 201st EN BN, Afghanistan, October 31, 2008

4. SGT Randy A. Sigley, 2123rd Transportation Co, Bagram, Afghanistan, April 18, 2010

As a result of the bravery shown by deployed service members--and despite our losses--our country recovered from the initial anxiety and uncertainty created by the 9/11 attacks. A calmness returned to our nation. You each made a difference, and the world around us is better for it.

Accepting how the war in Afghanistan ended may be difficult for our brothers and sisters in arms that served over there. As we uniquely respond to this experience, remember, the Kentucky National Guard is a family. Look out for one another.

Over the next days, weeks, and months, I ask that you check in on your fellow Guardsmen and Veterans who may be struggling with the events unfolding as our country ends the mission. Let them know you are there, show them your support, and share the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-TALK).

I am humbled by your accomplishments and sacrifices made for freedom and deeply proud to serve with each of you.

★ BRIG. GEN. HAL LAMBERTON





# 75TH TC COMMAND CHANGE

Story by Sgt. Jesse Elbouab, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The 75th Troop Command leadership changed with the passing of the brigade guidon during a Change of Command ceremony at Bowman Field, March 7.

Outgoing commander, Col. Douglas D. Clay, handed over the reins of the unit to Lt. Col. Timothy R. Starke.

“Col. Tim Starke is one of the finest officers and people I have had the pleasure to serve alongside,” said Brig. Gen. Robert Larkin, deputy Adjutant General –Army. “He is a consummate professional and cares deeply for the Soldiers of the Kentucky Guard.”

Starke said he is ready and excited to get to work with his troops and is thankful for the new opportunity.

“Being selected for command of the 75th is a tremendous honor, but more importantly it is an immense responsibility; ensuring that our Soldiers have caring and engaged leadership, opportunities to develop

personally and professionally, provide the resources they need to train and build readiness is my job that I take extremely seriously,” said Starke.

But as one man takes over, one man leaves the position. One that was personal to Clay, and as he leaves the 75th, he wants them to know he holds them in high regard.

“I have absolutely loved my time as the commander of the 75th Troop Command,” said Clay. “Over the course of 24-months we have accomplished so much in such unprecedented times for our state and nation. With such a diverse group of units from Infantry to cyber Soldiers there hasn’t been a moment where we became bored or complacent.”

Over the last two years, he has overseen the deployment and redeployment of the cyber warriors, successfully deployed the 1163rd Area Support Medical Company to Poland, prepared the 1-149th

Infantry Battalion for deployment and enhanced the capabilities and readiness in the 20th Military Intelligence Company.

He created a winning and results-oriented culture in the 101st Main Command Post—Operational Detachment (MCPD), which enhanced our relationship with the 101st Airborne Division. He also helped prepare the Brigade headquarters to participate in the SOUTHCOM led Tradewinds exercise, among other notable accomplishments.

“To the Soldiers of the 75th Troop Command, all that I would like to say is a simple; Thank You! This brigade has taught me more about leadership than I could ever teach them. I was privileged to serve as the Commander and be a small part of the camaraderie, culture, and family atmosphere that make the organization great. The 75th Troop Command and all of its units are great because of the people standing in our formations and their willingness to commit to something greater than self.”

He also shared glowing remarks for the incoming commander.

“There is not a more talented leader in our organization than Tim Starke. Anything that he is a part of is overwhelmingly successful and I have no doubt that he will take the brigade to even greater levels of achievement,” said Clay. “He is surrounded by an enormous amount of talented leaders across the brigade. He is blessed to serve alongside Kentucky’s best.”

The incoming commander will bring his Soldier first mentality as he sets goals for the brigade.

“We have amazing Soldiers in every formation in the brigade, and my guidance is to put people first, which means ensuring that they are fit, disciplined, trained, well-led and cared for,” said Starke.

## LETTER TO EDITOR POLICY

*The Bluegrass Guard values opinions*

To comment, keep remarks under 150 words, include your name, rank and address and send them to:

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

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Don’t miss an issue

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

Army Retiree address changes should be made through Personnel Services Branch at 502-607-1497 or email patricia.d.smith16.mil@mail.mil.

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



Kentucky National Guard



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## FITNESS CORNER

# HAND-RELEASE PUSHUP

"The key to success is to keep true to the process and push yourself to be better."

## The Event Consists of:

The Hand-Release Pushup/Arm Extension Push-up, is an upper body endurance test that represents repetitive and sustained pushing used in combat tasks and is the third event of the Army Combat Fitness Test.

The event differs from the standard 2-minute push-up test on the previous Army Physical Fitness Test. **The difference is the addition of the arm extension at the bottom of the push-up.** This is major because it requires the Soldier to activate and deactivate different muscle groups compared to the basic push-up. Once deactivated, the Soldier is required to reactivate each repetition which uses more energy than one standard pushup.



## How to Enhance Performance

**Develop your core strength.** Enhance your performance in this event by building all of these muscle groups with circuit training and isolating the upper body to build muscle endurance to be able to work longer.

Core strength will allow the Soldier to **maintain a straight and rigid torso for a longer period of time** while being able to keep the working muscles activated.

Perform **situps, planks (vary the type of plank), or any lift that involves maintaining a tight core** such as a weighted back squat or deadlift.



Nothing good comes over night and the process will yield results and satisfaction. **Work hard, eat smart, live happy** and put the work in, you will surely succeed.

### BIO:

2LT Jesse Mascoe

Job Title: Holistic Health and Fitness Coordinator/  
State Master Fitness Trainer

Certifications: Crossfit Level 1 Instructor, Crossfit Gymnastics and Mobility, BSN in Health and Wellness, Working in Masters in Strength and Conditioning with a Focus in Human Performance.

My goal is to educate Soldiers on the five pillars of holistic wellness to include Physical, Mental, Nutrition, Sleep, and Spiritual.



## DE-MINING, PROTECTING, AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

### KENTUCKY GUARD ENGINEERS CONDUCT TRAINING IN DJIBOUTI AS PART OF THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Story and Photos By: Sgt. Jesse Elbouab,  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kentucky National Guard Engineers with the 577th Sapper Company and 123rd Airlift Wing, traveled more than 15,000 miles to Camp Lemonier, Djibouti to conduct training with the Djiboutian military de-mining company as a part of the State Partnership Program August 19-29.

For over 25 years, through SPP, the National Guard has conducted military-to-military engagements in support of defense security goals, and leverages whole-of-society relationships and capabilities to facilitate broader interagency and corollary engagements; spanning military, government, and economic and social spheres. Kentucky maintains state partnerships with Djibouti and Ecuador.

"Our goals were to enhance each other's knowledge of a wide variety of explosive threats that Soldiers face on the battlefield including: improvised explosive device (IED), Unexploded ordnance (UXO), and landmine hazards," said Army Capt. William M. Fegenbush, commander of the 577th Sapper Co., and officer in charge of the expedition. "This equal sharing of knowledge and experience holds great potential for the increased

effectiveness and safety of both United States Forces and those of the Republic of Djibouti."

Training relationships like these are crucial to the survival of members of the Djibouti De-mining company, which lost four Djiboutian soldiers during routine route clearance over the last three years.

The de-mining unit was established in 2001 to ensure that Djibouti could become mine-free after years of civil war throughout the 1990s; this was achieved in 2003.

Eighteen years later, mines remain a threat in the surrounding region. Djibouti currently supports de-mining efforts in support of Operation African Union Mission in Somalia; an active, regional peacekeeping mission operated by the African Union with the approval of the United Nations.

As Kentucky and Djiboutian forces met in blistering temperatures; the heat, language barrier, and stresses of training were factors that would occur. However, both partner nations were able to overcome those challenges and learn from each other.

With only one translator being shared among 32 personnel and operating with different equipment in different areas of the compound, everyone had to get creative for communication.

"One of my most memorable moments was sharing how to use a mine detector without a translator," said Tech. Sgt. Dylan Wagner, explosive ordnance disposal technician, 123rd Airlift Wing. "Their expressions and feedback showed me that mimed actions and charades might have been more impactful than the traditional method using words. It's moments like these that make you realize how much



you take for granted, and I am thankful to have had this opportunity to learn and share with my counterparts."

Lifesaving information exchange makes the state partnership program so impactful for each partner nation. Safer practices and unit morale increase as a result.

"They feel good, they feel better," said Capt. Le Mohamed Louaita, commander for Djiboutian Demining Co. "When the United States comes, we can help each other be better. That is what we all need to grow and help others."

For Maj. Chad Brinton, chief of the Office of Security Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Djibouti, this experience has a bigger meaning.

"The OSC office plays a role in the national security strategy through the United States Embassy. The State Partnership Program is a fantastic asset toward attaining that goal," said Brinton. "Your Kentucky service members come here and can share knowledge, skills, and experiences that help us diplomatically, but also with Djibouti and the US security interests in the region."

As training concluded, participants left with new knowledge and experiences. The Kentucky - Djibouti state partnership continues to display the best that each partner has to offer.





# 75TH TROOP COMMAND SUPPORTS SOUTHCOM DURING TRADEWINDS 2021 EXERCISE

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Lerone Simmons,  
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

**BASE CAMP STEPHENSON, Guyana** — After more than a year of planning, 75th Troop Command, Kentucky National Guard, executed the largest U.S.-led multinational training exercise in the Caribbean this year, serving as the headquarters for base camp operations during Tradewinds 2021, June 11-26.

Tradewinds 2021 is a U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) sponsored, Caribbean security-focused exercise in the ground, air, sea, and cyber domains; working with partner nations to conduct joint, combined, and interagency training, focused on increasing regional cooperation and stability.

This year, 12 partner nations attended the 36th iteration of Tradewinds, hosted by Guyana, the only South American country with English as its official language, holding cultural ties to the greater Caribbean. Nestled between Brazil, Suriname, and Venezuela, Guyana's geography offers a vast coastline and terrain that adequately facilitates training that serves the needs of the participating nations.

This was the first time 75th TC supported

Soldiers assigned to the 305th Minimal Care Unit, U.S. Army Reserve, conduct a casualty evacuation training during Tradewinds 2021, June 16, 2021, at Camp Stephenson, Guyana.



SOUTHCOM with joint and multi-component US forces, in addition to interagency and multinational partners while in an overseas environment.

“While we were primarily sourced as the Camp Operations headquarters, 75th TC became SOUTHCOM’s go-to unit for everything ranging from strategic mobility and logistical support in country, to administrative tracking of all forces on ground,” said Col. Timothy R. Starke, commander, 75th TC, and director of Operations, Kentucky National Guard.

“That kind of responsibility required leaders and Soldiers to operate independently, think critically, and innovate to solve problems in order to make all of our partners successful,” he said.

Enter Maj. Eric Green, the 75th TC logistics and contracting officer during Tradewinds.

Green and the 75th TC staff were initially planning for Tradewinds to be held in Barbados; however, the host nation changed to Guyana late in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 75th TC planning team had to adjust for this change.

“As the mission changed location, Army Southern Command was very helpful in explaining and facilitating the process for Tradewinds; from adjusting for the number of participants, infrastructure, mobility, communications, environmental considerations, climate, and other variables; they as a result, set the 75th TC up for success from the start,” he said. “The initial coordination with SOUTHCOM and ARSOUTH was essential.”

The 75th TC headquarters operated out of





Sgt. Trace Cole, a supply non-commissioned officer assigned to 75th Troop Command, conducts a radio check during Tradewinds 2021, at Camp Stephenson.



Master Sgt. Frederick Clough, non-commissioned officer in charge for personnel, attached to 75th Troop Command, welcomes members of the Jamaican Defence Force to Tradewinds 2021, at Cheddi Jagan International Airport, Guyana, June 14, 2021.

Camp Stephenson and provided support for personnel across the entire area of training operations.

They worked alongside their host partner, the Guyana Defence Force and tenant units: 305th Minimal Care Unit (U.S. Army Reserve), 714th Quartermaster Company, water purification, field feeding (Puerto Rico National Guard), 735th Quartermaster Company, shower and laundry (Missouri National Guard), 54th Security Force Assistance Brigade and Bravo Company 1-85th Assault Helicopter Battalion (Florida National Guard), and 7th Special Forces Group (U.S. Army Active).

With Tradewinds occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic in South America, all participating forces followed protocols which included wearing masks, social distancing guidelines, and utilizing handwashing stations and hand sanitizer, resulting in zero positive cases from

all personnel.

Starke praised his staff for their dedication to safety, proficiency, and adaptability while carrying out the mission, and praised the Guyanese people for their hospitality and effectiveness during the exercise and support in cultural growth for his Soldiers.

“The warmth, hospitality, diversity, and culture of the [Guyanese] people, the professionalism of the Guyana Defence Force, and the beauty of the ‘Land of Many Waters’ have all made deep and lasting impacts on our Soldiers. I am incredibly grateful that our Soldiers, and I personally, had the opportunity to experience Guyana,” he said.

As a result of their hard work, and feedback from superior and subordinate unit leadership, the 75th TC look forward to another opportunity to participate in the next iteration of Tradewinds.





# JTF-PO

## 123RD CRG COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL U.S. TRANSCOM TRAINING MISSION WITH U.S. ARMY

Story and photos by Senior Master Sgt. Vicky Spesard  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

VOLK FIELD, Wis. — More than 100 Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Contingency Response Group joined approximately 50 Soldiers with the U.S. Army's 690th Rapid Port Opening Element to participate in Operation Lone Oak, a U.S. Transportation Command Turbo Distribution exercise held June 7-12.



Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Contingency Response Group set up their base of operations for the exercise.

The exercise was designed to test the rapid-assessment and airfield-opening capabilities of contingency forces and establish a Joint Task Force-Port Opening, which is a complete air logistics hub and surface distribution network. Airmen were responsible for establishing an Aerial Port of Debarkation, which received and staged cargo arriving by airlift.

The Soldiers simultaneously established a ground transportation network, shuttling cargo away from the airfield to a forward node for onward movement by external agencies.

Although the APOD and the forward node were established in geographically separate areas and in a notionally semi-permissive environment, the operation ran smoothly thanks to seamless cooperation between the two military elements, according to Air Force Lt. Col. Ryan Adams, JTF-PO commander for the exercise.

"It was amazing to see how our folks combined with the Army and came together as one joint team to do the job we did for this exercise," Adams said.

"We faced extreme heat conditions and a severe weather event on the flight line that suspended the exercise for a short-time, in addition to the normal challenges posed by

an experienced exercise control group-yet our Airmen and Soldiers never stopped working and helping each other out. It was a tremendous effort by everyone."

A JTF-PO is designed to deploy to austere areas that lack facilities or forces to safely and effectively distribute cargo and supplies to end users, or to move relief supplies into areas affected by catastrophic events such as floods, earthquakes and hurricanes.

JTF-POs deploy with everything needed to establish cargo operations, from power production, communications gear and material-handling equipment to aircraft mechanics, security forces and civil engineers. Once a JTF-PO is fully established, the mission is handed off to replacement forces that will constitute a longer-term distribution operation.



Senior Airman Emily Goss, an aerial porter from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Contingency Response Group, moves cargo during the exercise.





## Maintenance University sharpens skills with joint training in Puerto Rico

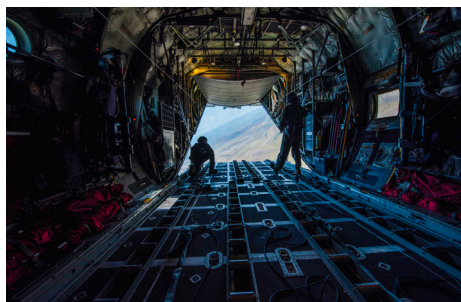
Story by Staff Sgt. Clayton Wear  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

CAROLINA, Puerto Rico — More than 130 Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard completed a week of intensive aircraft maintenance training June 12-18.

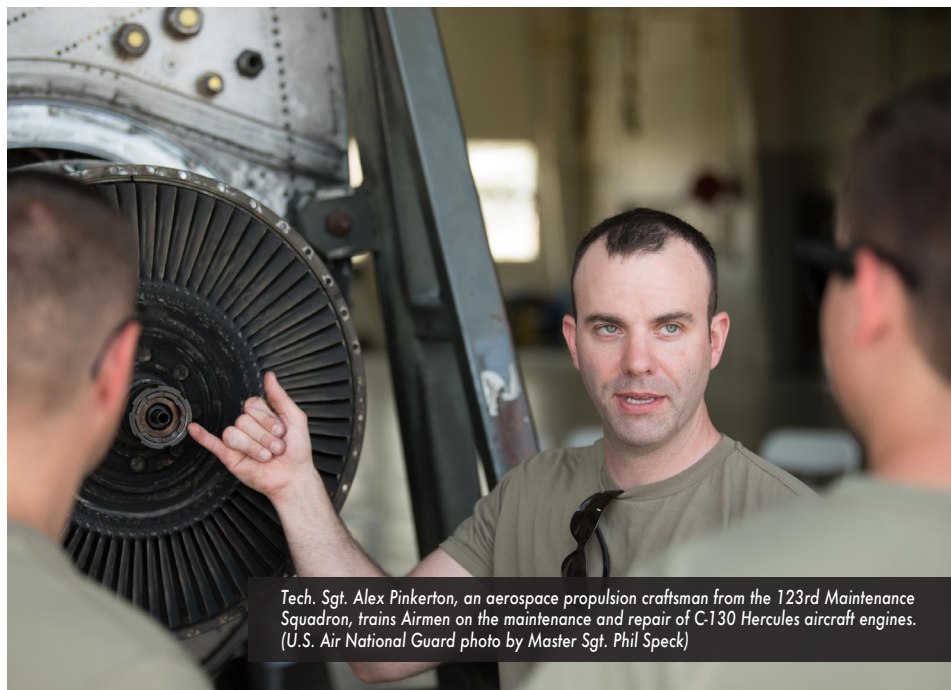
While there, they honed their proficiencies in a joint field environment while avoiding the distractions of home station.

“The annual event, called Maintenance University, featured classes on everything from changing the tires on C-130H Hercules aircraft to repairing sophisticated autopilot equipment,” said Lt. Col. James Embry, commander of the Louisville, Kentucky-based 123rd Maintenance Squadron.

The training allowed citizen-Airmen from Kentucky’s 123rd Airlift Wing to enhance their C-130 maintenance skills prior to the unit’s upcoming transition to the C-130J, while also giving



Senior Airman Eric Burk (left) and Master Sgt. Judson Wisely, loadmasters from the Kentucky Air National Guard’s 123rd Operations Group, simulate an airdrop. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Clayton Wear)



Tech. Sgt. Alex Pinkerton, an aerospace propulsion craftsman from the 123rd Maintenance Squadron, trains Airmen on the maintenance and repair of C-130 Hercules aircraft engines. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Phil Speck)

them the opportunity to train alongside maintainers from the Puerto Rico Air Guard’s new Contingency Response Group.

“The Puerto Rico Air Guard has provided a great location with a ramp that fits our requirements for training, classrooms, facilities, a fire response capability and security forces,” Embry said.

“It’s a perfect environment for us to not only get our maintainers up to career field standards, but we can also expand upon our training into the Contingency Response environment as well.”

This year’s MXU curriculum was

designed by shop chiefs to meet individual training needs while eliminating the competing obligations of a typical drill weekend back home.

“For those of us who are traditional Guardsmen, this is a really good opportunity for us to spend a week and focus solely on this training,” said Airman 1st Class Audrey Parios, a C-130 crew chief.

“This is a great chance to have everyone in the same place to meet, network, and learn from each other away from the distractions at home.”

Airmen from the Puerto Rico Air Guard’s 156th Wing also appreciated the opportunity to train with maintainers from the Kentucky wing, which also is home to a Contingency Response Group.

As the 156th works to stand up a

full Contingency Response Group in the coming years, the 123rd was also able to supply C-130s and CRG-qualified maintainers to train Puerto Rico maintainers on night-vision marshaling.

“It’s fortunate for us that the 123rd has a CRG with C-130 maintainers,” noted Col. Joelee Sessions, commander of the 156th Contingency Response Group.

“One of my goals is to get our maintainers and crew chiefs’ hands back onto aircraft so that they are fully familiarized, so that when we go on the road as a CRG, they are comfortable handling the aircraft that come in and accomplishing the mission.”





## 123rd Airlift Wing earns 19th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

Story and photo by Lt. Col. Dale Greer  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing received its 19th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award during a ceremony Aug. 7, maintaining a lengthy record as the most decorated airlift unit in the U.S. Air Force.

The coveted honor, bestowed annually on the top 10 percent of units, recognizes excellence in mission performance, deployments, readiness, inspections and community engagement.

The latest award is the Louisville-based wing's seventh consecutive AFOUA. Only a handful of units across the Air Force have earned 19 such honors, and no other airlift unit has equaled the feat.

"You know, this sure as heck isn't the first time we've (presented this award), and I trust it's not going to be the last time, either," said Kentucky's adjutant general, Brig. Gen. Hal Lamberton, just prior to bestowing the honor during a ceremony at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base.

Lamberton spoke of the wing's nearly 75-year history of achievement, noting that its mission and aircraft have changed many times, from fighter planes and aerial defense to reconnaissance, then airlift.

"But it's not about the equipment," Lamberton said. "It's about you guys. It's the quality of folks that we've got in the

wing. It's the quality of the men and women doing the jobs that you do — doing it here, doing it overseas — virtually every day.

"I'm honored to be part of this recognition this morning, as we add another streamer to your guidon."

Lamberton then formally presented the red, white and blue ribbon to the wing's commander, Col. David Mounkes, who pinned it to the unit's official flag staff as audience members applauded.

The 123rd Airlift Wing, which flies the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, earned the award for exceptional performance across a broad spectrum of operations, from homeland disaster response to the overseas war effort, between Oct. 1, 2017 and Sept. 30, 2019.

During that period, the wing deployed 53 percent of its Airmen to 34 locations in 21 countries, two territories and five geographic commands, many in harm's way, for a total of 78,455 days in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Freedom's Sentinel, Inherent Resolve and Spartan Shield.

In addition to participating in numerous exercises with U.S. and multinational forces across Europe — including the 75th-anniversary re-enactment of D-Day in France — the 123rd Airlift Wing deployed scores of Airmen and multiple aircraft to the Persian Gulf region, where they flew more than 2,300 sorties to deliver 22,350 troops and 7,447 tons of cargo to destinations across the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility.

The wing's Special Tactics Airmen also augmented active-duty Special Forces in Iraq and Syria during a five-month deployment, conducting 40 joint special operations missions and providing command and control for multiple surveys in enemy territory.

The Special Tactics Airmen were active in the United States as well, mobilizing a 10-person team to Virginia to establish a coordination cell for the recovery of victims following Hurricane Florence, reducing response time by 50 percent.

The wing's 123rd Medical Group was heavily engaged at home, too. The unit served as the lead agency for a field exercise in rural Eastern Kentucky involving 200 medical and dental troops from across the U.S. military. Working from field clinics established at four high schools in medically underserved communities, the team performed 11,275 medical and dental procedures for 2,662 patients, providing more than \$1 million in care and eyeglasses at no costs to residents.

The wing's Airmen also distinguished themselves with multiple individual honors during the award period. Among them, Lt. Col. J.T. Hourigan was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for exceptional airmanship by saving a C-130 aircraft and multiple lives following a catastrophic in-flight mechanical failure; and Tech. Sgt. Daniel Keller earned the Air Force Cross for gallantry in action on an Afghan battlefield — one of only 10 bestowed Air Force-wide since 9/11.

Both honors were presented by the Air Force chief of staff during ceremonies held at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville.

The wing completed yet another four-month deployment to the Persian Gulf in November, during which it flew 4,948 combat sorties to deliver 15,000 passengers and 10,158 tons of supplies to locations across U.S. Central Command.





Story and photo by Staff Sgt Chloe Ochs  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Col. Bruce Bancroft assumed command of the 123rd Airlift Wing during a ceremony at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base Aug. 7, accepting the wing's guidon before an audience of more than 50 socially distanced family, friends and fellow Airmen.

Bancroft, a command pilot with more than 3,600 hours of flight time in multiple aircraft, most recently served as commander of the 123rd Contingency Response Group here. He replaces Col. David Mounkes, who has been named director of policy for air operations, plans and programs at Joint Forces Headquarters — Kentucky.

Presiding over the ceremony was Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Wilkinson, Kentucky's assistant adjutant general for Air, who formally passed the unit guidon to Bancroft, marking the colonel's new position as leader of one of the most decorated wings in the U.S. Air Force.

"Col. Bancroft possesses a strong depth and breadth of operational and contingency mobility command experience," Wilkinson told the audience. "His achievements reflect a stellar record of operational leadership, and he is recognized for his accomplishments and influence across the Air Force for contingency response."

As commander of the 123rd Contingency Response Group — a post Bancroft has held since 2016 — he oversaw numerous missions and exercises, both stateside and overseas. In 2017, for example, the unit was tasked to operate Qayyarah West Airfield, Iraq, serving as the most forward-deployed U.S. Air Force unit during the West Mosul offensive. While deployed, the group moved 674 short tons of cargo and 2,000 personnel closer to the fight with ISIS while de-conflicting 4,500 air operations across 2,800 square miles of combat airspace.

The unit also provided humanitarian relief following Hurricane Harvey in 2017, establishing a Disaster Aeromedical Staging Facility in Houston; and was instrumental in response to Hurricane Maria in San Juan, Puerto Rico,

later that same year, evacuating 3,887 passengers, moving 3,617 short tons of cargo and providing ramp operations to 268 aircraft at what had been a non-functional airfield.

Prior to leading the CRG, Bancroft served as its director of operations, a post he held in 2014 when the unit deployed to Dakar, Senegal, to stand up a Joint Task Force-Port Opening. That air cargo hub, established and staffed primarily by members of the 123rd Contingency Response Group, coordinated the delivery of troops and supplies to West Africa during the largest Ebola virus outbreak in history.

As a key component of

Operation United Assistance, the hub processed 193 aircraft and 1,200 short tons of cargo during the unit's two-month deployment.

Bancroft joined the active-duty Air Force after graduating from the University of Louisville in 1996 and completed Officer Training School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He went on to attend Air Command and Staff College before completing Air War College in 2016.

While on active duty, Bancroft served at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, from February 1996 to March 1998, with the 3rd Aerial Port Squadron as the Operations Center flight commander. The following year, he was selected as the logistics operations officer for Joint Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, supporting special operations forces worldwide.

Upon completion of joint undergraduate pilot training with the U.S. Navy, Bancroft's career took him to Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, serving the next four years with the 50th Airlift Squadron and flying tactical airlift missions across the globe. From May 2004 to November of 2008, Bancroft served as an instructor pilot, evaluator pilot, chief of standardization and evaluations, and director of instructional flight hours, providing more than 1,800 instructional flight hours to multi-engine student pilots at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas.

In 2008, after 13 years of active-duty service, Bancroft transferred to the Kentucky Air National Guard, joining the 123rd Contingency Response Group where he served as the operations officer. As a Guard member, Bancroft also filled the role of 123rd Global Mobility Readiness Squadron commander.

His career spans more than 25 years and includes participation in Operations Southern Watch, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Tomodachi/Pacific Passage, Unified Response, United Assistance and Inherent Resolve.

As the ceremony drew to a close, Bancroft took the stage

**SEE BANCROFT, page 14**





## Welcome Home!

### Medical professionals return from year-long deployment

Story and photo by Lt. Col. Stephen Martin, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

**K**entucky National Guard leadership joined friends and family to welcome home members of the 1163rd Medical Company (Area Support) unit from a year-long deployment in Poland at Bluegrass Airport in Lexington, April 10.

Approximately 70 Soldiers from the 1163rd MCAS deployed to Powidz, Poland, in June 2020 to support Operation Atlantic Resolve.

They provided expeditionary combat health services support and force health protection to forward rotational forces while working with the host nation and other partners to maintain interoperability and integration in the region. This included role 1 and role 2 care: basic triage, sick call, diagnostic lab and radiology services, dental treatment, behavioral health as well as routine medical readiness requirements.

Due to the ongoing worldwide response to COVID-19 when the unit arrived in Poland, much of their effort focused on providing support to the pandemic. The 1163rd was the first and only U.S.-run certified lab to conduct COVID-19 tests in the forward operational environment. Additionally, their location was designated as the COVID vaccine distribution hub for all U.S. Forces in the area.

Maj. Stephanie Fields commanded the 1163rd throughout the deployment and said the contribution from her team to the COVID support to the field was critical.

“Shortly after arriving in Poland our mission quickly became consumed with our COVID response. Much like the United States, we were dealing with COVID surges and saturated host nation health care facilities,” said Fields. “Additionally, restricted movements for all personnel impacted our supply chain management, and living conditions made it very difficult to contain the spread of the virus once a Soldier became positive.

“Our ability to stand up onsite testing so far forward was a significant milestone to protect the force and the operational

environment. This capability allowed for earlier detection and contact tracing to do be done within hours as opposed to days. From the mechanic trying to get a generator part or the patient admin and provider trying to evacuate a decompen-sating Soldier, the 1163rd’s dynamic thinking and dedication to their company and mission success was invaluable.”

The 1163rd MCAS is located in Shelbyville, Ky. Since its inception in 2002, the 1163rd has been activated multiple times to include tours to Operation Enduring Freedom in Uzbekistan/Afghanistan 2003-2004; Operation Iraqi Freedom in Camp Bucca Iraq 2008-2009; Operation Enduring Freedom in Bagram, Afghanistan 2015-2016; Joint Training Exercises in Antigua 2005; Domestic operation support includes Hurricane Katrina, 2005; Kentucky Ice Storm support 2009; and most recently, the unit was activated to support COVID-19 response in Kentucky working with multi-agency organizations including FEMA, Ky’s Department of Public Health, Ky Emergency Management and local medical communities to stand up the state’s first Alternate Care Field Hospital in Louisville with capabilities to care for 250 to 2,000 COVID positive patients.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the Kentucky National Guard has mobilized more than 18,000 Service members in support of the Global War on Terror. The Kentucky National Guard is made up of approximately 7,500 Army and Air Guardsmen across the Commonwealth. 🇺🇸

#### **BANCROFT, continued from page 13.**

to give his first remarks as commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

“The most important and exciting time in the history of the 123rd Airlift Wing is right now,” Bancroft said. “When you look across the Guard and the Air Force as a whole, some units are experiencing drawdowns, an aging fleet of aircraft or, for some, a total loss of mission. In the 123rd Airlift Wing, we are growing in manpower in special tactics and contingency response. We’ve recently opened the doors to a brand-new building across the street, and in November we’re welcoming the arrival of the first C-130 J model.

“That is truly incredible — but none of these events happened by chance. They are a direct result of the long-term, word-class support this wing has provided and will continue to provide to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and our nation.

“We are truly fortunate,” Bancroft continued. “But as our wing motto reflects, fortune does favor the brave, ladies and gentlemen. I look forward to working with you.”

Wilkinson, the ceremony’s presiding officer, also praised the performance of Col. David Mounkes, outgoing commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, who has held the position for more than five years.

“(Col. Mounkes) excelled at creating an environment where every leader and individual felt valued, respected and heard,” Wilkinson said.

“To all of the 123rd Airmen here today,” Mounkes said, addressing the audience, “you are the wing now and in the future. You are the focus of the mission and all our developmental efforts. Thank you.” 🇺🇸





## Guardsmen support reduced-capacity Derby

Soldiers with the 75th Troop Command augmented the Louisville Metro Police Department and Churchill Downs security May 1, 2021, at Churchill Downs in Louisville. [BOTTOM] Kentucky Air Guardmen stand guard during this year's running of the Kentucky Derby. (Photos by Spc. Danielle Sturgill).

Story by Spc. Harrison Moore, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Louisville's historic Churchill Downs hosted the 147th Kentucky Derby, May 1, 2021, but for the Kentucky National Guard, this year's support and augmentation of local law enforcement were certainly different due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Nearly 100 Soldiers and Airmen supported the events of Derby weekend, with the majority coming from the 75th Troop Command. According to their commander, Lt. Col. Timothy Starke, Soldiers assisted with security, traffic augmentation, and Winner's Circle and Derby trophy details.

"Overall, the mission for the Guard is to provide support to civil authorities for what is a huge event that has worldwide visibility," said Starke.

**"I'M GRATEFUL TO BE HERE AND EXCITED TO BE ABLE TO REPRESENT MY UNIT & GAIN THIS NEW EXPERIENCE"**

The Kentucky Guard augmented the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) and Churchill Downs security to ensure the safety of Derby fans and race competitors throughout the day.

Typically, a staggering 150,000 visitors attend the Derby. But this year, the number came in at approximately 52,000. Decreased attendance also lessened the need for the Guard's assistance.

"Obviously, our Derby footprint is reduced this year. So when you're talking about the numbers that we're providing, it is a smaller number because the attendance is significantly lower due to COVID-19. But, there's still a mission, and we are always ready," said Starke.

"We are here to look after the trophy in the Winner's Circle," said Pfc. Jose Pena, from the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade. "Overall, it's also to show the support and professionalism throughout the organization. I'm grateful to be here and excited to be able to represent my unit and gain this new experience."

The Soldiers for the Derby trophy detail guarded the prized trophies early in the morning and moved to different locations during the day for photo opportunities.

"When we raised our hands, we vowed to protect and serve the Commonwealth and the country," said Sgt. Cody Redmond, who worked alongside LMPD officers at the track. "At the Derby, we have a clear mission and purpose to be in the middle of the community and the people that we serve, and it is overall a great experience."

For nearly 90 years, the Guard has strengthened its relationship with the Commonwealth by supporting this annual event.

This support has built a strong bond with the Derby community, a feeling even shared by younger Soldiers experiencing it for the first time.

Even though the derby attendance was especially small, the moment the horses began running, it brought the same magical feelings that it always has for so many years.







## GUARDSMEN SUPPORT GREATEST GENERATION

Spc. Quinton Boyd, assigned to a Facility Assistance Support Team, Kentucky National Guard, sanitizes mailboxes with an electrostatic sprayer at Sayre Christian Village, Lexington, Ky., Feb. 3, 2021. Gov. Andy Beshear directed troops to supplement long-term health care facilities in COVID-19 hot spots throughout Kentucky.

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Lerone Simmons,  
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

“If it were not for the Kentucky National Guard, we would not have been able to keep our doors open.”

That was a recurring sentiment echoed by the staff at Sayre Christian Village, a senior living community in Lexington and one of 11 recipients of supplemental facility support from the Kentucky Guard.

Sayre is a nonprofit senior living community that provides housing, rehabilitation and long-term nursing care. It has been open to the public since 1983.

This unique support from the military comes as part of a COVID-19 directive issued in November by Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear. Members of the Kentucky National

Guard were activated on Facility Assistance Support Teams (F.A.S.T.) to assist at long-term health care facilities in “red zone” counties with a lot of coronavirus cases.

“Our mission is to provide hope, housing and health care, regardless of the pandemic,” said Karen Venis, Sayre CEO. “COVID has certainly made things more challenging for us as a standalone nonprofit to achieve our mission.”

Venis and her staff were eager to share their appreciation for what the governor’s office and the Soldiers of the Kentucky Guard did for them in their time of need.

“The governor’s initiative, which took a lot of planning and logistics between the governor’s office and the Kentucky Guard, has felt seamless

and effortless to the senior living communities they are helping,” said Venis.

Approximately 60 Kentucky National Guard Soldiers were activated to fulfill duties ranging from mail sorting, COVID-19 screening, and facility decontamination, freeing up staffers to care for residents.

“They helped us unpack, assemble, and move furniture for the opening of our expansion. They delivered the mail, they disseminated and sorted personal protective equipment to all the floors for staff, and they sanitized (with our electrostatic sprayer) common areas on a regular basis,” said Angela Goodlett, Sayre’s assisted living director.

“We were honored to provide support to the greatest generation,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Rezac, senior enlisted leader, 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade and F.A.S.T. member. “Being able to safely assist Sayre and other facilities across the state during the pandemic has been a fulfilling experience for myself, Maj. Bill Crowe, and our staff.”

Rezac worked alongside Soldiers who have been on COVID-19 support in all facets, from testing support, helping at long-term health care facilities and with vaccinations.

“It felt great to work closely with their staff and we even had the privilege to show some appreciation to one of their residents, World War II U.S. Marine Corps veteran Paul Frederick, who served throughout the Pacific and at Iwo Jima,” said Rezac.

“It feels great to know that I work for an organization that not only fights and wins our nation’s wars overseas, but also takes the time to tend to our nation’s needs here at home,” he said.

*“For all of us, just simply being more aware of our lineage, our history and tradition is important. and since this is the first time we’ve ever done anything to recognize the birthday for the Kentucky National Guard, this event becomes a baseline for building on it in the future.”*

-Brig. Gen Hal Lamberton

Kentucky Soldiers and Airmen gathered together to celebrate its 229th birthday and commemorating its founding at Boone National Guard Center, June 24.

The Adjutant General of Kentucky, Army Brig. Gen. Haldane B. Lamberton, was one of the senior members who was involved in the cake cutting and acknowledged the significance of the day.

Kentucky’s Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Haldane B. Lamberton, and Brig. Gen. Jeff Wilkinson, Deputy Adjutant General-Air, look on as Airman Shelby Malburg and Spc. McKayla Bennet cut the cake during the birthday ceremony. (Photo by Sgt. Jesse Elbouab)



## CELEBRATING 229!



# LEADERSHIP PROFILE:

## KENTUCKY SOLDIER MAKES HISTORY AS THE STATE'S FIRST NATIONAL GUARD DRILL SERGEANT

Story by Sgt. Jesse Elbouab,  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kentucky history was made on Fort Jackson in South Carolina when Staff Sgt. Mary Carter became the first Kentucky National Guard drill sergeant on June 25, 2021.

A native of Rochester, New York, Carter relocated to the Kentuckiana area after her father settled home post-military career. She joined the Kentucky National Guard in 2007 to go to college debt-free and ultimately attended the University of Kentucky, where she earned a master's degree in psychology.

Before becoming a full-time recruiter for the organization, Carter worked as a dialysis technician while serving as a traditional Guardsman, drilling one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer for annual training. For 11 years, she served the Commonwealth as a combat medic.

"I remember getting off the bus at basic training, and the first person I saw was a female drill sergeant," said Carter. "I was taken aback because I didn't know what to expect, but from that moment on, I knew that is what I wanted to do."

While historically Guard Soldiers have had opportunities to become drill sergeants, it is by no means a common occurrence. In 2019, a partnership began between the Active Army and the

National Guard where a plan was developed that opened the opportunity for National Guard Soldiers to attend the academy but the slots are minimal.

Because of that, Carter put the thought of becoming a drill sergeant in the back of her mind and pressed on with her career.

About a year ago, there was word in the recruiting battalion that Kentucky was allotted a seat for the Drill Sergeant Academy. Without hesitation, she put her name on the list of hopefuls and got back to work.

"I was originally not supposed to go, and about three weeks before our initial phase one started, they offered me the slot," said Carter. "I said yes, immediately. My commander asked if I needed to talk to my husband. I told him 'No, my husband is in the Guard too-he understands.'"

Carter then left for Fort Jackson, coincidentally the same military installation she went to for basic training almost 14 years prior to the day. The class started with 132 non-commissioned officers from across the country and graduated 118. Of those, only three were National Guard Soldiers.

**TOP SECRET**  
**CARTER, M.**  
**SSG**



**“Throughout my six weeks at Jackson, I was continually faced with the reality that no matter how much I thought I knew, there was always room for improvement and more to learn.”**

"It was crazy to see it all over again -- to be right across the street from where I went to basic training," she said.

"In the Guard, we say 'roger' all the time. At basic training, that term is dead. I had to write roger's obituary while at school because I couldn't stop saying it out of habit. I wasn't laughing then, but looking back it is funny to know all the little games are still being played between drill sergeants and trainees."

Carter, receiving the slot only three weeks prior, had minimal time to prepare physically and mentally. She was ten months postpartum but had zero reservations about jumping on the rare opportunity. During her six weeks at the academy (typically nine weeks, but reduced due to COVID-19), at no point did she feel like she wouldn't be able to complete the mission.

"We were tested, and people failed - people went home for PRT (Physical Readiness Training)," Carter said. "Of all the obstacles to climb, that was one I stressed about the most."

"There were days when I felt like I am not as good of an NCO as I thought I was. It was very humbling," she said.



(Courtesy photos)

\*FOR MORE OF THIS STORY, VISIT [HTTPS://KY.NG.MIL/NEWS](https://ky.ng.mil/news)





# KENTUCKY EARNS RUNNER-UP AT 2021 REGION III BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

Story by Capt. Cody Stagner, Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

Kentucky Guardsmen, Staff Sgt. James Weitzman and Spc. Dakota Michel, proved their soldiering skills at this year's Region III Best Warrior Competition May 3-7, hosted at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

During the event, Michel, an infantryman assigned to Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, made a lasting impression on the judges and earned 1st Runner-Up for Region III BWC Soldier of the Year.

"I am proud of each and every one of you and how you represent our organization," said Brig. Gen. Haldane Lamberton, Kentucky's Adjutant General.

Lamberton personally honored and congratulated these Soldiers along with the Airmen of the Year from the 123rd Airlift Wing during a ceremony May 13, held at Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort.

"The quality of our Service members cannot be overstated. You are a reflection of our organization and how far we've come over the years," said Lamberton.

Weitzman, from the 103rd Brigade Support Battalion, and Michel competed against representatives from ten southeastern states and territories for their respective titles as NCO of the Year and Soldier of the Year. Only the winners would advance to the national event in July at Camp Navajo, near Flagstaff, Arizona.

The warriors were tested on their Soldier knowledge, strength and conditioning, weapons capabilities, communication skills, and more during a grueling gauntlet of tasks over five days.

"The past few years have been fruitful for the Mountain Warriors in terms of competitions," said Command Sgt. Maj. Benzie Timberlake of the 1-149th.

"This year, Spc. Michel has trained consummately for this, and it has shown through his results."

Fellow Mountain Warrior Spc. Jerry Marksbury III, also from C-Co., 1-149th, recently returned from Army's Best Ranger competition held last month.

Michel said he owes part of his success to the training he receives in Kentucky's only infantry battalion.

"Being in the infantry has been nice for this competition," said Michel, from Middletown, Ky. "We practice warrior tasks regularly, and I have been taking my Ranger handbook everywhere I go. The handbook is vital for anyone wanting to compete at BWC."

According to his first sergeant, Michel has been working at levels above his rank and recently took a sergeant-level slot at C-Co.

"He is a very motivated and knowledgeable young Soldier and will be a great asset for the company's success in its upcoming deployment," said 1st Sgt. Jason Moore. "We are happy to have him."

According to Kentucky competitors, the 2021 Region III BWC came with difficulties.

"The competition was quite stressful and hectic," said Michel.

"Each day was jam-packed full with at least two to three major events and [Army Warrior Tasks] mixed



in. My favorite event was the Stress Shoot, and I think I did the best at that. The ruck was the most difficult—it rained on us the entire time."

Only the winners made it to the next level, but Michel's battle for Best Warrior is far from over.

"As runner-up, I am the substitute for the winner," he said. "I still need to train as if I am the one competing."

Michel and Weitzman's journey began at the 2020 Kentucky National Guard Best Warrior Competition, held at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in October 2020.

Spc. Dakota Michel and Staff Sgt. James Weitzman shake hands with Brig. Gen. Haldane B. Lamberton, Kentucky's adjutant general, after being coined by him. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane)





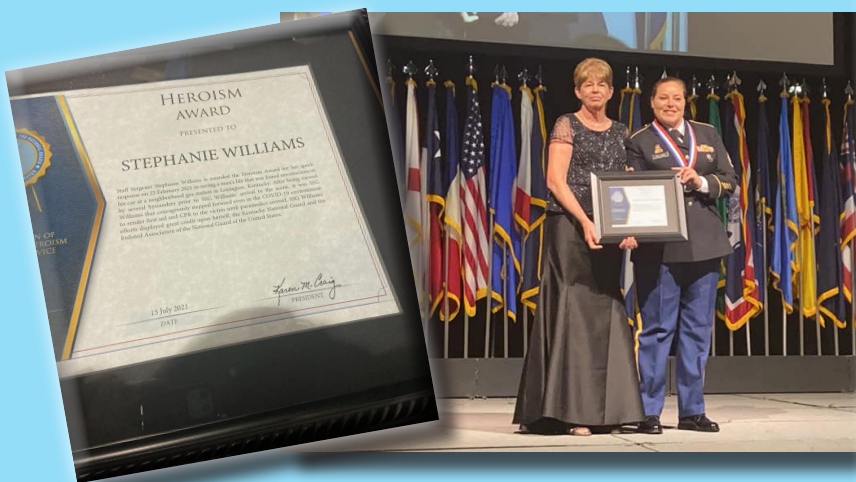
# YOUR SERVICE MATTERS

KENTUCKY  
**ARMY**  
NATIONAL  
GUARD



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR **SERVICE BENEFITS**,  
CONTACT YOUR UNIT RETENTION NCO

## HERO:SOLDIER



Army Staff Sgt. Stephanie Williams received a national award for heroism Aug. 12, 2021, at the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States Conference in New Mexico for her efforts in saving a man's life while at a Lexington gas station last February.



Photos by Ally Burton





# OBSERVING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SEPT 11. 2001

**The changes to the Guard and  
what we learned from the  
events of two decades ago.**  
Story by Andy Dickson



We hold in remembrance those who lost their lives in the



Retired Army Maj. Gen. Allen Youngman

attacks on September 11, 2001. Beginning at 8:46 a.m., when Flight 11 crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center, and

17 minutes later, Flight 175 struck the south tower. A third flight, Flight 77, hit the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m. Passengers of the fourth and final passenger airplane, Flight 93, learned about the deliberate attacks and would take back control of the plane, forcing it to impact in a field in western Pennsylvania.

The nation learned shortly after that these were terroristic attacks on Americans from 19 terrorists linked to al-Qaeda. In total, 2,977 people were killed because of the hijackings.

As jarring as it is to hear those statistics twenty years later, hearing those numbers in real-time in 2001 was unimaginable. So much so that Americans often remember

and can easily recall where they were when they heard the news. For many, 9/11 was a ordinary Tuesday morning. Within the first hour of work, school, or any daily routine, Americans stood in awe over television screens and radio while the events were being broadcast in real-time.

Retired Army Maj. Gen. Allen Youngman recounted the events in an oral interview on how he was notified of the attacks.

On Aug. 10, 2001, Youngman was sworn in as Kentucky's 50th Adjutant General of the Kentucky National Guard.

Prior to the attacks, Youngman's attention was on maintaining combat focus for his troops.

In a meeting with senior commanders and staff, he recalled saying to them, "Guys, we'll never see combat somewhere down the road. Some of these folks, more junior folks, probably will. And so how do we keep them ready in these intervening years?" Those words came back to haunt me, obviously, about a

month later."

On that crisp, clear Tuesday morning, Youngman was holding a commander's staff meeting. His secretary entered the room to notify him that a passenger plane just crashed into the north tower. His first thought, like most people's, was that an air traffic controller somewhere is out of a job.

Moments later, his secretary reentered, this time with a note. He stopped his meeting and solemnly said, "Guys, I think this country is at war with somebody."

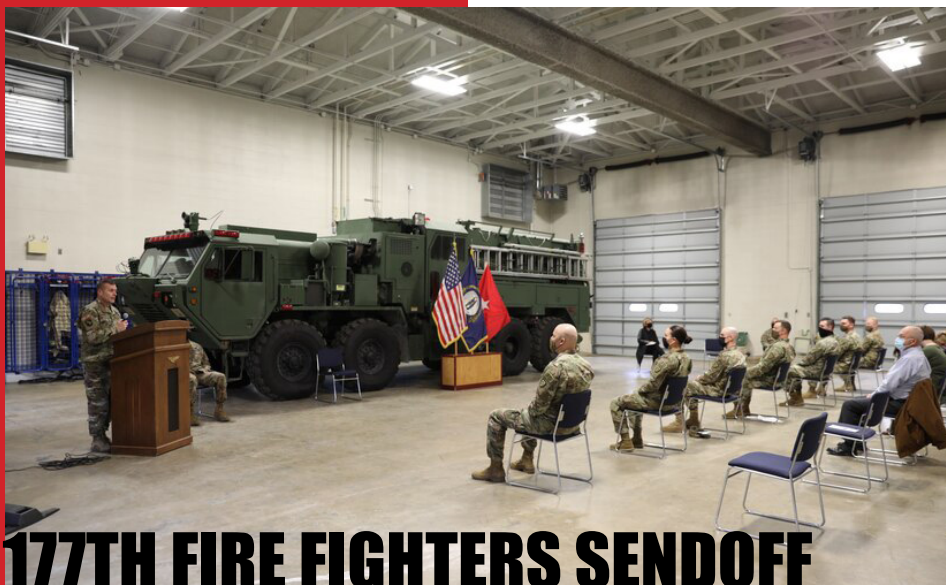
Over the next twenty years following the attacks on 9/11, the Kentucky National Guard supported operations in Afghanistan by sending a total of nearly 4,000 Soldiers and Airmen there.

TO READ THE FULL VERSION OF THIS STORY, VISIT [KY.NG.MIL](http://KY.NG.MIL).



'Battle of Takur Ghar' (Commissioned painting by Keith Rocco)





## 177TH FIRE FIGHTERS SENDOFF

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Lerone Simmons,  
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office

A small gathering of Soldiers, community leaders, and family members came together to send off Soldiers deploying with the 177th Fire Fighting Team, at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center Feb. 2.

The 177th FFT, belonging to the 206th Engineer Battalion, is slated to deploy to Eastern Europe in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. They will work alongside North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners to provide fire and emergency services through fire prevention, suppression, and mitigation, along with life safety measures on the bases they are assigned to.

"We have been looking forward to this opportunity which will allow our team to train and become more proficient in our job as firefighters," said Staff Sgt. Levi Burgin, station chief of the 177th FFT.

Burgin is responsible for leading his small team of seven firefighters overseas, four for the first time in their military career.

"Being able to lead a team is a great opportunity," he said. "I will be able to make a difference in training and implement changes to better fit our team."

The 177th is one of several

Kentucky Guard units that are currently deployed in support of ongoing operations. Their stringent training throughout the year allows them to be readily deployable.

They have conducted a myriad of trainings and certification events involving active duty, National Guard, and civilian counterparts.

"Our firefighting teams sustain a high training tempo filled with firefighter certification requirements," said Lt. Col. John B. Barger, 206th commander. "These selfless leaders are truly special, and bring special capability locally, nationally, and internationally."

Barger attended the ceremony along with other Kentucky Guard leadership and realizes the importance of the National Guard's contribution to our military and country.

"The Kentucky National Guard frequently exhibits the motto of 'Always Ready, Always There,'" he said.

"Our Army Guard brings a diverse capability to answer the Army's and Commonwealth's needs."

"These are special Kentucky Soldiers, and we will miss them," said Barger.



A Fire truck is displayed during a deployment ceremony for the 177th Fire Fighting Team at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center, Greenville, Ky.

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

# LIFE SUPPORT

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bill Draper  
Deputy State Chaplain  
KYARNG  
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"There is nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer." -- General James H. Doolittle. A product of the Greatest Generation, served as a pilot during WWII and earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.

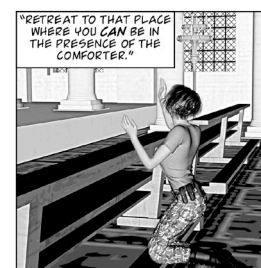
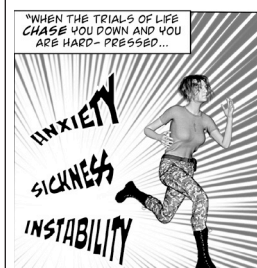
His quote is a reminder that we each serve in an all-volunteer organization. Our citizen Soldiers balance military service with careers, school, home, family, and many other responsibilities. It is a monumental task fueled by a deep devotion and dedication to serve others. Enabling them to serve well are family, friends, and employers who give encouragement and in many cases motivation to continue their service.

There is a cost to serve. All military families make sacrifices for their service member to serve. These sacrifices go from missing a birth to missing a birthday to everything in between. Helping families serve well through the uncertainty of these experiences is a vast part of what our chaplains and religious affairs specialist work to do each day.

For over 246 years the Army Chaplaincy Corps has served military service members and their families. We have a strong force of dedicated professional clergy who are trained and ready to support you. Our chaplaincy provides a safe, professional, and confidential source for Soldiers, families, and all leaders in times of need and celebration.

To our volunteer force, thank you for your strong "heart" to serve. To our families, friends, and employers, thank you for your continued support that enables our service. Please reach out to your unit chaplain or our office anytime.

Grace for the Journey!





# THE LAST WORD

TO READ THE FULL VERSION OF THESE STORIES, VISIT [KY.NG.MIL](http://KY.NG.MIL)



## Kentucky's Workhorse Battalion makes a difference at Camp Kamassa

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Rebecca Wood, 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

In early May 2021, more than 300 Kentucky Guardsmen loaded up their equipment, fuelers and construction vehicles, and slowly convoyed from Ashland, Ky., to Crystal Springs, Mississippi, for a much anticipated annual training.

"This is the first time since Hurricane Katrina that we have sent a convoy that big across a distance that far, and this time we didn't lose a single vehicle to a break down," said Command Sgt. Maj. Jerry Sipe, the highest ranking noncommissioned officer of the 201st Engineer Battalion. "I have to hand it to our company commanders and our maintenance folks; that's outstanding work."

The Workhorse Battalion's mission in Crystal Springs was the ongoing construction of Camp Kamassa, Mississippi's first, fully-accessible, year-round camp facility for children and adults with serious illness, physical and mental challenges and other special needs. Military involvement in construction projects like Camp Kamassa are possible through the Department of Defense innovative readiness training (IRT) program.

Sipe said IRT missions make a difference for communities in the United States and its territories, but it also provides joint training opportunities to increase the readiness for military units with specific skillsets.

"We've been anticipating our turn to make a difference at Camp Kamassa for a long time," said Sipe. "Not only are we supporting a community with a very specific need, but we're also providing Soldiers in every job occupation our battalion has to offer with two weeks of good, quality training."

In their two weeks of work, the

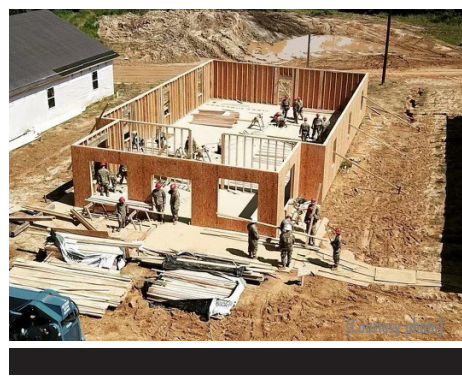
300 plus Soldiers completed interior construction to existing cabins, constructed a new family cabin and also completed a lot of the electrical and plumbing installation. They also began the initial construction of a levy for a recreational pond.

The 201st Engineer battalion commander, Lt. Col. Terry Durham, was very proud of the Soldiers in the 201st and the progress they made for the ongoing project at Camp Kamassa.

"It is why we signed up to wear the uniform. We want to give back and be part of something bigger than ourselves," said Durham. "We train for war--and that's certainly our main purpose--but the skills we need to develop to accomplish those missions are greatly enhanced by the IRT missions."

"We are honored to be a part of something that will positively impact thousands of children and their families in the future like Camp Kamassa," he said.

To learn more about MTKF, Camp Kamassa and how you can help, visit [www.mtkf.com](http://www.mtkf.com).



## Getting Rid of Ticks at WHFRTC



Story by Capt. Cody Stagner, Public Affairs Office, photo by Col. Jesse Huff

One Soldier's passion for preventive medicine became an unusual annual tradition at Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky.

For more than twenty years, Col. Jesse Huff, the outgoing preventive medicine officer for the Kentucky Army National Guard Medical Detachment, has been collecting ticks to prevent tick-related Soldier illness and support national-level scientific studies on the species.

According to Huff, WHFRTC can determine where to spray pesticides based on where they find large concentrations of ticks. Their efforts reduce the risk of Soldiers becoming host to these common parasites.

Ticks, which survive by ingesting the blood of other animals, such as deer, rodents, or even humans, can carry infectious diseases and transmit this illness to their host. Common tick-borne diseases which can be transmitted to humans are Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Lyme disease, Ehrlichiosis, and Heartland and Bourbon virus diseases.

When a person becomes ill, doctors can compare the patient's symptoms to that of the tick-borne illnesses found in the area and reach a diagnosis for treatment more quickly.

"I would collect ticks in certain areas and send them off to the Public Health Command-Atlantic lab at Fort Meade, Maryland, and they would send me back the diseases prevailing within the area," said Huff. "Instead of a doctor sitting here going, 'It could be this, or it could be this,' a Soldier coming down with a sickness from being at Wendell Ford can get the right treatment sooner once we rule out any tick-borne illness."

In 2012, contributions by Huff at WHFRTC and by other teams at Fort Knox and Fort Campbell were used as evidence to suggest increased public awareness for tick-borne diseases in central and western Kentucky and Tennessee.

Tick collection occurs only once each year, however, Huff and his preventive medicine team from MED DET stays busy at WHFRTC.

For more information on this scientific visit the National Center for Biotechnology Information at [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov).





## SOS Riverboat Cruise Returns

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Public Affairs Office

After canceling the event last year due to the pandemic, the Survivors Outreach Services Riverboat Cruise welcomed back gold star families for a riverboat ride on the Ohio River June 13.

About 300 friends and family members from five states enjoyed the cruise along with a meal, music, and fun hosted by Northern Kentucky's B&B Riverboats. The day is designed to recognize the surviving family members of military service members who have given their lives to defend our nation.

The children of those families are the ones who take center stage as the planners of the event cater to them. There was plenty to enjoy, from face painters and clowns making animal balloons to ice cream and fidget spinners that light up.

Attendees saw happiness on the faces of those around them as they milled around the three levels of the Belle of Cincinnati.

A large smile on Krista Williams' face and those of her children disguised the pain of losing a husband and father. Army Staff Sgt. Wesley Williams was killed in action while deployed to Afghanistan in 2012.

"It's been wonderful being here," said Williams. "This is like a second family of people who are in similar situations as us; people who understand. And you don't have to explain it to them. They just know. They've been through it on some level. And just doing stuff like this is so much fun with the kids."



## CERF-P Soldiers train with search & rescue teams

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Public Affairs Office

Approximately 100 Kentucky National Guard Soldiers and Airmen along with several dozen members of the London-Laurel Rescue Squad and Laurel County Emergency Management cross trained on search and rescue techniques to help improve search and rescue operations March 27-30, 2021.

The simulated real world situations took place in the hilly wooded areas near the Rockcastle Campground alongside the Cumberland River.

Members of the Kentucky National Guard CBRN Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) along with members of the Laurel County units trained on advanced use of rope systems, utilized boats and off-road vehicles to try to reach lost or injured people.

"A big part of the Kentucky CERFP mission is to be able to integrate in with local authorities," said Army Sgt Jonathan Viveiros, search and extraction team leader. "We're falling in with the London and Laurel Rescue Squad and they are teaching us what they do. We're taking a little bit from them while we're out here and then we're showing them some of our capabilities that we have to make that interagency relationship a little bit better."

The goal of the training is to allow the Kentucky National Guard and local emergency response agencies in the state to better work together, becoming more familiar with each other's types and styles of operations.



## KYNG field artillerymen treat former unit members to Fort Knox live-fire exercise

Story by Eric Pilgrim, Fort Knox News

Bryan Brown received several hugs, handshakes and pats on the back as members of 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery Regiment (Paladin) suddenly realized who he was.

Brown, who had served with the Lexington-based unit from 1999 to 2016, joined about 50 other former 138th field artillerymen, at the invite of leaders, to witness a Paladin live-fire exercise June 11. The unit is on a 10-day training cycle at Fort Knox.

"I miss it," said Brown of his time at the unit. "I definitely miss shooting those pieces, too."

During his time with the unit Brown had served as a crew chief, in charge of a Paladin squad. Unlike traditional field artillery guns that are considered a direct-fire weapon system, the Paladin is an indirect-fire system. That means the unit rarely sees the enemy when they fire on them.

Brown and the other veterans had come from different locations around the state and served in different time periods of the unit's storied history. Prior to the exercise, they gathered in bleachers and listened as unit leaders shared the history of 138th.

The brigade originally organized as the Louisville Legion on Jan. 21, 1839.

The unit was re-designated and activated into federal service as an infantry unit in 1861. It wasn't until 1917 when it became known as the 138th Field Artillery. Soldiers with the unit have deployed to the Vietnam War and Operation Iraqi Freedom.



## Special Tactics troop from Kentucky Air Guard earns Airman's Medal for heroism

Story by Airman 1st Class Ben Liebing, 123rd Airlift Wing, photo by Tech. Sgt. Joshua Horton

A special operations Airman in the Kentucky Air National Guard was awarded the Airman's Medal in a ceremony for voluntarily risking his own life to save others while responding to a car crash near Louisville on the night of Nov. 16, 2018.

The Airman, Master Sgt. Daniel Keller, displayed the highest levels of heroic selflessness, said Brig. Gen. Hal Lamberton, adjutant general of Kentucky, who presented the medal to Keller before an audience of more than 100 friends, family and coworkers at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base.

The Airman's Medal is Keller's second high-level honor for heroism. In 2019, he was awarded the Air Force Cross — second only to the Medal of Honor — by the Air Force chief of staff for valor on the battlefield in Afghanistan.





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Unit public affairs representatives (UPARs) are non-PA Soldiers identified to increase PA capability across a command. Commanders at the battalion level and below will appoint and resource UPARs to assist higher PA elements achieve the commander's requirement to communicate. Contact the Public Affairs Office at 502.607.1595 if you are interested.