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FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

A safe summer is a great summer

Summer is fast approaching and there will be a significant increase in outdoor activities such as boating, camping, grilling, swimming, and ATV and motorcycle use. I'll certainly be doing some of them myself.

But, we all know too well that with an increase in outdoor activities there will be a greater possibility of accidents.

Historically, off-duty fatality rates increase from April through September. In fiscal year 2009, almost 40 percent of accidents involving Guard personnel occurred during this time-frame, with car and motorcycle accidents leading the way.

More accidental fatalities involving National Guard personnel occur in privately owned vehicles or on motorcycles than any other single factor. All Department of Defense personnel must be aware that the use of hand-held devices is prohibited while driving any vehicle on or off duty.

All deaths, including accidental ones, represent a tremendous loss to our families, the local community and to the National Guard.

The 2010 Safe Summer Campaign, which runs from April 1 through Septem-



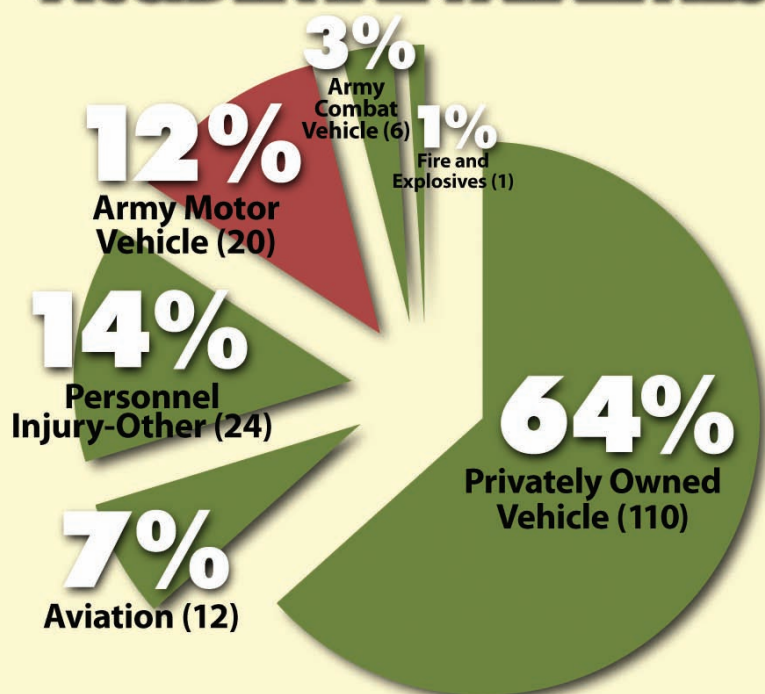
Maj. Gen. William D. Wofford,
the adjutant general of
Arkansas

ber 30, focuses on "playing it safe" this summer. Proactive, prevention focused, risk mitigation is stressed during these summer months, and should be used as a counter-measure to all hazards.

We should all be very familiar with the Composite Risk Management process: Identify the hazards, assess the potential risks, develop controls and make your decision, implement these controls, and follow through with supervision and evaluation. Take the time to get involved. Risk management isn't just a good idea; it's something that we must integrate into our daily work habits, as well as our personal activities, if we are to reduce our exposure to the increased hazards of summer.

Remember that seatbelts save lives. Please pay particular attention to, and

FISCAL 2009 SOLDIER ACCIDENTAL FATALITIES



Note: Green represents a decrease from fiscal 2008 numbers; red represents an increase.

Graph courtesy of Knowledge, the official safety magazine of the U.S. Army.

obey, the laws concerning seatbelts and car seat use for children. Ensure that if alcohol is consumed a designated driver is utilized. Wear personal protective equipment when riding motorcycles and ATVs; it will help prevent injury and may save your life if you are involved in an accident. Use personal flotation devices

when skiing and boating to prevent drowning.

In order to lower the risk of accidental injury and death, I ask each of

you as commanders, supervisors, Soldiers and Airmen to integrate safety into every aspect of your lives.

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Photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott,
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ON THE COVER

MISSING HIM ALREADY. Approximately 60 Soldiers with the Arkansas Army National Guard's 77th Theater Aviation Brigade departed Camp Robinson for their mobilization station April 14, 2010. Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Aviation, and Detachment 1, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation, mobilized in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

188th Airmen supporting missions in Afghanistan

Unit deployed on first Air Expeditionary Force rotation since converting to A-10s

Story and photos by

Lt. Col. Keith Moore

On deployment with the Arkansas Agriculture Development Team

KANDAHAR AIR BASE, Afghanistan – Nearly 300 members of the Arkansas National Guard's 188th Fighter Wing from Fort Smith deployed here in early March to begin their portion of an Air Expeditionary Force rotation as a component of the 451st Fighter Group. The Arkansas unit is fulfilling the second two months of a four month rotation that was begun by a sister A-10 unit from the Maryland Air National Guard. The current rotation will last through May.

This is the first deployed AEF rotation overseas for the "Flying Razorbacks" since the unit made its conversion from the F-16 to the A-10 aircraft in April of 2007. But from all indications the unit members, aircraft and crews were ready.

"We had a good train up before coming here, both at Davis Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona and at the Green Flag exercise in Nevada, so we were ready to be doing exactly what we are doing here in southern Afghanistan," said Lt. Col. Mark Anderson, one of the 188th's A-10 pilots.

The A-10 mission in southern Afghanistan is to fly close-air-support in response to ground troops who may be in contact with the enemy, or to escort convoys in particularly hostile areas. When not supporting ground troops, the aircraft will patrol designated sectors and provide aerial reconnaissance on locations of interest to ground commanders.

"We fly 12 to 16 sorties a day, around the clock," Anderson said. "Sometimes we get to do some low level shows of force. And they always result in the enemy breaking contact with forces on the ground."

Anderson's comments were made just days before the 188th's opportunity came knocking with a call for low level support to a Marine unit pinned down



GETTING READY. (TOP) Maj. Brian Ahlert, an A-10 pilot from the 188th Fighter Wing of the Arkansas Air National Guard examines the weapons mountings during his preflight "walk around" of the aircraft before a flight on March 19 from Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Ahlert is among nearly 300 members of the 188th deployed as part of an Air Expeditionary Force rotation, and is assigned to the 451st Fighter Wing. **(LEFT)** Master Sgt. Jay Greer, an aircraft crew chief from the 188th Fighter Wing buttons up a wing pod on an A-10 aircraft before takeoff.



on the outskirts of a village near Marjaf. Two of the 188th's pilots fired approximately 250 rounds each with their Warthog's .30 mm Gatlin guns. After completing two passes over the battle, the Airmen received the 'all clear' from the Marines on the ground.

Typically, flight missions range from two to five hours. Pilots will either be tasked to support specific ground units and operations, or they will be on patrol checking sectors with one to 10 points of interest for reconnaissance. At any time during a patrol a weapons system controller may divert

them to assist ground forces as necessary.

From a maintenance perspective things also seem to be going well for the 188th as Master Sgt. Justin Likens, an aircraft crew chief, points out.

"The aircraft have done very well since we got here despite the dusty conditions. You see the minor, normal stuff, but no major system or equipment failures," he said.

Fellow crew chief, Master Sgt. Jay Greer echoed the upbeat sentiment of the deployment.

"Most of the guys I have talked to are glad to be here," said Greer. "[It] makes

us feel like we are contributing to the fight to make sure those planes are ready to go for each and every mission. If our guys on the ground need the air cover, it's our job to make sure they are ready to fly."

The 188th is currently one of three units from the Arkansas National Guard that is working in southern Afghanistan. In addition there are approximately 200 members of the 1037th Route Clearance Company of the 875th Engineer Battalion from Jonesboro and another 60 Soldiers and Airmen with the Arkansas Agriculture Development Team.



PREFLIGHT CHECK. Sr. Airman Stephen Boggs, a crew chief on A-10 aircraft from the 188th Fighter Wing of the Arkansas Air National Guard, prepares the cockpit for the pilot during preflight checks on Monday, March 21, 2010, at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.



OFF TO WAR. A-10 pilots Lt. Col. Mark Anderson (left) and Lt. Col. Charlie Holden (right) from the 188th Fighter Wing of the Arkansas Air National Guard walk to their aircraft in preparation for a mission to provide close air support to troops near Kandahar on Monday, March 21, 2010.

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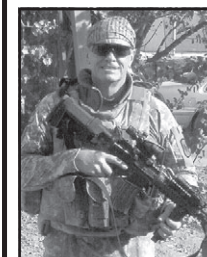
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A HEART FROM THE HEART. Col. Patricia Anslow, the former commander of the 875th Engineer Battalion of the Arkansas Army National Guard, congratulates former combat medic Michelle Donovan after pinning the Purple Heart on her during a ceremony April 21, 2010 at Hot Springs Village.

Former Guard medic receives Purple Heart during tearful ceremony

HOT SPRINGS VILLAGE, Ark. — Former Arkansas Army National Guard medic Michelle Donovan received her belated Purple Heart at a special ceremony April 21, 2010, courtesy of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Donovan and four others were injured by a roadside bomb in August 2007 while serving with the Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th Engineer Battalion. Due to an apparent paperwork glitch at the brigade level in Iraq, Donovan never received her Purple Heart.

That was remedied when the former commander of the 875th, Col. Patricia Anslow, pinned the familiar medal on Donovan during the ceremony at the Veterans' Memorial at Hot Springs Village. Donovan's family and a cadre of MOPH members, veterans, Daughters of the Ameri-

can Revolution and well wishers looked on as she received the honor. Many in the crowd wiped away tears as she spoke after the pinning.

Donovan was a medic with the 875th's 131st Engineer Company on August 21 when the vehicle she was in struck an IED, leaving everyone in the vehicle injured, including Donovan. She was still able to render aid to her fellow Soldiers following the incident, but her injuries have since required a medical discharge from the National Guard.

Members of the Hot Springs Village chapter of the MOPH discovered the oversight and began the campaign to get Donovan her recognition. During the ceremony she was inducted into Chapter 783. The 875th was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from October 2006 to September 2007.

Guard team establishes base camp in Southern Afghanistan

FOB APACHES, Afghanistan — The Arkansas Agriculture Development Team arrived here on April 5, 2010, establishing a footprint and beginning its mission in southern Afghanistan.

The ADT is the first unit of its kind in the Arkansas National Guard, made up of volunteers from both the Army and Air Guard who are trained in, and dedicated to, agricultural development in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Arkansas is among 10 states with National Guard teams deployed to Afghanistan to assist in agricultural redevelopment, training and education. The Arkansas team is the first to be assigned to the Regional Command-South.

Now that the ADT is established in its area of operations, the unit is coordinating with representatives of the Afghan government, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the provincial reconstruction team to apply knowledge and experience in support of local farmers and herdsman.



Photo by Lt. Col. Keith Moore, Arkansas ADT Public Affairs Officer

RAZORBACK PRIDE. THE Arkansas Agriculture Development Team proudly displays the "Hog Head" emblem on their vehicles as they maneuver throughout their area of operations in southern Afghanistan.



Photo by Lt. Col. Keith Moore, Arkansas ADT Public Affairs Officer

ESTABLISHING BASE CAMP. Members of the Arkansas Agriculture Development Team work to get their base of operations set up at Forward Operating Base Apache in southern Afghanistan. The unit reached its base camp on April 5, 2010.

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Soldiers depart for Kosovo de



Photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott, Arkansas National Guard Public Affairs

DON'T GO. Emotions ran high as members of the 77th Theater Aviation Brigade's Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Aviation (Security and Support), and Detachment 1, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation (Air Ambulance) prepared to depart for their mobilization station prior to a yearlong deployment to Kosovo.



Photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott, Arkansas National Guard Public Affairs

LAST HUGS. A young family spends some quality time together before this Soldier departs for his mobilization station prior to a yearlong deployment to Kosovo.

CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON, Ark. – Approximately 60 Soldiers with two units of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 77th Theater Aviation Brigade left for mobilization training April 14, 2010, in anticipation of a deployment to Kosovo.

Soldiers with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Aviation (Security and Support), and Detachment 1, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation (Air Ambulance), said goodbye to their loved ones and boarded buses early in the morning at Camp Robinson.

The units are deploying to Kosovo in support of the ongoing peacekeeping mission there, Operation Joint Guardian. They are slated to serve the yearlong deployment together as the command element for Task Force Griffin, a general support aviation battalion.

"It's an honor to take these guys over, especially with the mission we have," said Capt. Louis Hawkins, commander of Det. 1, Co. F. "It fits right in tune with the peacekeeping mission; we're going to be the '911' over there."

"It's about saving lives, it's about being there and answering the call when it comes in," said Hawkins.

The units were given a special sendoff ceremony the morning of April 13 at the 233rd Regiment Regional Training Institute's General Instruction Building on Camp Robinson.

"I'm excited, I'm nervous, but I want to make everybody proud," said Sgt. Tammie Rather, a member of HHC, 1st of the 114th. "I hope that I can be one of the best leaders that I can be, especially in taking care of my Soldiers."

There are currently no other Arkansas Guard units deployed to Kosovo, but approximately 500 Arkansas Guard members are currently deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Arkansas National Guard has mobilized over 12,000 Soldiers and Airmen since September 11, 2001.



Photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott, Arkansas National Guard Public Affairs

Deployment



U.S. Army Photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott, Arkansas National Guard Public Affairs

(ABOVE) GETTING ON THE BUS. Maj. Gen. William Wofford, the adjutant general of Arkansas, thanks members of the 77th Theater Aviation Brigade's Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 114th Aviation, as they board a bus headed to their mobilization station. The 114th and members of the 77th's Detachment 1, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation, are deploying to Kosovo.

(LEFT) FLAG AND BUS. Members of two units of the 77th Theater Aviation Brigade prepare to depart Camp Robinson for Camp Atterbury, where they will undergo pre-mobilization training prior to a yearlong deployment to Kosovo.

(RIGHT) LAST HUG. Soldiers get a last chance to say goodbye to their loved ones before boarding buses bound for Camp Atterbury, where they will prepare for a yearlong deployment to Kosovo.



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott, Arkansas National Guard Public Affairs

Fort Chaffee barracks renovations to provide Soldiers upgraded facilities, more personal space

By Capt. Heath Allen

Arkansas National Guard
Public Affairs officer

Soldiers undergoing training at Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center can expect a more pleasant stay as the post nears completion of Phase I of an extensive barracks renovation project involving the overhaul of 35 structures.

While the intent of the overhaul is not to rival the posh atmosphere of a four-star hotel, the upgraded facilities at Fort Chaffee will be an improvement over the conditions in which the Soldiers training at the post have been accustomed.

"I'm an old-time Soldier and I've been coming here since 1978," said Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Parks. "I've lived in these old barracks the old way. I think once the Soldiers see these new barracks they will feel like the Arkansas National Guard cares not just about their quality of training but their quality of life. That's going to be the biggest impact. When they see this they will realize someone spent a lot of money and went to a lot of work to give them a better place to live while training."

Parks, who is the project manager for the Arkansas Army National Guard Deputy Chief of Staff, Engineering, and Fort Chaffee's post command sergeant major, said his office budgeted \$10.5 million to renovate the barracks.

According to Parks, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided an opportunity for the Arkansas Army National Guard to submit candidate projects for consideration and funding that exceeded the base budget. Projects that demonstrated a potential reduction in energy consumption and improved the quality of life for Soldiers received the highest priority consideration.

Arkansas submitted a



FINAL INSPECTION. Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Parks, right, and Chief Warrant Officer Four Rickey Johns examine new wall lockers in newly renovated barracks building 1425 during a substantial completion inspection with civilian architects and construction contractors April 2 at Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center. Parks is the project manager for the Arkansas Army National Guard Deputy Chief of Staff of Engineering and post command sergeant major for FCMTTC. Johns is a facilities management specialist with the Arkansas National Guard. Thirty-five of 43 barracks scheduled for renovations are slated to begin housing personnel for training June 12.

plan to renovate 35 barracks in seven groups of five with an estimated cost of \$1.5 million per group. The average cost, though, was \$1.2 million per five barracks, said Parks.

The National Guard Bureau authorized "reprogramming" of bid savings, which permitted the remodeling of eight additional barracks. Parks said the work on the final eight barracks will begin after the initial 35 have been completed.

Parks said the goal is to have Phase I of the barracks renovation complete and ready for the traditional annual training cycle in late May. While many units nationwide train at Fort Chaffee, the Arkansas Army National Guard is the primary group utilizing the facilities.

"These improvements will positively impact Soldier readiness and morale," said Col. Robert Embrey,

Fort Chaffee commander and Arkansas Army National Guard Deputy Chief of Staff, Engineering. "We should also see a significant reduction in energy consumption, which will lower the operational costs of the training site."

The renovation project is extensive and includes additional insulation as well as the replacement of outdated plumbing fixtures, installation of new energy-efficient light fixtures, water fountains and reconfigured entries, stairwells, interior walls and floor coverings. New, spacious wall lockers and many safety features are also being installed.

The restoration project places a high priority on the Soldiers' well-being, personal space and privacy. Open-bay showers, which were originally constructed in 1942, were replaced with three separate shower stalls, each equipped with curtains.

"Before in our old barracks we had to put as many as 70 Soldiers in them," Parks said. "Now there will be only 34 Soldiers in each building. We wanted to improve the quality of life here for our Soldiers while on post because we feel that they deserve that."

In the past, 40 Soldiers were forced to share 22 wall lockers in the downstairs open-bay area. The Arkansas Army National Guard remedied that by installing new individual wall lockers throughout the barracks. Now every Soldier will have a secure place to store their personal belongings. "We tried to give them more space and make things more convenient for the Soldiers when they're not training," Parks said. That also included providing one electrical wall outlet per Soldier.

"Before there were a limited amount of outlets for the Soldiers and they had to



RENOVATED. A view of one of the newly renovated barracks buildings at Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center. Arkansas National Guard officials along with civilian architects and construction contractors recently completed a series of substantial completion inspections to turn over the new structures to the Arkansas National Guard. The structure is one of 35 barracks slated to begin housing personnel for training June 12. Eight more barracks are scheduled for renovations beginning June 1.

share them," Parks said. "In this day and age, just about every Soldier has a laptop and a cell phone. Now everyone will have the ability to plug in their electrical devices."

Arkansas National Guard officials along with the civilian contractors conducted a substantial completion inspection April 2. This examination of the barracks is a key step in the process toward ensuring each structure meets the plans, specifications and intent of the Arkansas National Guard, said Embrey.

It's one of the final phases of the project before each building is deemed ready to house training Soldiers.

"These improvements represent our commitment to Soldier care and to the continual improvement of Fort Chaffee," Embrey said. "The renovations and improved layout provide more space per individual Soldier and offer a higher degree of privacy. Our Soldiers will now have a safe, clean and comfortable place to rest and relax after a hard day of training."

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Guatemalan dentists visit Arkansas National Guard

By Donna Shelton

Arkansas National Guard Public Affairs

According to Senior Master Sgt. Billy Ruhland of the 189th Medical Group, the biggest medical issue that can cause a servicemember to be placed in a non-deployable status is preventable dental disease.

Preventing dental disease is also a major concern for the country of Guatemala.

In October of 2009, the 189th Medical Group traveled to Guatemala and treated over 4,900 patients, including extracting several hundred teeth while in the district of Baja Verapaz.

Lt. Col. Antonio Adonfo Barrientos Giron of the Guatemalan military, and Dr. Juan Jose Paredes, a civilian dentist, came to Arkansas on April 8, 2010, to observe the dental practices of our military medical units.

Guatemala is the partner country for Arkansas

in the National Guard State Partnership Program.

Since 2002, the partnership has been a means to share information regarding healthcare, emergency operations, disaster response, humanitarian assistance and more.

"In my country, I am an exception. I am a dentist on the active duty side in the military and as a civilian dentist with my own practice. This partnership is important because it gives me an opportunity to seek education and training that have been beneficial in your country. I hope to do the same in Guatemala and break barriers in my own country," said Giron.

Giron and Paredes visited the medical units at the Arkansas Army National Guard's Medical Command, the 189th Air-lift Wing of the Arkansas Air National Guard and the 19th Airlift Wing of the U.S. Air Force during the Dental Professionals Exchange program of the SPP.

Members of MEDCOM detailed the medical intake procedures, and Airmen of the 19th AW gave demonstrations on state-of-the-art equipment used to detect dental issues

more accurately.

Ruhland of the 189th Medical Group stressed the importance of adequate dental care and how dental problems can affect deployment readiness.

Both military and civilian organizations can participate in the state partnership program.

Giron and Paredes were also able to attend the Arkansas State Dental As-

sociation assembly, where they were formally introduced by Col. Robert Mason, the state surgeon for the National Guard, and the president-elect of the ASDA.



Photo by Donna Shelton, Arkansas National Guard Public Affairs

DENTISTA. Dr. Juan Jose Paredes and Lt. Col. Antonio Adonfo Barrientos Giron, visiting from Guatemala, watch as Col. Richard Bedinghaus of the 19th Medical Group describes and demonstrates a modern piece of equipment used in their dental offices.



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Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris A. Durney, Arkansas National Guard Public Affairs

THE ORDER'S NEWEST MEMBER – Col. (retired) Frankee Sears is presented the Order of Military Medical Merit Apr. 16, 2010 by Maj. Gen. William D. Wofford, the adjutant general of Arkansas.

Retired Guard nurse receives medical honor

CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON, Ark. – Col. (retired) Mary F. Sears was inducted into the Order of Military Medical Merit during a special ceremony here Apr. 16, 2010.

Better known as Frankee, Col. Sears received a special Order of Military Medical Merit – known as O2M3 – medallion and plaque from Maj. Gen. William D. Wofford, the adjutant general of Arkansas, during the brief ceremony. Her husband, Col. (retired) Don Sears, Col. Robert Mason, the Arkansas National Guard state surgeon, and a room full of friends and family applauded her achievement.

The order is a unique, private, organization founded by the commanding general of the U.S. Army Health Service Command in 1982 to recognize excellence, and promote excellence and esprit de corps among Army medical department personnel.

According to the organization's web site, membership in the Order recognizes those individuals who have clearly demonstrated the highest standards of integrity and moral character, displayed an outstanding degree of professional competence, served in the Army medical department with selflessness, and made sustained contributions

to the betterment of Army medicine.

Sears began her military career in 1976 and, along the way, served with the 875th Engineer Battalion and deployed to Desert Shield/Desert Storm. She was the first female officer in the Arkansas Army National Guard to graduate the U.S. Army War College, and received a Legion of Merit upon her retirement from the Guard in 1997.

In earning her induction into O2M3, Sears was recognized for her many contributions in the medical arena in Arkansas, including the development of Operation Care in 1995 that provided needed medical services to over 3,000 Arkansas veterans in a period of three days. The program was conducted again in 1996, earning her recognition from the 5th Army commanding general for her significant humanitarian efforts for area veterans.

ANG "Penns" newest Brigadier General

By Pfc. Stephanie Deiters

119th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON, Ark. – Assistant Adjutant General for the Arkansas Army National Guard, Kendall W. Penn, was pinned a brigadier general during a ceremony April 17, 2010 at Camp Joseph T. Robinson.

Brig. Gen. Kendall Penn was born Jan. 11, 1964 in Benton, Ark, and graduated Harmony Grove High School in 1982. He began his military career in 1982 and was commissioned a second lieutenant when he graduated from the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1985.

The combat veteran most recently commanded the Arkansas Army National Guard's 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during a yearlong deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 3,000 person brigade returned home in December 2008.

"Honesty, dedication, commitment, tactical and technical competence, and someone who lives the warrior ethos is how I would describe general Penn," said Maj. Gen. William Wofford, the adjutant general of Arkansas.

"General Penn is a man of character," said Wofford, "but, Kendall, I have to caution you that with this great job comes great responsibility. To whom much is given, much is expected."

"I've had a lot of support



Photo by Spc. Walter Guthrie, 119th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KENDALL W. PENN waits to be pinned Arkansas' newest Brigadier General. Maj. Gen. William D. Wofford, the adjutant general of Arkansas, and Penn's wife Mary were on the stage with him during the Apr. 17, 2010 ceremony at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock, Ark.

from family members, friends and bosses," said Penn after his wife Mary placed his new star on his uniform. "Sometimes they pushed me, sometimes they pulled me. And sometimes they gave me a good swift boot."

"And, most importantly is the support from the Soldiers I've served with day in and day out," continued Penn. "These Soldiers are guys and gals that have carried me on their backs for all these years and have done the hard task, even when it was some ungodly hour or some ungodly weather condition. They went out there and did the job and didn't complain."

He received his federal recognition as a brigadier general on March 20. The ceremony took place at the 233rd Regiment Regional Training Institute's new General Instruction Building on Camp Robinson.



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Army Aviation Brigade welcomes new commander

By Pfc. Stephanie Deiters

119th Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON - The Arkansas Army National Guard's 77th Theater Aviation Brigade welcomed Lt. Col. (promotable) John Payne as its new commander during a change of command ceremony April 17, 2010.

Payne assumed command of the Camp Robinson based brigade from Col. Karen Gattis, who assumed command of the Marksmanship Training Center later that same day.

"I know that you're prepared and will do well. I know that throughout your career you've had challenging positions in the past, but none more challenging than this," said Brig. Gen. Rodger L. McClellan, the Arkansas National Guard land component commander. "Col. Gattis will be a hard act to follow; she's done very well. I know that you're up to that challenge."

Payne is the distinguished military graduate of Henderson State University's ROTC class of 1988, and of the Army Aviation Flight School in 1989. Shortly after graduation from flight school, Payne served a tour of duty in the Republic of Panama as an air ambulance platoon leader with the 214th Medical Detachment, 228th Aviation. His tour in Panama included service during Operation Just Cause.

Payne left active duty in 1992 and has been a member of the Arkansas Army National Guard for over 17 years, serving in a variety of positions in the 77th and the 87th Troop Command. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff Officer Course, and is enrolled in the U.S. Army War College class of 2012.

He is qualified as a pilot of the OH-58, Kiowa, and the UH-60, Blackhawk, and was the honor graduate of the UH-60 Maintenance



Photo by Spc. Walter Guthrie, 119th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

NEW COMMANDER AND FAMILY. Lt. Col. (P) John Payne, the new commander of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 77th Theater Aviation Brigade, enjoys some time with his family following a change of command ceremony April 17, 2010 at the Camp Robinson Army Aviation Support Facility.



Photo by Spc. Walter Guthrie, 119th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

ROBINSON ARMY AIRFIELD. The Arkansas Army National Guard's 77th Theater Aviation Support Facility at Camp Joseph T. Robinson hosted a change of command ceremony April 17, 2010 for the 77th Theater Aviation Brigade. Lt. Col. (P) John Payne accepted control of the unit from Col. Karen Gattis.

Test Pilot course in 1991.

"I know you will build on to this unit and the talent of this brigade. I couldn't be more proud

and pleased that I'm handing it off to you. I have the utmost respect and confidence in your abilities to bring the brigade to the



Photo by Spc. Walter Guthrie, 119th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

ACCEPTING THE COLORS. Lt. Col. (P) John Payne accepts command of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 77th Theater Aviation Brigade as he accepts the unit colors from Brig. Gen. Rodger McClellan, land component commander April 17, 2010.

next level. John, you have the controls," said Gattis.

"Soldiers of the 77th, we've all agreed to support the constitution. That's a duty that we've agreed upon collectively and volunteered for," said Payne to his troops assembled

on the tarmac of the Army Aviation Support Facility on Camp Robinson.

"We take on that duty because we want to protect those rights that are guaranteed by the constitution for the citizens of the US. Along with those

rights come certain privileges. Among those privileges is the privilege of command. General Wofford, General McClellan, thank you for the privilege that your giving to me today," said Payne.

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Top Guard shooters in state named

CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON, Ark. – The top shooters in the Arkansas National Guard were named April 25 after more than two days of firing a variety of weapons in the 2010 The Adjutant General's Marksmanship Sustainment Training Exercise.

Camp Robinson hosted the event which tested more than 130 Soldiers and Airmen from all over the state in pistol, rifle and sniper disciplines.

Overall top marksman is Tech. Sgt. Chad Niccum of the 188th Fighter Wing

Overall top novice is Sgt. Jeff Scoggins of the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Overall team is Team Red of the 188th Fighter Wing;

Senior Airman Westly Wagner

Master Sgt. Mark McDaniel



OVERALL TEAM. From left, Master Sgt. Mark McDaniel, Tech. Sgt. Chad Niccum, Brig. Gen. Travis Balch, chief of staff, Arkansas Air National Guard, Master Sgt. Ron White, Jr., and Senior Airman Westly Wagner.

Tech. Sgt. Chad Niccum
Master Sgt. Ron White, Jr.

Sniper open and novice divisions is Sgt. 1st Class Neil Badger of the 39th IBCT

Sniper team is from the 1038th Horizontal Construction Company:

Sgt. 1st Class John Cummings
Pfc. Ernest Gonzales
Pfc. James Burrow

Spc. Mat Murray
Top rifle marksman is Master Sgt. Ron White, Jr., of the 188th Fighter Wing

Top rifle novice is Staff Sgt. Evan McGuyer of the 142nd Fires Brigade

Top rifle team is Team White of the 188th Fighter Wing

Chief Master Sgt. Gary Taylor
Senior Airman Nathan

Sosebee
Master Sgt. Gregory Palmer
Master Sgt. Michael Ritchie

Top pistol marksman is Tech. Sgt. Chad Niccum

Top pistol novice is Sgt. John Grant of the 39th IBCT

Top pistol team is Team Red of the 188th Fighter Wing



TOP SHOOTER. Tech. Sgt. Chad Niccum accepts his award from Brig. Gen. Travis Balch, chief of staff, Arkansas Air National Guard.



OVERALL NOVICE. Sgt. Jeff Scoggins of the 39th IBCT accepts his award from Brig. Gen. Travis Balch, chief of staff, Arkansas Air National Guard.

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