

THE CARGO COURIER

123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard, Louisville, Ky.

Vol. 11, No. 11, Nov. 4, 1995

Education bill calls for free tuition

NGAKy promises economic return in exchange for free schooling

By Maj. Ralinda Gregor
Wing Public Affairs Office

Persuading the Kentucky General Assembly to pass a college tuition bill for Guard members is the top priority for the National Guard Association of Kentucky, according to Maj. Richard Frymire III, the association's president. The proposed Kentucky National Guard Education Bill would provide free tuition at any state-supported university, community college or vocational training institution for guardsmen in good standing.

The association is launching a grassroots campaign to obtain support among the legislature. "We're asking Guard members to write all the legislators from their city and county and urge them to vote for the bill," said Maj. John Heltzel, chairman of the association's legislative committee who is spearheading the drive.

In addition to the letter writing campaign, Guard members should call their legislators and urge them to support the bill. The association is also providing petition cards so that members can obtain signatures from friends and family who support the bill,



KyANG photo by Senior Master Sgt. Dave Tinsley

Maj. John Heltzel

Bill advocate says Kentucky can't lose

Heltzel added.

Heltzel's committee has prepared information packets which outline the benefits of the bill. The packet contains several sample letters which can be used as a guide by Guard members and their families when they write their state representatives and senators.

The information packets will be available at several locations on base, said Heltzel, who serves full time in the Army Guard.

Several other states provide free tuition for their Guard members, according to Heltzel. In addition to being a much-needed recruiting tool, the Kentucky bill would increase revenues to the state as manning levels and Guard member earning potential increase, he added.

The proposed bill would ask Kentucky to allocate about \$4.7 million per year in the form of tuition vouchers from each state institution. In return, Heltzel estimates that more than \$5.3 million would find its way back into Kentucky's economy each year as a result, he explained.

It's important for every Guard member to contact their legislators and request their support for the bill, Frymire stressed. Members may not lobby or write letters while in an official military capacity or during unit training assemblies, he said.

Individuals desiring information about the education bill should call the National Guard Association of Kentucky at 502-546-7500 or 800-251-2333.

Per diem rate changes Nov. 1

KELLY AFB, Texas (AFNS) -- Starting this week, government travelers may see a change in the amount of money they receive for per diem. Under a revised

federal government policy, people will receive 75 percent of the per diem rate on their first and last days of travel, regardless of when they start travel.

Previously, travelers were paid according to their travel times. For example, if they left home before 6 a.m. or arrived back home after 6 p.m., they received 100 percent of the per diem en-

titlement for that day. If they left home between noon and 6 p.m. or arrived back home between 6 a.m. and noon, they received 50 percent of the per diem. The new rule does not affect interim travel days from one temporary duty location to another temporary duty location. Military finance offices have more information about the new policy.

Let's be thankful for all we have; this has been a really great year

November is the month of Thanksgiving. As the holiday approaches, I hope that each of you find that you have much to be thankful for.

As members of America's military forces, we should be thankful that the world stands in relative peace, and that we have no one in harm's way at the present time.

We should be thankful that we have been given the opportunity to serve our country, and fulfill our duty with the aid of new facilities and equipment. We stand, all 1,200 strong, in full partnership with the greatest air force the world has ever known.

During the week of Oct. 16, the Kentucky Air National Guard hosted Lt. Gen. Ralph Eberhardt, the deputy chief of staff for plans and operations, and Maj. Gen. Donald Shepperd, director of the Air National Guard, for lunch. Afterward we conducted a short unit briefing and a tour of the KyANG base. The base looks great.



Col. Michael L. Harden
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

Everyone pitched in and did their part to make sure that their area was spotless. The

people who were present that day were enthusiastic and anxious to allow these two fine generals know what they did, and how it affected mission accomplishment. They were really impressed!

After the tour, the generals made the standard comments about how nice the base looked and how wonderful the new facilities were. What was not standard, was the way they raved about our people. They could not get over the way you folks went out of your way to show and tell them what you do.

General Shepperd commented to me that he could see the pride in your faces. It was the Thoroughbred Express at its finest.

I just want you to know that when I sit down to Thanksgiving dinner, I will say a prayer of thanks that I have the privilege to be associated with such a wonderful group of people. I look forward to working with each of you for many years to come, to make the 123rd Airlift Wing even better.

Some volunteers entitled to medal

The Military Outstanding Volunteer Service medal can now be awarded to active duty, National Guard and Reserve members. This medal honors people who perform outstanding volunteer service of a sustained, direct consequential nature after Dec. 31, 1992, and recognizes exceptional community support over time, not a single act or achievement.

A person must directly support community activities,

not just attend annual membership meetings. Supervisors recommending individuals must ensure the service is on a volunteer basis, not tasked as part of military duties.

Once awarded, the volunteer medal is worn immediately after the Humanitarian Service Medal. For specific criteria and more information, contact your military personnel flight.

This funded Air Force newspaper is published for members of the military services. Contents of *THE CARGO COURIER* are not necessarily the views of the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Air Force.

The editorial content is edited and prepared by the public affairs office of the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard, Louisville International Airport, Louisville, Ky., 40213-2678. Our phone number is 502-364-9431.

Wing Commander
Public Affairs Officer
Production Team:

Col. Michael Harden
Maj. Ralinda Gregor
Tech. Sgt. Jeff Sansbury
Senior Master Sgt. Dave Tinsley

Call the PA office if you have a story idea, photo or article to submit. The deadline for our next issue is Nov. 10, and our office is in the wing headquarters building.

USERRA expands rights of reserve troops

As Guard accepts more duty, employers must know federal laws that protect both parties

By Staff Sgt. Dale Greer
Cargo Courier Staff

When it comes to time management, National Guardsmen have it a little tougher than their active duty counterparts.

Reservists have the same military obligations as full-time airmen, but they also must balance these with the demands imposed by their civilian careers.

That balancing act can become increasingly difficult when additional tasking, like the 123rd Airlift Wing's upcoming Operational Readiness Inspection, keeps guardsmen away from the workplace, said Maj. Steve Bullard, an ombudsman with the Kentucky Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

The unit's February inspection will require Kentucky Air Guard members to pull 18 days of duty during the next four months.

"When units start to pull additional duty, like we're doing now in the Kentucky Air Guard," Bullard said, "you always see a rise in employer complaints."

Bullard said most of those complaints arise because employers don't understand the Guard's need to train constantly to main-

tain a combat-ready force.

"There's a big difference between, let's say, Operation Desert Storm, where there were very few complaints because everybody saw a clear-cut need, and now.

"Now, we have a very peaceful environment, and (employers) don't understand why people have to pull additional time away, above and beyond what they normally pull."

Bullard said the best way to avoid conflict with your employer is to explain why you need to pull the extra duty -- and do it as soon as possible.

generally are supportive when they understand the need."

Guard members are protected by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1994, which states that employee must be granted a leave of absence from work for up to five years to perform voluntary or involuntary service in the National Guard.

The law makes it a federal offense to penalize the employee in any way, Bullard said, and an employee is not required to use vacation time to offset his absence. Any emergency active duty ordered by the governor,

however, is not covered by the law.

For their part, Guard members are required to tell their employers of any service they will have to pull as soon as they know about it.

Bullard also encourages Guard members to invite their civilian bosses to one of the Bosslift programs held on base. The next one, which still has a few slots open, will include educational seminars, as well as a C-

130 flight to the Air Force museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. It is scheduled for Nov. 30.

Another Bosslift, which will fly participants to San Diego and Mirimar Naval Air Station, is planned for Feb. 21-23. For more information on the Bosslift program or the ESGR, call Bullard at 502-491-4737.



KyANG photo by Capt. Steve Bullard

During last year's "Bosslift" program, employers were "deployed" for a day to Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio. Other ESGR tours lasted up to three days. Chris Johns, left, and Dick Seidenstricker climbed into an F-117 Stealth fighter plane.

"Communication is everything," he said. "Ninety-nine percent of the problems we have are caused by a lack of communication between the guardsman and employer.

"You need to be real up-front with them as soon as you can about when your drills are and what kinds of additional training you're going to have to pull. Employers

'At 30, it changed my course in life'

KyANG's first female chief made all the right moves

Story and photos by
Tech. Sgt. Jeff Sansbury
Wing Public Affairs Office

Vonnie Hood had lived overseas, was raising two boys and making sure her Air Force husband was properly fed. She was "caught up in life" and loving every minute.

So when her husband finished 10 years on active duty and the couple settled down back in the states, it was surprising that a woman with all these projects would want to join the Air National Guard.

"At age 30, it changed my course in life," Hood said recently. "I wanted to try something new, and I wanted to be near my husband."

Less than 20 years later, with her kids grown and her husband nearing Guard retirement, Vonnie has become a chief master sergeant and the highest-ranking enlisted female to serve in the Kentucky Army or Air National Guard. Her promotion in June marked a milestone for Vonnie, her family and the Commonwealth.

"I didn't really know if I'd stay in more than four years, but here I am, already qualifying for a pension myself," she said.

Her husband, Master Sgt. James Hood, was Vonnie's high school sweetheart. Ten years in the Air Force was great, and the family adapted well, she remembers. When James enlisted in the KyANG, Vonnie wanted to join him on drill weekends and travel together during summer training.

So she enlisted in the unit in 1976 and was later hired as a full-time air technician. She specialized in the administration fields and also did some recruiting. She stayed with it, studied hard and slowly rose through the ranks.

Being the first female chief on base "is no big deal" when talking about it today, "but back then, it never crossed my mind that I would come this far, do all these things," she admits.

As James approaches 30 years and looks toward his after-Guard options, Vonnie



he might return to Guard duties in the future.

Since 1986 Vonnie has been assigned to the headquarters staff of the KyANG, which recently moved its offices from Frankfort to the new base in Louisville. As NCOIC of utilization, she oversees the KyANG's awards and decorations program. If you've ever been decorated or recognized before a wing commander's call, chances are that Chief Hood tackled the paperwork to make it happen.

When she's not in uniform, Vonnie's in Frankfort at the adjutant general's office, where she holds a GS-11 rating in the human resources department.

She graduated from the NCO Academy and the ANG Leadership School, but it wasn't until this summer that she completed her first technical school ever, when she attained 7-level certification for her new E-9 position.

At first, Chief Master Sgt. Vonnie Hood joined the Air Guard in order to be with her husband on drill weekends; in the end, she's made a career out of her federal service. At left, Hood reviews KyANG awards and decorations with Master Sgt. Monica Rich of the state headquarters staff.

awaits her 20-year service plaque and sees her husband's tenure as a challenge.

Their son Randall is a staff sergeant here and, like his parents, he married his high school sweetheart last year. Just like mom and dad, Randall says, the Guard is a big part of his young family. Another son, James III, also served with the unit and says

"It really put me in touch with reality," Vonnie said. "At my age, to be going through my first technical school with much younger service members, it made me realize just how far I've come, how much I've invested, and how much the Guard has reinvested in my career...I'd say the relationship has worked out pretty well."



KyANG photo by Senior Master Sgt. Dave Tinsley

Two people important to Chief Master Sgt. Sharon Carter are Maj. Denny Lewis, her recruiter in 1978, and Chief Master Sgt. Mike Menting, a former CBPO supervisor.

It's CARTER IN CONTROL

By Maj. Ralinda Gregor
Wing Public Affairs Officer

When Chief Master Sgt. Sharon Carter joined the Kentucky Air Guard in 1978, she received some valuable career advice. "My first supervisor told me to do what I have control over as soon as possible, and then wait for the right time," Carter said.

Carter did just that, completing all her schooling and job requirements at each level as soon as possible. Only 34 years old, she's the newest chief master sergeant on base. As chief of the customer support branch of the 123rd Communications Flight, she oversees computer maintenance, software training and communications security.

Carter joined the Air Guard right out of high school. After two years in Army Junior ROTC at Thomas Jefferson High School and two years in Air Force Junior ROTC at Ballard High School, Carter began to look at Air Force career opportunities. When then-Master Sgt. Knox "Denny" Lewis visited her school as a KyANG recruiter, Carter decided to enlist in the Guard and see how

she liked the Air Force life.

"I planned to join the regular Air Force if I liked the Guard," Carter said. Two years later she applied for and received one of the coveted active Guard and Reserve positions, known as AGR, in which she became a full-time Guard member on active status.

Carter is a strong advocate of Air National Guard career and educational opportunities. She obtained her bachelor's degree in 1988; 75 percent of the cost was picked up by the Air Force's tuition assistance program. Her technical training as a Guard member helped her earn associate's degrees in personnel administration and information management. She attended the NCO Academy and was the youngest member of her class when she attended the Senior NCO Academy with

active Air Force members. "They couldn't believe I was only 30 years old; they thought I should apply for a commission," she recalls.

Carter started out in the personnel career field, working in the records section. She made it a point to learn her job quickly and attend all the required professional military training courses as soon as she became eligible. In 1982 she attended the Air National Guard NCO Leadership School. She was named a distinguished graduate of the course based on her class standing. She also received the Military Achievement Award for her professionalism and military bearing. "I'm very proud of that award because my peers selected me for it," Carter said.

Carter moved from the records section into a master sergeant's slot in the quality force section where she was responsible for managing performance reports, reenlistments and accession of people into the KyANG. At this point her career path took another turn. She applied for, and received, her current job in information management.

"I always enjoyed the personnel career field and I never considered leaving it," Carter said, "but I needed to move in order to get promoted."

The move has been a good one for Carter, allowing her to gain valuable skills in mainframe computer operations and small computer maintenance. She attained a stunning 97 percent average while attending the Air Force's communications-computer systems operator course this year. Her competence has been proven on the job as well as in the classroom. She received top ratings from Air Combat Command inspectors for her communications security program and she implemented regular software training classes for base personnel.

Now that this fast burner has made it to the top, she isn't about to sit back and rest. "I plan to start my master's degree in marketing this fall," Carter said. "The Air Force will pay 75 percent of my tuition, and my dad said he'd help out, too."

Her father, Ben Carter, owns Ben Carter Company Inc., a home construction and contracting firm. Carter hopes to join his business when she retires from the Air National Guard at the ripe old age of 38.



Old Glory

Staff Sgts. Lotus Austin, left, and Steve Erwin, both members of the 123rd Security Police Squadron here, raise the U.S. flag for the first time at the Kentucky Air National Guard's new base on Grade Lane. A temporary flag pole was erected and the flag was raised Sept. 14. After the new guard house is constructed, a permanent flag pole will be located behind it. There will also be three flag poles in front of the new headquarters building.

KyANG photo by Senior Master Sgt. Dave Tinsley



KyANG Promotions

The following members have been promoted in the Kentucky Air Guard and as reservists of the U.S. Air Force. Congratulations for a job well done.

To Senior Airman (E-4)

Charles Ewing, 165th AS
Heather Lamb, 123rd LS
Martin Schafer, 165th AS

To Staff Sgt. (E-5)

William Davis, 165th AS
Timothy Jackson, 123rd SPS

To Tech. Sgt. (E-6)

Timothy Dougherty, 123rd LS
Joseph Johnston, 123rd ALCF

DoD releases personnel strength through July 31

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AFIS) -- Military personnel strength dropped by more than 13,000 between June 30 and July 31, according to figures released by DoD recently. It is also a decrease of nearly 100,000 from the same time in 1994.

DoD bases its report on a preliminary report of 1,533,717 currently serving as full-time military members. These numbers include regular and reserve service members on active duty. It also includes officer candidates, cadets and midshipmen from the service academies.

Policy on blinding lasers announced by DoD; some uses still authorized

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AFIS) -- Although lasers will continue to provide a technological edge to U.S. forces, Defense Secretary William Perry said the DoD will not design lasers to cause blindness.

Perry announced in a Pentagon statement that the DoD prohibits use of lasers specifically designed to cause permanent blindness. He also supports negotiations prohibiting use of such weapons.

Perry said the DoD recognizes accidental

or incidental eye injuries may occur on the battlefield because of legitimate laser systems. However, he said, the services will continue to minimize injuries through training and doctrine.

The U.S. military currently uses lasers for detection, range-finding, communications and target destruction. Perry said lasers provide a critical technological edge to U.S. forces and allows forces to fight, win and survive on an increasingly lethal battlefield.

The Year Was 1977



Photo is from the KyANG historical archive

Representing 160 years of service, this quintet of old-timers grinned their way right into retirement on March 14, 1977. Recognized at the KyANG's 30th anniversary celebration that year, they are, from left: Ralph Bronger, Mike Crandall, Jim Jackson, Chester Knight and Paul Bronger.

How do you spell R-E-S-P-E-C-T?

By Master Sgt. Carolyn Young
KyANG Officer Records Manager

The article in the Sept. 16 issue of The Cargo Courier, "Earning the Title for Life" by Gen. Ronald Fogleman, the U.S. Air Force chief of staff, spelled out RESPECT quite accurately.

We realized we were not being respectful to retired service members by addressing your newsletter without the rank. Please be aware that if your mailing label does not

have your military rank, we have been unable to locate your rank on the date of your retirement.

Call Chief Master Sgt. James Turpin at DSN 366-3489 or commercial 502-564-8489 to update your record. Or, drop us a postcard at Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard, 100 Minuteman Parkway, Frankfort, Ky., 40601-6168.

Remember: you "earned it ... for life."



Working while retired? You might owe money back

By Charles Schuler
Frankfort District Manager
Social Security Administration

Every year about a million people receive more money from Social Security than they were entitled to receive as a result of unanticipated earnings. Most of these overpayments occurred because beneficiaries who work while drawing benefits earned more than they had estimated and their income exceeded Social Security's annual limits.

The annual limits for 1995 are \$8,160 for persons under age 65 and \$11,280 for persons between ages 65 to 69. If you are still working at age 70, the earnings limits do not apply, so you don't have to report your earnings to Social Security.

People who are overpaid by Social Security are required to return the money, either by direct refunds or by having their benefits reduced, to cover the overpayment.

It's easy to report excess earnings and other events that would cause you to be overpaid. Visit your nearest Social Security office or call us on our toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Because it is difficult to estimate exact earnings for the year, the Social Security Administration encourages beneficiaries who work to call us to adjust their estimated earnings if they get a raise, work overtime or otherwise increase their income.



Photo is from the KyANG historical archive

F-84 CRASH: The lonely figure of a Kentucky Air National Guard officer watches from safe distance as an F-84 jet aircraft burns. The crashes were a rather regular occurrence during the Kentuckians' stay in England during 1951. Throughout the Korean War, it seemed there was not enough time to cure all ills of this fighter plane.

Remembering the base club

By Tech. Sgt. John Martin
123rd Wing Historian

On Nov. 16, 1957, the Standiford Field Civic Club honored a former wing commander of the 123rd, Lt. Col. Lee Merkel, by presenting a plaque to the Kentucky Air National Guard base. Merkel was honored for his efforts to bring an ANG base to Louisville with the formation of the ANG following World War II.

Twenty-five years ago this month, the wing was presented the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its service during the Pueblo call-up during 1968 and 1969. This special order, numbered GB-886, stated that the award was being made for "exceptionally meritorious service in support of military operations from Jan. 26, 1968, through June 9, 1969.

On Nov. 6, 1972, Col. William Semonin became the new wing commander of the 123rd, the unit's sixth. However, just nine days later, Lt. Col. John Conaway was selected as the new base detachment commander for the 123rd. Both Conaway and Semonin replaced retiring Col. Verne Yahne in both capacities.

Nine years ago this month, one of the most enduring veterans of the KyANG re-

tired after a service career of 36 years. The retiree, our base club, was established in 1953 at the unit's first home at Bowman Field. The club was founded by KyANG members George Newman and Jack Gowen, who began the club by selling candy bars.

The club was forced to close under a new ANG regulation that required liability insurance coverage due to alcohol sales. This was a move that affected similar clubs nationwide. Yet, as in life, the end of something usually means the start of another, which held true for our club as well. Though it ceased to exist nearly a decade ago, in its place came our new AAFES base exchange, managed now by Connie Semmler of the Fort Knox Exchange.

Just three years ago this month, word was received that our unit's aircraft could be expected to be used in overseas operations in Somalia and in Bosnia. This was the very beginning of our worldwide reach.

Trivia Question from October: The 123rd's first female first sergeant was Master Sgt. Nancy Marchand of the 165th Air-lift Squadron.

Question for December: What was the difference between the commander and the detachment commander back in the 1970s? Find the answer next month.

Golf scramble a big success

By Senior Master Sgt. Mike Mitro
Thoroughbred Club Secretary

The second annual Thoroughbred Golf Scramble was held Oct. 1 at Shawnee Golf Course with 18 teams vying for the championship. The team coming in with the lowest score (12 under) consisted of Chris Lowe, Bill Carpenter, Jarvis Carpenter and Brent Bunting.

Second place went to John Thomas, Jim Olson, Steve Jeanette and Bucky Miles. Third place was captured by the team of Mark Ray, Tommie Ray, John Foos and Casey Foos. Congratulations to all who participated.

The closest to the pin competitions went to Brent Bunning and Kevin Frantze and the longest drive contest was won by Mark Ray. The winners of the door prizes were Teresa Adams (a weekend at the Executive Inn) and Tom Schiess Sr. (a weekend at the Holiday Inn).

David Orange, Gus Damico and Joe Johnston were the cooks and had a great meal of pork chops, hot dogs, baked beans, pasta salad, potato salad and Texas Toast ready for the golfers when they completed their rounds.

Katrina Kerberger and Chris Evans drove golf carts around to ensure that nobody became dehydrated. Thanks to all the volunteers who made the scramble a big success.

The board of governors would like to thank everyone who played and supported the scramble. If you did not get to play this year, come join us next season for an even better time.