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# THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

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## BRINGING HOME THE KERWIN -- 1/623 FA -- THE NATION'S BEST

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# 1/623rd FA Wins Kerwin with Work, Sweat and Pride

By SGT Robert Pillow  
133rd PAD

If you ever need artillery, the best battalion to call on in the entire Army National Guard is the First Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery, which has been recognized as the finest of any in the United States.

The 1/623rd received the Walter T. Kerwin Award for Readiness at a ceremony in Washington Oct. 13. The award is presented annually by the Association of the U.S. Army and the National Guard Association of the United States to the battalion-size unit with the highest marks for combat readiness.

MAJ Michael F. Gantt of Madisonville, the battalion's commander, accepted the award for the 1/623rd from the Army Chief of Staff, General Carl E. Vuono, Secretary of the Army John Marsh and LTG (Ret) LaVern Weber, executive director of the

NGAUS and Gen Kerwin.

Headquartered in Glasgow, the battalion includes Battery A, Toupsville; Battery B, Campbellville; Battery C, Monticello and Service Battery in Springfield.

Gantt cited the battalion's "full-time cadre, unselfish soldiers who give of themselves for the benefit of the whole" and support by employers and communities as the prime reasons for the battalion winning the Kerwin.

1LT David Merchant, Battery B's acting commander and executive officer said the battalion has a tradition of coming in first, noting several Second Army awards for excellence in the past.

"Our attitude is we are the best," he said, "and we keep trying to be the best."

"We put out a whole lot of work and sweat," said SGT Boyce E. Johnson, gun chief of Battery B's No. 4 gun section.

"Getting the award was fantastic," said SFC Jerome Taylor, chief of the firing battery of Battery A. "We strive to be the best."

"The 623rd takes a lot of pride in its uniform and its background," according to Battery A's fire direction control chief, SSG Kevin Jones. "The people who served in the past have really made a difference. We have a lot of pride and put out 120 per cent."

NCO experience was also a factor in the battalion being recognized as the best, according to CPT Richard Neal Simon, Battery C commander.

"We've got a core group who are really knowledgeable about artillery," he said.

When asked why the 1/623rd received the recognition, Battery C's gunnery sergeant, SFC Dale Hurd, answered rather simply:

"We can outshoot anybody."



# Duty in Philippines Was an Eye-Opener for MP's

By Mike Lynch

"I kind of knew what to expect ... but it still was overwhelming."

E-5 Michael Jones of Bullitt County, a member of the 438th MP Company, was one of 72 Ken-

tucky Army National Guard MP's who volunteered for duty at Subic Bay in the Philippines for three weeks in September and October. He came back with some definite impressions of the country and its people.

Jones says he found the people friendly and never felt threatened despite the political tension in the country. Yet the political factionalism was evident.

"They're really a split society," Jones says. "It's something like America during the Revolution, but instead of having two sides, they're split four or five ways."

"The most overwhelming thing is that the people are so poor," he added.

It was a common sight during their three-week stay for the MP's to see people begging. Certain items, like some fresh fruits or chocolate, are scarce there, according to some of the MP's — so the scarce items take on an inflated value.

"Things like M & M's and oranges were treated like gold," says E-4 John Schwab, of the 223rd MP Company in Louisville. "You could get anything you wanted for M & M's or oranges."

Because the Americans stationed at Subic Bay have access to such items, the Philippines look upon them and their country as rich beyond their imagination. Schwab says one woman he spoke to was typical of many of the people living near the base.

"She seemed to think America is the ultimate place to be ... where they could make their fortunes. They thought if somehow

they could get to America they would become rich and go to school."

The Military Police, members of units based in Louisville and Murray, were at Subic Bay helping to guard the dock, walking security lines and checking ID's of people entering. Schwab says they worked four hours on and eight hour off for three days before getting time off.

"Working the four seemed like eight due to the heat and humidity," he says.

never been to," he says. "That country is going through changes. History is being made over there, and I wanted to see it. I appreciate what I read in the newspapers now that I've seen it."

SGT Jones says he found the Marines helpful "not so much with the duty as much as with how to get along in the country," with advice on what to visit and what to avoid.

The political situation in the country surprised some of the



Two members of the KyARNG composite military police group stand guard at Subic Bay. Seventy-two volunteers were in the Philippines for three weeks. (Photo by 1SG Terrence Frantz, 223rd MP Co.)

## "The Most overwhelming thing is that the people are so poor"

"I got to see the Marines in operation," says E-4 David Sears, a Murray member of the 644th MP Company. "It helped me to realize that the Army isn't the only uniformed service out there."

Sears says rank is much tighter in the Marines than he's found in the Army National Guard, and the Marines were surprised to find so many NCO's among the Kentucky Guard task force.

He, too, was struck by the poverty of the people and worship of America he found in Subic City and Olongapo, adjacent to the base.

"...It was a pun of the word I had

MP's.

"Surprisingly, a lot of people I found want Marcos back," says SP4 Sears, not because life under Marcos was so much better, but because "you didn't have six or eight factions trying to take over."

As with the experience of other Kentucky Guard members who have served Overseas Deployment Training in the Third World, the Philippine trip made these MP's see their own country in a new light.

As SP4 Schwab put it: "It makes me appreciate what I have here now."



## *Subic Bay Duty Takes MP's Around the World*

From weapons inspection to a walk in the jungle, duty for three weeks in September and October was a "trip" for KJARNG MP's. Besides meeting people from a different culture, the MP's encountered some different "signs of the times" both on and off base while in the Philippines. A story on the Subic Bay duty can be found on page 3. (Photos by ISG Terrence Frantz, 223rd MP Co.)



## 3/123rd ACTIVATED AT FORT KNOX



An M-1 main battle tank provides an appropriate backdrop for Major George Welch, commander of the Kentucky Guard's newly activated Armor battalion as he greets those attending activation ceremonies Oct. 3, at Fort Knox. Welch is flanked by Assistant State Adjutant General Julius Berthold, Adjutant General Billy G. Wellman and Deputy Adjutant General Robert DeZarn. (Photo by LT Phil Miller, 133rd PAD)



THE FIRST OF THE THIRD OF THE 123RD - Charter members of the battalion headquarters staff pose outside the building that now houses the Headquarters 3rd Battalion of the 123rd Armor at Fort Knox - "The Home of Armor". (Photo by LT Phil Miller, 133rd PAD)

## SCENES FROM THE DEDICATION OF THE WILLIAMSBURG ARMORY



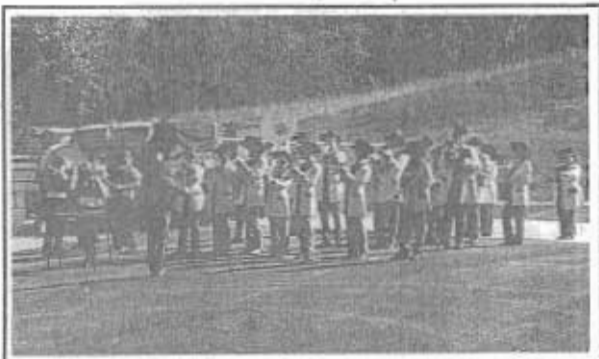
Keynote speaker for the event was Adjutant General Billy G. Wellman, who, along with Williamsburg Mayor Donnie Witt; Whitley County Judge-Executive Jerry Taylor, and 82nd District State Representative Charles Sifer, welcomed all attending the dedication of the Kentucky Guard's newest armory. (Photo by LT Phil Miller, 133rd PAD)



Posting of the colors was performed by members of Detachment 1, IHHC, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry. (Photo by WO1 Dewey Pope, 133rd PAD)



One of the 149th's armored personal carriers equipped with a four-dence mortar was available for public inspection on the day of the Williamsburg armory dedication. (Photo by LT Phil Miller, 133rd PAD)



Music for the dedication ceremony was provided by the Williamsburg High School marching band, directed by Ms. Nannie Hays. (Photo by WO1 Dewey Pope, 133rd PAD)

# 1/623rd FA, 141st CHEMICAL DOMINATE STATE MARKSMANSHIP MATCHES



**COMMENCE FIRING**—SGT Ronnie Dale York fires his M-60 from the 400 meter firing line while teammate SGT Roger Earl Anderson (standing) takes a look downrange. York and Anderson represented Battery A, 1/623rd (Tompkinsville). (Photo by LT Phil Miller, 133rd PAD)



**CHANGE OF PACE**—SGT John Morgan, Richmond, drops from the standing-ready position to the crouch-firing position during the state rifle matches. Morgan is a member of BHC, 206th EN BN. (Photo by WO1 Dewey Pope, 133rd PAD)

By SP4 Charles Peedleton, 133rd PAD

Individual preparation and practice on the firing-line paid off for teams from the 1/623rd Field Artillery Battalion and the 141st Chemical Company in the National Guard Association of Kentucky sponsored state marksmanship matches, held October 3-4 and 17-18 at Ft. Knox.

"Everyone that competes is expected to prepare on their own during their spare time," said SSG Robert Plomski, match operations sergeant, adding that in addition to firing practice, "they must keep up some sort of physical conditioning so their bodies will adjust to the various positions, whether they are standing, sitting or in the prone position."

Firing for top honors in the .45 Cal. Combat Pistol division was the 1/623rd FA BN team of CPT John W. Smith, CPT Daniel M. Fenwich, MSG Ted W. Sirmuous and SSG Randal J. Shofner.

The 1/623rd also "fired for affect" in the M-16A1 Combat Rifle Matches with the six-man team of SSG Robert E. Dyer, SSG Billy J. Honeycutt, SGT Kenneth H. Grider, SP4 David E. Graves, SP4 Tony H. Walden and SP4 David S. Miller emerging victorious over the other 100 competitors in that division.

Finishing second and third in the M-16 matches were teams from the 441st Medical Detachment, Frankfort, and the 141st Chemical Co., Louisville.

SSG Robert E. Dyer of Battery A, 1/623rd FA, Tompkinsville was the top-rated individual shooter of the rifle match and 1LT James Galloway, Co. D, 201st EN BN, Carlisle, was the highest scoring "first-time" competitor.

In the M-60 Light Machine Gun matches held October 3-4, the team from the 141st Chemical Company, Louisville, "smoked" its competition on Ft. Knox's Scott Mountain Range, with SGT Rolf Diehl, SP4 Dwayne Bruny, SP4 Timothy Smith and SP4 Richard Browe taking the first place spot.



**WINNING TEAM**—Members of the 1/623rd FA BN rifle squad scored 1,312 out of a possible 1,500 points to take the state M-16 title. (Photo by SGT Bob Walters, 133rd PAD)



**SANDWICHED BETWEEN HIS COMPETITORS**—SGT Neal Bishop (right) of Battery B, 1/623rd FA BN (Campbellsville) takes aim during a rapid-fire sequence of the .45 pistol competition. (Photo by LT Phil Miller, 133rd PAD)

## Kentucky's 'Elite Fleet,' M-1 Battalion, Activated

While the 113th Army Band of Ft. Knox's Armor Center played marches on a cold October morning, officers of the Kentucky Army National Guard and Ft. Knox stood in the shadow of an M-1 Abrams tank at the Kentucky Military Academy to officially activate the Kentucky Guard's own battalion of M-1's.

"We plan to be the epitome of the One Army concept," pledged MAJ George Welch, the new commander of the 3rd Battalion of the 123rd Armor. That battalion was reactivated at the Oct. 3 ceremony to become the M-1 battalion.

The colors of the 3/123rd were uncased for the first time since they were deactivated in 1968.

MAJ Welch called it "a distinct honor to be the commander of the 3rd of the 123rd," as former members of the battalion looked on. "I pledge that we shall continue their honors."

He dubbed his new battalion "the elite fleet" of the Kentucky Army Guard.

The activation of the battalion will introduce the U.S. Army's main battle tank to the Kentucky Army National Guard. When the headquarters and four tank companies reach full strength, the battalion will have 550 members and 58 M-1's.

It was not possible to place the battalion

on the ground without the support of (Ft. Knox Commander) General Thomas Tait and his staff. Adjutant General Wellman told a shivering crowd at the activation ceremony. "We're going to attract a lot of fine young men. I expect great things from this battalion."

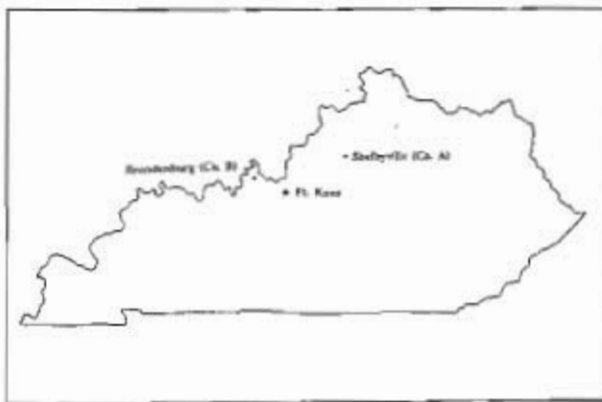
General Tait briefly welcomed the battalion headquarters to the Kentucky Military Academy grounds and pledged his support in the phasing-in of the battalion. A dozen former members of the 3/123rd helped to unveil the sign which will stand at the new headquarters of the battalion.

The four tank companies will be activated in stages with announcements of their locations during the next two years (Two locations were announced later last month. See story below). Two of the companies will be activated late next year, with the two remaining ones to be activated in 1989.

Meanwhile, equipment for the battalion is expected to roll into Kentucky early in 1988. The Kentucky Guard's Plans Operations and Training Office says HEMMT's (Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Trucks) and HMMWV's (High-Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles) are scheduled to begin arriving between January and March of next year.



CPT Wayne M. Neal, the S-3 for the 3/123rd Armor, unfurls the colors of the battalion at its reactivation last month at Ft. Knox. Looking on are MAJ George Welch, the new commander of the M-1 battalion and Adjutant General Billy G. Wellman. (Photo by LT Phil Miller, 133rd PAD).



### Shelbyville, Brandenburg to Have Tank Companies Next Year

Shelbyville and Brandenburg will be the homes of the first two tank companies of the reactivated 3/123rd Armor.

Adjutant General Billy G. Wellman made the announcement of the choices on Oct. 4, saying Co. A would locate in Shelbyville, in Shelby County, and Co. B in Brandenburg, in Meade County. He told community leaders during a news conference in Frankfort that the two companies would be officially activated on Oct. 1, 1988.

General Wellman says the cities were chosen as a result of lobbying efforts by community leaders to get a Guard unit. He

held up a thick stack of letters, telling Meade County Judge/Executive Monk Ross that all the correspondence from Meade County had obviously paid off.

"We cannot survive without your support and the support of the community," he said. "It's your Guard. We want to serve you and participate in your activities and respond to you when you have needs."

Work will begin next year to lease space for temporary armories. Typically, efforts to secure funding for a permanent armory begin about four years after a unit's activation, and a permanent home for the unit is built after seven or eight years.

### "I thank the Lord we got it." Cities to Feel Impact of Units

Just what do Shelbyville, Brandenburg and the areas surrounding them stand to gain from the location of National Guard units? Plenty, both in economic benefits to the communities and opportunities for people there. Their work to gain the units, however, isn't over yet.

It's estimated that in the first year after activation, each community's economy will realize \$150,000 in payroll, lease payments, utility costs and other expenses. At full strength, that amount will double.

The people who join the tank companies will, of course, benefit from the extra pay, training and educational opportunities. Meade County Judge/Executive Monk Ross says he's wanted a unit for 14 years, since he was Brandenburg's mayor. He has only to look back to April, 1974, to remind himself of why.

"The day of the tornado that wiped Brandenburg out, the first move I made was to call the National Guard," Ross says. "They brought us water, food and everything we needed. They worked with us for three months." So Ross is glad — to say the least — to have a unit located right in his county.

He also says a number of area Guard members who now travel to Louisville and other communities for Guard duty may have the chance to drill much closer to home.

"I thank the Lord we got it," is the way Ross puts his feelings about the announcement.

Locating a new unit in cities of the size of Brandenburg or Shelbyville is much like adding a small industry, but, as the Adjutant General told community leaders, support from the community is vital to keeping the unit there. Shelbyville mayor Neil Hackworth says the support has not typically been difficult in other communities.

"We feel very strongly that we can get that support," Hackworth says. "and have a lot of people get involved."

Shelbyville leaders have been trying for about four years to land a Guard unit, and the city and county governing bodies even approved resolutions to provide land for an armory.

Now their efforts have paid off.

## NEWSBRIEFS

### LEGION OF MERIT AWARDED

COL Kenneth C. Wood, former Deputy Commander of STARC, and COL Jimmie Judge, Commander of the 1st Detachment, Troop Command, were presented the Legion of Merit Award during ceremonies last month in the rotunda of the State Capitol.

The Legion of Merit is the highest federal award given to a member of the Reserves or National Guard. It was given to both Guardsmen for meritorious service, outstanding achievements and devotion to duty in keeping with the highest traditions of military service to the Army National Guard.

Both recipients are Frankfort residents.

### CSM BAILEY RETURNS TO WORK IN FRANKFORT

State Command Sergeant Major Robert Bailey returned to work late last month after a long recuperation from heart surgery in July. Bailey underwent a quintuple heart bypass operation in San Antonio, Texas and had been recuperating at home.

On Monday, October 26, he returned to his office at Boone National Guard Center to work for half-days.

### KyARNG UNIT INVOLVED IN 200K CALL-UP

The 2123rd Transportation Company of Bowling Green was involved in last month's nationwide test to evaluate the notification system of the Selected Reserve. Federal law gives the president authority to call up as many as 200,000 selected reservists without a declaration of national emergency. Such a test was held during the weekend of October 23-24.

Seventy members of the 2123rd were involved in the notification, which lasted from noon on Friday to noon on Saturday. Evaluators from STARC and the Second U.S. Army were on hand to gauge the success of the test.

### FIRST ADJUTANT GENERAL'S MAINTENANCE SAFETY AWARDS GIVEN

The first annual Adjutant General's Maintenance Shop Safety Award was recently handed to the Unit Training Equipment Site (UTES) No. 2, located in Greenville. The award is given based on a point system rating the shops' safety program. State Safety Manager Lt. Beth Roach visited each shop to survey its program.

Also receiving commendations were the Organizational Maintenance Shop (OMS) No. 1 in Ashland and the Army Aviation Support Facility in Frankfort.

### 281st ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY PLANS REUNION

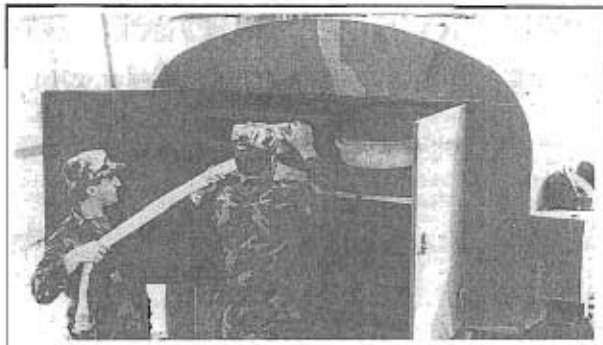
Any KyARNG members who served with the 281st Assault Helicopter Company in Viet Nam interested in attending a reunion of that organization should contact Mr. Duane A. Brudvig, 280 Sumpter Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota 55445.

### HELICOPTERS FIGHT FOREST FIRES

Six KyARNG helicopters from various aviation units were dispatched Oct. 30 to fight forest and grass fires in Eastern Kentucky.

The choppers, like the one shown in training at right, carry large water buckets which, after being filled in rivers or lakes, are dumped on fires pinpointed from the air.

The aircraft and crews were activated at the request of the state Division of Forestry.



Two members of Elizabethtown's Battery B, 2/138th FA prepare to unload another tanker-full of water at Irvington last month. The efforts of 18 members of the battery helped to keep the city from running completely out of water for over a week. (Photo by MAJ Mike Jones, KySTARC)

### Guard Helps Irvington Through Water Shortage

By Mike Lynch

For more than a week last month, the people of Irvington in Breckinridge County depended on the Kentucky Army National Guard and soldiers from Ft. Knox for water. A very low water level in the city's well, compounded by the contamination of the supply with gasoline or other petroleum products made the outside help necessary.

From October 10 to 18, a total of 18 members of Battery B of the 2/138th FA from Elizabethtown worked in shifts around the clock to haul thousands of gallons of water to Irvington. Other Guard units got involved, too.

"We had four water buffaloes there as stationary water supplies," says Mobilization Planner MAJ Mike Jones, "where people could pick up drinking water."

The activated members of Battery B also

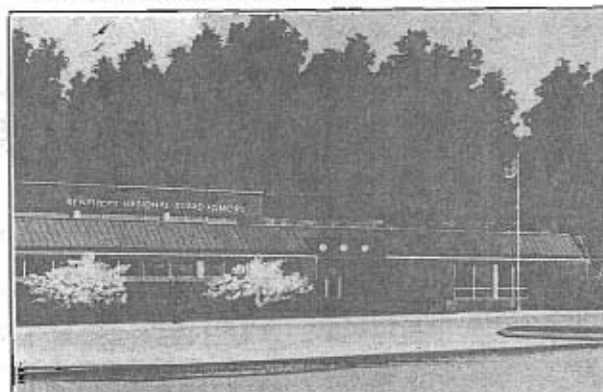
poned water into the city system to keep two water towers full in the event of an emergency like a major fire.

"They were really happy the first day," Battery B recruiter SSG Ray Jones said. "The days after, they kind of took it for granted." Jones says he kept reminding people that Guard members were working 12-hour shifts to keep the water available.

E-6 James Bannell, a supply sergeant from Elizabethtown, delivered replacement parts, like tires and a pump for the tanker which went down late in the operation.

"I thought it went rather well," he said, despite the few breakdowns.

The members of Battery B pulled out of Irvington late Sunday afternoon, October 18, when the job had been finished. But they won't be forgotten.



### Williamsburg Armory Dedicated

Dedication ceremonies were held October 18 for the National Guard armory at Williamsburg, home of Det. 1, HHC, First Battalion of the 149th Infantry. Construction had begun in 1979, and the building was initially occupied in '82. However, ground movement problems caused by abandoned mineshafts in the area required extensive recontouring of the land and reconstruction of part of the building.

Conducting the ceremonies were Adjutant General Billy G. Wellman, Battalion Commander, MAJ Larry L. Arnett and Headquarters Co. Commander CPT James M. Davis.