



The Bluegrass Guard

Volume Two, Issue Two

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

Summer 1998

Special Annual Training Issue!

**Spc. John Rheaume on location
at Camp Atterbury, Indiana,
with 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery
(photo by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom)**



THE GENERAL POINT OF VIEW

by Major General John R. Groves Jr.
Adjutant General of Kentucky

Membership in the Kentucky National Guard

requires a special dedication unlike that needed for most other organizations. Not only does a typical Guard member have to concern him or herself with meeting many of the demands of an active duty military unit – coping with physical fitness standards, training schedules and overseas deployments, to name but a few – but there are civilian employer concerns, time away from friends and family, not to mention the call to aid the Commonwealth during a natural disaster or civil disturbance.

It's been my experience that very few people are in this business for the money; indeed, for many members who commute great distances to be in their unit, a paycheck just barely covers their expenses. Membership in the National Guard, it would seem, is very often its own reward.

Two years ago, however, the people of Kentucky bestowed upon us a grand gift in recognition of the sacrifices being made on their behalf. Providing full tuition to any state university, college, vocational or technical institution, the Kentucky National Guard Tuition Assistance Bill has allowed more than a thousand of Kentucky's best and brightest to pursue their dreams for a better future, both in their role as members of the Guard as well as members of their communities.

This is indeed a reward that is in proportion to the oath that you – the sons and daughters of Kentucky – have sworn to uphold. A fair price for a job well done.

Approximately \$1 million of tuition assistance money has been spent so far, and the results have been outstanding. It seems that wherever I go, whether it's on a tank firing range or a flight line or a unit headquarters, I find young – and perhaps a few that are not so young – soldiers and airmen are taking this path of opportunity, seeking to better themselves and their place in life. In turn, these forward-thinking individuals are making the Kentucky National Guard a better organization by virtue of not just their education and knowledge, but that spark of enthusiasm, that hunger for *more*.

We are indeed getting more than we bargained for.

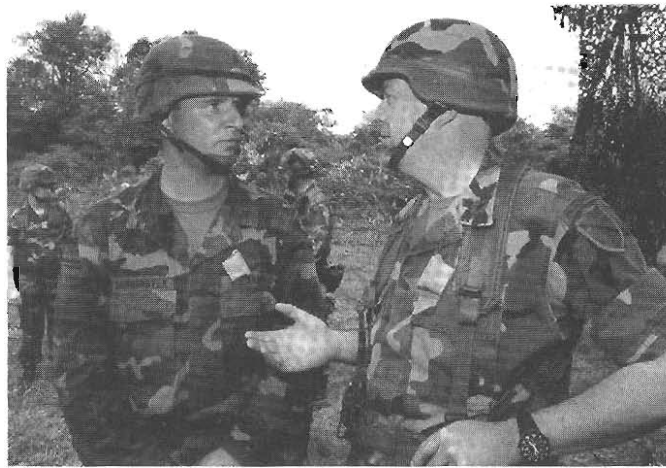
I cannot overstate the importance of the tuition assistance program to future generations of the Kentucky Guard. Without the seeds of inspiration, we cannot grow, and if we cannot grow, our chances for mission success diminish. The people of the Commonwealth have responded to the contributions that you have made, as well as your potential for the future, and we must

honor that trust.

In all the excitement that has taken place since tuition assistance has become available, however, it's easy to take things for granted. No other state has a program that matches ours and in these days of budget cuts and diminishing resources, we should be thankful. We need to recognize those who provided us with this opportunity. There were the officers and enlisted who first took action, turning an idea into reality and put together a workable plan; the National Guard

Association of Kentucky, who championed our cause by bringing our needs to the attention of our civilian leadership; the state senators and representatives who recognized a good thing when they saw it and provided the funding; Governor Paul E. Patton, our Commander in Chief, who signed the bill into law; and finally, the people who make up this great Commonwealth, whom we are sworn to serve and protect in times of war and peace.

To all of these people we owe a debt of gratitude, for without their support and consideration we would not be the National Guard we are today.



The Bluegrass Guard

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The National Guard Franchise

... by the people, of the people and for the people

comments by

Brig. Gen. Bruce Pieratt,
Assistant Adjutant General

Team-building is the mission.

Your local National Guard is founded "by the people" in the constitution and deeply rooted in the tradition of leaders forming fully manned units "of the people" (citizen soldiers) to be ready on call "for the people."

A modern day understanding of the National Guard is that the American public has granted franchises to communities and expects leaders to maintain fully-manned units/teams that are responsive when called upon. National Guard franchises differ from a regular Army unit and require leadership effectiveness and a scope of team building much different than the regular Army.

Individuals join the Guard because they want to be a citizen soldier. If they wanted to be a full-time soldier, they would have joined the regular service. Unlike full-time soldiers, the citizen soldier usually has

a long term caring commitment to their hometown National Guard and may only change units one or twice in a career.

Every unit and community should regularly go through a "soul searching" period to determine what quality and standard they really want their franchise to have. If the membership and the community really care, then the appointed key leaders prepare goals and a strategy to build full crews and teams, thus a fully manned franchise is first and foremost in their vision and commitment.

Over the years nearly every branch and every battalion has been at or near the top in team building success reflecting the best of Pride in Performance. But today is different. Once proud franchises are struggling to find a goal or strategy to meet the real mission of *team-building*. Where are the leaders who care enough and have the self-determination to rebuild the weak and broken franchises? Will they stand out by making their unit a fun, enjoyable, challenging and rewarding unit to be in?

A winning team-building strategy is crafted with a balance of realistic goals that the unit itself develops, accepts and all buy into. This can only take place after a gut-wrenching, soul searching session that develops agreement on the answers to these questions.

1. *Why would someone join our unit/franchise?*
2. *Why would a team member choose to get out of the unit?*
3. *Why wouldn't soldiers want to come to drill and be part of this franchise?*
4. *Does our franchise function with a proper balance of emphasis on each element of team-building such as training, recruiting, field exercises and meeting expectations of other headquarters?*

Leaders at all levels should be making the personal commitment to find the "franchise members" that can build the crew, squad, platoon, section and company around them and enjoy doing it with a passion.

Guardsmen come to the rescue

Kentucky aviators take time out from school to foil robbery

Ft. Rucker, Alabama—

Two Kentucky Army National Guard aviators apprehended a pair of purse snatchers in the parking lot of an Alabama Wal-Mart Nov. 11.

CW2 Allan Beghtol and CW2 Lance Nation were stopping in for last minute provisions for their Aviation Warrant Officer Advanced Class when they noticed two suspicious young men.

"They had walked four or five parking spaces past our car when we realized that something was happening," said Beghtol.

Suddenly the two suspects, with a distraught woman's purse in hand, darted toward the southern side of the Wal-Mart



parking lot. She instantaneously pursued the two young men, but they were running away too quickly.

"We saw that they were getting away, so we got back in our car and went after them. Once we got close to them we jumped out," said Nation.

As the two suspects crossed the railroad tracks adjacent to Wal-Mart, they noticed that Beghtol and Nation were chasing them. Nation tackled the first suspect, while Beghtol continued after the other.

"I chased down the second guy, and then held him down until the police came," Beghtol said.

"It is great that they (Beghtol and Nation) went after the two assailants. The chances of the Enterprise Police Department recovering the purse would have been

slim to none if it weren't for them," said Lt. Mike Lolley, an Enterprise Police Officer.

"Because I work with the Kentucky National Guard Counter Drug Force, something like this is no big deal. We weren't out to get medals or anything – we just saw two kids up to no good and chased them down," said Beghtol.

"If you see something wrong going on and you can stop it – then stop it. Don't just stand by and watch something happen. People need to be accountable. Even if you are on the sideline, you still have a responsibility to take action," said Nation.

According to Lolley, the two assailants have been charged with felony theft, which in Alabama can be punishable with a minimum of one year and a day in jail.

Who are these guys and why are they smiling?

Army Guard wins top honors at First Army competition

by Spc. Stephen Woolverton

Two Kentucky Army National Guard soldiers have been declared to be among the best.

Sgt. John A. Joyce Jr. and Sgt. 1st Class David P. Munden were respectively awarded the 1st U.S. Army Soldier and Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) of the year awards.

The Soldier & NCO of the Year competition is an annual event that challenges National Guard soldiers to put their knowledge to the test. The competition is comprised of the soldier's past accomplishments and his/her familiarity with military subject matter. Candidates go before a board of senior NCOs where they must present themselves with an upright military bearing while in a sharp Class "A" uniform. They are asked a wide range of questions spanning topics like first aid, military weapons, leadership and more.

Every year the soldiers of the Kentucky Army Guard are put to the test, but only two are picked to go onto the 1st Army to compete with soldiers from all over the eastern United States.

Joyce is the top tank gunner in the 2nd Battalion, 123rd Armor, a student of criminal justice at Murray State University, a scrap analyst for Mattel Corp. and an assistant scout master for Troop 112 in Benton, Ky. Somewhere in the middle of all of that John made the time to study for and win the title of the 1st U.S. Army Specialist of the year for 1998.

After being awarded Kentucky National Guard State Soldier of the Year honors, Joyce went on to 1st Army to compete against twenty-six individuals representing about 70% of the total army.

At the competition he had a rough start but didn't let that stop him.

"The first question that I was asked threw me for a loop," he explained. "In this competition it is better to give no answer than a wrong one, so I passed on that one and kept on going."

Putting a bad start behind him, he focused on the questions to come and won the 1st Army Specialist of the Year. After three years of achieving Brigade Soldier of the Year and two years of achieving State Soldier of the Year he said that winning at the 1st Army level "was a real surprise. After I had won at the state level I thought that was it."

Joyce admits that he is not the only one who deserves recognition.

"Tara (his wife), was very supportive of me. She didn't complain about the extra drills and she helped me study. She probably could answer all of the board questions herself."

Tara was rewarded for her efforts when she went with him to Washington D.C.

"She loved our trip to Washington. We got to tour all of the capital to include dinners with lots of interesting people."

Joyce believes that what is most important is the friendships he has made, but if you ask him about fond memories he'll tell you.

"The trip to Washington will always be one of the highlights of my time in the National Guard. Most people don't get a



photo: Sgt. Maj. Mike James



photo by Staff Sgt. Herbert Sanders

Sgt. John A. Joyce Jr. (above) and Sgt. 1st Class David P. Munden put Kentucky in the spotlight by winning the 1st U.S. Army Soldier and NCO of the Year awards.

chance to have two and three star generals waiting to shake your hand."

After it was all over Joyce went back to drill with his unit and it was business as usual.

"There is not a big to do about it right now. I think that they have something planned for next month but this is the way I like it. It was fun and challenging but this is what I joined the guard for."

Joyce plans on continuing to do his best for the National Guard in Co. C, 2nd Battalion 123rd Armor, making his way up the enlisted ranks and putting in 20 plus years.

"The National Guard is a choice that you make. It is your opportunity to serve your community and country."

1st Army NCO of the Year Sgt. 1st Class David P. Munden served for eight years in the Marine Corps before becoming a decorated member of the Kentucky Army National Guard's 198th Military Police Battalion. He currently works in Louisville, Ky. as a probation and parole officer, and somewhere along the way earned a Masters degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Louisville.

(continued on next page)

TOP GUN

Artillery officer sets standard for others

by Spc. John Kibler,
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

If you were to look up the word *dedication* in the dictionary, you'd probably see a picture of Capt. Brian Wertzler in the margin. A recent recipient of the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award for outstanding leadership abilities both within and outside the military, Wertzler – commander of Battery A, 1st Battalion 138th Field Artillery – attributes the needs of his soldiers as the driving force behind his success.

“My main concern is taking care of the soldiers I am responsible for training,” Wertzler said. “I am thankful for the recognition of my hard work, but I do what I do for the soldiers, not for awards.”

Wertzler has been in the military since 1989 when he joined the National Guard as a private. In 1991 he was selected to attend the Kentucky Military Academy and received his commission in 1992. Since then he has served in a variety of positions including fire support officer, recon survey officer, battery executive officer and fire direction officer for the battalion.

This is not the first award for which Wertzler has been nominated. He is also the current Kentucky Na-



tional Guard Junior Officer of the Year.

Though certainly busy with his military career, Wertzler doesn't limit himself to military endeavors. He coaches children's soccer and baseball teams and is active in his church.

Wertzler believes in education, and to this end he has already achieved a Bachelor's Degree from Eastern Kentucky University in Organizational Communication and is working on his Master's Degree in Defense Management through the American Military University.

“Soon sixty percent of the Army's field artillery will lie within the National Guard,” says Wertzler. “This means that there is a growing need to develop and maintain a strong, well-trained officer corps. I want to be part of that.”

“I have a lot of soldiers that I feel I am responsible for, and making sure they are properly trained and I am properly trained is my priority.”

His dedication to duty and to his soldiers receives the highest praise from his superiors.

“His work here has been outstanding,” said Lt. Col. Lonnie Culver, executive officer of the 138th Field Artillery Brigade. “In my opinion, he is the best captain in the National Guard.”

(continued from page 4)

Munden considers the award bestowed upon him by the Army a “great honor” but would like to see more active participation.

“I would like to see more NCO's step up and take this challenge,” he said. “It is a good tool for testing your capabilities as well as a good way to gain knowledge.”

Even though the competition was tough, Munden went to the state finals the year before and has learned from his mistakes.

“There were a few questions that I had some trouble with, but I had gone over what had been asked last year. I believe that helped me out.”

Munden did not do this all by himself though. He had his wife backing him up all the way.

“Ginger has been very supportive in my National Guard career as well as in this competition. She has given me the quiet time to study and was there to make sure that my uniform looked good.”

His unit was there to help him as well, recognizing his achievements and supplying him with encouragement and useful study materials.

Munden's future plans involve continued service in the National Guard and furthering his education.

“I plan on continuing to serve my country and look forward to promotion. In the fall I start work on my doctorate and go on to teach after I retire.”

The Snow of '98

*Kentucky Guard troops
combined forces to bring hope,
aid to fellow citizens*

by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom

Mayor Kenneth Isaacs had a serious problem. One of the worst snowstorms to ever hit the state of Kentucky had literally shut down the town of McKee and he was doing everything he could to make sure that the people he'd sworn to serve were being cared for. But some things, it seemed were just beyond his power.

"In one of our apartment buildings we had an elderly resident who was on oxygen," he explained, "and the bottle had run out. We'd put a call into Patty A. Clay hospital in Richmond for some help, but with the weather the way it was, nobody could get through. We were all pretty worried about what we should do ... and then here came a Kentucky Guard humvee up the road."

In the humvee were enough oxygen

bottles to see the infirmed resident through the crisis.

"They saved a life that day," Isaacs said. "I don't have enough good things to say about the Guard. They were really good to us."

Such scenes were repeated in more than half of Kentucky's 120 counties this winter when record snowfalls struck the Commonwealth, stranding thousands of people and putting lives at risk throughout the state. More than 1,100 Kentucky National Guard soldiers and airmen responded to the emergency, bringing aid and comfort wherever they could.

Meeting the basic human needs became the focus in the hardest hit areas. With snow drifts reported as high as three feet in some counties, blocking roads and downing

A Kentucky Guard UH-60 Blackhawk (top) prepares for another relief mission. *photo by Spc. John Kibler, 133rd MPAD*
Gov. Paul E. Patton (right) in his role as command-in-chief of the Kentucky Guard, surveys a road cleared by combat engineers.

Tech. Sgt. Michael Newman and **Staff Sgt. Ralph Duke** (left) of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Flight, provided vital communications links in isolated McCreary County.

photos by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom

power lines, conditions deteriorated to the point where survival was a serious concern.

In the first few hours of the crisis a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter from the 63rd Aviation Group was dispatched to rescue a kidney dialysis patient stranded in his rural home by high drifts and fallen trees. On the ground Guard members performed similar missions countless times, their humvees a familiar sight on the stark white landscape, transporting not only medical patients and victims of the storm, but emergency workers, medical personnel and law enforcement officials.

Anything and everything in the Kentucky Guard inventory that could get through the heavy snow was put to use. In addition to the 200 humvees that were on the road, more than fifty tactical wreckers and heavy trucks were called in to unclog traffic jams caused by those desperate to get to shelter.

But even staying at home carried some risk. At one point an estimated 50,000 households were without power. Twenty-



two armories were opened up as shelters, while two dozen power generators were brought online to run water plants and provide power to shelters affected by the blackout. Meanwhile, combat engineers from the 201st and 206th Engineer Battalions joined forces with the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Civil Engineer Flight, using chainsaws to clear away fallen tree limbs and debris and in turn speed up the restoration of power.

"We couldn't have gotten our equipment in without the Guard's help," said Reed Hall, district manager for Kentucky Utilities in McCreary County. "They made it possible to bring bucket trucks and linemen. Things would have been much

(continued on next page)



DISPATCHES FROM THE (COLD) FRONT

sent by Spc. Stephen Woolverton

At the Richmond National Guard Armory Captain David Zornes took charge of the snowstorm relief effort for 12 counties south of Fayette and north of Tennessee.

"We have more than 200 soldiers from transportation, military police and engineer units activated to assist in the relief effort," says Cpt. Zornes.

Zornes' troops busied themselves clearing roads of snow and fallen trees, taking supplies to people stranded in outlying areas, providing shelter for stranded motorists and transporting patients to and from medical facilities.

"On this trip we are going to pick up supplies at the EOC, some kerosene at Jack's BP station and a couple that had to spend last night at the Econo-Lodge," says Sgt. Larry Foley from the 2123rd Transportation. "Then we will distribute the supplies and kerosene and drop off the couple at their house."

That couple was Ron Stewart and Betty Jo Bruce from Poosie Ridge who had to be evacuated from their home.

"After the first night of snow we lost our heating and our electricity," says Stewart. "We had spent two days going to the car to get warm before the sheriff came out to get us."

Heath Estep and his family of Poosie Ridge never lost their heating or electricity but the loss of transportation was hard on them.

"My wife and I have spent the last two days without diapers for my two year-old son, Zayne," says Estep. "We're very glad that the Guard could get out here with these diapers and baby food."



(continued from previous page) worse without them."

In some parts of the state conditions were so bad that air support had to be expanded. OH-58 Kiowa and Blackhawk helicopters flew search and rescue missions wherever ground support was unavailable, risking white out conditions to fly from house to house in the more remote regions, bringing food and supplies to residents isolated by the heavy snow.

"Our main concern was in meeting with all the families we could, to make sure everyone had food and water and proper medical attention," said Lt. Col. Donnie Storm, who oversaw the relief effort in eastern Kentucky. "Getting medicine and proper health care to those who were stranded was our main priority. It took awhile, but we were able to get to everyone who needed help."

The Kentucky Air Guard provided essential support in the relief effort, bringing on dozens of members from its 123rd Mission Support Flight, Communications Flight, Special Tactics Flight, and Security Forces Squadron. Airmen established and maintained much-needed communications networks, cleared public rights of way, delivered medicine to stranded residents and patrolled the interstate highways with local law enforcement personnel.

Governor Paul E. Patton accompanied Kentucky National Guard troops on a road-clearing mission in McCreary County where he witnessed firsthand the conditions suffered by local residents.

"Our people are having a tough time here and the National Guard is putting forth an extraordinary effort," he said during a break in the work. "I'm proud of what I'm seeing and I know everyone here is grateful for their efforts."

By the time the snow melted away at least 40 counties would sustain more than \$13 million worth of damages. The loss of eleven lives would be eventually be attributed to the storm.

Back in the besieged town of McKee, Jackson County resident Marie Rader echoed Governor Patton's remarks.

"Being in a rural area we sometimes feel forgotten," she said. "Things were pretty bad, but it's good to have people like the National Guard to come in and help us get through something like this."

Staff Sgt. Russ Haselwood and Sgt. Larry Foley (right) of the 2123rd Transportation Co. refill the kerosene supply for a grateful Madison County resident.

Pvt. Robert Gadd from Det. 1, 2123rd Transportation Co. (below) assists a Madison County resident in removing a fallen tree from a public road.

photos by Spc. Stephen Woolverton



Annual Training

A look at life in



Sgt. Richard Buckner, Co. D, 1/149th Infantry (left) pulls maintenance on his .50 caliber machine gun.



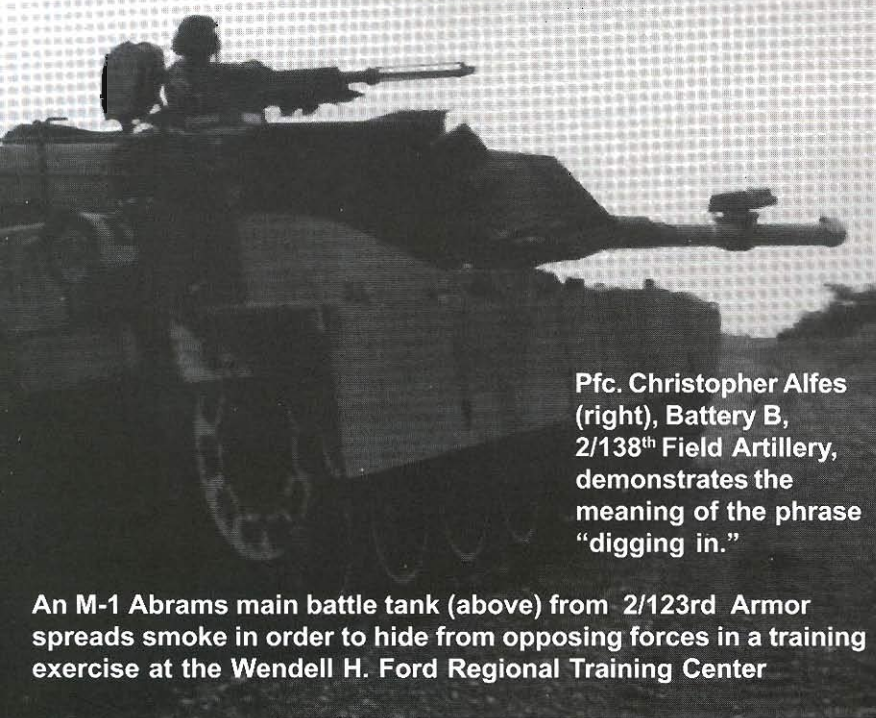
Medics Sgt. Donald O'Brien and Sgt. Richard Cochran (below left) monitor Spc. Jeremy Porter while training with HHB, 2/138th Field Artillery at Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

M-60 machinegunner Pfc. Matthew Guillaume (below) Battery B, 2/138th Field Artillery, sets up his fields of fire.

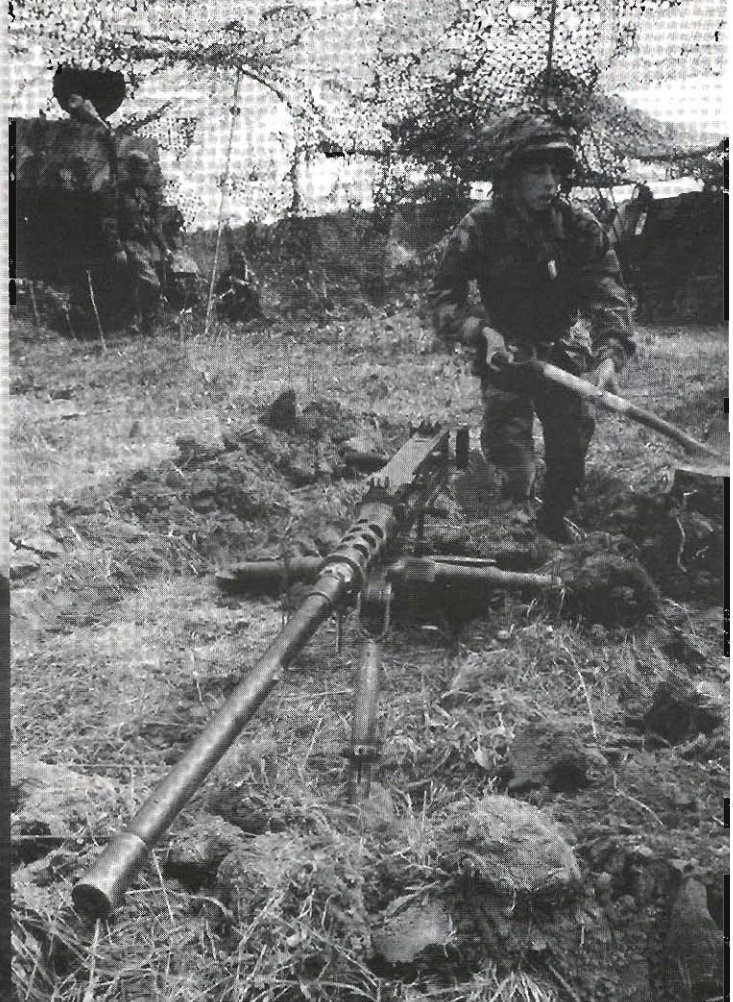


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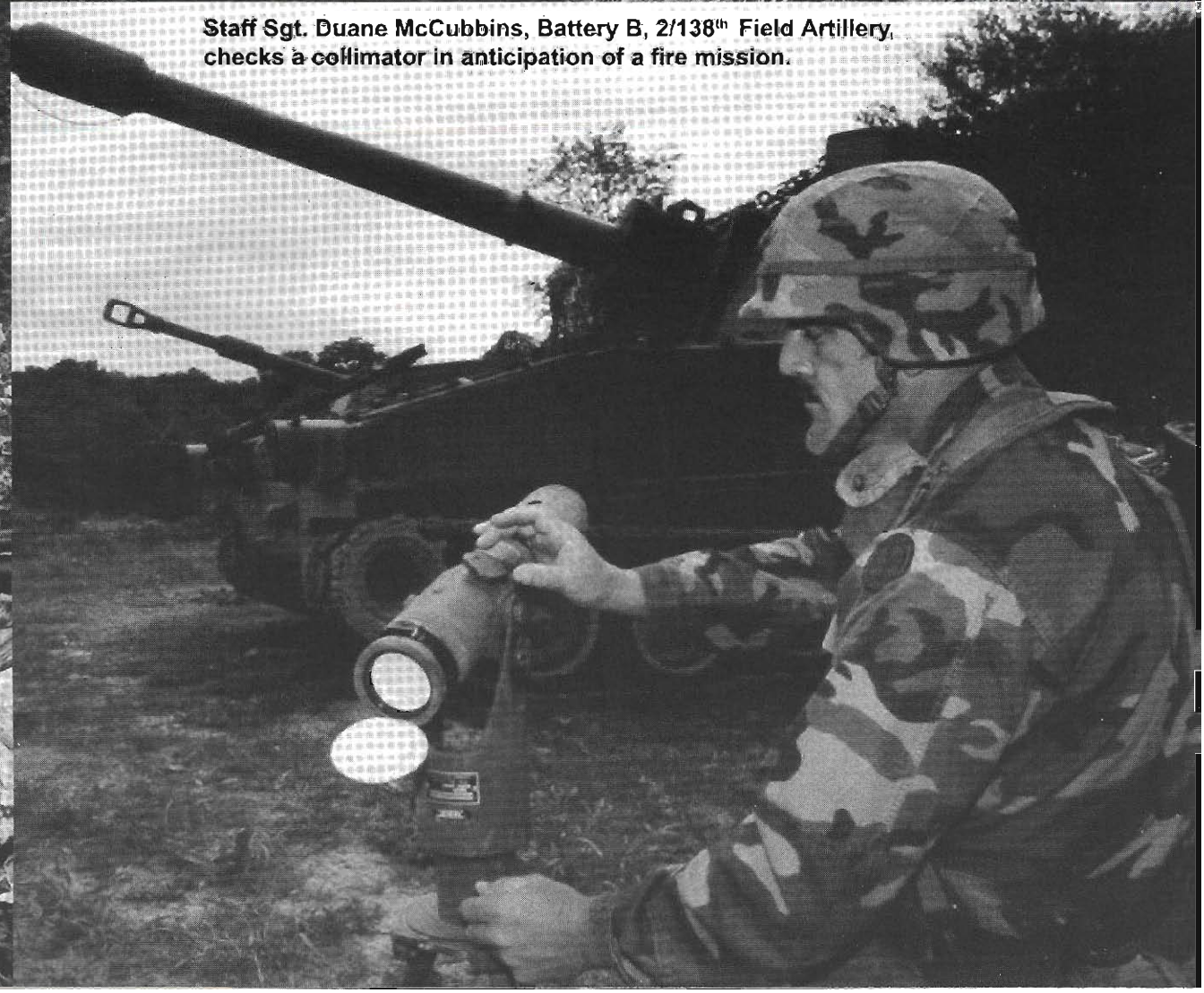
the Kentucky Guard



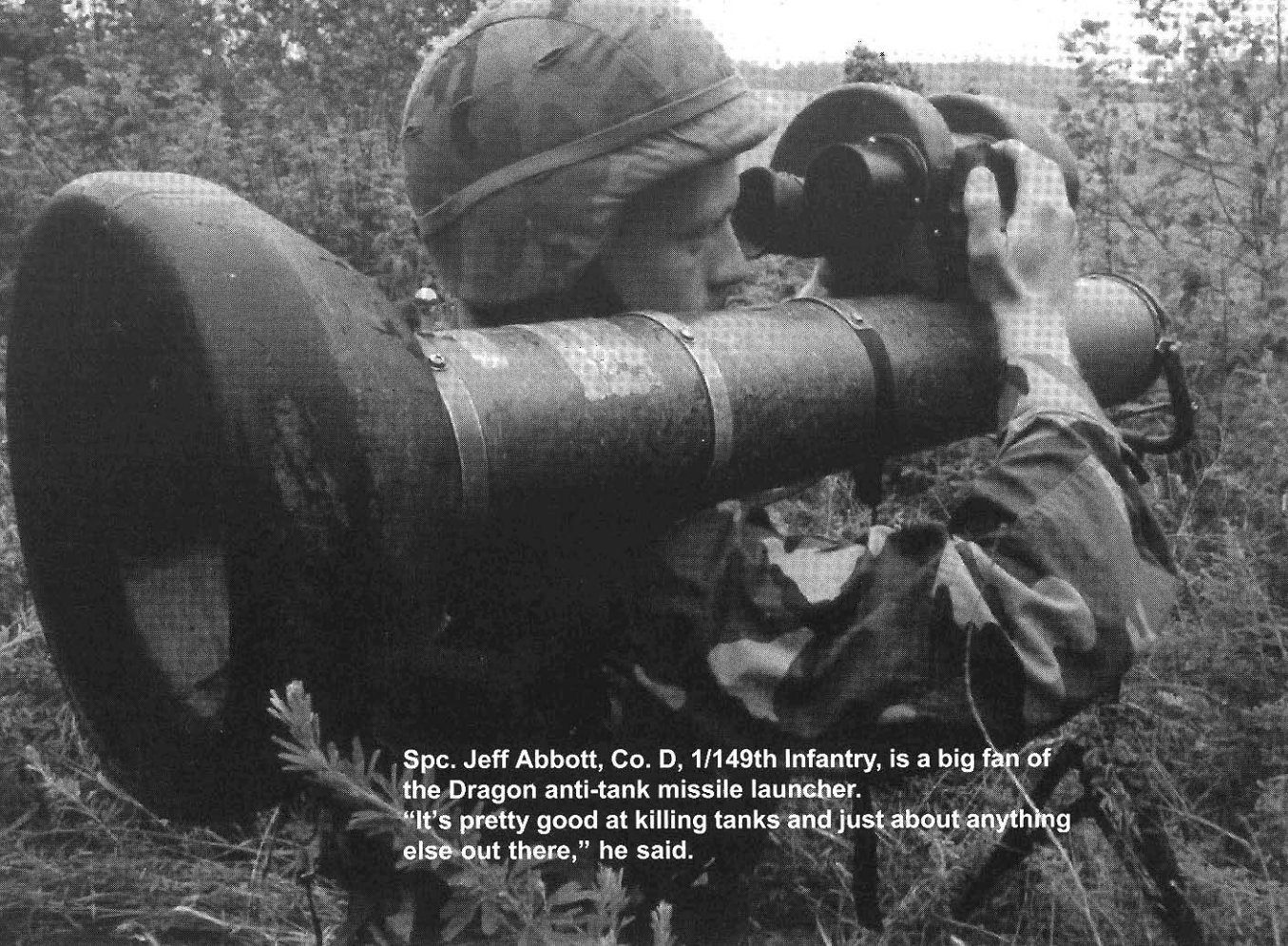
Pfc. Christopher Alfes (right), Battery B, 2/138th Field Artillery, demonstrates the meaning of the phrase "digging in."



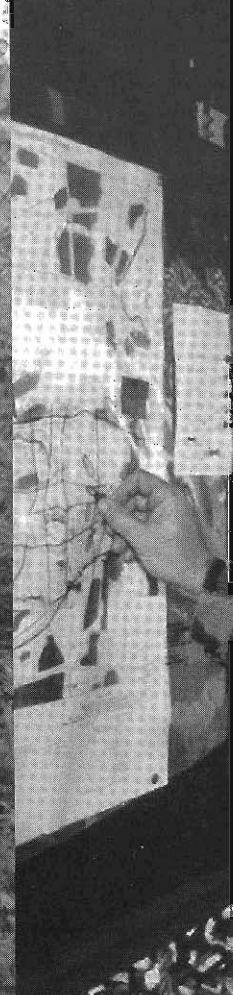
An M-1 Abrams main battle tank (above) from 2/123rd Armor spreads smoke in order to hide from opposing forces in a training exercise at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center



Staff Sgt. Duane McCubbins, Battery B, 2/138th Field Artillery, checks a collimator in anticipation of a fire mission.



Spc. Jeff Abbott, Co. D, 1/149th Infantry, is a big fan of the Dragon anti-tank missile launcher. "It's pretty good at killing tanks and just about anything else out there," he said.

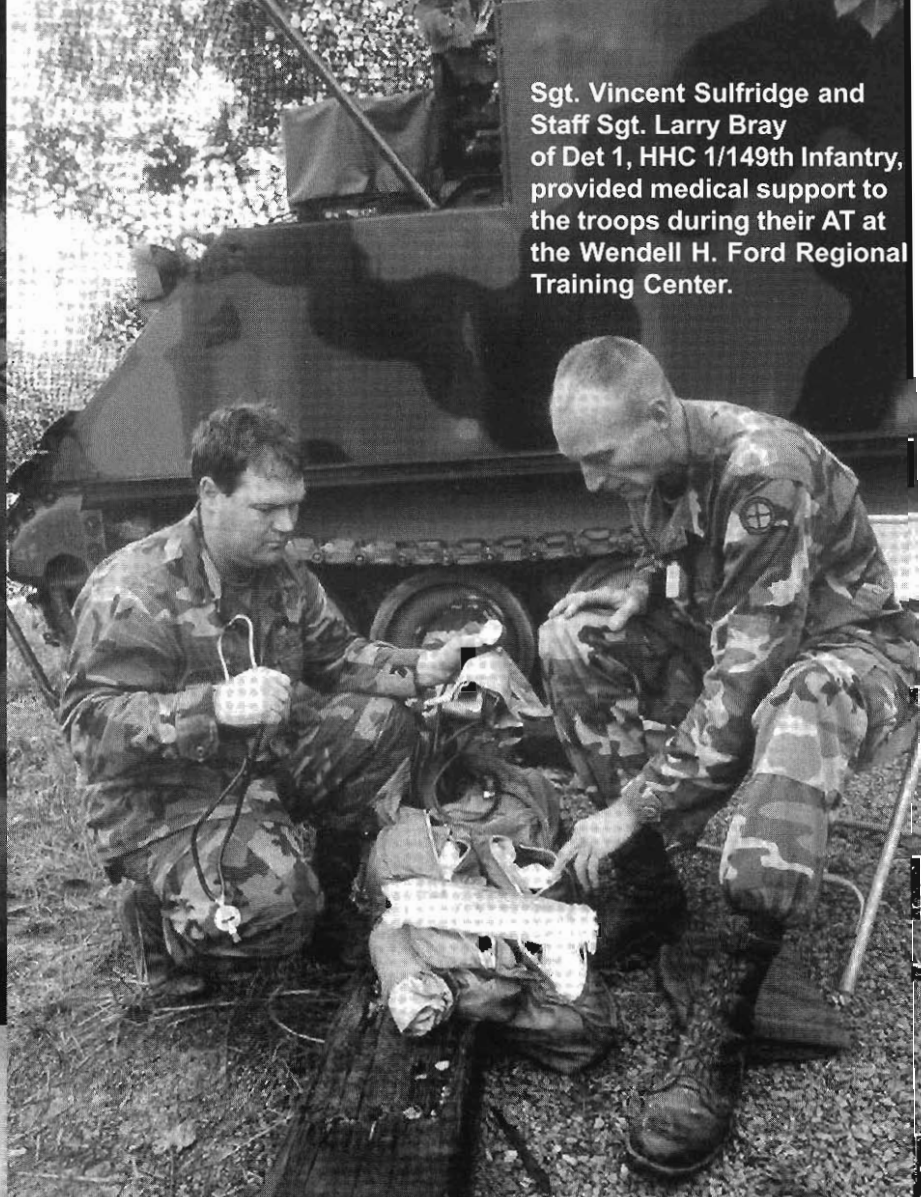


The M-203 grenade launcher was a constant companion for Spc. Charles Logsdon (bottom) during his training cycle with Battery B, 2/138th Field Artillery

Staff Sgt. Lewis Branstutter tracks the action for the 1/149th Infantry.



Sgt. Vincent Sulfridge and Staff Sgt. Larry Bray of Det 1, HHC 1/149th Infantry, provided medical support to the troops during their AT at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center.



Staff Sgt. Barry Rice and Spc. Deanna Brown of the 438th Military Police Co. helped keep traffic running smoothly at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center.



Spc. Bobby Downs, HHB, 138th Field Artillery Brigade (Meteorological Section), launches a weather balloon prior to a fire mission.



Nuevos Horizontes '98

Training for war, mission of peace

story and photos by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom

When *El Niño* brought on the heavy rains, Kentucky Army National Guard combat engineers brought out the heavy equipment.

It seems like a typical deployment at first. Troops living in GP medium tents, getting decent meals, proper medical attention and plenty of hard work to do. Oh, it's hot and humid and there are some bugs to deal with, but it isn't too bad. It could be Ft. Stewart, or the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center, for that matter.

But then come the rains. Then the mudslides and washed out roads. Oh, and don't forget the language barrier, and lack of a reliable infrastructure and, oh, man, that sun sure is bright

Welcome to Ecuador and Joint Task Force Esmeraldas, the Kentucky National Guard's first ever combined forces overseas deployment, operating in support of Nuevos Horizontes ("New Horizons") '98.

The mission sounds basic enough. Take a thousand or so troops and build five schools and a couple of clinics and latrines for some villages in South America. What could be simpler?

Well

First of all, you have to plan out how to get your people there, where they're going to stay and how long you need to keep them. What kind of people do you need? What kind do you have? Questions, questions, questions

For the first time Kentucky Air National Guard personnel would team up with Kentucky Army Guard soldiers in an overseas operation. However, having cut their teeth by working together on domestic relief missions during the flood of 1997 and last winter's snow storm, it seemed that the marriage of blue and green isn't going to be a problem.

Nuevos Horizontes is the largest overseas deployment of Kentucky Guard troops since the Persian Gulf War. More than 1,300 airmen and soldiers are being rotated through a five month period, joining various other active and reserve units from the Air Force, Army and Marines. A large portion of the Kentucky troops were transported down south via Kentucky Air National Guard C-130H transports, in much the same fashion they might be deployed under wartime conditions.

Which, you see, is the main point of this mission.

According to Kentucky Adjutant General John R. Groves Jr., missions like Nuevos Horizontes give Kentucky Guardsmen a taste of what could come if they ever had to go to war.

"Our primary objective is to train soldiers and airmen," said

Groves. "Nuevos Horizontes not only provides an excellent opportunity to refine individual military professional skills, it also allows us to mobilize and deploy from the United States into a remote environment while helping to improve the quality of life of the people of Ecuador."

A grand by-product of the operation in Ecuador is the humanitarian mission everyone eventually focuses on. Five schools, three clinics and four desperately needed latrines are to be built by combat engineers from the 201st and 206th Engineer battalions, as well as airmen from the 123rd Engineer Squadron. These structures, everyone is told, will do a great deal to bolster the living conditions endured by the citizens of Ecuador, and in turn eventually help them help themselves.

It's hard to ignore the conditions under which the residents of Esmeraldas Province exist. The city of Esmeraldas, for instance, is suffering from the effects of *El Niño*; the collapsed sewer system causes raw human waste to cover portions of the streets, landslides block essential roads coming into town and homes disappear from the face of the earth.

The situation isn't much better in the villages northward. In the coastal hamlet of Las Peñas, employment is nonexistent and villagers exist mainly on a diet of fish, which they catch daily and dry on makeshift racks exposed to the elements. The only source of fresh water is a community well in need of improvement. The local store has sparse offerings of flour, beans and other essentials, but little else.

Only one or two houses have electricity, there is no cable television or internet, no shopping mall or playground. No hospital, fire department, or police station.

One thing in plenty of supply are friendly faces. Everywhere there are children, some shy, some not so shy, all smiling and curious about the Kentuckians in their midst. The adults are a bit quieter, sharing their children's curiosity but holding back with a subdued dignity that belies their situation. Life here is hard, but it is home, after all, and that makes it good.

"It's amazing what they don't have here," said Staff Sgt. Mary Thurman, who accompanied the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron to Las Peñas. A school teacher in the civilian world, Thurman has been moved by what she's seen and feels strongly about the importance of the mission she's committed herself toward.

"The school they use now has no floor, no roof or doors." Her face shows her concern as she speaks, reflecting her determination to get the job done. "When we finish, these children will be better

equipped to learn.”

Just getting to the job sites is a challenge in itself. The main supply route, or MSR, is a rough gravel road that runs alongside the coastline. Several portions of this road – the only land access to the construction sites – are obliterated by landslides due to the recent rains, forcing Kentucky Guard planners to rethink things; a backup plan is to run the convoys of humvees and tactical trucks along the beach at low tide. Travel time for the sixty or so miles is anywhere from six to twelve hours, depending on how many flat tires you get. And don’t forget that you have to synchronize your trip with the ebb and flow of the tide.

It’s not a perfect plan, but it works.

Another alternative is to load vehicles and troops on LCUs (landing craft, utility) borrowed from the U.S. Army at Panama. The LCUs travel along the coast and then upriver to access the base camps. This cuts travel time to about three or four hours, depending on the weather, of course.

Such complications, well, complicate things. Kentucky Army Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters originally tasked with medical evacuation are called in to assist with transporting essential equipment and personnel in short order. The flights are relatively short – the six hour drive to Base Camp Bluegrass, for instance, translates into thirty minutes as the parrot flies – and aviators find themselves busy moving people and cargo between the port and camps.

Nuevos Horizontes presents plenty of such challenges.

There are the base camps to establish, supplies to be brought in, construction schedules to keep up with. Base Camp Bluegrass, near the Ecuadoran village of San Francisco, is flooded and has to be reinforced with gravel and concrete before the troops can move in. When they finally do, the camp becomes a microcosm of a Kentucky township, complete with state of the art communications, a water purification system – courtesy of the 217th Quartermaster Detachment – and a medical clinic manned by members of Detachment 5, State Area Command.

The camp even has its own police force. Troops from the 198th Military Police Battalion and the 123rd Security Forces Squadron work with Ecuadoran defense forces to keep everything safe, but the largest commotion heard is the high-pitched whine of the occasional helicopter and the sound of work being done.

According to 1st Lt. Brian Demers, commander of Co. C, 201st Engineers, the problems facing the troops shouldn’t be a big surprise.

“The obstacles are just part of the mission. We have to be able to react and overcome those obstacles.”

“It’s good training,” he adds with a smile.

“This is some of the best training in the world ...” has become the catch phrase of this exercise. Oh, there’s some complaining every now and then, mostly about the heat or the travel conditions, but everyone is upbeat, enthusiastic about being involved in a project with the scope and depth of Nuevos Horizontes.

“This is it. This is the ultimate training,” says Maj. Bob Hayter, logistics officer for the task force. “This is the first time a lot of us have had the opportunity to work in an unimproved theater. You can’t depend on anything here. You have to provide your own support, you

Kentucky Guard UH-60 Blackhawks proved essential in solving the transportation problems encountered by the task force.



have to make things happen that you normally wouldn’t do in the United States. If you break something you can’t just go down to the hardware store and get a new one. It’s been a real challenge for me and everyone else here.”

Senior Master Sgt. Tim O’Mahoney agrees. As part of the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron, he’s been integral in everything from the establishment of the base camp at Las Peñas to organizing the construction teams.

“All of this follows our wartime skill, as far as what we’d be doing if we went to war,” he says. “It teaches our folks what combat conditions are like. If we had to do this any other way, well, there’s no way to duplicate this. No way.”

With the downsizing of the U.S. military and the ever-increasing role the reserve component forces are playing in world events, there is no question that missions like Nuevos Horizontes play an invaluable role in preparing the troops for the real thing. Problems come up and solutions are found and everyone is glad that the current mission is a peacetime one.

In contrast, however, to all the talk

about valuable training and deployment planning and maintaining construction schedules, it’s hard to escape the human nature of the mission in Ecuador. Amidst the heat and poverty and the lack of modern conveniences – and necessities – everyone takes for granted back home, emotions run warm when villagers smile and give the occasional thumbs up to the Guardsmen working on the building sites.

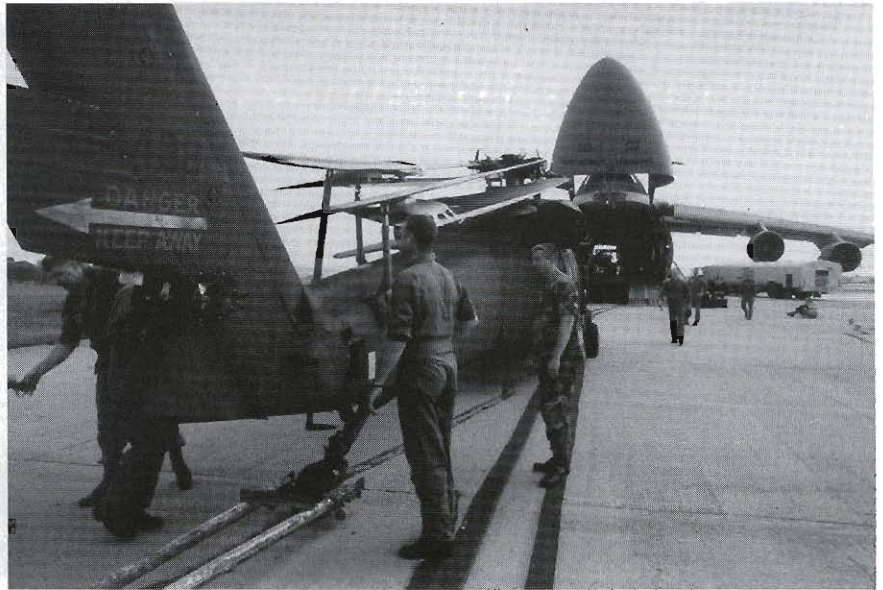
There is something special going on in the rain forests of Esmeraldas Province, no doubt about it.

“I’ve been to many countries and visited many projects,” says Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, who, as Chief of the National Guard Bureau is the top ranking National Guardsman in the nation. “But I haven’t seen any project where I’ve been more

moved than this one. When we saw the poverty here and the need for education, it made me aware of the fact that the Kentucky Guard is doing the right thing. They’re doing the right thing for this country, and they’re doing the right thing for the United States.”

“I believe,” he adds quietly, “Kentucky is doing the Lord’s work.”





Nuevos Horizontes '98

A training mission with a message of hope.



(clockwise, from top left)

Deployment Combat engineers load heavy equipment on a barge for shipment to the port of Esmeraldas, while Army Guard aviators load their UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters onto an Air Force C-5A transport.

Survival in paradise In a land of few jobs and even less money, fishing is a necessary way of life for the villagers of Las Peñas.

Home away from home Base Camp Bluegrass was both home and headquarter for hundreds of Kentucky Guard troops who served in Esmeraldas Province.

Blessed are the peacemakers Chaplain Patrick Dolan prays with those who've just arrived and those who are about to go home.

photos by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom





(clockwise, from top left)

A concrete effort Sgt. Herbert Graham, Co. D, 201st Engineer Battalion, sets block while Spc. George Qualls and Sgt. William Scott prepare more for the school they are building in the village of San Francisco.

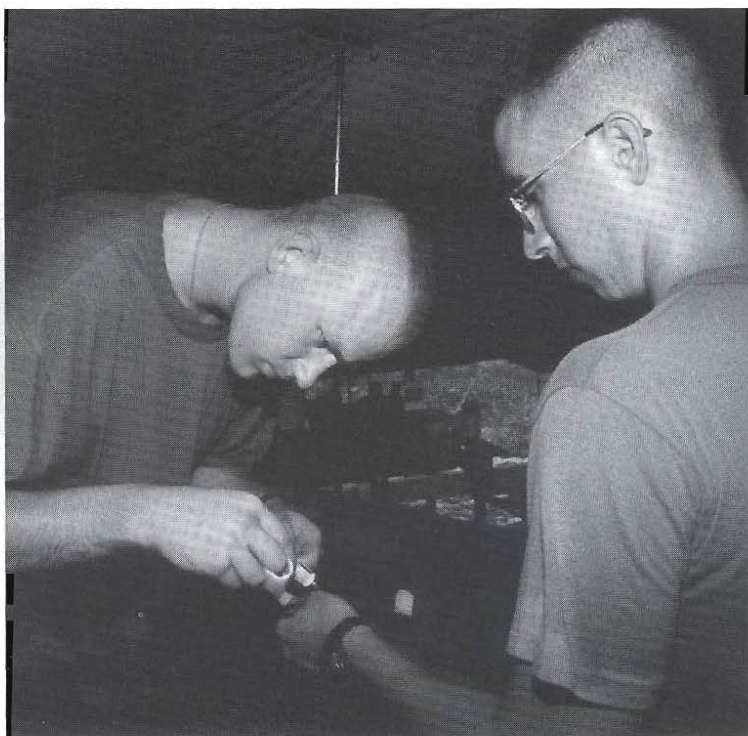
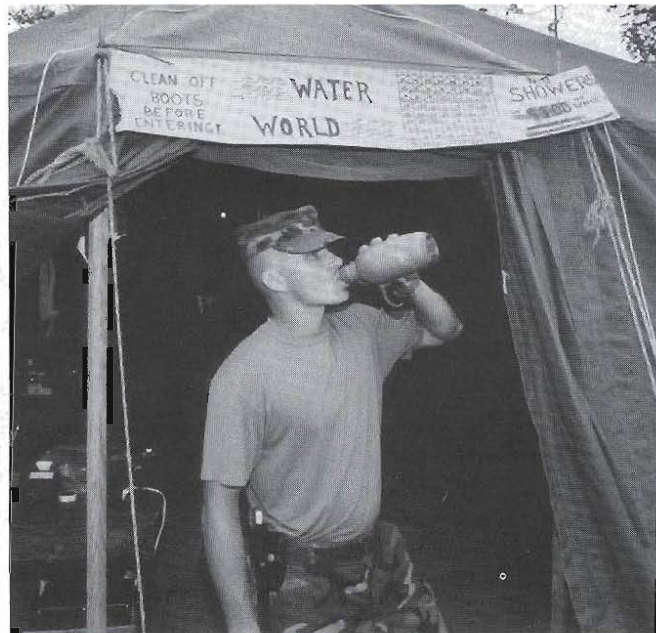
Cooking up cornbread Staff Sgt. Gene Smith gets ready to feed the troops.

Teamwork Spc. Jason Early, Sgt. Steven Asbury and Spc. Brandon McNeese mix up some much-needed cement.

MPs on duty 1st Lt. Charles Hill coordinates security issues with the Ecuadoran Army's Mauricio Mendoza.



Photos by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom



Kentuckians at their best

(Clockwise, from top left)

A visit from the chief Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, Chief of National Guard Bureau, talks with Kentucky Air Guard Staff Sgt. Mary Thurman about progress on the clinic being built at Las Peñas.

Living on the equator Troops had to monitor themselves, and each other, for signs of dehydration and make sure to consume plenty of water.

Taking care of the troops Spc. Robert Kirkland, Co. C, 103rd Forward Support Battalion, provides medical support for personnel working out of Base Camp Bluegrass.

Heading for home Troops completing a two-week rotation in Ecuador load onto a Kentucky Air National Guard C-130 transport headed for the Bluegrass state.

Another day begins Staff Sgt. Rick Hackett and Chief Warrant Officer David Maddox prep their Blackhawk helicopter prior to a full day of missions.

photos by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom



Kentucky Army National Guard officer remembered for his ability to help others

story and photos by
Staff Sgt. David W. Altom

photo by John Flavell, Ashland Daily Independent

Kentucky Army National Guard Maj. Robert S. Hacker was buried with full military honors one week after being killed in a vehicle accident while on duty in the South American nation of Ecuador.

Hacker - of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 201st Engineer Battalion - died on July 8th of injuries he received when the vehicle in which he was traveling ran off a road and overturned in Esmeraldas Province. Hacker was accompanied by a U.S. Army soldier and an Ecuadorian Army officer when the accident occurred.

A member of the Kentucky Army National Guard for 18 years and a veteran of numerous overseas deployments to Latin America and the Caribbean, Hacker was in Ecuador as part of the command element for Nuevos Horizontes ("New Horizons"), the Kentucky National Guard's humanitarian relief mission there. Hacker was the operations officer for the exercise task force, supervising the fielding of troops and overseeing the numerous projects.

The timing of Hacker's death was as ironic as it was tragic. A member of the mission's duration team, he had been in Ecuador since April and was scheduled to come home the weekend following his death. He died on the eve of his son's seventh birthday.

In addition to his overseas missions, Hacker was well-known for the role he played in responding to the needs of the community in which he lived during numerous emergencies and natural disasters. He was awarded the Kentucky State Active Duty Ribbon on three separate occasions for coming to the aid of Kentuckians struck down in their time of need.



**Maj. Robert Stephen Hacker
1962-1998**



"As a Kentucky Army National Guard Engineer, Robert Hacker had a unique reputation," said Kentucky Adjutant General John R. Groves. "Although his mission was to train soldiers for war, he will best be remembered for his intense interest in helping others less fortunate.

Whether it was directing relief efforts during floods or snowstorms in Kentucky, building an orphanage on the Caribbean island of Dominica, or a medical clinic in Ecuador, Robert Hacker was committed to helping to improve the lives of his fellow man. He was an outstanding professional Army officer and a devoted husband and father. He was our friend and he will be missed."

Members of both the Kentucky Air and Army National Guard turned out to honor Hacker's memory. Airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing served as his color guard, while combat engineers from his home unit fired a 21-gun salute. The sound of bagpipes playing "My Old Kentucky Home" filled the

air as the flag-draped coffin was laid to rest.

A memorial fund has been established in the name of Maj. Hacker by his family. Proceeds from the fund will be used to purchase textbooks for the schools he helped build while serving in Ecuador. Donations can be sent to:

The Major Robert Hacker Memorial Fund
c/o SFC Fitzpatrick
HQ 201st Engineer Battalion
2519 Lexington Ave.
Ashland, KY 41101

Cann, Mays show their stuff during air assault course



Daniel Mays and Mark Cann made their mark when they attended the Army's famed Air Assault School at Ft. Campbell a while back.

Spc. Mays, a member of Co. B, 1/149th Infantry, was selected from a field of 84 classmates as the honor graduate for the course.

Cann, a member of the 20th Special Forces Group, was christened the *Road March Champion* of his class with an overall time of 2:06 during the gruelling 12 mile trek. He is currently an officer candidate, attending classes with the 238th Regiment.

For your information

The Kentucky National Guard Inspector General's Office is located at 1121 Louisville Road, Frankfort, Kentucky. Office personnel consist of:

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Anyone may submit a complaint, allegation, or request for assistance to an Inspector General concerning matters of Army or Air National Guard interest. Soldiers are encouraged to first discuss complaints, allegations, or requests for assistance with their commander or chain-of-command. However, if a soldier does not wish to do so, the complaint, etc., will be accepted unless specific redress procedures are available.

Army makes changes in uniform regulations

Some changes have been made to Army Regulation 670-1, which governs the wear and appearance of Army uniforms and insignia. We thought we'd give you a quick rundown on some of the more significant developments:

physical fitness uniform (PFU)

The PFU may now be worn both on and off the military installation when authorized by the commander. It may be worn in transit between your quarters and your duty station. Soldiers may wear all or part of the PFU off post when authorized by the commander.

backpacks and shoulder bags

Commercial rucksacks, gym bags or like articles may be worn over the shoulder while in uniform as long as all items are black with no logos.

For more information on these and other changes in the regulations regarding the Army uniform, contact your unit administrator or supervisor.



Tuition assistance program keeps going strong

by Spc. Stephen Woolverton

Money may make the world go around, but it's a good education that'll put you in the money. It's common knowledge that a college degree is often the deciding factor on whether or not a person can even apply for a position. Coupled with the growing technical nature of the military, that means those soldiers and airmen without degrees or technical school diplomas could find themselves behind the times in both the military as well as the civilian world.

That's why it's important you know that the Kentucky National Guard offers tuition assistance to its members, thanks to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority and the citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

The requirements are easy enough to meet. You need to be a member of the Kentucky Guard in good standing; that is, your unit commander has to certify you passed the most recent physical training test, you meet the height/weight standard, and attendance standards for the past 12 months from the date of application to include no unsatisfactory performance or absences-without leave.

The program is good for any *state-funded* college, university or vocational-technical institute. Whether you're interested in getting a degree in psychology, a teaching certificate or training as an engine mechanic, there's something in the program for you.

"The program is very successful," said Lt. Col. John Roth, Kentucky National Guard education officer. "We've got great cooperation between all our units and the schools our people are attending. The program currently has about \$1 million programmed for use this year, so even with the recent increase in tuition rates, we're able to support all of our undergraduate

"The Army College Fund and the GI Bill are not considered tuition assistance, so they're not deducted from the amount of the award."

Roth encouraged applicants to be extra careful in filling out their applications and to send it all in as soon as possible.

Applications that are late or containing incorrect information cause lots of problems," he said.

"Just the stroke of a pen can change someone's life. We're dealing with at least 6,000 applications in our system, and the staff can't catch all of the mistakes. Attention to detail is a critical factor."

One of the most common errors is in checking a couple of simple blocks.

"Applicants need to remember that when they indicate they are receiving tuition assistance from other sources, the award will be reduced accordingly. It's extremely important to remember that GI Bill is not tuition assistance."

The most frequently asked question about eligibility for the program is whether or not a new enlistee can receive an award. The

answer is that in order to receive tuition assistance a new enlistee must have completed basic training.

For more information on the Kentucky National Guard tuition assistance program, contact your unit administrator or call Lt. Col. John Roth at 502-564-8550.

A tale of three tankers



Crew #65 has something in common other than a love of running their M-1 Abrams main battle tank through its paces. Mark Patterson is an engineering student at the Jefferson Community College in Louisville; Christopher Connors is a nursing major at Morehead State University and Nathaniel Stephens is a middle school education major at Elizabethtown Community College. All three crewmen are with Bravo Company, 1/123rd Armor and all attend college courtesy of the Kentucky National Guard tuition assistance program. (photo by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom)

requests so far."

An enthusiastic proponent of the tuition assistance program, Roth offered some tips geared toward making life easier for the prospective student.

For instance, contrary to popular myth, *the tuition award program can be used in conjunction with the Army College Fund or the Montgomery GI Bill.*

123rd Airlift Wing awarded 15th AF Reserve Forces Trophy

By 2nd Lt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing has been named the top reserve unit in the 15th Air Force, receiving the numbered command's 1997 Reserve Forces Trophy.

Col. Michael Harden, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, accepted the award from 15th Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Charles Robertson during a banquet held June 11 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

The 15th Air Force is one of twenty numbered commands that divide the country's Air Force assets into geographic regions or functional specialties.

There are twenty-nine Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units in the 15th Air Force.

"This distinguished honor is a testament to the dedication of the men and women of the Kentucky Air National Guard," said Brig. Gen. John R. Groves, Kentucky's adjutant general.

"At a time when our nation has come to rely on the Army and Air National Guard to fulfill its military obligations across the globe, the 123rd Airlift Wing has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to accomplish any task, no matter how demanding.

"Indeed, this award recognizes the 123rd Airlift Wing as one of our country's premier military organizations."

The wing received the trophy for its consistently high standards of excellence in everything from flight safety to mission accomplishment.

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1997, members of the Kentucky Air Guard participated in dozens of stateside and overseas deployments, including two major contingency operations that provided airlift services in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Saudi Arabia.

Back home, wing members responded in record numbers when unprecedented flooding hit the state, offering vital security, communications and medical skills to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

They also organized Thunder Over Louisville, one of only two marquee events nationwide honoring the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force.

"This is one more award that indicates the outstanding performance of the men and women of the Kentucky Air



The 123rd Airlift Wing has become one of the most decorated organizations in the Air National Guard.

National Guard," said Brig. Gen. Verna Fairchild, Kentucky's assistant adjutant general for air.

"I am extremely proud of all our people and the leadership of the 123rd Airlift Wing, especially Wing Commander Col. Michael Harden.

"I also appreciate the 15th Air Force for recognizing the superb performance of our people. Despite a very full schedule of missions around the world, we have maintained a high level of professionalism and unit morale."

Fairchild noted that such success wouldn't be possible without the support of Guard members' families.

"I would like to offer my personal thanks to the families of our guardsmen for their

continued support as our missions require more and more time away from home," she said.

The Reserve Forces Trophy follows on the heels of two other prestigious honors for the wing.

In May, the unit was awarded the Distinguished Flying Plaque by the National Guard Association of the United States.

The plaque is given annually to the country's top five Air National Guard flying units.

Three months earlier, the wing was selected for its ninth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, making it one of the most decorated organizations in the Air National Guard.

The secretary of the Air Force presents the honor to units that have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious service of national or international significance.

Only one other Air National Guard unit — Georgia's 116th Bomber Wing — has won as many Outstanding Unit Awards.

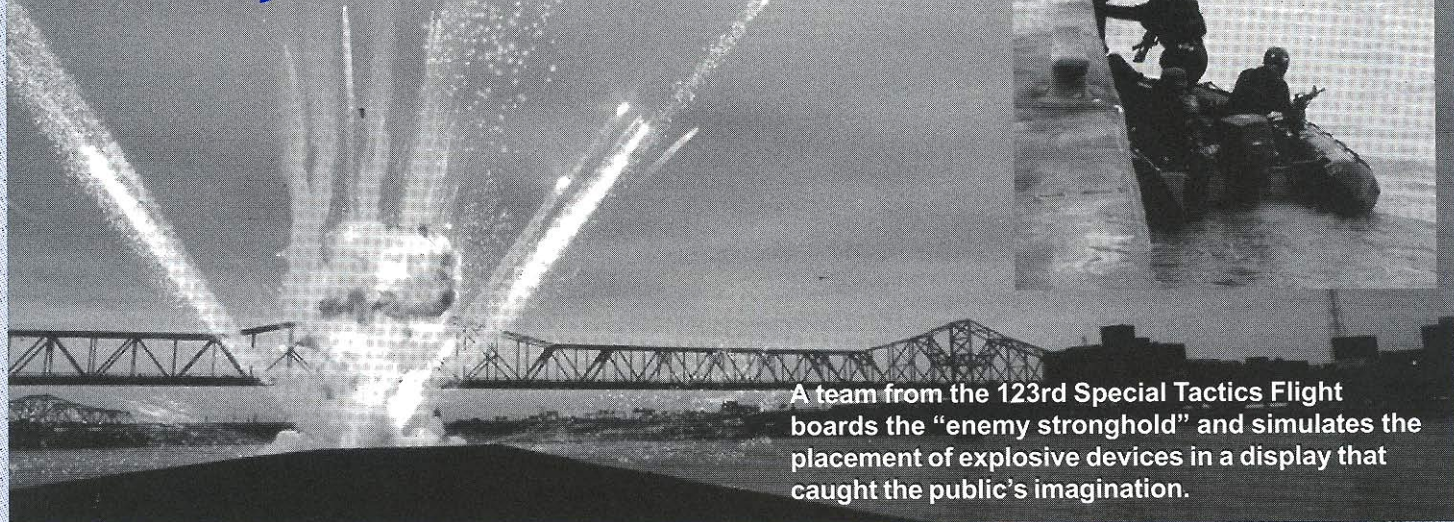
123rd AW - Air National Guard awards & honors

SPAATZ TROPHY — 1950, 1965, 1981: Presented annually to the overall outstanding Air National Guard flying unit.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING UNIT PLAQUE — 1960, 1980, 1983, 1987, 1993, 1998: Presented annually to the top five outstanding flying units in the Air National Guard.

CURTIS N. "RUSTY" METCALF TROPHY — 1994: Presented annually to the airlift or air refueling unit that demonstrates the highest standards of mission accomplishment.

Combined exercise crowd pleaser at "Thunder"



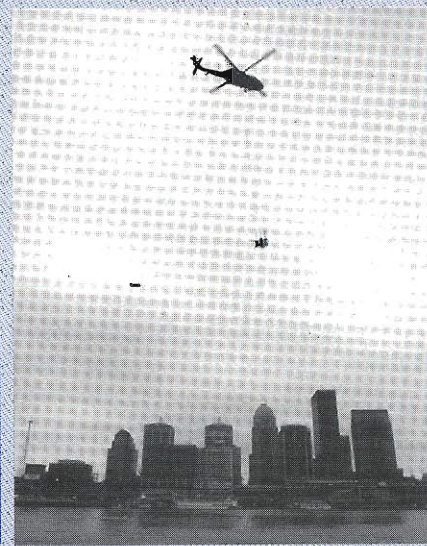
A team from the 123rd Special Tactics Flight boards the "enemy stronghold" and simulates the placement of explosive devices in a display that caught the public's imagination.

While it would be hard to top last year's 50th anniversary celebration of the Air Force, the Kentucky Guardsmen made a spectacular attempt with a combined forces special operations demonstration during the 1998 *Thunder Over Louisville* air show. Elements of the Army Guard's 20th Special Forces Group and 63rd Aviation married up with the Air Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Flight for a thirty minute combat simulation that some spectators said stole the show.

The word is that planners hope to make next year's event even more exciting.

As if that's possible.

photos by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom



Kentucky Air National Guard combat controllers took to the water while Army Guard Special Forces troops hung out over the city.



OMS rated state's safest

photos and story by
Spc. Stephen Woolverton,
KYSTARC PAO

"Look out for each other, know what your limits are and rely on your equipment to help you do your job safely," says Master Sgt. Bobby Turner, supervisor of Organizational Maintenance Shop (OMS) 11, located in Owensboro.

Sound advice from someone who knows his business.

Turner's shop was recognized last year by the Kentucky National Guard Safety Office for 10 years of operation without a lost time injury. A unique accomplishment and one that Turner is extremely proud of.

"As far as I know we are the only shop of our kind in Kentucky that has received this distinction," he said.

What is the secret behind their success? Well, according to Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Cook there is no secret.

"We keep our work stations clean and wear all of the protection required," Cook stated.

As safety officer for the shop, Cook keeps extra safety equipment in an accessible area for other personnel who may work in the shop from time to time. Turner, meanwhile, keeps all of the safety equipment up to date and meeting Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

Turner credits the State Safety Office for much of his shop's success.

"Capt. Sam Haliburton is good at getting us the equipment that we need. As soon as we found out that we needed new hard hats he made sure we received them quickly."

To ensure the safety of the workers the shop holds monthly safety meetings to keep everyone up to date on new OSHA requirements. Periodical pamphlets are collected to make up a *Safety Talks* informational folder.

Turner thinks these are great tools in that "they have suggestions and topics that are valuable for the soldiers here in the shop, as well as for their families at home."

The soldiers often borrow the folders and share them with their families. They also have access to "the wall of safety."

"This is a large bulletin board located



Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Cook demonstrates good safety practices while removing a tire from a 5-ton truck. Master Sgt. Bobby Turner (below) ensures everyone knows how to use the eye-wash/shower station.



in the break room that has everything from first aid instructions to Material Safety Data Sheets," Turner explains.

The soldiers can come in during their breaks and look over first aid, CPR, safe lifting procedures, National Guard Bulletins and various other information.

Probably the most important key to OMS-11's success is direct communication.

"I like to keep an open door policy," Cook explains, "so that if anyone feels unsafe they can go directly to their supervisor to make sure that the work is being done safely."

The result, it would seem, speaks for itself.

Safety starts with me!

by Cpt. Kim Manasco,
State Safety Office

Each year the Army Safety Center distributes promotional materials imprinted with an annual safety slogan; the slogan for 1998 is once again, "Safety Starts with Me." This is, perhaps, the best slogan for us to embrace, not only in the performance of our military duties, but in everyday activities as well. Statistics published by the National Safety Council and the Army Safety Center both indicate that human factors account for 80 percent of accidents. These statistics ring true for civilian accidents, as well as, military accidents. The Kentucky Army National Guard isn't immune to the effects of human errors and the resulting accidents; we, too, can attribute accident occurrences to a break down in human performance.

The Army states, "the key to safety success is to eliminate hazards and develop methods of reducing the risk of injury or the chance that damage to equipment will occur." How does this Army philosophy tie into a campaign led by the slogan, "safety starts with me?" For a simple, yet effective, answer, just follow the ABC's.

ATTITUDE isn't exactly *everything*, but it's darn close when it comes to safety. A safe attitude means staying alert and focused on the job at hand, taking safety guidelines and military standards seriously, never horsing around on the job, and *not* letting emotions like anger and frustration get in the way of job performance. This attitude must prevail throughout the ranks. To perform mission essential tasks to standard requires self-disciplined soldiers who will *consistently* perform to standard; leaders who are ready, willing, and able to enforce standards; training that provides skills needed; and standards and procedures for task performance that are clear and practical.

BEHAVIOR is an important part of being safe. Following the standards, refusing to take "shortcuts," using personal protective equipment, and asking

(continued on next page)

Aviation safety conference honors past accomplishments, prepares for future

by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom

Broken wings, equipment failures and human error were the focus of this year's Kentucky Army Guard Aviation Safety Conference.

Designed to remind everyone of the importance of good safety practices and procedures, the conference is essentially an aviation stand down day for all flight crew members so they can review accident trends, discuss accident prevention and in general promote a sense of safety awareness amongst themselves.

This year's conference was held at the Anderson County Technology Center and was attended by more than 120 pilots and crew members.

In addition to attending classes and briefings, there was a safety overview of Joint Task Esmeraldas, which would operate in support of the humanitarian mission in Ecuador.

Attendees also took part in some hands on training with compressed air fire extinguishers, due to replace halon flight line units. These, according to the aviators provide greater fire fighting effectiveness.

Guest speakers from both the military and private sectors contributed to the forum, addressing such issues as wire-strike prevention

Recognition of the good safety practices was highlighted with an award to Chief Warrant Officer Nelson E. Tatlock for completing more than 10,000 hours of military fixed and rotor wing flying without experiencing a human error class A-C accident.

Also, the National Guard Bureau recognized the Kentucky Army Guard aviation program for going over 25 years and 127,000 hours without a class A or B accident.

Special recognition was bestowed upon Chief Warrant Officer Gerald Carroll and Chief Warrant Officer Roland Knifley for their actions during an equipment failure on a UH-60 Blackhawk last year. Carroll was presented with the Army's Broken Wing Award for his efforts to save the aircraft and its crew. Knifley was presented with the State Aviation Officer Safety Award for his role in the incident.

According to Chief Warrant Officer Dean Stoops, Aviation Safety Officer, such conferences are crucial to the safe operation



Chief Warrant Officer Gerald Carroll and Chief Warrant Officer Roland Knifley were recognized for their actions during an equipment failure on a UH-60 Blackhawk last year.

of the Kentucky Army National Guard's aviation program.

"We realize that it's harder to maintain a good safety record than it is to fix a broken one," Stoops said. "It's harder to do things the right way than it is to take shortcuts, but doing things the right way keeps people safe. When we're hot tired and bored, we tend to take shortcuts and we have to force ourselves to do the right thing."

"This conference gives us an opportunity to look at ourselves and our programs and see how we're doing. This self check is more critical because amongst ourselves, within our own organization, we can look at the truth and police ourselves."

Staff Sgt. Rick Hackett, Safety NCO for Co. B, 63rd Aviation, sees safety in basic terms.

"We have this saying: Safety starts with me. From the junior ranking person to the most senior, everybody here has an important role in the safe operation of our aircraft."

"After all," he added with a smile, "this isn't an automobile we're operating. You just can't pull over to the side of the road whenever something goes wrong."

(Safety, cont.)

questions when you need more information about the task at hand are all safe behaviors. Safe behavior also means helping friends, fellow soldiers, and family members understand the importance of safe practices at work, annual training, home, or play. Safe behavior doesn't interfere with the mission when it is fully integrated in the planning phase. Safe behavior does reduce soldier errors, equipment breakdowns, and other negative factors that do become training inhibitors.

CONTROL means taking responsibility for making your unit, worksite, home, or recreational facility a safe place to be. You can help keep your surroundings safe from potential hazards by

keeping equipment in good repair, cleaning up spills and debris (or reporting them to the appropriate person), following the military standard for task performance, staying in good physical condition, getting the rest you need, identifying potential hazards and developing controls to eliminate or minimize them, and embracing the philosophy of "safety starts with me."

Attitude, behavior, and control are three important aspects of personal safety that have a tremendous impact on unit safety. Before you delve into a mission, task, or household chore take a moment to review your safety ABC's to see if you are doing all you can to protect yourself, your unit members, and your loved ones from careless, needless, injury. Think smart, be safe, and have a successful annual training!

story and photos by
Staff Sgt. David W. Altom

OCS on the move

Candidates find training challenging, fulfilling

Few people would categorize life in the military as being easy, and judging from the look on the faces of the men and women getting ready to tackle the Leadership Reaction Course during Officers Candidate School (OCS) Phase I at Ft. McClellan, Alabama, the idea isn't even in the realm of possibility. Presented with a series of problem solving challenges that require as much brainpower as muscle, the Officer Cadets (OCs) concentrate on the task at hand.

One of the scenarios, for instance, sounds rather simple. The mission is to move three ammo cans a distance of thirty feet. The problem comes in the details. The cans represent explosive charges that have to be placed in an enemy bunker, but this can be done only if the team can avoid a series of obstacles. Touching anything painted red, for instance, means that someone is killed or that a piece of equipment is either lost or destroyed. A shallow pool of water has to be crossed and the

What it's all about — Class 40-98 (right) revels in their recent graduation. Kevin Jones and Will Blevins (opposite) tackle a problem during the leadership reaction course while Tim Mitchell, Lawrence Carter and Joe Whitt (below) slip in a meal between rounds on the confidence course.

only thing available is a pair of sawed-off telephone poles that just happen to be laying around.

"All this requires planning and teamwork," says OC Will Blevins. "If I've learned anything here it's to make sure you organize, that you pay attention to detail and make the best use of your resources."



"Everyone has their strengths," Blevins explains. A member of the Kentucky Guard's 20th Special Forces Group, he understands the importance of working together. "Some people see the problem more quickly than others, while others are good at taking care of a particular task. It takes the whole team to get the job done."

Divided into three phases, OCS is designed to provide a cadet with the basic skills and knowledge required to become an officer in the United States Army. Total Army School System (TASS) Region D—which consists of Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee—has a reputation for maintaining prescribed Army standards and was the first region that received accreditation.

The notoriety of OCS is well-earned.



The demands are tough and not everyone can make the grade. The result, however, is a highly qualified graduate

"While quantity of enrollees has declined slightly in recent years, quality of our officer candidates has never been higher," said Maj. Steve Hogan, senior TAC officer with the 238th Regiment, which manages the OCS program for the Kentucky Army National Guard. "This year's graduating class is our best yet, and next year's class has the potential to run rings around them."

Hogan's pride for his troops is understandable. In a program where it's not uncommon to have an attrition rate of about 20%, they have a unique reputation.

"We have yet to lose anyone," he said. This, he adds, has been the standard for Kentucky since 1994.

Hogan's class just completed the two-week long Phase I, which started off with

(continued on next page)

Voices from the past

Andersonville presents lessons for officer candidates

story and photos by
Staff Sgt. David W. Altom

The name *Andersonville* has a profound impact on anyone familiar with the history of our nation. The site of one of the Confederacy's largest prisoner of war camps during the Civil War, Camp Sumter,



as it was officially know, operated from early 1864 through May of 1865. During that time more than 45,000 Union soldiers were held there at one time or another, with nearly 13,000 succumbing to disease, poor sanitation, malnutrition and exposure.

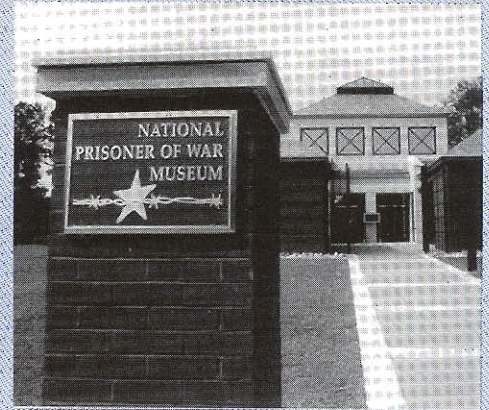
Occupying 26½ acres of land and constructed of a pine logs, the stockade was originally designed to contain no more than 10,000 prisoners. Faced with the problems of supporting a wartime army, deteriorating economic conditions and an overall lack of resources, Confederate officials were unable to cope with the basic human needs of their Federal captives. At the conclusion of the war the camp commandant, Capt. Henry Wirz, was tried

Officer Candidates Stuart Simms, Joe Sallee and Karen Grof (left) contemplate their past ... and their future in the Kentucky Army National Guard. Andersonville is also home to the National Prisoner of War Museum (right).

and executed as a war criminal.

Kentucky Army Guard cadets recently toured the Andersonville National Historic Site as part of their training while attending Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, Georgia. The students received briefings from park staff on the history of the camp, and discussions on responsibility, ethics and decision-making were held by OCS cadre.

According to Adjutant General John R. Groves, Andersonville presents some



(OCS, continued)

classroom instruction on the principles of leadership, battle focus, conducting training and organization of the army. Land navigation, the Leadership Reaction Course and the Confidence Course add to the excitement – and learning experience – of the program.

Phase II is a continuation of the education begun in the first phase, but with one important difference: the students run the school, setting training schedules, organizing activities and handling all the details required in the running of a military unit. Classes are held one weekend a month for more than a year, during which time the OCs learn that if its going to happen, they have to make it happen.

Phase III – another two weeks – presents tactical scenarios to the students put to use the skills and knowledge they've accumulated over the past year.

Officer Candidate Tim Mitchell from Lexington savors the challenge of OCS.

"It's extremely tough and physically demanding, especially the land navigation," he said. Explaining that he'd never navigated through the woods before, Mitchell is proud of his newly found skills. "I get a lot of gratification from it. I always wanted to be a soldier and now that I'm here, I really enjoy it."

Mitchell also finds the lessons learned at OCS relevant to other portions of his life.

"Training like this gives me a different point of view. I have three people who work for me [at General Electric] and I'm a youth mentor at my church, and the leadership principles I'm learning here easily apply to those parts of my life."

valuable and relevant lessons, even in today's modern military climate.

"There is much to learn here," he told the group of cadets during their tour. "You should add this to your collection of knowledge for use in your role as the next generation of leaders in the Kentucky Guard."

"Andersonville presents us with some of the most difficult challenges facing our leaders today, how to maintain decency, civility and integrity when faced with overwhelming logistical obstacles.

"What it comes down to is dealing with the problems that come from caring for soldiers."

For more information on the Andersonville National Historic Site, contact:

**Superintendent,
Rt. 1, Box 800,**

**Andersonville, GA 31711
912-924-0343.**

For more information on the Kentucky Army National Guard OCS program, contact your unit administrator or the 238th Regiment at 502-624-5011.

Paducah clinic has something for everyone

Guard, veterans benefit from collaborative effort

by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom

The Department of Military Affairs recently teamed up with Veterans Administration in a unique effort to help both current members of the Kentucky Guard and former members of the military.

Effective April 17, the Paducah Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic opened for business at the Paducah National Guard Armory. Consisting of six examination rooms and a laboratory located in about 1,200 square feet of space, the clinic is operated at no cost to the Kentucky National Guard or the Kentucky Department of Military Affairs.

According to Col. (ret.) Bob Carter, director of Facilities Division for Military

Affairs, the arrangement was almost too good to be true.

"This came about at just the right time. We'd gone through some reorganization changes over the years that made the space available. When I heard that we had 2,200 Kentucky veterans that needed help, I thought, man, it's worth it."

Carter's enthusiasm for the project is evident when discussing the new clinic.

"When they told me they'd do everything at their own expense, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that this was a viable project.

The initial term of the arrangement is for one year and is renewable for successive one year periods.

VA spokesperson Vicky Sheehan said the new clinic is essential toward providing

care to area veterans.

"Our goal is to improve the level of care our veterans receive by providing primary services and preventative care. We want to increase their access to health care and provide continuity of care."

"There was a great demand by in the area. We'd had surveys that indicated that one of the biggest reasons for not using VA facilities was a lack of access. This is developed into a *win-win* situation for everyone."

Part of that arrangement includes providing medical exams for Kentucky Guard personnel, an added bonus for those living at the western end of the state.

Located at 17th and Clark Street, the clinic is open from 0800-1700 hrs, Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays. For more information, call 502-444-8465

VA Clarifies rules for health-care enrollment

In response to incorrect information distributed by others on the Internet, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is clarifying recent changes regarding veterans' eligibility for health care.

VA is required by law to establish an enrollment system for health-care services to be in place by Oct. 1, 1998. While veterans must be enrolled to receive care, it does not mean that veterans who have not applied for enrollment by that date will lose their eligibility for VA health care. Veterans can apply and be enrolled at the time they are in need of VA health care. Veterans who have received VA health-care services since Oct. 1, 1996, will have an application processed automatically on their behalf.

Applicants will be placed in one of seven enrollment priority groups specified by Congress. Based on the priority they are assigned, the number of other veterans requesting to be enrolled, and the funds available for VA health care, VA will determine how many veterans can be served. Veterans will be notified by mail beginning in late spring whether or not their application for enrollment has been accepted.

After Oct. 1, 1998, some veterans may still be treated without being enrolled.

for more information call:

Veterans Administration

Lexington 606-233-4511

Louisville 800-827-1000

Kentucky

Department of Veterans Affairs

502-595-4447

Veterans with service-connected disabilities may be treated for those disabilities, and veterans who were discharged or released from active duty for a disability incurred or aggravated while on active duty may be treated for that disability within the first 12 months after their discharge.

Veterans who are classified as being service-disabled with a rating of 50 percent or greater will continue to be eligible for VA health-care services without making application for enrollment.

While veterans in these categories do not have to be enrolled to be treated, they are encouraged to do so to help VA plan its services and allocate its resources.

Those who are enrolled will be eligible for inpatient and outpatient services,

including preventive and primary care. Other services included: diagnosis and treatment; rehabilitation; mental health and substance abuse treatment; home health, respite and hospice care; and drugs and pharmaceuticals in conjunction with VA treatment.

Veterans accepted for enrollment will be eligible to receive care at any of VA's more than 1,100 service sites. While enrollment must be renewed every year, a veteran's enrollment will automatically be renewed unless he or she chooses not to re-enroll, or unless VA resources limit the number of veterans the department can cover. Certain veterans will be asked to provide income information annually in order for VA to properly classify them within the enrollment system, as required by law.

To apply for enrollment, veterans should call, write or visit their nearest VA health-care facility. Most facilities have designated special enrollment coordinators to assist veterans and their families, and to answer any questions they may have.

Guard members benefit from dental program

Coverage provides up to \$1,000 per year for services

To help maintain dental readiness of the Reserve components, the 1996 National Defense Authorization Act directed the establishment of a dental insurance program for members of the Selected Reserve of the Uniformed Services, titled the TRICARE Selected Reserve Dental Program (TSRDP).

Put into action late last year, the program covers unit members and Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs) performing Inactive Duty Training (drills/UTAs) and/or annual training as a minimum, as well as Selected Reserve enlisted members who have not yet completed initial active duty for training (IADT) and officers who are in training for professional categories or in undergraduate flying training. *NOTE: Standby, Retired and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) members,*

family members, Active Guard/Reserve (AGR), and Selected Reserve members serving on active duty over 30 days are not eligible to sign up for this program.

The program provides:

- Coverage without cost shares (co-payments) for diagnostic services (exams, x-rays), preventive services (cleanings) and emergency care services (evaluation and minor procedures).
- Partial coverage for restorative services (fillings) with cost shares of 10% paid by E-4s and below and 20% paid by E-5s and above.
- Partial coverage for oral surgery services (extractions) with cost shares of 30% paid by E-4s and below and 40% paid by E-5s and above.

Maximum annual benefit for all services is \$1,000 of paid allowable charges

per contract year.

Enrolled Selected Reservists will pay 40% of the monthly total premium (\$4.36). The government will pay 60% of the monthly premium (\$6.53). Monthly total premium payment: \$10.89. Modest annual changes to the premium levels are anticipated.

Enrollee premiums will be collected through either payroll deduction if monthly drill pay is due to the member and, if not available, enrollee will be billed for direct payment to Humana Military Healthcare Services.

For more information contact:
Humana Military Healthcare Services,
800-211-3614
 or
Sgt. 1st Class Kenny Brunner
800-372-7601 or 502- 595-4385

Now it's time to get



IN GEAR!

with Master Sgt. Steve Collier
 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Rambo sure looks hardcore with his five pound, double tipped, saw-toothed miniature medieval sword ... but it's almost useless except to fell large trees or, perhaps, as a lug wrench.

Our Italian Stud needs a blade half as long and a handle to fit his hand. Follow the *kiss* principle ("Keep it simple, stupid!") and get something practical and affordable. Knowledgeable troopers carry a basic sheath knife made of hard metal that's soft enough to take a good edge quickly. Most of us carry a subdued finish knife so the opposition won't detect our presence; spray paint works great, and it keeps the blade from rusting, too!

When I'm in the field I also carry a small knife on a dummy cord loop around my neck ... this one opens MREs and cuts up those tough combat zone steaks. Because I'm so well-prepared people are always wanting to borrow my stuff, so I keep a serrated folder as a loaner. A serrated blade, by the way, is effective in an emergency --- you never know when you might have to cut your way out of a collapsed tent or sleeping bag in an emergency.

Another handy piece of equipment to have is either a multi-tool or a Swiss-type knife. Along with a knife blade and fingernail file, these gems usually sport pliers, tweezers, screwdrivers and other goodies for making field repairs on all the gadgets the modern soldier has to be familiar with. I always keep one in a pouch on my belt for those times when a camera or video deck doesn't want to work.

Let's see Rambo do that with his battle Bowie.

The Last Word

by Lt. Col. Evan Miller, USAR
 Military Records and Research Branch

Following the United States' acquisition of the Philippine Islands at the end of the Spanish American War, American troops found themselves engaged in a protracted guerrilla war. The Philippine Insurrection and associated uprisings by Moslem Moro tribesmen lasted from 1899 to 1913. The insurgents sought refuge in the mountains, for which the Tagalog is *bundok*. This got corrupted into *boondocks* by the American soldiers, who would refer to going out on field operations as "going to the boondocks." The term boondocks became a part of standard American slang indicating any out of the way, backward, or wilderness locale.

During the Vietnam conflict, the term became abbreviated to *boonies*. Troops would refer to "going to the boonies," when going on patrol into the countryside, or to gear only to be worn in the field as "boonie boot," or "boonie hats."

Both *boondocks* and *boonies* remain familiar terms in American usage, not just for soldiers, but for the population at large. Precious few are aware that they are legacies of an obscure and bitter overseas conflict that began nearly a century ago.

Dear Friend of the Kentucky Guard.

Inside this publication you'll find out the latest scoop on one of the most versatile organizations operating in the nation today: The Kentucky National Guard. Come with us as we take you on a tour of our annual training cycle; fire one of the deadliest rocket launchers in the U.S. Army's inventory, ride an M-1 Abrams main battle tank on the firing line, and if that's not enough, fly with us to the South American nation of Ecuador and help build a school.

Also inside, see what it's like to go through the rigors of Officer Candidate School, accompany Kentucky Guard members on a mission of mercy in eastern Kentucky and find out why we're one of the safest organizations in the world.

There's also some information on the latest veterans issues, health and education benefits for Guard members, and a little bit of history as well.

*All of this courtesy of **your** Kentucky National Guard.*

The Bluegrass Guard
KG-PAO
Boone National Guard Center
Frankfort, KY 40601-6168

Troops from the Kentucky Army National guard's 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry (Mechanized) on patrol at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Muhlenburg County. photo by Staff Sgt. David W. Altom

