

THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

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

Volume Twelve, Issue Seven
September 2008



INSIDE:

Kentucky Special Forces Group leaps
high in sky

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini visits Ky.

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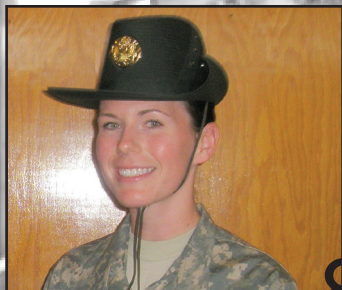
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Photo by Spc. Emily Slusher/KYARNG

An Ecuadorian Paratrooper floats to the ground at the 2008 Leapfest. Read more on page 11.



Change of Address

All change of address should be made at the unit level by the unit clerk.

Army retiree address changes should be made through Staff Sgt. Jason Pettitt at the Kentucky National Guard Personnel Services Branch. He can be reached at 502-607-1613 or jason.pettitt@ky.ngb.army.mil.

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

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



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Guardmembers and their Families are encouraged to submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain Bluegrass Guard readers. Send submissions, photos and correspondence to gina.vaile@us.army.mil. Payment will not be made for contributions. Paid advertising will not be accepted.

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FROM THE FIELD

Thank You - 201st EN

I would like to extend my thanks for the outstanding support and remarkable professionalism of your Army National Guard Soldiers.

I recently deployed to Afghanistan. My route of travel took me from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, to Kuwait, and onward to Afghanistan. While waiting in Kuwait for nearly two days, I had the good fortune to meet 1st Lt. Daniel Griffith of the Kentucky Army National Guard's 201st Engineer Battalion. He provided invaluable assistance to me and Sgt. 1st Class Fair, an NCO with whom I was traveling from Germany.

Lt. Griffith's efforts enabled us to fly from Kuwait to Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan without additional delays. Upon arriving at Bagram, Fair and I received additional assistance from Griffith, as well as from Staff Sgt. Adam Tallent and Sgt. Christopher Adcock. They provided us with lodging, helped us transport our equipment and ensured arrangements were made for a connecting flight the next morning to Kabul.

The selfless support that Fair and I received from these three outstanding Soldiers was truly commendable and speaks volumes about their character. It also speaks highly of the leadership of the 201st Engineer Battalion. I was privileged to meet Lt. Col. Michael Ferguson during the trip from Kuwait to Afghanistan, and I am certain that the positive command climate that exists in the 201st and the willingness of its Soldiers to support others can be traced directly to his leadership.

Lt. Col. Ferguson, Lt. Griffith, Staff Sgt. Tallent and Sgt. Adcock are truly representative of the high quality of the Army National Guard, and it is an honor to serve in an Army with such selfless, professional Soldiers.

Respectfully,
LTC David Astin
CSTC-A (C/J2)
Camp Eggers, Afghanistan

Gunner over Iraq in a UH-60 Black Hawk, Photo submitted

Vital message from the Adjutant General

Guardsmen must perform safety checks on driving techniques

By Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini
Adjutant General of Kentucky

Fellow Guard members and families must take note and apply this vital message to your daily practice.

A few short weeks ago, the Kentucky National Guard Family suffered yet another tragic loss.

Sgt. 1st Class Norman G. Middleton was killed in a motorcycle accident on his commute home from work.

His loss is a devastating one for his immediate family, but it also touches those around him, including everyone he served with in the Kentucky National Guard.

With Middleton's death comes our sixth fatality due to traffic accidents with motorcycles or automobiles in the last year.

People, we are at a crisis.

It truly bothers me that we have lost more Guard members due to traffic accidents in 2008 than any other year in memory.



I hope that it bothers you, and I hope that you help me do something about it.

This is a wake up call for everyone who has anything to do with the Kentucky National Guard, from our most experienced Veterans to our youngest family members. I ask that everyone take a deep breath and reset their thinking in regards to motor vehicle operation.

The next time you get on that new motorcycle, or behind the wheel of the family van, think to yourself, "I have people counting on me. My family needs me. My fellow troops need me. I will come home alive."

And then do it.

Staying Safe on Kentucky's Roadways



Always wear a seatbelt



Conduct routine maintenance



Leave at least 10 minutes early and don't speed to your destination



Don't talk on a cell phone while driving. Talking increases your chance for collision by 400 percent



Allow at least a four second space between you and other vehicles

Suicide Warning Signs ... Know what to look for?

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, and the Army National Guard is calling upon Soldiers to “ACE” the warning signs for suicide prevention. Cut out the card below and read how you can help your buddy in need.



How can I identify if my Soldier or buddy may be at risk?

Suicidal thoughts can occur in people of any age or background. Risk factors include relationship problems, financial pressures or long deployments. Soldiers may exhibit any of these warning signs:

- Comments that include thoughts or plans of suicide
- A preoccupation with death
- Major changes in performance at work
- Appearing depressed
- Reckless or high-risk behavior
- Appearing overwhelmed by recent stressors



Ask your buddy

- Have the courage to ask the question, but stay calm
- Ask the question directly, e.g. Are you thinking of killing yourself?

Care for your buddy

- Remove any means that could be used for self-injury
- Calmly control the situation; do not use force

Escort your buddy

- Never leave your buddy alone
- Escort to the chain of command, a Chaplain, a behavioral health professional, or a primary care provider



My Soldier shows those signs, but won't get help.

Many Servicemembers who are at risk of committing suicide keep their problems to themselves. One reason may include the fear that the Soldier's command staff will have access to his or her health records. According to Military OneSource.com, in most cases, confidentiality is maintained for Servicemembers who refer themselves to a chaplain or a Military Treatment Facility.

What can I do?

If you fear your Soldier or buddy is suicidal, you should get help immediately. Refer to the ACE card, or contact the nearest emergency facility.

Always take the Soldier's concerns seriously and LISTEN to him or her.

Soldiers can call 1-800-SUICIDE or Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647 to talk to someone who can help.

Spouses experience flight

Wife finds greater appreciation for Army Aviation after decade of marriage

By Amy O. Keach

Wife of Sgt. Nathan Keach

One would think that after a decade of being part of the Army Aviation life that the opportunity would have risen to fly in something with rotors. Gratefully, it finally did during a Bravo Company 2nd Battalion, 147 Aviation drill weekend July 20.

Aviation has always been a part of our married life. I accepted the fact a long time ago that my husband's "first love" is a Black Hawk helicopter and flying. In his defense, though, he did meet the present day "mistress" before we were married and I never quite understood the obsession.....until now.

I will admit there was certainly an aspect of fear and apprehension involved. At least I know there was on my part. Many of the spouses had flown before and only a handful of us were rookies on the spousal lift. Or, what I dubbed the Spousal Introduction to Helicopter Flight.

With pre-flight and safety briefings over, we were all eager to get going. The groups were separated into two flights, with me being on the first. Heading out to the aircraft, spirits were high with all of us hopping up, strapping in and checking headsets. Of course I had to be the problem child of the pre-flight checks with a "hot" mic.

The APU starts, rotors start turning and as the crew chiefs go about their duties, I could only think of one thing: "Let's go, let's go, let's go!!"

The initial start-up time seems to take forever but gave me time to observe what was happening up front with the pilots. With all the lights on, I thought about sarcastically telling them the check engine light was on, but knew they were serious about their pre-flight checks.

After what seemed like an eternity, wheels were off the ground and we were on our way. The flight took us over the Capitol, Versailles, the castle, Keeneland and the



Photo submitted by 1st Lt. Stephen Martin/KYARNG

Three spouses of military service members listen carefully to instructions from Crew Chief Spc. Jeremy Knight of Bravo Company, 2/147th Aviation. The spouses participated in "Spouse Flight" hosted by the 147th Aviation during drill weekend July 20.

University of Kentucky. There are no words to even come close to describing the experience. Smiles were in abundance, no airsickness bags were necessary, and all were extremely thrilled to partake in this opportunity.

We landed and jumped out as the next group loads up and waves goodbye. I was truly impressed with the level of professionalism and well-trained "second family" my husband has. Thank you to all who made this possible: the pilots for the skill they possess, the crew chiefs for their excellent care and all the ground and support crews.

I know this has personally given me a new insight into what my husband has done the past 14 years as a crew chief with over 800 flight hours and will continue to do so until he is forced to retire.

I just have two questions: When can we go again and can we add an aerial gunnery next time!? Thanks again for the ride of a lifetime!

GOT NEWS?

Anyone can submit photos and stories for possible use on our pages! Have a story or a story idea? Send your ideas or completed stories to gina.vaile@us.army.mil or call 502-607-5091 for more information.

Flying high, safe during balloon fun race



Photo by Spc. Michael Pfaff/KYARNG

The Kentucky National Guard Hot Air Balloon Team and the red, white and blue “Go Guard!” balloon prepared to participate in a hot air balloon race that was canceled due to bad weather, but couldn’t stop the joy rides offered at the Ursuline Campus A Glow Event at Ursuline Academy Aug. 1-2.

The Kentucky Guard sponsors the balloon team to assist with recruiting efforts and to promote community involvement.

National Guard Soldiers interested in purchasing a ride in the balloon should call Bill Smith at 502-338-6397.



Photo by Spc. Michael Pfaff/KYARNG

Tonini makes first visit to Iraq

Adjutant General goes on patrol on Baghdad streets

By Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

It was 119 degrees, Soldiers in the Louisville-based 223rd Military Police Company were in full body armor, cocked, locked and ready to rock on the streets of Baghdad.

But Sept. 19 wasn't a normal day for the Kentucky National Guard Soldiers patrolling Baghdad. The teams had one more troop with them -- Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Adjutant General of Kentucky.

"Just watching the level of professionalism that these fine Soldiers demonstrated was amazing," Tonini said of the MP's performance.

The road the team patrolled, Tonini said, was at one-time considered the most dangerous in the world.

"And yet because of the efforts of our Kentucky troops, and the rest of the U.S. and Coalition Forces, it was safe enough for me to go down," he said.

"And coming back (to the United States), people asked me 'do you think the surge really worked,' and I can say 'you know what, I lived the fact that the work of these great Soldiers just speaks for the truth that we are getting the job done over there,'" Tonini said.

He added that using three or four tactical vehicles, Blue Force Trackers, Apache and Black Hawk helicopters "gives a whole new meaning to the phrase 'I've got to go downtown for a meeting.'"

While in Iraq, Tonini also visited with Capt. Jay N. Todd and 1st Sgt. Joseph W. Peck, commander and first sergeant of the Murray-based 438th MP Company.

"I was briefed on the entire operation of their gaining command, the 716th Military Police Battalion," Tonini said.

The Kentucky MPs, he said, are providing security in Ramadi where violence has decreased so much since the



The Kentucky Adjutant General greets members of the 223rd Military Police Company in Downtown Baghdad during a visit to troops Sept. 17-21. From left to right: Sgt. William S. Gallion, Pfc. Rachel S. Richmond, Pfc. Joseph W. Meredith, Pfc. James D. Farris, Command Sgt. Maj. David Munden, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Pvt. James E. Conner, Pfc. Andrew Sweazy and Sgt. Jeremy S. Hawkins.

surge, the detention facility where they were supposed to work is in the process of being torn down.

"The 438th is supervising the destruction of the detention facility because it was no longer necessary," Tonini said.

"I think at the time," he said, "it was a little frustrating for our troops because they were supposed to go over there and run a detention facility.

"But I think that really speaks volumes to the success of the surge, and the success of our Kentucky troops over there," he said.

In the near future, Tonini hopes to visit more Kentucky National Guardsmen around the world, including Soldiers and Airmen serving in Afghanistan.



Photo submitted by Capt. Mary Decker/KYARNG

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini pauses with Amy Sulaiman, a contracted linguist working for the 18th Military Police Brigade. Sulaiman, an Arizona native, presents Tonini with a plaque depicting most of the historical landmarks in Iraq.



Photo submitted

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini checks out the 223rd Military Police Company's Operations Center with Spc. Evelyn Plociennik, 1st Sgt. Michael P. Rowan and Command Sgt. Maj. David Munden.

Tonini said he is happy with the progress Kentucky troops are making and is glad he could experience it first hand.

"Nobody could ever tell me enough about the situation that our troops are facing over there," he said.

"You know, I just did it once, these Soldiers do it every single day," Tonini said.

"I could have never had the understanding or the appreciation I have today about the work our Soldiers are doing, without seeing it first hand," he said.

At press time, Governor Steve Beshear was out of town on business, but Tonini said he will meet with him soon after he returns.

"He is very interested in what the Kentucky Guard is doing," Tonini said.

The adjutant general said everywhere he went in the country, "whether it was a two-star or three-star general, everywhere I went they sang the praises of our Kentucky Guard troops.

"They would go out of their way to say how prepared our Soldiers are for the battlefield," Tonini said.

"And that says a lot about Kentucky and our troops."

AFGHANISTAN



Photo submitted by Maj. Wil Abell/KYARNG

Maj. Wil Abell, the Regional Police Advisory Command-West Operations Officer alongside Col. Latifi Reza, the Afghanistan National Police RPAC-W at Badghis Provincial Headquarters in Afghanistan. Abell's unit, a Brigade Embedded Training Team, focuses on police reform and coordinating operations in the northern part of the province.

NEXT ISSUE



Substance abuse and Kentucky Soldiers



Coverage of '08 Hurricane Season



Wrap up of 2008 Annual Training for 751st Troop Command and new 149th Signal Company



Thanks and goodbye Bluegrass State...

Hurricane evacuees begin flights home from Kentucky Air Guard Base



Photo by Capt. Dale Greer/123rd Airlift Wing

Hurricane Gustav evacuees board a commercial airliner at the Kentucky Air Guard Base for a flight home Sept. 6. Nearly 1,500 Gulf Coast evacuees spent about a week at a Red Cross Shelter at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville.

KENTUCKY AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- Hundreds of New Orleans-area residents who were evacuated to Kentucky last week to escape Hurricane Gustav boarded commercial airliners here Sept. 6 for return flights home.

The first 96 evacuees left the Kentucky Air Guard flightline at 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time en route to Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. Four more flights followed in the afternoon, carrying an additional 770 passengers, officials said.

Outbound flights are expected to continue here on Sunday as the Kentucky Air Guard, the Red Cross and emergency management officials worked to return the evacuees to their homes. Since last week, nearly 1,500 Gulf Coast residents stayed in a Red Cross shelter at the Kentucky Exposition Center.

More than 200 Kentucky Air Guard members participated in the relief operation since Aug. 29.

Airmen complete Coronet Oak Mission

By Tech. Sgt. Diane Stinnett

123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- More than 120 members of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing deployed to Muniz Air National Guard Base here in August to support Operation Coronet Oak, a mission that provides vital airlift capabilities throughout the Southern Command Area of Responsibility.

By ensuring the readiness of aircraft and resupplying U.S. government and military operations in Central and South America, the Kentucky Airmen helped support important international interests, said mission commander Col. Rick Shelton, commander of the 123rd Contingency Response Group.

"The most important mission we do is the alert bird," he said. "What that means is that we always have a plane that we can launch within three hours, 24/7, for medical emergencies, and if necessary, to get troops in."

According to Lt. Col. Jeff McQuillen, director of operations for Coronet Oak, the airlift mission began in Panama in 1977. It is supported entirely by Guard and Reserve assets and remains essential in maintaining U.S. capabilities in the region. Aircrews provide theater mobility, embassy support and airdrops.

"Kentucky's been outstanding," McQuillen said.

"I never have to say, 'Hey, you guys need to come and do the mission.' Everyone is willing to work as many hours (as it takes) without complaining to get the mission done.

"It's fun working with them. (They have a) good attitude which really makes everything happen," he said.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Diane Stinnett/KYANG

Master Sgt. Carl Shaffer of the 123rd Maintenance Squadron positions ground equipment to load onto a C-130 aircraft during the Wing's successful airlift support of Southern Command operations.



Brig. Gen. Michael J. Dornbush presents Lillian Henderson-Givens a Gold Star Mothers license plate Aug 1 in Bowling Green, Ky.

By 1st Lt. Andi Hahn

Public Affairs Office

BOWLING GREEN, Ky-- A mother of a fallen Soldier received a Gold Star Mothers license plate in a ceremony at the Kentucky Army National Guard Armory here Aug. 1.

Lillian Henderson-Givens is the mother of 1st Lt. Robert L. Henderson II who died on April 17, 2005 while serving in Iraq with the Kentucky Army National Guard's 2123rd Transportation Company. The second Kentucky Guard member to die in the Global War on Terror, Henderson was a native of Alvaton, Ky.

"Gold Star Mothers" is a term derived from the custom in which families of service members hang a banner called a service flag in the window of their homes. The service flag has a star for each family member in the military. Living service members are represented by a blue star and those who have lost their lives are represented by a gold star with blue trim.

Henderson-Givens is the most recent recipient of the Gold Star Mother's license plate in Kentucky.

Building esprit de corps, one

20th Special Forces Group and Ecuadorians compete in 26th Annual Leapfest

By Spc. Emily Slusher and Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KINGSTON, R.I. -- More than 60 teams from the United States and 15 other countries converged on the dew spotted fields of the University of Rhode Island Aug. 9 for the 26th annual Leapfest competition sponsored by the Rhode Island National Guard.

For the Kentucky National Guard's 20th Special Forces team and the team from Ecuador, Leapfest was not just about jumping out of aircraft or placing first among teams from the U.S. service branches or competitors from Europe, South America or Asia, but a momentous opportunity to foster a partnership established 11 years ago.

"It is very important for us to maintain a relationship with our Ecuadorian counterparts while we are here," said Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Garcia of the 20th SFG.

"It is especially important for us to engage in this cultural exchange so that we can see how they operate and vice versa," he said. "We talked to them in Spanish, introduced ourselves and shared Soldier stories."

Both the team from Ecuador and the Kentucky team celebrated three successful jumps each from a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, high above Kingston.

For all the paratroopers, though the day was a morale-boosting competition, training was of utmost importance.

"I think about the sequence," Garcia said. "You use a parachute landing fall, pop a riser and try to get up and run as fast as you can. It feels like 10 people dragging you."

The point is for paratroopers to hit a large orange "X" on the drop zone in the fastest time. Garcia bragged, once boots were safely on the ground, that his fastest time was 16 seconds.

Capt. Wilson Fransisco Acosta, an Ecuadorian paratrooper, said his team had solid quick jumps as well.

"This is my first time here," he said. "I'd love to come back next year to do it again."

The weekend event gave way to the reunion of many



Photo by 1st Lt. Andi Hahn/KYARNG

Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Garcia prepares to jump from a Chinook Helicopter during Leapfest 2008 held at Kingston, R.I., Aug. 9. The 26th annual competition draws the best paratroopers from all services branches each year.

long-distant friends and war comrades.

Lt. Col. Allan Corcoran, an event organizer from the Rhode Island National Guard's 56th Troop Command, said what the event does best is help paratroopers establish and maintain contacts, both nationally and internationally.

"A lot of the guys that come here do a double take and look at each other and say: 'hey, didn't I see you in Kabul, or didn't I see you in Baghdad?'," he said.

"If you can get an opportunity to get these Soldiers together and put them in a situation that is not very stressful, then in the long run it's going to pay dividends when they do get in a stressful environment."

But for at least one person on the ground, the day was a bit nerve wracking.

"You get nervous when you know he's up there, and then it's exciting once he's hit the ground and I know he's okay," said Kay Holliday, wife of Maj. Kurt Holliday of Covington, Ky.

"I've enjoyed this a lot, and I'm really proud of my husband," she said.

jump at a time



Photo by 1st Lt. Andi Hahn/KYARNG



Photo by 1st Lt. Andi Hahn/KYARNG



Photo by Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson/KYARNG



Photo by 1st Lt. Andi Hahn/KYARNG

2008 Outstanding Soldier and Airmen

Story and photos by Spc. Michael Pfaff
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – The Outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the Year for the Kentucky National Guard were honored at a banquet Aug. 9 at Churchill Downs.

Three Soldiers and three Airmen were awarded Outstanding Soldier and Airmen, Non-commissioned Officer, and Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year awards.

Spc. Robert A. Yenshaw, of the 298th Chemical Company, 75th Troop Command, and

Senior Airman Matthew J. Meuser, of the Civil Engineering Squadron, 123rd Airlift Wing, were named the Outstanding Soldier and Airmen of the Year.

Sgt. Tera C. Stroncsek, with Headquarters 238th Regiment, and Tech. Sgt. John B. Hoagland, with Maintenance Squadron, 123rd Airlift Wing, were the Outstanding NCOs of the Year.

Sgt. Maj. Daniel W. Boller, of the 138th Field Artillery, 138th Fires Brigade, and Master Sgt. James D. Tenney, of Security Forces Squadron, 123rd Airlift Wing, were the Outstanding Senior NCOs of the Year.

Each recipient of the Outstanding Soldier and Airmen of the Year award received a blue, green and purple colored ribbon. The ribbon is worn with the blue closest to the heart for the Air Guard and the green closest to the heart for the Army Guard. The purple represents the joint effort between the Air and Army Kentucky National Guard. After a video presentation showcasing each individual's hard work and accomplishments, the crowd stood and gave a round of applause.

Following the videos, the 2007 Outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the Year marched out with the K.E.E.P.



Sgt. Maj. Daniel W. Boller, Sgt. Tera C. Stroncsek and Spc. Robert A. Yenshaw accept the Kentucky Enlisted Exceptional Performance Award presented to them at the Outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the Year banquet Aug. 9 at Churchill Downs.

man of the year honored



Master Sgt. James D. Tenney, Tech Sgt. John B. Hoagland and Senior Airman Matthew J. Meuser hold the Kentucky Enlisted Exceptional Performance Award presented to them by previous recipients at the Outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the Year banquet Aug. 9 at Churchill Downs.

Award, in order to pass the memento on to the new Outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the Year.

K.E.E.P. stands for Kentucky's Enlisted Exceptional Performance Award. The K.E.E.P. award is only for enlisted members of the Kentucky National Guard who are recognized by their peers for dedicating themselves to the welfare and security of our nation.

Kentucky Airmen take first and second in annual bass tourney

Staff Report



Jerry Zollman and his father Jerry Zollman Sr. proudly hold up their first place trophies at the 13th Annual Air National Guard Bass Tournament April 16-17.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala-- Kentucky Airmen took first and second place at the 13th Annual Air National Guard Bass Tournament held at the 117th Air Refueling Wing here April 16-17.

First place went to 1st Lt. Jerry Zollman and his father, Jerry Zollman Sr., with 26.21 pounds.

Retired Chief Master Sgt. Roger Hamilton, and retired Master Sgt. Terry Chasteen took second with a total of 25.73 pounds.

Three other Kentucky teams also placed among the top 50.

The Kentucky Air Guard will host the 14th annual bass tournament next year at Kentucky Lake.



Retired Chief Master Sgt. Roger Hamilton and retired Master Sgt. Terry Chasteen hold their second place trophies at the 13th Annual Air National Guard Bass Tournament April 16-17.

Kentucky commissions



Photo by Sgt. Fred Varney/KYARNG

By Sgt. Fred Varney

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Sixteen Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers raised their right hands and took the Oath of Office as the state's newest military officers during a formal ceremony held Aug. 16 at the Capitol Veranda.

Twelve members of the Kentucky National Guard Officer Candidate Class 50-08 completed a rigorous 18-month program under the 238th Regiment (Combat Arms) based out of Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville, Ky.

Four other candidates joined their comrades after completing the accelerated program located at Fort McClellan, Ala.

"The most challenging part of the course is taking a PT test every month," said 2nd Lt. Hershel N. Anglin.

"The academics are also very hard because there's not a lot of time to prepare. It's like cramming for college courses," she said.

Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, the Adjutant General for Kentucky, presented Anglin with the Erickson Trophy,

which is given to the officer candidate with the highest overall score in leadership, academics, and physical fitness.

The trophy is awarded in honor of Maj. Gen. Edgar C. Erickson, a former Chief of the National Guard Bureau. The trophy is retained at headquarters, National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C.

"I am honored to serve my country as an officer," said Anglin.

Second Lt. Tonya M. Donaldson, a 10-year veteran of the Kentucky Guard, said it felt great to receive her commission after working hard for the past year and a half.

"It's the best training I've had since I've been in the Guard," said Donaldson.

Donaldson said she has been a nurse for five years and wanted to become a leader in the Kentucky Medical Command.

Several of the newly commissioned officers were individually recognized for outstanding accomplishments while in OCS:

16 lieutenants

Maj. David Roche, OCS Senior TAC officer, presented the Physical Fitness Award to 2nd Lt. Kristopher Karr, Class 50-08 president, for attaining the highest composite score in several physical fitness tests. Karr was also presented the Kentucky Merit Ribbon and the Alumni Association of the Kentucky Military Academy Award for placing second overall in the class.

Second Lt. Kenneth Staley, Class 50-08 vice president, received the Commandant's Award. The award is given to the graduate who has made the greatest self-improvement during the program.

The Commander of the 238th Regiment, Col. Judy Greene-Baker, presented the award to Staley.

The recipient of the Military Order of the World Wars Award



Photo by Spc. Michael P. Pfaff/KYARNG

Lieutenants from the Kentucky National Guard Officer Candidate School's Class 050-08 take the Oath of Office Aug. 16 at the Kentucky Capitol from 238th Regiment Commander, Col. Judy Greene-Baker.

was presented to 2nd Lt. Dustin Pack, Class 50-08 treasurer, for obtaining the third highest overall class standing in leadership, academics, and physical fitness. Pack also received the Kentucky Commendation Ribbon. The award was presented by Lt. Col. French, president of MOWW.

Col. Judy Greene-Baker administered the oath to the 16 officers while Maj. Gen. Tonini presented the OCS certificates of graduation. Friends and family members continued the custom of pinning on the new officers' gold bars of a second lieutenant

Capt. William A. Snyder, 238th Regiment (Combat Arms) TAC Officer, said he has been training new officer candidates for the past two years and that this class has some very promising young officers in it.

"These officers will go far and they can be very proud of themselves," said Snyder.

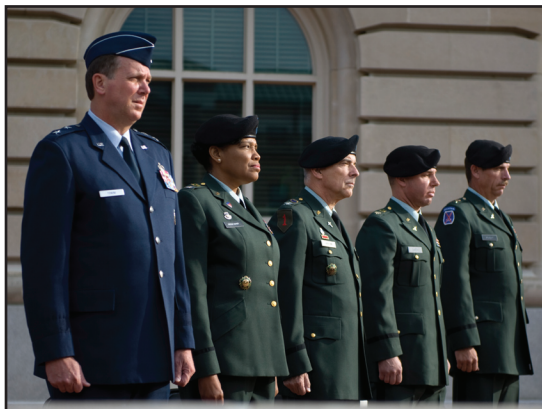


Photo by Spc. Michael P. Pfaff/KYARNG

Adjutant General of Kentucky Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, 238th Regiment Commander Col. Judy Green-Baker, Chap. Patrick Dolan, Officer Candidate School senior Teach, Access and Control Officer Maj. David Roche and Chief Warrant Officer Steve Knight from the National Guard Association made up the OCS graduation official party where Tonini was also the keynote speaker.

238th Names training NCOs and TAC Officer of '08

Staff Report

GREENVILLE, Ky. -- Col. Judy A. Greene-Baker announced Aug. 28, the 1st Battalion, 238th Field Artillery Battalion Instructor of the year, General Studies Battalion's NCO and TAC Officer of the year for the 238th Regiment (Combat Arms).

Capt. William Serie, a Nashville, Tenn. native was named the 2/238th General Battalion Instructor of the Year for 2008. Serie has been a member of the 238th for two years and is an Officer Candidate School instructor.



Sgt. 1st Class Charles Johnson, a Russell Springs, Ky. native, was named the 1/238th Field Artillery Battalion Instructor of the Year for 2008. Phillips has been a member of the 238th for six years and is a Multiple Launch Rocket System Field Artillery instructor.



Staff Sgt. Johnny Phillips, a Murray, Ky. native, was named the 2/238th General Studies Battalion Instructor of the Year for 2008. Phillips has been a member of the 238th for four years and is a Small Group Leader Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course instructor.



Meet the newest drill sergeant

By Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile
Editor

"An American hero is not a football player, or a rock star or a politician ... An American Hero is every man and woman who has ever put on a uniform and vowed their life for the freedom of this great country." -- Sgt. Tera Stroncsek

Tera Stroncsek doesn't look like your typical drill sergeant. She has a smile worth a million bucks, and a heart that's as big as a country mile.

But underneath the pretty exterior is a hardened warrior -- a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, a committed Soldier who embodies all of the Army Values, and a Soldier's wife who is counting down the days until her husband returns.

"To me," she says, "the best part about being a Soldier, is *being* a Soldier."

THE SOLDIER

Stroncsek began her active duty career in 2002 at the age of 19.

"Within my first few weeks of arriving at my duty station, I was on my way to Iraq," she said.

The deployment, Stroncsek said, made her grow up fast, in a very regimented and strict world.

In 2005, she met and married Nick Stroncsek while stationed in Germany. The two applied for the Married Army Couples Program before moving back to the states, but somehow the two were separated, with Nick going to Fort Campbell and her duty station assignment at Fort Jackson, S.C.

"After a year apart, and several thousand miles on our vehicles, I decided to enlist into the Guard. Above my love for the Army is my love for my Family," she said.

THE DRILL SERGEANT

Now, a traditional Guardsman, Stroncsek hasn't slowed a bit.



"I was not used to having so much free time," she said of her transition into the Kentucky Guard.

"It honestly took me a while to find my identity outside of active duty, until I realized that just because I didn't put on the uniform everyday, didn't mean I still wasn't a Soldier.

"I heard several times, from both sides, that the Guard and the active Army are two very different worlds," she said. "But really, they aren't."

Stroncsek proved that by becoming the first Kentucky National Guardsman to complete rigorous training at the Drill Sergeants School.

She said the most challenging part of the school was the hours.

"There were formations as early as 3:50 a.m. and nights that ended only minutes before Taps," she said, noting that the students would come back to the barracks at night to study for tests and the next day's classwork.

"When I was in basic training, I didn't realize the sacrifices that Drill Sergeants actually made," she said.

"They are at the units at least an hour before PT and an hour after lights out," Stroncsek said. "The school definitely prepared me for the long hours I will spend this summer on the trail.

"It was definitely a commitment of both mind and body," she said, adding that completing the school was the toughest challenge she has faced in her military career.

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE

For Stroncsek, the only thing tougher than being a Soldier is being a Soldier's wife.

"Iraq and Afghanistan are definitely not the most comfortable nor safe places in the world," the veteran said.

Her husband, Nick, a staff sergeant in the 101st Airborne is currently serving in Iraq.

"As a spouse, it's almost like your life is on pause," she said. "You are often lonely and worried, and find yourself anxiously counting down the days until your loved one returns."

This is the second deployment for Nick, and Stroncsek said it is easier this time around.

"I try not to worry too much about him," she said. "He is an outstanding NCO and I trust in his abilities."

THE FUTURE

Stroncsek says her ultimate goal, like many Kentucky Guard non-commissioned officers, is to retire from the National Guard as a command sergeant major.

To get her there, Stroncsek said she will use her NCO toolbox.

"The most valuable lesson that I have learned in my Army career is that there is more in a leader's tool box than just a hammer," she said.

"A hammer is a necessary and useful tool, but in the end, a hammer is just a hammer.

"A good leader has a variety of tools: a tape measure to show their Soldiers how far they have to grow; a level to remain fair and impartial, a screw driver to keep their Soldiers tightened up and among many others, a hammer, because everyone needs a good hit on the head every once in a while," she said.

KMA still searching for photos and information

Staff Report

Though the 238th Regiment (Combat Arms) has already dedicated a display honoring all 50 of the graduating classes from the Kentucky Military Academy, Col. Judy Greene-

Baker, commandant, is still looking for photos and information from a few of the classes.

"We are still missing several guidons and photos and are still accepting contributions from Soldiers and former students," she said.

This summer marked the 50th Anniversary of the 238th Regiment (CA), originally known as the Kentucky Military Academy. Located at the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Muhlenberg County and run by Kentucky Army Guard personnel, the 238th Regiment is Kentucky's premier Army officer and non-commissioned officer academy.

"This is a very ambitious project," Greene-Baker said. "We've prepared framed guidons, rosters and class photos to honor each of our fifty graduating classes."

Greene-Baker and her staff have displayed the guidons, photos and rosters at Building 300, the main classroom building."

1st Lt. Reginald Brown said the project is an important part of Kentucky National Guard history.

"We do want to preserve the legacy of the academy, but we're also trying to bring about awareness. A lot of people don't know we're here and we want to bring attention to the school."

More than 1,200 men and women have graduated from Kentucky's officer candidate school over the past fifty years.

If you have information or photos that will help with this project, 1st Lt. Reginald Brown at reginald.1.brown@us.army.mil or 502-607-7896.



File Photo

1st Lt. Reginald Brown, Maj. Chris Meyer and Col. Judy Greene-Baker discuss the art of recreating guidons earlier this Spring.

Eddie Montgomery becomes Honorary Guardsman



Photo by Spc. Michelle Waters/KYARNG

Eddie Montgomery of the Montgomery Gentry music group and his wife, Tracy, accept the Honorary Guardsman Award presented by Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini August 27. Deputy Adjutant Gen. Lonnie Culver praised the Montgomerys for their support to the Kentucky National Guard saying how fortunate it is to have such great Kentuckians giving so much of their time to the National Guard family. Culver said visits in a combat zone by such artists as Montgomery serves our nation and our great commonwealth and for that, the Kentucky National Guard will always be grateful.



THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

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