

# The Bluegrass Guard

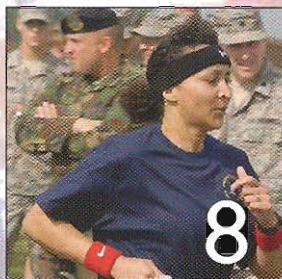
*Serving the men and women of Kentucky's Army and Air National Guard*

Volume Thirteen, Issue Six  
October · November 2009



## Helping Hands

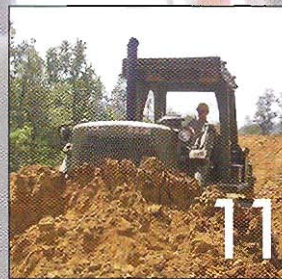
- Catastrophic exercise success
- Guard kids stay strong



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## INTO THE BLUE

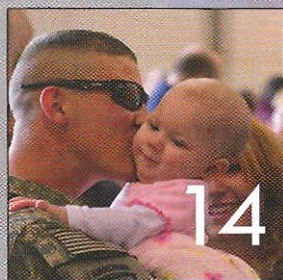
Wing holds fitness challenge



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## GREEN REPORT

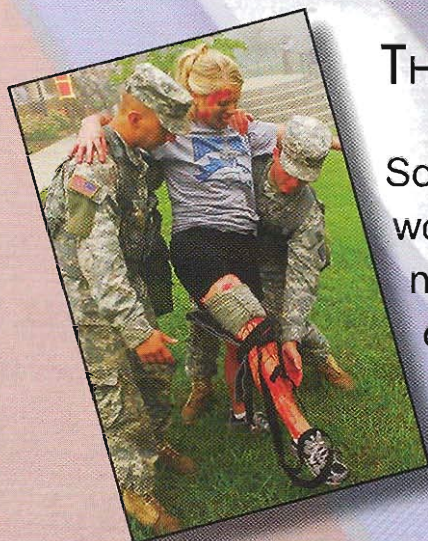
Engineers improve Artemus entrance



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## KID ZONE

Guard Children with positive attitudes



## THE COVER

*Cover Photo by Spc. Michael Pfaff/KYARNG*

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry aid a wounded student, roleplayed by a Midway College nursing student, in moving to a collection point during the mass casualty portion of the 2009 Catastrophic Training Exercise held on the college campus located in Midway, Ky., Aug. 5.



**Kentucky NATIONAL GUARD**  
Unbridled Service

## THE BLUEGRASS GUARD

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The Bluegrass Guard is distributed free to all members of the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard and to other interested persons by request.

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

### Remembering a Hero

I am writing in reference to the photo of Sgt. Nicholas R. Carnes headstone on the inside cover of The Bluegrass Guard Vol. 13, Issue 5, June/July 2009.

I am writing to voice my concern about seeing this picture without not even a single mention as to who Nick was or recognition that he lost his life two years ago Aug. 26, 2009, in Afghanistan, or even what unit he was with?

I really hope that the next issue follows with an article about who Nick was or something to at least remember who he was, not just his headstone as a background for your information.

Thanks for your time,  
A Concerned Army Sister

*\* Editors Note: The Bluegrass Guard Staff and Public Affairs Office regret that we did not do a better job being situationally-aware and sensitive, regarding the opening photograph of our fallen brother, Sgt. Nicholas Carnes.*

*There was no malice or intent to disrespect Sgt. Carnes' memory or ultimate sacrifice when the photo was placed on the page. The picture is a thoughtful one and holds meaning. Unfortunately, it is out of context as it appeared in The Bluegrass Guard.*

*The photo was taken during a We Will Not Forget Ceremony held May 16. Turn to page 11 for more information about how the Kentucky Guard honored our Fallen Guardsmen.*

### ADT looking for fans

Greetings from Afghanistan! The Kentucky National Guard Agribusiness Development Team invites all of the Kentucky Guard Family to follow us on our Facebook site. Click today to become our fan!

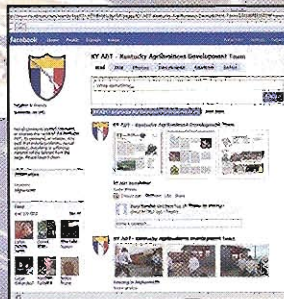


Photo illustration by Staff Sgt. Aaron Hiller KYANG

Simply do a search for for KY ADT - Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team from www.facebook.com.

Leave us a message and your words of encouragement. We look forward to hearing from you!

Thanks,  
Maj. John Holmes, Executive Officer, KY ADT

### Change of Address

*Don't miss an issue!*

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

Army Retiree address changes should be made through Staff Sgt. Debbie Devine at the Kentucky National Guard Personnel Services Branch. She can be reached at 502-607-1497 or deborah.devine@ky.ngb.army.mil.

Air Retiree address changes should be made through retired Chief Master Sgt. James Turpin at jturpin@fewpb.net

### Letters to the editor

The Bluegrass Guard values opinions. To comment, keep remarks under 150 words, include your name, rank and address and send them to:

The Bluegrass Guard  
KG-133 MPAD  
100 Minuteman Parkway  
Frankfort, KY 40601

or: gina.vaile@us.army.mil  
We reserve the right to edit letters for tone, length, clarity and factual accuracy.

# Get involved with your Family support

By Libbi Cox  
KYNG Family Programs

Right now as you sit and read this letter from me, there are more than 500 Kentucky Soldiers and Airmen who are mobilized or deployed around the world, representing Kentucky, the U.S. Army and Air Force well.

That means there are 500 empty dinner chairs; 500 missed birthdays and holidays and many Family members who sit and await the return of their hero.

I, too, have found myself looking at a flat tire, wondering who can pick the kids up from school while I take the dog to the vet. I know what it is like to sit and watch the news with

anticipation and a nervous heart.

I understand that no matter how busy you appear, your heart and mind are constantly with your servicemember no matter how many miles may separate your lives.

I know what it means to be an Army Spouse: it means you are not only married to your Soldier, but the U.S. Army or the Air Force. It means you, too, serve the Commonwealth of Kentucky. It means each Family member sacrifices and freedom comes with a price.

The thing you need to know is this: you are not alone.

The Kentucky National Guard, through Family Programs and our Family Readiness Groups, is here for you to provide the support that you need while your loved one is deployed. Family Readiness Groups can provide

support from Families just like you, because each of us truly understand the challenges of what it means to be a military Family.

The foundation of any FRG is to provide support, keep members informed and connected so that our unit always stands ready when our Soldiers or Airmen are called. Without a solid foundation at home, our Soldiers and Airmen cannot do their job on the battlefield.

Membership in the FRG is automatic! Your level of participation is up to you. Our job is to ensure our Soldiers and Airmen can focus on their mission during deployments while we man the homefront. For families who live away from the local armory, the internet can provide connection to your FRG through emails, resources, meetings and online trainings. Virtual volunteers are always welcome!

As you read the pages of this Bluegrass Guard, you will see just how important even the smallest Family member is to our Guardsmen.

I challenge other Guard children to do something positive for their unit or their Soldier or Airmen just as Taylor Pace, Mattie Roach and Hunter Corson have done.

I challenge other Guard spouses to become involved in their communities such as FRG President Amanda Herald of Det. 1, 617th of Pikeville did when she helped with making a local boy's dream of becoming a Soldier come true.

Remember that we are here for YOU ... to support YOU ... so that you can support your Soldier and Airmen.

For more information about your FRG or the State Family Assistance Programs, call 1-800-372-7601 and press option one at the prompt.

We look forward to having you participate!



## Editor: looking for a few good stories ... and photos

By Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson  
Editor

I can honestly say I have the coolest job in the U.S. Army.

They gave me a camera, and a computer and asked me to tell the story of our Soldiers and Airmen. I fell in love.

Each month I look forward to telling those stories, but if I don't

know they exist, I can't tell the world.

This magazine is YOUR magazine. It tells the story of the Kentucky Army and Air Guard. What do you want to see in it?

E-mail me with story ideas, or photos from your drill weekend. Do you have a Soldier who shines in your community? Tell me about it!

You can call and request public affairs support for coverage of unit training or ceremonies. If we have

the manpower, we will do our best to support.

Our office has the capabilities to spread the word about the wonderful things your unit does to support the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Visit our blog at <http://kynationalguard.blogspot.com> or follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/KYNGPAO>.

Help me get our story out there. Call me at 607-5091 or send a message to [gina.vaile@us.army.mil](mailto:gina.vaile@us.army.mil).





# 2009: Year of the NCO

## Spotlight on Command Sgt. Maj. David Owens

**AGE:** 48

**POSITION:** J-1 Sergeant Major

**UNIT:** Joint Forces Headquarters

**LOCATION:** Frankfort, Ky.

**HOMETOWN:** Louisville, Ky.

**YEARS OF SERVICE:** 28

**COLLEGE:** University of Louisville



**Story by** Spc. Michael Pfaff

*133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

**F**or the last 27 years, words and wisdom have laced the career of Command Sgt. Maj. David R. Owens, J-1 sergeant major.

To this day he still remembers his dad's advice the night before he shipped out for basic training: "I'll never forget, my dad told me – 'just never let them know your name. Don't be the last one, and don't be the first one. Just stick right in the middle and you'll be great.'"

But for Owens, the middle wasn't where he was destined to be ... he was meant for the top.

He learned Army skills from his drill sergeants in basic training, many of whom were Vietnam Veterans and hard-nosed trainers who used remedial training as their style of instruction. "It was a challenge back then because training was of a different mindset. The thought was if you were under pressure and couldn't make it, then you weren't meant to be in the Army."

In the early 90s, Owens was a self-proclaimed six-year specialist until he took a full-time position. From there, he began to rise through the ranks.

"The key to my success was the people that I worked with," Owens said.

"I was fortunate enough that the people above me gave me enough guidance and taught me enough so I could take the right steps and move

in the right direction," he said.

He learned his duties and tasks from non-commissioned officers above him who molded and mentored him.

"I had a lot of exposure to a lot of different leadership styles," he said. "I learned that it's better for me (as a leader) if I'm going to teach you something to help you as opposed to just telling you to do something and if you don't perform, reprimand you," he said.

Owens set his goal: to become a sergeant first class. By the time he reached it, he had held every full-time position available at the unit level.

His 2008 deployment to Afghanistan, he said, was one of the most challenging times in his career.

"I had people under me asking me to fix a lot of things. Command sergeants major are expected to fix things," he said.

And fix he did.

As a mentor to the Afghan Police, Owens assisted them with developing their mission and training capabilities. He immediately noticed the lack of an NCO corps and immediately recommended to the Afghans to follow the American approach by developing an NCO academy.

"The Afghan army and police really didn't know what the role of the NCO was," he explained. "They didn't use them. They had a commander talking to the lowest ranking soldier. We tried to instill NCO methods in them.

"We had one NCO in the headquarters that had been to the NCO academy," he said. "It was like night and day. The way he kept his uniform and the way he acted was a huge difference than someone who had just been to the basic police course."

Eventually, Owens would complete his mission in Afghanistan and return home to his Family. Owens is married to his wife, Teresa, and has three children. His eldest son, Sgt. Riley Owens, 24, also serves with the Kentucky Guard.

Though he is very proud of his son, Owens said he still doesn't do him any favors except to continue to mentor guide him to be the best NCO he can be.

"If he takes care of his people, they'll take care of him," Owens said. "And, that will be reflected upward to his leadership also. If you do what's right and you do what's required and expected of you, then you'll take care of yourself."

# Wing Fitness Challenge builds muscle and morale

By Tech Sgt. Phil Speck  
123rd Air Wing Public Affairs

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - The U.S. Air Force is placing renewed emphasis on physical fitness, and the Kentucky Air Guard is doing its part to promote that warrior ethos.

Nearly 100 Kentucky Airmen turned out July 13, to compete in the 123rd Airlift Wing's first-ever Fitness Challenge.

Twenty-four teams of four Airmen each vied for top honors by completing a circuit that included a relay race, timed crunches and push-ups, said Master Sgt. Krista Lindsey, field training technician for the 123rd Services Sustainment Flight, which sponsored the event.

Col. Greg Nelson, wing commander, made the contest more interesting by adding commander's coins to the mix.

Relay runners were required to hand off the coins without dropping them, lest they incur a time penalty.

This year's top team hailed from the 123rd Security Forces Squadron, with a circuit time of 9:09. The team was comprised of Capt. Kevin Krauss, Staff Sgt. Ryan Thompson, Airman 1st Class Austin Shaffer and Airman 1st Class Jeff Hall, each of whom received a commander's coin and VIP service for a steak lunch.

They also were recognized by Nelson during a commander's call that preceded Family Day events later in the afternoon.

The Fitness Challenge was coordinated by Tech. Sgt. Dale Grupe, Staff Sgt. Shaun Cowherd and Master Sgt. Kenny Richards. Grupe and Cowherd are certified by the



Members of the 123rd Airlift Wing pushed themselves to the limit during the unit's first-ever Fitness Challenge July 13.

The event, scheduled as part of annual Wingman Day activities, included a team relay race, timed crunches and push-ups. Top honors went to a team from the 123rd Security Forces Squadron, which completed the challenge circuit in a time of 9:09.

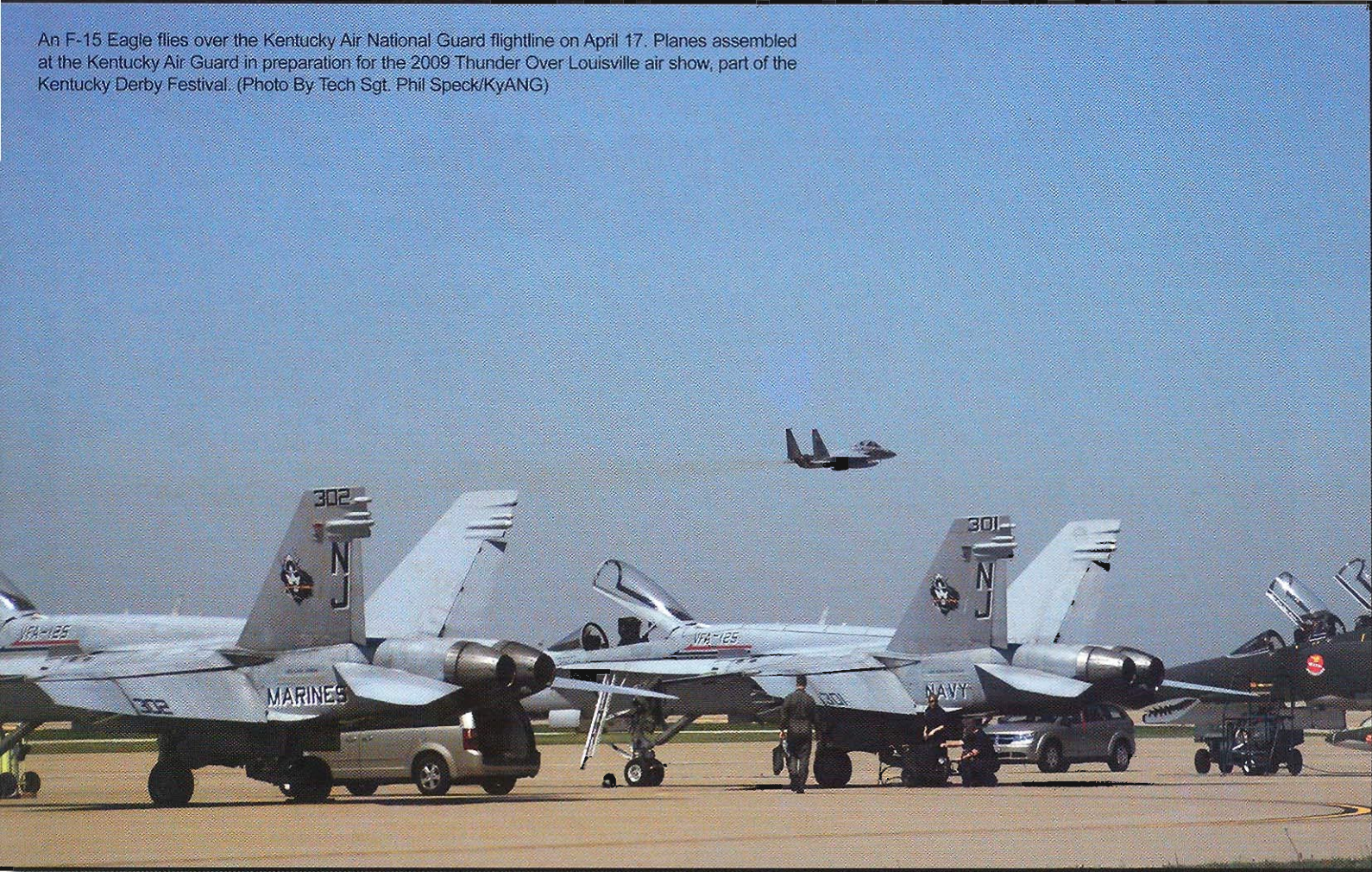


Cooper Institute as qualified personal trainers. They also manage the base fitness center.

The idea was to create an event that promoted teamwork and morale as much as it promoted personal fitness, while also adhering to all Air Force fitness and safety standards, organizers said.

"It was a huge success and could very possibly become an annual event," Lindsey said.

An F-15 Eagle flies over the Kentucky Air National Guard flightline on April 17. Planes assembled at the Kentucky Air Guard in preparation for the 2009 Thunder Over Louisville air show, part of the Kentucky Derby Festival. (Photo By Tech Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG)



# Best in the AF

## Staff Report

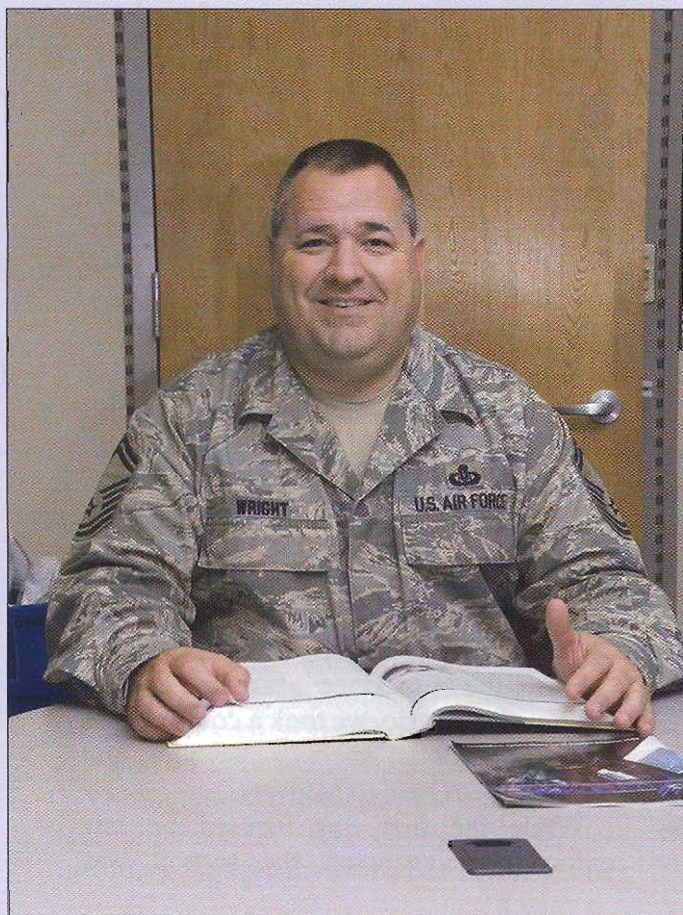
Senior Master Sgt. Barry Wright, the 123rd Airlift Wing's safety and occupational health manager, has been named one of the top safety professionals in the U.S. Air Force.

Air Mobility Command leaders recently selected Wright for its 2008 AMC Distinguished Individual Safety Award. The honor recognizes significant achievement in mishap prevention, officials said.

Wright previously won the same award at the Air National Guard level.

Among his many accomplishments in 2008, Wright developed a wing safety Web site that received numerous accolades during higher-headquarters assessments, which he further promoted across the Air Guard by lending expertise to four other wings. During a Unit Compliance Inspection, Wright also was recognized by the AMC inspector general for managing an exemplary safety program.

Wright volunteers several hours each week by conducting child car-seat inspections at local hospitals and supporting "train-the-trainer" courses for civilian safety professionals. He also is an active member of a Civil Air Patrol wing, emphasizing safe procedures to the unit's young cadets.



# Always ready, always there

*Catastrophic training exercise prepares Guard, agencies for disaster*

By Michael Pfaff

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MIDWAY, Ky. – Local, state and federal law enforcement and emergency management agencies participated in a two-day training exercise at Midway College Aug. 5-6.

The training exercise, designed and coordinated by the Kentucky National Guard, brought together multiple agencies to respond to several different terrorism scenarios, including hostile shooters and the detonation of an explosive device with the possibility of hazardous contaminants.

“Just being here together, we’ve accomplished a major goal,” said Brig. Gen. John Heltzel, emergency management director for Kentucky, and deputy

commander for the Kentucky National Guard.

“What we’ve seen is law enforcement shine. They took advantage of the opportunity to learn lessons, hone their skills and as a group, become better prepared to do deal with situations that we hope never happen; but we know we have to be prepared for,” he said.

Police officers from the Lexington and Versailles Police Departments, as well as Kentucky State Police, responded to situations at the campus that involved escalating hostile shooter scenarios in terms of tactical difficulty; a single shooter, two shooters, multiple shooters and multiple shooters using an explosive device.

Col. Stephen R. Hogan, counter drug coordinator for the Kentucky National Guard and the exercise commander, explained that the first three scenarios were based upon campus shooting incidents, such as Columbine and Virginia Tech, while the final scenario was pulled from the military’s experience in the Global War on Terror.

“I’m hopeful that the participants of the exercise get a tactical appreciation for problems they’ll see when dealing with real world facilities,” Hogan said. “The questions we ask are why would a shooter, in the Columbine sense, make an attack like this, what his motivations are and what indicators can be gleaned prior to anticipate an event like this and how to successfully mitigate the event once it takes place? For the fourth scenario, we took a couple pages out of the global enemy’s playbook and brought them here to Midway.”

While the first day focused on law enforcement agencies, the second was



Photo by Spc. Michael Pfaff/KYARNG

Two Emergency Response Unit team members with the Lexington Fayette Urban County Police provide security down a long hallway while teammates clear rooms during the Midway College 2009 Training Exercise in Midway, Ky., August 5.





Photo by Spc. Michael Platt/KYARNG

about emergency first responders and began with the simulated detonation of an explosive device at the Anne Hart Raymond Mathematics Building.

Kentucky National Guard Soldiers evacuated wounded victims from the scene to a nearby collection point where emergency medical personnel could treat them. The training was amped up when players were informed of the possibility of hazardous or toxic gas in the area.

"From an incident command and patient management situation, you really change tactics when you hear there's a hazardous device," said Steve Oglesby, the region 13 manager for the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management. "Radiological, biological, nuclear, all of the different types of risks you have there that are in a terrorist's toolbox."

The Kentucky Guard's 41st Civil Support Team investigated the bomb's detonation and determined that the threat was radiological. The victims were then decontaminated before taken to a triage location. When all victims were transported to local hospitals, the training scenario was dubbed complete.

Throughout each scenario, evaluators from law enforcement and emergency services, including the Federal Bureau of Investigations,



Photo by Tech Sgt. Phil Speck/KYARNG

▲ Firefighters from Midway, Lexington and Richmond Fire Departments decontaminate a victim during the exercise.



Photo by Spc. Michael Platt/KYARNG

◀ Sgt. 1st Class Leslie A. Duncan, 751st Troop Command battalion supply sergeant, gives Soldiers instructions on setting up the setup of the Joint Receptions Staging Onward Integration area.

analyzed and critiqued the performance of each unit involved. Heltzel said he was pleased with what he saw and what he heard from the evaluators.

“What I saw was true professionals doing what they were trained to do,” Heltzel said. “None of the comments by any of the evaluation staff were negative really. It was all about ways just to notch up [their] game.”

During the exercise, Kentucky National

Guardsmen role-played the terrorists, adding realism by using real-world tactics and techniques. Nursing and Homeland Security students attending Midway College acted as civilians and victims in the scenarios.

Midway College President William B. Drake, Jr., said the staff’s goal was to make sure the event went smoothly and all the agencies attending felt welcomed.

“Our staff has done the

legwork in making certain that we have created what’s very important for us here, which is a hospitable environment for visitors,” Drake said. “And, we do create that kind of environment for anyone who comes to this college. So it’s been in that spirit that we’ve created this event.”

The planning process for this training event began nearly nine months ago and involved a multitude of meetings and many agencies, more

than 80 Soldiers and 170 other personnel, coming together to make the event successful.

“We found out through this exercise there’s more capability in Kentucky law enforcement and emergency management than some people thought there was,” Oglesby said. “Our next task is to do our after action review and say, ‘what can we do to make it better next time – which is hopefully another exercise and not a real event.’”

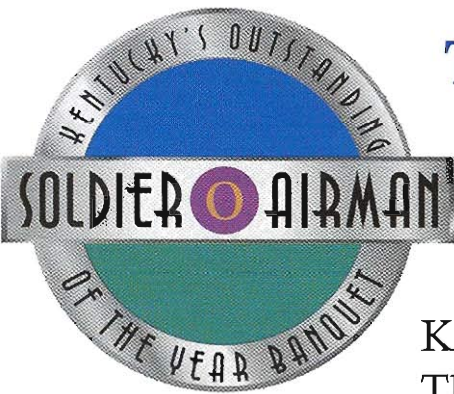
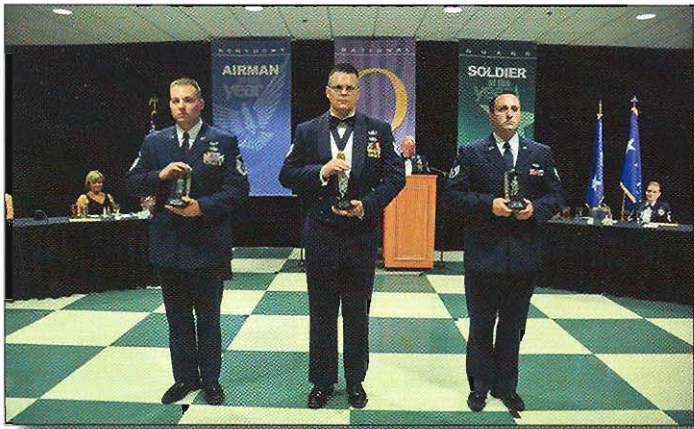


Photo by Spc. Michael Praff/KYARNG



Photo by Sgt. Caleb Riggs/KYARNG

- ▲ Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry carry a casualty to the triage area during the mass casualty portion of the Midway College 2009 Catastrophic Training Exercise in Midway, Ky., August 5.
- ▲ Emergency Management, Soldiers and other officials worked out of numerous operations centers during the week-long exercise.



**The Kentucky National Guard** named the 2009 Outstanding Soldiers and Airmen of the year during a ceremony at Churchill Downs Aug. 15, 2009.

The Soldiers were presented with Kentucky's Outstanding Soldier/Airman of the Year Ribbon and Kentucky's Enlisted Exceptional Performance Award. This year's recipients are:



**Staff Sgt. Patrick E. Nethery**  
123d Maintenance Squadron



**Tech. Sgt. Robert Woods**  
123d Explosive Ordnance Disposal



**Master Sgt. Larry Burba**  
123d Global Military Squadron, CRG



**Staff Sgt. Josuha L. White**  
Alpha Company, 206th Sapper



**Staff Sgt. Brandon Tedford**  
Headquarters, 238th Regiment



**1st Sgt. Terry Roark**  
Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry

## Engineers use new equipment, build roads at Artemus

By Maj. JB Richmond  
201st Engineer Executive Officer

The newly established Horizontal Construction Unit, 207th Engineer Company, based out of Hazard and Jackson, Ky., used its new equipment to construct a new road which will serve as the entrance to the Disney Training Site in Artemus, Ky.

The road will service the training site and residents who live in the valley.

During the mission, the 207th was required to first clear and grub trees from the roadway. Staff Sgt. Auden Clemons lead a team of 10 engineers to conduct the dangerous task which was accomplished without injury or incident.

Soldiers then began the second phase of the operation: cutting more than 39 feet from a hilltop and moving it to the lowlands to bring the roadway to a level grade.

During this operation, engineers lead by Sgt. Matthew Caudill, moved more than 10,000 cubic yards, installed four culverts, and compacted 15 tons of rock and dirt in less than three weeks.

"This was great mission for troop labor, we take a lot of pride in what we do," Caudill said.

The Soldiers utilized their 2009 Annual Training period in preparation for a 2010 deployment to Hohenfels, Germany where they will construct and maintain roads in support of the Joint Multinational Readiness Center.



▲ Pvt. Timothy Stidham loads dirt into dump trucks during Annual Training.



◀ The Dozer Blade Team from the 207th Engineer Company, Horizontal Construction Unit, stand in front of their equipment at Artemus. Soldiers are: Spc. Brady Gibson, Pvt. Timothy Stidham, Sgt. Russell Fox, Spc. Tommy Shrum, Sgt. Matthew Gilbert, Sgt. Brian Smith, Sgt. Matthew Caudill, Sgt. Chris Dixon, Sgt. Woodrow Hughes, Spc. Short and Spc. Michael Gabbard. (Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jason Owens, KYARNG)

## Kentucky Guard will never forget, honors fallen heroes for sacrifice

### Staff Report

Memorial ceremonies for several fallen Soldiers in Kentucky were held May 16 at cemeteries throughout the state.

The Soldiers were honored during the memorial ceremonies, including Master Sgt. Clinton Cubert, Sgt. Steven McGovern, Sgt. Darrin Potter, Sgt. James Sherrill, Sgt. Delmar White, and Pfc. Sammie Phillips.

Brig. Gen. John W. Heltzel said that these ceremonies are important to the remembrance of each Soldier.

"The meaning behind these ceremonies is to show we will never forget the sacrifices of the members of the National Guard, their service to their country and what it means to us as a community," he said.



Photo by Spc. Michael Plof/1199WGA

Kentucky Guardsmen place a memorial wreath on the grave of Staff Sgt. Delmar White May 16, at Camp Nelson Cemetery, during a We Will Not Forget Ceremony. White was killed Sept. 2, 2007 while on a convoy escort mission in Baghdad, Iraq. White was assigned to Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery.



## Kentucky OCS program graduates 17 new lieutenants

By Sgt. 1st Class Clint Wood  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**S**eventeen Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers were sworn in as second lieutenants during the 2009 Officer Candidate School graduation held at the State Capitol Aug. 16.

Families and friends pinned gold bars on the officer's dress uniforms. After the pinning ceremony, the officers rendered their first salutes too.

A rewarding experience for David A. Holloway.

"Something that I've been looking forward to for roughly eight weeks," he said, adding that being an officer was "a lifelong dream of his."

Holloway was among six Soldiers participating in the National Guard's Accelerated Officer Program that last eight weeks. The traditional officer program is 18 months long.

Class leader, Jonathan V. Strayer, said the traditional program started in January 2008 and challenged the

candidates both physically and mentally prior to them departing for Fort McClellan, Alabama in May.

"It was a long 18 months to say the least," Strayer said.

So what was the most challenging thing of the 18-month course?

For Matthew Speer, a former Marine who served in Ramadi and Fallujah, Iraq, it was the monthly Army Physical Fitness Test. He said this encouraged his fellow classmates to work out on their own time.

"You're in charge of your own training so the amount of work is just tremendous. It's almost its own part time job," he noted.

Having the graduation ceremony on the Capitol grounds was the reward.

It was absolutely amazing," he said.

"It was a culmination of a lot of hard work, stress sweat, and tears at times. So it's a huge relief and at the same time I'm immensely proud."



# The Kid Zone ...

Stories by Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson  
*Editor*

**For Kentucky National Guard children,** a deployment can be a scary and sad time when mom or dad has to pack up and go to war.

The Kentucky Guard kids you will meet in these next four pages know all too well what that's like.

How do they deal with it? How do they cope? These children are more than just sons and daughters of Kentucky National Guardsmen. They, too, are Citizen Soldiers, sacrificing their own time, feelings and even money to make the time away from their loved one easier.

These are their stories ... ones of success and patriotism laced with Unbridled Service, and spirit for the Kentucky Guard.



# Building bridges with bears

**T**hey come in hundreds of colors, each stuffed with love and stitched with care by 12-year-old Taylor Pace, an Honorary Kentucky Guardsman.

At six inches high, Tay Tay Buddy Bears are designed exclusively by Taylor for Kentucky National Guard children.

"I keep making bears in hope that I'm making deployment a wee bit easier for kids like me," Taylor said.

She began her project in 2006 when she found out her dad was going to deploy for a third time.

Taylor was heart-broken and spent many of night worrying about her father on his previous deployments.

So, to get her mind off of her dad's mission and to help other kids

who would find themselves in the same situation, Taylor began making the bears.

"The best part about making the bears is giving them away!

"Getting to see little kids smile and knowing that I helped do that," she said.

Taylor relies on donations from others and sales of her \$2 Tay Tay Bears to provide a bear for each deployed Soldier or Airmen's children.

Now that fabric is more expensive and most Wal-Marts don't sell fabric anymore, Taylor travels to Lexington to find the perfect materials for her bears.

"My mom and I spend a lot of time searching for fabric on sales and looking in the remnants bins," she said. "It's so much fun to go buy fabric!"

This fall, Tay-Tay bears make their public debut as Taylor and her mom Michele travel to festivals around Central Kentucky. Taylor will make one bear for a National Guard child for each bear she sells at a festival.

"Taylor sold 250 at the Daniel Boone Pioneer Festival in Winchester, so now there are 250 ready to be donated to the next deploying unit," Michele was proud to report.

"I will keep making bears as long as there are deployments" Taylor said.

"I know how hard they are and how scary it is for kids."

Taylor said each bear is different enough that it has its own personality -- just like the kids of the Kentucky Guard.





Photo by Staff Sgt. Gina Valle-Nelson/KYARRNG

Mattie Roach holds her Second Place Student Technology Leadership Program award and Flat-Daddy, a cardboard cut-out photo of her father, Lt. Col. G. Tom Roach Jr. Mattie took second place for her presentation about how Flat-Daddy got her through Tom's deployment.

## Flat-Daddy boosts confidence

**H**e went everywhere with his daughter ... to church, school, birthday parties and restaurants.

People probably looked at Lt. Col. G. Tom Roach a little funny. After all, he was flat.

Literally.

It was the only way that Tom's daughter, Mattie, could face the long days and nights while he was

on deployment in 2006 to Kuwait.

"Flat-Daddy is a cardboard cutout from the waist up of my Daddy," 11-year-old

Mattie said. "It helps me because when he's gone I know he's still in my heart and it reminds me he's still with me."

Not only did the cutout provide Mattie a sense of relief, but also was the perfect catalyst for a presentation Mattie gave in May, to the Student Technology Leadership Program, a state academic program that

provides learning and leadership opportunities for Kentucky youth.

More than 300 students participated in the State Championship held at Rupp Arena. Mattie placed second in her category with her project on Flat Daddy.

"It was very emotional to see her presentation," Tom said. "I know it's twice as hard on her and my wife when I'm gone."

"I do other things that will keep my mind off of my Dad working," said Mattie, "like after school projects. When he's deployed I need something to do."

The Heritage Elementary student was the only fourth grader to participate in her category. To top things off, she did the project by herself while the first place team had four students.

"They told me I was brave for doing it by myself," she said.

But doing the presentation on her own isn't what makes Mattie brave.

Both of her parents work for the Guard; her mom Sonia works in the Family Assistance Center and Tom is the commander of the 1204th Aviation Support Battalion.

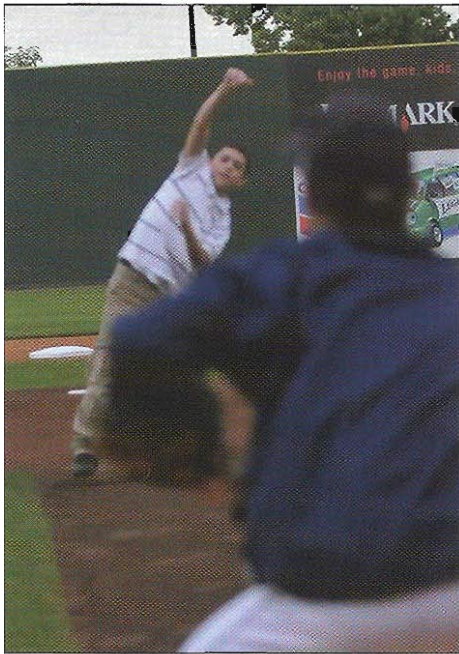
She shares her parents time with the Guard on a regular basis, but Mattie wouldn't have it any other way.

As for other Guard kids, Mattie had this advice: "Just stay strong. You will get through it," she said. "Try to keep your mind off of it, but it's okay to think about deployments and you can cry sometimes. I would just break down, but remember to stay strong."

"They are not leaving you because they don't love you it's what they have to do. And you should be proud."



# Baseball pitch seen 'round the world



Throwing the opening pitch at the Lexington Legends baseball game Aug. 28, wasn't the "hardest thing in the world," according to Hunter Corson. The 11-year-old son of Staff Sergeants Rob and Catherine Corson can think of other things that are much more difficult: deployments come to mind.

"I try to focus on school and get good grades," Hunter said. "I have my friends to help me and keep my mind off of it. They keep me out of trouble and they support me so I don't have to think about my mom being gone all the time."



Catherine's deployment with the Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team to Afghanistan was the catalyst for Military Missions Inc., to select Hunter to throw the opening pitch.

"I knew that Catherine was deployed to Afghanistan and I knew that her husband, Rob, was playing the role of mom and dad to three children during the deployment," said Beth Pennington, organizer and Military Missions member.

"When I asked them, they were thrilled to give their oldest son, Hunter, an opportunity to throw the opening pitch.

While most kids would be thrilled to be the center of attention at a sporting event, Hunter's favorite part of the night was seeing Catherine deliver a video message to her Family on the jumbotron before the game started.

"When I got to see my mom on the big screen, I cried," Hunter said. "That's the first time I've ever cried just for seeing somebody important in my Family."

Catherine said the video was a challenge due to internet connectivity and low bandwidth.

"It took forever for me to upload it, but the love for my Family and determination to show them my appreciation for their support kept me motivated to not give up on the video," she said via telephone from Afghanistan.

"We had no clue she was doing that," Rob said. "It was great

for the kids and me."

Although time differences and connectivity didn't allow Catherine to see the pitch live, she was able to watch it later thanks to Military Missions Inc.

"Within two hours of Hunter throwing the pitch, I was able to see it on a video that Beth posted to YouTube. It was awesome," Catherine said.

Catherine said she was proud her son was able to throw out the first pitch, but even more proud that he's also leaving a legacy in Afghanistan.

When Hunter found out she would deploy to Afghanistan, he took it upon himself to collect seeds for his mother to take with her to teach children how to plant.

"He calls it 'seeds of hope,'" Catherine said. "He wanted to be part of this deployment too because my last one was so long ago he doesn't remember it well. This was his way of making a difference in the lives of the kids here in Afghanistan," she said.

"We got five bags of seed to send over to the Afghanistan people. It's really special because if you teach the kids, they will pass it on and the next generation of Afghanistan people will know how to grow. I'm teaching thousands of people how to grow food," he said.



▲ Hunter Corson said his opening pitch at the Lexington Legends Game Aug. 28 was "caught by the wind and knocked off track," but he was excited and nervous to have the opportunity.

▲ Beth Pennington introduces Staff Sgt. Rob Corson and his children: Brooklynn, Logan and Hunter at the Lexington Legends game Aug. 28, as they watch a video message from their mom, Staff Sgt. Catherine Corson (pictured above right) deployed to Afghanistan.

# Staying Army Strong: Optimistic trooper epitomizes personal courage



**J**ustin Gilpin isn't scared of anything. He dreams of hanging out of a Blackhawk or flying in an Apache and says the height wouldn't bother him one bit.

Neither do the needles and tubes, or constant poking or prodding from doctors that Justin receives on a regular basis for treatment of testicular cancer.

"He hasn't cried, he has never said he's scared," his dad Randy Gilpin said. "I just don't know where he gets the strength."

Justin's strength to make it through chemo treatments comes from within -- he has the energy of a whirlwind and the strength of an ox derived from his own personal courage that he will fight the monster that tears away at his body.

"I don't get scared easy," he said.

A true fighter, Justin says he thinks "I'm going to get through it quick."

Kentucky National Guard officials, including Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Kentucky's adjutant general, visited Justin during a recent stay at the UK Children's Hospital in Lexington.

"I was told his one desire in life is to be a Soldier," Tonini said. "We did our very best to get as close as we could to make that dream come true.

"His eyes lit up and it was a very special experience for me and I suspect it was a special occasion for him as well," Tonini said.

"One of the most rewarding things I am able to do as adjutant general is to spend a little bit of my time doing something that I believe will really

make a difference in a young person's life," he said.

Tonini presented Justin with an Honorary Guardsman certificate, military uniforms, coins and other Guard keepsakes including autographed NASCAR and IRL items signed by the National Guard drivers Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Dan Wheldon.

***"If you need inspired, talk with our newest Honorary Kentucky Guardsman"***

*- Chaplain Bill Draper*

While many Guardsmen spend days with recruiters getting into the Guard, Family Readiness Group Leader Amanda Herald, of Detachment 1, 617th Military Police Company, based in Pikeville, Ky., said the process to make Justin an Honorary Guardsman happened very quickly.

It all began when Justin's nurse Annie Lee mentioned to her young patient that her husband, Timothy, was an MP in the Kentucky Guard. Justin wanted a set of dog tags, so Annie contacted the FRG to see what could be done.

"We decided we'd get him a whole uniform with nametapes and patches and everything," Amanda said. "So, I contacted Freddie Maggard to see if he could work up an Honorary Guardsman certificate. It all happened so quickly."

That was on a Wednesday. By Saturday Aug. 1, the Lee Family, Amanda and her husband, Spc. Anthony Herald, and Kentucky Guard dignitaries converged on the Children's Hospital to make Justin a Guardsman.

"I will never forget the smile on his face or the pride his Family had when Major General Tonini presented him with the Honorary Guardsman certificate," said Community Outreach Director Freddie Maggard.

"We went there to present Justin with coins, certificates and uniforms. When we left, we were the ones who received the most," Maggard said.

Chaplain Bill Draper describes Justin as a "surprisingly optimistic young trooper."

"If you need to be inspired, talk with our newest Honorary Kentucky Guardsman," he said.

Justin's parents say his attitude is what keeps them going.

"It's kind of just a day-by-day thing," Randy said. "You never know when a fever or something is going to end you up in the hospital for weeks."

Justin was diagnosed in August 2008 after a bike accident landed him in the hospital with stitches and staples.

"He had come to me a couple weeks before and thought something could be wrong, but we thought it was just puberty," Randy said.

"But when he went to have his staples removed, the doctors ran some tests and found a cancerous tumor," he said.

Since the initial tumor, others have been found in Justin's abdomen and kidney. He's had numerous surgeries and treatments.

"His chemo and radiation treatments are hardest on us," Randy said of he and his wife Renee.

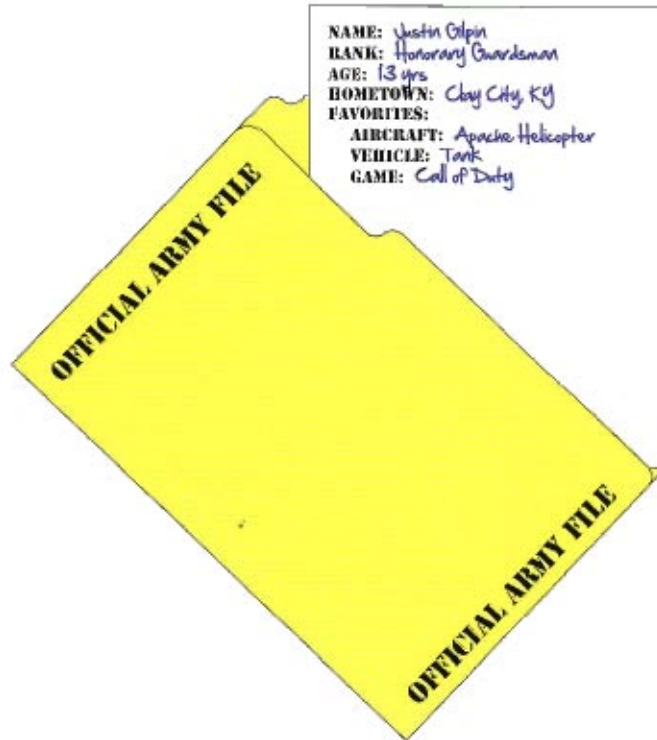
"But you haven't seen anything until you've seen him in his uniform.

"It was a happy time in Justin's life when that happened," Randy said of the presentation. "It's neat to think that General Tonini would come all that way to see Justin just because of the interest he has."

Randy and Renee know that they aren't the only couple in the Bluegrass with an ill child.

"Stay strong like your kids," Randy advises parents of other sick children. "That's what keeps me going with Justin. I have problems myself and he makes a difference with them."

Just a testament to Justin's Unbridled Spirit he has within.



➤ Opposite page: Justin Gilpin, 13, holds his Honorary Guardsman Certificate, presented by Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Aug. 1, at the UK Children's Hospital. Pictured behind him are his parents, Randy and Renee Gilpin.

➤ Justin Gilpin poses with Kentucky National Guard Community Outreach Director Freddie Maggard, and Guardsmen: Spc. Timothy Lee, Spc. Anthony Herald, Col. Rod Hayes; Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini and Maj. Bill Draper.

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# Bike team rides for a cure

Story and photos by Spc. Michelle Waters

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FRANKFORT, Ky.— Ten members of the Kentucky Army National Guard Family cycled more than 900 miles of the Bluegrass in the 2009 Multiple Sclerosis - 150 Bike Race for Charity held this summer.

The race began June 7 at Churchill Downs in Louisville, and ended at Keenland in Lexington June 8.

The Kentucky National Guard team raised \$2,810 to support research of finding a cure for MS, a chronic disabling disease that attacks the central nervous system and affects 400,000 Americans.

This was the second year members of the Kentucky Guard participated in the event.

"I would like to challenge the Kentucky Army and Air Guard members to come together for this event so that we have 100 riders or more for the 2010 MS-150," said team member Maj. Joe Hudson.

The bikers train for a solid six weeks prior to the race logging 20-25 miles three days per week.

Organizers of the race ensure that participants are provided with multiple routes to accommodate riders of all levels.

"It provides us with a great sense of accomplishment when we all meet at the finish," Hudson said.

Members of the team also participated in the Ride for the Red race to support the American Red Cross in August.

Members of the 2009 team are: Col. Rondal Turner, Maj. Tamara Hurst, Maj. Joe Hudson, Maj. John Blackburn, Capt. Chris Hettinger, Sgt. 1st Class Steven Link, Sgt. 1st Class Diana Mortenson, Staff Sgt. John Bartram, Sgt. Mark Creech, and Macaulay Hurst.



Photo by Spc. Michelle Waters, 133rd MPA Detachment

National Guard Bike Team members: Sgt. 1st Class Diana Mortenson; Col. Rondal Turner; Maj. Tamara Hurst; Staff Sgt. John Bartram; Maj. John Blackburn and Maj. Joe Hudson.