

**KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON MILITARY AFFAIRS**  
**ANNUAL FULL COMMISSION MEETING**

Microsoft Teams  
December 7, 2023  
10:00 AM EST

**DRAFT Minutes DRAFT**

**A. Call to Order and Welcome**

1. Call to Order/Welcome – BG (R) Jim Iacocca, Chair
  - i. Called to order at 10:00 a.m.
2. Roll Call – Stacey Shane
  - i. Executive Committee Present: BG (Ret) Jim Iacocca (chair); Whitney Allen; Brig. Gen. (R) Steven Bullard; MG Hal Lamberton; Lori Harper
  - ii. Other Participants – Governor Andy Beshear (video); John Hicks (Governor’s Cabinet); Coulter Minix (Governor DC Office); Jon Wertzler and Karen Yates (Economic Development); Eric Friedlander and Julianne Gorda (Health and Family Services); Gordon Slone and Sandra Gardner (Energy & Environment); Mary Elizabeth Harrod and Jill Cook (Personnel); Holly Johnson and Laura Gillis (Finance); Rebecca Goodman, DJ Wasson, Ray Perry and Lisa Brown (Public Protection); Mike Hancock (Transportation); Stefania Green and Marty Hammons (Education & Labor); Rep. Walker Thomas (General Assembly); COL (R) Tim Cocanougher (Attorney General); Josh Keats and Mike Sunseri (Homeland Security); Lindy Casebier and Cindy Brown (Tourism, Arts & Heritage); BG (Ret) Mike Ritchie (ESGR); COL (P) Peggy McManus (HRC); COL Fred Dente (V Corps); COL Chris Midberry (101<sup>st</sup> Airborne and Fort Campbell Garrison); COL Chris Roberts, Chip Reynolds (Cadet Command); COL Fred Hockett (USAREC); COL Steven Dowgielewicz (1<sup>st</sup> TSC); MG Bryan Howay (First Army Division East); Nels Dolan (100 TD); COL Lindsey Halter (Reserve Aviation Command); COL Dave Spess (84 TC); COL Chris Ricci (Fort Knox Garrison and Adjutant General of the Army); Joel Kallenberger and Sarah Marko (BGAD); CPT Heather Mattern (Coast Guard Sector Ohio Valley); Brandon Brummett (Army Corps of Engineers); Maj. Joshua Jaburg (Kentucky National Guard); Dr. Dallas Kratzer and Stacey Shane (KCMA); Keith Jackson and Mona Womack (Justice & Public Safety); COL (Ret) Jerry Cecil (CASA Emeritus); Richard St. Onge (Sen. Mitch McConnell); Brig Gen (Ret) Rob Givens (Sen. Rand Paul), Brian Smith (Cong. Brett Guthrie), Jessica Zeh (LRC-VMAPP); Frank Jemley (Kentucky Association of Manufacturers); Donietta Hawkey (USDOL-VETS); Juan Renaud and Dwayne Edwards (KDVA); BG (Ret) Ben Adams (Joint Executive Council of Veterans Organizations); Corey Ann Jackson, Jamie Hall and Jana Felts (KDMA); LTC (Ret) Tom Krupp (University of Louisville); Andrew Dietz; MAJ Haggerty; CPT Ethan Mosely; CPT Bryan Suazo; 1LT Siedlecki; Matt Sharman; Eleazar Psycher; Maria McClure; J.D. Schumaker; Randy Sommerville; Greg Collingsworth; Michelle Griffin; Larry Lee; Pamela Angel
3. Approval of Minutes – December 1, 2022
  - i. Motion by Lori Harper, second by Josh Keats, passes unanimously as presented

**B. Governor Andy Beshear**

Gov. Beshear welcomed all participants through video, text as follows:

Hi everyone, it’s Andy. Thank you for inviting me to join you today. I am honored to give my personal thanks to you, the heroes who serve and protect our Commonwealth and our country. We thank those that sacrifice their time, their health, and especially those who sacrifice their lives. Sadly, this year we experienced the loss of 14 Fort Campbell soldiers in two devastating helicopter crashes. Each one was a child of God. They are irreplaceable, and missed by their families and their community. We pray for all those lost, and we pray for all those who continue to serve. Each of you are invaluable members of Team Kentucky. Together, we’re committed to building that better, brighter Kentucky for our military personnel and their families. Kentucky is one of our nation’s strongest military communities. We host two of our nation’s most well known and respected bases, Fort Campbell and Fort Knox. Both play a major role in our nation’s defense and both have bright futures. As many of you know, Britainy has taken an active interest in the education and well-being of our military children at these bases, visiting many of the schools there. She’s got a lot of their artwork hanging in her office as we speak. Kentucky is also home to the Blue Grass Army Depot, a leader in the Army’s logistics system, supporting Army installations east of the

Mississippi River. Coast Guard Sector Ohio Valley manages our nation's inland waterways. And we have the best National Guard in the country. From the tornadoes in the west to the flooding in the east, and every other challenge we've faced, our soldiers and airmen have shown up in strength, delivering food and water, helping families find their loved ones, and performing life-saving rescue missions. We are proud of our Reservists serving in Kentucky and the service they provide to our nation. We've had a great year of moving things forward together. We successfully eradicated the chemical weapons stockpile at the Bluegrass Army Depot. We connected more military families with quality child care. We're building a new Veterans' Center in Bowling Green. We passed legislation to simplify the job certification process for military spouses, and we continue to grow our Kentucky Purple Star Schools program, with more schools equipped to provide military children with the resources they need. I look forward to continue working together to make Kentucky the most military-friendly state in the country. We're not just talking about building a better Kentucky, we're actually doing it. As a governor, and also as a dad of two kids I love more than anything, I want to build a Commonwealth where no matter how big they dream, every Kentucky child can pursue their dream right here at home. With such a bright future ahead of us, I want you to know that there's something I never forget – that we're only able to have this moment, this opportunity, because of you, our service members. We are home of the free because of the brave. Thank you for all you do for our people. God bless you and our Commonwealth. God bless the United States of America.

## C. Legislative Updates

### 1. Federal

- i. Letter from Senator Mitch McConnell was read, praising commission efforts.
- ii. Text of letter: Dear Friends: We gather today to celebrate another remarkable year of partnership that further enshrined Kentucky's reputation as a first-class environment for servicemembers and their families to live, work and transition to civilian life. I greatly appreciate this opportunity to share a few thoughts on our collaboration this past year.

First and foremost, I would like to salute the numerous servicemembers from Kentucky who deployed to confront rising global threats. Kentucky's units have stepped up time and time again when called upon to defend our great Nation, and our Commonwealth couldn't be prouder of their efforts this year. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the harrowing loss of life in March and November of this year. These tragedies serve as a sobering reminder to all Americans that the price of freedom is great, and we must never forget the debt we owe to those who pay the ultimate price for our country.

This year also provided many opportunities to celebrate numerous accomplishments that should make every Kentuckian proud. The 123<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing received its 20<sup>th</sup> Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, a rare achievement reserved for only the most prestigious units in the United States Air Force.

Additionally, we collectively achieved numerous critical improvements to our already impressive installations. At Fort Campbell, we resourced the Army to renovate all remaining Vietnam-era barracks, dramatically improving the quality of life for soldiers. We partnered to increase staffing at the Fort Knox Ireland Army Health Clinic, which I am told has dramatically reduced wait times for soldiers and their families. The Blue Grass Army Depot accomplished the final destruction of the U.S. Chemical Weapons Stockpile, culminating a decades-long initiative I was proud to spearhead.

With global threats on the rise and demand for American Leadership never greater, much will continue to be asked of Kentucky's servicemembers and their families. 2024 will be a pivotal year, and we must rise to the occasion together. I remain committed to using my position as Senate Republican Leader to bolster Kentucky's military installations and defense communities and support our brave servicemembers with the resources they need to protect our nation.

As always, I want to thank the KCMA's executive committee. It is an honor to stand shoulder to shoulder with you all in advocating for Kentucky to ensure it remains the best place in the country for our servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

Sincerely, Mitch McConnell, United States Senator

### 2. State

- i. Remarks by Rep. Walker Thomas; Chair, House Standing Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, Public Protection, focused on the General Assembly's support for military servicemembers and families. Rep. Thomas said he appreciates all that KCMA and the prestigious attendees here today do. It's so tragic when we lose servicemembers, as we have done so recently this year, he said. He reviewed highlights from the 2023 Kentucky General Assembly, including House Bill (HB 1), lowering the state income tax rate to four percent starting in January 2024. We hope to keep that going down to, eventually, zero percent, which will help our servicemembers and retirees, he said. We

passed HB 157, working with MG Lamberton, the National Guard and Emergency Management on passing the structure for a statewide Urban Search & Rescue Team, with, hopefully, funding to follow in the 2024 session. Our big occupational licensing compact was the new Teachers' Compact, he said, helping military spouses. Gen. Bullard will explain later our occupational licensing compact goals for the 2024 session. Senate Bill (SB) 54 expanded the use of KEES money to allow the students of military families who are transferred out of state to retain the use of earned KEES funding. He also praised the passage of SB 47, legalizing medical marijuana, with broad support from military veterans, particularly those with PTSD. We will continue to study this issue as it doesn't go into effect immediately – we have the 2024 session to further evaluate and refine it. He said he looks forward to the 2024 session, and added please don't hesitate to call him if issues arise, his cell phone is also his primary phone. When it comes to the military, if needed we can quickly craft and assess needed legislation and he'll find the right person to carry it. Chair Iacocca praised Rep. Thomas for his quick actions and willingness to stay consistently engaged.

#### D. KCMA Update

Brig. Gen. (R) Steven Bullard, Executive Director

Bullard's presentation focused on the activities of KCMA and the military in Kentucky over the past year. He noted that KCMA's mission, guided by Kentucky statute, addresses matters of military significance by advising and synchronizing efforts with key stakeholders; protecting and growing our military installations and activities; expanding its defense-related industry; and improving the quality of life for our service members, veterans, and their families. The desired end result is that Kentucky achieves its full potential in supporting and partnering with our military while creating enduring economic opportunity for the Commonwealth. He noted that Kentucky is an overwhelmingly Army state – 94 percent of DOD assets in Kentucky are Army-related. The Coast Guard Sector Ohio Valley is also a significant presence, but they are not a DOD asset – they fall under the Department of Homeland Security.

He reviewed the makeup of the commission, noting KCMA currently has two full-time state employees in himself and his executive assistant, Stacey Shane. We also have Senior Associate Dr. Dallas Kratzer, who is our contract manager for our DOD grant to the University of Louisville. The Executive Committee is partially appointed by the Governor and meets quarterly to provide advice and insight to the Executive Director and his team. There are five At-Large Members appointed by the Governor, including the Chair and Vice Chair. Ex-officio members are the KCMA Executive Director, the Secretary of Economic Development, the Adjutant General of Kentucky, and the Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs.

The full commission meets annually and consists of Kentucky's Cabinet Secretaries, major military installations and organizations, the Executive Director of the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the Chief Justice, the Kentucky Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Chair, Kentucky Civilian Aides to the Secretary of the Army, the Kentucky Congressional Delegation, and the Chairs of the Senate and House Veterans, Military Affairs and Public Protection (VMAPP) committees.

Bullard briefly reviewed the past year through the lens of KCMA's five strategic plan elements:

**Protect and Grow DOD Installations and Activities:** Bullard noted that our "Prime Directive" is to Protect and Grow DOD Installations and Activities. Kentucky has a military community valued well over \$20B. We have numerous partners in this role, at the local, state and federal levels, including, but not limited to, the Knox Regional Development Alliance, the Campbell Strong Defense Alliance, the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, the Kentucky General Assembly and Kentucky's Congressional Delegation.

Bullard highlighted recent successes, including:

- Chemical weapons eradication success at Blue Grass Army Depot
- Army BGAD Future Missions Feasibility Study
- Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-Plus
- KYNG AUSA Outstanding State Command Recognition

- 123<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing record tying 20<sup>th</sup> AF Outstanding Unit Award
- 123<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing Meritorious Unit Award
- New 3-star General Rank for Army Recruiting Command, Fort Knox
- Real Estate Disclosure for Fort Campbell & Fort Knox proximity, through partnership with the Kentucky REALTORS® Association and the Heart of Kentucky Realtors
- Continuing service as Co-Chair, State Advisors Council, Association of Defense Communities

**Expand the Economic Impact of Kentucky’s Defense-Related Industry:** Bullard stressed that the Commonwealth more than doubled its DOD-related economic growth since FY 2008, to well over \$20B.

- 56,290 Kentuckians in 2022 received direct DOD paychecks
  - Military personnel, retirees, DOD contractors
  - \$13.9B in direct DOD payments in 2021 (up from \$5.4B in 2008)

Bullard noted that this information is from the latest Defense Spending By State report released by DOD this Fall. Note that Kentucky is 13th in the nation in direct DOD spending for personnel and contracts, at \$13.9B. He stressed this figure does not include operations and maintenance spending. We’ve tried to quantify that amount, working closely with the University of Louisville’s economic research function and DOD itself. The reality, per DOD and U of L, is that it’s literally impossible to specifically quantify this amount. Generally speaking, operations and maintenance runs up to double personnel and contract spending. However, the amounts vary greatly from year-to-year, quarter-to-quarter, and execution of this spending by military components is often spread out over multiple geographic regions due to contingency response and ongoing worldwide commitments. DOD has settled on personnel and contract spending as the most accurate way to assess rankings. They have asked us not to even try to speculate on specific operational spending. At any one point, it would simply be a guess. We do know that Kentucky plays way above our weight in defense spending and mission execution, Bullard said.

Kentucky is also primed for growth, he stressed. Fort Knox is expanding usage of its missions/range operations, including the opening in Spring 2024 of their new Digital Air Ground Integration Range (DAGIR). We continue to seek, and anticipated acquiring, a new Air Defense Artillery Mission of 500+ soldiers. We’re working with the Army on future mission assessment for Blue Grass Army Depot, with 14 new mission sets under evaluation, including a potential Hyper-Scale Data Center through Bechtel National, the potential for 155-mm artillery ammunition production and a central security monitoring station capability. We are still first on the list for Army Future Vertical Lift to Fort Campbell in the 2030 timeframe. We have multiple partnerships with chambers, associations and state/federal agencies. The Kentucky Air National Guard is now fully operational in their new C-130J aircraft, and the Army National Guard has stood up a new Division Artillery mission. We continue to develop the potential for the economic development related expansion of airfields at Bluegrass Station and in Elizabethtown. The Army has announced that Army Recruiting Command will go to a 3-star level command at Fort Knox. Kentucky’s new Purple Star Schools program, coordinated under the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, is growing fast, with over 71 schools up and running and great partners like the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services; the Department of Education; Kentucky First Lady Brittainy Beshear; and KCMA executive committee member Heather French Henry. We expect exponential growth over the next few years. We have a lot of great things going, Bullard stressed, noting he’s fortunate to co-chair the state Advisors Council for the Association of Defense Communities, a council of all the military advisors to the governors around the country. He noted the council works closely with the Defense State Liaison Office and other DoD offices. He showed a slide on DOD’s investment in the Commonwealth, noting it shows how we play way above our weight in Kentucky, 13th nationally in direct DOD spending (up from 14<sup>th</sup> last year), 8th by GDP.

Bullard shared some quick facts about the military in Kentucky:

- Fourth largest industry sector in Kentucky by employment
  - Automotive – 103,500 employees
  - Distribution & Logistics – 91,800 employees
  - Food & Beverage – 57,500 employees

- Defense – 56,290 employees
- Fort Knox is the sixth largest urban community in Kentucky
  - Certified as a Kentucky city
  - Daytime population of 26,000 soldiers, civilians and family
  - 109,000 acres across Bullitt, Hardin, and Meade Counties
  - U.S. Department of Treasury's Kentucky Bullion Depository (adjacent)
  - Neighboring Glendale site hosts the new BlueOvalSK Battery Park
    - \$5.8 billion, 5,000 new jobs joint venture to produce advanced batteries for future Ford and Lincoln electric vehicles
- Fort Campbell is home to the Army's most-deployed contingency forces
  - Between 400-to-500 soldiers transition from the Army back to the civilian community on a monthly basis

**Develop and Implement the Model for Transitioning Service Members/Veterans/Spouses:** Bullard stressed there are great partnerships here as well, especially with the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, the Education and Labor Cabinet and Workforce Innovation Board, and the Veterans Affairs offices in Louisville and Lexington. Defense State Liaison Office is a tremendous partner, as previously noted. We work closely with the Council of State Governments and the General Assembly, and Bullard continues to serve as state commissioner for the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), which allows schools to say "yes" to military children during DOD-directed moves. He remains on the National Executive Committee as chair of their national compliance committee. DOD Office for Economic Adjustment federal grant programs. This year KCMA completed their \$2M Partnership with the University of Louisville to create U of L's Cyber Certification program, and has started a follow-up \$1.7M grant with U of L, at the request of DOD, called Kentucky COMPETES (Collaborative Opportunities to Modernize Practices, Engagement, Teams, and the Economy for Success). KCMA continues to support occupational licensing initiatives in partnership with the DOD State Liaison Office, the Council of State Governments and the Kentucky General Assembly, which you'll hear more about later in this presentation.

**Establish Kentucky as the Most Military Friendly State and Grow Veterans/Retiree Population:** Bullard said the commission continues a highly effective partnership with Kentucky General Assembly, working on initiatives to attract/retain veterans. State legislative successes from 2023 include:

- Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact
- Cosmetology Licensure Compact
- KDVA funding for Bowling Green Veterans Center (\$16.63M)
- Residency requirement removed for KDVA Veterans Cemeteries
- Creation of Kentucky Urban Search & Rescue Program (KDMA)
- Creation of Kentucky Battlefield Preservation Fund
- Resolution in support of U.S. Army V Corps motor vehicle licensing

Bullard said many new military enlistees don't have a driver's license – they've never needed one, especially if they're from an urban community. If their first assignment is overseas, it can be very difficult for them to obtain a license. We're still working through the details, as it's complicated; however, we are optimistic for some level of success in the near future, he stressed.

Bullard said KCMA will continue to work on initiatives to attract/retain veterans in the 2023 session, including:

- Ease occupational licensing restrictions
  - Social Work Compact
  - Massage Therapy Compact
  - Emergency Medical Services Compact
  - Dental and Dental Hygienist Compact
- Kentucky Purple Star Schools enabling legislation (Rep. Chris Fugate)
- Add National Guard/Reserve to MIC3 protection (Rep. Steve Bratcher)

- Add Space Force to military component definition (Rep. Bratcher)
- Space Force and Legion of Merit motor vehicle plates (Rep. Bratcher)
- KRS name update for Army Reserve Aviation Command
- Full military retiree income tax exemption (Rep. Thomas)
- Military vehicle sales tax loophole fix (Rep. Bratcher)

**Communicate Strategically and Gain Advocacy:** Bullard stressed KCMA’s strong partnerships, including the Commonwealth’s Military installations, state and federal agencies, the defense industry, state associations and chambers of commerce, the Association of Defense Communities (ADC), the Joint Executive Council of Veterans Organizations (JECVO), the EKV Kentucky Center for Veterans Studies (KCVS), the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) Metrics and Veterans Committees, and more.

Additionally, Bullard said KCMA continues to support the effort by House Veterans, Military Affairs & Public Protection (VMAPP) Chair Rep. Walker Thomas to create a full military retiree income tax exemption. This effort has been unsuccessful for several decades now, and it’s too long a story to fully explain here. However, we keep the concept alive in hopes of finding an opening, he stressed, noting that Kentucky is currently on path to eliminate the state income tax entirely by the target date of 2031.

Second, Rep. Steve Bratcher of Elizabethtown is working to fix a military vehicle sales tax loophole that taxes military personnel who transfer previously purchased vehicles to ownership in Kentucky. This can become an expensive tax for those who, for example, purchase a luxury vehicle such as a BMW or Mercedes, at a reduced rate overseas. Our concern is that it creates a disincentive for those personnel to choose to live in Kentucky, so it merits evaluation.

We’re excited about and support an effort by the Kentucky Department of Education and the U.S. Army Cadet Command at Fort Knox to create six new Army Junior ROTC positions with the Department of Education in Frankfort, Bullard said. This is a pilot program by Cadet Command, which manages Army school-based accession and training programs nationally. If it succeeds in Kentucky, they’ll try to export it nationwide. The need is that Kentucky has 69 Army JROTC programs. In a rural state like Kentucky, they’re so spread out no school districts qualify for a Director of Army Instruction (DAI) to standardize instruction within a district/state. That is only funded when a district has five or more programs (same service component). The proposal is to put six DAIs, officer and enlisted, in place at the Department of Education in Frankfort to manage Kentucky’s statewide Junior ROTC program. There is a fiscal impact, which makes it more challenging to achieve. We look forward to evaluating the proposal within the Beshear administration and the General Assembly. The best part, Bullard added, is that DOD could allow this team to also standardize the other service Junior ROTC programs in the state (Navy, Marines, Air Force).

## **E. Military Activity Reports**

(associated slides are available at <https://kcma.ky.gov/About%20Us/Pages/Meetings.aspx>)

### **1. U.S. Army Garrison Fort Campbell**

- i. COL Chris Midberry, Fort Campbell Garrison Commander, on behalf of 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) Commanding General MG Brett Silvia, said child-care assistance and assistance for transitioning soldiers are their main challenges. Lack of qualified child-care providers is an impediment for spouses to find employment, he stressed. This challenge will be exacerbated in the Spring as one of their child development centers will be down for needed renovation, he said. That will cost the installation 200 child-care spots for the next year and a half. Kentucky is already helping by adoption, as Gen. Bullard noted earlier, of Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-PLUS, a significant program. Tennessee has not yet adopted it, which is a priority for us. We encourage any assistance at the state level. (At this point, Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Eric Friedlander weighed in by chat to offer his Cabinet’s services to address any issues, and Bullard followed up by saying he would link them together, which he promptly did through email) COL Midberry reiterated Bullard’s earlier points about soldiers transitioning from Fort Campbell. He noted that about 35 percent of these soldiers remain local, which trends 10 percent or more higher than

the normal Army installation experience. This shows their soldiers and families do want to stay in the local area, he stressed. Well over half are married with children, and seek immediate employment. We ask Kentucky do anything they can to support these soldiers. He expressed concern that the counties around Fort Campbell do not accept the Uniform Residential Landlord Tenant Act. Fifteen Kentucky cities have adopted it, as has the Tennessee legislature for statewide implementation. We ask Kentucky consider doing the same. Fort Campbell is always busy as the most deployed Army elements in the nation. We're currently swapping out our 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team from the European Theater with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, a big movement. Also, on 1 November, the Division assumed the Immediate Response Force roll, meaning we must be ready to move on 18-hours notice, similar to the role the 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne Corps/82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division has had for years. We have assumed this mission from them, which is a big change for us.

## 2. **U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC)**

- i. COL Fred Hockett, Deputy Commanding Officer for Support, discussed the USAREC mission overall, including physical elements, and the transition approved by the Army for restructuring the command over the next five years. This will include raising the Commanding General's rank to Lieutenant General (3-star) and better tying together recruiting-related elements across the broad Army enterprise. There will be more to come on this effort as it is implemented, he stressed. He also noted their efforts to incorporate innovation in recruiting enterprises, and better analyze/absorb lessons learned, such as the effect of policy implementation and unemployment on recruiting efforts. We also want to change how recruiters come into the organization. Right now they are voluntary and spend three year tours. Our intent, with Secretary of the Army, support, is to move towards a dedicated, specialized workforce with the potential for soldiers to directly enlist into this Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). We plan to evaluate civilian models for evaluating talent. This will affect how we prospect for soldiers, in the digital market, high schools and the broader labor market. We want to turn our legacy efforts on their head and work out better methods across the force. How can Kentucky help? You can help us gain meaningful access to Kentucky high schools. Some schools severely restrict access, for example, only 8-8:15 a.m. on alternate Thursdays. This happens not only in Kentucky, but around the country – we are not given attractive times for access. He also discussed their programs to work with business to support military transition. Our Partnership for Youth Success and our Public-Private Partnership (P3) programs to support participation in the U.S. Army Reserve are excellent programs with high success rates, and we'd love to connect anyone interested. Lastly, we want to do anything we can to partner with you to promote the concept that military careers are attractive options, not just colleges or trade schools. We find that long-term military enlistment is a very positive factor for success in the civilian community. It's a springboard for future success. We also ask for any support for the Soldier Referral Program. Soldiers entering the Army through the Soldier Referral Program succeed at a 6-to-1 versus 10-to-1 level for those who enter through general prospecting. Referring soldiers get a ribbon and can get advanced promotion up to Specialist.

## 3. **U.S. Army V (Fifth) Corps**

- i. COL Fred Dente, Chief of Staff, said V Corps is truly one headquarters split between two locations, Fort Knox and Poznan, Poland. He briefly discussed how they support troops rotating forward to Europe on 6-to-9 months deployments, which will continue for the near term. We have sought and gained authorization for one-year, unaccompanied tours to Poland for 235 soldiers, with the goal of moving that to two-year accompanied tours. It is important to us to maintain a forward presence in Poland; however, our main headquarters effort will continue to be at our Fort Knox headquarters. Our priority continues to be improving these lines of communication. Our European mission is exciting, he said. We are the first enduring tactical headquarters in Europe since the drawdown at the end of the Cold War. V Corps also had this mission during the Cold War era. We are primarily tasked with assuring our allies on the eastern flank of NATO, deterring Russian aggression anywhere in NATO territory, and building interoperability and securing force assistance with our NATO partners across the eastern flank. Chair Iacocca noted that with the release of promotion holds under the rank of 4-star general, the Army has nominated MG Charles Costanza, currently Special Assistant to the Commanding General, Army Forces Command, at Fort Moore, Georgia, to the V Corps commanding general role, vice LTC Joseph Kolasheski. Do you know when that change of command will occur, he asked COL Dente? We do not know at this time, COL Dente said.

## 4. **U.S. Army Cadet Command**

- i. COL Chris Roberts, U.S. Army Cadet Command G-3 Director of Operations, began by sending the regards of Commanding General MG Andy Munera, who is currently TDY and unable to participate. He highlighted the recurring event began this year, National Raider Challenge, a Junior ROTC event where 240 teams from across the nation, with families, came to Fort Knox to compete and to learn the Army story, with outstanding support from the Fort Knox Garrison and tenant units. Raider Challenge 2024 will be from 24-27 October next year, and everyone is welcome to come observe the activities. Deputy Director of Operations Mr. Chip Reynolds took up the brief from there, saying one of the command's biggest concerns is the lack of a full military retirement income tax exemption in Kentucky, which has negatively impacted their ability to recruit and retain military retirees for DOD civilian job opportunities. All our surrounding states except Virginia have the full exemption in place. While its encouraging to see the move to a zero-state income tax state by 2030, we really need help with that now. It is a brain drain for us. Right now Kentucky is not competing very well. Chair Iacocca asked for Bullard's comments. Bullard noted that there is one senior leader in the Kentucky General Assembly in particular who simply does not accept this argument and steadfastly stands in opposition, with no flexibility otherwise, and he is in a position to prevent its movement. Chair Iacocca agreed with this assessment and said it appears the slower path to a zero income state is likely the most realistic outcome.

**5. U.S. Army Human Resources Command**

- i. COL (P) Peggy McManus, Deputy Commanding General and Director of Reserve Personnel Management Directorate, briefed on behalf of MG Thomas Drew, stressing they conduct world class talent management and manage human resource and data management initiatives that enable the Army to fight and win the nation's wars. Our scope includes the active duty and the reserve components, including units, retirees, federal employes and families. As many of you know, last year we embarked on HRC 2030 reorganization. This transformation is putting best practices in place, to take all customer service from a transitional process to a direct service that always puts all soldiers first. We are continuing to modernize and improve the way we do business. We are becoming more transparent in our communications and agile in our processes to serve the Army's most important asset, which is its people. This effort not only aligns HRC with Army strategy. Elements include the Army's Integrated Personnel Pay System (IPPS-A), a data-rich environment in which we'll have full total force visibility. We'll also reaching out to corporate partners to see how they might help the Army meet emerging requirements with the latest best practices in the field of human resources. Our intent is to transform in the manner needed to best serve our soldiers and the Army. COL McManus shared a slide showing how the command is reorganizing from a legacy structure to the HRC 2030 structure, emphasizing the customer versus the process, IPPS-A's potential capitalization, agility, data-centric decisions, redundancy elimination and automation capabilities. A major goal is to increase retention across the board.

**6. U.S. Army First Theater Sustainment Command**

- i. COL Steve Dowgielewicz said 1<sup>st</sup> TSC is America's only permanently deployed sustainment command, facilitating relationship activities within 21 countries across the Middle East. We focus on Peoples, Partners and Innovation in support of U.S. Army Central Command and U.S. Central Command, taking care of both soldier well-being and sustainment of operations. We want to build a network of like-minded sustainers who operate like we do. If they'd like to buy our U.S. equipment, that's an added benefit which allows us to be interoperable so we can come together and operate as one more rapidly and use technology to reduce the risk to our force and reduce costs. One example is the Autonomous Transport Vehicle System (ATV-S), which we're using in Kuwait and look to put across the trans-Arabian network. COL Dowgielewicz noted this theater shares a 2,200 mile border with China, six times the length of NATO's border with Russia. He also stressed that the conflict in Gaza between Israel and Hamas is keeping the command busy protecting soldiers in the region. Here at home, he praised Kentucky as the "first team" in our community. Kentucky enables our operations by taking care of our soldiers and our families, he said. Our command is operationally focused forward; however, the core of our organization, our people, are here in Kentucky. We work together to take care of America's sons and daughters, he stressed, showing multiple photos of soldiers and their families engaged in community activities. He also praised the command's partnership with the Kentucky National Guard, and recognition programs such as Kentucky Colonel recognition, which mean a great deal to the command's soldiers.

**7. U.S. Army First Division East**



- i. MG Bryan Howay, First Army Division East Commanding General and Kentucky Army Guardsman, briefed that his command exists to provide and ensure reserve component training and readiness and to conduct mobilization operations. Their coordinating authority spans 39 states, with over 3,300 soldiers/civilians. Fort Knox itself is designated as a mobilization station for Guard and Reserve forces. The command mobilized 50,000 Guard and Reserve soldiers in 2023, 16 percent of all deployed soldiers, and expects that to reach 20 percent in 2024. Twenty percent of those deployed make up the majority of forces in Africa and the Middle East. MG Howay proudly noted that First Army Division East dates back to World War I and was involved in some of the heaviest battles of World War II, with 77 soldiers earning the Medal of Honor between the two conflicts.
- 8. U.S. Army Reserve 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command**
- i. COL Dave Spess, Assistant Chief of Operations, Plans, Training and Exercises, briefed on behalf of U.S. Army Reserve 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command Commanding General MG Edward Merrigan, Jr. and Command Sergeant Major Scott Hinton. The 84th Training Command consists of over 4,000 personnel in units spread out across 35 States. Of those, over 400 work, live or attend school in Kentucky. Fort Knox hosts their Mission Training Center (MTC), which provides the capability to train virtually through a variety of exercises. The MTC is used extensively by V Corps, he said, and is also open to all other commands. The command is responsible for planning, resourcing, managing, and executing major exercises for all Army Reserve units. It executes nine multi-echelon exercises replicating Large Scale Combat Operations in four separate locations per year and trains more brigades per year than all other Combat Training Centers. It has subordinate units located across the U.S. and performs these missions with 3,300 Reserve Soldiers, 296 Active-duty Soldiers, 125 civilians, and 110 contractors. Missions include conducting internal education program training over for 400 Observer/Coach-trainers and Senior Gunners, executing five live fire events per year (including one for forces in Korea), and conducting the External Evaluation for Combined Forces Headquarters Korea twice a year. COL Spess said the command staff recognizes and appreciates the hard work accomplished by Kentucky to improve soldiers' quality of life, including support for spouse employment, access to child care, education and a host of other areas. There are some areas that do pose challenges for the command, creating a hesitancy for soldiers to come to Kentucky in the last several years. Anecdotally, these include, both negative and positive:
    - \* Perception of poor performing schools
    - \* Perception of few amenities, attractions, recreation opportunities
    - \* Perception of low multi-cultural tolerance; limited diversity
    - \* Perception that Kentucky equals rural living with limited cosmopolitan options
    - \* Increase in Soldiers and Civilians choosing to live in Southern Indiana due to cost of living
    - \* Increased dispersion of addresses from Radcliff, Elizabethtown, and Meade County (18-20 miles) to Louisville and Bardstown (30-40 miles), Southern Indiana (40-50 miles), Shelbyville (60 miles), etc. due to a lack of affordable available housing
    - \* Enhanced HWY 44 and other for direct access to Fort Knox without using HWY 265 or HWY 31 to I-65 and beyond
    - \* Enhanced promotion and advertisement of successful schools, enduring amenities and attractions, acceptance and tolerance, and that Kentucky offers the best combination of small town and metropolitan feel
  - ii. Bullard said this is excellent feedback he will share with Kentucky leaders. COL Spess responded that this meeting is also provided good feedback to the military, with news on the challenges and activities related to recruiting military retirees and transitioning military to Kentucky – exactly what we need to be hearing, he said.
- 9. Kentucky National Guard**
- i. Adjutant General of Kentucky MG Hal Lamberton highlighted another outstanding year of service from his Kentucky National Guard soldiers and airmen. Some of our units have received national recognition, including our 123<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing received its Air Force record 20<sup>th</sup> Outstanding Unit Award, recognized not just as an Air National Guard unit, but amongst the very best regular Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units. There is no other entity with that track record. Once again, I attribute that to the quality of the folks and the way they performed their missions. Also this Fall, our 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry earned the prestigious Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA) Walter T. Kerwin Jr., Readiness Award for outstanding readiness metrics, in competition with the entire Army National Guard. It's the second time our infantry battalions been recognized in such a

way, MG Lamberton said. In another impressive accomplishment, AUSA recognized Kentucky with the first-ever National Guard Most Outstanding National Guard State Command Award, across all 54 States and territories. Kentucky was honored to receive such recognition, again based on our readiness metrics as a state level entity. Another factor was our international and domestic response operations over the previous year, including Task Force Red Dragon Soldiers recognized for duty in Africa; Air Guard support to NATO Air Defender operations in Europe and Special Tactics Resolute Sentinel in Peru; the 2123<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Company in Poland in support of V Corps, in another operation supporting movement in the Yukon Territories of Canada; receipt of the Governor's Outstanding Unit citation for Southwest Border support; and mobilizations of the 138th Field Artillery Brigade, and upcoming 1-623 Field Artillery, 203rd Forward Support Company and 299th Chemical Company (-) deployments to the Central Command Area of Operations (AOR). Between the Army and Air Guard, he said, we pretty much work with every organization that's on this call in some capacity or another. MG Lamberton told the story of the 138th Field Artillery Brigade headquarters, currently deployed to the Central Command AOR with a footprint everywhere from Jordan to Kuwait to western Iraq to eastern Syria. When the Hamas conflict began on 7 October – some of you may have seen this on the local news – there was a tourist group out of Bardstown that was in Gaza as the attacks were initiated. This tourist group lost all contact with their tour sponsor and were left stranded with no communication except for a local contact with our 138 Brigade commander, who lives in Bardstown. He was able to make contact with them and facilitate their movement from Gaza and Israel into Jordan, from where they were able to fly back to the states. MG Lamberton said Kentucky continues to pursue a National Guard State Partnership for Peace program with Sweden as that nation looks to acquire NATO membership, joining current Kentucky partnerships with Ecuador in U.S. Southern Command and Djibouti in U.S. Africa Command. He discussed how the Kentucky National Guard is operationalizing its state-sponsored Kentucky Enlistment Enhancement Program (KEEP) to recruit and retain Guardsmen. Recruiting challenges are not unique to the active duty Army, he stressed, saying they even impact organizations like Americorps and Peace Corps. When we started KEEP, we were one of only six states, and in rapid succession now 37 states have some form of this program. Any of our soldiers and airmen, regardless of their duty status, if they simply provide the name of a potential soldier or airman who subsequently raises their right hand and contracts into the military, the individual who provided that referral receives a \$500.00 check from us. That growth across the 54 States and territories is an example of how effective this program is on recruiting efforts, not just here in Kentucky, but across the entire National Guard force structure. Kentucky has also stood up a Division Artillery (DIVARTY) unit that aligns with the 38th Infantry Division headquarters of the Indiana National Guard. This gives more in the way of upward career progression for our red leg brethren, from battery to battalion to division level and beyond. There used to be a Fire Support Element that was lost to the Regular Army in force restructuring. The Chief of Staffs of the Army wanted to reinstitute a core level Fire Support Element as an Operational Fires Command. There was no ability to do so in the Regular Army, so they looked to the Army National Guard to do so. So now, for each one of the active duty corps headquarters, there's a movement towards standing up an Operational Fires Command which will come from the National Guard. We in the Kentucky Army National Guard were beneficiaries by virtue of our geographic location to V Corps headquarters out of Fort Knox, and we been identified to stand up the OFC for V Corps starting next year, with a 2025 goal. Everybody's in sync in moving towards that direction. To wrap it up, I'm proud of our force structure. It's guys like a MG Bryan Howay who make us what we are. In the Kentucky National Guard, we only have billets for five General Officers (GO); however, we currently have nine Kentucky National Guard GOs who are serving, four outside our four structure like MG Howay. This opens up more opportunities outside of our immediate force structure and it broadens the network of our organization, giving us information conduits into many other organizations, which has been beneficial to our Kentucky National Guard. It is simply reflective of the quality of folks that we've got on both the Army and the Air side.

#### **10. U.S. Army Reserve 100<sup>th</sup> Training Division (Leader Development)**

- i. Mr. Nels Dolan, command executive officer of the 100th Training Division at Fort Knox, stressed they are the leadership development division for the Army Reserve, led by new Commanding General BG Voris W. McBurnette and Command Sergeant Major Samuel B. MacKenzie. Elements include the 83rd Readiness Training Center, which prepares soldiers and civilians to prevail in complex and uncertain environments through education and training in the areas of leadership, sustainment,

security, and readiness, and the 97th Training Brigade, which is the intermediate leader training for Majors and Lieutenant Colonels prior to command. The 83rd RTC is a subordinated units stationed at Fort Knox. Task Training Center trains Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve, along with Department of the Army civilians, throughout the year. The 83rd RTC has elements at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin; Camp Parks, California; and Fort Dix, New Jersey. The 100th Training Division also conducts classes in Puerto Rico, Hawaii and, when requested, overseas officer training in Germany. The 97th Training Brigade works with the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas as the Reserve schoolhouse. Mr. Dolan stressed their mission spans the U.S. and has overseas elements. In the Army you earn your rank, he said. Our mission is to give you the ability to become a better commander as you move through your career.

#### **11. U.S. Army Reserve Aviation Command**

- i. Deputy Commander COL Lindsey Halter said the Army Reserve Aviation Command (“A-Rack”) is the headquarters for all Army Reserve Aviation units, composed over 4,400 soldiers, 600 civilians and 230 aircraft. The command’s units are spread across the country, but the highest concentration of units is here at Fort Knox, with eight subordinate elements stationed here. COL Halter noted that the Army plans to build two modern hangars at Godman Army Airfield to accommodate both their current and future aircraft. This project is a construction priority for the Army Reserve, which is good news; however, more funding since the cost of the project is more than the entire Army Reserve construction budget. The Army is working with our Congressional delegation for additional support. The Army Reserve Aviation Command continues to provide support to the Army Reserve and the Total Force, and also supports recruiting operations across the country. Chair Iacocca followed up by stressing the importance of the Army Congressional Liaison program in educating Congress on this type of need in augmenting traditional funding processes. They’re aware of the importance of this particular project, so that is good news, he said.

#### **12. Blue Grass Army Depot**

- i. Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD) Chief of Staff Joel Kallenberger began by stressing BGAD’s ability to ability to surge and meet real world ammunition requirements. Whether that movement is by truck, rail or air, we can get ammunition shipped anywhere in the East Coast within 24 hours. In addition, BGAD’s team renovated over 65,000 artillery rounds in support of Ukrainian efforts. We also continue to assess our human capital needs and the type of skills that we need for our future missions. Contributors to our success include the promixity of the I-64/I-75 Interstate corridor, our relationships with local trucking companies, and our state-of-the-art Consolidated Shipping Center, all supporting BGAD’s ability to meet aggressive delivery schedules and timelines. Our main purpose is to ship, receive, store, maintain and demilitarize conventional munitions. We have supplemental missions to support joint warfighters with chemical defense equipment, air condition units, and more. Our top growth imperative, as mentioned earlier in the meeting today, is to evaluate new mission opportunities from the recent feasibility study and look to developing these future opportunities. We know we’ll have attrition in personnel, that and we will work with these potential growth initiatives to help lessen the impact of losses due to sunseting missions such as chemical weapons stockpile eradication. Bullard added that Craig Williams, chair of monthly Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens’ Advisory Commission (CAC) and Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board (CDCAB), wants to submit to the to the Kentucky Historical Society a request to create a Historical Marker at Blue Grass Army Depot commemorating the elimination of the nation’s chemical weapons arsenal at both the Depot and nationally. We’re putting a letter of support in for that.

#### **13. Fort Knox Garrison/ The Adjutant General of the Army**

- i. Garrison Commander COL Christopher “Chris” Ricci said they greatly appreciate the Commonwealth exempting active military from state vehicle tax when purchasing a new vehicle in state, and appreciates all efforts to eliminate any other associated vehicle transfer taxes. Kentucky is also a great supporter of the Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission, with Kentucky First Lady Britainy Beshear visiting Fort Knox schools for the Month of the Military Child. We’ve been honored by her presence and engagement with our children, he said. The Purple Star Schools program also illustrates the deliberate and earnest work to support our military connected youth. We congratulate Kentucky for becoming the 10<sup>th</sup> state to join the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact. We view this as a win because it helps address challenges in filling teaching positions while lowering barriers for eligible military spouses coming from out of state to receive an equivalent teacher license. Our spouses have a lot to offer, and we appreciate Kentucky recognizing that. COL Ricci discussed the

Compatible Use Plan (CUP), published in January 2022, that addresses existing and planned land uses/activities in ways the military and civilian communities can be mutually supportive so that growth and development is managed in a way that doesn't impede the military mission. We've made significant progress, he said. The Lincoln Trail Area Development District has been an outstanding partner as we've collaborated with Hardin County government. Our collaboration, he said, already supportive of Fort Knox considerations, was made even stronger so that growth and development at or near the installation boundary is complementary to our missions. He thanked the Heart of Kentucky Association of Realtors and KCMA for their work in developing a real estate disclosure notice where buyers will be informed to the installation's presence and its potential to produce noise. We continue to develop outstanding relationships with Bullitt and Meade Counties, he stressed, as they work on updating their own CUP plans. We have outstanding neighbors, and these type of partnerships illustrate exactly that, COL Ricci said. Efforts are underway to develop a new passenger service route between Elizabethtown and Detroit, as well as Elizabethtown and Jackson, Tennessee. Such an increase in available travel routes will benefit the Fort Knox community. We support the Elizabethtown airport board's aim to have a new 7,800 foot runway that would accommodate critical movements of personnel and material, along with mainline airline charter flights, for deployment purposes. Also, he said, Fort Knox fully supports Ford's BlueOval SK Battery Park project. The positives are numerous, and the opportunities are there to continue to capitalize on this major economic boon for the region. We simply ask that Fort Knox considerations and equities continue to be part of the larger growth management conversation as a single entity and location. Fort Knox is second only to UPS as Kentucky's largest employer, so, with our volume of military connected people, we very much feel the pinch when it comes to housing shortages, spouse and veteran employment opportunities, networks, healthcare access and more. We need to continue having a seat at the table, so we have flattened communications while collectively working to manage and capitalize on this good news story for Kentucky. COL Ricci concluded with installation updates. The new Digital Air Ground Integration Range, or DAGIR, is being constructed on the former Yano tank range. It is slated to be open this next spring. When completed, it will be the only range of its type east of the Mississippi River. It will draw additional ground and aviation units for training because of the large scale, realistic training opportunities that it will provide. Suffice it to say, the sounds of freedom will be back along the southeastern portion of our installation boundary, COL Ricci said. We're planning a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate this big, big occasion, with more to follow. Our last update is our Child Development Center replacement. This project had to be reprogrammed due to required design changes and notable increases from pre-COVID cost estimates. The redesign is being finalized and now we expect the contract for this much needed replacement to be awarded by the end of FY24. Available childcare for our military families is a real challenge, so this is a priority that will have my full attention throughout my time in command.

#### **14. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers- Louisville, KY District**

- i. Brandon Brummett briefed the update from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Louisville, noting that Colonel Mann sends her regrets due to travel requirements. When people think of the Corps of Engineers, they think of a lot of different things – we do flood risk management, commercial navigation, ecosystem restoration, support for our Army, support for the Air Force, support for the Army and Air Force Reserves and more. The Louisville organization has 1,229 Department of the Army civilians, many of whom are veterans, and eight active-duty military. Last year we executed over \$1.5 billion in contracts, with a total program over \$1.6 billion, including Louisville District Flood risk management projects, with the levies, floodwalls, detention basins, and the reservoirs that people use for boating and fishing and more good stuff. They're originally built for flooding management, and they've prevented over a billion dollars in damages. That's a pretty significant benefit to the Commonwealth. Additionally, our recreation facilities in Kentucky provide over \$500 million each year in economic benefits. When it comes to military and government agency support, our Interagency and International Support (IIS) program includes our \$41 million project for the Forage Animal Production Research Lab in Lexington for the USDA and the \$840 million veterans hospital here in Louisville for the VA. We just held the beam topping out ceremony. A lot of folks were there and were pretty happy with it. Fort Knox and Fort Campbell have already discussed some of our projects on our list here. We've also got about \$130 million worth of projects and design at Fort Knox, with another \$225 million-plus in construction planned. Projects in design include the Fort Knox Child Development Center and the Scott Middle School. Projects in construction include the

Van Voorhis Elementary School, V Corps HQ, Medical Clinic Replacement, Digital Air/Ground Integration Range (DAGIR), Separate Toilet/Shower Building, Fort Knox High School Running Track, and Fort Knox Middle/High School Gym Floor Replacement. At Fort Campbell, we've got almost \$200 million in design and over \$180 million in construction. Projects in design include the Automated Record Fire Range, Air Traffic Control Tower, Automated Multipurpose Machine Gun Range, Mahaffey MS Relocatable Removal, Consolidated Housing Furniture Storage, Rectifier Replacement, two Barracks, Multipurpose Training Range, Renovation of Building 6911, Renovation of Building 6912, and the Ambulatory Care Center. Projects under construction include the Fort Campbell Middle School, Vehicle Maintenance Shop, General Purpose Maintenance Shop, Multi-Use Helicopter Training Facility, Wassom & Jackson Middle School Demolition, Lucas Elementary School Playground Repairs, Barsanti Elementary School Playgrounds Repairs, Renovate Building 3071 Child Development Center, Fort Campbell High School Baseball/Softball Field, Fort Campbell High School Soccer Field Artificial Turf, and Lucas Elementary Roof Replacement. The Corps of Engineers is also providing \$871K in construction support for multiple FEMA facilities. Chair Iacocca closed his presentation by noting how impressive the VA beam topping ceremony was, and thanking the Corps for all they do in the Commonwealth.

**15. U.S. Coast Guard Sector Ohio Valley**

- i. Commanding Officer Captain Heather Mattern thanked both KCMA and all commands participating today, noting that in comparison Coast Guard Sector Ohio Valley is a small organization with limited resources which relies on support from the National Guard, the Army, and in particular, the Army Corps of Engineers, who are their close partners. She said we manage 8,000 miles of the Ohio River, its tributaries, parts of the Mississippi and the federal lakes across 10 States and eight major port complexes. We plan, coordinate and execute drills and exercises across that area. She showed a slide outlining drills and exercises that Sector Ohio Valley participated in during 2023, including handling active shooters on towing vessels and barges, preparation for mass casualty events on the river, massive oil pollution response, and more. Headquarters is in Louisville, with a Marine Safety Unit in Paducah, cutters in Hickman and Owensboro, and boat stations in Paducah and Louisville. We had yet another very significant low water season. We worked very closely with the Army Corps of Engineers to keep those riverways open, which are the lifeblood of our national and economic security of our country. We were very successful keeping desperately needed commerce moving through our country. Capt. Mattern noted that the cutter in Hickman has significant access issues due to drift and silting when low waters exist, so they're looking at a possible move to Paducah. They like operating out of Paducah, as well, because there are more opportunities for schools, employment opportunities for spouses and homes for our members to live, she said. Eight small boats based in Paducah and Louisville conduct 3,500 underway hours a year to include enforcing waterways safety and security zones across the 1,039 miles of the Ohio, Cumberland and Tennessee rivers. Illegal drug usage and illegal passenger operations are increasing, with the Coast Guard working with joint state and local law enforcement operations to address these challenges. She gave a few examples, including interaction with barges and tugs operating on the Ohio River. She also noted that Kentucky and Tennessee are two of the two fastest growing populations in the country right now, and with that, they've brought a lot of recreational boats. We're seeing an increase on recreational boat casualties, often in incidents with commercial vessels. Boating while intoxicated issues are another increasing challenge, both on river systems and areas like Lake Cumberland and Dale Hollow. Recruiting is not just an issue with the standard military components, she noted. We are 5,000 people short in the Coast Guard, the majority of those junior members, which led to a very recent decision to temporarily decrease staff for the active-duty crews across the Western rivers, which includes Paducah and Louisville. This reduction has a definite impact to Kentucky. We are working hard to keep our reserve component so that we will be able to surge people into these operations. Temporary de-staffing of active-duty crew at Stations Paducah and Louisville impacts homeland security/terrorism incidents and waterways disasters, illegal passenger operations, illegal drug use aboard both commercial and recreational boating, training/exercises with state and local partner agencies for maritime law enforcement operations, search and rescue operations, and inland flood operations. The Coast Guard has been operating in Kentucky since 1881, when we had our first station and small boat operations, Capt. Mattern said. I don't think people have a full understanding of what we do or how we do it. If you have an opportunity, we'd love to host you or provide you more information on our operations. We tend to put our heads down and just kind of get the job done. No one really notices us

and that's the kind of the way we like it. However, in this current recruiting environment, she said, it's important to know it really is impacting Kentucky and the interior states with inland rivers. My final plug for anyone who you're trying to recruit in the Army; if the Army's not quite the right fit for them, but they still have a calling to serve, ask them if they are interested in the Coast Guard. We could really use them. There are some sweet bonuses for those who sign up. If I was still 42 and under, I might join just to get the bonus! Chair Iacocca noted that military recruiting is a national crisis, with today's issues similar to a canary in a coal mine. Eventually, recruiting challenges could impact our national economy, he noted, particularly if it negatively impacts what flows through our waterways. Capt. Mattern also stressed ways in which Kentucky can help, including providing continued support in homeport locations for new (replacement) cutters and increased funding to state and local law enforcement agencies regarding maritime (lakes/rivers) operations, such as communications gear, training opportunities, maritime and air assets. Bullard added that KCMA helped set up Leadership Kentucky class access to the Coast Guard in Louisville and Paducah this past year.

## **F. Open Discussion**

MG Lamberton followed up on the recruiting discussion, saying just yesterday he was in a briefing at the Pentagon where it was noted that recruiting challenges are not just exclusive to the military. Both the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps have noted significant decreases in finding volunteers. My sense, he said, is that there seems to be a diminished national engagement in public service programs along those lines.

Chair Iacocca said our next full commission meeting is likely to be once again the first week of December (2024). I just want to thank all the participants on this call, and their teams, for all their efforts to make Kentucky such a great place for our military members, their families, veterans and retirees, he said. Bullard added that we also need to determine whether to keep this virtual format or return to an in-person meeting. The advantage of in-person is developing personal relationships, versus the time-savings of the virtual format. If anyone wants to provide feedback on this decision, we'll be glad to have it at your convenience, he said. Bullard then made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Lori Harper, and accepted by acclamation.

## **G. Next Full Commission Meeting – December 2024, TBD**

## **H. Adjourn**

**Adjourned at 12:01 p.m.**

**\*\*\* Audio file: 801\_0049 (Folder C) (NEEDS UPDATING)**