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Boone Co. official joins the military

BY MARK HANSEL • MHANSEL@NKY.COM • NOVEMBER 15, 2010

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BOONE COUNTY - Boone County Commissioner Charles Kenner already wears a lot of hats.

In addition to his role in county government, Kenner, a dentist, has a practice on Houston Road in Florence and serves on the board of the Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department.

With all of those responsibilities, it seems Kenner would not be looking for additional challenges, but he surprised a lot of people by adding U.S. Army captain to his list of titles.

On Oct. 27, he was sworn in and began a two-year stint with the U.S. Army Reserve Medical Corps.

At 56, Kenner knows he is not the typical Army recruit.

He has never served in the military and is at an age when a lot of people start thinking about retirement. He has thought about enlisting for several years and got the ball rolling about eight months ago, when he began working with a recruiter in Cincinnati to complete the process.

"It's something I've wanted to do for a while now," Kenner said. "I've had a few friends that have done this. Some were dentists, some were physicians."

Because of the need for qualified medical personnel in the military, there will be accommodations made for Kenner's schedule, but he will participate in monthly exercises just like other reservists. His assignments will be designed to take advantage of his special skills and he could be sent to other stateside locations, but he will not be called to long-term active duty or be deployed to a combat zone.

"This was just a great opportunity for me to serve my country," Kenner said. "It could be doing an exercise in Fort Knox or it could be something locally, like a public service project that the Army is involved in. There are a number of opportunities there."

In a worst-case scenario, he could be called for a 30- or 90-day deployment to a U.S. military base overseas, but even that is extremely unlikely.

He will get his first orders in about two weeks.

Kenner had to pass a physical examination and will go through some additional officer's training exercises next year in San Antonio.

"I've been a runner for about a year and I am in pretty good shape, so I wasn't too worried,"



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The Enquirer/Patrick Reddy
Dr. Charles Kenner, a Florence dentist and Boone County Commissioner, has enlisted in the Army Reserve.

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Kenner said.

Kenner realizes he was chosen because of his qualifications but says the Army has a lot to offer him as well.

He will be paid as a captain in the U.S. Army Reserve. He will also have access to modern equipment and training that will help him fulfill some of the continuing education requirements in his profession.

Despite his existing obligations, which also include serving on various community boards and committees and coaching youth basketball, Kenner is confident he can handle his military duties.

"It's basically two days a month," Kenner said. "They have set this up so I can run my full-time dental practice and keep my civilian life. They want my expertise and I want to be able to help them."

Kenner has served on the Boone County Commission for nine years and was unopposed in the Nov. 2 general election. He is a graduate of Boone County High School and the University of Louisville. He lives in Union with his wife, Joanne, and has four children.

Kenner chuckled at the comment that adding the title of captain will make it difficult for people who already don't know whether to call him doctor, commissioner or coach.

"They can always just call me Charlie," he said.

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