

JFHQ NCR-MDW Employee Spotlight

Name: Pfc. Kyle Latosky

Years of Federal Service: I have been in the Army for a year.

Where are you originally from? Virginia Beach, Va.

Activities/Hobbies: I love sightseeing around D.C., it's a beautiful place. I also like playing guitar. I started in high school and I have been playing ever since.

Where do you work? 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) Caisson Platoon



How did you get into the Caisson Platoon? I was in Alpha Company and one day the Caisson Platoon Sergeant and Platoon Leader came down and they were looking for volunteers. I volunteered and went to the nine week training course at Fort Belvoir, Va. From the first time I arrived at The Old Guard, I always saw the horses and thought they were majestic creatures so I jumped at the chance to join Caisson.

What do you like best about your job? I really enjoy working with the horses. Being around them all the time, they really become part of your life. It is also an honor to conduct the funeral ceremonies for our fallen Soldiers, every ceremony is moving.

What is a typical day like at the Caisson Platoon? The day starts very early. At 4:30 a.m. we are in the stables and polishing the brass and cleaning the saddles and such. At 5:15 a.m. we begin pulling the horses out, checking their shoes and washing them down. At 6:30 a.m. we start tacking them up with their saddles and at 7:30 a.m. we start hooking them to the wagon. Sometimes it's midnight before we get back to the barracks. This is a tiring job but extremely rewarding.

What is your most memorable experience during your time here at MDW? Getting into the Caisson Platoon and going on trail rides with the horses. The trail rides allow for both the Soldiers here at the Caisson and more importantly, the horses, to have a break while riding around some really great trails in the Northern, Va., area.

Would you recommend working here to other Soldiers? Yes, definitely! Being in The Old Guard is not an easy job. It takes a lot of discipline in this unit, but it builds a tremendous work ethic. You'll be able to do whatever you want to do to the fullest after coming here whether you stay in the Army or not.

Note from the Editor: *Most Soldiers who come to the Caisson Platoon are not expert horseman, but are trained as infantrymen, skilled in their individual fields. A new Soldier on this team must undergo rigorous training on a riding style the Army hasn't used anywhere else since 1948. In addition to caring for the horses, the Soldiers must learn to ride in correct posture of solemn military attention and sitting in a McClellan saddle as well as maintaining the ceremonial uniform of an Old Guard Soldier. The Caisson Soldiers must learn to use, clean and maintain ceremonial tack and harness that is unique to their mission in Arlington National Cemetery. In addition to their duties in military funerals, the Caisson Platoon participates in numerous historic pageants performed by the Old Guard; among these are "Spirit of America" and "Twilight Tattoo."*