

# THE CARGO COURIER

123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard, Louisville, Ky.

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## Thunder display draws 47,500 despite cold

### More than 30 aircraft showcase U.S. military's aerial firepower

By Staff Sgt. David I. Tors  
Cargo Courier Staff Writer

With a wind chill of 10 degrees, it was a gray, blustery morning when the gates opened here April 18 to kick off the 10th-annual Planes of Thunder static display.

But the lingering winter chill didn't dissuade too many area residents — some 47,500 aviation buffs of all ages stopped by the base to view more than 30 military aircraft and talk to the pilots who fly them.

The cold weather also didn't bother Staff Sgt. Michelle Holcomb of the 123 Maintenance Squadron, who was one of many volunteers working at the show.

Holcomb, a full-time propulsion mechanic on C-130s, assisted as a media escort, helping TV reporters cover the day's events for those who elected to view the static display from the comfort of their living rooms.

"I was out here last year, and I love working Thunder," Holcomb said. "I'm real proud to be part of this event."

This year's edition featured a broad range of military hardware, from helicopters like the Coast Guard's HH-65 Dolphin and Kentucky Army Guard's UH-60 Black Hawk to jet fighters like the U.S. Navy's F-14 Tomcat and the U.S. Air Force's F-15E Strike Eagle.

Planes of Thunder also boasted an international contingent from the German Air Force.

"We've been hearing so much about 'Thunder' in the past," said Lt. Commander Uwe Hensch, a weapons system officer who was here with a German pilot to demonstrate their Tornado fighter.

"We're really glad we finally got to fly in it."

This year's show wasn't the first time for Maj. Bobby Sullivan, however.

The A-10 pilot, assigned to the 303rd Fighter Squadron at

Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., was back for a return engagement because he enjoyed his first visit so much.

"It's a great deal to fly for Thunder," Sullivan said.



Photos by Master Sgt. Terry Lutz

**ABOVE:** Kyle Samuels, 12, and Eli Stumler, 13, of Floyds Knobs, Ind., examine a B-1B Lancer with 8-year-old Rodney Thacker of Louisa, Ky.

**LEFT:** Mario Marini of the U.S. Coast Guard explains the instrumentation of a HH-65 helicopter to 10-year-old Rebecca Linares of Louisville.



# There's simply no excuse for refusing to wear your seat belt



knew I was headed for the wall the instant my car began its sickening slide.

The pile of slush and ice left behind by the snow plows on this March evening was just too deep for the traction I needed to regain control.

And so I began a series of four wildly disorienting spins that brought me closer to the concrete dividing wall with each gyration; closer to sudden impact at 55 mph; closer to what surely was going to be my demise.

I remember thinking, "That's it, buddy boy. It's been a nice life."

The force of the impact was tremendous. I was rocketed forward in my seat only to be stopped by my seat belt and slammed back in the other direction. Items that I had packed in my car for a temporary duty assignment — a laser printer, a laptop computer, a clothes iron — were flying around like so much confetti in a cyclone. My glasses flew off my face, and for a few terrifying seconds, the experience was a surrealistic blur of unfocused chaos.

Then I came to a stop, perpendicular to the flow of traffic and blocking three lanes of Interstate 70.

As I searched the floor for my glasses, I saw two beams of light closing in, and the whole sequence renewed itself. A tractor-trailer approaching from behind was unable to avoid my stricken auto, and the rig slammed into my car at 40 mph.

By the time I finally came to rest about 200 yards from first impact, I wasn't sure if I was still in one piece.

I crawled out through the passenger-side door and looked down on my twisted Honda

as if I were having an out-of-body experience.

The truck driver came running up to see if I was OK. His words floated down to me through the velvet fog and remain the only clear aspect of those few terrifying seconds: "Man, you ought to be dead."

Indeed.

Judging from the damage to the car, I should have been a bloody smear inside the passenger compartment.

But I survived, in large part because I was wearing my seat belt.

Seat belts save an estimated 9,500 American lives every year, according to the National Highway Traffic Highway Safety Administration. And yet, some people still refuse to wear them.

The arguments range from the sublime to the stupid, but none of them withstand scrutiny.

Some people claim they don't need to wear seat belts because they're "only driving a short distance."

But the Louisville Police Department knows better. Most traffic accidents happen within three miles of home, according to Patrolman John R. Martin.

Other drivers rely on air bags to save them, thinking their protection is adequate in a crash.

But the NHTSA warns that air bags are a "supplemental restraint system" designed to be used in conjunction with seat belts. Air bags are largely ineffective without seat belts because they don't offer protection during rollovers or side- and rear-impact crashes.

Moreover, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety says that unbelted passengers actually increase their risk of death be-

cause deploying air bags can cause fatal neck and spine injuries to unsecured occupants.

Perhaps the most insidious argument against seat belt use, however, is the one for personal freedom. "It's my right to drive unbelted," these civil libertarians say, "because my actions affect no one but me."

But their actions do affect others. According to NHTSA, 85 percent of all crash victims' medical costs are absorbed by society, not the individuals involved. And the medical costs for those victims are 50 percent higher than for belted drivers involved in accidents.

Employers also must foot the bill for car crashes. The NHTSA estimates that nearly \$9 billion is spent annually to care for employees who are injured in accidents, and another \$9 billion is spent on sick leave and insurance for crash victims.

Finally, the NHTSA says unbelted drivers are less likely to maintain control of their vehicles during crashes, which means other motorists are more likely to be injured or killed.

Some people might say I was lucky to have walked away from my accident with nothing more than a bruised arm. But luck had little to do with it.

I was wearing my seat belt. And because of that, I survived.

Fate might have a similar accident in store for you this week. Wear your seat belt and walk away from that accident intact — if not for yourself and your loved ones, then for the rest of society.

The costs otherwise are simply too high.

*2nd Lt. Dale Greer is the wing's public affairs officer.*

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If you have a story idea, photo or article to submit, stop by the public affairs office, room 2117 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is June 23.

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Master Sgt. Charles Simpson/KyANG

## Tops in Blue

The Kentucky Air Guard honored its three Outstanding Airmen of the Year at a banquet held April 10 at Woodhaven Country Club in Louisville.

The honorees were Senior Airman Laura Mabe of the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron, Tech. Sgt. Christopher Mix of the 123rd Logistics Squadron and Master Sgt. Gus Damico of the 205th Combat Communications Squadron.

Mix also was selected as the Air National Guard's Outstanding Airman of the Year in the junior NCO ranks.

### Cargo Courier, editor earn honors

For the fourth consecutive year, The Cargo Courier has been selected as one of the top Air Force publications in the nation.

The newspaper won second place for overall excellence in its division during the 1998 Air Force and Air National Guard media contests.

2nd Lt. Dale Greer, wing public affairs officer and Cargo Courier editor, also was recognized for his writing.

For the second consecutive year, Greer was named National Guard Journalist of the Year, and he was runner-up in the Air Force Print Journalist of the Year competition.

The National Guard Bureau also awarded Greer first place for sports writing; second place for feature and news stories; and third place for photography.

## Atwell, Mix win ANG awards

By Staff Sgt. David I. Tors  
Cargo Courier Staff Writer

Two NCOs from the 123rd Airlift Wing have been named the best in the country for 1999.

Master Sgt. Tim Atwell was selected as the Air National Guard's top First Sergeant, and Tech. Sgt. Christopher Mix was named the ANG's Outstanding Airman of the Year for the junior-grade NCO ranks. Both sergeants accepted their awards May 20 at a banquet held in Washington, D.C.

"It is a great honor to be selected at the national level because this truly recognizes these individuals as the best of the best," said Chief Master Sgt. David Orange, wing senior enlisted advisor.

Orange noted that the 123rd received two of the four national awards offered — the Air Guard also recognizes an Airman of the Year in both the non-NCO and senior NCO ranks.

"This was a very difficult feat, because

nearly all states and units were represented," he said.

What makes the awards even more unique is the fact that both Atwell and Mix are assigned to the 123rd Logistics Squadron. Moreover, Atwell is Mix's first sergeant.

Atwell, who is a full-time heavy mobile equipment mechanic here, has been the unit's first shirt since July, 1996.

"I was chosen for the award over 42 others, so it's kind of overwhelming," he said.

Atwell was instrumental in establishing the Wing First Sergeant's Council, and he currently serves as its president.

Mix, who is NCOIC of Base Fuels Training, previously won Outstanding Airman of the Year at the base level.

He said he was "awe-struck" when he read the biographies of the junior-grade NCOs against whom he was competing in the national contest.

"These people were sharp," Mix said. "They were really good. I'm just flattered to no end that I won this award."

# Operation Joint Forge



**ABOVE:** An Ohio C-130, manned by a Kentucky aircrew, taxis at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, after delivering supplies to Bosnia.



**LEFT:** Master Sgt. Tommy Miller and Senior Airman Leslie Kirgan, both KyANG loadmasters, prepare cargo for offloading at Tuzla Air Base, Bosnia.

**LEFT:** Capt. Jim Nelson, operations officer with the 123rd Airlift Control Flight, schedules airlift sorties from the operations counter at Ramstein.

*KyANG photos by  
2nd Lt. Dale Greer*

**BELOW**  
Airlift So  
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Staff Sgt. Pat Malone, a loadmaster in the 165th Air Lift Squadron, picks up his survival gear at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, before flying a mission into Bosnia.



ABOVE: Maj. Jude Beyerle, a navigator in the 165th Air Lift Squadron, looks over his maps during a flight into Sarajevo, Bosnia.

*The Kentucky Air National Guard, working in tandem with the Ohio Air Guard, deployed to Ramstein Air Base Germany in January and February as part of Operation Joint Forge.*

*This is the second and final installment of photos highlighting the units' participation in the resupply effort for peacekeeping forces in Bosnia.*



LEFT, ABOVE: French cargo specialists offload pallets and baggage from a Kentucky C-130 at Sarajevo International Airport.

# Special Tactics Flight aces ORI

By Tech. Sgt. John Rosa  
123rd Special Tactics Flight

The 123rd Special Tactics Flight recently received high marks for its first-ever Operational Readiness Inspection.

The Air Force Special Operations Command's Inspector General evaluated the unit in two phases from Feb. 3 through March 25.

Compliance items were inspected first at Standiford Field.

Phase one involved the unit's ability to deploy all tasked equipment to a simulated forward operating base, said Capt. Jeremy Shoop, the flight's commander.

Phase two occurred at Fort Bragg, N.C., where the IG evaluated employment, deployed mission support and Ability to Survive and Operate.

"I'm extremely proud of our effort," Shoop said. "We proved our ability to rapidly deploy and fight alongside other Special Tactics Squadrons."

The evaluation took place while the Kentucky unit was participating in an Air Mobility Command exercise called Gryphon Warrior 99-2.

The exercise was a joint operation conducted with the 82nd Airborne Division, and it added a dose of reality to the entire inspection process, Shoop said.

Two simulated warring nations — Krasnovia and Mojavia — were fighting for control of a uranium-rich area that borders both countries.

U.S. and British support of Mojavia resulted in military action, so combat controllers were covertly inserted into Krasnovia in order to establish a drop zone for hundreds of parachutists from the 82nd Airborne.

Their goal was to seize the airport adjacent to the uranium and keep it secure for additional planes to land.

Deployed to Fort Bragg were Shoop; Chief Master Sgt. Bill Smith; Master Sgt. Joel Hicks; Tech Sgts. Jim Johnson, Stephen Danforth and Ralph Duke; and Staff Sgt. Bill Sprake.

Shoop served as the mission commander for the deployment phase.

"I acted as the Special Tactics liaison to the 82nd. I parachuted into the combat area with them and, once on the

ground, served as a member of the Division Assault Command Post."

Days before Capt Shoop and the 82nd jumped into Krasnovia, a four-man team from the 123rd STF was flown to a clandestine enemy forest by U.S. Army helicopters.

They traveled stealthily at night, moving in absolute silence toward the enemy-controlled airfield. Each controller wore a camouflage overgarment called a Ghillie Suit, which is made to appear like a bush.

"Maintaining secrecy is paramount," said Hicks, who was team leader of the reconnaissance mission. "Those Ghillies allow us to infiltrate deep into enemy territory."

"We remain motionless during daylight and send back vital intelligence via our satellite radios."

"Our team kept constant surveillance on the Krasnovian airfield and were never discovered."

The IG team was inserted with the 123 STF and was notably impressed with the unit's field craft.

"The tactical team expertly planned, rehearsed, and navigated their way to the objective undetected," said Lt. Col. John Brainerd, IG Team chief.

"They flawlessly executed 33 mission-essential subtasks during the mission scenarios, including a tactical helicopter landing survey, establishment of a night mass tactical drop zone, call for fire missions, airfield control and air traffic control services."

The 21st Special Tactics Squadron from Pope Air Force Base, N.C., and the 123 STF established a Special Tactics Operations Center to efficiently direct the reconnaissance, mass airdrop and austere airfield operations.

Smith represented the 123rd in the operations center and provided all aspects of mission support, including communications, intelligence, scheduling, logistics and planning.

The IG rated mission support as top-notch, Shoop said.

Additionally, the team was evaluated on close air support, a relatively new tasking for combat controllers.

This involves controlling air-to-ground munitions dropped by fighter and attack aircraft.

"It's a very challenging new mission for us, requiring close coordination with both the Army ground commander and the Air Force fighter community," Johnson said.

## Walz, Hall earn ANG awards for excellence

Senior Master Sgt. Donna Walz has been awarded the 1998 Air National Guard Education and Training Manager Award for base-level support.

Walz, who is NCOIC of the Base Training Office here, was recommended for the award based on her job performance and leadership abilities, said Lt. Col. Michael Dornbush, commander of the 123rd Military Personnel Flight.

During her tenure in the post, Walz has been instrumental in improving pass rates for upgrade training, greatly enhancing the wing's combat readiness.

Col. Michael Harden, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, called Walz one of the "most professional and competent NCOs that I have ever worked with."

"She not only knows her job, but she has the unique ability to communicate what needs to be done to ensure that this wing has the trained individuals it needs to perform its mission."

Master Sgt. Deb Hall also has been recognized as the best in her field with her selection as the 1998 Air National Guard Financial Analysis Airman of the Year.

Hall, a pay and entitlements supervisor here, took a lead role in preparing her office's deployment to Travis Air Force Base, Calif., last year to backfill unstaffed positions.

She also created a new pay office on base and developed a novel system for briefing unit commanders on financial matters during drill weekends. The system has since been adopted by other Air Guard units.

"Sgt. Hall's strong leadership qualities and in-depth knowledge of pay and entitlements have allowed her to create a stable and viable pay office that is praised by all members of the 123rd Airlift Wing," said Brig. Gen. Verna D. Fairchild, the KyANG's former assistant adjutant general for air.

## Raptor completes another hurdle

The Air Force's new F-22 Raptor air superiority fighter passed another testing hurdle recently after successfully opening its weapons bays during flight.



USAF

## Service launches on-line paper with honest, timely reporting

### Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — The Air Force unveiled its first official newspaper March 17, and, in keeping with the times, it's electronic.

Available to everyone with a computer and access to the World Wide Web, U.S. Air Force OnLine News can be viewed at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper>.

Published every Wednesday, the newspaper reports on news of interest across the Air Force.

Besides giving Air Force people and their families the news and information that affects them most, the online paper also provides them an opportunity to express their opinions and voice their concerns to Air Force leaders.

"Everyone interested in the United States Air Force needs to read Online News each Wednesday," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan.

"It is going to give people information they need and want to know about their Air Force."

The Online News staff promises to focus on important news with immediate impact.

"We know we can't cover everything," said Col. Ron Rand, director of Air Force public affairs, "but we'll work at telling people openly and honestly about the key

events and decisions that shape Air Force policies and programs."

Besides hard news, readers will find letters to the editor, selected for their broad appeal and relevance to timely issues, along with commentary, a listing of newsworthy events, notes from the around the Air Force and links to breaking news.

Air Force leaders know the newspaper will break new ground in the way they communicate the Air Force story, and they are excited about it.

"We want all Air Force people to read this newspaper," said F. Whitten Peters, acting Air Force secretary.

"We know to win and keep an audience we have to earn their trust by telling the whole story, and telling it in real time."

Readers have access to the paper through a variety of options.

Besides logging onto the newspaper Web site, they can subscribe via e-mail at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper>.

And for airmen assigned to units with limited computer or Internet access, the paper is available as a printable file so unit leaders can run off hard copies to distribute throughout the unit.

"The bottom line," Ryan said, "is we want to give Air Force people and their families a place to come home to for important Air Force news and information."

## Air Force Memorial gets green light from federal court

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFPN) — After two years of skirmishes, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled May 10 in favor of the Air Force Memorial Foundation.

This gives a green light to completion of a memorial honoring the service's men and women.

The ruling marks the second time in the last year a federal court has dismissed a suit aimed at stopping construction of the memorial on Arlington Ridge, north of the Arlington National Cemetery.

"Our Air Force Memorial has now been approved by an act of Congress, by four different government agencies and has twice won judgments in federal courts," said the foundation's Chuck Link.

"It is time to move forward and allow the Air Force Memorial to join those honoring the other branches of the military in our nation's capital."

The Air Force is the only major branch of the armed services without a memorial site in Washington, D.C.

In its ruling, the Court of Appeals ruled that the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia decided properly in favor of the foundation and the federal approval agencies in June.

The District Court had summarily dismissed the initial suit. It found that the Air Force Memorial Foundation and the U.S. government had complied with the provisions of the Administrative Approval Act and Commemorative Work Act in approving the memorial site.

The Air Force Memorial is scheduled for completion in 2002.

# KyANG promotions, retirements & separations



*The following airmen have been promoted to the rank indicated as members of the Kentucky Air National Guard and reservists of the U.S. Air Force:*

## **AIRMAN (E-2)**

- Jeffrey K. McMahan**,  
123rd Student Flt.
- Jason P. Ellison**,  
123rd Student Flt.
- Larry D. Massey Jr.**,  
123rd Student Flt.

## **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS (E-3)**

- Patrick S. Bawkin Jr.**,  
123rd Security Forces Sq.

## **SENIOR AIRMAN (E-4)**

- Kelly J. Drescher**,  
123rd Medical Sq.
- Reid M. Morris**,  
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Jennifer M. Nash**,  
165th Airlift Sq.
- Mary Stansberry**,  
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Jeremie W. Wheatley**,  
123rd Maintenance Sq.

## **STAFF SERGEANT (E-5)**

- John W. Miller**,  
123rd Medical Sq.
- Holli J. Olson**,  
165th Airlift Sq.
- Emil E. Stark**,  
123rd Maintenance Sq.

## **TECHNICAL SERGEANT (E-6)**

- Anne Deschane**,  
123 Operations Support Flt.
- Bradley J. Garcia**,  
123rd Logistics Sq.
- Curtis B. Hall**,  
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Gregg A. Romans**,  
123rd Logistics Sq.

## **MASTER SERGEANT (E-7)**

- Jeffery L. Greenwood**,  
123rd Logistics Sq.
- Katherine S. Mills**,  
123rd Airlift Control Flt.
- Michael W. Shepherd**,  
123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.

## **CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT (E-9)**

- Michael L. Geoghegan**,  
123rd Medical Sq.

## **1ST LIEUTENANT (O-2)**

- Joseph D. Clements**,  
205th Combat Communications Sq.

## **CAPTAIN (O-4)**

- Catherine A. Newell**,  
165th Airlift Sq.

*The following airmen have retired as members of the Kentucky Air National Guard and reservists of the U.S. Air Force:*

- Senior Master Sgt. Michael L. Armes**,  
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Tech. Sgt. Frank G. Erdman Jr.**,  
123rd Services Flt.
- Tech. Sgt. Benjamin D. Upton**,  
123rd Logistics Sq.

*The following airmen have separated from the Kentucky Air National Guard:*

- Staff Sgt. David Abell**,  
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Staff Sgt. Ian Auch**,  
205th Combat Communications Sq.
- Capt. Anthony J. Beatty**,  
123rd Airlift Wing

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