

THE CARGO COURIER

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

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Kentucky Air Guard aircrew receive an excellent during ASEV inspection

By Tech. Sgt. Amy Ziegler
Cargo Courier Editor

KyANG aircrew members received an overall “excellent” rating during an Aircrew Standardization and Evaluation Inspection held here July 9-15.

A team of about a dozen inspectors from 15th Air Force joined Kentucky aircrew members during training flights, administered written tests to unit members, and reviewed the 123rd Operations Group’s standardization and evaluation programs before issuing the grade.

Lt. Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 165th Airlift Squadron, attributes the wing’s success to an overall outstanding performance.

“It took lots of hard work, thoughtful preparation, attention to detail and close coordination to end the inspection on such a good note,” Kraus said.

“We are the best in the business—there’s no doubt. That’s because we are highly trained and proficient at what we do.”

The inspection focused on the performance of Kentucky Air Guard pilots, navigators, flight engineers and loadmasters.

Inspectors quickly saw KyANG aircrews at their best, Kraus said.

On the first day, every load of cargo dropped during one training mission received a perfect score, meaning it hit the ground within about 25 yards of its intended target.

“That usually just doesn’t happen,” Kraus said. “It’s not unusual to miss or be a little off on the drops.”

The inspectors rode along for 35 “check ride” flights, for which the wing was given a 100 percent pass rate.

Aircrew members also had a 100 percent participation rate on written tests—and an average score of 98 percent.

The Operations Group’s Standardization

and Evaluation Office, which administers the check ride program and other training programs for aircrew, was recognized for its superior performance as well, receiving an overall “outstanding” grade on its portion of the inspection.

Col. Mike Harden, 123rd Airlift Wing commander, said the inspection team was very impressed with the aircrew’s performance.

“Their team chief, Col. Bob Saunders from 15th Air Force, said this was the best inspection his team had seen in several years,” Harden noted.

“He said it’s obvious why we won the Solano Trophy.

“Col. Saunders also singled out our maintenance folks for providing spotless, mission-ready aircraft every time.

“Once again our operations and maintenance folks did us proud and made us look good.”



Senior Airman Valerie Gholson/KyANG

Special Report

Combat controllers and pararescuemen from the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron here spoke with local news media July 2 about their participation in Operation Enduring Freedom.

An article on the KyANG’s Tech. Sgt. Keary Miller was featured on the front page of the Courier-Journal newspaper July 4.

To view the article, go to the Courier-Journal’s web site at www.courier-journal.com and click on “Search/Archive.”

For more special tactics stories and photos, see Page 4.

KyANG's heritage sets total force concept

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How time flies. It's been nearly a year since I took the position as the wing's command chief master sergeant—and what a busy year it's been.

With more than 500 troops activated, I was able to get more than my feet wet. While watching our wing take its place in the Total Force concept, I was indoctrinated into Air Force leadership issues.

I'm happy to say, finally, the active duty Air Force is beginning to see they can't perform the mission without the Air Guard.

We in the Guard have known that for some time. And not to sound egotistical, but we have known that because of our experience, knowledge and dedication.

Many of us are volunteer citizen-airmen who left the Air Force, joined the Guard and continued to grow.

More importantly that dedication and passion has been passed on to the non-prior-service members of the Guard.

We have operators, maintainers and supporters with vast years of experience and knowledge that gives us a tremendous ability to get the job done.

The Air Force recognizes this and is now praising us for the job we are doing.

I have learned that the leaders of the National Guard, past and present, elevated themselves into these positions not just on past accomplishments but on their vision of what the Guard could be.

In the early years, the Air Guard took a back seat to the Air Force in terms of planes, equipment and resources. We were considered the little brother and a weekend flying club, except in times of war.



Command Chief Master Sgt. Mike Mitro
123rd Airlift Wing Senior Enlisted Advisor

We have come along way since then, but how did we get where we are today?

I believe we got here thanks to the vision of a former Kentucky Air Guard Commander: Lt. Gen. John Conaway. The general's vision of a Total Force enabled him to work his way up the ranks at the KyANG and then to become the director of the National Guard, where he turned his vision into a reality.

The Kentucky native worked diligently with the Air Force and Congress to ensure that the National Guard's planes, equipment, resources and training were upgraded.

And this diligence paid off.

Today's Total Force has become a reality due to our past leader's vision, and for this he is still much revered and respected by the National Guard senior leadership.

Now the KyANG supports real-world missions every day, everywhere—the Middle East, Europe, Antarctica and any where else we are needed around the globe.

Today's Air Guard is as good as any Air Force in the world and we owe a great deal of that to the vision of its great leaders, past and present.

Who knows what tomorrow's leaders, which very easily could be any one of you, have in store for us. But I do know that we are responsible for ensuring they are aware and knowledgeable of our past.

It has been a remarkable year for the wing. You made it possible for the KyANG to win it's 11th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the Metcalf Trophy and the Solano Trophy. Yet we have other challenges coming very soon: the Unit Compliance Inspection and the Operational Readiness Inspection in September.

With what you are all made of and all that I have seen of you, you will do just fine.

The inspectors want to see that you can do your job as they say you should and how you say you should.

We all know that you know how to do your jobs. The only thing I will add is to please be safe.

Our inspection results will add another truly outstanding chapter to this already outstanding year of KyANG heritage.

Our future is very bright. We have a tremendous number of dedicated, patriotic Americans that I am so very proud to serve with and for.

This funded Air Force newspaper is published for members of the military services. Contents of The Cargo Courier are not necessarily the views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Air Force.

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If you have a story idea, photo or article to submit, stop by the public affairs office, room 2118 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is Aug. 30.

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An electronic version of the Cargo Courier is available at the Kentucky Air Guard's Web site — www.kyang.ang.af.mil



Senior Airman Aleica Willis/KyANG

MOWW welcome

Brig. Gen. Leon Johnson, assistant to the deputy commander of the Air Force Reserve, spoke to the Military Order of World Wars Maj. Gen. Ben Butler Chapter here on July 12.

Shown with Johnson are Lt. Col. Rich Frymire, chapter commander, 1st Lt. Robert Geary, Lt. Cmdr. Larry Lintz, Capt. Chris Bishop and 1st Lt. Kristin Soldner.

Promotions, retirements & separations



The following individuals have been promoted to the rank indicated as members of the Kentucky Air Guard and reservists of the United States Air Force:

SENIOR AIRMAN (E-4)

- Joshua Blackburn,
123rd Logistics Sq.
- James Harned,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Joyce Robertson,
123rd Logistics Sq.
- Guy White,
123rd Security Forces Sq.

STAFF SERGEANT (E-5)

- Jason Craig,
123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.
- Heather Hultman,
123rd Medical Sq.
- Connor Middleton,
123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.
- Joseph Workman,
123rd Medical Sq.

TECHNICAL SERGEANT (E-6)

- Ronald Bricking,
165th Airlift Sq.
- Larry Bristow Jr.,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Kenneth Brown Jr.,
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Bruce Grimes,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Jay Hill,
165th Airlift Sq.

The following individuals have retired as members of the Kentucky Air Guard and reservists of the United States Air Force:

- Master Sgt. Len Keidel,
123rd Logistics Sq.
- Tech. Sgt. Sandra Merriweather,
123rd Airlift Wing
- Tech. Sgt. William Ray,
KyANG State Headquarters
- Tech. Sgt. Mary Thurman,
123rd Civil Engineers Sq.

The following individuals have separated from the Kentucky Air Guard:

- Staff Sgt. Christine Bohn,
123rd Medical Sq.
- Maj. Leo Cissell,
165th Airlift Sq.
- Daphne Dotson,
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Airman 1st Class
Thomas Hazelette II,
123rd Student Flt.
- Airman 1st Class Kevin Hicks,
123rd Student Flt.
- Senior Airman Damon Hobbs,
123rd Civil Engineers Sq.
- Airman 1st Class
George Hunter Jr.,
123rd Student Flt.
- Senior Airman Deedra Jones,
123rd Medical Sq.
- Airman 1st Class
Matthew Koehler,
123rd Student Flt.
- Staff Sgt. Nathan Morris,
KyANG State Headquarters
- Staff Sgt. Bruce Riopell,
123rd Maintenance Sq.

Wing special tactics officer deploys to former Soviet base in support of OEF

By Tech. Sgt. Amy Ziegler
Cargo Courier Editor

After the terrorists events of Sept. 11, the captain had no doubt he would be deployed. The only real question was when.

Jeff Wilkinson, a special tactics officer in the Kentucky Air Guard, knew the mobilization was coming so he stayed in close contact with special operations officials until his orders came down.

The next thing Wilkinson knew, he was stepping off of a plane into pitch-black, freezing-cold Uzbekistan to join operations at a base that once had belonged to the old Soviet Union.

Wilkinson, who has been in the wing for more than two years and has been an Air Force combat controller for 12, is used to deployments. They're not unusual for the men of his unit, he said.

What was unusual this time, though, was the location.

"It was interesting when I finally arrived there," Wilkinson recalled. "It was dark and cold, and it had the feel of an ex-Soviet base. It seemed like 'M*A*S*H.' There were muddy streets with big vehicles driving, and it was pitch black at night. You knew you were in a real-world op.

"This was the most remote place I'd ever been, although the living conditions were better than I'd expected. We had tents with heat, except that the heat was out the first week I got there."

Since the temperatures during Wilkinson's deployment ranged from about zero to 10 degrees, he said he it made for a pretty cold week.

"When I got there, I was on information overload. It was like being a deer in headlights because you're trying to catch up on what's been going on and who's responsible for what."

The captain said the Total Force concept was in full effect, with a large contingent of Kentucky Air Guard controllers operating alongside active-duty Air Force members.



Senior Airman Valerie Gholson/KyANG

Capt. Jeff Wilkinson, a special tactics officer in the 123rd Air-lift Wing, deployed to Uzbekistan for about four months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Since the special tactics career field is relatively small, with about 350 pararescuemen and about 375 combat controllers, most of the active-duty operators knew their colleagues were Guardsmen, but others didn't have a clue.

"The operation was so seamless that the air component commander didn't even know we were Guard members until the day before we left," Wilkinson said.

STS sends native Kentucky troop to training



Senior Airman Valerie Gholson/KyANG

Staff Sgt. Lee Davis, a special tactics trainee, prepares on base for combat controller's school.

By Tech. Sgt. Amy Ziegler
Cargo Courier Editor

Earning the right to wear the combat controller's red beret isn't easy — in fact, it's not even close.

Candidates for the position must possess extreme dedication, discipline and the ability to meet rigorous physical fitness standards, officials say.

Quite simply, most don't make it through the training.

Now, however, the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron here is hoping a homegrown Kentucky Air Guard troop will complete the program.

Currently, the squadron doesn't have a single controller or pararescueman from Kentucky who entered the program through Air Guard channels.

Instead, all of the current operators joined the unit after leaving the active-duty Air Force.

But two KyANG personnel left here Aug. 1 to see if they have what it takes to be a special tactics troop.

They will go through everything from Army Airborne and Combat Divers school to the Air Force Basic Survival School.

Staff Sgt. Lee Davis, a Kentucky native,

See STS TROOP on Next Page

Emergency number changes to 911

Improvements to the base telephone system now mean that wing members should dial the universally recognized "911" any time they need emergency assistance.

The previous emergency number was 111.

"Now if you call 911 from any phone on base you will get the Central Security Control operator," said Chief Master Sgt. Ken Bernardi, chief of the 123rd Security Forces Squadron.

"If local police, fire or EMS response is required in addition to our on-base resources, they will also get the call," Bernardi added.

The change, which involved coordination with the wing's 123rd Communications Squadron and civilian emergency response officials, was recommended in a report issued by the Air Force's Security Forces Center Vulnerability Assessment Team.

Veterans plates available for medal recipients

Recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross, the Air Force Cross or the Navy Cross are now eligible for a no-fee veterans license plate for their vehicle.

The new plates now feature images of the medals.

Veterans who are eligible may contact Jim Drake of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs at (502) 564-9203.

Don't focus too much time on tomorrow—live today

We've recently spent a lot of time planning for the future here at the Kentucky Air Guard.

Our people are on deployments, mobilization continues, and our Operational Readiness Inspection is on the horizon.

It makes sense to plan as much as possible for everything that lies ahead.

Some companies, agencies and churches even spend more time on what they will be doing five years from now than on what they will be doing next week.

Have you ever spent so much time focused on the future that you lost sight of the present?

One of my favorite songs is "Cat's In The Cradle" by Harry Chapin.

It's about a father who is so focused on his future success that he's too busy to spend time with his son growing up.

When the father finally wants to spend time with his boy, years later, it's too late.

According to scripture, King David sought out God's presence and "sat before the Lord" when he faced important decisions about the future.

Instead of investing all his energies in future strategies and designs, David first focused on his present need to sit before the Lord in prayer.

This simple act of trust and reflection helped prepare David for his future.

We all need time in the present to trust God with the future.

Taking time to remember that God will care for us in the future opens our hearts to receive God's good gifts to us now.

—Capt. Fred Ehrman
Wing Chaplain

Chaplain's Column

STS troop

Continued from Previous Page

turned in his Marine Corps. captain's bars several years ago and now is seeking the challenge of being a combat controller for the 123rd.

Davis, who decided he missed the military and wanted to come back in, started talking with the unit about two years ago and has been preparing himself for the challenge ever since.

He sits tall and says he is confident he will make it through the training.

"Absolutely," Davis said.

"This unit has gotten us ready for the training, and I think we're going to be much better off than a lot of kids coming in.

"They brought us over early and PT'd us and got us ready."

The 123rd Special Tactics Squadron normally brings recruits in about 30 days before they leave for training to give them an early start for the tough

physical fitness path the men are about to begin.

A normal day of training here may consist of a run of at least three miles, anywhere from 500 to 1,000 push-ups and about 100 pull-ups.

Davis, who said he is anxious and a little nervous about leaving for the training, also said he feels more motivated since Sept. 11.

"It's sad that it took something like that to instill such pride in Americans. I always feel good about serving—and every one who serves should—but I'm definitely more motivated now."

Davis is taking a leave of absence as a political science teaching assistant at the University of Kentucky while he works on earning his read beret.

Currently, the special tactics squadron is seeking about 20 combat controllers and pararescuemen to fill unit vacancies.

For information on jobs in this demanding career field, contact Tech. Sgt. Chris Tellis at ext. 4222.

KyANG traces history back to World War II

By Tech. Sgt. Tim Gagnon
165th Airlift Squadron Loadmaster

The Kentucky Air Guard was formed in 1947 but many current wing members may not know that the 123rd Fighter Group and the 165th Fighter Squadron—the KyANG’s original units—were made up of personnel from World War II U.S. Army Air Corps units.

This month, the 123rd Airlift Wing will invite former members of the 359th Fighter Group, who will be in town for a reunion, to attend a memorial service here and view a display of World War II aircraft.

The roots of the Kentucky Air Guard can be traced back to Dec. 20, 1942, when the War Department issued War Order number AG-320.2 calling for the establishment of the 359th Fighter Group.

In January 1943, the 1st Air Force activated the 359th Fighter Group at Westover Field, Mass. The group’s three squadrons—the 368th, 369th and 370th—received the rugged P-47 Thunderbolt and began training for war.

The group arrived in the United Kingdom in October of 1943 and flew its first combat mission, a high-altitude fighter sweep over northern France, in December.

The group drew blood in January with the downing of a Me-110. Claiming the kill was Lt. John Oliphint.

In March 1944, a few pilots were selected to test and develop new ground attack tactics in preparation for the planned invasion.

The need for the destruction of the Luftwaffe not only in the air but also on the ground became a priority.

The groups’ fighters also engaged any enemy reinforcements making their way to the invasion beaches—a role in which the 359th excelled.

In May of 1944, the group received its first batch of new P-51 Mustangs. To many this caused concern since the P-51 was very susceptible to ground fire.

The ruggedness of the Jug had brought many pilots home in aircraft that should not have been flyable.

But the P-51 did have its advantages. The Mustang, with its longer range and increased speed, would allow the group to escort bombers to and from their targets.

The operations tempo tasked both the pilots and ground-support personnel. The



ABOVE: Lt. Robert Guggemos was a member of the 359th Fighter Group during World War II. The group was first formed in 1943.



LEFT: Lt. John McAlister and Lt. Rene Burtner were also members of the 359th. The group will hold a reunion in Louisville on Aug. 23, when World War II aircraft also will be on display at the Kentucky Air Guard.

maintenance crews did not enjoy the benefit of heated hangars or shelters. Most work was performed at the aircraft’s parking spot in the notoriously miserable English weather.

Without the efforts of these men, the 359th would not have enjoyed the success it did.

Throughout 1944, the 359th participated in every major operation to include D-Day,

Operation Market Garden (the airborne invasion of Holland) and the Battle of the Bulge.

On Sept. 11, 1944, an escort mission to the Merseburg synthetic oil plants proved to be the group’s “Greatest Day.”

The unit provided penetration, target and withdraw support for a group of 351 B-17s.

Shortly after rendezvous, the group engaged a superior number of ME-109s.

The intense fight favored the 359th with 26 confirmed enemy kills and a loss of six Mustangs. The group was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation.

See HISTORY, Back Page

Reserve, Guard transitional health care benefits improve

By Tech. Sgt. Tim Dougherty
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON—A recent change to health care benefits will be a big help for Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard people who were mobilized in support of the war on terrorism.

Under the revised transitional health care benefit plan, Reserve and Guard people who were ordered to active duty for more than 30 days in support of a contingency and have more than six years total active federal service are eligible for 120 days of health care following their period of active service.

Guard and Reserve members with less than six years service will get 60 days of continued medical care.

Under a worldwide demonstration project, family members are also covered under this plan. This program is retroactive to Jan. 1.

Eligibility for these benefits will be determined by information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.

"I think the No. 1 thing a member can do upon demobilization is to ensure their information in DEERS is correct," said Col. Kathleen Woody, director of medical readiness and programs in the office of the assis-

tant secretary of defense for reserve affairs.

"That's paramount because all of your benefits are contingent on the information in DEERS."

The Defense Manpower Data Center is sending a letter to people who are eligible for this benefit, but only if the information in DEERS reflects their having served in support of a contingency operation such as operations Noble Eagle or Enduring Freedom.

"Our Reserve and Guard members and their families have sacrificed a great deal by responding to the call to duty in support of the war on terrorism," Woody said.

"We have an obligation to ensure that each individual is aware of this transitional health care benefit."

Members and families who were enrolled in TRICARE Prime while on active duty will automatically be disenrolled upon release from active duty.

The Reserve component member or family must actively re-enroll if they wish to continue TRICARE Prime during the transitional health care period.

An enrollment form is available on the TRICARE Web site or at a local TRICARE service center. No enrollment is necessary for TRICARE Standard or Extra.

New badge recognizes commanders

Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON—A new Air Force badge providing distinctive recognition to commanders will be available shortly, according to personnel officials.

The Air Force Command Insignia will be awarded to squadron, group, wing and equivalent organization commanders in the ranks of major through colonel, said Maj. Douglas Mullins, chief of commanders' programs and recognition policy at the Pentagon.



According to Mullins, the command insignia, available in both a chrome and subdued version, should be on the shelves of military clothing sales stores this month.

The badge is to be worn above the name tag on both blues and battle dress uniforms.

While mandatory for people currently in a commander billet, wear of the badge will be optional for those with past command experience.

Additional guidance about award criteria and proper uniform wear will be made available in the coming weeks, Mullins said.

AF Marathon scheduled for September

Air Force Print News

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio—Plans for the annual Air Force Marathon are on track as the date for the race approaches.

With more than 1,600 runners registered for the Sept. 21 event, the race will likely break all previous participation records, said marathon officials.

Runners of all ages, military and civilian, are encouraged to participate.

All runners will receive a 2002 Air Force Marathon T-shirt and patch.

All participants who finish the marathon within the eight-hour time limit will receive a medallion.

Pre-race events include a two-day sports and fitness expo at the Hope Hotel and Conference Center here on Sept. 19 and 20, sponsored by marathon organizers.

Vendors will display a variety of sports apparel, equipment and memorabilia at the event.

A pre-race pasta dinner will be held Sept. 20. Tickets for the dinner can be purchased via the registration form.

After the race, all runners, volunteers, family and friends are invited to a free post-race party sponsored by the conference center beginning at 4:30 p.m. at the hotel.

The registration fee for the event is \$45 for individuals and \$225 for teams.

For more information on the annual Air Force Marathon, including registration procedures, see the marathon Web site at <http://afmarathon.wpafb.af.mil/>.

History

Continued from Page 6

April of 1945 brought combat operations for the 359th Fighter Group to an end, but the unit remained in Europe as part of occupational forces until November 1945. The group returned to the states on Nov. 9 and was deactivated the following day.

In 17 months of combat operations, the 359th Fighter Group distinguished itself in every role it was given.

It developed tactics still used today, not only by U.S. air forces but also many foreign air forces.

It accounts for 13,455 combat sorties that destroyed 255 enemy aircraft in the air and 122 on the ground. More than 1,000 vehicles were victims of 924,807 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition fired.

These successes are not without losses to the group: 125 pilots were either killed or captured and 238 group aircraft were damaged.

On Jan. 30, 1946, the Air National Guard came into existence, and the 359th Fighter Group and its 368th Fighter Squadron became the 123rd Fighter Group and 165th Fighter Squadron, respectively. Both units were assigned to the Kentucky Air National Guard.

Two other units also comprised Kentucky's 123rd Fighter Group—the 167th Fighter Squadron of the West Virginia Air



Staff Sgt. Charlie Dalsom served as a crew chief in the 359th Fighter Group during World War II.

National Guard (formerly the 369th Fighter Squadron) and the 156th Fighter Squadron of the North Carolina Air National Guard.

The 370th Fighter Squadron was never again to find life after the war.

The men of the 359th Fighter Group set a tradition of excellence that the Kentucky Air Guard continues to this day and will proudly carry into the future.

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