

THE CARGO COURIER

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

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Wing's ALCF troops spend time in OEF

By Tech. Sgt. Amy Ziegler
Cargo Courier Editor

"Welcome to the madness," are words that the 123rd Airlift Control Flight's commander will never forget when he remembers his time serving in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Lt. Col. Greg Nelson and his unit were called to active duty November 2001 and spent more than 60 days deployed in the Afghanistan area of operations last winter, working side-by-side with active duty, Guard and Reserve troops from all branches of military.

"We really were lucky, because I got about 30 days notice before we left," Nelson said.

The team had been deployed to Fort Hood, Texas, with other KyANG troops participating in Operation Noble Eagle before being "invited to the other war," according to the element's commander.

During this preparatory time, Nelson said he heard many stories of doom and despair from the commander he was to replace.

"It was terrible. When that guy arrived, there were no tents, no latrines — there was nothing."

Luckily, this wasn't the case by the time the Kentucky troops reached the location.

"It was funny because when we got there, it was the middle of the night, all black out ops, a very austere location," Nelson recalled.

"But there was actually a tent where you use the bathroom and take a shower, so it

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TOP: Senior Master Sgt. Frank Green and Master Sgt. David Pollard work on communications problems during the deployment to Operation Enduring Freedom.

RIGHT: 123rd Tactical Airlift Control troops were housed in tents set up inside a hangar.



Photos courtesy of the 123rd ALCE

Mission-ready troops need to be physically fit

M

ay I start by offering my wishes for a safe, blessed and peaceful 2003 to all of the members of the Thoroughbred Express!

No one knows what the year may bring, but let it be known that we will do everything in our power to ensure that the 123rd Airlift Wing is prepared to support any effort to defend our American way of life.

As I do every year during the holiday season I have reviewed and revised our wing strategic plan, and you should see a copy of it around your squadron.

I ask that you take a look at it, read it and refer to it when you have a question about why we are doing what we are doing. This document contains what I think we need to emphasize, and do, to ensure that we become:

“A powerful, harmonious, and EPIC military organization, comprised of proud citizens, dedicated to the profession of arms; prepared to successfully wage war, and add value to community, state and nation.”

You may notice that this year’s plan looks very similar to the one we had last year. That’s not because I decided to take the holidays off and simply reused the old one. It’s because we had a great year last year, and there are not many things that need to be changed.

One area that I would like to emphasize, however, is personal readiness.

The entire Air Guard, and our unit in particular, needs to improve its level of physical fitness, so I have included that in the plan.

When we think of readiness we tend to think about having all of our training squares filled, and having all of the required equip-



Col. Michael Harden
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

ment and paperwork to go to war with.

We do that very well and take great pride in knowing that we are ready.

However, it became clear this past year that our health and fitness need work if we are to be truly ready.

During our activation too many of our folks came down with minor injuries — strains, pulled muscles, back aches — that could have been prevented had they been in better physical condition.

The team chief for our recent inspections pointed out that the big difference he sees between the active force and the Guard is the level of physical fitness.

He granted that we have more experience,

and that we fly, fix and support better than the active folks due to that experience. But he also noted that when placed under stress — heat, cold, an NBC environment — Guard folks tend to drop out a lot sooner than the active folks.

No matter how well trained and experienced we may be, if we physically can’t hack it we are not much good when things get hairy. I would like for everyone to make an effort to improve their level of fitness during this year.

We are fortunate to have a great fitness facility here on base that is open to all Guardsmen almost any hour of the day or night. We also have people with the expertise to help you set up an exercise program. All you have to do is to commit to give it a shot.

We are all busy, and every one of us can come up with a million reasons why we don’t have the time to stay in shape.

If you are full-time out here you know that you can take an hour a day to exercise on military time. Please take advantage of that. If you are a traditional Guardsman, it may be a bit more difficult, but I ask you to give it a try.

As members of the profession of arms it is our responsibility not only to be trained and equipped. We must also maintain a level of fitness that allows us to employ that training and equipment so as to prevail in any struggle.

Let’s resolve to be fully prepared to meet any enemy and any challenge.

Thanks Loads!

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Senior Airman Philip Speck/KyANG

Radio days

Members of the 123rd Security Forces Squadron pose with WRKA-FM morning show hosts after taping messages that aired during the holidays.

Those who participated include, in front from left, Senior Airman Corey Barker, WRKA's Jeff Ramsey and Gary Clark, Staff Sgt. William Billings, Tech. Sgt. Rhett Purdue; in back from left, Staff Sgt. Quintin Blan, Senior Airman David Flannery, Senior Airman Guy White, Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Meyer, Master Sgt. Jon Fulkerson, Tech. Sgt. Jesse Smith and WRKA's Matt Killion.

Live for today with your eye on tomorrow

As I write this column, KyANG's Family Support Christmas party is in full swing and the voices (or delighted screams) of possible future citizen-airmen fill the air.

It's also the day after the submission by Iraq of their arms declaration to the United Nations.

As you read this, we have begun a new year. What is now on our mind?

Is it the voices of little ones running around filled with the joy of the holiday season, or the apprehension of a possible fight with the political leadership of Iraq?

Only time will tell what the future holds.

As a chaplain, I must confess that I do not have a direct line to an all-knowing, all-powerful God.

Like the rest of the members of the Kentucky Air National Guard, I wonder what will be awaiting me as we enter a new year.

Will I be praying beside the monks of my community, or will I be praying and leading worship in a distant land?

I have no idea, and I won't even chance a guess.

What really matters when all is said and done is that I am doing what I am suppose to be doing, and giving it my all.

This requires faith, not just faith in one's self and one's leaders, but also faith in one's God.

A faith that assures me that I am being watched over and protected.

A faith that assures me that I, too, can live with God in a place full of milk and honey, where there is no more sadness or pain — a

place of peace and harmony.

We are all called to live now, but with an eye to the future.

To live in the future, with all its unknowns, is to allow the unknown to control one's life, because the unknowns will constantly change.

If one chooses to live this way, it will only lead to a life filled with anxiety.

But by living in the present, one lives by one's faith, letting God worry about the future.

As a Benedictine monk, one of our axioms, which come from the rule of our founder, St. Benedict, is to "keep death daily before one's eyes."

It may, at first, sound like a morbid thought, but it is actually meant to call one to live in the present moment, not in the possible future.

As we enter into this new year of 2003, let it be a time for us to rejoice and celebrate.

Let us celebrate in the gift of life that we each have been given and let us rejoice in all the gifts and blessings that we have and will continue to receive.

The future will unfold as it will, but it is the present where we can make a difference.

As that old familiar songs states, Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

Blessings from the Chapel staff as we begin this New Year.

—Maj. Patrick Cooney,
Wing Chaplain

Chaplain's Column

Counselor to airman and back again

Greene experiences shock of leaving rural Ky. for desert life

By Senior Airman Mark Flener
Cargo Courier Staff Writer

One fall day, Tech. Sgt. Paul Greene packed his things, left behind his job as a marriage counselor in rural Kentucky and went on the adventure of a lifetime.

As a member of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift Control Flight, he was one of the first troops deployed following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Greene, a radio equipment repairman, originally volunteered to deploy to Fort Hood, Texas, with other wing members as part of Operation Noble Eagle. His job there was to support communications and airfield management.

But the next thing he knew, Greene and other KyANG members were sent home to prepare for a deployment to an unknown location outside the United States as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Although Greene said he initially was gung-ho about doing his part in the war on terrorism, he began to have second thoughts when he reached the overseas base at which he was to serve after spending 38 hours riding in a C-17 Globemaster III.

"We had to walk across the ramp and the hangar in almost total darkness after a tactical descent into the air base," Greene said.

"I thought, 'What have I gotten myself into?'"

What Greene and his flight had gotten into was a grueling schedule that included 12-hour days, seven days a week, in a hostile environment.

"I wish we got more than one retirement point per day," Greene joked.

His job now was not only to act as a radio equipment repairman but also to plan communications operations for the flight.

"I needed to be able to service a generator, help loadmasters and airfield managers," he said. "I needed to be able to do a little bit of everything."

Greene and his unit stayed in a tent city set up inside an open hangar and worked side by side with a combined force of more than 2,000 soldiers, Marines and airmen from other units.

"One of the most profound experiences for me was the common spirit and camaraderie with the other services," Greene said. "The people were so great."

The bonds that were formed in this environment still continue, he added, because many of the people still stay in contact.

Several members of deployed total force were young, with little military experience and just out of high school.

"They were kids — 18, 19, barely shaving," Greene said. "For many, this was their first deployment. I saw my part as encouraging and building them."

Greene's flight left the desert in February and spent the rest of the deployment at Fort Campbell, Ky., before being shipped back to Louisville for an Inspector General's Exercise.

Since then, Greene has been released from active duty and is readjusting to his life as a civilian.

He recently opened another office for his counseling practice and is trying to rebuild the business to the level it was when he left.

The transition has had its moments for Greene.

"You're dealing with more black and white issues in the military than in marriage counseling," Greene said.

"There are more concrete issues such as attention to detail and the responsibilities of dealing with people's lives in the Air Force than there are in marriage counseling."

The deployment also was hard on his family life.

"It was the first time I spent Christmas and New Year's Day away from my family," Greene said. "I'm glad I went, but I'm even happier to be home."

Greene's military experience spans nearly 25 years. He spent five years in the Tennessee Air Guard, from 1978 to 1983, then enlisted again in the Kentucky Air Guard in October 1997.

He recently was recognized for his service to the country when he was selected to represent the Air National Guard in the 114th Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade and associated celebrations in Pasadena, Calif., on Jan. 1.



Senior Airman Valerie Gholson/KyANG

ALCF

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was like, ‘OK, it’s not as bad physically as I thought it was going to be.’

“The second thing was, after about three days (we realized we were) probably not going to die — even better. Then they started to serve a hot meal a day — life’s okay.”

The unit’s mission during the deployment consisted of command and control of all air-lift operations.

According to Nelson, ALCF members worked with every service aircraft in the U.S. military as well as those of multiple coalition nations and U.S. agencies.

Such interoperability among the services was highly successful, Nelson said.

“There’s a bond when you’re in a fight,” he said. “You’re there for the same purpose, same location. You’re all wearing the same uniform.”

“You still have, not animosity, but jokes between sister and brother services. But there’s a bond... If you’ve got something I need, you’ll give it to me. You’ll give me two if you have it.”

This spirit of cooperation and can-do attitude helped make the mission a success, but a little creativity didn’t hurt either.

“There were constant aircraft coming through,” Nelson said, “so they would land on the runway, taxi off to a parallel taxiway, and that’s where we would load and off load it, and it would taxi right back around.”

“It was like a big race track. We’d have to get creative because airplanes do break sometimes.”

“You’re supposed to have one (airplane) on the ground and that’s it. Now you’ve got two on the ground you’re working, a third one on the ground that you’re holding, one at the pit taking gas and another one on final trying to come in.”

One night while this was going on, Nelson said, he listened to an air traffic controller explain the situation to someone calling in.

“I’ve got two on the ground...one just took off poppin’ flares, another on final poppin’ flares coming in. Welcome to the madness,” the controller said.

After returning from the Afghanistan area of operations, the group was home for less than a month before packing their bags again



ABOVE: Commander of the 123rd Airlift Control Flight, Lt. Col. Greg Nelson, and the commander of a Marine MC-130 Raiders unit worked closely together during their deployment to Operation Enduring Freedom.

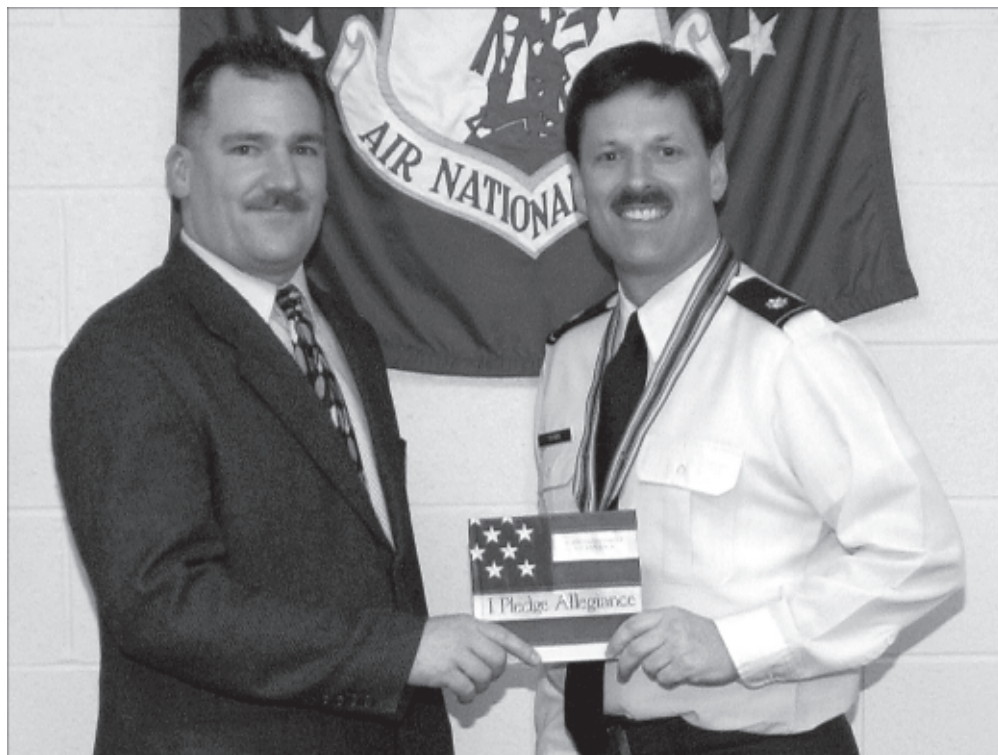


LEFT: Tech. Sgt. Wrensey Gill and Tech. Sgt. Paul Greene clean equipment in preparation for redeployment.



A C-17 Globemaster III arrives just before Christmas 2001 carrying USO show stars Wayne Newton, Drew Carey and two Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders.

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Senior Airman Philip Speck/KyANG

MOWW SALUTE

Capt. Dave Clements, membership chairman for the Military Order of World Wars Maj. Gen. Ben Butler Chapter, awards Lt. Col. Rich Frymire, the chapter commander, an "I Pledge Allegiance" book for recruiting five new members.

The presentation took place during the chapter's December monthly luncheon.

Membership in the organization is open to any commissioned or warrant officer—currently or formerly on active duty—who has served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces.

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:

AIRMAN FIRST CLASS (E-3)

- Lucas Coffey,
123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.
- Michael Moore,
123rd Maintenance Sq.

SENIOR AIRMAN (E-4)

- Nicholas Ash,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Jeremiah Burns,
123rd Student Flt.
- Marshall Cool,
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Joshua Forney,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Thomas Mahan,
123rd Student Flt.

- Lucas Sweeten,
123rd Civil Engineers Sq.

STAFF SERGEANT (E-5)

- Christopher Abrams,
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Michael Faulkner Jr.,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Laura Mabe,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Gregory Mattingly,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Frank Morgan III,
123rd Security Forces Sq.

TECHNICAL SERGEANT (E-6)

- Russell Decker,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Ivan Dummitt,
123rd Civil Engineers Sq.
- Robert Holland,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- David Johnston,
123rd Security Forces Sq.

- Edward Moody,
123rd Civil Engineers Sq.
- James Oliver,
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Jerry Zollman Jr.,
123rd Maintenance Sq.

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

- Staff Sgt. Carey Pravdica,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Chief Master Sgt. James Swanner,
123rd Communications Flt.

The following individuals have separated from the Kentucky Air Guard:

- Staff Sgt. Christopher Harlan,
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Tech. Sgt. Raymond Page Jr.,
123rd Security Forces Sq.

Medical official issues notice on ephedra risks

By G.W. Pomeroy
Air Force Surgeon General Public Affairs

BOLLING AIR FORCE BASE, D.C.—The Air Force’s surgeon general has issued a notice to airmen on the potential risks associated with dietary supplements that contain ephedra, following the death of a young Air Force member in early November.

Medical notices are released by clinical quality management division officials from the Air Force Medical Operations Agency to disseminate lessons learned from medical incident investigations and other pertinent events.

“What we know is that this young man took dietary supplements, including ephedra,” said Royal Air Force Wing Commander (Dr.) Victor Wallace, of the aerospace medicine division at the Air Force Medical Operations Agency. “Although there was insufficient evidence to be causal, the changes seen in this young man’s cardiovascular system can be associated with ephedra use.

“The purpose of the (notice) is to ensure that Air Force personnel and their attend-

ing medical staff remain alert to the risks and can provide appropriate advice and education,” he said, an RAF exchange officer.

The Air Force surgeon general issued a revised policy covering dietary supplements containing ephedra on Sept. 5 that strongly discouraged the use of such supplements and highlighted associated risk factors.

The revised SG policy was followed by a memorandum from the Air Force Services Agency, which called for services activities to remove such supplements from their resale inventories.

“Since ephedra and its alkaloids have several different names, products should be evaluated by (major command-) and baselevel dietitians to ensure all items known to include this herb/ingredient are identified and removed from your operations,” the services memo read.

In late August, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service also removed the products from its inventories.

According to a statement issued by AAFES headquarters officials in Dallas: “Due to health and safety concerns, AAFES has replaced all ‘performance enhancing’ dietary supplements that contain ephedra with

ephedra-free products. All products with ephedra have been removed from AAFES’ stores, along with those operated by AAFES concessionaires. Signs have been posted to encourage customers to carefully read the labels of all dietary supplements to help them make informed choices.”

Air Force Surgeon General officials have repeatedly “strongly advised” people to contact their physicians or health-care providers before taking dietary supplements containing ma huang, ephedra or ephedra alkaloids.

“Consultation is especially necessary if an individual has preexisting medical problems, is taking other medications or exercises vigorously as part of (his or her) occupation or fitness program,” Wallace said.

Such supplements, which include so-called energy boosters, over-the-counter diet pills and bodybuilding drinks or mixes, may pose health and occupational risks even for those not taking other prescribed drugs, Wallace said.

Today, at least 20 states and the National Football League are among those who have banned or restricted use of ephedrine products.

USAF eliminates captain central selection boards

Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON—The Air Force will eliminate captain central selection boards for active-duty, Guard and Reserve officers beginning in 2003.

The move will not only streamline the process for eligible first lieutenants—placing the decision point for promotion closer to those who know the officers best—but will benefit the Air Force in other ways as well, according to Col. Dale Vande Hey, director of personnel programs for the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

“Aside from placing the promotion decision maker closer to the officer, it also saves the Air Force time, money and productivity by eliminating temporary duty trips for board members and preparation time at the centers,” Vande Hey said.

Promotion decisions will now be made at the major command or equivalent level, Vande Hey said. Previously, active-duty

captain selection boards were held at the AFPC, while Reserve and Guard captain selection boards were held at the Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver.

“With the possibility on each board to promote 100 percent of those eligible, and with an historical 99 percent active-duty selection rate, it only seemed logical to make this change,” Vande Hey said.

The 2002 National Defense Authorization Act permits the service secretaries to eliminate captain promotion boards when the promotion opportunity is 100 percent.

Despite the absence of a central review, individuals will still need to be “fully qualified” to be promoted. This means everyone who is determined to be qualified can be promoted. By comparison, promotion to the ranks of major through colonel are based on the “best qualified” criterion, meaning promotion board members rank-order qualified candidates by merit and only a predetermined percentage of the total eligible are promoted.

First lieutenants meeting the time-in-grade

and time-in-service requirements will be initially recommended as either “promote” or “do not promote” candidates. Members who receive a “do not promote” recommendation will be provided an opportunity to rebut that recommendation.

Recommendation to captain for active-duty officers will take place one year preceding the quarter in which an individual is eligible to pin on, which is based on the two-year date of rank anniversary.

Promotion recommendation lists are then compiled and certified quarterly at the major command level and forwarded to the AFPC. Center officials then forward the list of recommended officers through the secretary of the Air Force for presidential approval.

Recommendation to captain for Reserve officers will take place twice a year, which parallels current board cycles.

Guard captain recommendations will take place once a year, one year preceding the projected pin-on date.

Cheney praises ANG efforts in war on terror

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

DENVER — Vice President Richard Cheney praised the Air Guard for all it has done during the global war against terrorism and promised that the fight will not end until the threat to the United States and the rest of the civilized world is wiped out.

That includes making sure that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is deprived of all weapons of mass destruction, Cheney told a reported 1,200 people attending the Air Guard's Senior Leadership Conference here Dec. 2

"The only path to safety is the path of action," Cheney said. "And the United States will act. We will confront every threat from every source that could possibly bring harm to our country.

"The conflict can only end with their complete and utter destruction and a victory for the United States and the cause of freedom," said Cheney of the war against those who have little to lose.

"In the terrorists ... we have enemies who have nothing to defend," he pointed out. "A

group like the al-Qaida cannot be deterred or placated or reasoned with at a conference table. For this reason, the war against terror will not end in a treaty. There will be no summit meeting or negotiations with terrorists.

"As the president has said, this is a fight to save the civilized world," Cheney said. "This is a struggle against evil, against an enemy that rejoices in the murder of innocent, unsuspecting human beings."

As for Iraq, the Cheney said that "confronting the threat posed by Iraq is not a distraction from the war on terror. It is absolutely crucial to winning the war on terror."

Hussein, Cheney charged, harbors terrorists and could supply biological or chemical weapons to terrorist groups or individuals.

"The war on terror will not be won until Iraq is completely and verifiably deprived of weapons of mass destruction," he added.

Cheney brought greetings and gratitude from President Bush, "the former commander-in-chief of the Texas National Guard, and the first Air National Guard veteran ever to live in the White House."

Bush, Cheney told his audience, "asked

me to please give you his personal thanks for the fantastic job you've done for all of us over the course of the last year and a half."

Cheney also acknowledged what the Air Guard has brought to the 14-month-old war against terrorism that Bush initiated following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

"The Air National Guard's role in the aftermath of September 11th has been truly remarkable. You have assumed an astonishing portion of the military missions in Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Enduring Freedom," Cheney said.

"Today, there are nearly 11,000 mobilized and volunteer members of the Air Guard serving at home or overseas," he pointed out. "Air National Guard pilots fly three-quarters of the combat air patrols defending the United States mainland. You provide 40 percent of our airlift capacity in Afghanistan and 42 percent of the fighters in our air expeditionary force. Between September 11th of 2001 and September 11th of this year, Air National Guard pilots flew 46,000 sorties.

"As members of the National Guard, you may not be full-time soldiers, but you are all full-time patriots," Cheney praised.

ALCF

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and heading to Fort Campbell, Ky., to offer support for the deployment and redeployment of their troops.

During this four-month trip, Nelson's team assisted in moving more than 17 million pounds of cargo.

Since then, KyANG's ALCF has been deactivated and is working to return to business as usual.

Through it all, the team's performance was outstanding, Nelson said.

"We had a lot of experience, a lot of maturity that really made my job easy," he said. "I can't thank them enough, can't praise them enough. What else can I really say?"

"They're combat veterans (who) went out and did they're job. Some (are) multiple veterans. I've got two (for whom) this is their second or third war.

"You can't deploy with better than that."

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