

THE CARGO COURIER

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Kentucky sharpshooters join USAF team

Johnson and Tallman are the first reservists ever to compete on squad

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

Two Kentucky Air Guardsmen have been selected as the newest members of the the U.S. Air Force Rifle Team, marking the first time in history that reservists have competed as part of the blue-suit squad.

Master Sgt. James Johnson and Tech Sgt. Frank Tallman, both members of the wing's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, were invited to join the team this summer after posting top scores in the 2004 National Rifle and Pistol Championships held at Camp Perry, Ohio, in July.

Using only the iron sights on his .22-caliber rifle as a guide, Sergeant Johnson placed first in the Sharpshooter Civilian/Service division and second place in the "Made in America" match, which is restricted to shooters with exclusively American gear.

Sergeant Tallman scored two first-place honors, winning the "Any Sight" category of the Sharpshooter Civilian/Service division with his scoped .22 rifle and taking first place overall in the same smallbore division.

Their achievements are especially remarkable because of bad weather during the iron sight matches.

Sergeants Johnson and Tallman had to fend off a deluge of rain and gale-force winds while trying to zero their rifles with fogged-up sighting scopes and hit targets whose bull's eyes are smaller than a dime at 50 yards, squeezing off 40 rounds of ammunition during each 40-minute match.

The rain was so heavy that Sergeant Johnson had to break his



Master Sgt. Mark Rines/KyANG

Master Sgt. James Johnson and Tech. Sgt. Frank Tallman are the newest members of the U.S. Air Force Rifle Team.

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Kraus named commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing

Cargo Courier Staff Report

Col. Mark R. Kraus has been named commander of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing, effective Nov. 15.

Colonel Kraus has served as an RF-4C weapon systems officer and C-130 navigator, and has held a variety of leadership positions including chief of standardization/evaluation, flight commander, operations

officer, squadron commander and group commander.

His military career spans more than 30 years, including six years of enlisted service prior to his commissioning as an officer through the Air National Guard Academy of Military Science in 1979.

During his Kentucky Air Guard career, Colonel Kraus has participated in Operations Provide Promise, Restore Hope, Joint Forge,

Coronet Oak, Bright Star and Red Flag.

He also was mobilized in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

As wing commander, Colonel Kraus provides leadership of the flying unit, supervising manpower, equipment and training.

His major awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal and the Aerial Achievement Medal.

I will strive to lead well, work hard and admonish carefully as your new commander

I

It is an honor for me to assume command of the Kentucky Air

Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing, effective Nov. 15.

I'm humbled to have the opportunity to serve this great organization in that capacity, and I look forward to continuing the path we've established over these last few months.

As I reflect on my first command many years ago, I recall the pledges I made to those folks then, and I hold fast to them for you now.

I will strive to *Lead Well, Work Hard and Admonish Carefully*.

These are the standards to which I will aspire.

Leading well, to me, means leading from the front, setting a good example, doing what is right, having integrity, being honest and providing an environment where I can encourage and support you to do the same.

I also will work hard to provide you with the tools you need to not only do what you're trained to do but also to have some fun along the way.

I will work hard to make things easy for you, to use common sense and to



**Col. Mark Kraus
123rd Airlift Wing Commander**

seek wise counsel in the decisions I make.

And lastly, I will admonish carefully. We all make mistakes; I live by grace and will extend it to you. I will strive to be fair and considerate always — to be your advocate even in correction.

The holidays are fast approaching,

and I hope it can be a time for you to relax, refresh and reflect with friends and family to celebrate this joyous time of year.

Each of you can take pride in the successes of this past year and the contributions that we continue to make in keeping our nation safe from terror.

On the other side of our break, many important tasks await us in the new year — the challenges of AEF rotations, preparations for the Operational Readiness Inspection, UTAs, proficiency training, and the list goes on and on.

It will be busy, but it will not be overwhelming if we each concentrate first on our individual responsibilities and then how we can work and support others in our unit.

Thank you in advance for all of your hard work, dedication and teamwork.

I wish the very best for each of you and your families.

Have a safe, restful and wonderful holiday season.

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Our office is located in room 2118 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is Jan. 12.

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

Giving Thanks

Col. Howard Hunt (left), commander of the 123rd Maintenance Group, and Col. Mark Kraus (right), commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, serve up holiday meals on base during the November UTA.



Senior Airman Philip Speck/KyANG

2005 UTA dates announced

The Kentucky National Guard announced the following 2005 Unit Training Assembly dates for members of the 123rd Airlift Wing:

January	22-23
February	5-6
March	5-6
April	16-17
May	14-15
June	11-12
July	30-31
August	13-14
September	17-18
October	15-16
November	5-6
December	3-4

All Kentucky Air National Guard members must participate in scheduled Unit Training Assemblies unless attending a split or rescheduled UTA as authorized by their commanders.

Tricare benefits improved for Guard, Reserve

Air Force News Service

WASHINGTON — The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2005 significantly improves the overall health benefits available to guardsmen, reservists and their families.

It also makes permanent several of the Tricare benefits authorized “temporarily” under defense legislation, while extending secretarial authorization for others. President Bush signed the act Oct. 28.

“Our reservists and guardsmen who are called to duty, and their families, deserve these great new benefits for their service to their country,” said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

For reserve component servicemembers with delayed effective date orders to serve on active duty supporting a contingency operation for more than 30 days, the new leg-

islation permanently authorizes Tricare eligibility for up to 90 days before the servicemember’s activation date for eligible troops and their families.

It also makes permanent a 180-day transitional benefit after deactivation for servicemembers and their families eligible for the transitional assistance management program.

Troops must also now receive a comprehensive physical examination before separating from active duty service, officials said.

The legislation authorizes waiver of the Tricare standard and extra deductibles of reserve component family members for troops ordered to active duty for more than 30 days, and authorizes Tricare to pay nonparticipating providers up to 115 percent of the Tricare maximum allowable charge.

To ensure seamless implementation of these provisions, Tricare officials have extended the Tricare Reserve Family Demon-

stration Project through Oct. 31, 2005. The demonstration, which began on Sept. 14, 2001, was scheduled to end Nov. 1.

Reserve component servicemembers who were called to support a contingency operation for more than 30 days after Sept. 11, 2001, and who served or will continuously serve for 90 or more days, can now purchase Tricare standard healthcare coverage for themselves and their family members after they demobilize.

The servicemember must sign an agreement to continue serving for one year or more in the selected reserve after their active duty ends.

For every 90 days of consecutive active-duty service, the servicemember and family member may purchase one year of Tricare standard coverage for the same period they commit to serve in the selected reserves.

More information on this program is available at www.defenselink.mil/ra.

Team

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shooting position twice to tilt the muzzle of his rifle and clear rain water from the sights.

"After breaking position, I had to trust that everything was back in the right place when I resumed shooting because I couldn't see through my sighting scope anymore," Sergeant Johnson recalled.

"I was really firing blind for the last eight rounds, but it all worked out OK," the combat controller added. "Every one of those shots was right in the 10-ring."

Sergeant Tallman, a radio equipment technician and former Army Ranger, said many longtime shooters decided to skip the competition rather than shoot under such austere conditions.

"But we just did the military thing," he said. "We drove on and made the best we could out of a bad situation."

Members of the Air Force Rifle Team, whom Sergeant Johnson subsequently contacted via e-mail, were duly impressed.

"Sergeant Johnson and Sergeant Tallman's scores were quite good," said Maj. Doug Clark, a member of the USAF team who stepped down as squad captain earlier this year.

"They clearly have a lot of ability and the potential for even more in the future, especially if they're practicing every week."

In fact, Sergeants Johnson and Tallman practice each Tuesday night at a local gun club populated with smallbore aficionados.

Those practice sessions are now considerably less expensive, thanks to ammunition supplied by the Air Force — one of the perks of Rifle Team membership.

Sergeants Johnson and Tallman each had been spending about \$100 a month of their own money on lower-grade ammo. Now the Air Force has committed to supplying each of them up to 10,000 rounds per year of competition-grade shells worth about \$2,000, Major Clark said.

Sergeants Johnson and Tallman first became interested in smallbore shooting — typically .22-caliber — about a year ago.

Previously both had participated in military matches, which usually feature high-powered, largebore rifles like the M-16. Johnson also had participated in two combat-rifle matches — a kind of obstacle

course with shooting — while serving as an active duty security forces troop in the late 1980s.

But international competition is based on smallbore (and air rifle) shooting, which requires an incredible amount of precision.

"We're measuring wins and losses by thousandths of an inch at 50 meters or 100 yards," Johnson said.

Smallbore rifles also happen to be the primary weapons used by competitors with Olympic aspirations.

In fact, the reason Sergeants Johnson and Tallman have ready access to smallbore rifles now is because of Maj. Don Durbin, a former chief of KyANG base supply who was a member of the U.S. Rifle Team in the 1984 Olympics.

Durbin acquired the 1960s-vintage rifles — bolt-action Winchester Model 52Es — from the U.S. Army Rifle Team, which was upgrading its equipment and planned to destroy them. They've been on base ever since and have gone largely unused for more than 10 years — until 2003 when Sergeants Johnson and Tallman returned from a deployment to Southwest Asia and picked up a new passion.

Access to such fine-quality rifles played an important role in helping the two land spots on the USAF team, Major Clark said.

"We get a lot of inquiries from folks who want to join the team," he said. "But you have to be sufficiently equipped for international-style competition, which carries a price tag of \$5,000 for the rifles and the clothing. A .22 from Wal-Mart doesn't cut it."

It was, of course, their shooting skills that ultimately earned Sergeants Johnson and Tallman a spot among the Air Force's best marksmen. Remarkably, both have competed in only two smallbore contests to date: a regional event held in May and the National Championships held in July.

Next on their agenda is the Rocky Mountain Championships, which will be held at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., in February.

The event serves as the first match of the year for the Air Force team and will be used to establish a pecking order among the squad's eight members.

After that, they can expect to travel on TDY status to as many as seven competitions a year as part of the USAF team, depending on their availability.

Unlike Army shooters, who are part of a standing team of full-time marksmen, the Air Force shooters must hold down regular

service jobs and are permitted to practice or travel for competitions only when their schedules permit.

This handicap actually works to the advantage of Sergeants Johnson and Tallman, who, as full-time Air Guardsmen, would not be able to participate in a USAF team staffed with full-time, dedicated shooters.

As it is, their availability is not much different from that of any other team member, Major Clark said.

While Sergeants Johnson and Tallman hone their skills as part of the Air Force Rifle Team over the next year, they also will be setting their sights on an even loftier target: the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

Major Clark said such aspirations are certainly within reach.

"Sergeants Johnson and Tallman are replacing two former world champions who left the team this summer," he said. "One of them was a member of the 1988 Olympic team and finished third in the selection for this year's Olympic team.

"It's some big shoes to fill, but the Olympics are certainly within anyone's grasp on our team."

For now, however, both airmen are pleased to represent the Air National Guard as the first reservists ever to compete on the U.S. Air Force Rifle Team. (Apparently, no one had ever asked before, Major Clark said.)

"I'm quite excited and very hopeful that this will pan out for us," Sergeant Johnson said.

"There hasn't been anyone competing at this level from the Air Guard since Major Durbin in the 1980s."

He also is especially grateful for the support he and Sergeant Tallman have received from people across the base.

"We now have new spotting scopes that won't fog up, and the base rifle team got together with our squadron to buy us new shooting jackets that meet international standards," Sergeant Johnson said.

"That was \$200 we thought we were going to have to pay out of our own pockets, so we're very appreciative of that support."

Sergeant Tallman is equally enthusiastic.

"I'm quite happy and surprised to be where we are right now," he said. "I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to do this."



Tech Sgt shooting 52E (top target field right).

KyANG



Sgt. Frank Tallman demonstrates the prone shooting position with his Winchester Model 70; Master Sgt. James Johnson sights a target from the kneeling position (bottom left,

Photos by Master Sgt. Mark Rines

Memo strengthens job protection for Guard members

WASHINGTON — Officials with the U.S. Attorney General's Office and the U.S. Department of Labor have signed a memorandum of understanding to ensure that the employment rights of men and women returning from military service are vigorously protected.

The memorandum streamlines and

strengthens enforcement of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, commonly known as USERRA. When a complaint raises an "issue of immediate and significant harm" and each agency agrees that the complaint appears legitimate, it now may be referred for enforcement immediately.

"Our military men and women have been there for us, so now it's our turn to step up our efforts for them," said Labor Secretary Elaine Chao. "This agreement will strengthen enforcement of USERRA by ensuring faster resolution of USERRA cases and quicker enforcement action by the government when it is necessary."

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)

- Andrew Carey**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron
- Tiffany Downs**,
123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Robert Fisher**,
165th Airlift Squadron
- David Francis**,
165th Airlift Squadron
- Donna Garrett**,
123rd Services Flight
- Garrett Gerard**,
123rd Maintenance Squadron
- Jason Healey**,
123rd Security Forces Squadron
- Heather Hoskins**,
123rd Medical Squadron
- Paul Jones**,
165th Airlift Squadron
- Joshua Jordan**,
123rd Maintenance Squadron
- Nicholas Leis Jr.**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron
- Christopher Miller**,
123rd Maintenance Squadron
- Valorie Rankin**,
165th Airlift Squadron
- Hannah Reed**,
123rd Mission Support Flight
- Andrew Six**,
123rd Maintenance Squadron

STAFF SERGEANT (E-5)

- Ileah Brown**,
123rd Maintenance Squadron
- Valerie Carpenter**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron

- Casey Clark**,
165th Airlift Squadron
- Robert Cloyd**,
123rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Christopher Edelen**,
123rd Civil Engineer Squadron
- Lindsay Elwell**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron
- Richard Hessick**,
165th Airlift Squadron
- Paul Ivey**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron
- Gregory Myers**,
123rd Maintenance Operation Flight
- Irene Myers**,
123rd Security Forces Squadron
- Joyce Robertson**,
123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Dana Stahl**,
123rd Communications Flight
- Kenneth White**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron

TECHNICAL SERGEANT (E-6)

- Joey Blanton**,
123rd Security Forces Squadron
- Michael Block**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron
- Michael Bradley**,
123rd Special Tactics Squadron
- Larry Burba**,
123rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Christopher Chamberlain**,
123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Brook Corey**,
123rd Civil Engineer Squadron
- Jonathan Coulter**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron
- Mark Duke**,
123rd Medical Squadron
- Michael Greene**,
123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Earl Hartlage Jr.**,
123rd Security Forces Squadron

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

- Staff Sgt. Patti Barnes**,
123rd Medical Squadron
- Chief Master Sgt. Michael Cook**,
123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Master Sgt. James Crane Jr.**,
123rd Maintenance Squadron
- Master Sgt. Laura Crowder**,
123rd Medical Squadron
- Tech. Sgt. Russell Decker**,
123rd Security Forces Squadron
- Senior Master Sgt. Maureen Engelstad**,
123rd Maintenance Squadron
- Master Sgt. Raymond Johnson**,
123rd Services Flight
- Tech. Sgt. Cedric Jones**,
123rd Airlift Wing
- Master Sgt. Samuel Knight Jr.**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron

The following individuals have separated from the Kentucky Air National Guard:

- Staff Sgt. Joseph Borchardt**,
165th Airlift Squadron
- Airman 1st Class Joseph Difede Jr.**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron
- Staff Sgt. Mary Evans**,
123rd Mission Support Group
- Staff Sgt. Fathaya Lockett**,
123rd Mission Support Flight
- Senior Airman Michael Marks**,
123rd Maintenance Squadron
- Staff Sgt. Joellen Mathias**,
165th Airlift Squadron
- Senior Airman Blaine Morgan III**,
123rd Services Flight
- Staff Sgt. Stephen Pendleton**,
123rd Aerial Port Squadron

Service honors spouses with pin

WASHINGTON — Air Force officials have expanded the pin program to recognize and thank those who support the efforts of Airmen around the world by introducing the Air Force spouse pin.

This new pin joins the Air Force employer pin and parent pin as one of the service's most visible public outreach programs.

The spouse pin — a blue star cradled in the Air Force symbol — is a contemporary adaptation of a wartime tradition.

Beginning with World War I, families hung service flags in their windows to display a blue star for each family member serving in the armed forces.

The new pin is given to spouses of American Airmen and civilians in recognition of the sacrifices they make for their spouse's service, officials said.

Spouses also will receive a personalized letter signed by Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche and Air Force Chief Staff Gen. John P. Jumper.

Airmen and civilian employees can register for a spouse pin through a Web-based program at www.yourguardiansoffreedom.com.

Your Guardians of Freedom, a division of the Air Force public affairs directorate, manages the recognition program.

The office's mission is to help commanders and Airmen reach out to key audiences to tell the story of Airmen fighting the war on terrorism.

More than 222,000 Airmen have created profiles at the Web site, which has resulted in the presentation of more than 318,000 parent pins and more than 61,000 employer pins.

The program was created by former Kentucky Air Guard Chief of Staff Brig. Gen. Ed Tonini, who retired from the service in 2004.

Secretary Roche stepping down

WASHINGTON — Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche announced his resignation Nov. 16.

"I'm honored to have served the president, the secretary of defense and the terrific Airmen I've come to know and love in the past few years as the secretary of the Air Force," he said. "I've served with talented active, Guard, Reserve and civilian Airmen who are successfully countering new threats to our nation through their innovation and creativity. I'm proud to call myself an Airman."

Secretary Roche submitted his letter of resignation voluntarily. He left private industry to serve his country and the Air Force.

During his tenure, Secretary Roche spearheaded many initiatives to improve the quality of life for Airmen and the capabilities of the Air Force.

Recapitalization and modernization program improvements under his watch included the F/A-22 Raptor, weaponizing the RQ/MQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial vehicle, delivering the remotely piloted Global Hawk and the Joint Direct Attack Munition.

"Dr. Roche has led the Air Force through one of the most remarkable periods in our nation's history," said Air Force Chief of

Staff Gen. John P. Jumper.

"It has been my honor to serve side-by-side with him since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. During his tenure he has made each and every Airman his priority. His unrelenting resolve to adapt our force, to counter new and resilient threats to our nation, has guaranteed America's Air Force remains the greatest in the world. His compassion for the sacrifices made by our Airmen and their families is known across the Air Force. Indeed, the men and women of the Air Force family will remember him as a leader, friend and, most of all, as an Airman."

Among other accomplishments, Secretary Roche instituted an agenda for change to improve the staff and cadet culture at the U.S. Air Force Academy following reports of sexual assault. His air and space expeditionary force concept improvements linked professional military education to AEF rotation dates, reorganized deployable unit type codes and delivered base opening capability packages.

Secretary Roche's previous military service spanned 23 years in the U.S. Navy, from which he retired as a captain in 1983.



Master Sgt. Jim Varhegyi/USAF

Air Force Secretary Dr. James G. Roche submitted his resignation Nov. 16. Secretary Roche said he plans on leaving his position Jan. 20 or sooner if a successor is confirmed by the Senate by then. Dr. Roche has led the Air Force since 2001.

Hail to the Chiefs

Lt. Col. Connie Allen, commander of the 123rd Civil Engineers Squadron, places new rank insignia on Chief Master Sgt. Danny Brooks during his promotion ceremony here Sept. 18. Chief Brooks is the base fire chief.



Master Sgt. Mark Rines/KyANG

Chief Master Sgt. Dee Riggle and Senior Airman Brian Milburn place new rank insignia on Chief Master Sgt. Billy Milburn during a promotion ceremony held on base Oct. 3. Chief Milburn is NCOIC of the Maintenance Operations Flight here. His son, Airman Milburn, is a loadmaster in the 165th Airlift Squadron.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

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