

THE CARGO COURIER

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

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Wing concludes mission in Afghanistan



Kentucky Guardsmen flew thousands of tons of cargo to U.S. forces

**By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer**

Kentucky Air Guardsmen delivered thousands of tons of equipment and supplies to forward-deployed troops across Afghanistan during a nine-week deployment to Bagram Airfield that concluded earlier this month, said Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

More than 210 Kentucky Airmen participated in the mission between July 5, when the wing first began deploying troops, and Sept. 9, when the final rotation of 31 Kentucky Airmen returned home.

Most served on rotations lasting about 30 days, during which they joined forces with personnel from other Air Guard C-130 units, including wings based in New York and Idaho. The deployed Airmen included pilots, navigators, loadmasters, maintenance personnel and support troops.

Colonel Kraus, who was tapped as deputy commander of Bagram's 455th Expeditionary Operations Group, said the deployment was one of the most challenging airlift missions he's ever experienced.

"Some of the drop zones were extraordinarily small — like 100 yards by 150 yards — and we had to deal with very unpredictable winds," he said. "We also were dropping into some of the most rugged terrain you'll find anywhere in the world, sometimes to troops

Above: Senior Master Sgt. Roy Self, a loadmaster from the Kentucky Air Guard's 165th Airlift Squadron, clears the ramp of a C-130 after eight bundles of supplies are airdropped over Afghanistan to troops in the field. Sergeant Self was one of more than 210 Kentucky Airmen who deployed for the airlift mission between July 5 and Sept. 9.

Right: Aircrew members and rigging specialists load airdrop bundles aboard a Kentucky Air Guard C-130 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The aircraft and aircrews were assigned to the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron for the duration of the deployment.



Photos by Senior Master Sgt. Kim Allain/USAF

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Each Airman has a responsibility to be a good wingman and help those in need

As Airmen fight terrorism in the far corners of the world, the sacrifices asked of them and their families have increased significantly.

These sacrifices have been accepted with courage and valor, and I am very proud of their contributions both at home and abroad.

Nevertheless, under such circumstances, it is natural for our people to feel the stress of these demands and to be overwhelmed at times.

Tragically, too often, these pressures end in suicide.

This year the Air Force has lost more Airmen to suicide than to direct enemy action.

In stressful times such as these, with so many Airmen deployed and with so many others pushed to the breaking point, it is vital that we all understand that we are not alone.

We are partnered in this war and bonded in the service.

It is up to us to look out for one another.

We must make every effort to understand the people around us, to talk to them and to get to know them on a personal level.



Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force

We must treat our people with respect and demonstrate integrity and empathy up and down the line.

Airmen must understand that they can talk through their difficulties. They must know that there is a wingman available to listen, be it a chaplain, family counselor, day care provider, or simply a friend.

In the battle against suicide, knowledge is one of our main weapons.

Understanding the signs of stress and depression in yourself and others can empower you to know when to seek help and wingmen to know how to help each other.

All Airmen should know that treating depression improves quality of life and job performance.

It is extremely unusual for an Airman's career to suffer negative effects from seeking help for emotional difficulties.

Getting help when you're hurting is the right thing to do.

Smart Airmen seek out help when they need it and great wingmen know when to encourage their peers to get help.

Many suicides can be prevented. By working together, we can all make a difference and save lives.

It is the responsibility of every Airman to be a good wingman and to reach out to those in need.

*—Michael W. Wynne,
Secretary of the Air Force*

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Our office is located in room 2118 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is Oct. 10.

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Airmen attend conference on women

More than a dozen women from the 123rd Airlift Wing represented the Kentucky Air Guard at the Governor's Conference on Kentucky's Women, held July 13 in Louisville.

The conference was dedicated this year to the commonwealth's military women, past and present.

Sponsored by the Kentucky Commission on Women, it featured a variety of workshops and seminars on subjects ranging from healthy lifestyles to leadership development.

The opening keynote address was delivered by Col. Holly M. Stone, deputy staff judge advocate at Air Mobility Command headquarters.

Colonel Stone earned both a bachelor's degree and a juris doctorate from the University of Kentucky before joining the Air Force.

She spoke about the sacrifices made by women in uniform throughout history.

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm also addressed conference attendees, taking time to recognize top women leaders in both the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard.

"The workshops were one of the highlights of the conference," said Staff Sgt. Cleopatra Buckner, NCOIC of the Military Equal Opportunity Office at the Kentucky Air Guard.

"They provided excellent advice and information on how to strengthen leadership abilities and better yourself as a woman while still maintaining a balance between work and personal obligations."

Truck plows into Base Annex

Building will need extensive repairs

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

A driver lost control of his cement truck and slammed into the side of the Base Annex on Aug. 16, causing extensive damage to the concrete-block structure.

The driver, who was treated for minor injuries at University Hospital, said his brakes failed as he drove down the southbound Interstate 65 offramp to Grade Lane at about 5:30 a.m.

The Allied Ready-Mix Co. truck then crossed four lanes of traffic, jumped a concrete curb, narrowly missed a fire hydrant and telephone pole, broke through a chain-link fence and struck the side of the Annex before coming to a rest inside the building.

The driver had already freed himself from the vehicle by the time rescue workers arrived on the scene minutes later, according to officials from Louisville Fire & Rescue. No one else was inside the building at the time of the accident.

It took contractors nearly eight hours to extract the cement truck and remove it from the scene, which remained strewn with rubble for days.

The truck hit near the base Morale, Welfare and Readiness facility, which housed recreation equipment like billiard tables and

a widescreen TV.

Most of that equipment was damaged beyond repair, and the building itself will require major reconstruction before it can be used again, said Capt. Keith Smith of the 123rd Civil Engineering Squadron.

Contractors have installed scaffolding to provide temporary structural support as reconstruction arrangements are made.

"We hope to begin construction by the first of November and have the project completed by the end of the calendar year," said Senior Master Sgt. Marty Fautz, base facilities manager.

"We're just lucky no one was in the building at the time of the accident. I'm certain they would have been killed."



Tech. Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

An Allied Ready-Mix Co. cement truck crashed into the Base Annex on Aug. 16.



Capt. Dale Greer/KyANG

Left: Children wait for the arrival of their loved one at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base on Sept. 9 as the wing's deployment to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, concludes.



Capt. Dale Greer/KyANG

Above: Nearly 100 people turned out for the event, which welcomed home 31 Kentucky Airmen.



Capt. Dale Greer/KyANG

Left: A returning Kentucky C-130 taxis to a stop in front of the maintenance hangar as the crowd cheers.



Capt. Dale Greer/KyANG

Right: Tech. Sgt. Delbert Brumbaugh is greeted by his family on the tarmac. Sergeant Brumbaugh is a life support technician in the 165th Airlift Squadron here.

Airlift

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who were in contact with the enemy.

“So trying to drop supplies was quite difficult. Every second you’re early or late on a drop means the cargo is going to land about 100 to 150 yards off target.”

Even routine flights to forward operating bases proved challenging, in part because landing strips often were short, unpaved, surrounded by hazards like ditches or mountain ranges, and unlighted, requiring the use of night-vision goggles.

“Night-vision goggles cause depth-perception issues,” Colonel Kraus said, “but they’re almost a necessity there because of the terrain.”

Afghanistan’s high altitude and summer heat posed problems, too, especially considering that most of the sorties called for cargo loads at or near the limits of a C-130’s capacity.

“When your heavy, you’ve got high temperatures and high altitudes, all those things work against your aircraft’s performance,” Kraus said.

Despite the challenges, Kentucky’s Airmen persevered, successfully transporting thousands of troops and thousands of tons of cargo while exemplifying what Colonel Kraus described as “the highest degree of professionalism.”

“Our folks did a fantastic job in Afghanistan,” he said. “They performed flawlessly in a tough environment, and I can’t think of anything they could have done better.”

“I’m so proud of everyone who deployed over there and took part in the mission.”



Staff Sgt. Diane Stinnett/KyANG

Above: Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, is greeted as he debarks here.

Below: Aircraft maintenance personnel were assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Bagram Airfield.



Photo courtesy 455th EAMS

Air Force e-forms migrate to public Internet site

SAN ANTONIO — Whether you're a warfighter in Iraq or a retired Airman in Nebraska, accessing Air Force forms or publications is now easier than ever due to a centralized Web site that began Aug. 24.

The Air Force Departmental Publishing Office, or e-Pubs, officially migrated under the Air Force Public Web program and is now accessible at <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil>.

The program is a secretary of the Air Force for public affairs initiative designed to consolidate all Web content and standardize the appearance of Air Force public sites worldwide.

A link to the new e-Pubs Web site is also available for customers on Air Force Link.

The new "one-stop shop" should be familiar to visitors of any Air Force public Web site. Publicly available forms and publications will be easier to find using the enhanced search capability available through Air Force Link.

"With streamlined navigation and enhanced search tools, customers will find the new site is an improvement over the former site," said Jessica Spencer-Gallucci, the director of Air Force Departmental Publishing Office in Washington, D.C.

"As a customer, I want to be able to use a key word or topic search to find what I need on the Web site," Ms. Spencer-Gallucci said.

"If I know I need a particular form, I would want to be able to search and have that form readily available to me. This is what migrating to Air Force Link will bring to both Air Force and public users of the site."

Tricare costs dropping

All reservists, families now eligible for low rates

Air Force News Service

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. — Reservists can now sign up for more affordable Tricare Select Reserve health care that starts Oct. 1.

For some, it means they will pay a third of what they are paying today.

"All drilling reservists, including individual mobilization augmentees, will have access to the health-care benefit at its lowest premium rate," said Lt. Col. Alexander Alex, Air Force Reserve Command's health benefits manager.

"Interested reservists, including those who are currently enrolled in Tricare Reserve Select, must fill out a newly developed Defense Department Form 2896-1 to take part in this restructured program."

In the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress told Defense Department officials to restructure the plan's three-tier payment system, which has been in effect since 2006.

Under the system that ends Sept. 30, only reservists on or recently returned from a contingency operation qualify for Tier 1, the lowest cost premium.

Reservists in Tier 3 pay the most each month, \$247 for the reservist alone and \$767.41 for the reservist and family. They include people who haven't been in a contingency recently, who are not self-employed, who work for an employer who offers a health care plan or who do not qualify for unemployment compensation as determined by state law.

That all changes starting Oct. 1. All drilling reservists will pay the lowest premium, \$81 a month for single coverage. Monthly premiums for reservists and families will be \$253. Tricare will adjust premiums annually on Jan. 1.

"We've been working hard for years to improve health-care benefits for all reservists, and this is a big step in that process," said Maj. Gen. Allan R. Poulin, AFRC's vice commander.

The general encourages all reservists to study the program to see if it meets their needs.

"As a health-care consultant, I have looked at numerous plans," Colonel Alex said. "And this is a very competitive 80/20 indemnity plan where the government pays 80 percent and the member pays 20 percent of the cost share.

"One of its huge benefits is the pharmacy program," he said. "If used wisely, members can get a 90-day supply of medicine for \$3 per prescription."

Another plus to the plan is its \$1,000 catastrophic cap, among the lowest in the industry, according to Colonel Alex.

"Once a member has paid \$1,000 in a fiscal year, Tricare will pay 100 percent of the Tricare allowable cost after that," he said.

About 11,500 members of the reserve components across all services are enrolled in Tricare Reserve Select. They include some 2,700 Air Force reservists.

Colonel Alex said these people will be required to re-enroll in the program using a DD Form 2896-1 if they want to keep their coverage.

To begin the application process, reservists should visit the Guard and Reserve Web portal. This is a restricted site, but DOD officials said they are looking into a simpler application process.

For more specific information, people can go to the Tricare Reserve Select Web site or contact the Air Reserve Personnel Center toll free at (800) 525-0102.

Online customer service is available by going to the Virtual Personnel Center Guard Reserve Web site and clicking on "New Request."

All drilling reservists are qualified for the restructured Tricare Reserve Select program starting Oct. 1 unless they are eligible for Federal Employee Health Benefits or are currently covered under FEHB.

"We want reservists to know that Tricare Reserve Select is something they have earned through their service to their country," said Colonel Alex. "And it is a benefit that our senior leaders have worked very hard to obtain."

Service ending use of decals on autos

By Senior Master Sgt. Matt Proietti
Secretary of the Air Force PA

WASHINGTON — Air Force officials are working with other services to allow its people to enter installations without requiring them to display a base decal on their vehicles.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley recently ended use of the sticker, officially called a DD Form 2220, on Air Force installations due to cost, a lack of utility and long-term threats facing bases.

The decal was developed in the 1970s as part of a vehicle registration and traffic management system, not to bolster security, said Col. William Sellers, the Air Force chief of force protection and operations for security forces.

“There was a clear and definable need for this system (then),” he said. “A nationwide vehicle registration database did not exist, insurance was not required by all states and a process was needed to expedite vehicle entry onto installations.”

Air Force officials began questioning

the value of the vehicle registration system in 2005 due to security concerns.

Many people incorrectly viewed the decal as being designed to bolster security, Colonel Sellers said.

In actuality, the decal lessens it by identifying vehicles of Airmen and civilian workers as potential terror targets and may lure gate guards into complacency.

Laws now require motorists to have a legal driver’s license issued by a state, proof of vehicle ownership/state registration, evidence of insurance, and safety and emissions inspections.

A national vehicle registration system is used by all civilian and military police departments in the country.

“We’ve been putting our own personnel through a process that simply duplicates state and federal mandatory requirements,” Colonel Sellers said.

Security forces and gate guards now check the ID of each person entering an Air Force installation, Colonel Sellers said.

This provides better security than a base decal ever did because:

- The vehicle displaying it could have been sold with the decal on it.

- Its owner may have left the service and not removed the decal.

- The number on the decal could be duplicated.

- The decal could be counterfeited.

- The decal may have been removed from another vehicle.

- The vehicle may have been stolen.

Some within the Defense Department feel the registration system still has utility, regardless of inherent weaknesses, Colonel Sellers said.

Installation commanders worried about the time it takes to access bases “need to face today’s security challenges.”

The military branches have spent millions on new entry points, but have failed to review the process of how they allow entry onto an installation, Colonel Sellers said.

“The strength of a redesigned gate is defeated if the process to enter is flawed,” he said. “Our first line of defense becomes irrelevant. The priority is not expediting entry, but knowing who is entering.”

Ky. Air Guard takes titles at state shooting match

Staff report

Members of the base marksmanship team took top honors during the State Combat Matches held April 14 and 15 at Fort Knox, Ky.

The annual event pits the best shooters in the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard against each other for trophies and bragging rights.

Master Sgt. John Martin took home the

coveted “Top Gun” award as overall winner of the pistol competition this year, while Senior Master Sgt. John Siebert won the same title in the rifle category.

Air Guard members also won three other awards. Staff Sgt. Jim Berger took third place in both pistol and rifle, while Sergeant Siebert earned fourth place in pistol shooting.

The competition was especially difficult this year because the weather presented ad-

ditional challenges, Sergeant Martin said.

“With freezing rain, driving wind and temperatures in the 40s, shooters had to battle the weather as much as each other,” he said. “Weapons were getting jammed and the targets kept getting blown around by the wind. We also had to lie in ankle-deep water and mud for some of the events.

“But that only added a healthy dose of realism to an event that’s supposed to test your shooting skills in a combat environment.”

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