

THE CARGO COURIER

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

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Wing takes 'triple crown' of inspections

Kentucky Air Guard scores three 'excellent' ratings in evaluations

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The 123rd Airlift Wing scored a triple crown of sorts last month when it completed three higher-headquarters inspections by logging prestigious "excellent" ratings in each.

The wing successfully completed an Air Mobility Command Inspector General Unit Compliance Inspection, a U.S. Air Force Health Services Inspection and a Logistics Standardization Evaluation Team Inspection. The trio of evaluations rated the wing's overall program compliance, medical operations, and aircraft maintenance and logistics support, respectively.

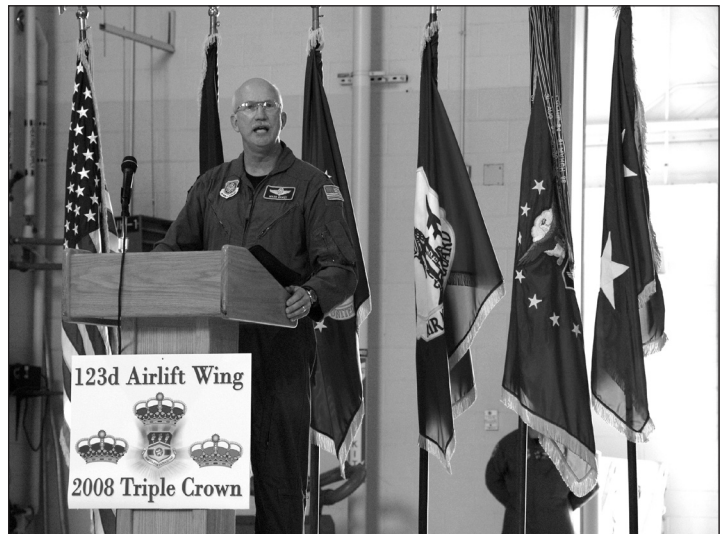
The hat trick is especially noteworthy because it came in the midst of one the busiest times in the unit's 61-year history, said Col. Mark Kraus, wing commander.

"I could not be more proud of you for your record of accomplishments," Kraus told the wing's 1,200 members during a commander's call held in the Fuel Cell Hangar on June 8.

"With the schedule we've been keeping, we don't have time to stop and smell the roses, but we ought to slow down and get a whiff of them as we go by.

"If you will remember, it was just about this time last year that you — the 123rd Airlift Wing — were awarded the Curtis N. 'Rusty' Metcalf Trophy as the No. 1 airlift unit in the National Guard. From that time to this time, you have set about to validate that selection.

"Last summer, you deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, for



Capt. Dale Greer/KyANG

Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, praised unit members for their dedication to excellence during a commander's call June 8 in the base Fuel Cell Hangar.

AEFs 7 and 8 to work and fly combat missions in the most challenging environment in the world. We rolled off of that and, in November, you started a five-month-solid commitment to Germany to support

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123rd Aerial Port Squadron deactivated by order of NGB

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

More than 100 Kentucky Air Guardsmen gathered in the Base Annex April 19 to witness the deactivation of the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron, a once-crucial unit established nearly 20 years ago to provide essential cargo services when the KyANG mission transitioned from reconnaissance to airlift in the late 1980s.

The unit was eliminated at the direction of the National Guard Bureau as part of a nationwide plan to reallocate resources, officials said. Aerial port squadrons in other

states also are being deactivated.

Most of the Kentucky squadron's expertise will be transferred to other duty sections on base, including the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron and the new 123rd Contingency Response Group, said Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

The contingency response group was formed last year to provide a rapid-reaction force capable of deploying within a 400-mile radius of Louisville for the purpose of establishing emergency air bases.

Speaking to a crowd of current and retired wing members, Colonel Kraus detailed the aerial port squadron's tremendous impact

on the success of the Kentucky Air Guard through the years.

"I could simply say that the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron has, from its very beginning, left an indelible mark on the wing — and that would be truthful," he said. "But I can't leave it there. Because for 20 years, you've had your shoulder to the wheel, making the mission happen with extraordinary dedication and perseverance.

"Beyond supporting the flying mission, you've also been a force multiplier for every other program, project or special event on

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Preparation and perseverance are essential to the wing's record of success

NFL Hall of Fame quarterback Roger Staubach said that "spectacular achievements are always preceded by unspectacular preparation."

As a Heisman Trophy winner and two-time Super Bowl Champion, he would be particularly well-versed in both preparation and achievement.

But football isn't exclusive territory to those tenets for success; they hold sway over any field of endeavor, including our mission at the 123rd Airlift Wing.

We've just passed through a season of inspections, preceded by an even longer season of preparation that yielded some spectacular results.

The Wing's recent Air Mobility Command Inspector General Unit Compliance Inspection rating of "excellent," the 123rd Maintenance Group's recent Logistics Standardization and Evaluation Team Inspection rating of "excellent," the 123rd Medical Group's recent Health Services Inspection rating of "excellent" and, finally, the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron's very strong "in-compliance" rating during a recent Air Force Special Operations Command Unit



Col. Mark Kraus
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

Compliance Inspection would not have been possible without an extraordinary effort from every corner, every level and every person on base.

Moreover, you did well in spite of a scorching operations tempo that sent more than 600 wing members worldwide in the past 12 months.

Those deployments included an Aerospace Expeditionary Force rotation to Afghanistan, a five-month-solid commitment to Germany in support of Operation Joint Enterprise and a 30-day deployment to Puerto Rico for Operation Coronet oak.

Someone once said that "success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it."

In my remarks for the in-brief to the AMC/IG Team, I told them that the inspection was not a destination for us but only a stopping point along the way from our last mission to our next.

True to form, since the inspections have passed, you've already moved forward through the flawless execution of another Coronet Oak mission.

This month's deployment to Gulfport, Miss., will begin the official preparation for the next AEF in 2009.

Our standard procedure here is to exceed standards. That is our heritage from the past, and it is our bridge to a bright future. I simply could not be more proud of your accomplishments, your perseverance through every challenge and your commitment to our mission. More spectacular achievements are on the way!

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Our office is located in room 1160 of the Wing Headquarters Building.

We welcome your feedback. Please contact the Public Affairs Office directly if you have suggestions for articles or photography. Publication deadline for the next issue is July 28.

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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

More tickets available for Airman of the Year

Tickets are still available for the 2008 Outstanding Soldier and Airman of the Year Banquet, which has been rescheduled for Aug. 9.

The venue has been moved to a larger banquet hall at Churchill Downs, increasing seating capacity of the previously sold-out event from 500 to 800.

Tickets are \$20 each and may be purchased from any chief master sergeant. Social hour runs from 6 to 7 p.m., and the banquet will follow.

Wing to sponsor competitors for USAF Marathon

The 123rd Airlift Wing is sponsoring two members to compete in the Air Force Marathon this summer — one each in the full-length and half-marathon categories.

Sponsorship consists of payment for the entry fees, said Tech. Sgt. Ricky Odle, program manager.

Applicants must provide an official race time from any regional race run between March 9 and tomorrow.

Sponsored troops will be selected based on the fastest of these times.

Applications are available on the wing Community of Practice Web site and must be submitted prior to the end of the July drill.

For more information, contact Sergeant Odle at (812) 989-4170.

Public Affairs wins NGB awards

The public affairs office has earned two awards in the 2007 National Guard Bureau Media Contest, NGB officials announced.

The wing's base newspaper, The Cargo Courier, won third place for overall excellence in the national competition, and Capt. Dale Greer, 123rd Airlift Wing public affairs officer, took third place in the news article competition.

Adams named top ANG optometrist

Airman recognized for exceptional patient care, new eyeglass benefits

By Capt. Amy Mundell
123rd Medical Group

Capt. Tricia Adams has been named the 2007 Air National Guard Optometry Officer of the Year for her outstanding achievements in the 123rd Medical Group here.

In 2007, Captain Adams was the sole optometrist serving the base population, providing visual screenings and occupational health examinations for all personnel.

She also provided critical support to the medical group through her participation in the Periodic Health Assessments program, accomplishing more than 30 eye exams each drill weekend, officials said.

Moreover, Captain Adams reorganized the Soft Contact Lens Program, significantly improving efficiency and increasing the follow-up compliance rate to 100 percent.

Captain Adams also implemented the Frame of Choice Spectacle Program at the 123rd Airlift Wing, allowing all eyeglass-wearing active-duty members to receive one pair of civilian-style frames at no cost.

Since joining the Kentucky Air National Guard, Captain Adams continues to be actively involved in community service activities at home and abroad.

She has, for example, completed 10 Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity missions worldwide to locations such as Paraguay and Peru. During these missions, Captain Adams typically provides eye examinations to nearly 500 patients.

At home, she provides no-cost examinations to the needy through the Lions Club, the Daviess County Detention Center and to migrant workers through the Centro Latino Program.

Captain Adams earned her bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Louisville and her doctor of optometry degree at Indiana University.

She joined the Kentucky Air Guard in 2005.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Capt. Tricia Adams, an optometrist in the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Medical Group, has been named 2007 Air National Guard Optometry Officer of the Year.

Aerial port deactivated

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the base. In my four years as your commander, I've not yet found the depth of your talent or the limit of your willingness to roll up your sleeves and go to work.

"And you've done it with whatever adversity came with the job. Adversity, as author William Arthur Ward said, causes some men to break, and others to break records. Thankfully, with great talent, leadership and dedication, you've always fused together as a team to break records."

Colonel Kraus noted that the unit played an essential role in the wing's ability to conduct the training it needed to learn the airlift mission from scratch, starting in 1989 when the Kentucky Air Guard began its radical conversion from RF-4C Phantom IIs to C-130s.

"As I thought back to a time when we were all learning the airlift mission, it didn't take long for me to realize how heavily dependent we were in the flying business on the aerial port in order to be able to conduct our flying training, do unit movements and support combat readiness for the wing," he said.

"Aircrews can't fulfill their actual airdrop requirements unless someone builds the airdrop loads, unless someone goes to the drop zone to retrieve those loads, unless someone maintains the forklifts and the trucks and the loaders and the parachutes.

"You may ask yourself: How did that really impact the readiness of the wing? Over the past 20 years, we have no doubt airdropped literally hundreds of thousands of pounds of concrete — simulated supplies — into the Atterbury (Indiana) drop zone. And we've put enough sand bags into Fort Knox, at 15 pounds apiece, to make for a very nice beach at Muldraugh Hill.

"I can tell you that this practice, in turn, meant the difference between success and failure in every airlift mission we've launched, on every continent we've landed on, all around the globe."

Those missions, Colonel Kraus noted, include last year's deployment to Afghanistan, where Kentucky aircrews delivered thousands of tons of equipment and supplies to forward-deployed U.S. troops who were in contact with the enemy.

"Time and time again, those loads found the target in the most challenging environment we've ever faced," he said. "Our crews could do that because of the opportunities you gave them to practice, by the hours that you spent rigging the loads and the nights that your teams rolled through the gates — after midnight sometimes — coming back from the drop zone.

"Your efforts all these years, day and day out, saved American lives in Tora Bora, just as if you had personally kissed every fuel, ammo, food and ammunition pallet that rolled over the ramp into the Afghan darkness and into the arms of our brothers in combat."

Colonel Kraus also praised the men and women of the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron for their can-do spirit and involvement across a range of base projects.

"Through the years, no matter the task at hand, no matter how long the hours or how little the payoff," he noted, "one thing I never heard an aerial porter say was, 'That's not my job.'"

"I grew accustomed to seeing you involved in every project on base, making it happen from the start and being there at the end. Your enthusiasm, positive attitude and professionalism are highly



Lt. Col. Jeff Peters, commander of the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron, furls the unit's colors one last time before casing the guidon and handing it off for retirement during a deactivation ceremony held in the Base Annex on April 19.



Photos by Airman 1st Class Max Rechel/KyANG

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Local printer honored for support of Guard

Cargo Courier Staff Report

The owners of a Jeffersonville, Ind., printing company were honored May 13 with an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award presented by Brig. Gen. Howard Hunt, Kentucky's assistant adjutant general for Air.

The award recognizes Vicky and John Denney, owners of PIP Printing and Document Services, for their support of employee Diane Stinnett, a technical sergeant in the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing.

"PIP is a small company," said Sergeant Stinnett, a graphic artist at PIP who serves as a combat correspondent in the wing's Public Affairs Office.

"Whenever anyone is not here, it makes it hard on everyone. Vicky and John have always been very supportive of the fact that I have an obligation to the military."

That kind of support is vital to the Guard and Reserve, General Hunt said.

"Without the support of employers like John and Vicky Denney, Diane and thousands of others like her could not do their jobs for our nation," he said.

"This is a shared experience where we in the National Guard benefit from Diane's commitment to her nation, and the company benefits from Diane's commitment to them."



Tech. Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

Brig. Gen. Howard Hunt, Kentucky's assistant adjutant general for Air, presents an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award to Vicky and John Denney (second from left and far right, respectively). The Denneys own PIP Printing and Document Services in Jeffersonville, Ind., and employ Tech. Sgt. Diane Stinnett (second from right) as a graphic artist. Sergeant Stinnett is a combat correspondent in the 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office.

Inspections

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Operation Joint Enterprise. You even picked up a shortfall rotation over the holidays, and you never missed a mission."

While Kentucky Airmen were maintaining their commitments abroad, they also stepped up back home, Colonel Kraus said, pledging more than \$35,000 in charitable giving to the Combined Federal Campaign — a 27 percent increase over the previous year's figure.

Meanwhile, the wing earned its 13th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award — no other Air Guard unit has more — and completed a successful Joint Forces Headquarters disaster response exercise that tested the teamwork of the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard.

The wing also successfully completed an Environmental Safety and Occupational Health Compliance Assessment and attained the highest level of deployment readiness training in four years, averaging 98 percent for all training currencies across the wing.

"Then, you crossed all the T's, you dotted all the I's and turned in a remarkable performance during the HSI, the LSAT and the UCI, making excellence the word for the day," Colonel Kraus said.

"Before the ink was dry on the draft reports, we started deployments for Puerto Rico to again support Operation Coronet Oak."

Colonel Kraus noted that the wing has deployed more than half its personnel — over 600 troops — during the past 12 months to the farthest reaches of the globe in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle, Joint

Reach and Joint Enterprise.

"We even deployed folks to support a Space Shuttle launch," he said.

"In every instance, you've represented Kentucky and the Air National Guard in the finest tradition. Thank you for your hard work and commitment to the vision of this wing."

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, reflected on unit's legacy of excellence and noted that about 70 percent of the wing's current membership joined after 9/11.

"I can't begin to tell you people how proud I am — especially those 70 percent of new faces since 9/11 — that you have dedicated yourself to continuing that legacy of excellence," he said.

"There's no doubt in my mind that the legacy of excellence is alive and well and prospering today. Please keep up the great work."

Chief: Guard's relief efforts 'outstanding'

Flood recovery and firefighting campaigns keep units busy in June

Air Force Print News

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — The chief of the National Guard Bureau assessed the National Guard's California fire and Midwest flood-fighting efforts firsthand June 26 and 27, calling their support "superb."

"They're handling very difficult and complex issues in a very competent and professional manner," said Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum.

More than 280 citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen, and 23 National Guard helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft helped California firefighters, while more than 2,100 troops and an abundance of equipment tackled Midwest floods.

"The National Guard response has been generally superb, a benchmark case study in cooperation among the states for mutual support and cooperation during an emergency," General Blum said. "They've achieved the correct balance between local, state and federal response in a coordinated and synchronized manner."

The general worked with the California and Iowa adjutants general as he visited their states to assess Guard effectiveness and determine if they have what they need.

"In order to save lives, minimize destruction and assist recovery, we need the right capability, in the right quantity, where and when it's needed," General Blum said. "The adjutants general assess the situation, identify immediate requirements and send the National Guard's critical capabilities to meet our communities' needs."

California faced hundreds of lightning-sparked wildfires. Parts of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin have been inundated with Mississippi River flooding. The National Guard has played vital roles in both domestic disasters.

The Guard contributed OH-58 Kiowa, UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters to spot fires and drop water to support civilian firefighters. RC-26 aircraft are giving state fire managers vital reconnaissance that improves their ability to focus



Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith/USAF

Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, left, overlooks the wildfire response operations of two North Carolina National Guard C-130 Hercules aircraft with Army Maj. Gen. William Wade June 26 on the airfield at Chico, Calif. General Blum is the chief of the National Guard Bureau, and General Wade is the adjutant general of California.

effectively on firefighting efforts. C-130 Hercules aircraft have dropped flame-retardant that helps halt advancing fire.

In the Midwest, the Guard contributed on the ground, sometimes in knee-deep floodwater.

During the general's June 26 visit, two C-130s were loaded with retardant and took off toward Whiskeytown, Calif. Four of eight firefighting C-130s that exist in the United States are currently in the Chico area. More are expected to arrive soon, General Blum said.

"The (C-130s with the Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems) were prepositioned and ready," he said. "All they need is favorable weather conditions and they will make a significant impact on the fires. This will not be a case of piece-mealing the capabilities; they'll be able to mass the systems against the fire with good effect."

"There's a lot of fire out there," said Lt. Col. Mark Christian of the 156th Airlift Squadron of the North Carolina Air National Guard. "We love to get out here and fly every

day. That's why we're here."

On June 25, a National Guard CH-47 plucked an injured teenager from the side of a Colorado mountain after a car crash. The same day, Guardmembers assisted Border Patrol agents in four Southwest Border states, ferried drinking water to residents of several New Mexico towns, supported Louisiana police, provided critical infrastructure protection in Northeast states and California, flew critical air sovereignty missions nationwide and continued counterdrug operations.

Guardmembers also remained on duty for numerous overseas missions, including in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"The nation is depending on us to do this and expects us to do this, and we're not going to fail the nation," General Blum said. "The Minutemen of the National Guard have been doing this kind of work for 272 years and will continue to do this as long as there's a United States of America. We owe it to the American people to remain always ready, always there."

Acting secretary stresses USAF Core Values

'Jointness' and teamwork also will be key concepts

Air Force News Service

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — The U.S. Air Force core values of integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do will remain in place, said Acting Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley during a July 1 visit here.

In his first trip to an Air Force base since being named to the position, Secretary Donley held a candid town-hall style meeting with members of Air Force Space Command.

"We are working through the issues confronting the Air Force," he said, referring to problems regarding accountability of nuclear weapons and others factors that lead to the resignation June 5 of his predecessor, Michael Wynn.

"We need to build back inner confidence in our Air Force and we need to rebuild our credibility."

Secretary Donley outlined three perspectives he brings to this position based on his previous experience.

"The first thing you will get from me is 'jointness,'" he said. "The Air Force is one part of a big team."

He outlined some of the ways the Air Force contributes to the ongoing joint fight in Iraq, Afghanistan and the war on terrorism both in the United States and around the world.

"I know the Air Force is contributing lots of mission sets and capabilities, and it is an impressive array, I can tell you," the acting secretary said.

A related theme is the support provided by the Air Force to the global war on terrorism.

"This is a priority for this Air Force," he said. "We have more than 30,000 Airmen deployed around the world, engaged in the war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan."



Michael B. Donley

One of Secretary Donley's first acts upon appointment was to visit Walter Reed Hospital and speak with wounded Airmen. From this visit, he gained both an appreciation of their sacrifices and personal inspiration, as all the troops expressed their

desire to heal quickly and get back in the fight, Secretary Donley said.

He also recognized those who stand behind and support the people on the pointed end of the spear.

Secretary Donley's third theme is the welfare of all Airmen.

The acting secretary said the Air Force is a technology-driven service, but its most important asset is the knowledge, experience and commitment of the people who make it all work to support the warfighter.

"The welfare of our Airmen is very important to me, and I will try to strike the best balance in the Air Force budget between equipment needs and our people," Secretary Donley said.

After addressing his overall concerns, he spoke to the issue closest to Air Force Space Command members right now.

"The Air Force's credibility has been tarnished, and we need to rebuild it," he said. "The Air Force leadership needs to develop a roadmap for the nuclear enterprise to put us on the right track for stewardship of the nuclear mission that the defense establishment and the American people expect from us."

"There is no quicker route to recovery than the power of tens of thousands of Airmen and civilians rededicating themselves to the high standards of excellence that have always been the hallmark of the world's best Air Force," he said.

Secretary Donley carried the same message to Airmen at Peterson Air Force Base, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., Barksdale Air Force Base, La., and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, during a two-day tour.

VA reaching out to vets with home mortgage difficulties

Air Force News Service

WASHINGTON — Many home owners have found it difficult recently to pay their mortgages, but quick intervention by loan counselors at the Department of Veterans Affairs has actually reduced the number of veterans defaulting on their home loans.

"VA is reaching out to veterans, both those who use our home-loan guaranty program and those who don't take advantage of our guaranties, to keep people in their homes," said Dr. James B. Peake, the secretary of

Veterans Affairs

"I'm proud of our solid record of success in helping veterans and active-duty personnel deal with financial crises."

Accounting for much of this success are VA counselors at nine regional loan centers who assist people with VA-guaranteed loans to avoid foreclosure through counseling and special financing arrangements.

The counselors also can assist other veterans with financial problems.

VA counselors have helped about 74,000 veterans, active-duty members and survi-

vors keep their homes since 2000, a savings to the government of nearly \$1.5 billion.

Depending on a veteran's circumstances, VA counselors can intercede with the borrower on the veteran's behalf to pursue options — such as repayment plans, forbearance and loan modifications — that would allow a veteran to keep his or her home.

To obtain help from a VA financial counselor, veterans can call VA toll-free at (877) 827-3702. Information about VA's home loan guaranty program can be obtained at www.homeloans.va.gov.

Aerial port

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regarded across the wing, and I know that those personal attributes will not furl with the aerial port guide-on — because I know it's the people and not the unit designation that make the unit go.

"As you settle into your new unit assignments, know that you take with you the gratitude of the entire wing and my heartfelt thanks for your contributions to this organization, past, present and future."

Col. William Ketterer, commander of the 123rd Mission Support Group, and Chief Master Sgt. Ray Dawson, the squadron's superintendent, also had words of encouragement for unit members who are moving on to new assignments.

"This unit will turn the page and keep rolling with the changes," Colonel Ketterer said. "There is a culture that's been instilled in every member of this unit, and it comes from leadership. I've never asked for anything that you

guys didn't deliver, and that speaks loads about you as individuals and as a group.

"One thing that is good about (the de-activation) is that I now have a bunch of positive attitudes that I can infuse in other areas. We're going to have opportunities for everyone to grow."

Chief Dawson noted that aerial porters are known for their tenacity, adding: "We will carry that with us as we branch out to different areas on the base. You either have to lead a 'porter, follow a 'porter or get out of the porter's way."

Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Downs Jr., the wing's command chief master sergeant and a former aerial port superintendent, recalled highlights from the unit's history, including its first months when staffing humbly consisted of four technicians and 98 traditional Guardsmen who possessed little more than 1-skill levels and good attitudes.

"Within about a year and a half, we were in Germany on our first annual tour," he said. "While we were there, we made some friends with (our counterparts) at Ramstein Air Base, which was a good thing, because

within days of returning home, we had six people turn right around and go back to Germany for Desert Storm and Desert Shield."

The unit has had people on the road ever since, including deployments for Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle.

"After about three years in business," Chief Downs recalled, "we became known as the smartest and the best-trained aerial port in the best Air Force in the world.

"I've been proud to work with you, and I'll be proud from now on to say I was an aerial porter."

Lt. Col. Jeff Peters, the squadron's commander, closed the ceremony by thanking his troops for "teaching me a lot."

"I took over about 18 months ago as the squadron commander, and you've really contributed to my career," he said. "I just hope that in some small way I was able to contribute to your success.

"The future looks great. You've got everything you need to move forward ... and step into different responsibilities. We're going to lead the way."

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