

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

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## Assistant adjutant for Air pins on first star

Promotion recognizes Kraus for leadership and accomplishments

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare  
Cargo Courier Editor

The Kentucky National Guard welcomed its newest star Nov. 2 when former 123rd Airlift Wing commander Mark Kraus was promoted to brigadier general during a ceremony held in the Base Annex.

Brig. Gen. Kraus' silver stars were pinned on by Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Kentucky's adjutant general, and General Kraus' wife, Leslie.

With the promotion, General Kraus assumes the duties of assistant adjutant general for Air, the state's top Air Guard officer.

"I take an extreme amount of pride in being able to participate in my first pinning of an individual to general officer," General Tonini said. "Mark, I sincerely welcome you to Joint Force Headquarters."

See *RISING STAR* on Page 7



Tech. Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

Brig. Gen. Mark Kraus, assistant adjutant general for Air, is 'pinned' with silver stars by his wife, Leslie, and Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Kentucky's adjutant general.

## Mobility Exercise prepares unit for worldwide mobilizations

Wing members simulate deployment, redeployment

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare  
Cargo Courier Editor

A Mobility Exercise held on base Nov. 9 tested the 123rd Airlift Wing's ability to respond to the state and nation's call to duty.

The exercise — informally called a 'Mob-Ex' — simulated the wing's deployment process from start to finish, with members of the base "Mobility Machine" working together to ensure that personnel and equipment were prepared to leave home station at a moment's notice.

"The goal with the exercise is to practice exactly like we'll perform in a real-world scenario," said Colonel Armand Bolotte, installation deployment officer. "We want to make sure our personnel can process out

correctly and have the equipment and training required to accomplish their mission.

"This was a great opportunity for us to get together and make sure we all understand our procedures," Colonel Bolotte added. "We have a lot of new faces in the wing who are fairly new to this detailed process, and (we have) a busy schedule ahead."

That schedule includes an upcoming Air Expeditionary Force rotation to Afghanistan in March, a July deployment to Germany and an October mission to South America.

"We're heading into a very busy period," agreed Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"The MobEx was a great start for us. Being ready to answer the call is a priority for our wing. Now we're getting more people involved in the mobility process, and it will give us that much more experience moving forward."

Colonel Bolotte praised the base Mobil-

ity Machine — the 100 or so experts who manage the deployment and redeployment processes — for make the wing's global accomplishments possible.

"The 123rd is considered a national leader," he said. "All the time, people look to us to see how we do business."

For example, the colonel noted that a recent deployment by Kentucky maintainers to Yemen lead to an international request for an information exchange.

"That's a very prestigious and impressive request," he said.

"When we went on our AEF deployments last year, the other units in rotation looked to us to be the lead even when we weren't designated to be the lead unit. They want to talk about how we do things.

"We have a reputation out there that we're going to continue to build upon moving forward."

# *New wing fitness program offers tools for readiness of the mind and body*

**H**appy New Year and welcome back! I hope everyone had a great holiday season and enjoyed some well-deserved rest and relaxation with their family and friends.

Now it's time to come back regenerated, rejuvenated and ready to go to work. I hope you've made some realistic New Year's resolutions that are both measurable and achievable.

One of our resolutions should be maintaining our combat readiness and continuous preparation to accomplish our military mission.

We should strive to maintain both readiness of mind and readiness of body. Unlike with other careers, our military service requires us to stay in shape, or "fit to fight."

Additionally, we are military professionals, and we must present a professional appearance in our military uniform.

Readiness must be our culture, and physical fitness must be a critical part of our culture. I'm not talking about body-building, power lifting, extreme diets or supplements. Our culture should simply include taking care of ourselves.

With this in mind, I asked some experts within the unit to develop a 123rd Airlift Wing Fitness Program.

I asked them to build a program that



**Col. Greg Nelson  
123rd Airlift Wing Commander**

included both exercise and nutrition.

Master Sgt. Ken Richards from the 123rd Medical Group took the lead on this project, and I think you will be pleased with the results.

The 123rd Airlift Wing Fitness Pro-

gram is designed to be your personal program. It encourages you to set your own personal goals, to begin slowly and to stay motivated. It also explains how to avoid exercise errors, ensuring effectiveness and success.

Finally, the 123rd Airlift Wing Fitness Program provides nutrition information for calorie counting and weight loss, along with healthy menu selections at fast food restaurants.

Sergeant Richards will publish our 123rd Airlift Wing Fitness Program and post it on the Wing Community of Practice Web site. We will also provide printed copies to all the units for their use and distribution.

I want to offer this program to all members of the 123rd Airlift Wing. Feel free to share this with your friends and family members, too.

I like our program because it is both detailed and simple to understand and use. You don't have to be a member of an expensive fitness club or spend money on a diet plan — you can use the 123rd Airlift Wing Fitness Program at home, or at our Fitness Center on base.

Again, welcome back from the holidays. We have a busy 2009 ahead of us, and I know I have a few holiday treats I need to work off. See you at the gym!

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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 submissions to the next issue is Jan. 23.

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*An electronic version of the Cargo Courier is available at the Kentucky Air Guard's Web site — [www.123aw.ang.af.mil](http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil)*

## Guard Recruiting Assistance Program reinstated

The Guard Recruiting Assistance Program is once again open to Air Guard troops seeking to earn up to \$2,000 by identifying and assisting in the successful enlistment of qualified Airmen.

The program was temporarily frozen in October.

Visit [www.guardrecruitingassistant.com/air](http://www.guardrecruitingassistant.com/air) for more information.

## VA issuing benefits to surviving spouses

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced immediate actions Dec. 18 to quickly identify and pay surviving spouses who are eligible to receive a one-time compensation or pension payment for the month of a veteran's death.

Problems in VA's implementation of a change in law that was effective in 1997 resulted in some surviving spouses not receiving the veteran's compensation or pension payment for the month of death.

Surviving spouses most likely to be affected by this processing problem are those who never applied to VA for survivors' benefits following the death of a veteran.

A task force is in the process of reviewing VA's payment records for veterans who died after December 31, 1996, and who are survived by a spouse. VA has already begin issuing retroactive payments to eligible surviving spouses, and those payments will continue to be issued as additional unpaid beneficiaries are identified and VA is able to obtain current address information.

Surviving spouses are encouraged to contact the Survivors' Call Center at 1 (800) 749-8387. Call center agents will assist surviving spouses in providing VA with the information needed to determine their eligibility.

More information also is available at <http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors-benefit.htm>.

# Chief closes three decades of service

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare  
Cargo Courier Editor

Chief Master Sgt. Mark B. Hall was recognized for more than 36 years of service to the 123rd Maintenance Group during his retirement ceremony here Dec. 6.

During his storied career, the chief deployed to participate in Operations Bright Star, Coronet Oak, Joint Forge/Enterprise, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

"Chief Hall is one of our last aircraft maintenance experts to have been through three historic aircraft conversions," observed Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

The chief began his career in 1972 working on the RF-101H Voodoo fighter aircraft. Like other Kentucky Air Guardsmen, he converted to the RF-4C Phantom II during the latter half of the 1970s. By the end of the next decade, he was instrumental as a leader in helping the wing convert to C-130 Hercules aircraft.

"There's a wealth of experience that will definitely be missed," Colonel Nelson said.

"Chief Hall has been a leader and mentor to countless Airmen over the years and has contributed immeasurably to the culture of excellence that our maintainers struggle to maintain and build upon today."

Chief Hall received the Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal and Meritorious Service Medal (first oak leaf cluster) on Dec. 6 in recognition of his service.



Photos by Airman 1st Class Max Rechel/KyANG

**Above: Chief Master Sgt. Mark B. Hall enlisted in the Kentucky Air National Guard in 1972. Upon his retirement, he was one of a handful of remaining maintenance troops to have undergone three successful aircraft conversions at the Kentucky Air National Guard.**

**Below: Col. Neil Mullaney, 123rd Maintenance Group commander, congratulates Chief Hall on his retirement.**





# Holiday Cheer

Party marks launch of full-time family-support effort

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare  
Cargo Courier Editor

The gathering of 123rd Airlift Wing families for the Wing Holiday Party Dec. 7 marked the start of a new era in family support.

The event was the first opportunity for Dave Rooney, family program coordinator, to meet and greet the spouses and children of wing members.

Mr. Rooney, a retired master sergeant, is the wing's first full-time family-support professional. His goal is to manage relationships and facilitate resources to ensure that families get the support they need — especially when members deploy.

According to Col. Greg Nelson, 123rd Airlift Wing commander, Mr. Rooney's work with wing members is critical to the success of the Kentucky Air National Guard.

"Beyond it being the right thing to do, we know how important families are to our ability to achieve our mission," he said. "After all, if there is a problem at home, it's undoubtedly going to impact the mission."

Mr. Rooney is soliciting and working with key volunteers to ensure networks are in place to support deployed members. He's especially concerned about the children and teens of Airmen called to active duty.

"The more involvement we can get with Mr. Rooney's programs, the bigger and better the net of care and comfort we can provide our families," Colonel Nelson said.

"Families need to know that we are here to help. They shouldn't hesitate to call me or Mr. Rooney or anyone else in the chain of command. We have the resources in place. Sometimes the biggest challenge is getting people to take the first step and reach out for help."

Mr. Rooney can be reached at (502) 413-4647.



Clockwise from top: A family member aims a ping-pong ball in an attempt to win a prize at the 123rd Airlift Wing Holiday Party; a father photographs his children with Santa; an Airmen and his daughter stop for a quick photo.

Photos by Tech. Sgt. D. Clare/KyANG





Clockwise from left: This partygoer picks out a duck before receiving his prize; another youngster tries his luck at the wing's Mini-Football Toss; the "Thoroughbred Carolers" continue a 123rd Airlift Wing tradition by performing seasonal songs for Guardsmen and their family members.



# Family affair: Wing members continue legacies

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare  
Cargo Courier Editor

When 2nd Lt. Anthony Dale Gardner's son, Anthony Jacob Gardner, asked his father about following his footsteps into the military, the elder Gardner was hesitant at best.

"I gave him every downside I could think of. I wanted him to make an informed decision for himself," said Lieutenant Gardner, a nurse with the 123rd Medical Group here.

The lieutenant had taken the long way to joining the Kentucky Air National Guard. He'd met his wife as a medic in the Army years before his son was born. He then served 10 years as a Soldier before joining the 123rd Airlift Wing, ultimately earning a commission two full decades after his initial enlistment.

When his son finally committed, the father was overwhelmed with pride — as were his grandfathers, who served during the Vietnam and Korean War eras; his mother; and everyone else in the family.

"My son grew up with me in the Guard. He's seen me in the military since birth," said Lieutenant Gardner. "He's seen what you can do in the Guard. He knows the benefits and the opportunity to serve the country and state. There's a sense of pride when you see dad go off every month in uniform. I think children want to be a part of that."

Already, the elder Gardner has seen changes in his son. He says he is more focused and making plans for the future. In addition to receiving educational benefits that will help him achieve his degree, the 18-year-old will use his Air Guard training as a medic to decide if he wants to follow his father's path into military medicine.

"It's my chance to make sure nursing is the field I want to go into," said Airman Basic Gardner. "I have always felt like everyone should serve, even if for a single enlistment. It gives you a sense of duty. I see it as an opportunity to help people and carry on a tradition in our family."

The Gardners aren't alone.

Airman 1st Class Tia Tongate is 20 years old. She has a full-time job at as an information manager in the Kentucky Air Guard while she studies social and behavioral sciences at a community college in preparation for a four-year degree at the University of Kentucky.

She has highly focused career goals and has nearly saved up enough to handle a down payment on her first home. She's been to Germany, Paris and Puerto Rico. She feels more mature than her fellow students and better prepared for life's challenges — all thanks to a family tradition.

Like Airman Gardner, Airman Tongate grew up in the military. Her father, Master Sgt. James Tongate, is a loadmaster in the Kentucky Air Guard. Her cousin, Tech. Sgt. Charles Lambert, has more than 20 years of service in ground maintenance.

"My dad told me it was a really good experience. It's like family out there, and people take care of you," Airman Tongate said. "It's like going from one family to another. (My dad) likes to help people and he told me about the places he went. I wanted to join for the benefits, but also for my dad."

"My heart raced that she would follow in my footsteps," Sergeant Tongate recalls of the younger Tongate's enlistment. "She's my only daughter. There were a lot of things on my mind when (former wing commander Brig. Gen. Mark) Kraus swore her in. I had to sit down. It was overwhelming.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. D. Clare/KyANG

**Anthony Jacob Gardner is following in his father's footsteps by joining the 123rd Airlift Wing. 2nd Lt. Anthony Dale Gardner is a former enlisted medic and now a nurse in the 123rd Medical Group.**

"I raise my children with the same values we have in the Air Force — integrity, service before self and excellence," said the father of three.

Sons Noah, 11, and Caleb, 8, are still too young to sign up, but the sergeant said future enlistments are possible.

"It's instilled in them," he said. "They have different personalities, but it's possible all four of us would be in at the same time."

According to Col. Greg Nelson, 123rd Airlift Wing commander, the experience and upbringing of family members typically make them good candidates for military service.

"We know the product we're getting, and the family members understand the positive experience of serving in the organization," said Colonel Nelson, whose own son, Benjamin, served in the wing. "If their parent or sibling is successful already, we're dealing with a known quantity in the prospective member."

"It says a lot if a parent is willing to encourage their child to serve. It says a lot about the wing and the Kentucky Air National Guard."

Few family stories in the unit are as steeped in tradition as the Holaday's. Master Sergeants Tim and Steven "Doc" Holaday have six decades of combined service — 54 in the Kentucky Air Guard.

The brothers are second-generation Airmen. Their father and uncle, twins, enlisted in the Army Air Corps and celebrated the Air Force's initial birthday together in basic training.

Both younger Holadays transferred off active duty to the Kentucky Air National Guard through the Palace Chase program and have served their home state together since 1983.

"The friends you have here, you're never going to make outside of the Guard," said Sergeant Steven Holaday. "In the military you are aware that these are they guys who may pull you home at night if the worst happens. If you look at it that way, we're all part of the same family, really."



# Wyatt nominated as next Air National Guard director

LANSDOWNE, Va. — Less than 24 hours after taking the oath of office as chief of the National Guard Bureau, Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley announced here today that President George W. Bush will nominate Air Force Maj. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III to the U.S. Senate for confirmation as the next director of the Air National Guard.

If confirmed, General Wyatt will be promoted to lieutenant general and succeed General McKinley, who served as the Air Guard's director for more than two years until becoming chief Nov 17.

General Wyatt is the Oklahoma National Guard's adjutant general. He has also served as commander of the 138th Fighter Wing in Tulsa and as the Oklahoma Guard's chief of staff for its Joint Force Headquarters.

"This is a great honor for General Wyatt and a great honor for Oklahoma," said Gov. Brad Henry, commander-in-chief of the Okla-



Maj. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III

homa National Guard.

"I've always said we had the best adjutant general in the country, and the latest

announcement is certainly confirmation of that. I greatly appreciate General Wyatt's selfless, dedicated service to our state and our troops, and we will certainly miss his leadership."

If approved by the Senate, Wyatt will be responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating all policies, plans and programs affecting more than 107,000 Air Guard members serving in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands.

General McKinley made the announcement to hundreds of general officers, command chief master sergeants and others at the Air National Guard's Senior Leadership Conference.

"You can be very proud of the direction that, I know, General Wyatt will take us," said General McKinley. "We will continue in the fine tradition of Air Guard leadership that we have in this room today."

## Rising star

Continued from Front Page

The adjutant general spoke at length about General Kraus' professional accomplishments, charting his rise from enlisted airman to weapons system operator, navigator and eventual commander.

He noted that General Kraus received two Bronze Stars for combat service, and he recognized the sustained period of awards and achievements attained by the 123rd Airlift Wing under Kraus' leadership.

"It's not lost on me that while I'm privileged to wear a star today, I didn't earn it on my own, and I won't wear it alone," General Kraus told ceremony attendees. "A piece of it belongs to each of you here and hundreds of others who have invested in me."

As assistant adjutant general for Air, General Kraus represents the governor and the adjutant general of Kentucky on matters pertaining to the Kentucky Air National Guard and serves as commander of the Kentucky Air National Guard.

The general's career spans more than 35 years. He was commissioned as an officer through the Air National Guard Academy of Military Science in 1979, after which he served as an RF-4C weapon systems officer and C-130 navigator. General Kraus also has held a variety of leadership positions, including chief of standardization/evaluation, flight commander, operations officer, squadron commander, group commander and wing commander.

He has participated in Operations Provide Promise, Restore Hope, Joint Forge, Coronet Oak, Bright Star and Red Flag. General Kraus also was mobilized in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.



Tech. Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

General Kraus has more than 30 years of military service. He previously served as commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.