

THE CARGO COURIER

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

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Wing completes Afghanistan deployment

Kentucky unit airlifts 6,000 tons of cargo and 20,000 soldiers

By Maj. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The 123rd Airlift Wing concluded its second major deployment to Afghanistan when the final rotation of deployed Airmen returned home May 18 to a warm welcome from more than 100 family, friends and co-workers on the base flightline.

Waving flags, posters and homemade banners, the anxious crowd cheered as the Kentucky Air Guard C-130 taxied to a stop on the tarmac in front of the Base Fuel Cell Hangar. The scene that followed was punctuated by kisses, hugs and tears as family members rushed to greet the two-dozen returning Airmen as they stepped off the plane.

The Air Guardsmen were among about 200 wing members who have been in Afghanistan since mid-March to provide airlift services as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. They began returning to the United States in rotations that started May 6.

The Kentucky Airmen flew more than 1,500 combat sorties during the two-month deployment, delivering approximately 6,000 tons of cargo to forward operating bases or airdropping vital equipment and supplies to U.S. and coalition forces on the ground.

"You name it, and we hauled it," said Lt. Col. Mark Heiniger, mission commander for the deployed airlift operation. "Everything from Howitzers, Strikers and Humvees to food, water and mail."

The Kentucky Airmen also transported more than 20,000 Soldiers across the theater of operations, participated in the aeromedical evacuation on injured coalition forces and completed the first-ever sequential airdrop of heavy equipment in Afghanistan. Using this process, multiple large items are airdropped in series from the rear cargo door of a C-130, Colonel Heiniger explained. The procedure re-



Above: A Kentucky Air Guardsman displays the colors as a Kentucky C-130 taxis onto the base flightline after returning from Afghanistan in May. The wing provided airlift services for coalition forces as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, delivering everything from howitzers and Humvees to food and water during the two-month deployment. (KyANG photo by Maj. Dale Greer.)



Left: A Kentucky Air Guard loadmaster directs pallets of cargo onto a Kentucky C-130 in the Afghanistan theater of operations. The wing transported approximately 6,000 tons of cargo and 20,000 Soldiers in more than 1,500 combat sorties. (KyANG photo by Tech. Sgt. Clint Stinnett.)

quires perfect execution to avoid a mishap and ensure precise delivery to friendly forces.

Another unique mission involved the transportation of a United Nations employee who had been held hostage by a terrorist organization in Pakistan for two months.

"We got diplomatic clearance and approach plates to fly into a Pakistan air field, picked

up the hostage, and flew him back as the aeromedics provided necessary medical care," Colonel Heiniger said. "He was home on U.S.-controlled soil less than six hours after we were first notified of the mission."

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123rd Airlift Wing is prepared for anything: 'Always ready, always compliant'

Recently I heard a speech by Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, chief of staff of the United States Air Force.

General Schwartz was providing very candid direction to newly appointed wing commanders. He explained his priorities for our Air Force, and how all our Airmen must be ready to fly, fight and win whenever called.

General Schwartz told us about a new Inspector General no-notice inspection program. He used the term, "Always ready, always compliant."

I wrote down this quote for future reference and direction.

"Always ready, always compliant" should be a term we use to describe the 123rd Airlift Wing. We are always ready, at a moment's notice, to answer the call from our governor or the president.

We demonstrate our readiness every day by answering the individual call to fill deployment shortfalls, as a unit or squadron in support of Aerospace Expeditionary Force rotations, or as the wing in response to a natural disaster in Kentucky.

We just exercised our readiness last week at Salina, Kan., and Volk Field, Wis., in preparation for our Operational Readiness Inspection next year.

As for no-notice inspections — bring it on! The 123rd Airlift Wing is always compliant with the rules, regulations, instructions and higher headquarters direction in



Col. Greg Nelson
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

everything we do. We take the authority vested in us to do our job deadly serious. We professionally execute the responsibilities of our military position and our duties assigned. We accept and embrace our personal accountability as members of the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard and the United States Air Force. We ensure our readiness of body as well as readiness

of mind through our Wing Physical Fitness Program. Last year's Unit Compliance Inspection proved how excellent we are in being always compliant.

Next year we will prove that we are always ready to respond to any emergency in the United States during our Operational Readiness Inspection.

We will demonstrate our ability to mobilize, deploy, employ, survive attack and continue operations in support of a homeland security (HLS) natural disaster and/or homeland defense (HLD) enemy attack.

This will be the first time a tactical airlift unit — active duty, Reserve or Air National Guard — will validate their wartime readiness against a HLS/HLD scenario.

The Air Mobility Command Inspector General approved the 123rd for a HLS/HLD Operational Readiness Inspection because we are the only wing that can open an airfield providing mobile command and control, immediate search and rescue, and expeditionary medical capability, all via organic Tac-Airlift, with one phone call.

We want to be our nation's initial response hub for HLS/HLD, and we will prove we can do this mission through Inspector General validation. We will do this, and we will prove our ability in an outstanding manner, because we are the 123rd Airlift Wing.

We are always ready, always compliant!

— Col. Greg Nelson

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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 July 31.

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FEMA selects 123rd Medical Group for training on new biohazard system

By Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora
Cargo Courier Staff Writer



Peters named as installation inspector general

Lt. Col. Jeff Peters has been selected as the new base Inspector General and will take charge of the wing's Complaints Resolution Program (CRP) this month.

Colonel Peters began his Air Force career as an active-duty weather officer in 1985. He remained on active duty for 9 1/2 years before moving to Kentucky to work for UPS Airlines. Colonel Peters joined the Kentucky Air Guard in late 1995 and has served in the 165th Weather Flight and the 123rd Mission Support Group. Most recently, he was commander of the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron and the 123rd Security Forces Squadron.

Colonel Peters urges Airmen to use their chains of command to resolve disputes, but he stands ready to assist in cases where that approach is not optimal.

"My wish is that Airmen will not need my services, but if circumstances dictate otherwise, I will help them through the CRP process," he said.

AFI 90-301 provides more information about the Complaints Resolution Program.

Colonel Peters may be reached at jeffrey.peters@ang.af.mil.

Members of the wing's 123rd Medical Group are enhancing their homeland-defense skills by training on a new chemical and biological decontamination system.

The Kentucky Air Guard unit was hand selected by officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to receive the Reeves Decontamination System, a portable station that allows Airmen to clean themselves of chemical or biological hazards before providing care for up to 100 casualties.

"The system is a self-contained mobile decontamination unit, consisting of tents, water warming, water pressure equipment and decontamination uniforms," explained Lt. Col. Bill Adkisson, a physician's assistant in the medical group.

Twelve members of the unit were initially trained on the system this spring.

Under typical conditions, three four-person teams are required to operate the system, Colonel Adkisson explained.

"One sets up the compressor, another runs the heating system and the third dons decontamination suits, which have air systems built in them.

"The requirements are to set this up in a reasonable amount of time. From start to finish, it should be set up in 12 minutes."

Colonel Adkisson said the system can be used for liquid or aerosol contaminants of any kind, including chemical warfare agents. Its use is not, however, limited to wartime scenarios.

"This system could be deployed for any number of stateside missions, like a chemical truck spill on the interstate that may have caused some injuries from contamination," he said.

Now that members of the medical group are familiar with the system, they will begin training other members of the wing in its use.

"It doesn't have to be medics that run this," Colonel Adkisson said. "As a matter of fact, we need to be able to respond any time during the week or on drill weekends, no matter what."



Airman 1st Class Max Rechel/KyANG

Members of the 123rd Medical Group train using the Reeves Decontamination System during the April drill. The unit was hand-selected by FEMA to receive the equipment.

Operational Readiness Exercise tests wing's

Deployment to Volk Field, Wis., is first step in new approach to Air Guard inspections

By Tech. Sgt. Diane Stinnett
Cargo Courier Staff Writer

VOLK FIELD, Wis. — The 123rd Airlift Wing deployed more than 290 Airmen and four C-130 aircraft here June 19 for an Operational Readiness Exercise that marks a new era in higher-headquarters inspections.

The six-day exercise was designed to prepare the wing for an upcoming Operational Readiness Inspection to be conducted by the Air Mobility Command Inspector General next May. As such, it tested the unit's ability to deploy to remote sites and operate in hostile environments, said Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

In this respect, it was not much different from scores of OREs that have come before it. But this year's exercise diverged substantially from those of the past in one crucial way: The scenario centered around homeland defense, rather than an enemy attack while deployed overseas.

For the first time ever, next year's ORI will do the same.

Typical OREs and ORIs are built upon a simulated deployment to South Korea, during which mobilized units must fend off the assaults of hostile forces.

In contrast, the homeland-defense scenario calls for an Air Guard unit to respond to a natural disaster by providing assistance to civil authorities at home. The participating unit is then hit with an enemy attack, either from a terrorist group or other rogue elements operating within the United States.

The shift is a fundamental one, based in part on new roles the National Guard assumed as it transitioned from a strategic reserve to a front-line operational force following 9/11, Colonel Nelson said. These new roles mean the National Guard is now the primary military organization responsible for homeland defense, whether it be response to natural disaster or enemy attack.

In light of these changes, it makes perfect sense for the wing's next ORI to test the kinds of capabilities the Kentucky Air Guard will be called upon to deliver in the event of an enemy attack on U.S. soil or the occurrence of natural disasters like hurricanes, floods and tornados.

Nelson noted that the idea for this new approach originated in Kentucky, where local Guard officials are keen to demonstrate the 123rd Airlift Wing's homeland defense capabilities. The revised scenario was approved by Air Mobility Command officials, he said, because it mirrors the wing's potential real-world taskings so well.

"We're stepping forward to do this because we believe homeland defense and homeland security are primary missions of the National Guard," Colonel Nelson said. "That's especially true of the Kentucky Air National Guard because of the capabilities that we house within the 123rd Airlift Wing. Those include C-130 airlift, special tactics search-and-rescue, explosive ordnance disposal, expeditionary medical services and the 123rd Contingency Response Group," whose mission is to establish new airfields in austere environments.

"These capabilities allow us to respond to any natural disaster or enemy attack on the United States, open up an air hub, and provide search-and-rescue and medical assets as part of one coordinated effort."

The June ORE was the first of two fly-away exercises the 123rd will be completing in preparation for the 2010 ORI. While deployed to Volk Field, Kentucky Guardsmen received training in such areas as self-aid and buddy care; and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive events.

The deployment culminated with a two-day mock war that included simulated ground and chemical attacks. Members of the wing's 123rd Contingency Response Group also airlifted a National Guard Civil Support Team from Iowa to Kansas as part of the ORE.

The teams' mission was to assist local first-responders in determining the nature of an attack, provide medical and technical advice, and pave the way for the identification and arrival of follow-on state and federal military response assets.

See next month's Cargo Courier for more coverage of the 123rd Contingency Response Group's role in the Operational Readiness Exercise.



Staff Sgt. Ryan Thompson prepares to fire his weapon during the exercise at Volk Field, Wis. The simulation was part of an Operational Readiness Exercise.



Ability to perform homeland-defense mission



...pon during a simulated attack by enemy forces at
ational Readiness Exercise held in June.



Above: Senior Airman Shawn Fay straps on his Kevlar helmet in preparation for an attack by mock aggressors.

Left: Members of the 123rd Airlift Wing practice chemical decontamination procedures as they travel from one sector to another following a simulated attack at Volk Field, Wis.



Above: An Airman helps his buddy drink from a canteen following a simulated chemical warfare attack at Volk Field, Wis.

Left: Senior Airman Sarah Rogers of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Medical Group conducts a test of the base drinking water during the Operational Readiness Exercise.

Right: Lt. Col. Armand Bolotte (center), the Kentucky Air National Guard's deployment officer, receives self-aid and buddy-care training during the six-day exercise.



KyANG photos by Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora

Afghanistan

Continued from Front Page

A 25-year veteran of C-130 combat and support operations in Panama, Kuwait, Kosovo, Bosnia and Iraq, Colonel Heiniger described the Afghanistan deployment as “the most intense operational environment I’ve ever seen in the military,” with a 24-hour-a-day ops tempo that demands the highest levels of military readiness.

The men and women of the Kentucky Air National Guard did not disappoint.

The unit’s C-130 aircraft maintained a nearly perfect mission-capable rate at all times, Colonel Heiniger said, never missing a single planned sortie due to maintenance issues despite a challenging operational environment that included high-altitude navigation and night-time assault landings on unlit dirt runways.

“That’s an incredible achievement,” he said. “Our maintenance troops went above and beyond what is normally required to prepare the aircraft before our deployment, and they worked equally hard in Afghanistan. Those accomplishments allowed our mission to happen.”

Colonel Heiniger singled out Maj. George Tomica and Chief Master Sgt. William Davis for exceptional leadership of the maintenance section during the deployment. He also praised Master Sgt. John Wardrip for his outstanding performance as first sergeant, calling him “the best first shirt I’ve seen in my entire career.”

“We don’t know when the man slept, because he took care of everybody,” Colonel Heiniger said. “You don’t find people with that level of dedication very often, and I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to have worked with him.”

The mission was rewarding in other ways, too, not the least of which was the satisfaction that came from making a tangible contribution to the war effort.

“We provided an essential lifeline to many of the troops on the ground,” Colonel Heiniger said. “The terrain is unbelievable, with deep valleys and high mountain peaks, so airdrop often is the only way to deliver food, supplies and equipment effectively.

“Overall, I’m very pleased with our mission performance. We assembled the A-team going over there, maintenance got the aircraft ready and we put our folks into positions in which we knew they would excel. They maximized every mission every time, despite a difficult operational environment.”



Left: Lt. Col. Scott Wilson hugs his family after returning to Louisville from Afghanistan on May 12. Colonel Wilson is a pilot in the 165th Airlift Squadron. (KyANG photo by Tech. Sgt. Phil Speck.)

Below: About 200 members of the Kentucky Air Guard’s 123rd Airlift Wing deployed to Afghanistan for the mission. Among their remarkable achievements was a perfect operational readiness rate, with no scheduled sorties missed due to aircraft maintenance issues, officials said. (Photo courtesy U.S. Central Command Public Affairs.)



Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, echoed those sentiments.

“The accomplishments of our deployed Airmen over the past two months demonstrate a tremendous amount of exceptional work under very austere conditions,” he said. “They also demonstrate our commitment to do whatever is necessary for our nation’s defense — to deploy at any time, to any place — and to perform with a level of excellence that is unsurpassed in the U.S. military.”

This latest mission marks the 123rd Airlift Wing’s second major deployment to Afghanistan since 2007 and its fourth major

deployment to the Central Command Area of Responsibility since 2003. Previous missions sent hundreds of Kentucky Air Guard forces to multiple locations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 10,000 members of the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard have deployed worldwide in the Global War on Terror.

To view more images of Kentucky Air Guardsmen returning from Afghanistan, visit <http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil/photos/index.asp?galleryID=7116>.

Air Force officials overhaul fitness program

New rules emphasize fitness 365 days a year; aerobic health to gain more weight in scoring

**By Tech. Sgt. Amaani Lyle
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs**

WASHINGTON — The need for a “clear, understandable and simpler” fitness program will mean significant changes to the Air Force’s current fitness program, said the service’s top officer during a senior leadership conference held June 4 through 6 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz met with the service’s other four stars at CORONA TOP where one of the key agenda items was Air Force fitness.

His intent was to fine tune fitness testing, promote a year-round fitness culture and send a clear message that health and fitness are critical to mission readiness.

“Fitness is a vital component of Air Force culture,” General Schwartz said. “These challenging times underscore the importance of properly caring for our most valuable resource: our Airmen.”

The Air Force’s top enlisted leader agreed that good fitness is a fundamental requirement for Air Force warriors.

“Maintaining the proper fitness levels is really about maintaining combat capability,” said Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley.

“Being fit can make the difference between life and death for Airmen when actions require concentrated physical activity on or near the battlefield.”

Chief McKinley explained that Airmen must constantly hone their fitness abilities to withstand and overcome the demanding rigors of deployment and combat.

“Airmen must present the proper military appearance and project to the American public our ability to defend our nation and its interests,” the chief said.

While commanders have responsibility of their unit fitness programs, each Airman is responsible for meeting and maintaining fitness standards 365 days a year, said Lt. Gen. Richard Y. Newton III, the Air Force deputy chief of staff for manpower and personnel.

“With these program revisions and enhancements, we encourage a culture of fitness, empowering all Airmen to take responsibility for being physically mission ready,” General

Newton said.

General Newton added that the new Air Force instruction, projected for publication in July 2009, will better emphasize the service’s fitness expectations of its Airmen. Who will conduct the testing, when and how Airmen will test are among the most significant revisions to the fitness program, which takes effect January 2010.

Perhaps the most significant difference in fitness testing will be its frequency, Air Force officials said.

Full-time active-duty Airmen will now test twice each year, and most reservists or guardsmen will continue to test once per year.

To maximize testing objectivity, the AFI designates trained civilian proctors to conduct fitness tests administered at new centralized locations called fitness assessment cells.

Aerobic fitness is the best indicator of current and future health risk, followed by body composition, said Lt. Col. Scott Arcuri, the chief of promotions, evaluations, and fitness policy at the Air Staff.

Because of this, the aerobic run will now account for 60 percent of the test (previously 50 percent), body composition will account for 20 percent (previously 30 percent), while sit-ups and push-ups remain at 10 percent each.

“We developed evidence-driven, health based criterion standards for aerobic fitness and body composition and muscle fitness,” Colonel Arcuri said. “Airmen can be confident the new standards and corresponding points have sound rationale behind them.”

Colonel Arcuri also stated that the points awarded within each component directly reflect health risk and fitness and are designed to reward incremental fitness improvements.

Senior leaders said in order to pass the test, Airmen will be required to have a composite score of 75 but also will need to meet minimum requirements for each component.

Air Force officials said age range requirements will be simplified to five categories: less than 30, 30-39, 40-49, 50-

59 and 60-plus years of age. Additionally, because overall fitness is a readiness issue, fitness results will be categorized using operational readiness or unit compliance inspection-type ratings.

Those scoring 90 and above will be “Excellent;” those scoring between 75 and 90 will be “Satisfactory;” and those scoring under 75 will be “Unsatisfactory.”

“The time has come for all Airmen to better integrate fitness into their daily lives,” said Chief Master Sgt. Mark Long, the Air Staff enlisted promotions, evaluations and physical fitness chief.

Chief Long said the new AFI will provide commanders clear guidance on recommended actions based on the number of failed tests.

Chief McKinley noted that making a commitment to fitness puts the responsibility on each Airman to get in shape and remain wartime ready year-round.

“Proper fitness is an important aspect of an overall healthy lifestyle,” Chief McKinley said.

“When our Airmen are fit, eat healthy and reduce risk factors such as tobacco use and irresponsible alcohol consumption, their health will improve, they will visit the hospital less, and in the end, Tricare costs will be reduced.”

Failure to comply with the new fitness standards could impact more than an Airmen’s waistlines.

The new AFI links unsatisfactory fitness test performance directly to enlisted and officer performance reports. Chief McKinley said the upcoming revised evaluation AFI will ensure no Airman can have a referral enlisted performance report for fitness and receive an overall five rating.

The rewritten AFI mandates that fitness compliance be reported from unit to wing to major command for review.

General Newton asserts that while the Air Force fitness AFI outlines Airman’s responsibilities, the Air Force Fitness Management System will be enhanced to provide detailed post-test feedback designed to help Airmen improve in targeted areas.

Airmen will be able to view component scoring charts in the new AFI. Further questions on the program can be directed to Colonel Arcuri, Lt. Col. John Giles and Chief Long at DSNs 224-8270, 222-4532 and 227-1661 respectively.

Twelve-nation consortium ready for first C-17

Air Force News Service

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Officials of the 12-nation Strategic Airlift Capability, or SAC, consortium celebrated the activation of the operational unit, known as the Heavy Airlift Wing, and arrival of the unit's first C-17 Globemaster III aircraft at Pápa Air Base, Hungary, in a ceremony on July 27.

The wing's multinational aircrews will fly missions to meet participant nations' obligations to employ, deploy and redeploy forces and equipment and provide humanitarian relief in Europe and the surrounding region, including Afghanistan.

The 12 participating nations — Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and the United States — have established the SAC consortium to jointly acquire and operate three C-17s from a single base of operations for the next 30 years.

Each nation will decide how to use its portion of flight hours to support national, United Nations, European Union and

NATO requirements.

This unique approach allows participating nations to achieve greater efficiencies in defense investment and operational capacity than otherwise possible.

Roughly 150 air force personnel and

their families from all 12 nations will live at the base, creating a new multinational military community in Pápa, a small city of 33,000 native Hungarians.

Among these are 43 U.S. Air Force members and their families.



Airman 1st Class Brett Clashman/USAF

Multinational aircrews assigned to the Heavy Airlift Wing at Pápa Air Base, Hungary, will be flying the C-17 Globemaster III.

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