

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

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## 123rd makes history in homeland-defense inspection



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/U.S. Air Force

Members of the 123rd Airlift Wing depart the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky., en route to Gulfport, Miss., for an Air Mobility Command Operational Readiness Inspection. The ORI was the first ever to test a unit's capabilities in defense of the homeland.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/U.S. Air Force

Members of the 123rd Airlift Wing Fire Department respond to a simulated fire at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center.

### Unit takes lead, rated 'excellent' in first-ever Total Force operational readiness assessment

By Maj. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing scored another entry in the history books May 16-23 when it successfully completed the Air Force's first-ever homeland-defense Operational Readiness Inspection.

"For the very first time, the U.S. Air Force has validated a wing's wartime capabilities to defend the homeland by fighting an enemy right here on U.S. soil," said Col. Greg Nelson, wing commander. "That represents a major shift in the way the Air Force evaluates unit readiness, because it puts the focus in our own backyard, rather than a simulated overseas location where these evaluations are usually staged.

"I'm pleased to say that the 123rd Airlift Wing passed this new test with flying colors. We are ready to perform our mission any time, anywhere, whether it be in support of our allies abroad or here at home in defense of the United States of America."

The wing received an overall grade of "excellent" for the inspection, which tested its ability to mobilize personnel and equipment, fly to a remote site, operate in a hostile stateside environment, complete multiple airlift sorties, defend against enemy attacks, and redeploy back home -- all while inspectors evaluated every phase of the operation.

The inspection results were announced by the Air Mobility Command Inspector General during an out-brief in the Base Annex.

The ORI was unusually challenging, Colonel Nelson told a crowd of more than

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# *Be ready to fight hard — like a Kentuckian*

Congratulations again on our excellent Operational Readiness Inspection. It seems like a long time ago already, but this is the first Cargo Courier since our inspection, and I want to thank you again for all your hard work, preparation, professional performance, and excellent attitude!

Everyone in the 123d Airlift Wing genuinely gave his or her all, and everyone contributed to our success, demonstrating the true excellence of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

We didn't have a Unit Training Assembly weekend in June, so I hope you were able to take some time off with your family and friends. Debby and I visited with our sons, my brother, other family members, friends, and spent some quality time chilling at home with the dog.

I needed some rest and I hope you were able to rest also. I also hope you celebrated our Nation's birthday on the 4th of July, knowing how much your service in the Kentucky Air National Guard contributes to our freedom everyday!

During our inspection, the 123rd



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

Airlift Wing proved our ability to perform our wartime mission in support of any emergency here in the United States. We are ready for the call, whether it is in support of a hurricane in the Gulf this summer, an earthquake or enemy attack. The 123rd is ready.

We are also ready to continue the fight against our enemies abroad, and that's what we will do next.

The 123rd Airlift Wing will deploy as part of Aerospace Expeditionary Forces (AEF) 7 and 8. Some of us will leave in just a month or so, and some of us will deploy with our aircraft later in the fall and winter. This is our federal mission, and we are ready to do our job overseas as well as here at home.

I will leave just after this weekend, and won't be back until December. Col. William Ketterer will be your Commander during my deployment. I know you will give him the same support you give me, as well as the support you give all our commanders, chiefs, first sergeants, supervisors, chiefs, and your fellow members of our great Wing.

Please continue doing the great things you do every day. Please provide your outstanding support for others deploying during this AEF rotation, and support those remaining ready here at home.

The 123rd Airlift Wing is truly an excellent wing. I will miss you while I'm gone, and I stand proud of you always. Fight hard, fight as a Kentuckian. The 123rd Stands Ready!

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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 May 20.

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# Wing Honors Airmen of the Year

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare  
Cargo Courier Editor

Master Sgt. Brad Simms, Master Sgt. John Wardrip, Tech. Sgt. Edward McKenna and Senior Airman Aaron Lind have been selected as the Kentucky Air National Guard's 2010 Outstanding Airmen of the Year.

According to the Kentucky Air National Guard state command chief master sergeant, Chief Master Sgt. Smith, the honorees are outstanding representatives of the commonwealth.

"We're talking about the best of the best. A lot of the things these airmen have done and accomplished over the year are things not everyone on base hears about," said Chief Smith. "We've taken into account their job performance in their primary duties as well as leadership, self improvement and community involvement. We're looking at the broad spectrum – the whole person."

According to Chief Smith, the panel looks for nominees who exceed standards in their career field and as military professionals.

Sergeant Simms, loadmaster, 123rd Operations Group, is the first enlisted flier to represent the Kentucky Air National Guard as the senior NCO of the year. The Nicholasville native is a veteran of Operations Enduring Freedom, Joint Forge and Joint Enterprise. He supported relief

efforts for Hurricane Katrina, supported operations in Kosovo and is active in the Fraternal Order of Police and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"I've always strived – no matter what my assignment was – to do the best that I can. I don't wait to be told what to do. Everything I do reflects on this unit, so I want to be the best that I can be," said Sergeant Simms. "This is a great honor. A lot of great people have come before me and to be named the top [senior NCO] is a tremendous honor."

Sergeant Wardrip, 123rd Maintenance Squadron, was named the first sergeant of the year for the commonwealth. "In my 30-plus years of experience, he's the best first sergeant I have ever seen," said Chief Master Sgt. Bill Davis, component maintenance flight superintendent.

On a deployment to Afghanistan as the Operations Group first sergeant, Chief Davis said Sergeant Wardrip's selflessness made him stand out. "For the first three or four days, he didn't even sleep. He was making sure everyone else was bedded down, had a room, and had the right equipment. I can't say enough about him. He's a poster child for Air Force core values."

Sergeant McKenna, Pararescueman, 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, was selected as the

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## Iraq operations renamed 'New Dawn'

Defense Secretary Robert Gates renamed military participation in Iraq "Operation New Dawn."

The change from Operation Iraqi Freedom represents the shifting role of the military in the country.

## DoD releases social networking guidance

Department of Defense released a policy memorandum regarding the safe and effective use of Internet-based capabilities, including social networking services (SNS) and other interactive Web 2.0 applications.

Commanders at all levels and heads of DoD components will continue to defend against malicious activity and deny access to prohibited content sites.

Use of Internet-based capabilities, including SNS, have become integral tools for operating and collaborating across the DoD and with the general public. Establishing a DoD-wide policy ensures consistency and allows for full integration of these tools and capabilities.

The new policy memorandum is available at: <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/DTM%2009-026.pdf>.

## Personnel services available online

Air National Guard members can now perform many personnel actions online through the virtual Personnel Center-Guard and Reserve (vPC-GR); the virtual Military Personnel Flight (vMPF); and the Personnel Record Display Application (PRDA) online services.

Air National Guard members can access these resources from the AF Portal, [www.my.af.mil](http://www.my.af.mil), under the Top Portal Links section.



Courtesy photo

Senior Airman Aaron Lind, 123rd Contingency Response Group fire team member, provides combat arms training to shooters. Airman Lind was recognized as the Kentucky Outstanding Airman of the Year for 2010.



# ORI

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400 wing members who gathered for the out-brief, because of extreme weather conditions and several eleventh-hour changes mandated by the non-availability of infrastructure.

"We didn't flinch, we didn't whine, we didn't push back to any challenge, from changes in taskings, to changes in locations to changes in facilities at the last minute," he said. "(With temperatures hovering near 100 degrees), it also was the hottest ORI the team chief had even seen.

"But we maintained a great attitude, we operated safely, and we performed our mission with a level of excellence that makes me proud. This is our passion. We come from the Minutemen, when this nation was formed. We pick up arms, and we protect our neighbors and our families right here in the United States.

"There's a reason we just received our 14th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, and it's because we are an outstanding wing. This ORI was equally outstanding because the IG evaluated how we provide our capabilities in the United States.

"So write this down in your diaries: You are the first wing to be wartime-validated in support of the security and defense of the United States of America. That's huge.

"I couldn't be more proud of the 123rd Airlift Wing, because you gave it your all."

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, was equally pleased by the inspection results.

"(Air Mobility Command) didn't need to grade this unit for me to know about its high level of excellence," General Tonini told the audience. "For 41 years, I've known of the excellence of the Kentucky Air National Guard. But this has got to be one of the best days I've had in the 41-plus years I've been in this uniform. I want to thank each and every one of you for what you've done. You did it like the great Airmen that you are."

The wing's ORI scenario required more than 300 Kentucky Air Guardsmen to establish operations at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., where they merged with about 175 troops from two other units to form the notional 104th Air Expeditionary Wing.

Those additional units were the active-duty Air Force's 317th Airlift Group from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, and the Air Force Reserve's 70th Aerial Port Squadron from Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla.

With the 123rd serving as the lead unit, all three organizations worked seamlessly together to launch multiple theater airlift sorties across the Gulf Coast region, supporting U.S. Northern Command missions and civil authorities while defending against multiple attacks by well-organized terrorists.

The homeland-defense scenario differed markedly from those of traditional ORIs, which task units to deploy to simulated overseas locations and fight conventional military forces, Colonel Nelson said.

The new approach, implemented by Air Mobility Command for the first time here, represents a fundamental shift in thinking that more accurately reflects

the military realities of a post-9/11 world in which homeland defense has taken center stage, he said.

Colonel Nelson noted that the idea for a homeland security/homeland defense ORI originated at the Kentucky Air Guard, whose leaders asked AMC to consider using the alternate approach to evaluate the 123rd.

"Almost everything that an airlift wing would do in support of a real-world homeland security/homeland defense mission -- whether it be response to a terrorist attack on U.S. soil or humanitarian aid following a hurricane -- would be in support of a lead civilian agency at the federal, state or local level. As a result, the overall command and control aspects are completely different from those of an overseas operation.

"So we took our plan to the IG and said, 'You need to evaluate us on this.' They thought our approach had a lot of merit and agreed to implement it on a trial basis. A lot of changes were required to make this approach work, but the IG developed new scenarios to test the interoperability of DOD, federal, state and local agencies in defense of the homeland. As a result, our ORI provided a unique opportunity to validate how we provide tactical airlift during an emergency in the United States.

"Ultimately, the inspection process is all about validating readiness, and we must be ready to perform our mission wherever it takes us. I think the ORI results speak for themselves: The 123rd is clearly ready to perform its mission -- any time, anywhere."

The 123rd Airlift Wing is no stranger to historic accomplishments, officials said. It is one of the most decorated wings in the U.S. Air Force, with 14 Outstanding Unit Awards. No other Air Guard unit has won more.

"The 123rd Airlift Wing stands ready!" Colonel Nelson said.





Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/U.S. Air Force

Senior Airman Robert Amburgey, 123rd Airlift Wing Security Forces Specialist, provides watch over the main gate with an M-60 machine gun at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Center in Gulfport, Miss.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/U.S. Air Force

Members of the 123rd Airlift Wing render simulated first-aid to an Airman following a mock attack on their shared facilities center as part of the Air Mobility Command Operational Readiness Inspection.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/U.S. Air Force

ABOVE: Master Sgt. Michael Ludke, a Nuclear/Biological/Chemical Warfare cell chief from the 123rd Airlift Wing, upchannels information via radio during an evacuation of his facility following a simulated attack.

BELOW: The 123rd Airlift Wing was the lead unit for the Air Mobility Command's first-ever homeland defense Operational Readiness Inspection. Airmen from active-duty Air Force's 317th Airlift Group and Air Force Reserve's 70th Aerial Port Squadron also participated, making the event a Total Force effort.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/U.S. Air Force

# Kentucky Air National Guard salutes hometown heroes

Airmen who answered the call, leaders who support them, honored at ceremony

**By Capt. John Stamm**  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

On April 17, the Kentucky Air National Guard delivered a heart-felt “thank you” to the more than 900 men and women of the 123rd Airlift Wing who have deployed in support of combat operations since September 11, 2001.

That message, delivered during a “Hometown Heroes Salute” ceremony at Louisville Male High School, also recognized family members and key civic leaders for their support, including State Sen. David L. Williams and State Rep. Rocky Adkins.

Dennis M. McCarthy, assistant secretary of defense for Reserve Affairs, spoke at length during the ceremony about the essential contributions made by Guard and Reserve troops, which he called “tremendous.”

“We’ve been averaging about 140,000 members of the Guard and Reserve mobilized every day,” Secretary McCarthy told the audience of 300 Air Guardsmen, family and friends. “It’s a tremendous, tremendous contribution that the reserve components are making to the national security of our country. It has been going on for a long, long time, but we cannot continue unless we continue to have the support of our families and our employers.”

The Director of the Air National Guard sanctioned the ANG Hometown Heroes Salute program in August 2008. It provides Airmen with keepsakes in recognition of their service, including framed letters of appreciation and framed American flags. Spouses or significant others are eligible to receive engraved rosewood pen-and-pencil sets, and children receive commemorative dog tags with the HHS logo.

Each troop also receives a “Centers of Influence” medallion that they can present to whomever they choose to show gratitude for their support.

During the ceremony, Kentucky’s adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, personally presented Centers of Influence awards to three civic leaders who have expressed



Maj. Dale Greer/U.S. Air Force

**More than 300 Airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing, their family members and friends gathered April 17, 2010 at Louisville Male High School in Louisville, Ky., for a ceremony honoring the Airmen’s service in the Global War on Terror.**

continuous support of the Kentucky Air National Guard since 9/11: Senator Williams, Representative Adkins and Thunder Over Louisville Air Show producer Wayne Hettinger.

Each received a medallion and a special cased coin representing their commitment to the continued support of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

“Our state leaders have a long history of outstanding support of the men and women serving in the armed forces of the United States,” General Tonini said. “This support dates back to the War of 1812 when Kentucky’s first governor, Isaac Shelby, personally led Kentucky troops into battle. Ever since, Kentucky’s civic leaders have always taken a personal interest in the welfare of military personnel in the Commonwealth.”

In his acceptance speech, Senator Williams personally thanked General Tonini for keeping him informed of the needs of Kentucky Airmen. He also spoke of his admiration for Kentucky’s service members and discussed his own family’s history of military service, recalling how his father and uncles served in World War II. One of those

uncles made the ultimate sacrifice, giving his life in defense of the country.

“I have a special place in my heart for the sacrifices families give, as I saw the sacrifices my grandmother gave throughout the rest of her life,” he said. “During my time in the General Assembly, I’ve done everything I could to make sure we supported our military. I will assure you that, as long as I’m president of the Senate, the Air Guard and the military in the Commonwealth of Kentucky will always have a friend in Frankfort.”

Representative Adkins conveyed his deep appreciation for the unsurpassed contributions of the 123rd.

“It’s a great honor for me to spend my Saturday here with you to show my respect and appreciation for those who serve,” he said. “I also want to thank all of you who have been deployed... those who have been in Afghanistan and Iraq and all around the world representing the foundation of what this great country is all about.”

For more information on the Hometown Heroes Salute program, visit <https://airguard.af.mil/hometownheroessalute>.

# Wing wins 14th Outstanding Unit Award

Extraordinary honor ranks unit among top Air Force-wide

By Maj. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing has been awarded its 14th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award -- an extraordinary achievement that confirms the wing's standing as one of the most decorated organizations in the United States military, said Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, Kentucky's adjutant general.

The award was formally presented by Dennis M. McCarthy, assistant secretary of defense for Reserve Affairs, during a ceremony held April 17 at Louisville Male High School.

Wing officials believe that no other Air Guard unit has won as many Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards. The North Dakota Air National Guard's 119th Wing has 13 such honors, and the 116th Air Control Wing, a joint active-duty/Air National Guard unit based in Georgia, has 14.

The Kentucky unit's previous honors were bestowed in 1970, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2005 and 2008.

"This latest award is only the most recent in a long series of honors -- stretching back decades -- that recognizes the 123rd Airlift Wing as one the finest units in the Air National Guard or the U.S. Air Force," General Tonini said.

"Whether they're deploying to Afghanistan to provide crucial airlift for Operation Enduring Freedom or delivering life-saving assistance during last year's devastating ice storm in Kentucky, the men and women of the 123rd Airlift Wing have shown repeatedly that they are ready to answer the call to duty, any time, anywhere, and perform their mission with a level of excellence that is unsurpassed in the U.S. military."

The Air Force Outstanding Unit Award recognizes exceptionally meritorious service or outstanding achievement. It is bestowed on the top 10 percent of all Air Force organizations each year.

The new award recognizes the 123rd Airlift Wing's accomplishments from Oct. 1, 2007 to

Sept. 30, 2009. During those two years, the wing stepped up to perform numerous critical missions at home and abroad, deploying 759 personnel to 62 locations in 20 countries -- many of them in harm's way.

For example, about 300 Kentucky Airmen and multiple C-130 aircraft were deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, from March through May, 2009 to provide key airlift support for U.S. forces engaged with the enemy in Operation Enduring Freedom.

The unit maintained an unprecedented 100 percent mission-capable rate during the deployment, never missing a single scheduled flight due to aircraft maintenance issues, while completing more than 1,500 combat sorties that delivered 3,900 tons of cargo and transported 20,000 troops throughout the theater of operations.

"Our men and women stand ready to do their job anywhere, any time we are called," said Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"I am proud to be a member of the 123rd Airlift Wing, and I am humbled to be their commander."

## HONOREES

Continued from Page 3

NCO of the year. During the year, Sergeant McKenna served a combat tour in Afghanistan where he provided combat search and rescue capabilities to his deployed commander.

"Ed has an outstanding dedication to duty and service. He goes the extra mile in everything he does. He's the first on the block to volunteer for deployments. He just took on a deployment to Israel to learn from and assist our counterparts over there," said Chief Master Sgt. Pat Malone, chief enlisted manager for Pararescue.

At home, Sergeant McKenna serves as the Pararescue equipment noncommissioned officer in charge, maintaining rescue alert equipment for homeland defense, civil disaster and what Chief Malone calls "go-to-war" equipment.

He's a military tethered tandem bundle (MTTB) master, one of the few in his field qualified to take military equipment and non-jump qualified military personnel on jumps

into emergency situations.

"He's a professional guy and a good family man. He's a well rounded guy who keeps a good balance and prioritizes his needs," Chief Malone said.

Airman Lind, a fire team member for the 123rd Contingency Response Group, was selected Kentucky's Airman of the year. It's a new accolade for the young Airman who has earned a series of honors and the respect of his peers and senior members.

"He's one of our best troops. He's wearing three stripes but he should be wearing five. He's a leader and a mentor; someone you can count on to do the job and do it well," said Chief Master Sgt. Ray Dawson, 123rd CRG superintendent.

On a recent deployment to the Kyrgyz Republic, he was named Airman of the Quarter and served as vice president of the First Four Council. Airman Lind served as the Defense Biometric Identification System Registrar -- a position responsible for monitoring third country nationals on the base that is normally reserved for noncommissioned officers.

"I'm overwhelmed," Airman Lind said of receiving the award. "There's a lot of great

people around. I had a busy year and I devoted the year to be with the Guard and I'm sure that had something to do with it."

The Airman studies computer information systems at the University of Louisville and manages a downtown bar. He hopes one day to earn a commission. "I'm on track to finish my degree. At that point, I'll look at what I can do to be a bigger influence."

According to Chief Smith, himself a past honoree, the Airmen who participated in the nomination process benefit from the recognition and the entire Kentucky Air National Guard benefits from identifying individuals with potential for future leadership roles.

"You go down the hallway and look back at winners from the past and you see that their futures are boundless. They are hard-chargers; the ones who are self-motivated and strive for excellence," he said.

The winners will be honored at Kentucky's Outstanding Soldier and Airman of the Year Banquet at Churchill Downs Millionaire Row on Aug. 14 at 6 p.m.

Those interested in attending should contact their sergeant major or chief master sergeant to purchase tickets.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS



Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel/U.S. Air Force

## Kentucky welcomes new command chiefs

**ABOVE:** Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, applauds as his unit welcomes incoming command chief master sergeant, Chief Master Sgt. Curtis Carpenter.

**RIGHT:** Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini (left), congratulates the new Kentucky Air National Guard state command chief master sergeant, Chief Master Sgt. James Smith. Chief Smith is replacing former Command Chief Master Sgt. Mark Grant (center), who is retiring from the Kentucky Air Guard after 30 years of service.

Both senior enlisted advisors were named to their current assignments during a change-of-responsibility ceremony held April 17, 2010 at Louisville Male High School in Louisville, Ky.



Maj. Dale Greer/U.S. Air Force