

THE CARGO COURIER

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

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Wing deploys for Operation Coronet Oak

Unit to provide airlift to Caribbean, Central and South America

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare
Cargo Courier Editor

Nearly 50 members of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing deployed to Muñiz Air National Guard Base in San Juan, Puerto Rico, April 2 to support Operation Coronet Oak, a mission that provides vital airlift capabilities throughout the U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility.

The Airmen, who departed aboard two Kentucky C-130 aircraft, will provide theater airlift services for U.S. military and government operations across the Caribbean and Central and South America, according to Lt. Col. Jude Beyerle, mission commander.

"We'll be supporting airlift for Southern Command wherever they need it," explained Beyerle, a navigator in the wing's 165th Airlift Squadron. "The primary mission is to provide a C-130 and aircrew on alert 24 hours a day for whatever kind of contingency might come up, whether that be a medical evacuation, humanitarian assistance or hurricane relief. But we'll also fly regular re-supply and troop-transport missions around the region."

The deploying Airmen comprise the first rotation of nearly 300 Kentucky Air Guardsmen who will support Coronet Oak this year. Five more rotations will follow between now and Sept. 17, when the wing's role is scheduled to be handed off to another unit, said Lt. Col. Barry Gorter, commander of the 123rd Operations Group.

Coronet Oak began in Panama in 1977 and is supported entirely by Guard and Reserve assets. Kentucky began flying the mission in the 1990s, after the wing con-

See **CORONET OAK**, Back Page



Photos by Maj. Dale Greer/KyANG

Above: Loadmasters from the 165th Airlift Squadron direct a pallet of cargo onto a C-130 aircraft on the flight line of the Kentucky Air National Guard Base April 2. Two of the Hercules transports and nearly 50 Kentucky Air Guard aircrew members, maintenance personnel and support troops deployed to San Juan, Puerto Rico, in support of Operation Coronet Oak.



Left: Kentucky Airmen board a C-130 prior to departure for Muñiz Air National Guard Base, Puerto Rico. The Airmen will be flying theater airlift missions in support of U.S. Southern Command across the Caribbean and Central and South America through Sept. 17. The Kentucky Air National Guard has been deploying regularly in support of Coronet Oak since it was based in Panama in the 1990s.

Exercise will test wing's support to local, state and federal agencies after New Madrid earthquake

Anually, the president of the United States directs all federal departments and agencies to conduct a joint, interagency exercise responding to a simulated natural disaster.

This annual event is called the National Level Exercise, or NLE. This year's NLE-11 will exercise our nation's ability to respond to a simulated earthquake along the New Madrid fault, a major seismic zone stretching west and southwest into four states from New Madrid, Mo.

An earthquake along the New Madrid fault would be the worst possible disaster affecting Kentucky and our neighboring states. This year the Kentucky National Guard — Army and Air — will simulate a full response under the direction of Joint Force Headquarters, Kentucky. Within the Commonwealth, we will provide emergency response to the governor through Kentucky Emergency Management.

The 123rd Airlift Wing will provide multiple levels of support, including aircraft, aircrews, communications, medical services, and search and rescue. We will establish a Joint Air Operations Center in our Annex and respond to tasks and requests from our Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC), Brig. Gen. Mark Kraus.

The 123rd will work in concert and coordination not only with JFHQ-KY, but also multiple local, state and federal agencies. On base, our Mission Support Group and Medical Group will support Louisville



Col. Greg Nelson
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

Emergency Management and the Regional Airport Authority to exercise the National Disaster Medical System in an aircraft emergency scenario. In support of JFHQ-KY JFACC tasking, we will fly aircraft around the state, providing damage assessments of major highways, bridges and other critical infrastructure.

We will demonstrate our Initial Response Hub (IRH) capability by simulating the opening of two major airfields for

emergency airlift operations. Personnel and equipment from our Contingency Response Group, Special Tactics Squadron and Medical Group will fly on our C-130s to Fort Campbell, Ky., and Springfield, Mo. Our IRH will simulate opening Fort Campbell for hand-off to one of the USAF active-duty contingency response groups.

The 123rd Airlift Wing Initial Response Hub will enable the United States Transportation Command (USTC) exercise in Springfield. This will be USTC's full aeromedical evacuation exercise integrating local, state and federal support. The 123rd Airlift Wing's Initial Response Hub will provide command, control, communications and coordination for all airfield operations supporting both USTC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We supported this same exercise during our Operational Readiness Inspection last year.

This year's exercise is unfortunately timely, with the devastating earthquake that recently hit Japan. We pray there will never be an earthquake in our area, but if there were to be an earthquake along the New Madrid fault, our ability to immediately respond, providing airlift operations to Kentucky and the FEMA region, will be critical. We are uniquely postured to provide this response when needed, and we need to practice, train and exercise so we will be ready when called.

The 123rd Airlift Wing 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 April 22.

123rd Airlift Wing Editorial Staff

Wing Commander.....Col. Greg Nelson
 Chief of Public Affairs.....Maj. Dale Greer
 Public Affairs Manager.....Master Sgt. Philip Speck
 Cargo Courier Editor.....Tech. Sgt. D. Clare
 Photo Editor.....Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora
 Staff Writer.....Master Sgt. Diane Stinnett
 Staff Photographer.....Staff Sgt. Jason Ketterer
 Staff Photographer.....Senior Airman Max Rechel

Address: 1101 Grade Lane, Louisville, KY 40213-2678
 Phone: (502) 413-4484 • Fax: (502) 413-4676
 E-mail: allen.greer@ang.af.mil

An electronic version of the Cargo Courier is available at the Kentucky Air Guard's Web site — www.123aw.ang.af.mil

Greer wins two NGB photo awards

The 123rd Airlift Wing's chief of public affairs, Maj. Dale Greer, won two first-place photo awards in the 2010 National Guard Bureau Media Contest, NGB officials announced March 15.

Major Greer took first place in the news photo competition for an image depicting the final EC-130 as it departed from an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia at the conclusion of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

He also won first place in the picture story competition for a photo essay showing the in-flight training of aeromedical personnel aboard a Kentucky Air Guard C-130 Hercules.

The annual media contest recognizes outstanding public affairs achievements across the National Guard.

Since 1995, the 123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office has won more than 50 first-, second- and third-place awards in the NGB, U.S. Air Force and Department of Defense media contests.

Chief's Council offers college scholarships

The Kentucky Air National Guard Chief's Council is again offering college scholarships to the dependents of KyANG enlisted members.

The program is open to high school seniors who are attending college this fall, according to Chief Master Sgt. James Smith, the Kentucky National Guard's state command chief.

"Don't let this valuable scholarship slip by," Chief Smith said. "Last year, we were able to award two scholarships, each for \$1,650, to incoming freshmen who were dependents of our enlisted members."

For more information, see any chief master sergeant.

Tops in Blue



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

The Kentucky Air National Guard's top troops for 2011 display their Kentucky Enlisted Exceptional Performance awards at the Kentucky National Guard Outstanding Soldier and Airman of the Year Banquet, held March 12 at the Louisville Airport Crowne Plaza Hotel. Pictured from left to right are Senior Master Sgt. Gary Pelletier, a special operations weather specialist in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron; Staff Sgt. Jeff Kinlaw, a combat controller in the same unit; and Senior Airman April Kennedy, a material management handler in the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Ky. Air Guardsmen deploy to support earthquake, tsunami relief in Japan

By Maj. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Two members of the Kentucky Air National Guard have been tapped to support the U.S. military's earthquake- and tsunami-relief efforts in Japan.

Col. Warren Hurst, commander of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Contingency Response Group, deployed March 18 to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, where he is serving as the Deputy Director of Mobility Forces for Pacific Air Forces. He was accompanied by Maj. Bruce Bancroft, who is serving as an executive officer during the mission.

Colonel Hurst is responsible for helping direct the airflow of relief supplies and equipment into Japan, which was hit by a

magnitude 9.0 earthquake and 30-foot-tall tsunami on March 11, causing widespread devastation.

"I'm pleased to be contributing to the relief effort in whatever way I can," Colonel Hurst said. "People helping people is the most rewarding kind of mission you can perform. In the meantime, our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Japan."

Colonel Hurst is no stranger to disaster-response operations. He served as Director of Mobility Forces to Air Forces Northern in 2010 after a deadly earthquake struck Haiti. Working from Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., Colonel Hurst coordinated the airflow of hundreds of tons of relief supplies to airlift hubs in Haiti and the Dominican Republic as

See JAPAN, Back Page

Wing completes environmental assessment



Photos by Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Jim Rowe, an environmental assessor from the National Guard Bureau, reviews office records March 30 with Tech. Sgt. Ron Shears, a production control specialist for the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron, during the ESOHCAMP audit at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base.

Regular audit also examined base safety, occupational health

**By Master Sgt. Philip Speck
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs**

The 123rd Airlift Wing completed a week-long assessment of its environmental, safety and occupational health programs April 1, with all areas earning a score of “operational” from a team of National Guard Bureau auditors.

The rating means that some items were identified for improvement, but that the wing’s overall programs are sound, according to Lt. Col. Deborah Hamrick, audit team chief.

“Everyone here was extremely helpful during our visit, and the audit showed that every section is working hard,” Colonel Hamrick said. “It really does take a whole base to effectively manage these programs.”

Auditors looked at compliance with local, state and federal laws and regulations in the areas of environmental programs and management systems; occupational health; and ground, flight and weapons safety.

The audits — formally known as ESOHCAMPs, for Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health Compliance Assessment and Management Programs — occur every three years. They are designed to assess a wing’s relevant programs, identify and track compliance issues, and offer recommendations for corrective actions if necessary, Colonel Hamrick said.

Phil Aschbacher, base environmental manager, said the audits are extremely helpful to wing leadership because they validate multiple management processes.

“It gives the commander a snapshot of where our environmental, occupational health and safety programs are,” Mr. Aschbacher said.

Any issues noted by the auditors will be integrated into a management action plan that allows the wing to focus on process improvement, Colonel Hamrick said.

Auditors identified several functional areas for praise, including aircraft structural repair and the aerospace ground equipment shops, which had outstanding recording-keeping.

Tech. Sgt. Tracey Cordy also was recognized for her broad knowledge of pharmacy operations despite having only been in the job for six months.



Melissa Spawn, a weapons safety assessor from the National Guard Bureau, inspects a munitions storage area as part of the ESOHCAMP audit conducted at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in March.

Serving with HONOR

The 123rd Airlift Wing welcomed six new members to the Base Honor Guard this month with a week-long training course designed to provide them with the experience to conduct color guard ceremonies and funeral services.

The team's primary mission is to pay respects to fallen comrades who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, according to Master Sgt. Cutty Parker of the 123rd Force Support Squadron.

The Honor Guard also supports ceremonial and protocol functions, including memorial services, changes of command, retirements and patriotic community events.



Clockwise from top right: A team of volunteers for the 123rd Airlift Wing Honor Guard prepares to fold the colors during a funeral service training session held last month in the Base Dining Facility. The session was part of a week-long course for six new members that concluded March 25.

2nd Lt. Frank Morgan III calls out orders during an Honor Guard funeral service practice held March 25 at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base.

Lieutenant Morgan positions the United States flag over a casket during the practice session as other Honor Guard Team members stand at attention. Funeral details are the primary mission of Air Force Honor Guard Teams.



Photos by Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

McCain credits National Guard for helping deter terrorism in U.S.

By Tech. Sgt. John Orrell
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON — The reserve component, including the National Guard, is one reason the United States has succeeded in defending the nation and deterring another attack on American soil after 9/11, Arizona Sen. John McCain said March 17.

Senator McCain was here to receive the Reserve Forces Policy Board's 2011 Citizen Patriot Award for his contributions to the nation's defense and national security.

"In this era of enemies who want to destroy everything we stand for and believe in, there's no more patriotic group of Americans ... than those who serve in our reserve (components)," Senator McCain said.

"Since 9/11, our (National Guard) citizen-Soldiers have been called upon to serve and sacrifice in a way that it has never been called upon in history," Senator McCain said.

"And, as we see events unfold in the Middle East — the continued threat from those people who would destroy everything we stand for — I am afraid (the reserve com-

ponents) will have to be called on again," he said.

Senator McCain said he is aware of Guardmembers' commitment and sacrifice and is proud of them. He thanked them for their sacrifice and the pride they have for serving.

"We have seen our (Guardmembers) leave their families, their homes and their jobs time after time, voluntarily, to serve their country's call," he said.

"I am inspired every time I meet someone who walks up to me and says, 'I'm in the (National Guard), and I'm proud that I serve.'"

This success is a credit not only to Guardmembers, but also to everyone who helped the National Guard successfully move from a strategic reserve to a fully functional operational reserve component, he said.

"I am also proud of the American people who have provided the training and the equipment to make our (National Guardmembers) on an equal basis with our active-duty personnel," he said. "That has been a major improvement and step forward."



Tech. Sgt. John Orrell/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Sen. John McCain, far right, speaks with members of the Reserve Forces Policy Board March 10 after being presented with the 2011 Citizen Patriot Award. The award recognizes Senator McCain's substantial contribution to the nation's defense and national security.

Air Guard supports coalition operations over Libya

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFNS) — The Air National Guard is contributing to Operation Odyssey Dawn with Airmen from 11 air refueling wings supporting the international coalition enforcement of a United Nations no-fly zone over Libya, National Guard officials said here March 22.

Aircraft and crews from Alaska, Arizona, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Utah are scheduled to conduct mid-air refueling missions for coalition forces who have been launching strikes against Libyan military sites and air defense systems to prevent further attacks against Libyan civilians.

Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, the director of the Air National Guard, said he wasn't surprised that the Air Force turned to the Air Guard to provide refueling support to the coalition.

"The Air Guard has the experience and expertise to quickly mobilize, deploy and integrate with any joint or coalition effort anywhere in the world," General Wyatt said.

"The fact that we are able to rapidly bring in assets from several different wings is a testament to the flexibility and professionalism our citizen Airmen provide our combatant commanders when called."

The Illinois Air National Guard's 126th Air Refueling Wing is one of the wings that stepped up to the call.

"The 126th Air Refueling Wing always stands ready to respond at a moment's notice," said Col. Peter Nezamis, the 126th ARW commander.

"We have very highly trained and highly motivated Airmen. I'm proud of their passion, professionalism and willingness to help our country and state."

New travel cards tie spending limits to orders

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

WASHINGTON — The Air Force has begun distribution of new Citibank controlled-spend account government travel cards that will replace all previous travel cards, officials here said.

Some members of the 123rd Airlift Wing have already received their new cards, according to Master Sgt. Jon Lundergan of the base Financial Management Office, while others can expect to see them in the mail by the end of spring, he said.

Issuance of the CSA card for use in conjunction with temporary-duty assignments, permanent change of station or deployment orders follows an extensive multi-installation pilot phase and involves the eventual replacement of more than 480,000 traditional “set-limit” cards currently in use.

According to Mike Bilbrey, the Air Force banking officer, the CSA card differs from the traditional travel card in that approved travel authorizations and amendments automatically adjust the CSA’s spend limits to reflect the estimated cost of the mission.

“The CSA is the most innovative solution to the government travel card program since its inception, and it allows the Air Force to better manage cash flows,” Mr. Bilbrey said. “Since the card won’t have any value until a travel order is approved, Airmen can count on higher levels of security, lower delinquency rates and, best of all, instant approval, since there is no credit check required to have a CSA.”

Mr. Bilbrey explained that once the mission is complete, users submit their vouchers for processing, at which time Citibank officials reconcile the account and identify the residual funds available to the cardholder for personal use or to transfer to another personal account.

While enjoying possible residual funds for personal use is a perk for Airmen, the fully automated CSA also has virtue from a commander’s perspective by eliminating arduous, time-consuming travel card oversight responsibilities, Mr. Bilbrey said.

“We can reduce many hours per week on tasks agency program coordinators and managers once spent on program delinquency management, to the tune of about

382,000 man-hours per year,” Mr. Bilbrey said. “With Citibank receiving 100 percent of the travel voucher payment, the number of delinquencies will be minimal, ensuring Airmen and APCs can focus on the mission at hand.”

Since the mission at hand can vary greatly for Airmen, Citibank allows cardholders to call for temporary spend-limit adjustments, based on last-minute travel requirements.

This provides cardholders the spending limit they need until they can get the amendment into the system, Mr. Bilbrey said.

Current GTC cardholders will be automatically enrolled into the CSA program and will receive e-mail notifications when their card is on the way. Infrequent travelers will be among the first to have their current government travel cards deactivated and receive the new CSA cards, Mr. Bilbrey said, adding that Airmen should update their e-mail addresses with Citibank and their new card numbers with merchants.

For more information, see your unit program coordinator or visit www.airforcetravelcard.transactionservices.citi.com.

Panel: DoD should rescind policy on women in combat

**By Lisa Daniel
American Forces Press Service**

WASHINGTON — A commission established to study diversity among military leaders is recommending that Defense Department officials rescind the policy that prevents women from being assigned to ground combat units below the brigade level.

In a report issued March 7, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission recommends that the department and the services eliminate combat exclusion policies for women, as well as other “barriers and inconsistencies, to create a level playing field for all qualified service members.”

Retired Gen. Lester L. Lyles, who chaired the commission, said the recommendation, one of 20 in the report and the only one specific to women, is one way the congressionally mandated body suggests the military can get more qualified women into its more-senior leadership ranks.

“We know that (the exclusion) hinders women from promotion,” General Lyles said. “We want to take away all the hindrances and cultural biases” in promotions, he said.

The commission was established as part of the 2009 National Defense Authorization Act to evaluate and assess policies that provide opportunities for promotion and advancement of women and racial and ethnic minorities in the armed forces.

The 1994 combat exclusion policy, as written, precludes women from being assigned to ground combat units, but women have for years served in ground combat situations by serving in units deemed attached to ground units, General Lyles said.

That distinction keeps them from being recognized for their ground combat experience — recognition that would enhance their chances for promotion, he said.

“If you look at today’s battlefield, in Iraq and Afghanistan, it’s not like it was in the Cold War, when we had a defined battlefield,” General Lyles said.

“Women serve — and they lead — military security (units), military police units, air defense units (and) intelligence units, all of which have to be right there with combat veterans in order to do the job appropriately.”

Women serving in combat environments are being shot at, killed and maimed, General Lyles said.

“But they’re not getting the credit for being in combat arms,” he said, “(and) that’s important for their consideration for the most senior flag ranks, three stars and four stars, primarily.”

In the commission’s outreach to military leaders, General Lyles said, at least a couple of service leaders thought there would be little interest among women to serve in combat. But when the commis-

See COMBAT, Back Page

123rd Airlift Wing
Public Affairs Office
Kentucky Air National Guard
1101 Grade Lane
Louisville, KY 40213-2678

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Coronet Oak

Continued from Front Page

verted from RF-4C reconnaissance aircraft to the C-130 Hercules, Colonel Gorter said.

“Past missions have varied from something as routine as rotating personnel out of the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to more involved taskings, like a 10-day mission to Santiago, Chile, to provide assistance following an earthquake there,” he said. “Much of the flying is done in the mountainous terrain of South America, requiring a unique skill set from our aircrew members.”

Coronet Oak marks the second major airlift deployment for members of the Kentucky Air Guard in the past six months. The 123rd Airlift Wing completed a deployment to Afghanistan in January.

Combat

Continued from Page 7

sion brought in a panel of commissioned and enlisted women from different services, “that’s certainly not what we picked up” from talking to them, he said.

“I didn’t hear, ‘Rah, rah, we want to be in combat,’” he said, “but I also didn’t hear, ‘We don’t want to be in combat.’ What they want is an equal opportunity to serve where their skills allow them to serve. Removing the barriers for that, and removing the barriers to them getting credit for that, was our number one focus.”

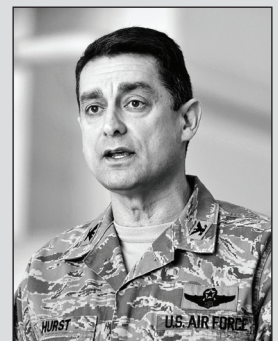
DoD spokeswoman Eileen Lainez said department officials “will thoroughly evaluate” the panel’s recommendations as part of their ongoing review of diversity policies.

Japan

Continued from Page 3

part of Operation Unified Response. He also lead the 123rd Contingency Response Group when it conducted relief operations in rural Kentucky in 2009 following an ice storm that paralyzed the Commonwealth, leading to the largest call-up of National Guard forces in state history.

“This is just another example of Kentucky Airmen and Soldiers serving in the critical enabling role to benefit those in less fortunate circumstances,” said Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Kentucky’s adjutant general. “Colonel Hurst served



Col. Warren Hurst

in a similar capacity during the earthquake response in Haiti. He’s one of the U.S. Air Force’s ‘go-to’ officers in these kinds of contingency operations.”

More than 17,000 U.S. service members are currently supporting relief efforts in Japan, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. Personnel are delivering food, water and equipment, conducting debris-removal operations and providing high-pressure water pumps to cool nuclear reactors at the damaged Fukushima Dai-ichi power plant, which is in danger of suffering a catastrophic meltdown.