

THE CARGO COURIER

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Kentucky Air Derby tests crews' airmanship

Event gives families an opportunity to see airlift unit in action

By Master Sgt. Diane Stinnett
Cargo Courier Staff Writer

FORT KNOX, Ky. — Members of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Squadron completed essential training here Oct. 22 while competing for "best aircrew" bragging rights in the first-annual Kentucky Air Derby.

Six crews of six members each tested their airmanship skills in multiple areas as they flew airdrop missions aboard C-130s, said Maj. Randall Hood, chief of tactics for the 123rd Operations Group. Points were given for threat and airspace avoidance; threat calls and reactions; time on target; airdrop accuracy; time of arrival; and assault landing accuracy.

"This mission was first and foremost a training mission," said Hood, who organized the Air Derby with the help of Maj. Benjamin Bull and Capt. Josh Ketterer.

"We conducted 12 low-level (approaches); six low-cost, low-altitude airdrops; six tactical arrivals; multiple threat scenarios; and six assault landings, the results of which provided for very comprehensive and realistic training in preparation for our real world mission."

In addition to the valuable training, the event offered a unique chance for unit members' families to come out and see airdrops first-hand.

"With the cooperation of Fort Knox, we had the opportunity for our families to observe how we train to conduct our wartime mission," Hood said. "It is these opportunities that allow our families to understand what it is we do in preparation for, and in, the fight."

"Allowing them to observe us conduct our mission gives them confidence in our abilities," he added.

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Above: A C-130, piloted by aircrew members of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Squadron, deploys cargo over a drop zone at Fort Knox, Ky., during the unit's first-annual Kentucky Air Derby competition Oct. 22. Family members of the Airmen were in attendance to witness the friendly competition.



Left: The cargo lands within feet of its intended target during the precision airdrop competition. The Air Derby scored crews in multiple areas, including threat and airspace avoidance, airdrop accuracy and assault landing accuracy.

Photos by Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel/KyANG

The 123rd Airlift Wing stands ready for others

My column this month is in two parts, but as you will see they are both connected in an inseparable way.

First, this is the season of Thanksgiving, and again I am blessed beyond my needs. I am thankful for my family and our good health. I am thankful for my friends, my neighbors, my community and my church. Like you, I am thankful for the freedom I have living in the United States of America; and I am thankful for the ability to serve in the greatest military in the world. I could go on — my blessings are countless, and I imagine yours are also.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people who do not have some of the very basics we take for granted. Many within our local community, state and nation suffer from illness and disease. Even more don't have the money to care for their families or themselves. Truly, our nation is living in tough economic times, and this is the time we need to do everything we can to help each other.

One small way we can provide financial assistance to someone in need is through the Combined Federal Campaign. CFC is a single point of collection, benefitting a variety of worthy organizations too numerous to list in this column. The 123rd Airlift Wing solicits your voluntary support through CFC each year.

This year, each group within the wing has representatives who will provide you with a CFC pamphlet listing charitable organizations and contribution forms for your consideration. I simply ask that you consider your blessings and your ability to help someone less fortunate. The 123rd Airlift Wing Stands Ready for Others.

This leads me to the second part of my column. The 123rd Airlift Wing will stand ready to provide our unique tactical airlift and support capabilities, whether needed in Kentucky, another state or in support of our allies abroad. I recently heard several of our nation's top defense and Air Force



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

leaders speak at the National Guard Joint Senior Leader Conference. I want to share their message with you, so you will understand what we need to do to ensure we remain ready to support others.

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta spoke to us in reference to our unique ability to connect the United States military and our local communities. He emphasized the importance of this as our overseas contingency operations draw down, and there is less visibility on the military. Secretary Panetta acknowledged a reduction in the military budget, but he stated his number one "guide post" is to maintain the best military in the world. He said he will not hollow out the force, but we will be forced to look for efficiencies and savings. The 123rd Airlift Wing will support his direction and ensure we are a cost-effective, ready force.

Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and USAF Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz also addressed our group, acknowledging that the Reserve Component will continue as an operational force. Their emphasis was on Total Force operations between the Active Duty, USAF Reserve and Air National Guard. I will tell you that they indicated reductions in the Air National Guard and also emphasized how the Air Force overall must look for cost savings due to budget reductions. The 123rd Airlift Wing will continue at an equal operational pace with the U.S. Air Force. We will fulfill our Air Expeditionary Force and Expeditionary Combat Support obligations in support of our Active Duty brethren, but we will always stand ready to support any emergency or disaster in the United States. Regardless of fiscal constraints, we will find a way to be ready.

Lastly, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Daniel Ginsberg spoke about the Air National Guard roll in domestic operations and our nation's security and defense. He said he "heard about two C-130s on alert somewhere ready to respond when called." He knows about the 123rd Airlift Wing Initial Response Hub. The 123 AW IRH will be a first-responder when our nation needs us. The 123 AW IRH is efficient. We represent cost savings in our unique, single location: one phone call, combined capabilities. We will be ready.

This is the 123rd Airlift Wing. We are a combination of men and women who volunteered to serve Kentucky and the United States. We believe in serving others, whether individually through actions or gifts, or gathered together as the wing. The best tactical airlift wing in the greatest military in the world. We are truly blessed, and we share our blessing.

The 123rd Airlift Wing stands ready for others.

— 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 Nov. 28.

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Familiar Faces

Master Sgt. John Wardrip's daughter, Chloe, gets her face painted Oct. 23 during the Kentucky Air National Guard Family Day celebration. The event featured live music, games, a barbecue cookout and rides in the wing's Mini C-130. More than 900 family members attended the festival, sponsored by the 123rd Force Support Squadron's Family Support Group.

Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Wellness Team to focus on supporting Airmen

Group brings together broad range of expertise from across the base

By Maj. Dale Greer
Chief of Public Affairs

Wing officials have announced the creation of a new Wellness Team to help Airmen and their families build resilience and live healthier lifestyles.

The team provides a variety of free resources to meet the social, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of Airmen and their family members, said Col. Greg Nelson, wing commander.

The group was created partly in response to years of high operation tempo and repeated deployments that have strained the resilience of many Airmen and their support networks.

Speaking to an audience of Airmen and family members Oct. 23 during the wing's annual Family Day celebration, Nelson said the goal is to fully embrace a wingman culture across the base and beyond.

"We asked, 'How do we promote total wellness for our Airmen?' I think the answer is this Wellness Team," he said. "We've put together a team that will take advantage of the broad range of expertise we have in the wing."

The team is comprised of Linda Ringleka, the wing's director of psychological health; Lt. Col. John Stea, a flight surgeon and psychiatrist; Chaplains (Lt. Col.) Patrick Cooney, (Lt. Col.) Fred Ehrman and (Capt.) Kerry Wentworth; Master Sgt. Ed McCormick; David Rooney, Family Support Group coordinator; and retired Col. Robert Williams, a former group commander in the Kentucky Air National Guard.

"As a team, we will be doing things like looking at how to create Wingman Day training for specific units," Ringleka explained. "We want to tailor the program so that we provide individual units with exactly the kind of training that will be most beneficial, as opposed to a one-size-fits-all curriculum."

"Two of the questions we ask is: 'What's your group's effective learning style, and how do we tailor the training to that particular learning style?'"

"For most people," she said, laughing, "it's

not a Powerpoint presentation.

"We're also looking at ways to be prepared for crises or emergencies. This could be an emergency for one individual, a group of individuals or an entire community. But we want to offer a planned, methodical response."

Ringleka said the team will work to leverage other resources in the community.

"There's a big interest in doing crisis-intervention response training, and to linking with other community agencies, like the Red Cross, in the event of a larger-scale disaster."

To promote the team and improve accessibility, the group will be launching a Facebook page, Ringleka said.

The page will contain contact information, promote available resources and provide tips for healthy living — everything from pointers on nutrition and exercise to stress-management techniques.

"Our Wellness Team resources are here for you and your families," she added. "They are free of charge. We're here to serve."

"We will work together to foster and support wellness for the Air Guard family, one wingman at a time. Let us know what you need from us, and how we can help."

Remembering 9/11

Members of the Kentucky Air Guard joined with citizens across Louisville Sept. 11 to remember the victims of the terrorist attacks against the United States 10 years earlier. The 123rd Airlift Wing provided C-130 flyovers for a Waterfront Park memorial event and for the closing ceremonies of the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall exhibit at Resthaven Memorial Park.



Left: Capt. Nick James of the 123rd Airlift Wing Safety Office uses a two-way radio to communicate with the pilots of two Kentucky Air Guard C-130s as the aircraft are positioned for a flyover at Resthaven Memorial Park in Louisville on Sept. 11.

Right: The fly-by was part of a 9/11 observance and closing ceremonies for the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall, a 3/4-scale replica of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, D.C., that has been exhibited in more than 200 cities across the country since 1990.





Far left: A sea of American flags covers The Great Lawn at Louisville's Waterfront Park on Sept. 11 during the city's 10th-anniversary observance of the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States.



Left and above: Brig. Gen. Michael Dornbush, chief of joint staff for the Kentucky National Guard's Joint Forces Headquarters, and Chief Master Sgt. James Smith, state command chief master sergeant, place a wreath in front of the 9/11 Memorial Sculpture at Waterfront Park on Sept. 11. The sculpture is made of steel taken from the wreckage of the World Trade Center.



Left: Jane Lee of Louisville creates a rubbing from a soldier's name Sept. 11 during closing ceremonies for the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall. Lee, whose first husband served in Vietnam, chose the name at random because, she said, "everyone here is important — each one of these people gave their all in service to our country."

*Photos by
Maj. Dale Greer*

Battle of the Base

Fitness Challenge promotes readiness of mind and body, builds esprit de corps

By Staff Sgt. Megan Cuebas
123rd Force Support Squadron

The 123rd Special Tactics Squadron took the title for most physically fit squad during the third-annual Base Fitness Challenge here, narrowly edging out the 123rd Contingency Response Group in a two-hour contest held Oct. 23.

More than 60 Airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing tested their physical prowess during the challenge, which scored four-person teams based on their speed in a relay race and the time required to complete 40 sit-ups and push-ups.

Fourteen teams — many with imaginative titles like Rondo's Rejects and Team AMMO — represented units from across the base, while two additional teams were comprised of chief master sergeants and colonels, said Tech. Sgt. Dale Grupe, event coordinator and fitness program manager for the 123rd Force Support Squadron.

The challenge was based on three heats, with five teams competing in the first two heats, and six in the third. Each team member was responsible for a different part of the relay. The first team member ran a lap, which was approximately a quarter-mile, and completed 40 push-ups before the next team member could begin. Team member two was required to run the same lap and complete 40 sit-ups. Team member three repeated the same routine as team member one, and team member four finished the relay with a strong lap.

Besides fostering physical fitness, the 2011 challenge also promoted wing unity and camaraderie, Grupe said.

"This was the best turnout we have had in the three years the challenge has been around, so it was great to see that the effort put into it was more than worth it," he added.

Tech Sgt. Shaun Cowherd, who also helped coordinate the event and is a fitness specialist with the 123 FSS, said the challenge was designed to be fun while still taxing participants' stamina.

"I feel this challenge is a true testament to a person's fitness level and drive," he said. "The design is simple but, when broken down, the race is very taxing on the performer's body. It takes courage and strength to get out there and partake in this event."

This year's winning team completed the event in 9:00 minutes, breaking the all-time Fitness Challenge record. Team members were Tech. Sgt. Jason Cordy, Tech. Sgt. Ryan Darnell, Staff Sgt. Travis Brown and Staff Sgt. Kenneth Lukens.

The 123rd Contingency Response Group team placed second with a time of 9:01, while the 123rd Force Support Squadron team held third with a final time of 9:04. Winners of the co-ed division hailed from the 123rd Security Forces Squadron.



Above: Senior Airman Brandy Craig, a fire team member from the 123rd Security Forces Squadron, competes in the Base Fitness Challenge here Oct. 23



Left: More than 60 Airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing participated in the third-annual event, which featured a relay race, sit-ups and push-ups. The team with the most points took the title.

Photos by Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, praised the challenge for helping build esprit de corps while promoting overall health and fitness.

"Events like the Fitness Challenge help us achieve readiness of body and readiness of mind so that we're all prepared to serve when our state or nation need us," he said. "We must continue to promote the idea that fitness is not something we prepare for once a year. It should be a way of life for every member of the 123rd Airlift Wing."

Combined Federal Campaign kicks off at Ky. Air Guard

The Kentucky Air National Guard kicked off its 2011 Combined Federal Campaign on Nov. 2 with a goal of \$46,350.

The annual program is the only authorized charitable solicitation of federal employees in the workplace, said Donna Wooten, Louisville CFC director.

Last year, the local program collected more than \$1.6 million for over 2,700 ap-

proved charities ranging from the American Lung Association to the YMCA.

Anyone in the wing is eligible to give.

"Full-time employees can make a one-time donation or sign up for payroll deduction," said Maj. Dale Greer, base CFC coordinator.

"Traditional Guardsmen also are eligible to give by making one-time donations.

"We'll have a table set up in front of the Dining Facility during the November and December drills so folks can get more information, sign a pledge form for payroll deduction or make a one-time donation right on the spot."

For more information, visit www.cfclouisville.org or see your group Combined Federal Campaign representative.

Mass enlistment brings new troops to 123rd

By Maj. Dale Greer
Chief of Public Affairs

Eight new recruits took the Oath of Enlistment during a mass swearing-in ceremony Sept. 20 at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base, joining the 123rd Airlift Wing to fill a variety of jobs from military journalist to aircraft loadmaster.

Kaleb Henry, one of those new enlistees, will soon depart for training at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., where he will learn how to load cargo on a C-130 Hercules aircraft, the 123rd Airlift Wing's workhorse military transport plane. The wing uses C-130s to provide intra-theater airlift in support of homeland security, disaster response and military operations all over the world.

Henry, who has a degree in criminal justice and most recently worked at a college textbook rental firm, became interested in the Air Guard after meeting a number of Kentucky Airmen through a family member.

"I liked how they carried themselves and how they approached things," Henry said. "It kind of made an impression on me, and I decided I wanted to join the unit. I hope to learn more about myself, travel in my job as a loadmaster, meet new people and experience the world."

Prior to swearing in the recruits, wing commander Col. Greg Nelson told them to expect a purpose-filled tour.

"The unit you're about to join is the best

tactical airlift wing in the United States Air Force, hands-down," Nelson said. "When we need you, we will call on you to support the Commonwealth of Kentucky here at home or the President of the United States in the



Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Kaleb Henry takes the Oath of Enlistment during a mass swearing-in ceremony held here Sept. 20. Henry, who most recently worked at a college textbook rental firm, will serve as a C-130 loadmaster.

destruction of our enemies abroad. I thank you now for the commitment you're about to make."

This latest class of recruits keeps the 123rd Airlift Wing at 100 percent of authorized manning for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, said Master Sgt. Tommy Caruso, Base Recruiting Office supervisor. Such full staffing is not uncommon for the 123rd, which consistently meets or exceeds its recruiting goals year after year while Air Guard units in other states struggle to enlist new Airmen, he noted.

"I think that's a reflection of the excellent reputation our wing enjoys," Caruso said. "We're one of the most decorated units in the United States Air Force, with 14 Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards to our credit. And people enjoy working here. Our members are happy, and they tell their friends and family."

In addition to the excellent working environment, new recruits enjoy free tuition at state-supported colleges, universities or trade schools; and G.I. Bill benefits of up to \$350 per month for full-time students for a period of 36 months, Caruso said.

"We offer a lot of exceptional benefits, unsurpassed training opportunities and the chance to serve with an outstanding unit, both at home and overseas," he said. "That's a compelling combination for young men and women who want to make a difference in their own lives and the world at large."

A Kentucky Air Guard combat controller observes as one of the unit's C-130s approaches the runway at Fort Knox, Ky., during the first-annual Kentucky Air Derby Oct. 22. The winning aircrew was comprised of Maj. Carl Watkins, Chris Engleman and Brian Story; Master Sgt. Cyndi Benskin; Staff Sgt. Matt McKeehan; and Airman 1st Class Josh Relogle.



Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Air Derby

Continued from Front Page

"I think it is great that we are able to come out and see this, because it is not something everyone gets to do," said Debbie Mildenerger, whose husband, Lt. Col. Fred Mildenerger, was aircraft commander for one of the crews. "It gives us a feel for what they do when they go overseas."

The winning crew consisted of aircraft commander Maj. Carl Watkins, co-pilot Maj. Chris Engleman, navigator Maj. Brian Story, flight engineer Staff Sgt. Matt McKeehan and loadmasters Master Sgt. Cyndi Benskin and Airman 1st Class Josh Relogle.

"They earned the right to be proud," said Lt. Col. Shawn Dawley, commander of the 165th Airlift Squadron. "They were competing against other professionals who are just as trained, just as experienced — and on that day, this crew was the best out there. It was a well-deserved victory."

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Imorde takes command of Force Support

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Ketterer
Cargo Courier Staff Writer

Lt. Col. George Imorde III took command of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Force Support Squadron during a change-of-command ceremony here Oct. 22.

Imorde, who most recently served as executive staff officer for Headquarters, 123rd Airlift Wing, replaces Lt. Col. Kathryn Pfeifer, who has been named staff support officer at Joint Forces Headquarters — Kentucky. Pfeifer had served as FSS commander since the unit was stood up two years ago following a merger of the mission support and services flights.

Imorde brings experience from 10 years of active duty in the U.S. Army and a previous assignment as Military Personnel Management Officer for the Kentucky Air Guard. He recently returned from a deployment to Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, where he served as assistant chief of staff for a joint special operations task force.

As commander of the FSS, he will supervise personnel programs, customer service, community and family support, and quality of life programs for his fellow Airmen.

"I've been a staff officer for quite some time and haven't commanded since a company command in the Army in August 2003," Imorde said. "I've thirsted for the opportunity to lead again and am enthusiastic about this opportunity."

A Louisville, Ky., native, Imorde received his commission from the United States Army in 1997. He is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom whose decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with Two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal and Army Commendation Medal.

The 123rd Force Support Squadron is comprised of four units:

the 123rd Military Personnel Flight, 123rd Services Flight, 123rd Base Education and Training Flight, and Family Services. Those units cover a broad range of functions, from personnel, family support and recruiting to the base dining facility, lodging and honor guard.

"We are largely a customer-service organization, and that will be my emphasis," Imorde said. We will continue to take care of people and will always do the right thing for the Airmen of the 123rd Airlift Wing."



Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel/KyANG

Lt. Col. George Imorde III, incoming commander of the 123rd Force Support Squadron, receives the unit colors from Col. Jeffrey Peters, 123rd Support Group Commander, during a change-of-command ceremony at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base Oct. 22. Outgoing commander Lt. Col. Kathryn Pfeifer (left) has been named staff support officer for Joint Forces Headquarters-Kentucky.