

THE CARGO COURIER

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

Vol. XXVI, No. 11 • Dec. 10, 2011

Wing Airmen receive Bronze Star Medals

Explosive Ordnance Disposal team leaders cleared roads, neutralized bombs in Afghanistan

By Maj. Dale Greer
Chief of Public Affairs

Kentucky's adjutant general presented three members of the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron with Bronze Star Medals here Nov. 20 for their outstanding service while deployed to Afghanistan as Explosive Ordnance Disposal specialists.

Before an audience of nearly 1,000 Airmen in the base Fuel Cell Hangar, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini pinned the distinctive, five-point stars on the battle uniforms of Tech. Sgt. Matthew D. Basanta, Tech. Sgt. Matthew J. Meuser and Tech. Sgt. Robert L. Woods.

All three Airmen were EOD team leaders who spent six months clearing the Afghan countryside of enemy ordnance and neutralizing scores of deadly Improvised Explosive Devices buried in roads and other public spaces.

"The achievements of these three Kentucky Air Guardsmen exemplify the highest standards of duty, honor and bravery," said Col. Greg Nelson, commander of their parent unit, the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"Working tirelessly in some of the most dangerous regions of Afghanistan, they conducted daily Explosive Ordnance Disposal missions at great risk to their own lives so that coalition forces could operate safely and effectively. Whether they were disabling IEDs along more than 600 miles of roads or conducting patrols under constant threat of attack, Sergeants Basanta, Meuser and Woods aided the war effort immeasurably, saving the lives of coalition forces by neutralizing one of the enemy's most insidious weapons.

"They truly represent the best quali-

ties of the United States Air Force, the Kentucky Air National Guard and the 123rd Airlift Wing. I'm proud to serve with them."

The Bronze Star is awarded to service members who distinguish themselves by heroic or meritorious achievement in connection with non-aerial military operations against an armed enemy.

Basanta was assigned to 466th Operating Location Alpha, Combined Joint Task Force Paladin-East, Forward Operating Base Ghanzi, Afghanistan, from Feb. 23 to Aug. 23, 2011, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

During that time, Basanta executed 40 EOD combat missions throughout Ghanzi Province, completing 16 route patrols that cleared more than 600 miles of roads, according to the narrative that accompanies his award citation. He also participated in four named operations that destroyed two enemy caches containing 2,400 pounds of explosives.

In two separate instances, Basanta removed 200-pound IEDs from culverts by approaching to within hands' reach, attaching ropes and pulling them free so they could be remotely disrupted without causing damage to Afghanistan's most strategic highway.

He also provided valuable insight into enemy tactics, safely disrupting two IEDs by deciphering their initiation systems and intended targets. His surgical disruption techniques and detailed exploitation resulted in flash reports to the field, alerting coalition forces and Afghan National Security forces to new

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Photos by Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, presents Bronze Star Medals to three Kentucky Air Guardsmen during a ceremony held Oct. 20 in the Fuel Cell Hangar. Pictured from top to bottom are Tech. Sgts. Matthew D. Basanta, Matthew J. Meuser and Robert L. Woods.

123rd Airlift Wing stands ready for the holidays

Welcome to our December Unit Training Assembly. This will be a jam-packed drill, but I hope we can mix a little fun with our work this weekend.

Saturday will be Wingman Day for the 123rd Airlift Wing. We will dedicate the afternoon to discussion and activities centered on strengthening our individual resilience.

Our Wellness Team has the lead this Wingman Day. They have prepared a brief video emphasizing the four areas of wellness — physical, psychological, social and spiritual. The individual members of our Wellness Team will meet with all our groups and units individually in order to answer any questions you may have about the programs they offer, and to allow for open discussion specific to your individual missions and situations.

Additionally, your group commander will provide a back-brief on our Wing Climate Survey. We had good participation and representation from all the groups, which allows us to provide specific feedback based on your input.

Overall we are in great shape, but we have some areas for improvement. I don't want to get ahead of your commanders on this briefing, but I will provide more information from the survey next month.

We will conclude Wingman Day on Saturday with individual activities in your unit.

On Sunday, we will take some time to celebrate the holidays. We have invited



Col. Greg Nelson
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

the families of our deployed members to breakfast in the Annex MWR Area at 9 a.m. I asked the commanders to ensure that families of their deployed Airmen are invited. We will invite these families to stay and visit with us the rest of the day.

Sunday afternoon will be dedicated to our Children's Christmas Party in the Annex and individual organizations' holiday celebrations. I'm pretty confident Santa Claus will be at our Children's Party, so feel free to stop by and say hello. I'm sure the children, Santa and our volunteers will be glad to see you.

You might wonder why we combined

Wingman Day with our holiday celebration weekend. Well, one reason is we will hit the ground running in January, preparing for our upcoming Air Expeditionary Force deployments in 2012, followed closely by a Unit Compliance Inspection in 2013. So rest while you can.

Additionally, the holiday season can be a stressful time when we just might need a Wingman to talk to.

The holidays are a time of reflection; a time of traditional celebrations and gift-giving. We associate the holiday season with good cheer and happiness, but for some this could be a tough year. Some relationships may have changed, and there might not be a traditional celebration for some of our Airmen.

These are also tough economic times, so some of our Airmen might not have the funds to buy the gifts they'd like to give.

All these things can add up, and we need to know we can lean on our Wingman for help. We need to know about the resources of our Wellness Team and how they can help us, and just as importantly how they can help our Wingman.

I want to close by thanking you for a great year. 2011 was a busy time, and you never failed to answer the call.

I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year. I'll see you this weekend.

The 123rd Airlift Wing stands ready for the holidays!

— Col. Greg Nelson

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The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office of the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

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 Dec 12.

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

Kentucky Aviation Association visits base

Members learn about wing's dual mission at home and abroad

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

More than 70 aviation professionals from across Kentucky had the opportunity to examine aircraft maintenance and flight line operations at the Kentucky Air National Guard during tours Sept. 7 at the Louisville-based 123rd Airlift Wing.

The tours were held in conjunction with the Kentucky Aviation Association's annual conference, which ran through Sept. 9 in Louisville. The association is dedicated to promoting aviation and aerospace education across Kentucky, said Mark Giuffré, director of state government affairs for UPS Airlines and one of the conference organizers.

Visitors toured a maintenance hangar, where a C-130 Hercules transport was undergoing a regularly scheduled inspection, and boarded a second aircraft to view the flight deck and cargo hold. Aircrew members and operations officers also held multiple question-and-answer sessions.

"Our members are people who work in the general aviation community, and they love planes," Giuffré said. "For them to have the opportunity to tour the Kentucky Air National Guard, see the inside of a C-130 and talk to the men and women of the unit is really exciting."

The tour was an eye-opening experience for many of the visitors, some of whom had little prior knowledge about the scope of the Kentucky Air Guard's ongoing operations. The unit has deployed personnel overseas more than 3,400 times since Sept. 11, 2001, in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn, and it regularly conducts combat airlift missions in Afghanistan.

Other countries or regions in which the wing has conducted operations in the past decade include Antarctica, Bahrain,

Cuba, Curacao, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Greece, Guam, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

"I didn't know that the Kentucky Air National Guard was the only Air Guard

unit in the state, or anything about how much of a global reach the unit has," said Matt Fox of the Harlan County Airport in Baxter, Ky.

Westly Westerfield of the Hopkinsville-Christian County Airport in Hopkinsville, Ky., agreed.

"This brings our group a good insight on what the Kentucky Air National Guard does," he said, adding, "I've never been inside a C-130 before, so this is pretty neat."



Photos by Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Maj. James White, a C-130 pilot in the 165th Airlift Squadron, answers questions about the C-130 flight deck as members of the Kentucky Aviation Association tour the Kentucky Air Guard Base Sept. 7. The association is dedicated to promoting aviation across the state.



Left: Col. Ken Dale, commander of the 123rd Maintenance Group, briefs association members about the wing's mission during a tour of the Maintenance Hangar here Sept. 7. The association held its annual state-wide conference in Louisville from Sept. 7 to 9.



Left: A joint-service color guard leads Louisville's Veterans Day parade down Main Street on Nov. 11. Representing the Air Force is Staff Sgt. Brent Reichardt (second from right) of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Maintenance Squadron.

Right: The last of three Kentucky Air Guard C-130s flies over Main Street to kick off the parade. The flyover was timed to occur at 11:11 a.m. — the exact moment in 1918 when the Armistice took effect ending World War I.

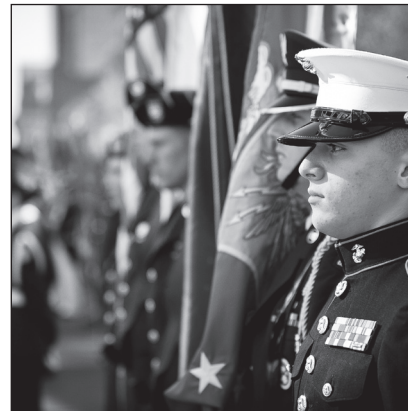


Above: Col. Tom Curry, a former 123rd Airlift Wing chaplain, blesses a color guard detail during the event.

Left: The Kentucky Air National Guard fielded a color guard detail as part of the parade. It was comprised of Tech. Sgt. George Burke, Tech. Sgt. Brittany Ingram, Tech. Sgt. Bao Huynh and Staff Sgt. Garrett Milby.



A massive U.S. flag waves over Main Street.



Cadet Gunnery Sgt. Austin Lucas, a member of the Jeffersontown High School Majors Junior ROTC squad, represents the United States Air Force in the joint-service color guard.

Honoring Service

Thousands of spectators attend Louisville's first Veterans Day parade since end of World War II

Story and photos by Maj. Dale Greer
Chief of Public Affairs

Thousands of spectators lined Main Street Nov. 11 to show their support for military service members during Louisville's first Veterans Day parade in more than a half-century.

The parade kicked off with a three-ship flyover of Kentucky Air National Guard C-130s at 11:11 a.m. — the exact time in 1918 when the Armistice took effect ending World War I.

The event featured dozens of color guards representing every branch of the U.S. military, numerous veterans' groups and a variety of government agencies like the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, according to retired Maj. Gen. Carl Black, a former Kentucky Air Guard commander who lead the committee in charge of organizing the parade.

"This truly is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to pay tribute to American veterans and ... members of the armed services," he said. "11:11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month of 2011 won't happen again."

A joint-service color guard, comprised of members from each branch of the U.S. armed services, led the procession down Main Street under a hail of red, white and blue confetti. The detail included an active-duty Navy member from the Louisville area, as well as three Soldiers from the Kentucky Army National Guard. Rounding out the cadre were two Marine Corps cadets from the Jeffersontown High School Junior ROTC detachment and an Air Force flag-bearer from the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing, which organized the joint detail.

The parade also featured the 113th Army Band from Fort Knox, Ky., and restored military equipment courtesy of the KILROY and 14th Armored Preservation groups.

"This special observance is the least we can do to honor the dedication and service that our military veterans have made and continue to make every day," said Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, who said the event was believed to be the first Veterans Day parade in Louisville since the end of World War II.

The Mayor's Office estimated that 8,000 to 10,000 spectators attended the event.



Street.



Above: Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer waves to thousands of spectators along Main Street as he marches in the city's first Veterans Day Parade in more than a half-century.



Member
ne Corps
S. Ma-

Right: Cadet 2nd Lt. Ashley Brainer, a member of the Moore Traditional High School Air Force Junior JROTC detachment in Louisville, stands at attention during the Massing of the Colors ceremony Nov. 11.



Survival School

Kentucky Air Guardsmen conduct life-saving training at Taylorsville Lake

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

TAYLORSVILLE, Ky. — More than 120 aircrew members and intelligence specialists from the Kentucky Air National Guard conducted life-saving land- and water-survival training at Taylorsville Lake here June 9 and 10.

The training, which covered topics like land navigation and emergency egress from a downed aircraft, is required for aircrew members every three years, said Lt. Col. Ronald Whelan, commander of the 123rd Operations Support Flight. It builds on an extensive three-week combat-survival course that all aircrew members must complete in Spokane, Wash., as part of their initial training.

“The scenarios we’re training for here are certainly the kinds of things we hope will never happen in real life, but we need to be prepared for them,” Whelan said. “The idea is that our reactions will become second-nature in the event of a real emergency.”

Chief Master Sergeant Joan Hazel, who helped organize the training, said repetition is key.

“We hear stories, over and over again, about how this information comes back to the forefront of crewmembers’ brains during real-world emergencies and they’re able to use their knowledge,” said Hazel, superintendent of the Kentucky Air Guard’s Aircrew Flight Equipment Section, which conducted the course. “It’s really good stuff.”

The land portion of the training covered radio usage, compass-reading, land navigation, concealment techniques and firecraft — the use of flares and other incendiary devices. Instructors also provided a “hanging-harness” course, which teaches aircrew members how to extract themselves from trees if their parachutes get snagged after jumping out of a plane, Hazel said.

Water-survival training gave aircrew members the opportunity to deploy and use rubber survival craft such as a 20-person boat or a one-person raft. Students were then pulled across the lake by a motorboat to simulate what it would be like if they had landed in the ocean by parachute, and the tides had begun to drag them across the surface of the water by pulling on the parachute canopy. Students were required to release their canopies to stop the dragging action.

“Training like this gives us the opportunity to



Photos by Senior Airman Maxwell Rechel/KyANG

Medical evacuation troops from the Kentucky Army National Guard hoist Capt. Jennifer Nash, a Kentucky Air Guard C-130 pilot, into a UH-60 Blackhawk during land-survival training held June 9 in Taylorsville, Ky. Nash was participating in training to augment her survival skills.



Col. Barry Gorter (far left), commander of the 123rd Operations Group, sets up a life raft during survival training at Taylorsville Lake. The aircrew training is required every three years.

get out here and work with equipment that we don’t get to work with that much,” said Capt. Casey Clark, a C-130 pilot with Kentucky’s 165th Airlift Squadron. “I’ve really appreciated the enthusiasm of the flight-equipment folks we come out here to work with,” he

added. “They genuinely have a passion for what they do, and they really impress upon us the importance of knowing the equipment and helping us learn how to use it accurately so that we can help ourselves in situations we hope we never get into.”

ROTC programs returning to the Ivy League

WASHINGTON (AFNS) — ROTCs are making a comeback at Ivy League schools after being banned from many of them for decades — first in objection to the Vietnam War, and more recently because of the now-repealed “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law that banned gay men and lesbians from serving openly.

With both objections now history, ROTC programs are returning to more campuses, including the Ivies. (The University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Cornell and Dartmouth never dissolved their long relationships with ROTC.)

Harvard, Yale and Columbia universities approved the reintroduction of ROTC programs to their campuses earlier this year.

Harvard President Drew Faust called Naval ROTC’s return to the Cambridge, Mass., campus “an important new chapter in the long and storied history of military service by members of the Harvard community.”

At Yale, university and military officials agreed to establish Naval and Air Force ROTC programs next year.

Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley, who signed an agreement Sept. 12 to establish an Air Force ROTC detachment at Yale in the fall of 2012, called the decision a “win-win.”

Stanford University voted in April to invite ROTC to return to its Southern California campus. University officials reportedly are in “serious discussions” with the military branches about setting up an on-campus ROTC program, but no agreements have yet been reached.

Meanwhile, Brown University in Providence, R.I., the last Ivy League institution to ban ROTC from its campus, is studying the issue.

Off-the-shelf acquisitions are speeding equipment to Guard

By Staff Sgt. Tiffany Trojca
Air Force Public Affairs Agency

WASHINGTON — By using ideas from recently deployed Airmen and using off-the-shelf technology, the Reserve Component has developed new equipment that saved lives and led to highly successful combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

This streamlined process is speeding high-tech acquisitions and was briefed by the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard to representatives on Capitol Hill here Oct. 28.

The “National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation” is the Reserve Component’s primary means of modernizing its forces. Since 1982, this money has resulted in cost-effective upgrades to Reserve equipment and aircraft.

“The number one thing we’ve spent (National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation) on in the last few years has been the advanced targeting pods,” said Col. Leonard Dick, the vice commander of the Air National Guard and Reserve Test Center in Tucson, Ariz. “We’ve done a great deal with moving targets.”

The “LITENING” advanced targeting pod was a resounding success during the opening days of combat against the Taliban in Afghanistan, according to Air Force officials. Air Force Reservists were asked to stay in country longer than expected because they were the only ones flying and maintaining F-16 fighter aircraft with this state-of-the-art avionics upgrade.

The targeting pods enhance communication during missions by connecting pilots directly with Airmen on the ground, providing a faster and more accurate response time.

The advantage of the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation is that it uses off-the-shelf, commercially-available technology and products. Also, new ideas come from the troops in the field and the proposals get evaluated, validated and prioritized, which results in equipment upgrades quickly getting to the combat zone, increasing mission success and saving lives.

After Congress approves the funding, the Air National Guard Air Force Test Center leads the process.

“We take the National Guard (and) Reserve Equipment Appropriation, after that process, and use those resources to effectively and efficiently turn those requirements into immediate needs and capabilities that can be deployed very quickly to help out the warfighters,” said Brig. Gen. Dan Bader, special assistant to the chief of the National Guard Bureau at the Pentagon.

Today, Reserve Component forces are developing less costly helmet-mounted cueing systems, averaging one-third to one-fourth the normal price. The helmet is still in the testing phase; however, if it is approved it will enhance pilot situational awareness and provide faster control of aircraft targeting systems and sensors.

Other equipment upgrades will result in benefits directly felt by taxpayers at home during the Reserve’s support of homeland defense missions. Unique aerial spray systems for the Air Force Reserve’s 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown-Warren Air Reserve Station, Ohio, are being replaced using the special funding.

This is the only unit within the Department of Defense with the unique capability to control disease vectors and insect populations, and disperse oil spills. The unit responds to national disasters and emergencies such as the oil spill clean-up in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Reserve speakers were hosted by Jimmy Thomas, the military legislative assistant to California Rep. Duncan Hunter, who is the co-chairman of the House National Guard and Reserve Component Caucus. The other co-chair is Rep. Tim Walz from Minnesota. The Air Force Association helped sponsor the event.

Last year, Congress funded the Air Force Reserve for equipment upgrades of \$70 million and the Air National Guard for \$250 million.

During the discussion, the Reserve speakers outlined the recent Weapons and Tactics Conference held Sept. 12-16 at the Air National Guard and Reserve Test Center. This weeklong annual conference shares information from Airmen recently deployed or deploying in the near future to define critical, essential and desired capabilities.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Bronze Stars

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threats, the narrative said.

Meuser was assigned to 466th Explosive Ordnance Flight Bravo, Combined Joint Task Force Paladin-South, Kandahar, Afghanistan, from Aug. 25, 2010 to Feb. 22, 2011, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

During that time, Meuser led a three-person team on more than 72 combat missions covering the 675-square-kilometer Ground Defense Area surrounding Kandahar Air Field, according to the narrative that accompanies his award citation. He responded to and rendered safe 15 IEDs and destroyed over 3,000 legacy unexploded ordnance and enemy weapons cache items, thus limiting the IED threat and reducing the number-one insurgent weapon used against International Security Assistance Force troops.

Notably, Meuser led his team during named operations in support of British Regimental Forces and U.S. Army Scouts who infiltrated two compounds suspected of harboring known IED facilitators responsible for 40 indirect fire attacks on Kandahar Air Field. His team meticulously cleared areas identified as IED threats, enabling the successful capture of the primary objective, the narrative said.

Additionally, Mueser was pivotal in the disposal of more than 50,000 pounds of excess or dangerously unserviceable North Atlantic Treaty Organization munitions, allowing logistics resources to focus on battlefield resupply and saving the United States millions of dollars in redeployment costs.

Woods was also assigned to 466th Explosive Ordnance

Flight Bravo, Combined Joint Task Force Paladin-South, Kandahar, Afghanistan, from Aug. 25, 2010 to Feb. 22, 2011, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

During that time, Woods led 42 combat missions that rendered safe, recovered, destroyed or exploited numerous IEDs, unexploded ordnance and weapons caches, according to the narrative that accompanies his award citation. He also conducted post-blast analysis missions throughout Regional Command-South, collecting evidence that was instrumental in the detention of two bomb-making facilitators in Kandahar Province.

Woods' expertise was evident when he devised and implemented an innovative safing procedure against a dud-fired, rocket-propelled grenade that lodged in the door of an armored troop-transport vehicle during a route-clearing mission, the narrative said. After Woods neutralized the ordnance, he meticulously analyzed the remaining vehicles in the convoy and discovered two more that were contaminated with ordnance residue. His resulting actions minimized the potential for damage and preserved more than \$2 million in combat vehicles for future operations, releasing critical life-saving resources back into the fight.

Woods also effectively evaluated, safed and destroyed more than three tons of explosive remnants of war, thereby preventing their use against coalition forces.

The three Bronze Star recipients are among the hundreds of Kentucky Air National Guardsmen who have been mobilized worldwide in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn during the past decade. The unit has deployed personnel overseas more than 3,400 times since Sept. 11, 2001.