

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

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## Third ag team completes Afghanistan tour

### Group of 58 Ky. Army and Air Guardsmen helped farmers build sustainable economy

By Lt. Col. Kirk Hilbrecht  
Kentucky National Guard Chief of Public Affairs

Fifty-eight members of the Kentucky National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team 3 were honored during a welcome-home ceremony here Feb. 28, concluding a 10-month deployment to Afghanistan that saw substantial advances in local farming techniques.

KYADT 3 was charged with sustaining the relationships built between former KYADTs and Afghan farmers to ensure the country becomes agriculturally self-sufficient through the development of an agricultural marketplace, officials said. The task force was comprised of Army and Air National Guardsmen with a variety of skills in agricultural matters.

"Without a doubt, the hard work of our third agribusiness development team will continue to be realized by an Afghan nation 20 years from now ... and beyond," said Brig. Gen. Mike Dornbush, chief of the Kentucky National Guard's joint staff, to a crowd of more than 300 friends and family who gathered to greet the team, also known as Task Force Hurricane.

Presiding over the homecoming ceremony was Army Brig. Gen. Steve Hogan, Kentucky's assistant adjutant general.

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**Right: Army Guard Staff Sgt. Jeff Valentine holds his daughter, Taylor, for the first time in 10 months during a welcome-home ceremony here Feb. 28 for members of the Kentucky National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team 3. The team's 58 Soldiers and Airmen have been deployed to Afghanistan since April 2011.**



Maj. Dale Greer/KyANG

## Kentucky names three outstanding Airmen for 2012

### Sikkema, Fulton, Stinnett to be honored on May 19

By Master Sgt. Diane Stinnett  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Senior Airman Braden Sikkema, Tech. Sgt. Karen Fulton and Master Sgt. Clint Stinnett have been selected as the top enlisted members of the Kentucky Air National Guard for 2012, claiming the title of Outstanding Airmen of the Year.

The trio of exemplary Airmen edged out a competitive field of 21 other nominees in the areas of leadership, job performance, personal

improvement and community service, according to Chief Master Sgt. Jim Smith, the Air Guard's state command chief master sergeant.

"The evaluation process was truly challenging," said Smith, who chaired the selection committee comprised of Air Guard chief master sergeants and the Kentucky Army Guard's state sergeant major. "We had an excellent pool of nominees this year. All were model Airmen who go above and beyond, both on duty and off."

Sikkema, the winner in the Airman category, is an intelligence analyst with the 123rd Operations Group.

"He is phenomenal for how far along in his military career he is," said Maj. Kevin Kraus,

who supervises the young Airman. "He has a lot of drive, a lot of passion for what he does. He's been on two deployments already, and for a Senior Airman, that is fairly unusual in the intelligence career field."

In addition to the deployments, Sikkema was selected for several special assignments here in the commonwealth. He participated in a homeland-response exercise, demonstrating the ability to collect imagery from the back of a C-130 aircraft for use in evaluating disaster damage. He also was chosen to brief the adjutant general on the nature and scope of airlift and agricultural-development operations in

See **AIRMEN**, Page 6

# The 123rd Airlift Wing: Truly Outstanding!

Tomorrow we will celebrate our 15th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. No other unit in the United States Air Force holds more Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards, and as your wing commander, I could not be more proud.

We are truly the best tactical airlift wing in the USAF, not only from what we have done, but also due to the great Airmen who preceded us in the Kentucky Air National Guard.

The 123rd received its first AFOUA as a tactical reconnaissance wing celebrating accomplishments from Jan. 20, 1968 to June 9, 1969. Even back then, we were conducting "vital operations in widely separated locations in the United States and overseas, including Alaska, Panama Canal Zone, Japan and Korea," according to the citation.

Our third AFOUA, from November 1978 to October 1980, acknowledged distinguished flying operations and an aircraft maintenance mission-capable rate exceeding that of our major command, Tactical Air Command. Our fifth and sixth awards noted how the 123rd demonstrated leadership during inspections with the first "Outstanding" rating ever awarded by the 12th Air Force IG and "13 straight inspections rated no less than Excellent."

The 123rd has always strived to recruit, retain and take care of our great Airmen: AFOUAs five, six, seven, 10, 14 and 15 recognize 102 to 112 percent manning. We've led the USAF in Non-Commissioned Officer professional education, finance operations, social services, civil engineering and public affairs. We've maintained a culture of safety in everything we do with repeated recognition for flying safety, aircraft maintenance safety and ground safety.

We also have a culture and heritage for humanitarian relief support. Our eighth AFOUA recognized multiple emergency response operations, from being the first C-130 to land at Homestead Air Force Base, Fla., following Hurricane Andrew, to our Combat Controllers and aircrew members' supporting humanitarian relief and disaster response in Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda.

At the same time, the 123rd has never failed to sup-



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

port the fight! Numbers, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and now 15 all recognize our contribution to overseas combat and combat-support operations. We have provided airlift, maintenance, support and services capability to multiple areas of responsibility around the world.

Our 12th AFOUA recognized the valor of our Airmen from March 6, 2003 to March 15, 2004. We deployed 10 out of our 12 aircraft, crews and maintenance to support combat and combat-support operations in Iraq, Bosnia and the horn of Africa. At the same time our civil engineers and security forces were some of the first in Baghdad, securing facilities and providing force protection critical to establishing the "green zone" used throughout the war.

Our 15th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award is no less deserving in recognition. We've maintained our presence in both Iraq and Afghanistan, along with a myriad of missions around the globe. We maintained our recruiting and retention culture of

over 100 percent manning, and our safety culture of 100 percent accident-free flying operations at home and abroad. Our maintenance and operations culture of excellence led to a 100 percent mission-capable rate in Afghanistan while performing more combat airdrops than ever before in the history of the USAF.

We continue to lead the USAF and Air National Guard in "1st Ever" accomplishments. We performed the first homeland security/homeland defense Operational Readiness Inspection, receiving a rating of "Excellent" from AMC/IG. During the same time frame, we established the first ANG Contingency Response Group and the first two ANG Critical Care Air Transport Teams. Please take the time to read our 15th AFOUA submission. You need to see what you did to receive this unprecedented, prestigious award.

So, where do we go from here? I say we continue to lead the Air National Guard, Air Mobility Command and the United States Air Force in everything we do. The 123rd Airlift Wing will continue to be the innovator in not only what we do today but also tomorrow, identifying, developing and performing new missions.

We will lead with new ideas in our missions and services, like our Initial Response Hub for disaster response in the United States; and our 123 AW Wellness Team, supporting the physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of our Airmen. We will continue to maintain the culture established by our predecessors that makes us strong today: safety, professional military education, 100 percent-plus manned, trained and equipped. Those who won awards in the past knew this, and we will pass it on to all our Airmen.

We will look for ways to improve what we do, from lessons learned in the past to improvements for the future. We will take care of ourselves, we will take care of each other and we will take care of our wing.

If we do these things, we will celebrate many, many more Outstanding Unit Awards in our future.

The 123rd Airlift Wing Stands Ready!

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**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 March 30. Our office is located in room 1160 of the Wing Headquarters Building.**

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## Deadline for tuition-assistance applications is April 1

April 1 is the deadline to apply for benefits under the Kentucky National Guard Tuition Assistance Program for all students attending school during the Summer and Fall 2012 academic terms. The deadline for the Spring 2013 semester is Oct. 1.

Individuals must apply online at <https://ky.ngb.army.mil/TuitionStudent>.

Each applicant must also provide the Base Training Office with a Commander's Checklist and a print-out of the application for every semester he or she will be enrolled. Checklists are available from unit training managers.

Note that it is the individual's responsibility to meet program deadlines. Contact the Base Training Office at ext. 4421 for additional information.

## Ky. Guard, U of L establish partnership

The University of Louisville and Kentucky National Guard have established a partnership that will promote an ongoing professional exchange between troops, their families and U of L faculty, staff and students.

University President James Ramsey and Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general of the Kentucky National Guard, signed a memorandum of understanding Feb. 17.

"We are your neighbors, we stay here, we are always going to be here," Tonini said. "And our responsibilities are not only for the federal mission but also for the state mission, so we really are a part of the home team."

The two organizations will work together to develop a wide array of joint initiatives such as degree programs for troops.

## Town Hall



Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, looks on as Sen. Mitch McConnell takes questions from members of the 123rd Airlift Wing during a town hall meeting held Jan. 4 at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base.



McConnell greeted individual Airmen following the event, which was held in the Fuel Cell Hangar and touched on such topics as proposed military budget cuts, servicemember benefits and international relations.



Photos by Maj. Dale Greer/KyANG



# Afghanistan

Continued from Font Page

“In a war-torn nation where 70 percent of the population earns its living as farmers, the ability to increase the presence and legitimacy of the government’s local agriculture representatives can be a key to winning the counterinsurgency fight,” Hogan said. “You have shown our nation your Unbridled Service.”

Among the team’s achievements, Task Force Hurricane mentored professors at Al Bironi University to dramatically expand their knowledge base and improve instructional techniques through a microscope training program that focused on plant pathology, officials said.

The team also was instrumental in executing the first-ever commercial mulberry harvest in the Panshir Valley, producing 75 metric tons of mulberries while introducing a new juice product to the local marketplace and netting area farmers more than \$45,000.



Right: More than 300 friends and family members gathered in the Kentucky Air National Guard Annex Feb. 28 for KYADT 3’s homecoming ceremony.

The unit has been in Afghanistan for 10 months, building on the success of previous Agribusiness Development Teams in creating a sustainable agriculture-based local economy.

KyANG photos by Maj. Dale Greer

KYADT 3 was the first Agribusiness Development Team to move its entire unit off Bagram Air Base, aiding counterinsurgency efforts while placing members closer to the projects and Afghan government officials they were assisting.

Task Force Hurricane’s return marks the end of the third agribusiness mission for the Kentucky National Guard. KYADT 4 is currently in Afghanistan and will continue the work undertaken by KYADT 3.

Col. Neil Mullaney, KYADT 3 commander and the first Air Guard officer to lead an agribusiness team, expressed his appreciation to audience members for their support over the past 10 months.

“I want to thank the families, friends and loved ones of Task Force Hurricane for allowing your Soldiers and Airmen to serve our nation,” Mullaney said. “It has been an honor to serve with you, beside you and as your commander. I thank you.”

The Kentucky National Guard currently has nearly 450 Soldiers and Airmen deployed across the world. More than 14,000 Kentucky troops have deployed in support of the Global War on Terror since 2001.



Right: Brig. Gen. Michael Dornbush, National Guard’s Joint Staff, leads the Annex to kick off the homecoming ceremony.

KYADT 3 was instrumental in coordinating the first-ever commercial mulberry harvest in the Panshir Valley, producing 75 metric tons of mulberries, creating a new juice product for the local market and netting \$45,000 for area farmers.

Task Force Hurricane members also mentored professors at Al Bironi University through a microscope training program that focused on plant pathology.



Maj. Bernie Quill (above), a Kentucky National Guard member of Agribusiness Development Team 3, mentored professors of Task Force Hurricane. Quill





Chief of the Kentucky National Guard leads the official party into the ceremony.

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mentored professors at  
scope training program



...y Air National Guard officer who deployed with the Kentucky National Guard's  
listens as his commander, Col. Neil Mullaney (right), speaks about the achieve-  
was joined by his wife, Hope.





## Airmen

Continued from Front Page

Afghanistan.

"It's a pretty big honor being selected to brief the TAG," Kraus noted.

Sikkema excels in the area of community involvement, too. He is active in his church, where he assists with special-needs children, and was invited by the Puerto Rico Air National Guard to attend their ROTC career day, providing the enlisted perspective to a new generation of cadets.

Fulton, the winner in the Non-Commissioned Officer category, is an orderly room clerk assigned to the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron. Her supervisor, Chief Master Sgt. Jeff Moore, calls her the squadron's "go-to" person.

"She is pretty much the whole backbone of our squadron," Moore said. "She took this squadron and built it up to where I would put our organization against anyone's on the administration side."

Fulton, who manages her unit's security program, received an excellent rating during a 2011 OPSEC inspection. She also developed and implemented master file plans for 12 separate flights within the squadron and flawlessly processed more than 300 orders through the new Defense Travel System. To date, she is the only person Air Force-wide to have logged a perfect score in both the Knowledge Operations Management Course and the Information Fundamentals Basic Technical Training School, Moore said.

"She is the sharpest troop I have ever had working for me in my 30 years of service," he added.

Fulton is also active in her community, shaping the next generation by mentoring at-risk students as a member of the Jefferson County Traditional Middle School Parent Teacher Student Association, and by coordinating youth activities at her church.

Stinnett, the senior NCO of the year, is a loadmaster with the 165th Airlift Squadron who was nominated because of his dedication and professionalism.

"He is so meticulous about everything," said his supervisor, Chief Master Sgt. Jeff Brown. "When he's given a task — and a lot of times, he doesn't even have to be asked to do it — he's on top of it and it's perfect. He doesn't complain about anything, he just gets it done. You can always count on him."

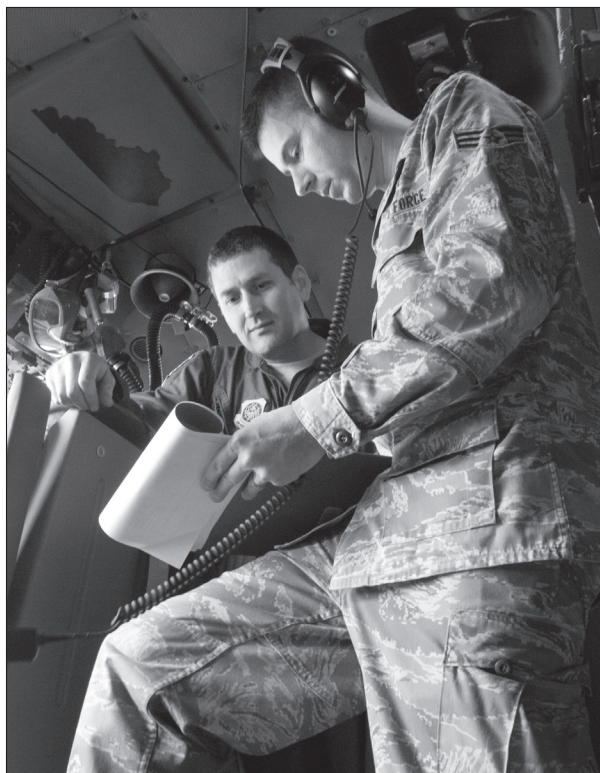
In 2011, Stinnett voluntarily deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Brown said. While deployed, he flew troop-transport and cargo-supply sorties, including 27 combat missions and five airdrop missions. During one of these flights, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. James F. Amos singled him out for superior profes-

sionalism. Stinnett also deployed twice last year in support of Operation Cornet Oak, supporting airlift operations in Central and South America.

At his home unit, Stinnett overhauled the training program for the flight simulator and altitude chamber. His new streamlined process resulted in a higher percentage of aircrew being trained at a lower cost, Brown noted. He also developed briefing packages for those attending the training, detailing all the necessary information. As a result of his dedication, Stinnett was upgraded to evaluator loadmaster, joining only



**Above:** Tech. Sgt. Karen Fulton, an orderly room clerk assigned to the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, is the Kentucky Air National Guard's 2012 Outstanding NCO of the Year. Fulton received an excellent rating during a 2011 OPSEC inspection and developed master file plans for 12 separate flights within the squadron.



**Left:** Senior Airman Braden Sikkema (foreground), an intelligence analyst with the 123rd Operations Group, is the Kentucky Air National Guard's 2012 Outstanding Airman of the Year in the Airman category. Sikkema deployed twice in 2011 and was selected for several special assignments in the commonwealth.

Photos by Master Sgt. Philip Speck/  
Kentucky Air National Guard



four other evaluators in his section. During a recent training flight, he was applauded by the Standards and Evaluation loadmaster from Air Mobility Command for his knowledge of airdrop procedures.

Additionally, the operations group commander handpicked him to establish a new tactics loadmaster position, leading to more effective training for combat operations.

Stinnett takes his commitment to the military home with him, too. He is a lifetime member of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States and Kentucky, and an active member of the American Legion.

All three Outstanding Airmen of the Year will be honored — along with the Kentucky Army National Guard's Outstanding Soldiers of the Year — during a banquet to be held May 19 at the Kentucky State Fair and Exposition Center.

Social hour gets underway at 6 p.m., and the banquet is scheduled to start at 7. Tickets are \$25 and may be purchased from any chief master sergeant.



**Master Sgt. Clint Stinnett, a loadmaster with the 165th Airlift Squadron, is the Kentucky Air National Guard's 2012 Outstanding Senior NCO of the Year. In 2011, Stinnett voluntarily deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, flying 27 combat missions.**

## King selected top first sergeant in Ky. Air Guard

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

Master Sgt. Collin King has been selected as the Kentucky Air National Guard's 2012 First Sergeant of the Year.

A traditional Guardsman who serves one weekend a month and at least two weeks of active duty per year, King balances his military obligations with a high-tempo career as a detective in the Louisville Metro Police Department. He's currently a Task Force Officer working in concert with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

At the Air Guard, King serves as first sergeant for the 165th Airlift Squadron and Headquarters, 123rd Airlift Wing. He is responsible for the morale, welfare and conduct of his fellow enlisted members and advises the commander about enlisted-force issues.

It's a job for which he is imminently suited, according to his supervisor, Lt. Col. Shawn Dawley.

"Master Sgt. King is a model traditional Guardsman and senior NCO who epitomizes the Air Force Core Values of service, integrity and excellence," said Dawley, commander of the 165th Airlift Squadron.

"He's an invaluable friend whose motto is 'You command, I'll advise.' His willingness to take on tough issues, whether they be personnel-related or administrative — and

without being asked — is probably the greatest service he provides the unit. Often, he'll come into the office to tell me, 'This was the problem, these were suitable alternatives, this is what I chose, this is what happened; problem solved. Questions?'"

King joined the Kentucky Air Guard in 1999 as a Security Forces troop and deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom in 2003. He later served as squad leader in the 123rd Contingency Response Group before being named first sergeant in 2008.

King was selected for 2012 First Sergeant of the Year because of his exceptional performance from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2011. During that time, he was elected chairman of the 123rd Airlift Wing First Sergeants' Council, created an enlisted mentoring program and conducted "town hall" meetings for the family members of Kentucky Air Guardsmen who were deployed overseas. He also coordinated the repair of maintenance issues at the homes of those family members and facilitated referrals to local assistance agencies as needed.

Following an appearance on the A&E Network Television series "First 48" that detailed his skill in solving a high-profile murder, King was chosen by wing staff to conduct interview training for investigators assigned to the base Flight Safety Board. He also leveraged his experience as a police of-



**Master Sgt. Collin King**

ficer by sharing with other Airmen what he learned about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder following his involvement in a duty-related fatal shooting. This directly assisted several unit members during a Wingman Day event focused on building resilience, officials noted.

"He was built for this job," Dawley said of King. "Strong, humble, passionate, tough and caring."

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

## Tonini addresses the state of the Kentucky Guard

By Army Sgt. Scott Raper  
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

Several hundred Kentucky Air and Army National Guardsmen came together in Louisville Feb. 10 for The Adjutant General's Officer and Senior Enlisted Professional Development Seminar.

The annual meeting gives leaders the opportunity to give their own "state of the unit" addresses.

In an afternoon speech, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Kentucky's adjutant general, asked the large crowd of uniformed servicemembers who among them enjoyed being a part of "the most proficient, most professional and the most decorated force in the United States military."

"I could not be any more amazed, more proud or more awestruck by the accom-

plishments and accolades bestowed upon our Kentucky National Guard," he said to a room full of raised hands.

In addition to the adjutant general, guest speakers included retired Army Maj. Gen. Robert Silverthorn, state chairman of the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve; Army Command Sgt. Maj. David Munden, senior enlisted advisor for Joint Forces Headquarters; and Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson.

Each echoed Tonini's praise for the quality of service the Guard provides to the commonwealth.

Breakout sessions provided each major command with its own forum to address issues and allow leaders to brainstorm ideas.

Topics such as career progression, education and readiness were discussed

as a means to direct improvements within units and throughout all ranks.

Many of the Guardsmen also attended the National Guard Association of Kentucky and Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Kentucky Joint Conference held Feb. 11-12.

The conference meets annually to discuss the associations' continued representation of the National Guard before Congress.

"This is a great opportunity for young officers to see how leadership works on all levels of the Guard," said Army 2nd Lt. Brysen Perry of Ashland.

"All together, the weekend is a really good experience," added Perry, who was recognized as the Junior Commissioned Minuteman, having just become an officer in December.