

THE CARGO COURIER

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Wing deploys to Persian Gulf region

Aircrews, maintenance and C-130s to support OEF and New Dawn

By Maj. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing deployed 70 Airmen and two C-130 aircraft to the Persian Gulf region July 2 in support of operations Enduring Freedom and New Dawn.

The deploying Airmen, who include aircrew members, maintenance troops and support staff, will operate from an undisclosed air base in Southwest Asia, flying troops and cargo across the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility as part of the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing.

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, said the deploying Airmen are among the most experienced and highly trained personnel in the U.S. military.

"I know one thing categorically about the people sitting here in this room: You are ready to do the job we've asked you to do," Tonini said during a briefing held for the Airmen and their family members.

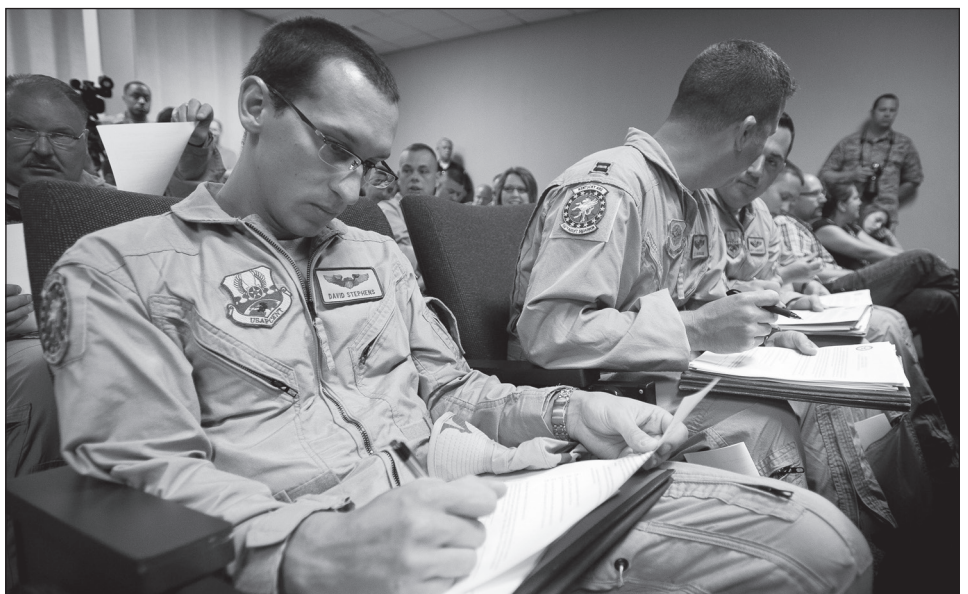
"It will be a difficult job, and I want thank you for stepping up for this mission. I especially want to thank the family members for what you do, by taking on additional responsibilities at home so these Airmen can deploy. We couldn't do this mission without your support."

About half of the Airmen will remain overseas for four months. The other half will return home in two months, after being replaced by a second rotation of about 30 Kentucky Air Guardsmen. In all, approximately 100 members of the 123rd Airlift wing are expected to participate in the deployment. They will be joined in Southwest Asia by other Air Guardsmen and active-duty Air



Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, and Brig. Gen. Mark Kraus, assistant adjutant general for Air, shake hands with Airmen as they board a C-130 here July 2.



Maj. Dale Greer/KyANG

1st Lt. David Stephens, a C-130 pilot in the 123rd Airlift Wing, fills out paperwork July 2 prior to his deployment to the Persian Gulf. Stephens was joined by 69 other deploying Guardsmen.

See *PERSIAN GULF*, Back Page

123rd Airlift Wing: Past, present and future

This month I want to address the four articles in our Cargo Courier. Collectively, they explain a lot about the 123rd Airlift Wing's strength from our past heritage, our present successes and our future challenges.

Two weeks ago, I attended the first-annual ANG Chief Master Sergeant Tommy Downs Award for Excellence presentation at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center in Savannah, Ga. (See the story on Page 3). Two of Chief Downs' peers developed this award, named in honor of a former 123 AW command chief, to recognize his national contributions to the Air National Guard Aerial Port community. Several 123rd Airlift Wing senior leaders, chiefs, coworkers and friends joined Chief Down's wife, Janet, her daughters and other family members to support this inaugural presentation.

"True to Chief Downs' heritage, this annual award will recognize one 2T2 Airman who emulates Chief Downs' drive and passion for the Aerial Port career field and for their care and mentoring of fellow Airmen in service to their country," according to Chief Master Sgt. Brian Pritt, one of Chief Downs' peers.

What a tribute to Chief Downs, who passed away in 2009, and to the 123rd Airlift Wing. All who served with Chief Downs know the great things he did for the Kentucky Air Guard. His benchmark legacy will always be how he cared for his fellow Airmen. This national award recognizes what he did for Airmen across the United States by developing the Aerial Port University to train young Airmen. That's the heritage of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

Chief Downs made a mark in ANG history that we must carry on today. From this heritage a junior officer and NCOs from the 123rd Airlift Wing led this year's Logistics Readiness University at the Savannah CRTC, training more than 400 Airmen while recognizing a cost savings of over \$800,000.

Also two weeks ago, we hosted the commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, Lt. Gen. Eric Fiel. He personally came to Kentucky to present multiple awards to our Special Tactics Squadron Airmen, recognizing their historic contributions to the ongoing war effort during a recent deployment (see the story on Page 4). General Fiel and our adjutant



Col. Greg Nelson
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, officiated an unprecedented presentation of awards, including the Purple Heart, four Bronze Stars, a Meritorious Service and multiple Commendation Medals. Take the time to read some of the citations for these awards. These 123rd Airlift Wing Airmen truly demonstrated duty above and beyond the call.

During General Fiel's visit, he and General Tonini discussed the need for additional Special Tactics capability in the USAF, and a possible growth opportunity for the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron. General Fiel recognizes our demonstrated capability today, which gives him faith in our ability to support additional challenges in the future. The collective performance of all the combat controllers and PJs on recent deployments, along with all 123 AW Airmen who have deployed since 9/11, have established a combat experience level never seen before in the history of the Kentucky Air National Guard.

This is the heritage of the 123rd Airlift Wing. What we did yesterday, and what we do today, will define our future tomorrow. The Airmen of the 123rd

Airlift Wing are known for their quality performance. Anywhere we go, and anything we do, we do the best we can. We do not accept mediocrity. If it's wrong, we correct it. If it's broke, we fix it. If it's substandard or even average, we improve it.

This leads me to the first Air Force Smart Operations 21st Century, or AFSO21, event in the wing. A small group representing almost every 123 AW organization gathered for a quick two-and-a-half days to improve our medical Line of Duty process. They established one goal up front: Improve the support of our Airmen.

The LOD process tracks injuries or illness experienced during military duty. The LOD system changed dramatically in the last year, and those changes were not necessarily in the best interests of individual Airmen. Our Team used the AFSO21 process to eliminate as many roadblocks and hurdles as possible. Please read the article on Page 7 and look for the positive results of this Rapid Improvement Event.

The AFSO21 team members' dedication to improving the LOD process today will benefit all the men and women of the 123rd Airlift Wing needing medical care in the future.

Lastly, I want to recognize the aircrew, maintenance and support men and women who just deployed overseas with our aviation package (see the story on the Front Page). They join other 123 AW Airmen already deployed around the globe, actively engaged in our nation's security and defense. This is the third AEF rotation in my four years of command, but in true 123 AW form, this deployment is not the same as the last. Lt. Col. Shawn Dawley will command a Total Force ANG/USAF C-130 tactical airlift squadron at an undisclosed location supporting not only operations Enduring Freedom and New Dawn but any possible need within the U.S. Central Command AOR. I have no doubt he will lead this new mission with historic results.

This is the 123rd Airlift Wing. This is the Kentucky Air National Guard. This is our heritage from yesterday's history. This is our mission and duty today. This is our challenge and the legacy we will leave tomorrow.

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 July 27. Our office is located in room 1160 of the Wing Headquarters Building.

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Logistics award honors legacy of Chief Downs

Aerial porter recognized for excellence at CRTC

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

SAVANNAH, Ga. — The inaugural presentation of the Chief Master Sergeant Tommy Downs Award for Excellence was bestowed on the top graduate of the 2012 Logistics Readiness University during a ceremony here June 27.

The award, presented to Senior Airman Nathan Rogers of the Wisconsin Air Guard, is named in honor of former 123rd Airlift Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Downs, who passed away in 2009 due to complications from pancreatitis after more than three decades of service in the Kentucky Air National Guard.

Downs was instrumental in establishing the school in 2004, according to Chief Master Sgt. Brian Pritt, superintendent of aerial port operations for the West Virginia Air Guard's 130th Airlift Wing.

"If it weren't for Tommy, we wouldn't have any thought process in starting this whole training program, which has turned into something very good for the entire aerial port community and has now led into the entire logistics readiness squadron community," Pritt said.

Downs wife, Janet, and his daughters Whitney and Abby, came to Savannah to present the award to Rogers, a stand-out aerial port specialist from the 128th Air Refueling Wing.

"The way (Rogers) helps his squadron and takes care of his troops as a senior airman really impressed me the most," Pritt said. "His giving attitude, staying late, doing what's asked and always being there to get the job done — honestly I felt Tommy's presence when we chose (him for) this award."

Downs, who also served as superintendent of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Aerial Port Squadron, saw the need in the early 2000s for a cost-effective national training program to provide mission-critical skills to Air National Guard aerial porters, Pritt said. At the time, training through normal active-duty Air Force channels was either unavailable or prohibitively expensive.

Located at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center, the logistics school was originally called Aerial Port University. When the National Guard Bureau directed the merger of all Air National Guard aerial port squadrons into existing logistics readiness units, the deci-



Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Senior Airman Nathan Rogers, an aerial porter for the Wisconsin Air Guard's 128th Logistics Readiness Squadron, receives the first-annual Chief Master Sergeant Tommy Downs Award for Excellence at the Logistics Readiness University in Savannah, Ga., on June 27. Also pictured are his commander, Lt. Col. Betsy Schoeller, and Janet Downs, wife to the late Chief Downs, a Kentucky Air Guardsman who was instrumental in founding the school.

sion was made to expand the curriculum of Aerial Port University and allow all logistics career fields to participate.

"The downfall of the aerial port squadrons was very hard for us to take, but knowing Tommy, the bottom line was that we needed to do what is best for the Airmen that work for us," Pritt said.

"His heart and soul was aerial port. I know he would want this to continue, even when it became Logistics Readiness University. He would still want us to mentor those young men and women and educate them on how to do the job, and how to do it right."

In its first year of operations, 189 students took classes at the school. This year, 824 students from across the Air Guard completed a four-week curriculum covering such topics as hazardous material inspection and preparation, vehicle operations, and inventory and equipment management.

That training has been provided at a huge cost savings to the Air Force, Pritt said — he estimates more than \$800,000 in 2012 alone. And over the school's nine-year history, the program has saved millions of taxpayer dollars while providing world-class logistics training to thousands of Air National Guardsmen.

The Kentucky Air National Guard stays heavily involved in the university.

Tech. Sgt. Charles Wilding, an air trans-

portation specialist for the 123rd Contingency Response Group, has been both a student and a staff member in seven of the past nine years.

"The main thing is to make sure, regardless of your rank — a slick-sleeve Airman, a chief master sergeant or a lieutenant colonel — that we take care of the people down here," Wilding said.

Five other members of the Kentucky Air Guard also have served as staff. 2nd Lt. Matthew Skeens, 123rd logistics readiness officer, served as university commander for two weeks. Master Sgt. Ray Graves, ramp supervisor for the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, served as administrative services non-commissioned officer in charge. Tech. Sgt. Darrell Roof, a special handling specialist for the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, served as facilities assistant. Master Sgt. Joshua Younce, aerial port section NCOIC for the 123rd CRG, served as acting first sergeant. And Staff Sgt. Brian Leech, an aerial porter for the 123rd CRG, served as facilities assistant and a joint inspection instructor.

"I've never met another person that cared more about his career field, more about his people and to assist them in any way possible, than Tommy Downs," said Chief Master Sgt. Jeffery Stines, superintendent of the North Carolina Air Guard's 145th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

'AMERICA'S FINEST'

Commander of U.S. Air Force Special Operations presents Purple Heart, Bronze Stars to combat controllers from the Kentucky Air National Guard

By Maj. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The Afghan countryside is an unforgiving place for American troops, with the kinds of unknown threats and hidden dangers that can turn a routine patrol into a bloody fight for survival.

Tech. Sgt. Bryan Hunt, a combat controller in the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, was reminded of that fact once again on March 31 while conducting a reconnaissance patrol in Eastern Afghanistan as part of a U.S. Army Special Forces Team.

Hunt was serving as the gunner in the first of four all-terrain vehicles as his patrol entered a remote village rarely visited by coalition forces. In the blink of an eye, the patrol came under attack when an insurgent fired a rocket-propelled grenade at Hunt's ATV.

The ordnance threaded a narrow gap between Hunt and his driver, passing Hunt's head so closely that the fins of the RPG cut his face as it flew by. The grenade then struck the ATV's roll cage, inches from Hunt's head, and detonated on his rucksack. Both men suffered concussions from the blast, and Hunt received lacerations to his face and a fractured nose.

Despite his injuries, Hunt instinctively returned fire with his vehicle-mounted machine gun. He then transitioned to an assault rifle and a 40mm grenade launcher to break up the ambush. This allowed the special forces team leader to take cover behind a mud wall and return fire, buying time for the rest of the team to repel the enemy.

For his performance under fire and for sustaining injuries during combat, Hunt was awarded the Purple Heart and an Air Force Combat Action Medal during a ceremony held June 28 at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville.

Seven other members of Hunt's unit also were recognized for exceptional service during recent deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, earning nine decorations ranging from the Bronze Star Medal to the Air Force Commendation Medal.

"Days like today remind us of the truth that humans are more important than hardware, and that the operators we send out to tackle America's security challenges are among America's finest," said Lt. Gen. Eric Fiel, commander of the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Com-

mand, who traveled to Louisville to personally bestow the awards.

"Battlefield Airmen live on forward operating bases and in austere corners of the world, where ground special operations forces demand precision integration with combat air power," Fiel continued, speaking to an audience of more than 300 friends, family and coworkers. "You never fail to rise to the occasion, because you know better than anyone that the success of the mission — and often the lives of our brothers — depends on you.

"You are the authorities on airpower in the joint Special Operations Forces battle space, and the nature of your service is unique. It demands a formidable warrior who can calmly employ decisive skills one moment and unleash hell in the next.

"We will continue to defend this nation and bring harm to our enemies no matter where they hide, and I know the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron will continue to call in the airpower we need in that fight."

The 123rd Special Tactics Squadron is the only special operations unit in the Air National Guard with both combat controllers and pararescue personnel. Mission sets include clandestine deployment by land, sea and air to establish and control austere airfield and assault-zone operations, according to Lt. Col. Jeff Wilkinson, squadron commander. Members also conduct environmental reconnaissance and tactical weather forecasting; battlefield trauma care; and personnel and equipment recovery operations, including casualty evacuation and combat search and rescue.

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, praised all eight Airmen for their unsurpassed dedication to duty, telling the audience that they routinely "put their lives on the line under the most extreme hardships and save untold lives in the process."

"I am so proud to be here, among all of you," he said, "but it is a special honor to be here with these men, these quiet professionals who truly embody the spirit of unbridled service."

The seven other STS members who received awards June 28:

- Master Sgt. Robert Fernandez, a combat controller, earned a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement while deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from Nov. 16, 2011 to May 1, 2012.

During this period, Fernandez led a 21-person team to manage operations, logistics, resupply and intelligence for 61 combat controllers, tactical air control party members and special operations weathermen conducting combat operations at 46 different locations. He also oversaw the coordination of 5,046 close-air support aircraft and 1,908 combat missions resulting in the kill or capture of 510 enemy combatants.

- Master Sgt. Aaron May, a combat controller, earned a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement while deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from Nov. 16, 2011 to May 1, 2012. During this period, May oversaw 61 Air Force special tactics operators attached to Army, Navy and Marine Corps special operations teams throughout Afghanistan. He also supervised the coordination of 1,980 combat missions resulting in the employment of 70,000 pounds of air-to-ground ordnance and 188 enemy killed.

- Tech. Sgt. Harley Bobay, a combat controller, earned a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement while deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from Nov. 16, 2011 to May 1, 2012. Bobay also received an Air Force Combat Action Medal. During his deployment, Bobay and a team of special operators conducted 32 combat reconnaissance patrols and 22 tactical ground movements while engaging with hostile forces. On one occasion, Bobay was pinned down by a barrage of heavy machine-gun fire and rocket-propelled grenades. Exposing himself to incoming fire, he rapidly acquired the target and directed 30mm canon fire from an overhead AC-130 gunship, killing six insurgents. On eight other occasions, Bobay directed air-to-ground containment fires to protect arriving resupply convoys from enemy attack.

- Tech. Jeff Kinlaw, a combat controller, earned a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement while deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from Nov. 16, 2011 to May 1, 2012. Kinlaw also received an Air Force Combat Action Medal. During this period, Kinlaw was the sole Airman serving as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller assigned to two Army Special Forces Teams conducting village stability operations. He later was partnered with a 100-man Afghan commando unit conducting battlefield operations. His



Above: Eight combat controllers from the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron receive numerous military decorations during a ceremony in the Base Annex June 28. More than 300 friends and family members attended the ceremony, during which Lt. Gen. Eric Fiel, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, bestowed a Purple Heart, four Bronze Star Medals, a Meritorious Service Medal, two Air Force Commendation Medals and three Air Force Combat Action Medals.

Right: Fiel addresses the audience during the ceremony, calling the Kentucky Airmen some of "America's finest." The AFSOC commander traveled to Louisville so he could personally present the awards, which were earned for exceptional service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Kentucky's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron remains one of the most heavily deployed units in the Air National Guard, from hurricane-recovery efforts in the United States to combat operations overseas. In the past three years alone, the unit's Airmen were deployed for more than 4,600 days.

Below: Fiel presents Tech. Sgt. Bryan Hunt with an Air Force Combat Action Medal during the June 28 ceremony here. Hunt, a Kentucky Air National Guard combat controller, also received a Purple Heart for his service in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Photos by Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG



coordination of multiple air-to-ground strikes from eight A-10s and six AH-64s resulted in five enemy killed in action and four forfeited fighting positions destroyed.

- Maj. Sean McLane, a special tactics officer, earned a Meritorious Service Medal for outstanding achievement while deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from Aug. 17, 2011 to Dec. 1, 2011. During this period, McLane led an 85-person special tactics squadron conducting daily combat operations across Afghanistan. Noting that air support tactics had grown stale in the theater, he initiated a real-time, lessons-learned

and best-practices evaluation process which ensured no rules-of-engagement violations, no civilian casualties and no friendly-fire incidents. His leadership enabled the execution of 2,291 ground operations controlling 400 air strikes that resulted in 1,058 enemy fighters killed and 172 wounded.

- Master Sgt. Michael Newman, a combat controller, earned an Air Force Commendation Medal for outstanding achievement while deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in support of operations Enduring Freedom and New Dawn from Aug. 18, 2010 to Nov. 18, 2010. During this period, Newman served for two months as a Joint Attack

Controller for an Army Special Forces Team in Iraq, conducting 14 missions in conjunction with Iraqi Security Forces. He was then assigned to the Special Tactics Assault Zone Reconnaissance Team in Afghanistan, where he provided air traffic control for fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, as well as control of re-supply airdrops.

- Senior Airman John Kane, a combat controller, earned an Air Force Commendation Medal for outstanding achievement while deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from Aug. 18, 2010 to Nov. 18, 2010.

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Finest

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During this period, Kane conducted 50 combat patrols through enemy terrain laden with improvised explosive devices. He also controlled 120 close-air support and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms that provided ground commanders with real-time battlefield data. On four separate missions, Kane and his team were attacked by insurgent forces, and each time Kane responded by directing airpower to neutralize the situation. As his team's air-to-ground expert, he flawlessly controlled the airdrop of three tons of mission-essential supplies and equipment to troops on the ground.

Bronze Star Medals are earned for heroic or meritorious achievement in connection with military operations against an armed enemy. Meritorious Service Medals and Air Force Commendation Medals recognize outstanding achievement or service. Combat Action Medals are awarded to Airmen for active participation in combat, having been under direct and hostile fire or physically engaging hostile forces with direct and lethal fire.

The 123rd Special Tactics Squadron remains one of the most heavily deployed units in the Air National Guard, from hurricane-recovery efforts in the United States to combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Wilkinson said. In the past three years alone, the unit's Airmen were deployed overseas for more than 4,600 days, conducting over 950 ground-combat missions and 10,000 hours of Combat Search and Rescue operations credited with saving more than 50 personnel, he said.

The unit's combat controllers were among the first U.S. forces on the ground following a devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010, directing the first C-17 airdrops of humanitarian aid and controlling a massive resupply effort that delivered 20,000 pounds of food, water and medicine.

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, members of the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron established and operated a helicopter landing zone on a highway overpass in New Orleans, helping evacuate nearly 12,000 citizens.

The unit is comprised primarily of combat controllers, pararescuemen and special operations weathermen.

Combat controllers are some of the most highly trained personnel in the U.S. military, Wilkinson said. As FAA-certified air traffic controllers, they deploy undetected into combat and hostile environments to establish assault zones or airfields while simultaneously conducting air traffic control, fire support, command and control, direct action, counter-terrorism, foreign internal defense, humanitarian assistance and special reconnaissance.

Pararescuemen are parachute-jump qualified trauma specialists who must maintain Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic credentials throughout their careers. With this medical and rescue expertise, PJs are able to perform life-saving missions in the world's most remote areas, Wilkinson said. A PJ's primary function is personnel recovery specialist, with emergency medical capabilities in humanitarian and combat environments. PJs deploy in any available manner, to include air-land-sea tactics, into restricted environments to authenticate, extract, treat, stabilize and evacuate injured personnel.

Special operations weathermen are meteorologists with advanced tactical training to operate in hostile or denied territory, Wilkinson said. They gather and interpret weather data and provide intelligence from deployed locations while working primarily with Air Force and Army Special Operations Forces.

The 123rd Special Tactics Squadron's parent organization is the Louisville-based 123rd Airlift Wing, the main operational unit of the Kentucky Air National Guard.

When under federal control, the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron reports to the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command, which is headquartered at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Power Prop

Senior Master Sgt. Gary Dunlap, NCOIC of the 123rd Maintenance Squadron propulsion section, shows off the Kentucky Air National Guard Mini C-130 to baseball fans during the Louisville Bats-Syracuse Chiefs game May 28 at Slugger Field. The Mini C-130 is a scale replica of its airborne big sister, the C-130 Hercules flown by the men and women of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

Photo by Maj. Dale Greer
Kentucky Air National Guard



AFSO21 team tackles process improvement

Line of Duty claims get increased focus on base

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

Kentucky Air National Guardsmen have a new toolset to help improve programs and processes across the base.

Called Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century, or AFSO21, the system can be used to “lean” almost program by cutting off excess fat, said Chief Master Sgt. Lori Zinsmeister, chief enlisted manager for the 123rd Force Support Squadron.

She recently served as the AFSO21 team lead for a review of the Line of Duty claims program, which tracks injuries or illnesses experienced during military duty.

Zinsmeister explained that the LOD system had become challenging for members to negotiate, necessitating a re-think of the program.

“It was taking up to 90 days for a Line of Duty claim to get through and people weren’t getting paid on time,” Zinsmeister said. “According to the Air Force Instruction, we are supposed to do it in a 65-day period.”

And so, for two-and-a-half days in June, a team of Kentucky Air Guardsmen used AFSO21 for the first time to analyze and streamline an existing process.

The first problem that needed to be resolved was that Line of Duty determination processing took too long at the local level. The team examined the local workflow to figure out how they could “lean out the fat” and make it faster.

“The goal was to improve the process for the individual Airman,” Zinsmeister said.

Based on their findings, the team created checklists for all involved parties, from the member and the commander to the medical group and the judge advocate general. The team also created a policy letter that allows a traditional commander to use a proxy to sign LOD paperwork, so cases can be expedited.

Moving forward, the group will develop a training program to make sure everyone is well informed on how the LOD process is supposed to work.

When an Airman gets sick or injured while on duty, he or she typically files a Line of Duty determination, which is tracked to ensure the Airman is given proper medical care and compensated for any lost time. They are then supposed to be returned to duty or evaluated for a medical disability.



Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Tech. Sgt. Marie Plaza and Master Sgt. Gary Spaulding discuss the Line of Duty determination workflow during an AFSO21 team meeting held on base June 28. AFSO21 — shorthand for Air Force Smart operations for the 21st Century — is an Air Force process-improvement method that can be used to improve virtually any program.

“This is a very long process, and it involves a lot of different elements from within our wing, from finance to medical to the Force Support Squadron to legal to the individual Airman and his command element,” said Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing. “This AFSO21 analysis improved all the steps to make it more efficient and timely to support the Airmen as best as possible.”

Lt. Col. Robert Hamm, vice wing commander, brought in Phil Chansler, director of Air University’s Lean Six Sigma Business Office at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., to help with the wing’s first AFSO21 case.

The goals of AFSO21 are to provide a standardized Air Force approach to continuously improving any process that employs Air Force capabilities, eliminating waste, sharing best practices and reducing cycle times.

AFSO21 also ensures that all Airmen understand their role in developing the ability to affect change and continuously learn new ways to improve processes in their daily activities, Hamm said.

AFSO21 uses an eight-step problem solving scheme that can be employed to fix any broken process:

1. Clarify the problem

2. Break down the problem and identify performance gaps
3. Set improvement target
4. Determine root causes
5. Develop countermeasures
6. See countermeasures through
7. Confirm results and process
8. Standardize successful processes

Nelson said he wants AFSO21 to become a “virus” that spreads basewide, to be used by individual Airmen all the way up through the flights, squadrons and groups.

He likes the AFSO21 improvement process because it combines Six Sigma, a private industry improvement process, with elements from combat planning, such as the “OODA” loop — observe, orient, decide and act.

“The LOD evaluation is just the first event,” Nelson said. “I look for this to be a benchmark event that we can capitalize on and use for any process.”

The Kentucky Air Guard LOD team consisted of Zinsmeister, Master Sgt. Gary Spaulding, Lt. Col. Pat Pritchard, Maj. Robert Geary, Chief Master Sgt. Johnie Cherry, Tech. Sgt. Marie Plaza and Maj. Bruce Bancroft.

Hamm and Chansler were facilitators.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS



Family members wave goodbye to their loved ones here July 2 as the wing deploys 70 Airmen and two C-130 aircraft to the Persian Gulf for a four-month tour in support of operations Enduring Freedom and New Dawn.



Photos by Maj. Dale Greer/KyANG

Persian Gulf

Continued from Front Page

Force troops from units in Wyoming and Missouri.

Lt. Col. Shawn Dawley, a Kentucky Air Guard C-130 pilot who will serve as commander of the deployed flying squadron, said his Airmen will play a vital role in airlift operations across Northern Africa and Southwest Asia.

“We’ll be supporting the Central Command Area of Responsibility, which goes from Egypt in the west all the way to Afghanistan in the east,” he said.

“As a tactical airlift unit, our job is to support the warfighter on the ground, whether we’re doing an assault landing on an unimproved strip using night-vision goggles, flying aeromedical evacuation missions across the theater or conducting combat airdrop and resupply sorties to Soldiers in the fight.”

This mission marks the wing’s seventh major deployment to CENTCOM since 2003. Previous missions sent hundreds of Kentucky Air Guard forces to multiple locations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

In 2007, for example, more than 210 wing members deployed to Afghanistan to airdrop thousands of tons of vital equipment and supplies to forward-deployed troops who were in direct contact with the enemy, navigating some of the most rugged, high-altitude terrain anywhere in the world.

Nearly 300 Kentucky Air Guardsmen returned to Afghanistan in 2009 for the same mission, transporting 20,000 troops and 6,000 tons of cargo across the theater of operations.

Most recently, about 160 Kentucky Airmen broke airlift records when they airdropped or transported an unprecedented amount of cargo and personnel in support of Operation Enduring Freedom while deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, from October 2010 to January 2011.

Since 9/11, more than 14,000 Kentucky National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have mobilized in support of the Global War on Terror. The Kentucky National Guard currently has about 400 troops deployed worldwide.