

THE CARGO COURIER

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

Vol. XXVIII, No. 7 • Sept. 21, 2013

Pfeifer breaks barrier as newest colonel



Col. Kathryn Pfeifer, director of staff for Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard, takes the oath of office during a ceremony here Aug. 17.

Director of staff at KyANG Headquarters is the first female line officer to make O-6 in Kentucky National Guard history

Story and photos by Senior Airman Vicky Spesard
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Kathryn Pfeifer, director of staff for Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard, was promoted to the rank of colonel during a ceremony here Aug. 17, breaking a symbolic barrier in the process.

“This is a great day for Col. Pfeifer and her family, but this is a historic day for the Kentucky National Guard and the Kentucky Air National Guard,” explained Kentucky’s adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, who officiated the ceremony. “She is the first female line officer to obtain the rank of colonel in the history of the Kentucky National Guard.”

Line officers are authorized to command a war-fighting force, as opposed to officers who normally exercise authority in a non-combat specialty field such as the medical or chaplaincy corps.

“I know our organization is in good hands as we go forward with your kind of leadership,” Tonini continued. “I truly believe that good things happen to good people. I know you are one of those, and I genuinely appreciate all that you have done.”

Upon hearing the orders for promotion, Tonini joined Pfeifer’s husband to pin silver eagles to her uniform epaulets, a time-honored tradition. Pfeifer’s two children assisted in the ceremony as well, replacing the lieutenant colonel’s rank on her dress uniform shirt with silver colonel’s eagles.

After taking the oath of office, Pfeifer took a few minutes to thank her family and friends, and address those gathered to celebrate her promotion.

See PFEIFER, Back Page

Kraus pins second star as advisor to U.S. Air Forces Central

By Airman Joshua Horton
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Mark R. Kraus, a Kentucky Air Guardsman who serves as Air National Guard assistant to the commander of U.S. Air Forces Central, was promoted to the rank of major general during a ceremony held here Aug. 18.

Kraus’ new rank insignia were pinned on

by his wife, Leslie, and Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, Kentucky’s adjutant General, before an audience of more than 200 family, friends and coworkers.

Tonini, who praised Kraus for his dedication to excellence during a career spanning more than 39 years, presented the new major general with a flag depicting two stars on a field of Air Force blue.

“Unbridled service is that standard by

which we define the Kentucky National Guard,” Tonini told the audience. “In my opinion, Mark exemplifies that slogan. This is an absolutely great, great day for Kentucky and a great day for the Kraus family.

“Mark is someone who has ‘been there and done that.’ His illustrious career has taken him through the Middle East, South-

See KRAUS, Page 7

Wing continues high-tempo deployments

More than 85 Ky. Airmen supporting global missions

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

More than 85 members of the Kentucky Air National Guard are being deployed to multiple locations this summer and fall in support U.S. military operations around the world, including Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

The most recent group to mobilize consisted of 26 Airmen from the 123rd Security Forces Squadron, who deployed in support of an Air Expeditionary Force rotation earlier this month.

They will provide security at an undisclosed air base in the Persian Gulf region for six months, according to Col. Jeffrey Peters, commander of the 123rd Mission Support Group.

In other mobilizations, 11 cargo handlers from the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron reported to Afghanistan in July and August to support Aerial Port operations, and 11 firefighters from the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron are slated to deploy overseas in mid-October.

“Mission Support Group has seen an increase in deployments lately as group personnel are deploying as volunteers and in association with Air Expeditionary Force buckets,” Peters said.

“The 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron, 123rd Force Support Squadron, 123rd



Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Staff Sgt. Kyle Miller (left) and Tech. Sgt. Dewayne Gibson, fire protection craftsmen from the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron, inspect firefighting equipment here Sept. 10 prior to an overseas deployment. They are among more than 85 Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard who are being deployed this summer and fall to support Air Expeditionary Force rotations and stateside missions.

Logistics Readiness Squadron and 123rd Security Forces Squadron all have Airmen deployed supporting contingency operations.”

Additional personnel from the 165th Airlift Squadron and 123rd Special Tactics Squadron deployed to Afghanistan in June

and July, while other Kentucky Airmen are currently supporting domestic missions at sites across the United States.

“Most of the deployments are for six months,” Peters noted, adding, “We look forward to our Airmen’s safe return to their families.”

This Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services.

Contents of The Cargo Courier are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

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 National Guard photographs unless otherwise indicated.

We welcome your feedback. Please contact the Public Affairs Office directly if you have suggestions for articles or photography.

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

The deadline to submit content for the next issue is Oct. 1.

123rd Airlift Wing Editorial Staff

Wing Commander.....Col. Warren Hurst
Chief of Public Affairs.....Maj. Dale Greer
Public Affairs Officer.....2nd Lt. James Killen
Public Affairs Manager.....Master Sgt. Philip Speck
Senior Staff Writer.....Master Sgt. Diane Stinnett
Staff Writer.....Staff Sgt. Austin Shaffner
Staff Writer.....Senior Airman Vicky Spesard
Staff Writer.....Airman Joshua Horton

Address: 1101 Grade Lane, Louisville, KY 40213-2678

Phone: (502) 413-4484 • Fax: (502) 413-4676

E-mail: 123AW.PA@ang.af.mil

Visit our Website for expanded content — www.123aw.ang.af.mil • Follow us on Facebook for daily updates — www.facebook.com/123AWKY

Sunday is deadline for 123rd Airlift Wing Climate Survey inputs

The 123rd Airlift Wing commander, in coordination with the base Equal Opportunity Office, will be conducting Unit Climate Assessment Surveys through Sunday.

The surveys, which collect information anonymously, are used to assist commanders in assessing positive and negative factors of the human relations climate in their organizations, according to 2nd Lt. Roxanne Smith, base EO officer.

Questions will touch on cohesion and pride, supervisory support, motivation and morale, overt discriminatory behaviors, perceived discrimination, command policy, and sexual assault prevention.

“Your concerns are important to your commander, the wing commander and the EO office,” Smith said.

“We need the participation of everyone. If you have something to say, or feel that you have not been heard, this is one way to express what matters to you.

“The EO office and the Wellness Team will actively use the data from the Unit Climate Assessment to find ways to improve the climate on base.

“Each group and squadron commander also will be briefed on the content of the survey, and the wing commander will get a combined report giving him an overall idea of the health of his wing.

“We need your honest responses,” Smith added. “Each group and squadron will receive a unique password that will allow responses to remain strictly anonymous. Responses in any group smaller than six will be rolled into the next larger group to ensure individuals are not indirectly identified.”

Section supervisors can provide more information this weekend on how Airmen may take part in the survey.

Flip of the Coin



Maj. Dale Greer/KyANG

Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, executes the coin toss to kick off the University of Louisville-Eastern Kentucky University football game at Papa John's Cardinal Stadium on Sept. 7. U of L billed the game as Military Appreciation Day. For more coverage, see Page 6.

Tonini selected as president of adjutants general group

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

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Kentucky's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, was elected president of the Adjutants General Association of the United States during the group's June conference in Greenville, S.C.

The Adjutants General Association of the United States is made up of the 54 Adjutants General of the sovereign states, territories and the District of Columbia.

The purpose of AGAUS is to ensure that the units within the National Guard of the United States are organized, equipped and postured to fulfill their responsibilities across the full spectrum of operations inherent in the National Military Strategy and the constitutions of the United States, states and territories.

AGAUS holds elections for its top leadership positions every other year during its spring meeting. Elected officers typically serve a single two-year term. Tonini succeeds

Maj. Gen. William D. Wofford of Arkansas. “The AGAUS president is an important voice in matters involving the National Guard in Washington,” said retired Maj. Gen. Gus L. Hargett Jr., president of the National Guard Association of the United States. “General Tonini is a seasoned leader and a gifted communicator. He will be a real asset in the challenging discussion ahead. We look forward to working with him.”

Tonini, an Air National Guardsman, has been Kentucky adjutant general since December 2007. He has nearly four decades in uniform, much of it as an Air Guard public affairs officer.

“During our 376 years, the National Guard citizen-Soldier and -Airman have answered every call to service as an organized, trained and equipped force for the dual state and federal mission,” Tonini said. “It is my job as AGAUS president to ensure we continue to empower the outstanding Soldiers and Airmen who have answered the call to serve their state and nation.”

Two recruiters recognized for excellence

Walker, Wigginton earn top NGB awards

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

Two Kentucky Air National Guard recruiters have been honored with regional and national awards from the National Guard Bureau that recognize excellent performance during 2012.

Tech. Sgt. Anthony Walker, a recruiter in the 123rd Airlift Wing here, won the national-level “Medicine Man” award for being the top health-professions recruiter nationwide. Walker brought in 13 health professionals during 2012, including three doctors. On average, a good health-professions recruiter might bring in one doctor a year, according to Senior Master Sgt. Brett Dew, recruiting and retention superintendent for the Kentucky Air National Guard.

Tech. Sgt. Lawrence Wigginton, another recruiter in the 123rd Airlift Wing, was awarded “Top Rookie Recruiter” for Region IV. That award is given to outstanding new recruiters in their first 24 months on the job, Dew said. Wigginton enlisted 70 Airmen in 2012, more than doubling the average of about 30 enlistments annually. He finished the year at 330 percent of his assigned goal.

“In an extremely tough career field, the Kentucky Air Guard is fortunate to have two of the best recruiting professionals the Air Guard has to offer,” Dew said. “I thought personally (Wigginton) could have won the national award for Rookie Recruiter of the Year, but I’m sure he just missed it.”

Both recruiters are now eligible to wear the Recruiter Gold Badge on their service dress uniforms as an indicator of excellent performance.

Tech. Sgt. Anthony Walker (left) and Tech. Sgt. Lawrence Wigginton, Kentucky Air Guard recruiters, recently won regional and national awards from the National Guard Bureau.



Master Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Wilkinson selected as 123rd’s next vice commander

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Lt. Col. Jeffrey L. Wilkinson has been selected to serve as the next vice commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, effective Oct. 19, Kentucky’s adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, announced Aug. 16.

“In this role, Lieutenant Colonel Wilkinson will provide wing leadership critical insight into the day-to-day operations of the 123rd Airlift Wing and act as the focal point for all wing inspections and compliance with higher headquarters directives along multiple functional areas,” Tonini said.

Wilkinson currently is detailed to the vice wing commander position. From June 2008 through June 2013, he served as commander of the Kentucky Air National Guard’s 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, leading his unit through numerous combat deployments in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.



WILKINSON

A Bronze Star-decorated combat veteran, Wilkinson is a combat control officer and combat rescue officer who has served as a combat control team leader, pararescue flight commander and director of operations for the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

He has participated in Operations Uphold Democracy, Joint Endeavor, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom; Joint Chiefs of Staff-directed national exercises; and civil natural disaster-response operations and state exercises.

The 23-year veteran of active duty and National Guard service is an Air War College graduate by correspondence. His decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the Gallant Unit Citation.

“Please take the time to congratulate Lieutenant Colonel Wilkinson for his selection to this very prestigious position,” Tonini said.

MAINTENANCE U.

Kentucky creates unique training experience

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

The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Maintenance Group held its second-annual Maintenance University Course this summer, giving 130 Kentucky and Connecticut Air Guard members the opportunity to receive concentrated training on a broad range of aircraft maintenance tasks.

The five-day course, created and managed by the Kentucky Air Guard but held at the Air National Guard Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., is the first of its kind, according to Col. Ken Dale, commander of the 123rd Maintenance Group.

He said the course was designed to provide Airmen with a block of time away from home station so they could concentrate on maintenance-specific training, eliminating distractions like ancillary training that often consume a good portion of available time during monthly drill weekends.

"We had an E-6 and below meeting, and the number-one gripe was 'I never get to work on aircraft,'" Dale said.

To address that issue, senior leaders deployed two C-130 Hercules aircraft and 80 part-time and full-time Airmen to Gulfport last year for a week of maintenance-specific training.

The event went so well, they decided to do it again this year and call it "Maintenance University."

Other Guard wings were invited to participate, and the Connecticut unit accepted. Several others expressed interest, Dale said, but Sequestration-driven budget cuts prevented their participation.

"Other folks have heard about the training, and now we have a waiting list of units that want to go next year," he added.

In addition to C-130 aircraft, the 123rd took a spare engine to Gulfport this year so Airmen could train on unique tasks such as replacing a starter, something that normally isn't accomplished very often.

No aircraft were flown during the course, which was held June 17-21, so maintainers could conduct engine runs and other types of training they normally aren't able to ac-



Photos by Col. Ken Dale/KyANG

Above and below: Kentucky Air National Guardsmen work on C-130 Hercules engines at the Air National Guard Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., in June as part of a five-day course called Maintenance University.



complish during busy drill weekends.

The National Guard Bureau was able to support the university by providing days and dollars for Airmen to attend, according to Dale.

He said next year's course is already being planned.

"We want to grow it," Dale said. "We're hoping to continue it, and we have visions of growing it slow and steady."

Airmen honored at U of L football game

Story and photos by Maj. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Three Kentucky Air National Guardsmen were honored by the University of Louisville during the U of L-Eastern Kentucky University football game Sept. 7 as part of Military Appreciation Day.

The game began at noon when Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, adjutant general of the Kentucky National Guard, executed the coin toss at center field of Papa John's Cardinal Stadium. Then, during a timeout in the second quarter, the three Kentucky Airmen were brought on the field to recognize their service to the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard.

Honored were Lt. Col. Bruce Bancroft, a C-130 pilot and commander of the 123rd Global Mobility Readiness Squadron; Master Sgt. Robert Fernandez, a combat controller in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron; and Staff Sgt. Jarrod Blanford, an aerial port specialist in the 123rd Contingency Response Group.

Bancroft has deployed multiple times in support of operations around the world, including four combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. During those tours, Bancroft flew more than 500 combat hours in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. He also deployed for relief operations following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the nuclear power plant disaster in Japan in 2011.

Fernandez also has deployed multiple times to Iraq and Afghanistan, where he directed numerous air strikes on enemy insurgents; and to the Gulf Coast region of the United States where he supported massive rescue operations following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Fernandez is a former football player for the University of Louisville.

Blanford deployed to Iraq in 2009 for a six-month tour as a cargo handler and aerial port specialist in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The following year, he volunteered to deploy to the Dominican Republic to assist in the opening of two airfields supporting earthquake-relief efforts in Haiti.

In 2012, Blanford deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During this mobilization, he volunteered 300 hours of personal time to a NATO Combat Hospital in Kandahar.

At the hospital, Blanford provided emergent care to U.S. military members, coalition forces and Afghan National Army personnel who sustained battlefield injuries. He also assisted in the care of multiple patients who



Honored for their military service by the University of Louisville on Sept. 7 were Lt. Col. Bruce Bancroft (above), Master Sgt. Robert Fernandez (below left) and Staff Sgt. Jarrod Blanford (below right). The event was part of Military Appreciation Day activities.



suffered amputations or burns, and prepared wounded warriors for airlift transport out of the theater.

Prior to the game, members of the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron and the 123rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight staffed static

displays of equipment outside the stadium, answering questions from sports fans about the Kentucky Air Guard's multiple mission sets.

For more photos, visit www.flickr.com/photos/kyngpao/sets/72157635477332077

Kraus

Continued from Front Page

west Asia, Europe, North Africa, Antarctica, Central America, South America, and he even spent some time conducting operations along the U.S.-Mexican border.

“What happens here today bodes well for the future of the Kentucky National Guard, for the Kentucky Air National Guard, for all of our men and women who wear the uniform, and for the citizens of this great nation.”

Kraus was further recognized during the ceremony with the award of The Legion of Merit, first oak leaf cluster, for his numerous accomplishments as Kentucky’s assistant adjutant general for Air, a post he held from October 2008 to May 2013.

His “exemplary leadership resulted in Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard, earning two Air Force Organizational Excellence Awards and the 123rd Airlift Wing earning three Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards,” according to the award citation.

Kraus also stood up multiple critical mission sets, including the 223rd Intelligence Flight as a stand-alone mission under the Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency, providing sensitive mission support information to Air Force and key national intelligence user agencies, the citation said.

He was instrumental, too, in the development of the mission doctrine and organization for Kentucky’s 123rd Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, which delivered an outstanding performance during an initial certification exercise that resulted in multiple best-practices now in use nationwide.

Kraus used the occasion to thank his family and the Airmen of the 123rd Airlift Wing, with whom he served as commander from November 2004 to October 2008.

“I’m truly honored that of all the things that you could have been doing today, you chose to be here instead to celebrate this milestone in my career,” Kraus said. “When I joined this organization with two stripes on my sleeve, it never occurred to me that I’d be here this long and that I would turn those two stripes into two stars. I am truly a blessed man.

“I am the ninth Airman in the history

of this organization, from its beginning in 1947, to be allowed the opportunity to wear the rank of major general,” Kraus continued. “That alone is humbling enough, but all the more so when I think and consider the thousands of others who have come before me and the limitless talents of those that I have served with over the years.”

Kraus also thanked his wife for her “unfailing support” through the years, saying she was instrumental to his success.

“I don’t know where I would be today (without her support),” Kraus said, “but I know this: I wouldn’t be here doing this if it weren’t for her.”

In his current role, Kraus serves as advisor to the commander, United States Air Forces Central, on Air National Guard program matters. He is responsible for assisting in the development of contingency plans and the conduct of air operations in a 20-nation area of responsibility covering Central and Southwest Asia.

Kraus maintains frequent and regular liaison with the commander, vice commander and staff at Ninth Air Force/United States Air Forces Central Headquarters, focusing on matters relating to the Air National Guard. He monitors operational readiness and the safety record of Air National Guard units and informs the commander and staff on actions

to be taken to improve readiness.

Kraus has served as an RF-4C weapon systems officer and C-130 navigator, and has held a variety of leadership positions including command at the squadron, group and wing level.

His military career includes six years of enlisted service prior to his commissioning as an officer through the Air National Guard Academy of Military Science in 1979.

While deployed for Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, he served with United States Central Command as commander of the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing and deputy commander of the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group.

Kraus also has served as the Intelligence Directorate assistant to the director of the Air National Guard and the Air National Guard assistant to the commander of the Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency.

“In closing I would like to say again how proud, yet humble, I am to have the opportunity to further represent the Kentucky Air National Guard,” Kraus said. “I’m honored that you have joined me for today’s ceremony, and I thank you very much.”

For more photos, visit www.flickr.com/photos/kyngpao/sets/72157635125319949



Airman Joshua Horton/KyANG

Maj. Gen. Mark Kraus’ wife, Leslie (right), and Kentucky’s adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, pin the rank insignia of major general to Kraus’ uniform during a promotion ceremony here Aug. 18. Kraus is a Kentucky Air Guardsman who serves as Air National Guard assistant to the commander of U.S. Air Forces Central.

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

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Pfeifer

Continued from Front Page

“It is an honor and a privilege for me to stand here today, not because of the historical significance of being the first female line officer, but primarily because of the support I’ve received along the way,” Pfeifer said.

“The mentors in your life have such a huge influence on you as a young officer and all the way through, even to us who are old folks,” she continued. “The enlisted corps, you are key and instrumental in guiding us, teaching us how the enlisted corps works, keeping us out of trouble, and we have learned the ways of how to become a successful officer. Senior officers, you help us drive our careers, so without you, many of us would never be here.

“Whether you are receiving feedback as a colonel, an airman or somewhere in between, pick out the good tidbits along the way and absorb them to make yourself become a better officer.”

In her current role, Pfeifer advises and assists the chief of staff for Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard, in the formulation of plans, policies and procedures, and provides coordination and staff assistance during state emergencies when the Air Guard is called to active duty. Pfeifer also reviews projected personnel policy changes for impact on existing plans and programs, and recommends action.

Pfeifer graduated as a mechanical engineer from North Carolina State University and received her commission through the Air Force

Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1988.

She began her military career in the missile maintenance field troubleshooting technical issues with Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and launch facilities.

After four years, she transitioned to civil engineering, filling various positions at different active-duty and Air National Guard wings, both in the United States and overseas for the next 14 years.

In 2000, after a two-year break in service, she joined the Kentucky Air National Guard. Three years later, she was mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and spent a tour of duty at Sather Air Base, Iraq, supporting civil engineer operations.

Following that, Pfeifer became 123rd Airlift Wing Inspector General here. She followed the IG assignment by standing up the newly formed 123rd Force Support Squadron, merging the missions of the Military Personnel Flight and Services Flight under one umbrella.

Pfeifer then moved to Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard. Prior to assuming her current position, she served as the director of personnel.

“We continue to lean forward to recognize and promote our best service members, regardless of gender or family of origin, who earn their promotions through their excellent work and dedication,” Tonini said.

“Kathy is a stellar officer who exhibits the qualities and character we expect from our colonels.”

For more photos, visit www.flickr.com/photos/kyngpaol/sets/72157635118388897