

THE CARGO COURIER

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Beach, Quijada, LaGrone named top Airmen of year

Trio to be honored tonight at annual KYNG banquet

By 2nd Lt. James W. Killen
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The results are in, and three Airmen have been selected as the Kentucky Air National Guard's 2014 Outstanding Airmen of the Year.

Senior Airman Katherine Beach, Tech. Sgt. Elmer Quijada and Senior Master Sgt. Shane LaGrone will each be recognized for excellence at a banquet held Saturday night at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville.

The Airmen were chosen for their dedication to duty, leadership, job performance, personal improvement and community service, according to Chief Master Sgt. Jim Smith, state command chief master sergeant. They exemplify what it means to be outstanding Airmen and uphold the highest values of the Citizen-Airman, Smith said.

Beach, selected in the Airman category, is a cardiopulmonary technician with the 123rd Medical Group. A 2011 honor graduate from basic training at Lackland Air Force Base,

Texas, she holds degrees from Bellarmine University and the University of Kentucky. Beach is currently assistant manager at the Shawnee branch of the Louisville Free Public Library.

In her role as a Kentucky Airman, Beach is a member of the rapid response and critical care teams; as a civilian, she provides leadership-skills training to community leaders and youth counselors; and as an individual, she maintains a high level of physical fitness and pursues several avenues of personal development.

"She is always a top performer and leads by the Core Values," said her supervisor, 1st Lt. Angela Jenkins. "She is always willing to contribute to the team."

Quijada, selected in the Non-Commissioned Officer category, is a pararescueman with the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

The former active-duty troop is working toward a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership and earned the title of pararescueman team lead because of his dedication to duty, officials said. He's also the recipient of four Air Medals for meritorious achievement.

Read more online at
www.123aw.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123404150



Senior Airman Beach



Tech. Sgt. Quijada



Senior Master Sgt. LaGrone

Amburgey retires after 38 years of service

With 38 years of outstanding service to the 123rd Airlift Wing, Chief Master Sgt. Jim Amburgey was honorably retired from the U.S. Air Force during a ceremony Jan. 12. See more online at www.123aw.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123403475

Daughters help Airman show unit pride

The daughters of a Kentucky Air National Guardsman have put their artistic talents to use by helping showcase unit pride. Master Sgt. Joey Youdell and his daughters, Olivia and Juliet, painted a ceiling tile depicting the heraldry of his unit, the Louisville-based 123rd Special Tactics Squadron. See more online at www.123aw.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123401647

Other headlines at www.123aw.af.mil

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[Stone assumes command of MSG](#)

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[8 honored for service in Afghanistan](#)



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Outstanding Airmen, interesting times

Tonight, we get to honor some outstanding individuals at the 2014 Airman of the Year Banquet.

While a few enlisted members are singled out, this event also serves as an opportunity to thank all enlisted troops.

You are the heart of our wing. As Command Chief Master Sgt. Jim Smith has said many times, it is very difficult to pick five outstanding individuals from a wing of 1,000 extremely talented enlisted Airmen.

The tickets for this year's banquet are sold out. If you missed your opportunity, plan better next year because you are going to miss a great event.

Senior Airman Katherine Beach is one of this year's winners. She is a traditional Guardsman who happens to hold degrees from Bellarmine and the University of Kentucky, and serves in the CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package unit as a cardiopulmonary technician.

I am sure a person with this level of intellect is also pursuing a degree from the University of Louisville.

I am glad Katherine is on our team.



Col. Barry Gorter
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

She's smart, ambitious and dedicated to service. And she inspires me.

I'm also inspired by the other 1,000 enlisted Airmen within our wing. Thank you for your dedication to your country, state and service branch. Thank you for knowing your job well. Challenge yourself to know

it even better. Ensure you assist your fellow Airmen — both at work and away from the base. Look after each other. Continue to carry to mantle during "our time" as we serve.

I spent the past week at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., with wing commanders from active duty, the Air Force Reserves and the Air National Guard.

All of the challenges we face at the Kentucky Air National Guard resonate throughout the community. As we face financial uncertainty and question what tomorrow's military will look like, it is possible to let it affect one's outlook. Don't let it.

You are part of a wing with a long history of excellence. And you help ensure that our future will look like our storied past. Thank you for your commitment and dedication.

March UTA comes after a nine-week break. Let's make it a great one. Start building your Airman of the Year package now by mastering your Air Force Specialty Code, by engaging in your community and by enhancing your education. And if you aren't careful, you might inspire someone in the process.

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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.

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