

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

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## Director of Air Guard visits wing, begins 25th Thunder

### Mass swearing-in broadcast live on Louisville television

By Maj. Dale Greer  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III, director of the Air National Guard, toured the Kentucky Air Guard Base April 11-13, meeting Airmen from units across the 123rd Airlift Wing and kicking off Thunder Over Louisville, one of the largest air show and fireworks displays in North America.

Clarke also inspected the wing's unique mission capabilities, including the only fully operational contingency response group in

the Air National Guard and a special tactics squadron that combines both combat control and pararescue functions, according to Col. Barry Gorter, commander of the 123rd.

"It's always good to get out of the office and talk to Airmen in the field," Clarke said of his visit. "That's the best part of my job."

He was especially interested in learning more about the contingency response and special tactics units here.

A contingency response group functions as an "airbase in a box," Gorter said, providing the ability to rapidly establish an air cargo hub

Read more online at  
[www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123407292](http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123407292)



Maj. Dale Greer/KyANG

Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III, director of the Air National Guard, administers the oath of enlistment to 15 members of the Kentucky Air National Guard on the 2nd Street Bridge April 12. The event kicked off the 25th anniversary of Thunder Over Louisville, the city's annual air show and fireworks display over the Ohio River.

### 123rd unveils plaques honoring retirees

The newest retirees from the Kentucky Air Guard were honored April 12 when two black-granite plaques inscribed with their names were unveiled during a ceremony here. See more online at <http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123408391>

### Zinsmeister concludes 26-year career

Chief Master Sgt. Lori F. Zinsmeister officially retired after 26 years of service to the active-duty Air Force and Air National Guard during a ceremony held at the Base Annex here March 23. See more online at <http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123407765>

### Other headlines at [www.123aw.ang.af.mil](http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil)

Aircraft arrive at 123rd Airlift Wing for Thunder Over Louisville air show

Kentucky Air Guard promotes two distinguished leaders to rank of colonel

Wing recognizes top first sergeant, Honor Guard member of the year

Beach, Quijada, LaGrone to be honored as Kentucky's top Airmen of the Year



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# 123rd continues its legacy of excellence with outstanding support to Thunder, DANG

Earlier this month, the Kentucky Air National Guard honored 46 Airmen who retired in 2013, unveiling marble plaques that immortalize their service to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the United States of America.

During the unveiling ceremony, I was reminded again of the legacy of excellence created by those who founded this wing and have guided it for the past 67 years to become one of the most decorated units in the United States Air Force. We would not be where we are today without their example of outstanding leadership, service and commitment to excellence.

I'm pleased to report that the wing's dedication to excellence is alive and well, based on your outstanding performance in hosting aircraft for Thunder Over Louisville and a three-day unit visit by Lt. Gen. Stanley Clarke III, director of the Air National Guard.

On behalf of Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, Col. Warren Hurst, Col. Steve Bullard, myself and many others: Thank you for a job well done!

Thunder Over Louisville weekend was not only the culmination of substantial preparation, but also of a showcase of excellence.

Your preparation alone was amazing, including plans for military and civilian aircraft parking at Louisville International Airport and flying in Thunder Over Louisville; numerous plans for ramp configuration, with changes up to the last minute; a base beautification effort that was exceptional (it really couldn't have looked better); extra security forces, all of whom were fully prepared for any worst-case scenario (thankfully there wasn't one); 453 different iterations of briefing slides for Lt. Gen. Clarke, and a final product that was outstanding; a retirement plaque dedication that include many guests, all of whom felt distinguished; a "show and tell" game plan that was ready for any weather, any question and



**Col. Barry Gorter**  
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

every mission set; the most beautiful weather we've had for Thunder Over Louisville in many years — I can only think our chaplain cadre spent significant time working this; a swearing-in ceremony that was covered on live television, featured on the Air National Guard website and currently serves as the main photo on Lt. Gen. Clarke's Facebook page; and a plan for integrating the Blue Angels into our community through many civic engagements (which they supported brilliantly).

All of this culminated in a showcase of excellence. The one-hour mission brief we prepared for Lt. Gen. Clarke lasted 2 1/2 hours due to the many questions and comments of our guest. Despite having waited a significant amount of time, each of our featured unit representatives then gave Lt. Gen. Clarke exceptional briefings during a "windshield tour" that lasted three hours. All along the way, he asked specific questions.

I believe that Lt. Gen. Clarke is engaging by nature, but he was also getting a litmus test of the technical competencies of each member — and he was impressed. It's my belief that Lt. Gen. Clarke left Kentucky with a feeling that we are a quality organization that 1) deploys often, 2) wins a lot of honors (15 Outstanding Unit Awards), 3) is comprised of many friendly faces, 4) takes care of each other (his wife was elated that their son-in-law is now a KYANG member), and 5) is an organization that he can count on — a wing that needs expansion, not reductions.

Think about it: We had the director of the Air National Guard here for three days (unheard of). He was able to swear in his son-in-law (and brought in his wife, two daughters, grandchild, son-in-law's parents and son-in-law's siblings — it was a family reunion!). He witnessed the best air show and fireworks in the country. He was so impressed by his base tour, that his wife and daughter asked to see portions of it on Sunday morning (and did).

If you were one of the members who planned or participated in the weekend's events, thank you! If you were unable to, thank you as well! The mantra of excellence runs much deeper than those who showcased our wing April 11-13. Nothing happens without the 1,200 members of our wing who demand excellence as the standard.

— Col. Barry Gorter

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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, 1101 Grade Lane, Louisville, KY 40213.

123rd Airlift Wing Editorial Staff

- Wing Commander.....Col. Barry Gorter
- 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.....Staff Sgt. Vicky Spesard
- Staff Writer.....Airman 1st Class Joshua Horton

Phone: (502) 413-4089 • Email: 123AW.PA@ang.af.mil

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