

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

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## Djibouti, Kentucky Guard sign historic partnership agreement

By Staff Sgt. Nathan Maysonet  
Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa

CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti—For 22 years, the National Guard has partnered with the armed forces of allied countries to build and strengthen military, political, economic and societal relationships.

In a historic first for East Africa, representatives from the Kentucky National Guard and the Djiboutian Armed Forces, or FAD, ratified a state partnership agreement in a signing ceremony held at the Kempinski Hotel in Djibouti City, June 2.

“Ten African countries already benefit from this program, and we are honored to be the eleventh African country and the first to benefit from East Africa,” said Maj. Gen. Zakaria

Cheik Ibrahim, FAD chief of defense. “This follows from the new partnership that our two countries are committed to.

“Since the meeting between our two heads of state in May 2014, the cooperation between our two countries has strengthened positively and we are very optimistic to see, in the coming years, a considerable expansion of our defense and security cooperation.”

The State Partnership Program originated from a U.S. European Command program that paired Reserve Component Soldiers and Airmen with Baltic States in 1991.

Read more online at  
[www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123449831](http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123449831)



Staff Sgt. Nathan Maysonet/U.S. Air Force

Maj. Gen. Zakaria Cheik Ibrahim, (left), Djiboutian Armed Forces chief of defense, and Air Force Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini, adjutant general of the Kentucky National Guard, sign a State Partnership Program agreement at the Kempinski Hotel in Djibouti City June 2.

### Airman saves child from drowning

Staff Sgt. Matthew Weingarten of the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron was instrumental in saving a child's life over Derby weekend after the boy nearly drowned in a backyard pool in Simpsonville, Kentucky. Read more at [www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123449745](http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123449745)

### Wing has new bomb containment gear

The Kentucky Air National Guard has a new piece of equipment that allows specially trained Airmen to safely detonate bombs and other explosives without harming nearby personnel or structures. The gear, known as a Bomb Containment Vessel, does exactly what its name implies. Read more at [www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123449246](http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123449246)

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

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# The 123rd Airlift Wing is one big family; make sure you're taking care of your own

**S**ister Sledge said it best: We are family. Part of being a family member is taking care of each other.

At a recent conference, the Air National Guard's director of safety discussed how the ANG has done the past couple of years. In 2014, the Air Guard sustained 55 fatalities, down from 71 in 2013. Here is how those fatalities occurred:

- Accidents – 16 (five were auto, three were motorcycle, and eight were “other”); 15 of 16 were off duty
- Illnesses — 16 (eight were cancer, seven were heart attacks, and one was “other”); this is down from 26 in 2013
- Drowning — 4
- Aviation — 3
- Suicide — 14 (13 had never deployed, and one hadn't deployed in a significant amount of time; the average age was 34)
- Unspecified — 2

The Air Guard speculates that the decrease in deaths due to illness is because of the increased emphasis on Fitness Assessments. Those who can't pass the test are either getting fit or getting out of the military.

Whatever the reason for the overall decline, the 123rd Airlift Wing is certainly not immune to sudden, unexpected death.

Last December, we lost Staff Sgt. Scott Morton, who was working as a contractor at Bagram when he had a fatal heart attack. Our thoughts and prayers continue for Scott's family and friends.

Overall, the Air Guard is on track for a record-low number of fatalities in 2015, even



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

as suicides are trending toward record-high numbers (there have been 10 from January to April).

So, stepping back from these numbers, one can speculate that — with the exception of suicide prevention — we are doing well in managing risk. Risk is part of each day, and working to mitigate the risk with training, proper gear, wise decision-making and experience is effectively decreasing fatalities within the Air Guard.

This is a huge win. Each member of the Air National Guard, and specifically the 123rd Airlift Wing, is a valuable part of our family.

We need each of you to assess the risk in every part of your day, and work to mitigate it to the maximum extent possible. The secretary of defense, Ashton Carter, just released a memo discussing the Critical Days of Summer (if you have access to the wing Sharepoint, [click here to see it](#)). It is a practical reminder to be aware of your surroundings and remain vigilant when boating, vacationing or otherwise enjoying the season.

So how do we remain vigilant with suicide? Looking your fellow Airmen in the eye and asking the tough questions is one way: Are you okay? Do you need to talk to someone? Let's call the chaplain or director of psychological health together.

When confronting someone who concerns you, it may be well outside your comfort zone, but do it anyway. You'll be indirectly telling the person that he or she is valued, and you care.

If you are going through a rough spot, seek help.

Everyone experiences times in their lives when the world seems to be kicking their butts, and there seems to be little hope. But we can't allow pride, ego or embarrassment to preclude us from seeking help.

If we are truly a family, our fellow Airmen will jump at the opportunity to assist. It may be Pollyannaish of me, but I believe your fellow Airmen will be there.

As the Sisters sing, “I got all my Airmen with me.”

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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.

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