

THE CARGO COURIER

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Airmen return from Persian Gulf deployment on Independence Day

By Maj. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

This 4th of July was a special one for 39 members of the 123rd Airlift Wing, who received a hero's welcome from more than 200 flag-waving friends and family when they returned to the Kentucky Air National Guard Base following a deployment to the Persian Gulf region.

Several of those family members, like 3-year-old Declan Gilreath and 2-year-old Max Gordon, carried signs with phrases like "Welcome Home Daddy!" and "Move It or Lose It: I'm here to get my DADDY!"

Many in the crowd found it impossible to contain their emotions. The daughters of one C-130 pilot burst into tears as soon as they

began to hug their father, while others jumped for joy when they saw their loved ones walking toward them across the airfield tarmac.

For Vanna Jones, the day was especially significant. Her boyfriend, Tech. Sgt. Mike Johnson, dropped to one knee, presented her with a diamond engagement ring and asked her to marry him moments after he stepped off the C-130 aircraft that carried him home.

"I fell in love with you the first time I saw your smile," Johnson told Jones. "Will you marry me?"

A trembling Jones, clearly surprised, answered yes.

Read more online at
www.123aw.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123452648



Maj. Dale Greer/Kentucky Air National Guard

Capt. Ross Farling, a C-130 pilot in the 123rd Airlift Wing, hugs his daughters during an emotional homecoming ceremony here July 4. Farling was among 39 Kentucky Air Guardsmen who were returning from a deployment to the Persian Gulf region.

Wing completes overseas mission

Thirty Airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing returned to the Kentucky Air National Guard Base July 8, concluding the unit's most recent overseas deployment to the Persian Gulf region.

More than 100 friends and family were on hand to welcome them, waving flags and homemade signs as the Airmen's C-130 aircraft taxied to its parking spot on the base flight line.

The wing began deploying aircraft and personnel to Southwest Asia in February to fly airlift missions in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the follow-on mission to Operation Enduring Freedom. Read more at www.123aw.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123452958

Special Tactics troop receives Bronze Star

A combat controller from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in a ceremony here March 14 for meritorious service while deployed to Afghanistan. Senior Airman Robert Willging served with a combined joint special operations task force in Afghanistan from June 1 to Nov. 1, 2014. Read more at www.123aw.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123452621



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123rd's Maintenance University a tremendous benefit to Air Guard

The 123rd Maintenance Group conceptualized and executed Maintenance University starting in 2011.

It began with about 60 Kentucky Air Guard maintenance personnel going to Gulfport, Mississippi, for three days and has grown into a multi-unit training event of about 200 personnel from the Kentucky, Connecticut and Montana Air National Guard, all deploying to the Savannah, Georgia, Combat Readiness Training Center with two C-130 aircraft (one from Kentucky, and the other from Connecticut).

This summer, more than 50 training classes were completed in four days spanning 10 critical Air Force Specialty Codes and encompassing over 500 individual tasks — roughly the equivalent of a month's worth of continuous-core task training and aircraft downtime.

This unique training event drastically reduces the number of aircraft required for maintenance training at home station and improves our operational aircraft availability for a challenging flying hour program.

MXU was started after we received complaints from a number of our members, such as "We never get to work on aircraft during drill" or "We get all kinds of ancillary training, but we don't get the AFSC training we need."

So we pitched the idea to the wing



Col. Ken Dale
123rd Maintenance Group Commander

commander to allow us to go off-site to a CRTC to do just that: AFSC-specific training designed by our members to meet their needs.

After other units heard about the training event, we now have units calling every year wanting to join us. Not only is the training fantastic, but the camaraderie that is built goes a long way in making the 123 MXG the best in the business.

Planning for MXU begins in early January when we ask our members, "What type of training do you want to see?" The training is not dictated by leadership, but rather is developed by the members that need it.

Armed with the knowledge of what training is to be accomplished, we conduct a site survey to coordinate with the CRTC hosting MXU.

After surveying the available facilities, a detailed class schedule is built to maximize training opportunities, allowing the members to get the most out of their MXU experience.

This year's MXU has been an outstanding success. Being able to remove our maintainers from the distraction of daily operations has allowed them to accomplish a tremendous amount of training in a short time.

Operating C-130 aircraft as long as we have has allowed our senior maintainers to develop a vast corporate knowledge of C-130 maintenance. MXU gives us a forum to share that knowledge with both our young Airmen and visiting units that are new to the C-130 airframe.

The maintenance group, and wing as a whole, will reap the rewards gained through the accomplishments of our 2015 Maintenance University.

— Col. Ken Dale

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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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