

THE CARGO COURIER

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CRG Airmen complete mission in Iraq

By Lt. Col. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Twenty-three Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard returned home from Iraq on March 15, concluding a two-month deployment during which they managed an airfield crucial to coalition military operations.

Kentucky's 123rd Contingency Response Group deployed a total of 66 Airmen to Iraq on Jan. 4 as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, the campaign to battle the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

Those troops have been redeploying to the United States in small groups over the past two weeks. The March 15 group, which landed in Louisville around 1 a.m., was the final cadre of Kentucky troops to return home.

While overseas, the Airmen were responsible for operating a vital logistics hub that was recaptured from ISIS forces last year and has since played a key role in supplying the campaign against the militant group.

The Airmen were responsible for loading and off-loading cargo from coalition aircraft, maintaining airfield security and communications, and providing aircraft maintenance.

"Once again, the Airmen of the Kentucky Air National Guard have deployed to other side of the world to perform a mission vital to our nation's security interests," said Col. David Mounkes, commander of the 123rd CRG's parent unit, the Louisville-based 123rd Airlift Wing. "As always, our Airmen executed the task in a flawless manner, moving many, many tons of supplies and equipment necessary to support the fight against ISIS while operating from an austere location. I could not be more

proud of their performance."

The 123rd Contingency Response Group is the only unit of its kind in the Air National Guard and just one of five CRGs in the entire U.S. Air Force. CRGs are comprised of Airmen from dozens of specialties who can deploy on short notice to establish and operate air fields from austere locations anywhere in the world.

The units bring everything necessary to stand up operations in a matter of hours, including communications, power generation, cargo-handling equipment, security forces and air traffic control capability.

The Kentucky unit has been globally engaged in a variety of missions since being

established eight years ago. In 2014, the group deployed to Senegal to establish and operate an Aerial Port of Debarkation and Intermediate Staging Base in support of Operation United Assistance, the international effort to fight the largest Ebola outbreak in history. The unit's Airmen processed 193 aircraft and 1,200 short tons of cargo, including blood, plasma and tactical vehicles during the two-month deployment.

Four years earlier, the group was one of two Air Force contingency response units to establish overseas airlift hubs supporting earthquake-recovery efforts in Haiti.

Hail to the Chief



Master Sgt. Phil Speck/U.S. Air Force

President Donald Trump exits Air Force One on the flight line here March 20. He was in town to attend a rally at the Kentucky Exposition Center.

Wing supports presidential inauguration

By Tech. Sgt. Vicky Spesard
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

As part of the specially created Joint Task Force – District of Columbia, approximately 7,500 National Guard members from around the nation and territories were in the nation’s capital this past January to support the 58th Presidential Inauguration of Donald Trump, including three groups from the Kentucky Air National Guard.

The task force’s mission was to assist with security, communication, medical evacuation and provide other logistical support including traffic control during the days leading up to the event as well as inauguration day. Airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing Services Flight, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight, Civil Engineer Squadron and Special Tactics Squadron all performed various duties within their capacities to support the prestigious event.

“The Kentucky National Guard is proud to be a part of such a historical event,” said Army Brig. Gen. Scott Campbell, Kentucky’s assistant adjutant general, during a National Guard Bureau interview. “This mission serves as yet another example of the unique role of the National Guard, our interoperability with civilian agencies and our unbridled service to the nation.”

Five members of the services flight arrived in Washington D.C. Jan. 17, and were positioned at FedEx Field, home of the Washington Redskins football team, where their mission was to prepare and serve meals for Guard personnel who were arriving daily as part of the task force.

Using a mobile kitchen and working side-by-side with approximately 45 services flight members from other Air Guard units, more

than 3,500 meals were prepared and served twice a day at the stadium for both Air and Army National Guard personnel who were billeted there.

Two members of the EOD flight were attached to the secret service and performed duties associated with their mission that included sweeping vehicles, personnel and any equipment the personnel might be carrying.

Specifically, the explosive ordnance specialists assisted the Secret Service in security sweeps at a State Department event the day

before the inauguration and continued their support the next day at the event itself.

“Our mission in inauguration day was to search all of the buses that brought military bands to perform for the event,” said Master Sgt. Jason Warden, who continued to explain that they were also responsible for searching all of the instruments and equipment that each band member had with them.

“It was a very long day that started early in the morning,” he explained. “We were very tired and ready to return home but we were also very proud to be a part of the day and to represent Kentucky by doing our specialized job.”

With the Wing’s Mobile Emergency Operations Center, four emergency managers from the CE squadron, assisted by two communications specialists from STS, arrived at their initial staging area in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where they connected with eight other Guard MEOCs.

After a few days of training, the nine MEOCs traveled on to Washington, D.C. to perform their mission of assisting civilian emergency services with state-of-the-art communication assets.

According to the National Guard Bureau, the Joint Task Force-District of Columbia is established every four years to coordinate National Guard support to local and federal civilian authorities for the presidential inauguration.

National Guard support for presidential inaugurations dates to April 30, 1789, when the forerunners of today’s National Guard joined U.S. Army and Revolutionary War veterans to form an honor detail and escort Gen. George Washington to his inauguration ceremony in New York City from Mount Vernon, Virginia.



Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton/KyANG

Tech. Sgt. Amanda Bedel of the 123rd Services Flight prepares food Jan. 18 for thousands of Soldiers and Airmen supporting the inauguration in Washington, D.C.

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