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Walker pins on brigadier general

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

Charles M. Walker, the newly appointed chief of staff for Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general during a ceremony Nov. 4 at the Kentucky Air Guard Base.

Walker was presented with his brigadier general's flag by Army Maj. Gen. Steven R. Hogan, adjutant general of the Kentucky National Guard; and Walker's new rank insignia were pinned on by his wife, parents and daughters.

"It is an honor to serve alongside our guest of honor today," Hogan told the audience of family, friends and coworkers. "I am reflective of how lucky we are in the Guard to have him in our ranks. He is a first-class leader and officer."

Turning to Walker, Hogan added, "It is our privilege for you to accept this honor today."

As chief of staff, Walker is responsible to the adjutant general and assistant adjutant general-Air for the coordination of policy, guidance, and direction for the Commonwealth's 8,400 Army and Air Guardsmen. He also serves as the deputy director of the Joint Staff at Joint Forces Headquarters—Kentucky National Guard.

Walker was commissioned through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Auburn University in 1990. During nearly eight years of active duty, he served as a squadron section commander and group executive officer at the 355th Wing, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona; and as operations officer at the Chicago Military Entrance Processing Station, Des Plaines, Illinois.

In 2004, Walker joined the Air Force Reserves as a member of the Judge Advocate General's Corps. His initial assignment was as deputy staff judge advocate at the 445th Airlift Wing, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

He transferred to the Air National Guard in 2005 to become staff judge advocate for the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard. Since joining the unit, Walker has been activated twice in support of Operation Noble Eagle and has participated in exercise Eagle Flag as part of the 123rd Contingency Response Group.

Walker also served as the program director for the Contemporary Base Issues Course, a national-level seminar designed to assist commanders, supervisors and their support staff in addressing everyday command legal issues.

He is admitted to practice law before the Supreme Court of Tennessee, U.S. District Courts for the Middle and Western Districts of Tennessee, the U.S. Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

During the ceremony, the newly appointed general thanked his family members, co-workers and mentors, whom he credited for his successful military career.



Tech. Sgt. Vicky Spesard/KyANG

Army Maj. Gen. Steven R. Hogan (left), adjutant general of the Kentucky National Guard, presents the brigadier general flag to Charles M. Walker during a ceremony here Nov. 4.

"I have been associated with the United States Air Force since I was 19 years of age," Walker said. "I stand here not as an individual, but as the sum total of all the people who have put something in me that allowed me to be here today."

"My one mission moving forward is to represent the Kentucky Air National Guard, and I can say with great knowledge, that hands down we are the best airlift wing in the United States Air Force."

"My charter is to continue to tell your story, get you the resources you need and to fight for the things we need right here in Kentucky."

Wardrip earns top USAF safety award

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

Senior Master Sgt. John Wardrip, Propulsion Element supervisor with the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Maintenance Squadron, has earned the Air Force Chief of Safety Aviation Maintenance Safety Award for 2016.

Wardrip was recognized for identifying multiple failed components within the propeller assembly of a C-130 from the 123rd Airlift Wing here, resulting from improper maintenance completed at the depot level. Further investigation found that the issue affected 315 U.S. Air Force C-130s worldwide.

The search for the failed components began with an in-flight emergency that could have resulted in substantial loss of life, officials said.

While on a routine flight on July 15, 2015, a Kentucky Air Guard C-130H began vibrating so violently that crewmembers could not read the instruments or engine gauges. In addition, the noise from the vibration prevented crewmembers from talking to one another through the in-flight communications system. With extraordinary effort, the crew was able to implement corrective action and execute an engine-out landing that saved the lives of all six crewmembers.

As a result of the incident, Wardrip and his team of propulsion mechanics conducted a safety investigation of the aircraft's propeller system, revealing the cause of the near-fatal mishap. That information was shared with engineers who provide depot-level maintenance on C-130 aircraft at Robbins Air Force Base, Georgia.

"When we started our inspection, we initially thought that this issue might be a one-time event because that particular aircraft had just undergone a routine inspection with no issues," Wardrip explained. "But because the previous inspection didn't reveal anything,



Tech. Sgt. Vicky Spesard/KyANG

Senior Master Sgt. John Wardrip (center left), Propulsion Element supervisor with the 123rd Maintenance Squadron, received the Air Force Chief of Safety Aviation Maintenance Safety Award for 2016. Standing with him are Airmen from the Propulsion Element.

we started taking a closer look at the propeller system and all the other propellers that were in our shop at that time.

"This was not something I accomplished alone. It was through the efforts of each member in this shop that the problem was discovered in other C-130s here and properly investigated. With the help of depot engineers at Robbins, the failures were resolved."

Resolving the issue, however, wasn't enough for Wardrip and his team. He insisted that the information they discovered and the risk level associated with the failed components be shared with the other military branches using this type of propeller system.

"The impact of this ranged pretty wide," said Maj. Jerry Zollman, commander of the 123rd Maintenance Squadron. "Across all

branches of the services, anyone who flies the C-130 or uses that propeller system has benefited from the work and the risk mitigation that Senior Master Sgt. Wardrip and his team have done.

"We have a lot of respect for, and are very proud of, our guys, who were able to contribute to this significant event and to provide corrective action.

"It's pretty awesome to have a Non-Commissioned Officer here whose technical expertise and opinion is valued at the highest level," continued Zollman. "They are one of the busiest sections in my squadron with one of the heaviest workloads. But if you ask Senior Master Sgt. Wardrip and his guys about what they did, they would just say they're doing their job."

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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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