

THE CARGO COURIER

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

Vol. XXXIII, No. 8 • Aug. 11, 2018

Exercise prepares FSRT for mission

By Airman Chloe Ochs
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

CAVE CREEK, Ky. — Members of the Kentucky Air National Guard set up a training site here July 16 to simulate the recovery of fallen service members and civilians injured in mass-casualty events.

The 123rd Airlift Wing's Services Flight sent a total of 13 troops for the training, which was designed to prepare them to respond to real-world disasters, said Capt. Jonathan Fairbanks, the mission's officer-in-charge.

The Airmen, all part of the wing's Fatality Search and Recovery Team, began their three-day scenario by establishing a base camp at Rough River Dam State Resort Park.

FSRT leadership used the "crawl, walk, run" concept throughout the mission, Fairbanks explained. The troops spent the first two days setting up supplies, troubleshooting equipment and sitting through classroom training. The Airmen then showcased their knowledge on the third day with hands-on execution by simulating the recovery of deceased people in a chemically hazardous environment.

Not only were the troops challenged physically by their cumbersome protective suits and equipment, but they also had to be mentally "fit-to-fight" in order to successfully complete the mission, Fairbanks said.

"We go out, we recover those that have lost their lives and we're trying to bring them back with dignity to their loved ones," Fairbanks said. "That's what this mission does. So these guys go out, and when they operate, I just want them to



Master Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

Airman First Class Anthony Cirwithian (right), a member of the Kentucky Air Guard's Fatality Search and Recovery Team, zips up a MT94 defense suit for Senior Airman Ben Bohannon, another FSRT member, near Cave Creek, Ky., on July 18.

keep that in the back of their minds; that there is a bigger purpose here."

The Grayson County Coroner and a representative from local law enforcement were also on hand to observe capabilities the Airmen can offer the community.

Fairbanks emphasized not only the importance of the mission, but also his Airmen's ability to completely sustain themselves. The team prepared its own meals, and supplied its own tents, electricity and transportation.

While working at least 14 hours a day, the FSRT also ran the gamut of hazardous terrain, according to Senior Airman

Sara Hozian, an exercise team leader.

"I think the most difficult challenge is getting suited up, having long hours and going through the different types of terrain," Hozian said.

"There are rock hazards and chemical hazards we have to deal with. We have floods and any kind of natural disaster you can think of. No matter what has happened, we will go through it and do our job.

"We don't mess around. We want to get this job done, and we want to do it safely and securely," she added. "This isn't a glamorous job, but we're bringing people home."

Selby concludes 39 years' KyANG service

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

Chief Master Sgt. David Selby retired from military service during a ceremony held here May 19, concluding a career that spanned 39 years of service in the Kentucky Air National Guard.

"I have known him for a long time, and I'm a true fan of Chief Selby," said Col. Jeffrey Wilkinson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, to the many family, friends and co-workers in attendance at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base. "He truly stands out in front as the epitome of the Air Force core values. Chief engages people at every level, finds out what needs to be done, rolls up his sleeves and dives right in no matter what the work is.

"He emulates the finest professional qualities of the Air Force in our enlisted core," Wilkinson added. "We at the 123rd Airlift Wing are finer Airmen thanks to his service. Chief Selby has shaped and bettered many lives across the wing and will be missed."

Selby, who most recently served as the 123rd Mission Support Group superintendent, entered military service in May 1979 and was assigned to the 123rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing's Security Police Flight, eventually becoming the assistant NCOIC of the armory.

Over the years, Selby has served in many different managerial roles throughout the Kentucky Air Guard, including positions in such units as the 123rd Combat Support Squadron, the 123rd Security Forces Squadron and the 123rd Combat Control Team armory.

In February 2001, Selby was instrumental in the transition of the 123rd Special Tactics Flight into the Air National Guard's first Special Tactics Squadron, filling various



Master Sgt. Vicky Spesard/KyANG

Col. Jeffrey Wilkinson (left), commander of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing, presents a Meritorious Service Medal to Chief Master Sgt. David Selby during Selby's retirement ceremony here May 19.

management and leadership positions as the flight evolved into a fully operational squadron.

During his career, Selby was a key contributor to major exercises in Bulgaria and to Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. He participated in humanitarian missions in Ecuador and was part of flood response operations for Hurricanes Floyd, Katrina and Rita and in his home state of Kentucky.

The chief was appointed to the position of 123rd Airlift Wing human resource advisor, then to 123rd Mission Support Group chief in 2015. He served as the interim 123rd

Airlift Wing Command Chief in 2017.

Fighting back tears, Selby thanked his wife, children and extended family for their support during his career but saved his final thanks for the members of his Kentucky Guard family.

"I would like to thank the leadership over the years for having faith in me and in my actions and having the courage to let me go out there and do it and lead the people in the way I thought was best," he said. "Everyone here has impacted life in one way or another, and I couldn't have done the last 39 years without all of you."

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The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office of the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard. All photographs are Air National Guard photographs unless otherwise indicated.

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