

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

Vol. XXXIV, No. 1 • Jan. 5, 2019

## 123rd MXG welcomes new commander

By Maj. Allison Stephens  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

With hundreds of friends, family and fellow Airmen in the audience, Col. Ashley E. Groves assumed command of the 123rd Maintenance Group at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base here Dec. 1.

"I'm extremely happy to be back in aircraft maintenance, back where I started my career many moons ago," Groves told the audience.

Groves enlisted in the active-duty Air Force in 1997 and spent his first assignment at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, as a KC-135 aircraft hydraulic specialist and crew chief. In January 2000, he graduated from Officer Training School as an aircraft maintenance officer and was assigned to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina. While stationed there, Groves deployed several times in support of Operations Southern Watch and Iraqi Freedom.

He transferred to the Kentucky National Guard in 2004, first serving in the 123rd Maintenance Group and then the 123rd Contingency Response Group, the latter as director of Operations for the 123rd Global Mobility Squadron.

Col. David Mounkes, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, presided over the change-of-command ceremony, formally passing the unit guidon to Groves.

"He is one of the finest officers I've ever had the pleasure of working with," Mounkes said, speaking to the Airmen of the 123rd Maintenance Group.

"Support him, mold him and mentor him. I am absolutely convinced the critically important work that you all do every day will continue at sustained levels of excellence — it's just what you do. You're getting a commander that will be there for you through thick and thin, and you better believe he's going to help you get the mission accomplished."

Upon addressing the Airmen in the maintenance group, Groves said, "This unit holds a very special place in my heart, and after moving around for several years, there is no other place I would rather be in my career than right here, right now."



**TOP:** Col. Ashley Groves (center) assumes command of the 123rd Maintenance Group as he accepts the unit's guidon from Col. David Mounkes (left), commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, during a ceremony here Dec. 1. Groves is replacing Col. Ken Dale, who is retiring after more than 38 years of service to the Kentucky Air National Guard.



**LEFT:** Groves addresses the crowd in the Maintenance Hangar at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base Dec. 1. He enlisted in the active-duty Air Force in 1997 and spent his first assignment at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, as a KC-135 aircraft hydraulic specialist and crew chief. In January 2000, he graduated from Officer Training School as an aircraft maintenance officer and was assigned to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. He transferred to the Kentucky National Guard in 2004.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton/KyANG

# Dale concludes 38-year career with KYANG

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

With hundreds of family, friends and colleagues in attendance, Col. Kenneth Dale retired from military service during a ceremony at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base here Dec. 1, concluding 38 years of service.

Presiding over the ceremony was retired Col. Michael L. Harden, former commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing and a close friend of Dale's.

"Thirty-eight years to support and defend the Constitution, 38 years of serving your country, from Airman basic to colonel, from the enlisted side to group command, Kenny, I think you have done your duty," Harden said. "You have done it with honor, with excellence and with the spirit of helpfulness and pride that will go unmatched.

"The fact that all these folks are out here today, your co-workers, family and friends, is a testament to the respect they hold for you and your career," he continued.

Dale enlisted in the Kentucky Air National Guard in 1980 as a jet engine mechanic on RF-4C Phantom II aircraft. He graduated from the University of Louisville and was commissioned through the Air National Guard Academy of Military Science in 1987. Dale then attended undergraduate pilot training at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi, and went on to become a C-130 evaluator, instructor and functional-check pilot with more than 5,000 flight hours.

During his career, Dale has held a variety of operational and support assignments at the flight, squadron, group and wing levels. He has deployed in support of multiple contingencies, exercises and related missions including Operations Provide Promise, Provide Hope, Joint Forge, Coronet Oak and Enduring Freedom. Notable assignments include serving as the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group deputy commander at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, where he earned the Bronze Star Medal for ground operations, and the Air Medal and the Aerial Achievement Medal for air combat operations.

"When I started thinking about retirement, I started thinking about how I got here after 38 years, and then I figured it out," Dale told the

audience. "It's because I'm wealthy; I'm one of the wealthiest guys here, and I come from one of the wealthiest families around. You've got to be wealthy to work here.

"I'm not talking about money, houses or cars. I'm talking about the wealth that truly, truly matters. That's having a great family, a supportive spouse, great co-workers and fantastic friends. In that respect, I am one of the wealthiest guys around. In this business, if you can't have that, it makes this job that much harder.

"This ceremony is a celebration of all of the people who got me where I need to be. I am a product of my environment, and luckily for me, I had a lot of people who guided me and helped me reach my goal."

Prior to his retirement, Dale served as commander of the 123rd Maintenance Group, where he was responsible for aircraft maintenance activity for a combat-proven airlift wing with approximately eight permanently assigned C-130H aircraft. He controlled and directed the activities of more than 230 assigned personnel, managed an annual budget in excess of \$110,000, and developed and implemented plans to meet wing operational taskings.

Dale also developed Maintenance University, a benchmark deployed annual training event dedicated to providing maintenance personnel with hands-on training at a level difficult to receive at home station, resulting in more knowledgeable maintainers and safe, reliable aircraft.



Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton/KYANG

Col. Ken Dale (right), outgoing commander of the 123rd Maintenance Group, receives the Legion of Merit from retired Col. Michael Harden, former commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, during Dale's retirement ceremony here Dec. 1. Dale is retiring after more than 38 years of service to the Kentucky Air National Guard.

This Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of The Cargo Courier are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

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.

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.

Wing Commander.....Col. David Mounkes  
Joint Force HQ Chief of Public Affairs.....Lt. Col. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer.....Maj. Allison Stephens  
Staff Writer.....Master Sgt. Philip Speck  
Staff Writer.....Master Sgt. Vicky Spesard  
Staff Writer.....Master Sgt. Austin Shaffner  
Staff Writer.....Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton  
Staff Writer.....Airman 1st Class Chloe Ochs

Phone: (502) 413-4089 • Email: allen.d.greer.mil@mail.mil

Visit our public website for expanded online content — [www.123aw.ang.af.mil](http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil) • Follow us on Facebook — [www.facebook.com/123AWKY](http://www.facebook.com/123AWKY)