

THE CARGO COURIER

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Wing to recognize top troops tonight

By Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Senior Airman Brianna Cook, Staff Sgt. Danielle Blankenship and Master Sgt. Brittany Ingram have been selected as the Kentucky Air National Guard's Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2019.

The three Airmen were chosen by the KyANG Chief's Council based on leadership, job performance in their primary duties and qualities of the "Whole Airman Concept," said Chief Master Sgt. Shane LaGrone, 123rd Airlift Wing command chief.

All three will be honored tonight at the Kentucky National Guard Soldier and Airman of the Year Banquet, to be held in Louisville.

Cook, winner of the Airman category, currently serves as senior controller for the Kentucky Air Guard Base Defense Operations Center, 123rd Security Forces Squadron. She ensures detailed, concise command and control of all installation force protection and security forces functions while on duty. She also performs duties as entry controller and flight armorer for the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

During a deployment to Southwest Asia last year in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, Cook was part of a security team responsible for protecting 67 aircraft and \$10 billion in assets. She was hand-picked to operate a Tactical Automated Security System at the largest base in theater, earning an "excellent" rating for performance, according to her supervisor, Senior Master Sgt. Greg Myers.

Cook also was an integral member of an entry control team responsible for the daily processing of more than 900 personnel and safeguarding multiple senior leaders.

Back home, the Airman volunteered to provide security for a cancer survivor's event at Churchill Downs Racetrack and regularly donates time to feed the hungry at local homeless shelters.

"Brianna rose above her peers in all levels,"

Myers said of her performance during the past year. "She was a senior airman doing, at times, tech sergeant-level jobs and excelling. NCOs and some of the SNCOs would actually go to her to solve programmatic issues.

"I can think of no better representation of an Airman, a security forces member or an Air Force member than Brianna Cook," he added. "She embodies all of the core values. She has the work ethic, the drive and the desire to be the best."

Blankenship, winner of the non-commissioned officer category, is a logistics plans journeyman for the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron. She serves as the overall manager for development, evaluation, planning and documentation of all logistics plans processes and activities.

Blankenship has deployed in support of operations Freedom's Sentinel and Inherent Resolve. While mobilized last year, the NCO was hand-selected as the top enlisted member of an expeditionary Readiness Action Team that redeployed 4,500 troops with zero errors. She also single-handedly created a new format for the management of force deployment data, reducing rejection rates 15 percent below the average for units across U.S. Air Forces Central Command.

Blankenship also is engaged in her community, serving as a youth group leader at her church and organizing a breast cancer walk/run that raised \$400,000.

"She possesses all the traits that it takes to become an expert logistician," said Master Sgt. Duane Wariner, logistics plans superintendent for the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron. "She's very driven, detail-oriented and meticulous. Everything you give her, she takes and improves upon. Every program she's taken over at our wing has gotten exponentially better.

"In our job, we don't get a lot of recognition," Wariner added. "We're kind of the



COOK



BLANKENSHIP



INGRAM

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Posten named 1st Sergeant of the Year

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

Master Sgt. John Posten of the 123rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron has been selected as the Kentucky Air National Guard's 2019 First Sergeant of the Year.

Posten, who previously served as a C-130 crew chief, is principal advisor to the squadron commander on all issues related to enlisted members. As such, he is instrumental in providing a mission-ready enlisted force, said Lt. Col. Chris Bishop, 123rd AMXS commander.

"Chris is a consummate professional in every way — steady, mature, caring and deliberate," Bishop added. "He's always there to mentor our troops and provide them with the tools to develop and grow personally and professionally."

"When Chris was offered the opportunity



POSTEN

to serve as our first sergeant, he jumped on it. And I'm glad he did — he is a tremendous shirt."

Over the past year, Posten served as first sergeant to more than 400 personnel while deployed to the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. As part of that mission, he engineered the bed-down for the theater's largest swap-out of forces — two maintenance groups — in less than 12 hours with no loss of mission capability.

Back home, Posten was a key player in planning a multi-state aircraft maintenance training event and volunteers at Hosparus of Louisville to provide support to terminally ill patients and their families.

Posten will be honored at the Kentucky National Guard's Soldier and Airman of the Year Banquet, to be held tonight in Louisville.

Airman

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puppet masters behind the scenes. If everything goes smoothly — everybody gets there on time — we're kind of lost in the shuffle. That's kind of how we like it. So the fact that she's getting this recognition for doing an outstanding job is well deserved and overdue."

Ingram, winner of the senior non-commissioned officer category, serves as information manager and administrator for the 123rd Airlift Wing command staff. She coordinates daily operations involving the wing commander, vice wing commander and wing command chief, including meetings, staff visits and travel. She also

serves as the resource manager, unit fitness program manager, functional area records manager, Defense Travel Systems certifier and the Air Reserve Orders Writing System clerk.

Ingram has been deployed in support of operations Freedom's Sentinel and Inherent Resolve. While mobilized during the past year, she expertly trained and led 55 administrators across five geographically separated units in four countries in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility. Her execution as deployed resource administrator led to the meticulous execution of \$510,000 toward 57 critical mission requirements, according to Col. Jeffrey Wilkinson, her longtime supervisor at the 123rd Airlift Wing. She also was instrumental in managing response to a Class-A

aircraft mishap that claimed the lives of seven people.

In Kentucky, Ingram provided expert leadership as vice president of the Enlisted Association, National Guard of Kentucky.

"Master Sgt. Ingram is a powerhouse that drives results for not only the wing staff, but on programs that affect the entire wing," Wilkinson said. "She cares about every Airman that she works with, she's very conscientious, and she makes sure she's taking care of everybody she touches."

"Her impact across her most recent deployment was tremendous in addition to the efforts she provided at the wing before deployment, helping everybody prepare to go on their deployments and making sure her programs were handed over properly and sustained in her absence."

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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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