

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

Vol. XXXIV, No. 10 • Oct. 149 2019

## Wilkinson named ATAG-Air in Ky. Guard

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

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey L. Wilkinson became the commonwealth's new assistant adjutant general for Air during a ceremony here Aug. 11.

Wilkinson, who served a lengthy career in special operations, accepted the unit's headquarters guidon from the outgoing ATAG-Air, Brig. Gen. Warren H. Hurst, before an audience of 500 Airmen, friends and family.

After accepting the colors, Wilkinson expressed his gratitude and vision to unit members.

"To each Airman among us, from our brand-new apprentices to our most seasoned craftsman, every role is valuable and every contribution is vital," said Wilkinson, who most recently served as vice commander of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing. "Our oneness perpetuates an ever-improving version of the Kentucky National Guard that our nation demands of us and that's needed now more than ever.

"We stand ready, as we always have, for the citizens of the commonwealth of Kentucky and our nation. So it's my distinct honor and privilege to serve you as the assistant adjutant general. Together, we are the Kentucky Air National Guard, and we will honor those who came before us to carry forward as we face unforeseen challenges and answer the call."

As assistant adjutant general for Air, Wilkinson will serve as commander of the Kentucky Air National Guard and principle advisor to the adjutant general on all matters pertaining to the unit, including strategic plans, programs, policies and air operations.

Hurst also addressed the unit before relinquishing his role and receiving a final salute, praising its members and saying words of encouragement for the incoming general.

"I want to thank all of you for what you do out here each and every day," he said. "One of my goals during this tenure was to ensure greater opportunities for more Airmen. The hardest challenge is to provide for the development for our Airmen.



Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton/KyANG

**Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Wilkinson (center) assumes responsibility as Kentucky's next assistant adjutant general for Air as he receives the Headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard, guidon from U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Stephen Hogan, Kentucky's adjutant general, during a ceremony here Aug. 11.**

"It's a goal that Brig. Gen. Wilkinson and I have talked about and will continue. So in this transition, I want to welcome him to the team. The work is never done, but I hope I left the foundation and the framework to provide you with strong organizations to work from and to take it to the next level."

In addition to his most recent role as vice commander at the 123rd, Wilkinson held a variety of leadership positions throughout the organization, including wing commander. Prior to that, he was commander of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron for more than five years, leading the unit through numerous combat deployments.

He has spent most of his career in Air Force special operations as a combat control officer and combat rescue officer.

That career spanned active duty, traditional Air National Guard and Active Guard Reserve tours. After leaving active duty and

before joining the Kentucky Air Guard full time in 2001, Wilkinson worked as a quality engineer for General Electric Appliances in Louisville.

A Bronze Star-decorated combat veteran, Wilkinson participated in Operations Uphold Democracy, Joint Endeavor, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom; Joint Chiefs of Staff-directed national exercises; and multiple natural disaster-response operations and state exercises.

A 23-year veteran of military service, Wilkinson is an Air War College graduate by correspondence. His decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the Gallant Unit Citation.

He received his commission in January 1990 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y. Wilkinson was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in February.

# Hurst earns the Distinguished Service Medal

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

The director of the Air National Guard, Lt. Gen. L. Scott Rice, presented the Distinguished Service Medal to Brig. Gen. Warren H. Hurst, Kentucky's outgoing assistant adjutant for Air, during a ceremony here Aug. 10.

The medal is awarded to members of the United States military who distinguish themselves by exceptionally meritorious service in duties of great responsibility.

"Mission is first, take care of your people' is our motto, and sometimes those two things are in conflict," Rice said to an audience of Airmen, friends and family prior to presenting the award. "Warren was all about doing what's right through professionalism and commitment. He had the focus to do what was right, to find that balance and stay consistently true to our values. He did that here on a level that I have never seen before."

In his role as commander of the Kentucky Air National Guard, Hurst is principle advisor to the adjutant general on matters pertaining to the unit, including strategic plans, programs, policies and air operations. As such, he is responsible for the overall management of the state's flying unit, the 123rd Airlift Wing.

Hurst is a combat veteran and command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours. During 14 years of active duty, he has served in various operational and headquarters staff assignments, including duty as an instructor and evaluator pilot for the 12th Air Force and Air Forces Southern. He also served an active-duty tour with the Kentucky Air National Guard prior to joining the unit as a traditional Guardsman in 2000.

Hurst distinguished himself as assistant adjutant general-Air, Headquarters-Kentucky National Guard, from June 25, 2014 to May 31, 2019, according to the award citation.

"While under his command, Kentucky Air National Guard units garnered three United States Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards, one United States Air Force Organizational Excellence Award and one National Intelligence Meritorious Unit Citation," the citation said.

"Under General Hurst's direction, the Kentucky



Lt. Col. Dale Greer/KYANG

**Lt. Gen. L. Scott Rice (left), director of the Air National Guard, presents the Distinguished Service Medal to Brig. Gen. Warren Hurst during a ceremony here Aug. 10.**

Air national guard's 223rd Intelligence Flight, as the National Security Agency's expert in developing access to unique intelligence sources, achieved remarkable success in providing actionable intelligence that influenced and guided United States national policy and directly resulted in an updated presidential executive order," the citation continued.

Hurst also played a key role during United States European Command's global engagement war game, helping develop new multi-domain concepts for integrated and synchronized combat operations.

Finally, Hurst revolutionized Commonwealth of Kentucky protocols "to affect an immediate and precise response for state and national-level contingency and crisis action humanitarian-assistance and disaster-relief events," the citation concluded. "He established the Commonwealth Aviation Coordination Group, a recognized and respected model for organizing, planning and executing civil and military aviation responses during domestic operations, and strategically managed Kentucky

Air National Guard responses to various natural disasters, to include five hurricanes."

Hurst served as commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing from 2012 to 2013. Before that, he held staff positions at the Tanker Airlift Control Center and at Headquarters, Air Mobility Command. He has flown C-130 combat and humanitarian relief operations worldwide, including operations in Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia, Central/South America and the Middle East.

In 2007, Hurst stood up and commanded Kentucky's 123rd Contingency Response Group — the only CRG in the Air National Guard — and is qualified as a Joint Task Force-Port Opening commander.

He also served as the 1st Air Force director of mobility forces for eight homeland security/homeland defense exercises and coordinated civil-military air relief efforts during the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

*To read more and view a photo gallery, visit [www.123aw.ang.af.mil/News](http://www.123aw.ang.af.mil/News)*

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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.

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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