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Kentucky Airmen participate in Eagle Flag

CRG members among first ANG participants in history of renowned joint event

By Army Capt. Andi Hahn
Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs

MCGUIRE AIR FORCE BASE, N.J. -- The 123rd Contingency Response Group mobilized to McGuire Air Force Base July 26 as part of joint exercise "Eagle Flag" which simulates a deployment assisting in humanitarian relief efforts.

The annual exercise consisted of members from the Army and Air Force, both active and reserve, who come together to form the Joint Task Force Port Opening. With 82 deployed Kentucky Airmen participating, the CRG Airmen comprised the majority of the approximately 150 participating servicemembers. During the evolution, the task force was thrown into a mock scenario where they were deployed to the simulated third world country of "Nessor."

They were evaluated on their ability to work as a team to rapidly establish a Port Opening to support humanitarian relief operations within the country.

Participating Airmen provided air mobility expertise while Army assets provided ground surface movement expertise. As a team they expedited movement of cargo from Lakehurst Airfield to a pre-determined forward location for further distribution.

This is only the second joint exercise of Eagle Flag and the first year a National Guard unit was invited to participate.

"This provides a good challenge for us working with the Army," said Maj. Kevin Thornberry, logistical officer in charge for the task force. "We are getting more and more engaged with the Army with these kinds of joint activities and it helps us understand their capabilities and helps them



Master Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG



Army Capt. Andi Hahn/KyNG

ABOVE: Lt. Col. James Ehrman, a 123rd Airlift Wing chaplain, takes a quick break while assembling a tent at McGuire Air Force Base's Lakehurst Air Field during "Eagle Flag." The Airfield had become the simulated Akrah International Airport for the exercise. Colonel Ehrman and his fellow Airmen simulated providing humanitarian assistance to a third-world country.

LEFT: Tech. Sgt. Philip Seif, 123rd Contingency Response Group, assembles a communications antenna at Lakehurst Air Field, McGuire Air Force Base, after arriving to provide "humanitarian assistance" as part of a joint exercise. Sergeant Seif and his fellow Kentucky Airmen were among the first Air National Guard members to compete in this annual training event.

understand ours."

Army Capt. Matt Zayd, 689th RPOE operations officer in charge, said all the participants faced initial challenges before developing an operational rapport.

"Once you overcome the difference in lingo and terminology, the basics are the same," Captain Zayd said. "Understanding each other and working together continually

allows for the mission to be successful."

While this Eagle Flag event was the first to include active and reserve components from the Army and Air Force, the Kentucky Air National Guard has a distinguished history of supporting disaster relief missions overseas, their most recent airlift mission-request followed a deadly earthquake in Haiti earlier this year.

Kentucky Airmen Taking Care of Our Own

As your commander, I'd like to thank each of you who participated in Family Day and our Veterans' Affairs and Family Support Group volunteers who made the event such an outstanding success.

It was the best Family Day seen to date, with bands, games, special guests, door prizes, C-130 tours, Mini C-130 rides and all the hoopla we could imagine. It was a great example of members of our community looking out for one another and everyone involved made it an incredible success.

It was also a great reminder during a fantastic summer day that we are all part of a larger family – the Kentucky Air National Guard family.

During these fun summer times, it's important that we think of our families and Wingmen and use our best judgment.

We have all heard of the "101 Critical Days of Summer." The Air Force has made a considerable investment in this campaign over the last 20 years because Airmen are our most valuable resource and summer statistics show an historically alarming trend.

Despite our familiarity with this issue, some 22 of our fellow Airmen lost their lives last summer. If that isn't sad enough, many, many more were seriously injured as a result of a good time going horribly wrong. The vast majority of these tragedies could easily have been averted with just a slight bit of added foresight.

Now is a time of year where we especially need to be Wingmen for our fellow Airmen, friends and family.

During flight training, anyone has the power to call a "time out" or "knock it off"



Col. Bill Ketterer
Interim 123rd Airlift Wing Commander

and bring unsafe activities to a halt. When you're at the lake, on your ATV or out and about, don't be afraid to speak up if you see something hazardous. A "knock it off" before someone is about to operate a vehicle under the influence could save more than a career – it can save lives.

Along those same lines, it's important that we have the courage and integrity to sound off when we see one of our own in trouble.

I recently had the opportunity to hear the Air National Guard Surgeon General Col. Brett Wyrick's presentation titled "Courage – A Bank Account That Can Be Overdrawn."

The speech addressed the pressures placed on our wartime Airmen as we face routine combat rotations in and out of the areas of

responsibility for Iraq and Afghanistan.

The moral of the story is something we're all familiar with; continually tapping our finite resources causes inevitable and often caustic repercussions.

Of course, we're all familiar with the toll multiple deployments have on ourselves and our fellow warriors. We've heard suicide statistics rising among servicemembers and combat veterans. We each have friends whose lives have changed as a result of post traumatic stress. We know the disruption deployments can cause in our civilian careers, families and lives.

Our sense of duty and camaraderie compels us to serve, but we're all aware that the stress we endure can become overwhelming.

In the face of our upcoming Air Expeditionary Force deployment and in the midst of summer fun, I'd ask that each of us remember our Wingmen. If someone needs help, sound off. If someone needs resources, be there for them. Put them in touch with the chaplain or our Family Support Group. Follow through and make sure they get the care they need.

On the battlefield – even during an inspection – when we hear a call for help we respond unhesitatingly. When you hear or sense a cry for help at home, it's equally important that you're there for your Wingman.

Remember we're part of a family – let's call "time out" when it's appropriate to do so and ensure we never leave a Wingman behind. At home during these challenging times, our greatest obligation must be on taking care of our own.

Thanks for all you do!

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Our office is located in room 1160 of the Wing Headquarters Building.

We welcome your feedback. Please contact the Public Affairs Office directly if you have suggestions for articles or photography. Publication deadline for submissions to the next issue is Sept. 10.

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Special Tactics members receive gallant unit citation

Members of the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron have been named as recipients of the U.S. Air Force Gallant Unit Citation.

The Gallant Unit Citation, which was awarded to members of the 720th Special Tactics Group, is awarded to any Air Force unit which distinguishes itself by extraordinary heroism while engaged in armed combat with an enemy force on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

The honored unit must have performed with marked distinction under difficult and hazardous conditions in accomplishing its mission so as to set it apart from and above other units participating in the same conflict.

The degree of heroism required is the same as that which would warrant award of the Silver Star to an individual.

During the eligibility period named in the citation the 123rd STS was continually deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

DoD seeks bone marrow donors for critical patients

The National Marrow Donor Program and Department of Defense Marrow Program match donors with patients whose doctors believe bone marrow replacement is necessary for survival.

The Defense Department program matches DoD members exclusively with DoD members.

Interested donors can visit www.marrow.org or www.dodmarrow.org for more information.

Tips on being an effective Wingman

Compiled by Capt. John T. Stamm
Deputy Wing Public Affairs Officer

The Air Force established the Wingman program to encourage Airmen and their families to look out for each other and to intervene when signs of stress are observed. The term Wingman stems from a time-honored tradition within our Air Force flying community that essentially says a lead pilot will never lose his/her Wingman.

The Air Force wants to cultivate and instill this same culture of commitment between all Airmen and Air Force civilians in all career fields and specialties via the Wingman program.

Today's operations tempo can cause a great deal of stress, anxiety, and even grief for our Airmen and their families. Airmen have to recognize when they, or fellow Airman, need reinforcements.

These reinforcements can come in the form of reaching out to a friend, supervisor, commander, or a trained professional such as the chaplain, family advocate, or life skills provider.

There are four basic steps of the Wingman:

- 1) Assess the desire for self harm
- 2) Assess the means for self harm
- 3) Assess the status of wellness (physical, emotional, social, spiritual)
- 4) Stay on your Wingman's wingtip until a positive hand-off is complete

According to Lt. Col. Patrick M. Cooney,

123rd Airlift Wing Chaplain, the final step, follow through, might be the most important step of all.

"When a member identifies a Wingman in trouble, it's critical to follow through. In other words, don't leave the Wingman alone," said Chaplain Cooney. "Hand over to a supervisor, first sergeant, commander, or other helping agency."

"The Wingman concept when it comes to suicide awareness and prevention is invaluable," he said. "Learning the symptoms and danger signs can only make you a better Wingman."

Airmen at every level have a role as Wingmen. Commanders bear responsibility for the total welfare of their assigned personnel, including the physical, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions. They recognize when their people need help and know where to send them to get it.

Supervisors are the first line of defense for the well being of the people they supervise. Often they are in a position to spot the first signs of trouble and are in the best position to listen and engage.

All Airmen are encouraged to lead by example -- to be good Wingmen by taking care of themselves and those around them and taking action when signs of stress are observed.

Chaplain Cooney recommends visiting www.militaryonesource.com, and the Department of Veterans Affairs at 1-800-273-8255 (option 1), for more information or immediate assistance.

Symptoms and Danger Signs

- Suicidal thoughts, talk or wishes
- Substance use or abuse
- Purposelessness/Hopelessness
- Withdrawal in relationships, activities
- Anxiety/anger
- Recklessness (risk-taking behavior)
- Dramatic mood swings
- Preoccupation with death
- Sense of hopelessness/worthlessness
- Sudden shifts to happiness/calm
- Loss of concern in previous interests
- Sudden outreach to loved ones
- Arrangements/settling of affairs
- Giving away prized possessions

24 Hour VA Suicide Hotline
1-800-273-8255

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/

VA, Air National Guard welcome family members on base

Family members enjoy games, rides and fun while connecting with resources

By Capt. John T. Stamm
Deputy Wing Public Affairs Officer

Members of the Kentucky Air National Guard and their families gathered to celebrate "Family Day" at the 123rd Airlift Wing headquarters and air base July 17.

The event was a coordinated effort between the 123rd Family Readiness Office and the Louisville Department of Veteran's Affairs.

Mr. Dave Rooney, Airman and Family Readiness Program manager for the Wing, led the coordination of base involvement which beginning back in January.

"The VA contacted me and wanted to reach out to the members of the Air National Guard," Mister Rooney said. "Family Day is an annual event here, and provided the perfect opportunity for the VA to 'welcome home' everyone from the Air Guard who has deployed since 9-11."

The day was filled with events and activities. For the adults, there was a corn-hole game tournament and classic rock music by the local Louisville band, "Cadillac Shack." Kids were treated to several games including a "pugel stick" pit, a football toss challenge and rides around the parking lot on a mini C-130 cargo transport plane replicating the aircraft flown by the Wing.

There was also a martial arts demonstration provided by St. Matthews Martial Arts. The Army National Guard was a hit with their obstacle course and rock-climbing wall. An estimated 1,600 people were in attendance for the celebration.

The festivities were more than just a "thank-you" for the troops, explained Mr. Rooney. The underlying motive was to educate everyone about the various programs and benefits that the VA offers to take care of veterans and their families post-deployment.

"The VA's main focus was to educate and register as many troops as possible for VA benefits, to include employment assistance and referral program as well as family advocacy and medical issues" Rooney said.



Master Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

ABOVE: Members of the University of Louisville Marching Band perform for family members and guests at the Family Day event.

LEFT: A family member enjoys a romp down an inflatable slide. Some 1,600 123rd Airlift Wing members and their families celebrated Family Day, July 17. Families were treated to games, entertainment, rides and opportunities to learn about services available to members of the military community.

"Registry into the system allows them to utilize all the resources available."

Representatives from 22 service providers around the community that assist veterans regarding various issues also were present.

"The VA connects with service providers through the state and nation to get veterans the help they need for whatever reason," Rooney said. "Employer Support of Guard and Reserve is a major resource to help troops and employers with various

issues that may arise after returning from a war zone. We want people to know their options."

Among those lending support were several University of Kentucky football players who volunteered their time to ensure the day was a success.

"We appreciate what our (troops) are doing for us," said Luke Mc Dermott, defensive tackle for the team. "We just wanted to give something back."

Base challenge marks unit's increased emphasis on fitness

By Tech. Sgt. Diane Stinnett
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The 123rd Airlift Wing held a Fitness Challenge here July 18, just weeks after implementation of new fitness assessment standards Air Force wide.

According to Tech. Sgt. Dale Grupe, who coordinated the event in conjunction with the 123rd Force Support Squadron, 17 teams of four Airmen each competed in a circuit that consisted of a relay race, pushups and crunches.

The overall winning team was comprised of 123rd Special Tactics Squadron members, with a circuit score of 19 minutes, 5 seconds. Team members were Tech. Sgt. Jason Cordy, Capt. Garrett Dawson, Master Sgt. Mark Wilson and 1st Lt. Nathan Tingle. The winning team in the coed division was from the Logistics Readiness Squadron. They posted a time of 12:13. Members of this team included Maj. Katrina Johnson, Master Sgt. Dan Conklin, Staff Sgt. Nicki Smith and Tech. Sgt. Casey Carmichael.

Though not present at the event, Col. Greg Nelson, 123rd Airlift Wing commander, supported the event by donating coins that each team used to hand off for the relay and then got to keep.

"You know how much I believe in the physical readiness of our airmen as well as our mental readiness," the commander wrote to his Airmen. "Do well and enjoy the event."



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Master Sgt. Tim Kenney, 123rd Maintenance Squadron, holds the feet of Senior Master Sgt. Scott Andrews, 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, as he performs crunches during the Wing Fitness Challenge.

The event reflects the Air Force's continued emphasis on fitness, as is evidenced by the new fitness assessment standards that were implemented July 1. New standards require Airmen to meet a minimum score in each of four components: a 1.5 mile run, pushups, sit-ups and body composition, as well as achieving an overall composite score.

The Fitness Challenge was introduced last year to create a fitness-based event that includes the entire base.

"We wanted to build some esprit de corps and also to stress the importance of fitness in our career field and our daily lives," said Sergeant Grupe, who also manages the base fitness center along with Staff Sgt. Shaun Cowherd and Master Sgt. Kenny Richards.

Fitness staff members are planning to add other events in the future, including a wing volleyball challenge, to encourage increased participation.

Hail two new chiefs...



LEFT: Those attending the promotion ceremony of Chief Master Sgt. Joan Hazle enjoyed a special surprise when Steve Buttleman, official bugler for Churchill Downs, called Chief Hazle to the post of her current rank. The chief serves as the aircrew flight equipment superintendent.

RIGHT: Col. Diana Shoop, 123rd Medical Group commander, presents a certificate of promotion to Chief Master Sgt. Jimmy L. Rogers. Chief Rogers serves as the superintendent of nursing services.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Airmen ambassadors reflect on Kyrgyzstan tour

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare
Cargo Courier Editor

For Senior Airman Tim “Mac” MacAllister, 123rd Security Forces Squadron member, a recent deployment to Transit Center at Manus, Kyrgyz Republic offered an unexpected opportunity.

In the middle of the Kentucky Air National Guard member’s tour, the call came down from his command that the military there was forming a basketball team. The team would play Kyrgyzstani teams and clubs in a series of goodwill games.

“I said I’d love to coach. That’s when I found out we didn’t even have any players,” Airman MacAllister recalled. “I also found out that the first game was less than a month away.”

In short order the Bluegrass native, who served as an assistant girls basketball coach at Logan County High School near Bowling Green, Ky. before his deployment, formed a team. As luck would have it, there were a few talented Airmen at the deployed location. He found a player who had walked on at Mississippi State. Another was a back up at Purdue University before his enlistment. Still another played Division II basketball at the collegiate level.

In weeks the quickly assembled team found themselves at Kyrgyzstan’s Palace of Sports in Bishkek. Their opponent was a consortium of the host nation’s collegiate all-stars.

After an abysmal first quarter, the team came back to lead by two points at the half. By the fourth quarter, a stadium packed with 1,000 local nationals saw the military team manage a victory.

Any illusions of grandeur for the Americans were wiped clean weeks later in a subsequent game against a sports academy team.

“They were huge. We came in thinking it would be like the first game,” recalled Airman MacAllister. The home team won big. However, in defeat the young coach recognized that his team was competing for more than points. They were connecting with the local population in ways that they wouldn’t have otherwise.

In the next game, they played a college team on base. It was the first time any of the opposing players had ever visited the installation.

“I think many of the Kyrgyzstanis thought we were big bad Americans,” MacAllister said. “They got to see us on a more personal level. In two of the games, we presented them with gifts. It’s harder to dislike someone when you have something in common, and basketball was something we definitely shared.”

While the score in the third game favored the Americans, both sides were winning. The competition drew the attention of Kyrgyzstan’s national press. Television networks and newspapers covered the games.

The final game during Airman MacAllister’s tour pitted the Airmen versus the academy team who’d soundly defeated them before. Playing a fast-paced game against the semi-pro academy athletes, Team Manus fought valiantly in a close loss.

“You know, it didn’t feel so much like we were losing. It felt like we were competing. We were all having fun. We played hard and it was rewarding to have made so many friendships and to have shared such a unique experience while serving our country,” he said.

Airman MacAllister returned home to graduate from the Nike Basketball Coaches Clinic and is a trial manager for the Murray



Senior Airman Tim “Mac” MacAllister, 123rd Security Force Squadron, prepares his deployed basketball team before to play.



Courtesy photos

Deployed Airmen pose for a photo with Kyrgi players after a goodwill international game.

State men’s team. But the most unique honor on his resume is the recognition he received by the American Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan and the host nation’s minister of sports.

Still, he wasn’t the only Kentuckian to be recognized. Of the dozens of deployed Security Forces members who guarded precious American resources at the base, most participated in off duty activities to show their gratitude to the Kyrgyzstani people.

Deployed Security Forces members took up a collection to pay for open heart surgeries for two local nationals. Others visited orphanages, helped improve local school facilities and went off base to interact with local community members and children.

“We all got something out of it,” said Senior Master Sgt. Rhett Perdue, 123rd Security Forces Squadron operations supervisor. “Even beyond the language barrier, we wanted to make a difference. When you look at what Airman MacAllister did and how much everyone contributed, you can’t help to feel that we left a very positive impression.”

“We knew we weren’t in direct combat. But we understood what we were doing on and off duty was critical,” recalled Staff Sgt. Jake Anderson, 123rd Security Forces Squadron member. “We were helping people meet their basic needs and ensuring some of our nation’s most important forwardly deployed assets were protected. To say it was rewarding would be an understatement.”

ANG marksmen sweep 12th consecutive state competition

Airmen shooters prove skills, now prepare for national competition

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare
Cargo Courier Editor

For the 12th consecutive year, the Kentucky Air National Guard swept the Kentucky National Guard Combat Pistol Match at Fort Knox, Ky., Air National Guard Pistol Team 1 defeated 11 teams, 10 of which were comprised of Army guardsmen, to win the team pistol competition.

Kentucky Airmen also placed in rifle contests and as individual winners – including an Airman, Master Sgt. Darryl Loafman, being named the Commonwealth’s “Top Gun” for achieving the aggregate top score in the competition. It was the sergeant’s second consecutive top finish.

“It was a great honor – one I worked very hard for,” said Sergeant Loafman. “We all really enjoyed representing the Kentucky Air National Guard.”

“The training we received is passed along and will enhance the combat readiness of the Wing and the entire Kentucky National Guard.”

Kentucky Airmen showcased their rifle skills by placing third in the competition.

The matches, sponsored by the Kentucky National Guard Recruiting and Retention Office, determine who will represent the Commonwealth in Guard-wide matches. As a result of the state competition, at least four Airmen will participate at the regional level this month at Camp Butner, North Carolina. The national competition will held in October.

“There’s a bit of a rivalry between the Air and Army side of the house on the state level, but our focus now is on showcasing our skills against the Guard’s top marksmen,” said Sergeant Loafman, who has been named captain for the Kentucky National Guard Marksmanship Team. “We work very well together as a team. It’s a great group and we’re looking forward to showing the nation what Commonwealth shooters are capable of.”

“These Airmen performed very admirably in severe weather and under heavy competition among their fellow National



Kentucky Air National Guard Pistol Team 1 finished first place, marking their 12th sweep of the top prize. From left, Senior Master Sgt. David Selby, Master Sgt. Darryl Loafman, Master Sgt. Eric Hagen, Tech. Sgt. Frank Tallman and Staff Sgt. Brian Rayzor. Sergeant Loafman was named the “Top Gun” for having the highest aggregate score.



Courtesy photos

Rifle team members placed third among 12 teams. From left, Master Sgt. Travis Keehner, Staff Sgt. Bryan Hunt, Master Sgt. Darryl Loafman, and Senior Master Sgt. John Siebert.

Guard soldiers,” said Col. Bill Ketterer, interim 123rd Airlift Wing commander. “We’re proud of the honors they took home and the warrior spirit they showed during the matches. They fought as true Kentuckians.”

“More and more often, Airmen are being asked to perform ‘in lieu of’ taskings, augmenting soldiers and Marines on the battlefield. Marksmanship is a perishable

skill and they show a special fitness and aptitude that should inspire us all to focus on our training. Obviously, these Airmen are proving we are up to the task. We’re proud of their performance and wish them well in future competition.”

According to Sergeant Loafman, the team is always looking for marksmen to join and compete. Interested Airmen can contact him at (502) 413-4107.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Maintenance, operations groups welcome new commanders

By Capt. John T. Stamm
Deputy Director of Public Affairs

In a dual change of command ceremony in the 123rd Airlift Wing fuel cell, Col. Kenneth J. Dale relinquished command of the 123rd Operations Group to Lt. Col. Barry D. Gorter on Sunday, July 18 at 1 p.m.

Colonel Dale then assumed command of the 123rd Maintenance Group from Col. Neil T. Mullaney, who is vacating the position to serve a tour with the Kentucky Agricultural Development Team.

Colonel Dale, a Louisville native, enlisted in the Kentucky Air National Guard in 1980 and was commissioned in 1987. His decorations include the Bronze Star, Air Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal and numerous other decorations. He's a veteran of the Kosovo campaign and the Global War on Terrorism.

Colonel Gorter joined the Air National Guard in 1991. He's supported operations in Somalia, Bosnia, Germany, Puerto Rico, Iraq and Afghanistan. His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Medal and numerous other decorations.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Col. Kenneth J. Dale, center, receives the 123rd Maintenance Group guidon from Col. Bill Ketterer, interim 123rd Airlift Wing Commander. The passing of the guidon officially marks Colonel Dale's assumption of commander of the group. Lt. Col. Barry D. Gorter, far left, assumed command of the 123rd Operations Group.