

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

Vol. XXXII, No. 6 • June 10, 2017

## Wing supports Exercise African Lion

**By Master Sgt. Phil Speck**  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain — More than 75 Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard deployed to Spain and Morocco this spring for African Lion, a multinational exercise that tested the interoperability of military troops from 11 countries.

Members of the 123rd Airlift Wing and three of the unit's C-130 aircraft joined forces with Airmen from U.S. Air Forces in Europe, U.S. Air Force Global Strike Command, Air Forces Africa joint tactical air controllers, the Utah Air National Guard, the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces and troops from nine other nations.

"Multinational exercises give us an opportunity to train together, allow us to support joint and total forces and strengthen our skills for future operations," said Lt. Col. Jason Johnson, U.S. Air Force lead commander for the exercise, which ran from April 19 to 28.

The U.S. Air Force's participation in the U.S. Marine Corps-led exercise provided several joint training opportunities for U.S. military branches and Moroccan forces, according to said Capt. Tristan Stonger, exercise project officer for the 123rd Airlift Wing.

It also provided an opportunity to reinforce lessons learned from past African Lion exercises and helped build upon a foundation for future military cooperation and engagements.

"Working in a new environment

with other U.S. military branches and the Moroccans gives us the opportunity to hone and refine our skills and enhances our professional relationships, allowing us to support the interoperability of forces," Stonger said.

In addition to building relationships between the branches of the military and the Kingdom of Morocco, the wing was able to perform several different training scenarios to prepare for future deployments, including low-level air drops and low-level navigation through the mountains of North Africa.

"This type of training helps keep our aircrews current and fully prepared and

trained for any type of airlift operation that our nation calls for," said Maj. Penn Brown, a pilot for Kentucky's 165th Airlift Squadron.

This annually scheduled, combined multilateral exercise aims to improve interoperability and mutual understanding of each nation's tactics, techniques and procedures while demonstrating the strong bond between the nations' militaries.

In addition to forces from the United States and Morocco, other participating nations were Germany, Senegal, Mauritania, Canada, France, Spain, Great Britain, Mali and Tunisia.



Master Sgt. Phil Speck/Kentucky Air National Guard

Kentucky Air National Guard crew chiefs prepare a 123rd Airlift Wing C-130 Hercules for flight at Naval Station Rota, Spain, prior to take off on April 27 during Exercise African Lion.

# Pritchard takes command of MSG

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

With peers and colleagues looking on, Lt. Col. Patrick Pritchard took charge of the 123rd Mission Support Group during a change-of-command ceremony here Jan. 7.

Presiding over the event was Col. David Mounkes, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, who formally passed the group guidon to Pritchard.

"Whether I have worked with Pat while he was in intelligence, finance or serving as the deputy commander of the Mission Support Group, he has always maintained a very high standard of work," Mounkes said. "He's thoughtful, reasonable and supportive, and he communicates well."

"He has an incredible ability to break down complex topics to simple basic statements," the colonel continued. "You are getting a great commander, and I am looking forward to getting a great addition to the wing's senior leadership team."

Pritchard enlisted in the Kentucky Air National Guard in 1986, serving as an environmental systems mechanic on RF-4C Phantom II aircraft before cross-training as crew chief on the C-130 Hercules.

Following graduation from McKendree University, he received his commission in September 1998 and



Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton/Kentucky Air National Guard

**Lt. Col. Patrick Pritchard (center) assumes command of the 123rd Mission Support Group as he accepts the unit's guidon from Col. David Mounkes (left), commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, during a change-of-command ceremony here Jan. 7.**

was assigned to the 123rd Operations Support Flight. Prior to accepting his new post, Pritchard served as Financial Management commander, comptroller, finance analyst and chief intel officer. He has deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I want to thank my leadership for this opportunity," said Pritchard, who most recently served as the Mission Support Group's deputy commander.

"Thank you for your trust and con-

fidence in me to run the Mission Support Group. My vision and pledge is to continue down the path of excellence, and if possible to improve on an already outstanding organization.

"My focus will be on direction, establishing goals and priorities," Pritchard said as he spoke to MSG members in attendance.

"Which means time-management and quality of work, strategic long-range planning, and providing what you need to actually do the mission."

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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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