

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

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## Thunder to feature C-130, STS demo

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

A Kentucky Air Guard C-130 and a parachute demonstration by Kentucky's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron are among the scheduled highlights for this year's Thunder Over Louisville air show April 21.

The annual event is one of the largest single-day air shows in North America and draws crowds of up to 750,000 along the banks of the Ohio River, said Capt. Chad Applegate, Thunder coordinator for the 123rd Airlift Wing here.

The Kentucky wing will once again serve as the base of operations for dozens of military aircraft and demo teams performing in the air show, providing essential maintenance and logistical support. In addition to the two Kentucky Air Guard demos, other scheduled participants include the U.S. Air Force A-10 "Thunderbolt" Demonstration Team, the U.S. Navy F/A-18 "Super Hornet" Tactical Demonstration Team and the U.S. Army "Golden Knights" Parachute Team.

"It's a true pleasure to support Thunder and give the people of Louisville an opportunity to see their nation's military aircraft up-close and in-person," said Applegate, who has spent hundreds of hours coordinating the show. "The U.S. armed forces have the most sophisticated aircraft and professional aviators in the world. Events like Thunder allow our aircrew members to showcase that to citizens who may not normally have much engagement with the military. We're very pleased to be part of that."

Featured events from the Kentucky Air Guard include a fly-by of the C-130



Lt. Col. Dale Greer/KyANG

**Airmen from the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron simulate a water-rescue mission after jumping into the Ohio River from a Kentucky Army National Guard UH-60 "Blackhawk" helicopter during the 2017 Thunder Over Louisville air show. The unit's Airmen will parachute into the river this year from an altitude of 5,000 feet.**

"Hercules" transport, which has been the 123rd Airlift Wing's operational aircraft for three decades. Wing aircrews were heavily involved in hurricane-recovery efforts last year, flying 473 tons of relief supplies to the Caribbean following Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, and evacuating more than 400 stranded U.S. citizens from the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten. Nearly one-quarter of the wing's personnel are currently deployed overseas, supporting war-time and contingency operations in multiple theaters.

The second Kentucky Air Guard demonstration during Thunder will see six members of the wing's Special Tactics Squadron parachute from a Kentucky

Army National Guard UH-60 "Blackhawk" helicopter into the Ohio River, said 1st Lt. Russ LeMay, a special tactics officer with the unit.

The Airmen, who will jump from a height of 5,000 feet, will land in a targeted area of the river and then be picked up by a special tactics water-recovery team.

LeMay, who will be one of the parachutists, said the event demonstrates how a team of pararescuemen and combat controllers might insert into a challenging operational environment, either for personnel-rescue missions or

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# Wing launches new smartphone app

By Maj. Allison Stephens  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Many smart phone users are accustomed to downloading apps that help organize and simplify their lives. Now, the 123rd Airlift Wing has a smart phone app that does just that for unit members and their families.

“The intent is to provide our members and their families with relevant information at their fingertips for family and wellness programs, resources and a wing directory,” said Col. Jeffrey Wilkinson, vice wing commander.

A key function of the app is the group feature, which allows leadership to send targeted messages and notifications specific to each group.



Unit members are encouraged to provide feedback via the Suggestions Box tile, and to direct any questions or concerns to group CSS points of contact.

To download the app, search for “123 AW” in the Apple store or Google Play.

Key features of the app include:

- 123rd Airlift Wing news
- Family Programs information (youth, financial, yellow ribbon, etc.)
- Fitness standards, calculator and dates
- Wing directory
- Mental health resources (classes, support programs)
- Timely notifications and messages
- Special events information, updated as needed

## Thunder

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combat operations.

“We’re really pleased to showcase our abilities to the public,” added LeMay, a Louisville native. “I don’t think many people know much about what we do, and Thunder provides a great way to raise awareness about our mission set and capabilities right here in our own hometown.”

These special operators were also heavily engaged in hurricane-recovery missions last year, rescuing 336 civilians stranded by flood waters in Texas, and controlling 636 military aircraft in the Virgin Islands, facilitating the evacuation of 1,286 U.S. citizens.

LeMay will be joined during the demonstration by a team comprised of five combat controllers and pararescuemen.

Combat controllers are among the most highly trained personnel in the U.S. military. As FAA-certified air traffic controllers, they deploy undetected into combat and hostile environments to establish assault zones or airfields while simultaneously conducting air traffic control, fire support, command and control, direct action, counter-terrorism, foreign internal defense, humanitarian assistance and special reconnaissance.

Pararescuemen are parachute-jump qualified trauma specialists who must maintain Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic credentials throughout their careers. With this medical and rescue expertise, PJs are able to perform

life-saving missions in the world’s most remote areas. A PJ’s primary function is personnel recovery specialist, with emergency medical capabilities in humanitarian and combat environments. PJs deploy in any available manner, to include air-land-sea tactics, into restricted environments to authenticate, extract, treat, stabilize and evacuate injured personnel.

The 123rd Airlift Wing is one of the most decorated units in U.S. Air Force history, with 17 Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards, four Metcalf Trophies and three Spaatz Trophies. The Metcalf Trophy is awarded annually to the top airlift unit in the Air National Guard, and the Spaatz Trophy is bestowed annually on the country’s premier Air Guard flying unit.

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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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