

THE CARGO COURIER

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123rd Airlift Wing named best Guard unit in 15th Air Force

By Tech. Sgt. Amy Ziegler
Cargo Courier Editor

For an unprecedented third time in five years, the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Airlift wing has been named the top Air Guard unit in the 15th Air Force.

The wing's commander, Col. Michael Harden, accepted the Solano Trophy from the 15th Air Force commander Maj. Gen. John Becker during a banquet held April 26 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

The unit is deserving of the trophy, Harden said, because of its members' high standards and their ability to live up to them.

"It's significant and unprecedented that we have won this award three out of the last five years," he said. "This is quite an honor, and the men and women of the wing should feel proud of what they've done.

"No one flies, fixes or supports better than we do. We do things right. We always have, and we always will."

The award is given annually to a single 15th Air Force unit from each of the three service components—active duty, Guard and Reserve. Recipients are considered the top units in the Travis-headquartered command, which is responsible for more than 70,000 people and half of America's military airlift, tanker and aeromedical evacuation aircraft.

The latest award was based on activities conducted between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2001, when citizen-airmen from the 123rd Airlift Wing participated in numerous overseas deployments, including Operation Enduring Freedom in support of the war on terror, and Operation Joint Forge, a multinational peacekeeping mission in Bosnia.

Back home, the wing activated more



Courtesy of the 15th Air Force

Col. Michael Harden, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, accepts the Solano Trophy at a banquet April 26 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. Shown above from left to right: Maj. Gen. John Becker, 15th Air Force commander; Gary Falati, chairman of the Travis Regional Armed Forces Committee; Harden; Col. Bob Rodekoeh of the 153rd Airlift Wing; and Maj. Gen. Jim Czekanski, commander of the Fourth Air Force.

than 450 personnel for Operation Noble Eagle, the country's homeland defense mission, and sponsored numerous community relations events like Planes of Thunder, a static display of aircraft held in conjunction with the Kentucky Derby Festival's annual Thunder Over Louisville airshow.

The 123rd also supported the Combined Federal Campaign charity fund-raiser, the Kentucky Harvest "Million in a Month" food drive and Special Olympics Kentucky.

"The continued outstanding success of

the 123rd is further justification for the faith that the Air Force has placed in the organization," said Brig. Gen. Allen Youngman, the commonwealth's adjutant general.

"The leadership at both 15th Air Force and Air Mobility Command know that when a critical mission comes along, the 123rd will be ready and will execute the mission to standard," Youngman added.

"The men and women of the wing know they're the best; this award is proof that the rest of the Air Force knows it, too."

Unit members must prepare for the long haul

It sure doesn't seem like it has been eight months since we started our war on terrorism.

The events of Sept. 11 are still very fresh in my mind—I cannot easily forget the sight of cold-blooded killers flying an aircraft full of innocent Americans into a building filled with thousands of hard-working American citizens.

I hope I never forget that, and I hope that no American ever forgets it, either.

This was an act of war, an act designed to disrupt our way of life and the first step toward the ultimate goal of destroying our American civilization.

Since Sept. 11 we have responded with a decisive victory over the Taliban butchers who sponsored and cheered this attack.

We quickly returned to a semblance of normalcy with air travel resuming, the stock market rebounding and gas prices stabilizing.

We had a traditional Christmas, the Super Bowl and the Olympics went off without a hitch, and the Kentucky Derby was won by a longshot.

Soon the weather will be hot and sticky, the kids will be out of school and summer vacations will be underway.

Already the talk of war and retaliation for this cowardly act is fading from the minds of a lot of Americans.

If you believe the latest polls, the economy, education and other political issues are more on the minds of the American people than the war on terrorism.

While I don't know whether this is good or bad, it is a testament to the resiliency of



Col. Michael Harden
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

our country and our people.

What I do know is that because we are military people charged with the responsibility of protecting this great country and all of her citizens, we can never forget this attack. The war must always be foremost on our minds.

We must all believe our president when he says that we are in this for the long term and that we will prevail.

We have responded admirably up to now, with all of the folks who have deployed to the theater, all of the folks who have contributed to our Noble Eagle taskings and all of the folks who have supported those that

have been directly involved. No one does it better than we do.

Our recent 11th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award and our third 15th Air Force Air National Guard Unit of the Year Award proves that.

We are so used to rising to the occasion and doing well that it is ingrained in us and becomes a part of who we are. What we face now is a bit different.

We face the prospect of continuing our high operations tempo and state of readiness into the foreseeable future.

Make no mistake, this war is far from over, and we must prepare ourselves, our families and our employers for the long term.

Our contributions will be needed tomorrow, next month, next year and five years from now.

While we will do everything possible to lessen the impact on each individual, their families and employers, our main commitment is to the mission of defending our country.

We will not hesitate to ask each member of the Thoroughbred Express to do even more if necessary, and I know that because of who you are we will not have to ask twice.

These are serious times, this is serious stuff and we are in a serious business.

There will be many distractions that may cause us to divert our attention from our task.

Money may be an issue, inspections may be an issue, bureaucratic bungling may be an issue. But the bottom line is that we are at war, you have performed superbly thus far, and we need your continued support and commitment.

We will not fail.

Thanks loads!

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If you have a story idea, photo or article to submit, stop by the public affairs office, room 2117 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is May 28.

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THUNDER roll

Col. Donald Storm, chief of staff for the Kentucky Army Guard, and Col. Michael Harden, 123rd Airlift Wing commander, press the buttons at the Galt House that kick off the Thunder Over Louisville fireworks display April 20.

The event was billed as the largest fireworks show in North America.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Tommy Downs, KyANG



KyANG pistol team wins at state competition

Cargo Courier Staff Report

Members from the KyANG Pistol/Rifle Team once again proved their mettle by besting the Army Guard in the annual state competition held March 30 at Fort Knox, Ky.

Winning in virtually every category, the wing's marksmen took home five out of six awards in two individual categories.

Master Sgt. Darryl Loafman again reigned as Top Gun, while Master Sgt. Jim Johnson took second place and Master Sgt. John Martin third. With less than 10 points between the finishers, KyANG troops made a clean sweep in the individual pistol championship.

In the team category, the 123rd's cadre outshot every Army team to take first, second and third places in the Patton Match.

Top honors in individual rifle competition went to Johnson, while the wing's Staff Sgt. Frank Tallman took third place.

The competition marked the eighth time in the past 11 years that members of the 123rd Airlift Wing took home either team or individual honors from the state competition.

Kentucky Air Guard members who have shooting skills and are interested in joining the shootists should contact Martin, team captain, at ext. 4337.



Tech. Sgt. Mark Rines/KyANG

ABOVE: The KyANG Pistol/Rifle Team members, in front from left: Staff Sgt. Frank Tallman, Army Guard Staff Sgt. James Dollar, Master Sgt. Jim Johnson, Senior Master Sgt. John Siebert; in back from left, Master Sgt. Dave Selby, Master Sgt. Rich Martin, 1st Lt. Chris Bishop, Staff. Sgt. John White and Master Sgt. Darryl Loafman.



1st Lt. Chris Bishop/KyANG

LEFT: Shootists Loafman and Johnson check their targets.

Shining star

Fairchild hangs up her blue suit after 34 years

By Tech. Sgt. Amy Ziegler
Cargo Courier Editor

Earning two stars was the last thing Verna Fairchild had on her mind when she visited an Air Force Reserve recruiter in 1968.

The young nurse feared a coworker was going to be drafted into the Vietnam War and agreed to tag along with him to the recruiting station.

While there, Fairchild was told of the nurse shortage in the military and, in an effort to help her country, she signed up.

Fairchild thought to herself, "It's only one year, and I've always been interested in the Air Force."

That was the beginning of a long and distinguished career in service to her country. Now, 34 years later, the major general is hanging up her blue suit and retiring.

The general, who most recently served as the assistant to the director of the Air National Guard for operational support readiness, has the distinction of recording several firsts in both the Air Force and Air Guard.

She was the first member of the nursing corps to become commander of an Air Guard tactical hospital in 1986.

Then in 1990, she became the first Air Guard assistant for nursing to the surgeon general of the Air Combat Command.

In 1993, she became the first nurse and the first female to be appointed as assistant adjutant general for Air in Air Guard history.

Fairchild transferred to the Kentucky Air Guard in 1974 after leaving the Air Force Reserves, joining the unit as chief of nursing services. Since then, she's held numerous other positions, including assistant to the adjutant general for Air for the commonwealth.

That position, Fairchild said, was her favorite.

"It was the best job I ever had because I worked with a special group of people," she recalled. "I didn't hide in the office. I tried to get out and see what was going on.

"I even flew weekend missions to learn what the aircrew did. (Kentucky's 123rd) is a good wing with good people, and it was my job to know the issues."

The most welcome change Fairchild has seen in her 34 years in the military is the rising importance of diversity.

"It goes back to 'once a medic, always a medic.' Females were excluded from things, and that was the norm," she explained. "Policies prevented women from being in certain positions. Now that's changed."



Maj. Gen. Verna Fairchild

Fairchild said she owes her career's success to hard work and a supportive husband, Byrnes. But those who served closely with Fairchild say they believe it has more to do with her devotion to members of the Kentucky Air Guard.

The current assistant adjutant general for Air, Brig. Gen. Richard Ash, said his experiences working with Fairchild have always been positive.

"I've had the pleasure of working for and with Maj. Gen. Fairchild since joining the state headquarters in 1995," Ash said. "During this time, she never swayed in her devotion to the men and women of the Kentucky Air Guard.

"More and more I meet people locally and at the national level who, like myself, claim her as a mentor, role model and friend. Those of us whose lives she has touched and enriched will be forever grateful and in her debt."

The commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, Col. Michael Harden, concurs.

"Maj. Gen. Fairchild was a great boss," Harden said. "She was mission-oriented, and the welfare of her troops was foremost in her mind."

"As one of (Air National Guard director) Maj. Gen. Paul Weaver's trusted confidants, she worked tirelessly to improve the entire Air Guard but always kept an eye out for the 123rd. She's a true Guard hero, and she will be greatly missed."

Fairchild's retirement ceremony is scheduled for June 8 at 2 p.m. in the Base Annex. All members of the KyANG are invited to attend.

New council formed for company grade officers

By 1st Lt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The Kentucky Air Guard's Thoroughbred Company Grade Officer Council is now official: KyANG leaders signed the group's charter during a ceremony here April 14.

The council, which has been meeting for about a year to organize its affairs, was formed at the suggestion of Col. Michael Dornbush, executive state support officer, to assist the commander in educating and developing company grade officers.

Its members already have been active in a variety of events, including youth leadership programs and the 2002 Kentucky National Guard Association Conference, during which the council sponsored the KyANG hospitality suite.

"Today's celebration was a milestone in the process of making this council a viable part of the Kentucky Air Guard," Capt. Dave Clements said following the charter-signing ceremony.

Clements, the council's current president, added, "We hope to grow the council by reaching out to other company grade officers not currently involved.

"We want to provide a path for all company grade officers to develop their leadership, officership and problem-solving skills



Master Sgt. Charles Simpson/KyANG

Col. Michael Harden, 123rd Airlift Wing commander, and Brig. Gen. Richard Ash, assistant adjutant general for Air, formally approve the council's charter April 14.

while at the same time developing good working relationships with other company grade, field grade and general officers."

The council meets each UTA Sunday at 11:30 a.m. in the ABO Classroom. All company grade officers are welcome.

Buckle Up

Staff Sgt. Bill Christopher of the 123rd Civil Engineers Squadron and Master Sgt. Mike Myers of the base safety office post a sign at the front gate reminding KyANG troops to buckle up.

The sign, donated to the wing by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, is part of a base safety initiative to ensure wing troops wear seat belts both on and off base.



Master Sgt. Charles Simpson/KyANG

Support group seeks personnel troop

The 123rd Support Group is seeking a personnel specialist, AFSC 3S051.

The position has a maximum rank of staff sergeant and requires attendance at a six-week technical school at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss.

The position advises officers and airmen on personnel issues and programs, creates and maintains personnel records and performs personnel actions.

For more information, contact the 123rd Support Group commander, Col. Tom Marks, at ext. 4425.

Know the facts and warning signs of suicide

Although suicide is not a topic we enjoy talking about, it's important that KyANG members know the facts and warning signs of suicide to help prevent the unnecessary deaths of comrades.

On average each year, 13 Air Guard personnel will commit suicide. And that's 13 too many. Here are the facts:

1. Suicide is preventable. Most suicidal people want to live; they are just unable to see alternatives to their problems. They often view their situation as hopeless.

2. Suicidal people are temporarily overwhelmed with real-life events. Some of the most commonly experienced are relationship difficulties, separation, divorce, financial problems, loss of a loved one, etc.

3. Most suicidal people give definite warnings of their suicidal intentions, but we are often unaware of their significance or do not know how to respond.

4. Suicide cuts across all ranks, ages and economic, social, religious and ethnic boundaries.

5. Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in the United States and the third leading cause among 15-24 year-olds, behind accidents and homicide.

6. The socially isolated are at higher risk for suicide.

7. Suicide intimately affects at least six other people.

Also, learn the signs and be aware.

- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Ask if people are thinking about suicide.
- Be direct. Talk openly. Determine if they have a suicide plan.
- Question accessibility to guns, pills, etc.
- Listen. Allow expression of feelings.
- Don't lecture or debate; try to be non-judgmental.

There are many "helping resources" that you can consult if you know someone is at risk or displaying suicidal behaviors.

- Supervisors, first sergeants or commanders
- Chaplains, mental health professionals
- Security or local police
- 911, hospital, ER, fire department

Remember, suicide is preventable. Suicidal people have lost hope. You may be the person who saves a life because you cared enough to intervene with hope.

—Lt. Col. Thomas T. Curry
Wing Chaplain

Chaplain's Column

Promotions & separations



The following individuals have been promoted to the rank indicated as members of the Kentucky Air Guard and reservists of the United States Air Force:

AIRMAN (E-2)

- Joseph O'Donnell,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Rosanna Sidebottom,
123rd Student Flt.

SENIOR AIRMAN (E-4)

- Elizabeth Byars,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Gregory Cady,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Mark Grote,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Robert Miller III,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Jason Prifogle,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Robert Stanley,
123rd Maintenance Sq.

STAFF SERGEANT (E-5)

- Scott Benningfield,
123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.
- Quinton Blan,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Christopher Chamberlain,
123rd Logistics Sq.
- Meghann Coffey,
123rd Special Tactics Sq.
- Michael Flickinger,
41st Weapons Mass Destruction Team
- Eric Hamilton,
123rd Logistics Sq.
- Alexandra Roof,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Jason Rowe,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Ryan Russell,
123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.
- Donald Tyson II,
123rd Aerial Port Sq.

TECHNICAL SERGEANT (E-6)

- James Adams,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Brian Bauer,
165th Airlift Sq.

- Robert Bratcher,
165th Airlift Sq.
- Eronica Dew,
123rd Logistics Sq.
- Edwin Hall,
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Jeremy Meyer,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Raymond Page Jr.,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Theresa Sheek,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Jesse Smith,
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- James Stover,
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Martin Tracy,
123rd Student Flt.

The following individuals have retired as members of the Kentucky Air Guard and reservists of the United States Air Force:

- Tech. Sgt. Alice Hewitt,
123rd Airlift Wing
- Maj. John Hogan,
123rd Logistics Group
- Master Sgt. Martin Mery,
123rd Maintenance Sq.

USAF wings to undergo major reorganization

By Tech. Sgt. Scott Elliott
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON—The way Air Force wings are organized will undergo major changes beginning Oct. 1. Those changes include creation of a new maintenance group, restructuring support groups and reducing the taskings of operations groups.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper directed April 22 that all active-duty, Reserve and Air Guard wings adopt the new standard wing structure to enhance the service's warfighting capabilities.

"After careful deliberations with major command commanders, we reached a decision on a new wing organizational structure that will standardize operations across the Air Force and enhance our expeditionary capabilities," Jumper said.

The five major changes involved in the standard wing concept include:

- All aircraft and space maintenance specialists currently assigned to operations and logistics groups will be reassigned to a newly created maintenance group.

- Supply and transportation squadrons will be combined to form logistics readiness squadrons.

- Contracting squadrons, aerial ports and LRSs will transfer into existing support groups, which will be renamed "mission support group."

—Logistics plans functions will transfer to the newly created LRSs.

—The logistics readiness officer career field initiative, which combines three officer career fields—supply, transportation and logistics plans—has new accessions beginning this month.

"My vision is that the groups in our wings will focus on their essential core capabilities," Jumper said.

"Operation of air and space weapons systems is a core competency of the U.S. Air

level of war.

"Maintenance of air and space weapons systems is (also) a core competency of the U.S. Air Force," Jumper said. "Aging fleets and years of resource shortfalls require increased attention to the balance of sortie production and health of our fleets. This requires career maintenance professionals able to develop the same level of skill and proficiency demanded of our operations, logistics and medical professionals.

"Mission support, in the expeditionary, rapid reaction, contingency-based Air Force of today is (another) core competency," he said. "The Air Force will develop a career path for commanders who understand the full scope of home station employment and sustainment, and deployment, beddown and sustainment at contin-

gency locations: crisis actions, force protection, unit type code preparation, load planning, contracting actions, bare base and tent city preparation, munitions site planning, personnel readiness expeditionary combat support, etc."

Jumper set Sept. 30, 2003, as the target date to achieve full operational capability.

"I fully understand the magnitude of these changes," he said. "The goal is to achieve a more capable Air Force with professionals who understand and are capable of meeting our ever-increasing complex mission."

“ The goal is to achieve a more capable Air Force with professionals who understand and are capable of meeting our ever-increasing complex mission. ”

—Gen. John Jumper
Air Force Chief of Staff

Force," Jumper said. "Operations group activities focus on planning and executing air and space power. Commanders of operations groups are charged with leading their units in combat.

"They will continue to be considered leaders and role models in the tactical employment of their weapons systems," he said. "The Air Force has also recognized the emerging necessity to more closely integrate tactical skills with execution at the operational level of war. Commanders of operations groups will be increasingly involved in planning and training for the operational



Master Sgt. Randy L. Mitchell/USAF

Beauty and the Beast

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM—A-10 Thunderbolt IIs stand ready along the flightline at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, with the Himalayan Mountains providing a backdrop.

As part of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Group, the men and women deployed to Bagram Air Base are supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

101 critical days of summer approaching—think safety

**By Master Sgt. Barry Wright
Wing Safety and
Occupational Health Manager**

Being safe allows KyANG members to be mission-ready at work as well as at home.

With the 101 critical days of summer approaching, now is a good time to begin implementing risk management at home.

The best way to ensure the safety of your loved ones is to teach them to identify hazards, assess the risks and make decisions that will have an impact on the safe outcome of family activities.

When you manage risk, you give yourself and your loved ones another birthday, another anniversary, another laugh, another hug, another chance, another precious

family moment.

Risk management needs to be a part of your everyday life, especially during off-duty family activities.

Just ask yourself—are you doing everything you can to manage the risk for you and your family as you go about your personal activities?

Remember that every time you cross the street, drive your car or cut the grass, you should applying risk management.

Managing risk is easy and the right thing to do. It starts with your identifying the hazards, assessing the risks and making decisions that ensure a safe family event.

When it comes to your safety and the safety of your family and loved ones, manage the risk.

The bottom line: Being safe is all about you and your family.

Wing seeks members to play intramural sports

The 123rd Airlift Wing's Human Relations Council is interested in forming intramural sports teams for the benefit of the unit's morale, welfare and recreation.

Members have so far expressed interest in softball and volleyball teams.

Games would be scheduled after duty hours during the week for full-time and activated members, and on Saturday afternoons of drill weekends throughout the spring, summer and early fall.

If you're interested in helping coordinate the effort or participating in a team sport, contact Maj. Beth Leistensnider at ext. 4683 or elizabeth.leistensnider@kyloui.ang.af.mil; or Capt. George Tomica at ext. 4610 or george.tomica@kyloui.ang.af.mil.

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