Wing completes deployment to Saudi Arabia

By Staff Sgt. Dale Greer
Cargo Courier Editor

Prince Sultan Air Base is perhaps the most challenging military environment in the world.

Located on the high desert of Saudi Arabia, 60 miles from the nearest civilization, its lone remarkable feature is a desolate expanse of blistering brown sand.

Daytime temperatures and the sun’s unrelenting rays can cook exposed skin in minutes, poisonous spiders and snakes abound, sandstorms appear from nowhere, and the only thing that breaks the ceaseless monotony of the dull horizon is a constant flow of military aircraft charged with enforcing the No-Fly Zone in Southern Iraq.

This is the environment in which more than 90 members of the Kentucky Air Guard operated from April 7 to June 10, delivering around-the-clock theater airlift services for multinational forces as part of Operation Southern Watch.

During the deployment, Wing aircrews flew 103 missions in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar, logging more than 238 hours of flight time. On the ground, air cargo personnel built scores of pallets for delivery while maintainers pulled 12-hour shifts prepping C-130s for their next missions.

Although the KyANG is known for its

See Desert, Page 4

TOP: An F-16 from Prince Sultan Air Base refuels while patrolling the No-Fly Zone in Southern Iraq. More than 90 members of the 123rd Airlift Wing deployed to Prince Sultan to provide theater airlift for the operation.

BOTTOM: KyANG members were housed in tent cities at Prince Sultan.

Capt. Catherine Jabbb/KyANG
Fleming's dedication and integrity represent best of Air Guard

Many of you have heard me say over the years that there is no such thing as a "part-time" Guardsman.

I have always believed that once you make the commitment to become a part of this unit, you are a Guardsman all the time, although your availability to perform your military duties may be somewhat limited because of your civilian job and family demands.

The same thing is true if you become a commander or supervisor — you are the commander or supervisor all of the time, but with somewhat limited availability.

This system of providing military might through the use of volunteer citizen-soldiers and airmen has proven to be effective and cost efficient, and its role in our nation's defense has become increasingly crucial.

This reliance on the Guard can only be effective, however, if our members exhibit the age-old military values of duty, honor, and country.

Last month, we said good bye to an individual who epitomizes this concept. Lt. Col. John Fleming commanded the 165th Airlift Squadron for a little more than two years.

Meanwhile, he worked full time for the Army Corps of Engineers and also saw his family enough that they remembered what he looked like most of the time.

And yet, you know it when you see it.

When Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ronald R. Fogelman announced that one of the Air Force core values was service before self, he could have had John Fleming in mind.

The unit has been fortunate to have had a long line of people like John Fleming — people like Irv Pope, Dwight Pounds and Donn Ryan — traditional Guardsmen but full-time commanders who gave of themselves for the betterment of the wing and the nation.

These folks know that command is very serious business, and those who successfully undertake the responsibility understand that command means full-time responsibility and commitment to that responsibility.

It is also a heck of a lot of fun.

John Fleming will be missed, but his sense of duty and honor will remain.

Just as he learned from his superiors, sometime in the future someone whose life he touched as a commander will accept the responsibility of command and benefit from his example.

Thanks loads, John, for making the Thoroughbred Express what it is.

Michael L. Harden
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

Before his most recent post, Lt. Col. Fleming served as a line jack weapons systems officer, flight commander and squadrons operations officer.

Over the years, he never shuffled off his duty or said, "Don't ask me — I'm just a part-timer." He was a full-time Guardsman — and a full-time commander — in the truest sense.

He spent the time necessary to ensure the readiness and well being of every member in his squadron. Lt. Col. Fleming did this out of a sense of duty and responsibility that is hard to define, teach or instill.

Michael L. Harden
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

Col. Michael Harden
Staff Sgt. Dale Greer
Senior Master Sgt. Dave Tinsley

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The Cargo Courier
August 9, 1997
Pedal Power

Guardmember riding 100 miles for charity

By Staff Sgt. Dale Greer
Cargo Courier Editor

Next month, while most members of the Kentucky Air Guard are sharpening their combat skills on base, Master Sgt. Bob Wood will be fighting his own personal battle with leukemia.

Wood, a cargo airlift supervisor in the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron, doesn’t have the deadly disease, but he’s seen its effects up close, and he wants to do something about it.

A five-year-old boy who attends Wood’s church in Hendersonville, Tenn., has been struggling with leukemia for months.

As the disease and his chemotherapy sessions have progressed, young Cannon Lowe has become increasingly withdrawn and confused, Wood said. His mother no longer lets Cannon play with friends for fear that his compromised immune system will fail to protect him from infections.

“He’s not even allowed to come to church anymore,” Wood said of the once playful boy who liked to wear cowboy costumes and deliver high-fives.

“Now, he won’t even talk to me. The seclusion that he’s going through has been real hard for him to handle. He just wants to live a normal life.”

Wood hopes that his efforts Sept. 21 will enable Cannon to do just that.

The Guardsman will spend the drill weekend participating in a 100-mile bicycle marathon to raise money for the Leukemia Society of America, which estimates that a cure for some forms of the disease is less than three years away.

The marathon will begin in New Hampshire, cross Maine, and end in Boston.

“This is an opportunity to help make a difference,” said Wood, who’s been collecting donations since the spring and so far has raised about half of the $2,500 minimum required to participate.

He’s confident he can raise the money, but the physical aspect of the marathon is a little more intimidating.

“It’s going to be tough,” Wood said. “This is straight through, without much of a break, for six hours. I’ve ridden as far 62 miles before, but I’ve never tried a hundred.”

To prepare, Wood has been training on weekends with other marathon cyclists, and he rides his bicycle 11 miles to work every day.

He’s even modified his diet and bought a new 16-speed bike.

But the best asset Wood expects to have next month is a small loop of plastic.

“When I leave on the ride, they’ll give me a hospital bracelet with Cannon’s name on it,” he said. “So if I get to the point where I think I can’t go any further, I can look down at that bracelet and remember why I’m here.”

Leukemia is a cancer that infects the body’s blood-forming tissues like bone marrow and lymph nodes. Nearly a half million Americans have the disease, and more than 20,000 die from it each year, according to the Leukemia Society of America.

Overall survival rates for leukemia victims have more than doubled in the past 30 years, rising from 14 percent in 1960 to 40 percent today.

Wood encouraged Guard members to place themselves on the National Registry for Bone Marrow Transplants by contacting their local branch of the Leukemia Society of America.

“It’s an opportunity to save a life,” he said.

“It may not be someone you know, but it’s a person that somebody else knows and loves.”

For more information, call Wood at extension 4301.
Desert taxes Kentucky airmen

Continued from Page 1

effectiveness, the wing’s 98 percent operational readiness rate at Prince Sultan is all the more remarkable given the environmental circumstances.

At its worst, the heat index reached 146 degrees and forced Guardsmen to take 45 minutes of rest for each 15 minutes of work, said Maj. Johnny Jones, commander of the 123rd Maintenance Squadron.

There were no hangars large enough to accommodate C-130s, so all maintenance had to be accomplished on the tarmac.

Living conditions were equally austere. Troops were housed in tents that, while air-conditioned, could reach temperatures of 90 degrees.

“It was a pretty tough place to work, but I’m proud of our accomplishments,” said Senior Master Sgt. Richard Cwiak, a production superintendent with the 123rd Aircraft Generation Squadron.

“Of the 104 missions we were tasked with, we only missed one mission.”

The ops tempo left Guard members with little free time, but Cwiak said there wasn’t much to do anyway, since troops were restricted to base unless they were flying on a mission.

“They had a gym, a pizza place, a Burger King and a Baskin-Robbins — that was about it,” he said.

“If you wanted to go nowhere,” Jones observed, “you were in the right place.”

A few aircrew members did, however, get a chance to see the results of U.S. firepower in the Gulf War.

“As we flew into Ahmed Al Jaber Air Base in Kuwait, we saw hardened bunkers that had been destroyed during the war,” said Lt. Col. Bill Ketterer, operations training officer with the 123rd Operations Support Flight.

Iraq had seized Al Jaber during the war, Ketterer said, and used the bunkers to protect its fighter aircraft from U.S. assault. But concrete and steel were no match for the Air Force’s precision-guided munitions, which pummeled the bunkers when allied forces took the base.

“Square in the middle of each one of the bunkers was a hole where a munition went through and destroyed whatever was inside,” he said.

“I think everyone who saw those bunkers would agree that they were glad they were on our side during the war.”

While the war may be over, Iraq continues to challenge the legitimacy of the No-Fly Zone. Aircraft from Prince Sultan still intercept Iraqi fighters there on a daily basis, Jones said.

And that made Operation Southern Watch an important mission for the Air Guard, which was the exclusive provider of C-130 assets during the deployment.

“I feel that we needed to be there,” he said. “This country is dependent on oil from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and we need to protect our interests.”

The mission also gave the Kentucky Air Guard a chance to demonstrate its ability under tough conditions, said Col. Michael Harden, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

“Southern Watch allowed us once again to show that nobody does it better than the Kentucky Air Guard,” Harden said.

Capt. Catherine Jacob stands in front of a hangar demolished by U.S. munitions during the Gulf War.

Unit returns to Bosnia

Sixteen members of the 123rd Airlift Wing left Louisville on July 21 to participate in multinational peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia.

The members deployed to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, where they joined other Air Guard and Air Force Reserve units as part of Operation Joint Guard. Their mission is to fly airlift and re-supply missions for U.S. and NATO forces throughout the theater.

Most of the participants will serve rotations that last approximately 20 days.

At least 45 Kentucky troops and one C-130 will deploy during the unit’s phase of the operation, which is expected to end Oct. 4.

The wing also served in Bosnia in 1993, 1994 and 1995.

Plan to cut wing’s C-130s put on hold

An Air Force plan to eliminate four of the wing’s C-130 aircraft and 150 personnel has been put on hold indefinitely.

The decision was made after the release of the Quadrennial Defense Review in May, which concluded that the Air Force will need to depend on the Guard and Reserves more than ever if it is to fulfill its global mission in the face of increasingly tight budgets.

“It is clear that the C-130 force structure requires greater scrutiny before any reductions are made,” Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman told U.S. Sen. Wendell Ford in a letter dated May 21.
Summer of ’62 lands astronaut in Louisville

KyANG commander escorts ‘Gus’ Grissom during city’s parade

Editor’s note: The Cargo Courier has not published for the last two months because of budget cuts. This column originally was scheduled to run in June.

By Tech. Sgt. John R. Martin
123rd Airlift Wing Historian

The captivating images of Mars now being transmitted to Earth by NASA’s latest intergalactic explorer have helped to focus renewed attention on the nation’s space program.

But on June 15, 1962, Louisville-area residents needed no prompting to turn their thoughts skyward.

The Space Race was in full swing, and one of America’s warriors in that contest, Air Force Capt. Virgil I. “Gus” Grissom, had just flown into Louisville’s Standiford Field.

Hundreds gathered at the airport to meet the 36-year-old Mitchell, Ind., native, including Gov. Bert Combs and Col. Verne Yahne, commander of the Kentucky Air Guard.

The astronaut, who shattered distance records the previous year by traveling 118 miles in orbit, was whisked down Broadway in a convertible for a parade before 10,000 cheering onlookers.

Grissom also was given an honorary captniency of the riverboat Avalon (now called the Belle of Louisville) and presented with a certificate naming him an official Kentucky Colonel.

Concerning the latter, Grissom joked that “it is easier to get promoted in Kentucky than in the Air Force.”

Yahne himself found June to be a month conducive to promotions.

Six years earlier, on June 1, Yahne had been selected as Base Detachment Commander, replacing the late Lt. Col. Lee J. Merkel, who was killed in an airplane crash in January of that year.

A former instructor at Lindsey-Wilson Junior College in Columbia, Ky., Yahne also was slated to take over command of the 165th Fighter-Interceptor Group.

One of the more famous events in our 50 years of service was the deactivation ceremony that took place on June 1, 1969, in front of the old hanger.

After 17 months of deployments to Air Force bases around the world, the KyANG finally ended its active service precipitated by The Pueblo Crisis of 1968.

During the deactivation, 37 medals were presented to unit members. Dignitaries in attendance included Gov. Louis B. Nunn and Brig. Gen. I.G. Brown of the National Guard Bureau.

During this call-up, the wing accomplished 19,715 tactical flying hours from 11,561 sorties.

It also processed 257,000 aerial reconnaissance prints and developed 284,251 feet of film.

Trivia question: What was Kentucky native Lt. Gen. Simon B. Buckner’s claim to fame in the battle of Okinawa?

Find out the answer in the next edition of The Cargo Courier.
50th Anniversary spurs vets to seek U.S. service medals

Air Force News Service

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — The Air Force's year-long celebration of its golden anniversary continues to flood veterans and their families with memories of past wars, battles and the recognition garnered for their acts.

But for some, the recognition — in the form of medals or decorations — was never received.

The effects of the service's anniversary is no more apparent than here at the Air Force Personnel Center's awards and decorations branch, the agency tasked with verifying the issue of first-time awards and replacing lost medals.

"We've received quite a few more requests for replacing lost medals over the past six months than we usually do, and more and more, we're receiving requests from veterans or their families saying they or their loved ones should have received a medal for an act or achievement from as far back as World War II," says Tech. Sgt. Mark Jiampetti, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the center's recognition programs branch.

Unfortunately for some, Jiampetti says, the process of verifying their acts or replacing their medals is delayed because necessary documents are missing.

"There are two different processes that depend on whether or not the individual ever received their decoration," explains Jiampetti.

The process begins when the veteran sends his request to the Air Force Reference Branch at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC, 9700 Page Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63132-5100).

Once the request is made, the center reviews existing records for "obvious entitlements."

However, Jiampetti notes, a 1973 fire at the center destroyed millions of records — most dating to World War II — and they had to be reconstructed. Because of the fire, many records have been cross referenced by using orders and personnel files, but often the information does not reveal what decorations or awards an individual had been entitled to.

If the National Personnel Records Center cannot determine the eligibility, the member's entire record is forwarded to Air Force Personnel Center for verification.

The personnel center receives more than 2,000 requests each month, Jiampetti said, adding that 80 percent of the requests concern World War II veterans.

"Occasionally we can't verify the entitlement and have to turn to the member for supporting documents," Jiampetti said.

"It's imperative that requests, at all levels, are legible and include complete addresses and all pertinent information. It helps with the process."

For first-time presentations of awards and decorations, the process becomes more involved.

"In 1952, President Truman announced that no one else could be put in for World War II decorations," Jiampetti said.

"The feeling at the time was that the war was over, and anyone not previously recognized, would not be."

However, in February 1996, Congress passed Section 326 of the National Defense Authorization Act, eliminating the time limit.

Service members who were affected by time limitations may now make a case for an award if two criteria are met, Jiampetti said.

First, service members must have a written recommendation by someone in the member's chain of command at the time of the incident who has firsthand knowledge of the acts or achievements.

Second, the request must be submitted through a Congressional member who can ask a military service to review a proposal for a decoration based on the merits of the proposal and the award criteria in existence when the event occurred.

"We are very sensitive to the desires of veterans to receive the recognition they deserve," Jiampetti said.

Former Army Air Corps or Air Force servicemembers looking to replace lost decorations are entitled to a one-time free replacement.

Life insurance changes affect reservists

Government life insurance policies have changed to permit reservists to retain coverage even if they separate before their 20-year retirements or become eligible to draw retirement pay.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, reservists and National Guard members now can generally apply for Veterans Group Life Insurance if they decide to separate before reaching a 20-year retirement.

Members should contact their military personnel flight customer service office if they have questions or want to update their existing policies.

The Department of Veterans Affairs also announced that it is lowering the cost of Servicemember's Group Life Insurance premiums for current members of the Guard. The premiums will drop from 90 cents per $10,000 of coverage to 85 cents per $10,000.

Web Site offers 'straight facts' on Air Force

Straight facts, straight from Air Force headquarters, now are available on the Internet.

The Air Force Issues page provides a one-stop information source for those who want accurate and timely information and have an .mil address.

The site covers a wide variety of topics including Air Force benefits, new weapons systems and Air Force plans for the future. The developers are working on allowing access to other than .mil addresses in the future.

Editor's note: This is the second installment in a series on the skills and values the Air Force must possess to succeed in the next half century.

From its early days as a separate service, the Air Force has continually stretched its combat arms as fast as its aircraft can fly.

Air Force leaders reaffirmed global attack as one of the service's core competencies in its new strategic vision, "Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force."

The other Air Force core competencies are air and space superiority, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, information superiority and agile combat support.

One aspect of global attack is the ability of the Air Force to use stateside bases and forces to attack anywhere.

In the Cold War, Air Force long-range bombers and, later, intercontinental ballistic missiles, shouldered the nation's primary responsibility for deterring nuclear war.

"Although nuclear weapons no longer play as central a role in America's national security strategy as they did during the Cold War, we recognize the dangers posed by the efforts of rogue states and others to acquire them," said Secretary of the Air Force Sheila E. Widnall.

She said the Air Force will sustain its work in the nuclear area and strengthen its response to the growing risk of proliferation.

Meanwhile, she said, the Air Force will use global attack as the basis to maintain the bomber and land-based ballistic missile legs of the triad even as it prepares for any force reductions.

The Air Force also keeps its commitment through global attack to support nuclear requirements of theater commanders, said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman.

The Air Force is absolutely determined to maintain its record of excellence as the custodian of nuclear weapons by ensuring globally, using both lethal and non-lethal means, is vital to today's national security strategy of engagement and enlargement," he said.

The other aspect of global attack is providing expeditionary forces with sustained combat power.

The Air Force has developed and demonstrated the concept of using a rapidly deployable air expeditionary force from the United States.

This expeditionary force, Fogleman said, can be tailored to meet the needs of the joint force commander, both for lethal and non-lethal applications, and can launch and be ready to fight in less than three days.

"We will develop new ways to do mobility, force deployment, protection, and sustainability in support of the expeditionary concept," the chief of staff said.

The Air Force is increasing the role of expeditionary forces to maintain its global engagement capability.

But in the future, Fogleman said, "capabilities based in the continental United States will likely become the primary means for crisis response and power projection."

"At the same time, long-range air and space-based assets increasingly fill the requirements of the global attack core competencies."

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Space Battlelab helps guide core competencies

Air Force News Service

FALCON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — A new era in warfighting began here June 30 with the activation of the Space Battlelab, an organization dedicated to innovative space operations and concepts.

"The Space Battlelab will be developing and examining new ways to make space an integral part, not only of what our operational warfighters do, but our logisticians, our communicators, our intelligence agencies and eventually the American public at large," said Gen. Howell M. Estes III, commander of U.S. Air Force Space Command.

The post-Cold War environment has created new realities for the military, said Col. Jeff Wenzel, who commands the battlelab.

"Technology is moving faster than it ever has before," Wenzel said. "We don't know if we're applying technology that our country develops to our warfighting the way that we could or should."

The military also is having to fight in nontraditional environments like Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti, "so we need to be able to change and do things differently," Wenzel said.

The Space Battlelab, he said, facilitates such innovative approaches — a crucial element to the Air Force's future success.

The battlelab is one of six designed to advance the service's core competencies.
Rhodes to command 165th Airlift Squadron

Fleming retires after 26 years’ service

By Staff Sgt. Dale Greer
Cargo Courier Editor

Lt. Col. Paul Rhodes has been named commander of the 165th Airlift Squadron, replacing Lt. Col. John Fleming, who retired last month after 26 years’ service in the Air Force and Air National Guard.

Rhodes said he’s looking forward to his new duties, and he offered high praise for his predecessor.

“I’m pretty excited about this,” the command navigator said. “I’m following in some pretty big footsteps. John Fleming was one of the finest and most dedicated squadron commanders we’ve had. He’s done an excellent job over the past two and a half years, and it’s going to be a big challenge to maintain the quality he’s established as his norm.”

Rhodes joined the Kentucky Air Guard in 1976 after four years as a radar navigator in the active duty Air Force.

Since entering the Guard, he has served as an operations plans officer, commander of the Operations Support Flight, assistant chief of operations training, and a standards and evaluation officer for both RF-4C and C-130 aircraft.

Most recently, Rhodes was Squadron Operations Officer for the 165th Airlift Squadron. He will continue to serve as a full-time flying training instructor.

Rhodes completed Air Command and Staff College in 1993 and has more than 4,500 flying hours in the B-52D/F/H, RF-4C and C-130 B/E/H.

Promotions in the Kentucky Air National Guard

The following servicemembers have been promoted in the Kentucky Air National Guard.

► TO AIRMAN (E-2): Kristie Harden, 123rd Airlift Wing; Scott Terrill, 123rd Security Police Sq.; Jennifer Williams, 123rd Student Fld.

► TO AIRMAN 1ST CLASS (E-3): Andrew Walters, 123rd Civil Engineering Sq.

► TO SENIOR AIRMAN (E-4): Kristopher Beasley, 123rd Logistics Sq.; Timothy Gagnon, 165th Airlift Sq.; Lewis Walker, 123rd Communications Fld.; Chad Walters, 123rd Maintenance Sq.


► TO MASTER SGT. (E-7): Audrey Barney, 123rd Aerial Port Sq.; Victor Dry, 205th Combat Communications Sq.; Steven Holiday, 123rd Maintenance Sq.; Ronald Lucas, 123rd Aerial Port Sq.

► TO SENIOR MASTER SGT. (E-8): Sheila Atwell, 123rd Services Flight; Carl Evans, Headquarters KyANG; David Fink, 123rd Maintenance Sq.; Ronald George, 123rd Aerial Port Sq.; Mark Hall, 123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.; Anthony Hettinger, 123rd Civil Engineering Sq.; Ralph Lowery, 123rd Civil Engineering Sq.; Robert Wagner Jr., 123rd Airlift Wing; David Fink, 123rd Maintenance Sq.

► TO CHIEF MASTER SGT. (E-9): Michael Meredith, 123rd Civil Engineering Sq.; David Orange Sr., 123rd Airlift Wing; David Pope, Headquarters, KyANG.

► 1ST LT. (O-2): Catherine Newell, 165th Airlift Sq.

► TO CAPTAIN (O-3): Diane Byerly, 123rd Civil Engineering Sq.; David Velander, 165th Airlift Sq.

► TO MAJOR (O-4): Kenneth Dale, 165th Airlift Sq.; Deborah Foster, Headquarters KyANG; Barry McCall, 123rd Aerial Port Sq.; Neil Mulaney, 123rd Operations Support Flt.; Philip Palmer Jr., 123rd Logistics Sq.