

THE CARGO COURIER

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

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Medical unit treats Katrina relief troops

23 Kentucky Airmen deploy for mission in Louisiana, Mississippi

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

Twenty-three members of the wing's 123rd Medical Group deployed to the hurricane-stricken Gulf Coast in September and October to provide badly needed medical services as part of Joint Task Force Katrina.

Fifteen of the Airmen deployed in two rotations to Naval Air Station New Orleans to establish an expeditionary field hospital, said Lt. Col. Diana Shoop, an administrator for the medical group. Meanwhile, eight more Kentucky troops provided medical and public health services at multiple locations in Mississippi, including the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center.

The first wave of Airmen, which included physicians, nurses and an optometrist, deployed to Louisiana on Sept. 6 and joined with approximately 100 other military members to establish an Expeditionary Medical Services facility.

This field hospital — basically a series

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Top right: Maj. Donna Hunsaker, a physician with the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Medical Group, treats a soldier who was injured during relief operations for Hurricane Katrina. Hunsaker was one of 15 KyANG troops who deployed to Louisiana in September and October to provide medical care for military members and civilian contractors.

Bottom right: Servicemembers are evacuated from Louisiana to Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio.



Photos courtesy 123rd Medical Group



An action-packed year draws to a close, but more challenges lie ahead

W

elcome to the December Unit Training Assembly and a quick turn from our last gathering in November.

I hope that you had a safe and memory-filled Thanksgiving with your families and are now planning a festive holiday season.

I always look forward to this time of year for the opportunity to take some time off and reflect back on the year behind us and project forward on those things that lie ahead.

Our wing has experienced a tremendous year of service in 2005.

We began the year with members deployed around the globe, and we have continued the deploy-redeploy cycle throughout the year.

We will close as we began, with 123rd members separated from their families through the holidays, often in harm's way, to accomplish the mission.

Not only have we responded to every tasking in the Global War on Terror, but we've stepped up as a team to bring life-saving and life-sustaining aid to Americans in distress from the ravages of a history-making hurricane season of destruction.

You can each be proud of your accom-



Col. Mark Kraus
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

plishments and know that your contribution made an important difference to so many people and in so many ways.

"Action-packed" will aptly describe our expectations for 2006.

Preparations will continue for the wing's Operational Readiness Inspection in April.

In the months preceding April, count on making the best of the time allotted

to sharpen your skills to the fine edge necessary to successfully complete this combat readiness evaluation.

The 165th Airlift Squadron will roll from the ORI into an Air Mobility Command Standardization/Evaluation Inspection in late summer, and the wing will sponsor an Annual Field Training deployment modeled after this year's successful trip to Gulfport, Miss.

Wow!

These things alone would keep us all busy enough, but without doubt, challenges also await that can not be predicted, planned for or penciled in on the calendar.

No matter. I'm confident that together we can rise to the occasion, take them in stride and get the job done.

Please take advantage of this opportunity for some well-deserved downtime to recharge the batteries and come back ready to roll.

Have a joyous, restful and safe holiday season.

I'm looking forward to working and serving with you in the new year ahead.

See you then, and thanks for all that you do.

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Our office is located in room 2118 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is Dec. 5.

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Ewing honored as top life support troop

Special tactics member named outstanding senior NCO for ANG

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

Master Sgt. Lamar Ewing has been honored by the National Guard Bureau for exceptional performance as a life support troop, earning the career field's 2004 Outstanding Senior NCO of the Year title for the Air National Guard.

Sergeant Ewing, a 12-year veteran of the Kentucky Air National Guard, is chief of the life support section in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

"This is a well-deserved honor for Sergeant Ewing, who's an extremely dedicated individual with an encyclopedic knowledge of his career field," said his supervisor, Senior Master Sgt. Jon Rosa. "In fact, the career field manager for the Air Guard frequently seeks his expertise on many life support issues.

"He's also very proactive in his shop. He stays on the leading edge of technology in terms of the equipment we can use here, like new oxygen systems or face masks."

Sergeant Ewing's list of accomplishments is lengthy. He was the first person to establish a life support section in the Air National Guard; he wrote and implemented the Air Guard's first special tactics squadron life support instructions and policies; and he created a training syllabus instructing Air Guard aerial port squadrons on the proper use of night-vision goggles for combat loading and unloading of aircraft in hostile environments.

Sergeant Ewing also served as a technical advisor to a defense contractor involved in quality-control testing of night-vision goggles and is widely regarded as a national expert in cold-weather survival, Sergeant Rosa said.

Sergeant Ewing appreciates the recognition, but he's simply thankful to work in a career field that allows his ready access to state-of-the-art equipment.

He also said he appreciates the work environment of the special tactics squadron, which he likened to a family.

"I really enjoy the camaraderie here," Sergeant Ewing said. "It's a smaller unit, and you can have personal relationships with just about everybody."



Staff Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

NGB frequently taps Master Sgt. Lamar Ewing for his expertise.

CORRECTION

An article in the November edition of the Cargo Courier incorrectly stated the year in which Col. Robert Yaple was commissioned through ROTC. Colonel Yaple, a brigadier general selectee, received his commission in 1980.

He currently serves as Kentucky's assistant adjutant general for Air.

Airman remembered for his sense of duty

A Kentucky Air Guardsman who died Nov. 8 following an apparent altercation at a Louisville skating rink is being remembered for his dedication.

Airman Royce A. Robinson Jr., who enlisted in the wing on Sept. 17, was assigned to the 123rd Student Flight.

"Although he was with us only a short time, Airman Robinson repre-

sented the essence of selflessness and service that we hold dear in the Kentucky Air National Guard," said Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"His commitment to the defense of our nation will not be forgotten."

Louisville police continue to investigate Robinson's death.

Hurricane

Continued from Front Page

of tent-like shelters — offered in-patient medical care, dental services, an x-ray lab, an intensive care unit, an emergency room and an outpatient clinic, said Lt. Col. William Adkisson, a physician assistant in the 123rd Medical Group.

With the hospital soon up and running, the Airmen turned their attention to serving nearly 50,000 military members and civilian contractors who were carrying out relief efforts around New Orleans, Colonel Adkisson said.

Judging by initial numbers, the need was pressing: More than 800 people were treated at the facility in its first two weeks of operation, said Maj. Elizabeth Leistensnider, who served as a senior administrator on the deployment.

Maladies ranged from simple colds and rashes to moderately severe lacerations and broken bones.

More emergent cases were airlifted either to Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio or the U.S.S. Iwo Jima, which boasted on-board surgical suites and was docked nearby. Some patients also were transported to the one local hospital that remained open.

“Helicopters were bringing us patients right and left,” Colonel Adkisson recalled. “These relief workers were doing extremely physical tasks in terrible conditions. They were exposed to flood waters that were contaminated with all kinds of hazardous chemicals, and they sustained a lot of cuts and lacerations.

“We also took care of numerous back injuries. I’d say 60 percent of the problems we saw were musculoskeletal.”

Despite the painful nature of these injuries, the troops remained in high spirits because they knew they were receiving first-rate care, Colonel Adkisson said.

“I don’t know how many of them came up to me and said, ‘I’m glad you’re here.’ It really made them feel good to know they had a top-notch medical facility to go to if they became injured.”

That kind of response made the mission a personally rewarding one, Colonel Adkisson said.

“We weren’t out there pulling people off

the rooftops, but we were a critical part of the machine,” he said. “All those people who were out there on the front lines were in good hands because we were there to take care of them.”

The contributions of public health professionals were equally important to the success of relief operations, officials said.

Three individuals from the 123rd Medical Group’s public health section deployed to Mississippi from Sept. 10 to 30 to monitor critical issues like water quality and sanitation in the Gulfport area.

Thousands of Army troops were being housed in tent cities at the Gulfport CRTC, for example, but the base plumbing system was full of bacteria-contaminated water.

“The potential was there for a major public health issue, particularly because of the water situation,” said Lt. Col. Carney Jackson, public health officer in the 123rd Medical Group.

Job One was to ensure that troops had ready access to potable water, either by supplying bottled sources or providing water buffaloes and tankers trucked in from off base. Water initially was being hauled from Hattiesburg, Miss., two hours away, but Colonel Jackson was able to locate a source of potable water on a Navy See Bees base just 15 minutes from the CRTC.

Meanwhile, the three Kentucky Airmen joined with public and bioenvironmental health professionals from other Guard units to purge and stabilize the base water system, which eventually was certified for potability on Oct. 30.

The Airmen also conducted regular inspections of makeshift shower facilities, dining halls and field kitchens to ensure that sanitary conditions were maintained.

“There were no reports of major gastrointestinal issues, which meant that public health had done its job well,” Colonel Jackson said.

“Ultimately, we were working to get the CRTC dorms, which had been damaged by the storm, back online.”

“We wanted to provide the recovery workers with a place they could come back to each night that had safe food and safe drinking water. We wanted them to be able to take a shower and not have to worry about any health issues from that water.

“It was a good feeling to know that we did eventually achieve that.”



Above: A military member arrives for medical care aboard an Army National Guard helicopter. The helicopter was in its first two weeks of operation.

Below: Tech. Sgt. Kim Harward of the Delaware National Guard, 17th Street Army in Gulfport, Miss.





Photos courtesy 123rd Medical Group

ical treatment at Naval Air Station New Orleans
More than 800 patients were treated at the facility

are Air Guard checks water potability outside the



Chaplain counsels troops in aftermath of Katrina

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

Lt. Col. Tom Curry says his recent deployment to Mississippi to minister to hurricane relief workers stands as a highlight of his 23-year career.

The 123rd Airlift Wing chaplain, who deployed Sept. 6 along with chaplain's assistant Staff Sgt. Billy Lain, spent 11 days traveling the southwestern corner of the state, visiting with 175 Indiana National Guardsmen mobilized to 10 different cities following Hurricane Katrina.

Along the way, they conducted more than 30 counseling sessions with stressed-out soldiers, held 15 prayer services and visited eight Red Cross relief centers.

This part of the state received minor damage during the storm, Colonel Curry said, but it was struggling to deal with a massive influx of evacuees who needed food, shelter, clothing and other assistance.

The Guardsmen were one of the primary conduits for the distribution of relief supplies, and they also provided security at FEMA and Red Cross facilities where financial assistance was disbursed.

"We tried to talk to as many of the troops as we could," Colonel Curry said. "The point was to debrief them and let them talk about the stressful situations they were dealing with.

"The heat and humidity were just terrible, the Guardsmen were working very long days, and they witnessed a lot of traumatized families.

"But they also knew they were doing good work, and a lot of the evacuees expressed deep appreciation for the fact that the Guard was there."

Several of the Guardsmen spoke of the contrast between their deployments

overseas, where they were seen with suspicion, and their deployment to Mississippi, where the people were usually very receptive.

But relations weren't always so pleasant. Colonel Curry recalled an incident at a high school in Vicksburg that was precipitated when Red Cross officials decided to shut down a benefits processing line before all those in line could be served. The result was 350 angry, frustrated evacuees.

"The National Guard troops began forming a line in the middle of the high school to protect the Red Cross work-



Photo courtesy Lt. Col. Tom Curry

Lt. Col. Tom Curry meets with deployed Guardsmen.

ers from the angry crowd on the other side," Colonel Curry said.

It was clearly time for some crisis intervention skills, so the chaplain met with the Red Cross leaders and convinced them to see everybody.

He also met with the evacuees in small groups, explained that the Red Cross and the Guard were trying to help, and asked if everyone would join together in prayer. Afterward, Colonel Curry and Sergeant Lain passed out candy bars, which he said were received "like gold."

"So a crowd that was potentially hostile turned into our best friends, and everybody left that day shaking the hands of the Guardsmen who had been standing between them and the Red Cross.

"To bring peace and keep hope alive among these people was a real blessing to me. It's one of the best assignments I've ever had.

Kentucky shooter honing skills on USAF team



Photo courtesy Master Sgt. James Johnson

Master Sgt. James Johnson demonstrates the standing and prone positions.



File photo

123rd marksman still aiming for U.S. Olympic Team in '08

**By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer**

The road to an Olympic gold medal begins in earnest this weekend for Master Sgt. James Johnson, a combat controller in the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

Sergeant Johnson will be competing through Monday in a marksmanship match that serves to identify members of USA Shooting's National Team. These marksmen will form the drawing pool for America's Olympic hopefuls in 2008.

"This match starts the process," Sergeant Johnson said of the National Team Tryouts, which are being held at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. "It will set the tone for the next two years, until the 2008 Olympics."

During those two years, Sergeant Johnson will compete in numerous international competitions, trying to accumulate enough first-, second- and third-place finishes to earn a spot in the Beijing Olympics.

A gold medal may sound like a grand aspiration for a shooter who only began competing at the national level last year, but Sergeant Johnson has come a long way in a short time.

Impressive showings at the 2004 National Rifle and Pistol Championships earned Sergeant Johnson and a KyANG colleague, Tech. Sgt. Frank Tallman, admission to the U.S. Air Force Marksmanship Team — all-time firsts for members of the Air National Guard.

Since that time, Sergeant Johnson has continued to hone his skills in a dozen matches held across the country, scoring several personal bests and multiple top-three rankings.

In fact, Sergeant Johnson typically finishes within a few rankings of his far more experienced USAF team members, and he's now one of the squad's primary shooters. (Sergeant Tallman, a radio maintenance technician with the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, is currently deployed overseas and remains on the team's developmental squad.)

Sergeant Johnson's scores took a considerable jump this past spring after he invested \$3,000 in a new rifle to replace an aging Winchester on loan from the base.

"The new rifle fits me so much better than the one I was issued here," he explained. "My scores increased 20 or 30 points right off the bat."

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DOD to begin BRAC closures, realignments

Kentucky Air Guard maintains authorization for 8 primary aircraft

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Base Realignment and Closure Commission's recommendations for reshaping the Defense Department's infrastructure and force structure took effect Nov. 9.

Congress allowed the commission recommendations to pass into law at the mandated Nov. 8 deadline.

The nine-member BRAC panel delivered its final report to President George Bush Sept. 8. He, in turn, sent it to Congress for legislative review Sept. 15. Congress had 45 legislative days — until Nov. 9 — to accept or reject the report in its entirety.

However, Congress was not authorized to make any changes to the final report.

By statute, the Defense Department now has until Sept. 15, 2007 — two years from the date the president sent Congress the BRAC commission's final report — to begin closing and realigning the installations as called for in the report. The process must be completed by Sept. 15, 2011, DOD officials said.

The Kentucky Air National Guard will remain largely unaffected by the closures, according to the committee's final recommendations.

Wing leaders initially hoped Kentucky would gain C-130 aircraft from other units slated for reductions, but that no longer appears to be the case.

The final recommendations call for the 123rd Airlift Wing to maintain its current authorization of eight primary aircraft.

The 2005 BRAC recommendations represent the most aggressive BRAC ever proposed, affecting more than 800 installations, officials said.

The four previous BRAC rounds — in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 — resulted in 97 major closures, 55 major realignments and 235 minor actions, according to DOD figures.

Overall, closing and realigning these installations saved taxpayers around \$18 billion though fiscal 2001 and a further \$7 billion per year since, officials said.

BRAC 2005 is being called an important milestone in restructuring the department's domestic base structure to improve efficiency and operational capabilities.

It also supports plans to move thousands of U.S. forces — currently serving overseas — to within the United States as part of DOD's new global positioning strategy, officials said.

After months of study, installation visits and public hearings around the country, the BRAC panel approved 86 percent of DOD's original recommendations — 119 with no change and another 45 with amendments, the panel said.

The panel also rejected 13 recommendations, significantly modified another 13, and made five additional closure or realignment recommendations on its own initiative.

Of DOD's 33 major closure recommendations, the panel approved 21, recommended seven bases be realigned rather than closed, and rejected five recommendations outright.

In addition, the commission recommended closing rather than realigning another installation, for a total of 22 major closures.

Many of the transformational recommendations in the report, particularly those to establish joint operations, will present sig-

nificant challenges as they are implemented, officials acknowledged.

Detailed business plans will be developed for every BRAC recommendation, laying out what actions are required to implement them, when they will occur and what resources are needed to put them into effect, officials said.

Affected services and agencies must submit these plans by Nov. 15 to the DOD Installation Capabilities Council, which will review them and forward them to the Infrastructure Steering Group for approval.

Meanwhile, the department is poised to begin working with civilian employees and communities affected by the BRAC decisions.

DOD has a long and successful history of helping its civilian workers impacted by base closings, officials noted. This includes programs that promote placement, training, retraining and transition to new positions.

Since 1989, DOD has reduced its civilian work force by 428,400 people, with less than 10 percent of those reductions through involuntary separations, officials said.

The department's Priority Placement Program — which officials call the centerpiece of DOD's Civilian Assistance and Reemployment programs — gives defense employees placement priority at other DOD facilities.

The department's Office of Economic Adjustment will take the lead for the federal government in helping communities affected by base closures and realignments, working cooperatively with the President's Economic Adjustment Committee, officials said.

A community conference, to be held in Baltimore Nov. 28 through Dec. 1, will focus on many of the issues involved in BRAC 2005 and the programs available to address them.

Health program designed to help returning troops

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Servicemembers returning from deployments will now participate in a post-deployment health reassessment program that all the services are instituting.

Defense Department officials said the new program will assess the health — both physical and mental — of servicemembers from 90 to 120 days after they have redeployed.

"We recognize deployments may have an impact on the health and well-being of our servicemembers, and we know from research that health concerns are identified even sev-

eral months after returning from operational deployments," said William Winkenwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

Active-duty and reserve servicemembers will be treated exactly the same, he said.

Unit commanders are charged with ensuring servicemembers participate.

Honoring Service

James M. Gannon, who retired from the Kentucky Air National Guard at the rank of major, addresses a crowd of recent retirees and family members in front of the Wing Headquarters Building Nov. 20.

The event honored 54 Airmen who retired from the Kentucky Air Guard in 2004. Their names have now been added to marble tablets listing all retirees since the unit's inception in 1947. The tablets were provided by the 50th Static Group, an organization of KyANG retirees.



Tech Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Marksman

Continued from Page 6

Sergeant Johnson is shooting so well, in fact, that he found himself in first place midway through this summer's America's Cup finals while competing against a gold-medal Olympian and a world-record holder.

He would later drop to eighth place after scoring a series of 9s — 10s would have been necessary to maintain a lead at this level — but his achievement was still remarkable.

“Once it was over, I was like, ‘Holy Cow!’ It really got my confidence up. Now I know that if I don’t shoot a 585 or better (out of 600) in prone rifle, I’m just having a really bad day,” he said.

“I guess I need to start planning on winning. That kind of confidence goes a long way.”

As for this weekend's competition, Sergeant Johnson's attitude reflects his new mind-set.

“I'd like to think I'll make the national team,” he said. “At the very least, I expect to finish in the top 10 or 15 percent.”

The Olympics await.

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