123rd Airlift Wing earns sixth Distinguished Flying Plaque

By 2nd Lt. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The 123rd Airlift Wing was selected last month by the National Guard Association of the United States to receive its sixth Distinguished Flying Unit Plaque. The honor is given annually to the top five Air National Guard flying units.

"This prestigious award recognizes the 123rd Airlift Wing for its many significant and outstanding accomplishments as members of our total Air Force," said Brig. Gen. John R. Groves, Kentucky's adjutant general.

"It is particularly rewarding to the Kentucky National Guard because it validates the hard work and professionalism the men and women of the 123rd Airlift Wing consistently display across the globe."

The wing received the award for its consistently high standards of excellence in everything from flight safety to mission accomplishment.

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1997, members of the Kentucky Air Guard participated in two major contingency operations overseas, providing airlift services in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Saudi Arabia.

Back home, wing members responded in record numbers when unprecedented flooding hit the state. They also organized Thunder Over Louisville, one of only two marquee events honoring the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force.

"This is a great honor that reflects the dedication and determination of every member of the wing," said Col. Michael Harken, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"I hope that everyone is as proud of this award as I am."

The wing's continued record of flight safety helped earn it the 1998 Distinguished Flying Unit Plaque from the National Guard Association.

123rd AW • Air National Guard awards & honors


- **CURTIS N. "RUSTY" METCALF TROPHY** — 1994: Presented annually to the airlift or air refueling unit that demonstrates the highest standards of mission accomplishment.
Wing's future depends on our readiness

A powerful, harmonious military organization, comprised of proud citizens, dedicated to the profession of arms, prepared to successfully wage war, and provide world class service to community, state and nation.

This is the third and final installment of columns that attempts to explain and expand on our vision statement.

The first column talked about our organization, and last month we talked about our people. This month we will talk about our purpose — why we are necessary now, and why we will be vital in the future.

Our vision statement says we must be "prepared to successfully wage war and add value to community, state and nation."

This is the essence of why we exist.

Any National Guard unit in the country exists to serve two masters — its state and nation. This fact is what separates us from the active duty Air Force or Army, and it even separates us from the Reserves.

We have a mission to support the vital interests of the United States and to also support our fellow Kentuckians when called upon during state crises. We do that now, and we must continue to do that in the future.

The vision of an organization is a simple statement of what it wants to become. The 123rd must always strive to better perform our mission.

This translates into readiness, and readiness for this unit means being prepared to successfully wage war. We must never shirk that responsibility.

Readiness is what we are about. It is imbedded in the core of our organization. It is why we exist, why the American people pay our salaries, supply us with state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, and hold us in such high esteem and respect. We are an equal partner in the total force for the simple reason that we are ready to go to war, and everyone knows it.

It is an iron clad fact that the Total Air Force could not do its job without the Air National Guard and the 123rd Airlift Wing. When a theater CINC calls for tactical airlift, he does not care whether he gets it from the active Air Force or the ANG.

We have built this position of respect over the years because we take pride in our ability to maintain readiness with a mostly part-time force.

It is critical that every member of this wing be prepared both mentally and physically to go to war, win and then return home with honor. Leadership at all levels must ensure that the wing is supplied with good people, and that these people are motivated and trained to do their job. Equipment must be procured and maintained to allow our airmen to do their job in facilities that are comfortable, are conducive to mission accomplishment and foster pride in their surroundings.

Anything less is unacceptable and will undermine our reputation and future survival as a relevant combat force.

Not only do we strive to be ready to successfully wage war, we must also be ready to assist our neighbors during state and community crises.

We must support state officials when called, and make our people, equipment and facilities available. This state mission makes us unique in the military forces of our nation, and we should welcome the call and never shirk from this responsibility.

We want the community to know that we are ready to help. We want them to take pride in the Kentucky Air National Guard as a unit that is ready to assist across the world or across the street.

Only by maintaining our excellent reputation in the community can we continue to recruit our neighbors and motivate the young people of our community to join our organization.

Well, there you have it. It has taken me three columns and several months to explain what I mean by our one-sentence vision statement. I firmly believe that this statement sums up what we want to become, and if we are successful in attaining this vision, the 123rd will be always be a formidable force. I hope that you believe it, too.

So Sayeth The Loud,

Michael L. Harden
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

This funded Air Force newspaper is published for members of the military services. Contents of The Cargo Courier are not necessarily the views of the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, or the Air Force.

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The Cargo Courier
June 6, 1998
Ecuador mission opening **Nuevos Horizontes**

By Maj. Ralinda Gregor
KYANG Chief of Public Affairs

This summer, more than 1,300 members of the Kentucky National Guard will take part in the largest-ever U.S. joint training exercise in South America.

The Kentucky citizen-soldiers will deploy to the Esmeraldas province along Ecuador's northern coast for the United States Southern Command exercise "Nuevos Horizontes '98."

The exercise, which runs from April 29 to Sept. 5, is unique because active Army and Air Force participants will come under control of National Guard forces that have command-and-control responsibility, said Maj. Phil Miller, public affairs officer for the Kentucky National Guard.

It also is the first overseas training exercise conducted jointly by Kentucky's Army and Air National Guard, involving personnel from engineering, medical, aviation, water purification and maintenance units.

“Our primary objective is to train soldiers and airmen,” said Brig. Gen. John R. Groves, Kentucky's adjutant general.

"Nuevos Horizontes not only provides an excellent opportunity to refine individual military professional skills, it also allows us to mobilize and deploy from the United States into a remote environment while helping to improve the quality of life of the people of Ecuador."

The exercise is an important one for the Kentucky National Guard because this newly forged relationship with Ecuador is similar to those between several other states and former Soviet bloc countries.

"Kykentucky's partnership with Ecuador is the first between a National Guard in the United States and a nation in South America," Miller said.

Nuevos Horizontes, which means "new horizons," in Spanish, is "separate from SOUTHCOM's partnership initiative, but it is an excellent parallel activity that allows a greater number of Kentucky Guard members to get involved," Miller said.

In all, about 150 Kentucky Air National Guard members will be part of the joint task force working with Ecuadorian defense forces to build schools and clinics and provide medical care, support services and site security from May 16 to July 12.

Between 30 and 40 Air Guard personnel from the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron, 123rd Medical Squadron, 123rd Security Forces Squadron, 123rd Services Squadron and 123rd Communications Flight will deploy on each two-week rotation.

"This exercise gives us outstanding training in deploying to an austere location and constructing a tent city-type bare base," said Lt. Col. Tom Marks, commander of the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron. "All the planning and problem-solving involved with an exercise of this magnitude parallels what we would do if we were deploying to a remote location for combat."

In spite of difficult conditions, Marks said that morale is high among KYANG members deployed to Las Penas. Floods and mudslides caused by six non-stop months of rain have wiped out sections of a major coastal highway and farm-to-market roads, making it difficult for the Kentuckians to transport building materials from Esmeraldas to their remote location. Normally, a ground convoy could make the trip in two hours, but with the mud slides it has taken upwards of six hours when trucks could get through at all.

"Right now, they're driving along the beach to bypass the mud slides," Marks said, "but even that becomes impossible during high tide because the water comes in so far."

Still the airmen manage to look at the bright side.

"They said the insects aren't as bad as they expected, they have showers now and the mobile kitchen is working just fine," Marks reported.

The rewards of helping the Ecuadorian people make the experience worthwhile for many of the Guard members.

"The people are very poor, so it really makes you appreciate what we have at home in Kentucky," said Senior Master Sgt. Ralph Lowery, NCOIC of force management for the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron, who recently returned from Ecuador.

**Major participants**

- Ashland: 201st Engineer Battalion (task force command with units from Olive Hill and Cynthiana)
- Danville: 217th Quartermaster Detachment (water purification)
- Frankfort: 63rd Aviation Group (UH-60 helicopter support)
- Lexington: Detachment 5, AMEDD (medical support); 75th Troop Command
- Louisville: 198th Military Police Battalion (site security); 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron (construction); 123rd Medical Squadron (medical support)
- Richmond: 206th Engineer Battalion (along with units from Carlisle, Jackson, Maysville, Morehead and Prestonsburg)

The Cargo Courier
June 6, 1998
You can help prevent suicide by looking for warning signs

Which individual is most responsible for preventing suicide? The wing commander? The first sergeant? Security Forces? The mental health unit? The chaplain?

The answer is you.

You are the person who notices when someone has a problem. Buddy Care basics require that we get acquainted with the signals of suicide: talking about killing oneself; drastic changes in behavior; withdrawal from friends or social activities; lost interest in hobbies, work or school; preoccupation with death; and increased use of alcohol or drugs.

An individual who is contemplating suicide may be experiencing many problems, like divorce, death of a spouse, pending disciplinary action, financial difficulty or alcohol abuse. There may also be a history of suicide attempts.

What can you do to take care of your buddy?

• Know the warning signs. Pick up the pamphlet Suicide Prevention in your orderly room and study the signals.
• Intervene by talking to individuals whom you suspect may be having suicidal thoughts or feelings. Determine if they are considering suicide and whether they have made any plans to carry it out. Use direct language to discern if they are suicidal.
• Get help. The first sergeant, the commander, the chaplain, security forces, hospital personnel and mental health professionals are all resources to assist you and your buddy.

Take any threat of suicide seriously. It is not true that those who talk about suicide do not commit suicide.

Remember, nothing can hurt your buddy more than suicide. Behavioral medicine is a non-punitive, helping agent.

Many suicides are preventable if people get help soon enough. Your early buddy care may save someone’s life.

—Chaplain Thomas Curry

Personnel flight and food services honored for Air Guard excellence

By 2nd Lt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

Two Kentucky Air Guard units recently were honored for being among the best in the nation.

The 123rd Mission Support Flight was one of only nine Air Guard units to be named Outstanding Military Personnel Flight of the Year for 1997.

And the 123rd Services Flight’s Thoroughbred Dining Hall was selected as the top Air Guard dining facility of 1997, earning the Hennessy Travelers Award for food service excellence.

"Both of these awards reflect the excellence that our members demonstrate each day," said Col. Michael Harden, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"It’s this kind of dedication that makes us one of the best units in the Air Guard."

The personnel flight was recognized for top-notch performance in the areas of customer service; base training and education; and recruiting and retention, said Lt. Col. Michael Dornbush, the unit’s commander.

Judges for the Hennessy competition took special note of the services flight’s training program, team camaraderie and benchmark-level sanitation.

They also gave high marks for the wing’s unusual level of command support during their visit.

"Gen. Torini was working KP that weekend, and Col. Harden gave them an outstanding briefing," said the flight’s Tech. Sgt. Mary Decker.

Volunteers needed for state fair

Volunteers are needed Aug. 20-31 to work as assistants at the Kentucky Air Guard’s recruiting booth at the Kentucky State Fair.

Two shifts are available: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information, contact Master Sgt. Dotenda Stackhouse at 364-9429 or on-base extension 4429.

Cargo Courier staff earns top awards in 2 contests

The staff of the Cargo Courier took top honors in the 1997 Air Force and Thomas Jefferson Department of Defense journalism competitions held this spring.

The Cargo Courier was named the best small funded newspaper in the Air Force and advanced to second place in the DoD competition.

Newly commissioned 2nd Lt. Dale Greer, the Cargo Courier’s editor, shares the awards with Senior Master Sgt. Dave Tinsley, Maj. Rahinda Gregor, Master Sgt. Terry Lutz, Tech. Sgt. Charlie Simpson and Senior Airman Tommy Downs.

Greer also came away with several individual honors.

He was named the Air Force Print Journalist of the Year for exceptional writing in a variety of categories.

Greer also placed first in the DoD and Air Force news writing competitions.

The American Forces Information Service sponsors the annual Thomas Jefferson Awards competition. Print judges were Professor Rose Ann Robertson, director of writing programs, School of Communication, The American University; Glenn W. Goodman, Jr., senior editor, Armed Forces Journal International; and Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News Service.
Coronet Oak'98

The 123rd Airlift Wing deployed 54 aircrew members, maintenance troops and support personnel to Panama between March 28 and April 11 for Coronet Oak '98.

The operation provides transportation and logistical support for ongoing U.S. military exercises and U.S. embassies throughout Central and South American and the Caribbean.

A second rotation is planned for July.

ABOVE: Tech. Sgt. Reed Striegel, a maintainer with the 123rd Maintenance Squadron, examines a Kentucky C-130 during pre-flight inspections in El Salvador.

ABOVE: Capt. Kevin Morris, a navigator with the 165th Airlift Squadron, examines a map during a flight from El Salvador to Panama’s Howard Air Force Base.

RIGHT: Senior Airman Timothy Gagnon, a loadmaster with the 165th Airlift Squadron, helps guide a pallet of used truck tires onto a C-130 before it leaves El Salvador for a return trip to Panama.

Photos by
Master Sgt. Bettina Puckett
Maryland Army National Guard
Dining outs have tradition-rich heritage

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

Nearly every aspect of military life is rooted in custom or symbolism, and dining outs are no exception.

Dating back hundreds of years to the time of the Roman Legions, the tradition began as a way for victors to relish their triumphs and share the spoils of battle. This, naturally, included a large feast.

As the centuries passed, and the last of the Roman Legionaries departed the shores of England and Europe, some of their customs — including the dining out — remained.

Saxon England adopted this ancient tradition during the 10th century, and by this time, the dining out had become more than a military pig-out.

Rules were established about the dining procedures, and strict protocol was observed. In addition, those in attendance were entertained by feats of strength and skill. Leaders always sat at the head of the table, while lesser guests sat in order of rank.

Viking warlords also had their own victory feasts, and as the custom spread throughout Europe, other vocations began adopting the practice. Monks who had vowed to follow a rigid lifestyle had their own form of dining out as part of their monastic life. From the clergy, colleges and universities also adopted the custom.

George Washington's troops borrowed the idea from British soldiers during their stay in Colonial America.

Though they might have been the enemy at the time, we owe much of our basic military heritage to the British Army, and like most things borrowed, we added some aspects of our own.

It had been an accepted practice that officers were never to dine with the enlisted troops because such fraternization was viewed as bad for morale.

However, during the American Revolution, post commanders instituted a program where all officers would dine with enlisted personnel at least once a month and would do so in full military dress.

Our present military program has its start in the U.S. Army Air Corps of World War II, under the direction of General I. H. "Hap" Arnold, when he began what was to be called his "Wing Dings." These were first held at March Field in 1933.

Spouses are now included in dining outs, which helps promote fellowship as a basic part of military organizations. It also is a time for recognition of unit and individual achievements, all of which build unit morale and esprit de corps.

Guests frequently are asked to participate in toasts to honor certain individuals or entities.

This custom began centuries ago when antagonists, fearful that the other may have poisoned his beverage, drank from the same source at the same time.

If no ill effects came to either one, a form of trust was established.

Another tradition of dining outs is the MIA-KIA-POW table.

These feature an empty chair, a lemon slice, salt on the plate, a white tablecloth and a single rose and red ribbon — all symbolic of those who paid a bitter sacrifice for freedom.

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**INVITATION**

All KYANG members, retirees and their spouses or guests are invited to the First Annual Dining Out. Reserve your place at the mess by July 12th for an evening of fun, camaraderie and entertainment!

**When:** Saturday, Aug. 15. Social hour begins at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m.

**Where:** Club Hotel by Doubbletree, 9700 Bluegrass Parkway (formerly the Hurstbourne Hotel and Conference Center)

**Attire:** Mess dress, semi-formal dress or service dress uniform for military personnel. Business suit or tuxedo for civilian men. Long or short dress for civilian women.

**Cost:** $18 for airmen through tech sergeants; $25 for senior NCOs; $27 for company grade officers; and $30 for field grade officers.

**Invitations:** If you do not receive one in the mail, contact your orderly room. Retirees may call Chief Master Sgt. Jim Turpin at (502) 364-8489.
Kentucky combat controllers deploy for 30,000-troop exercise

By Chief Master Sgt. Bill Smith
123rd Special Tactics Flight

Three combat controllers from the 123rd Special Tactics Flight recently joined forces with more than 30,000 other service members for a joint task force exercise called Purple Dragon.


The participants used the latest advances in technology to enhance their ability to deploy rapidly and conduct joint operations during a crisis, said Capt. Jeremy Stoop, commander of the 123rd Special Tactics Flight.

The combat controllers' role in the exercise was to gather intelligence behind enemy lines in preparation for an invasion that would seize control of an enemy airfield.

The airfield would then be used as a drop zone for more than 1,500 Airborne troops.

“Our mission was to covertly enter the enemy's back yard a few days in advance of the invasion and essentially keep an eye on it, relaying our surveillance reports back using satellite communications,” said Hill, who was combat control team leader for the high-altitude high-opening parachute insertion that placed the 12-man surveillance team in enemy territory.

Each team member had a different task. Sprake was responsible for setting up remote-controlled drop zone lights, and Rosa was charged with controlling the drop zone and coordinating the arrival of friendly troops.

“The fictitious enemy area, which was named Bragg Island, was populated by about 200 role players simulating civilian residents and an opposing force from the 101st Airborne Division and 10th Mountain Division,” Hill said.

The controllers dined on MREs during their days leading up to the forced entry and used extensive camouflage to hide their location.

Tensions soon grew, however, as friendly aircraft began approaching the airfield to unload their troops and cargo on Jan. 29.

“Once the C-130s and C-141s turn in and line up, the enemy knows you're coming and, in a way, your cover is blown,” Sprake said.

Humvees, howitzers, ammunition and troops filled the skies over Bragg Island as the simulated invasion and combat operations began around midnight.

“The entire area was blanketed with parachutes, but one chute that was attached to a humvee failed,” Rosa said.

“That vehicle came slamming into the approach end of the drop zone, sending soldiers running everywhere.”

One parachutist also was killed during the exercise, and his death is being investigated by the Army.

“Both of those incidents brought home the reality of training for special operations missions,” Rosa said.

“But the exercise gave us the chance to refine joint tactics, techniques and procedures, and then test how well a joint force can deploy and operate together.”

Wing's bowlers take 2nd in national tournament

Air Guard event coming to Louisville in 2000

A Thoroughbred Express bowling team took second place at the 36th annual ANG Bowling Tournament in Peoria, Ill., last month.


A second Kentucky team failed to earn any trophies, but they managed to score a win nonetheless.

Team members persuaded tournament-goers to select Louisville as the site for the 2000 ANG Bowling Tournament, edging out Milwaukee, Wis.

“This is an excellent opportunity to get involved with unit activities,” said Master Sgt. Dee Riggle, who was a member of the second team.

“Many who remember the successful tournament we held here in 1987 have expressed an interest in assisting again.”

For more information call Riggle at extension 4538 or 574-6020.
Byrne retires after 36 years of service

By 2nd Lt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

Maj. Gen. Stewart R. Byrne retired from military service during a formal ceremony May 7 at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, concluding a military career that spans the better part of four decades.

During those 36 years, the former 123rd Airlift Wing commander established a record of excellence that earned him several high-level appointments, including Air National Guard advisor to the commander, Ninth Air Force and Tactical Air Command.

Byrne is a command pilot with more than 5,000 hours of flight time in a variety of aircraft. During a tour of duty in Vietnam, the pilot flew 300 combat sorties over enemy territory, earning him a silver star from President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Byrne also guided the Kentucky Air Guard through some of the most fundamental changes the wing has ever faced, overseeing the design and construction of a new base in the early 1990s as wing commander.

The unit received its eighth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in 1995 under Byrne's watch.

The general earned his second star shortly after he assumed his last post — assistant to the commander, Pacific Air Forces — in June 1995.

"It was a wonderful career, and I've enjoyed every minute of it," Byrne said. "You don't get the opportunity to do the things I've done without the support of a good unit, and I've been very fortunate to have come from the Kentucky Air Guard.

"I would not have been considered for the jobs that I've held were it not for the dedicated people of the Kentucky Air Guard who have worked so hard to make our unit one of the best in the country."

Byrne began his Air Force career with a commission from the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1962. He completed undergraduate pilot training the next year and became an instructor pilot.

The general served in a variety of active duty posts before joining the Kentucky Air Guard in 1972. While in Louisville, Byrne was named commander of the 165th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron and wing deputy commander for operations.

In 1982, Byrne returned to active duty as an Air National Guard advisor. Eight years later, he briefly assumed the post of vice wing commander for the 123rd Airlift Wing before being named chief of staff, headquarters, Kentucky Air National Guard. Byrne was appointed commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing in April 1992.

Promotions & retirements in the Air Guard

The following servicemembers have been promoted in the Kentucky Air National Guard and as reservists of the United States Air Force:

TO SENIOR AIRMAN (E-4)
- Shaun Cecil,
  123rd Civil Engineers Sq.
- Monte Goldring,
  123rd Airlift Wing
- Jason Michel,
  123rd Civil Engineers Sq.
- Philip Speck,
  123rd Communications Flt.

TO STAFF SGT. (E-5)
- Brian Burgin,
  165th Weather Flt.
- Richard Chenaunt,
  123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Charles Ewing,
  165th Airlift Wing

TO TOTECH. SGT. (E-6)
- Mark Crawford,
  123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.
- William Davis,
  165th Airlift Sq.
- Mark Ellegood,
  123rd Logistics Sq.
- Jonathan Fulkerson,
  123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Robert Semones Jr.,
  165th Airlift Sq.

TO MASTER SGT. (E-7)
- Thomas Gentry,
  123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Delano Jewell,
  123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Julie Webb,
  123rd Mission Support Flt.

TO SENIOR MASTER SGT. (E-9)
- John Grant,
  123rd Airlift Wing

- Steven Peters,
  123rd Civil Engineers Sq.
- Brian Shaughnnessy,
  123rd Logistics Group
- Ronald Smith,
  Headquarters, KyANG

The following servicemembers have retired as reservists of the United States Air Force:

- Lawrence Froman,
  123rd Civil Engineers Sq.
- Dennis Jennings,
  165th Weather Flt.
- Rocky Lainhart,
  123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.
- Larry Middleton,
  123rd Medical Sq.
- Juan Ramos,
  165th Airlift Sq.
- Mark Stevens,
  Headquarters, KyANG
- Nora Weidemeyer,
  123rd Aerial Port Sq.