

THE CARGO COURIER

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

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Savannah deployment preps wing for ORI



Above: Staff Sgt. Mike Helton sets up equipment for a chemical decontamination station at the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center.

Below: Members of the 123rd Airlift Wing fill sandbags for use in the hardening of base facilities.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

6-day exercise tests war-fighting skills, ATSO capabilities

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Nearly 400 members of the 123rd Airlift Wing deployed to the Combat Readiness Training Center here Nov. 3 for a six-day exercise designed to prepare the unit for an upcoming Operational Readiness Inspection.

The Kentucky Airmen were tasked with deploying everything necessary to establish airlift and support operations at a fictional forward operating base. Once in theater, they were required to launch operations in less than two days, survive 48 hours of attacks by hostile forces and then redeploy everything back home by Nov. 8.

The aggressive timeline and wartime scenarios, which included numerous chemical weapon attacks, provided the most realistic training yet for the wing's April 2006 inspection at the hands of inspectors from the Air Mobility Command.

"This deployment gave us a good opportunity to exercise the ORI preparations we've made over the past few months," said Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing. "It was our scrimmage, if you will, to help us identify the things we're doing well and to better understand the areas in which we need to improve.

"I think we met the expectations of the exercise," he added. "There are some areas that will require additional attention, but many of our people have never been involved in an ORI before and didn't know what to expect during this deployment.

"So we took a building-block approach, and I think there were lessons learned almost every minute of every day."

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When disaster strikes, are you ready to roll?

First responder” is a term that has been batted about routinely over the past month and a half or so.

It normally is associated with those men and women whose careers put them first on the scene of natural disasters, emergency or life-threatening situations.

Firefighters, police and emergency medical services technicians come to mind quickly as those who typically fill these roles. Yet today, in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, the scope of first responders is widening and evolving to include each of us in uniform.

The size and severity of a catastrophe such as we’ve seen recently require an “all hands on deck” mentality to counter with sufficient relief forces. This means all of us — both the specially trained and those who fall in the “anyone who can lend a hand” category.

When New Orleans went under water, the Americans trapped on their roofs, in their attics and wading and walking on I-10 didn’t ask for the credentials of those lifesavers who arrived with food, water, shelter or a boat ride to safety; they just took the hand that reached out to them.

Responding to state emergencies has always been a part of the Air National Guard mission. In fact, our dual responsibility — wartime to the nation and peacetime to the state — make us unique among the military services. But we’ve always tended to compartmentalize the two missions, and our main focus has been on our war-fighting capability.

This was easier to do when we balanced flood relief against an all-out Russian assault across Western Europe, but the War on Ter-



Col. Mark Kraus
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

ror is forcing a re-examination of the responsibilities levied upon us. We can no longer assume the luxury of observing the marshaling of troops along a border to let us know we need to catch up on training events that will make us “go-to-war” ready.

The two basic tenets of a first-responder contract are timeliness and sound technical expertise. Think about it: If you reported a fire in your home, what level of confidence would you place in firefighters who could never manage to arrive on scene early enough to save anything but the basement. And imagine the increased level of anxiety you might experience after suffering a life-threatening injury, to note that, as you drift into unconsciousness, the emergency medical technicians attending to you are fumbling

through a checklist to refresh themselves on basic lifesaving skills.

The terrorists who seek to target us desire to strike like many natural disasters, with little or no advance notice. As first responders, we must be ready to respond within hours — not days or weeks. And when we arrive on-scene, we must know our jobs cold. The American public will expect it, demand it and deserve it.

The good news is that those wartime skills we train for abroad are readily transferable to any other mission we might be tasked for here at home. In the simplest of terms, we are expected to be able to pack up, deploy, employ, redeploy and reconstitute.

The Operational Readiness Exercise practicum we recently completed in Savannah, Ga., gave us an opportunity to examine our weak spots so we could make them strong and our strong spots so we could keep them strong.

Readiness is the key ingredient in the recipe for success because readiness equals responsiveness. Our individual readiness will dictate how rapidly we will be able to respond as a wing, and this is first and foremost an individual responsibility.

If you are behind on training or non-current to the degree that you can not gear up and deploy within 12 hours of a catastrophic event, you are like the proverbial firefighter who is left behind, still tugging on his boots as the engines pull away from the firehouse.

We can’t field a winning team short of players, so we must all be 100-percent ready, 100 percent of the time. The stakes are high, the risk is great and, as first responders, a lot of people are counting on us.

Are you ready to roll?

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Our office is located in room 2118 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is Nov. 21.

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An electronic version of the Cargo Courier is available at the Kentucky Air Guard’s Web site — www.kyang.ang.af.mil

Pinning ceremony scheduled for Yaple in December

A pinning ceremony has been scheduled for Dec. 3 in honor of Col. Robert J. Yaple, who is being promoted to the rank of brigadier general.

Colonel Yaple is Kentucky's joint forces air component commander.

He has been a member of the Kentucky Air Guard for more than 20 years and has held a variety of positions at all levels of operations, including pilot and navigator.

Colonel Yaple was commissioned through the University of Vermont's ROTC program in 1990 and attended the Armor Officer Basic Course at Fort Knox, Ky., before joining the Kentucky Air Guard in 1981.

He began his career here as an RF-4C weapons system operator and, later, a pilot.

Colonel Yaple also has served as a command post officer, flight commander and headquarters director of operations. During his KyANG career, Colonel Yaple has participated in Operations Restore Hope, Joint Endeavor, Provide Promise and Noble Eagle.

The pinning ceremony will be held at 3:30 p.m. in the Base Annex.

Greer wins third place in USAF contest

The Kentucky Air Guard's Capt. Dale Greer recently took third place in the 2004 U.S. Air Force Print Journalist of the Year competition.

The annual contest, which evaluates top military journalists from across the active duty, Guard and Reserve, was sponsored by the Air Force News Agency.

Captain Greer, who is public affairs officer for the 123rd Airlift Wing, previously won second place in 1998 and first place in 1997.

Climate survey seeks input from Air Guard members

Online forum accepting Airmen's opinions now; campaign ends Nov. 23

Cargo Courier staff report

If you've ever wanted to gain the ear of top Air Force officials, now is your chance — but you must act by Nov. 23.

That's the day the 2005 Air Force Climate Survey closes, ending your annual opportunity to share opinions with the highest-level USAF brass.

The survey, themed "Speak Today, Shape Tomorrow," provides a unique total-force perspective and is open to active duty, Reserve, Air National Guard and both appropriated and nonappropriated funded civilians.

The identities of all participants are protected, and every response is reviewed for consideration.

In past surveys, respondents have provided feedback on issues that affect their organizations' ability to perform the mission, such as resources, training and development, and unit flexibility.

This year, respondents are being asked to provide feedback on their immediate supervisor's "enduring competencies."

The Air Force's enduring competencies are the personal, managerial and leadership qualities that should be common to all Air Force members.

These results will provide senior leaders with a valuable baseline of the competencies used for force development, officials said.

"What you say today really can shape tomorrow," said Chief Master Sgt. Ken Wade, the Kentucky Air Guard's state human resource advisor.

"We realize people are busy and the operation tempo is high, but maximum participation is crucial for gaining a realistic and comprehensive assessment of Air Force issues and concerns."

Chief Wade noted that the survey shouldn't take long to complete, and it can be accessed via any Internet-enabled com-

puter, on or off base.

The 2005 survey will assess 13 factors:

- Leadership
- Supervision
- Unit performance outcomes
- General satisfaction
- Unit resources
- Unit flexibility
- Training and development
- Recognition, teamwork
- Core values
- Job characteristics
- Job enhancement
- Participation and involvement

Members will be able to access the survey directly from the Air Force Climate Survey Web site — <https://afclimate.survey.af.mil/>.

Upon accessing the survey, each member will create a unique login ID and password. At any point during the survey, the member can log-out and log-in again using his or her individual login ID and password.

"The survey can be started on base and finished at home, or vice-versa," Chief Wade said.

Officials at the highest levels of the Air Force are encouraging participation, including Gen. T. Michael Moseley, Air Force chief of staff.

"This survey will help us ensure we are taking care of our most important asset — our people," General Moseley said.

"We have used the most advanced information-masking reporting software available to ensure your identity will be protected. The questions in the survey itself are intentionally hard-hitting, and I fully expect your direct, honest and candid feedback."

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald R. Murray echoed General Moseley's sentiments.

"It's your chance to provide honest and straightforward answers to issues that directly affect you and your fellow Airmen," Chief Murray said.

For more information on the survey, call Chief Master Sgt. Ken Wade on base at extension 4172.

Information for this article also was provided by the Air Force News Service.

Wing completes hurricane relief operations

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

One of the busiest hurricane seasons in history made for an equally busy deployment schedule at the Kentucky Air Guard this summer.

Nearly 100 wing members deployed to the Gulf Coast region between Aug. 31 and Oct. 8 in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, providing everything from cargo processing and security police to food services and air traffic control.

• **123rd Security Forces Squadron:** 31 members of this unit left Louisville for Naval Air Station New Orleans on Sept. 2, said Master Sgt. Jon Fulkerson. While in New Orleans, the Kentucky Airmen provided security at a railroad crossing as 600 displaced citizens were evacuated to Shreveport, La., aboard Amtrak passenger cars.

By Sept. 5, the Airmen had relocated to Baton Rouge, La., where they were tasked with providing security at two facilities on the campus of Louisiana State University.

One of the buildings — the Pete Maravich Assembly Center — was being used as a field hospital, with patients arriving by ambulance and helicopter.

The following day, Sergeant Fulkerson and the other security forces were assigned to join Baton Rouge police who were protecting evacuees and workers at a Red Cross shelter in the River City Convention Center.

“When we arrived on scene, there were approximately 4,000 individuals at that location,” he said. “The Baton Rouge Police Department was very happy that we had arrived to assist them.”

With the exception of one other mission — providing security at the state’s main pharmaceutical supply warehouse, which had been set up in response to Katrina — the Kentucky troops remained at the convention center until they returned home Sept. 22.

“It was very challenging work,” Sergeant Fulkerson said. “A lot of people were still in shock because they’d never faced anything like this before and didn’t know where to turn. It caused a lot of frustration.”

At the same time, the evacuees seemed deeply thankful for any kind gesture, he said.

“One day, Staff Sgt. Kevin Roy and I handed out about 60 cases of water to people as they were processing through a line at the Food Stamp distribution center, and they were so appreciative of that.

“If anyone on this deployment had ever questioned why they joined the Guard, I think their question was answered in Louisiana: We did it because we want to help people in any way we can.”

• **Tanker-Airlift Control Element:** This section, which is composed of members from the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron and the 123rd Airlift Control Flight, deployed twice — first in response to Katrina (from Sept. 3 to 19) and again for Rita (from Sept. 26 to Oct. 3). Both times, the unit operated from the former England Air Force Base in Alexandria, La., providing air cargo services. The first rotation was composed of 24 personnel, while the second deployment consisted of 21 Airmen.

“Our initial tasking was to go down and assist the Coast Guard, which was flying water and MREs into Naval Air Station New Orleans after Katrina hit,” said Maj. Kevin Morris, acting commander of the TALCE.

“They weren’t very efficient at building, weighing and marking pallets, so they were only getting one C-130 a day down to New Orleans with supplies.

“They asked us to come down, and once we got nets and pallets brought in, our aerial porters built up 80 pallets in two days. The Coast Guard guys were just floored by that, because they had been moving eight pallets a day if they were lucky.”

By the time that first tour was over, the TALCE had helped move about 250 short tons of cargo and approximately 800 troops who were engaged in relief operations, Major Morris said.

The second rotation primarily focused on troop movements, with about 1,200 being passengers processed. That work dried up quickly, however, so the Kentucky Airmen began helping relief workers distribute food and clothing to the needy.

“We hauled two 25-foot box trucks full of donated clothes from a warehouse to the coliseum, which had been set up as a shelter,” said Senior Master Sgt. Ray Dawson. “Those clothes were gone within hours, because people had nothing.

“That was a really rewarding experience. We

got to do something right here in our own country that truly helped people in a time of need.”

• **123rd Special Tactics Squadron:** These Kentucky Airmen also deployed twice, first to conduct search and rescue missions in New Orleans following Katrina, and again to establish air traffic control in the aftermath of Rita (see the Sept. 17 issue of the Cargo Courier for complete coverage of the Katrina mission).

The second deployment sent 12 pararescuemen, combat controllers and support staff to Mississippi’s Naval Air Station Meridian on Sept. 23. Four of those troops went on to Chenault International Airport near Lake Charles, La., to re-establish airport operations the day Rita made landfall.

The four departed for Chenault as the tail end of Rita passed over the state on Sept. 24, and they arrived in Lake Charles by 11:30 the same evening.

At the airport, they discovered a control tower so badly damaged that its equipment was useless for air traffic control, said Master Sgt. William Sprake. Luckily, combat controllers carry on their backs all the radio gear they’ll ever need to set up shop.

After grabbing a few hour’s sleep, the Airmen awoke to begin clearing the runways, taxiways and traffic areas of any debris.

“Once that was done, at about 7:30 a.m., we made a broadcast over a published frequency that there would be air traffic control services provided at this airfield,” he said. “Within a few minutes of making that call, we started getting aircraft in.”

For the next 12 hours, Sergeant Sprake and Tech. Sgt. Robert Fernandez controlled the movements of approximately 225 aircraft before handing off the operation to members of the 82nd Airborne.

“We were the only airport in the area with fuel and air traffic control, so everybody was coming to us,” Sergeant Sprake said. “It became everything for everybody who wanted to get into the Lake Charles area.”

All 12 members of the squadron returned home Sept. 26.

• **123rd Services Flight:** Eight members of this unit deployed to Mississippi’s Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center between Sept. 6 and 30 to provide

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Photo courtesy 123rd Special Tactics Squadron



Photo courtesy 123rd Security Forces Squadron



Photo courtesy 123rd Aerial Port Squadron

Clockwise from left: Tech Sgt. Robert Fernandez climbs the air traffic control tower at Chenault International Airport; members of the 123rd Security Forces Squadron gather for roll call outside the River City Convention Center in Baton Rouge, La.; Kentucky aerial porters load pallets of water aboard a Coast Guard C-130 in Alexandria, La.



Photo courtesy 123rd Aerial Port Squadron

TALCE team members stand in front of the 80 pallets of MREs and water they assembled for Coast Guard airlift missions in Alexandria, La.

Savannah

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The wing was able to launch all its assigned airlift sorties during the exercise and seemed to have a good grasp of the concepts required to function in a chemical-warfare environment, Colonel Kraus said.

These so-called Ability To Survive and Operate, or ATSO, skills were tested repeatedly by placing Airmen in various Mission-Oriented Protective Postures for extended periods of time.

Despite the drills, which required the donning of uncomfortable Chemical Warfare Defense Ensembles — including gas masks and helmets — spirits remained high.

“I saw folks willing to dive in and do the job all week long,” Colonel Kraus said. “And we still had smiles on our faces when we returned home.”

The exercise also gave Kentucky Airmen a chance to interact with their counterparts from the New York Air Guard’s 109th Airlift Wing, which primarily staffed a night shift here. About 200 of the 109th’s Airmen will be evaluated alongside Kentucky troops during the April ORI.

The next step on the road to the ORI is a bit of self-inspection, as leaders begin dissecting after-action reports compiled by members of an Exercise Evaluation Team.

“We’ll be looking for opportunities to improve our processes and capabilities so we can really shine during the ORI,” Colonel Kraus said. “I’m confident we can do well.”



Above: Members of the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron cover palletized equipment with plastic sheeting.



Left: Staff Sgt. William Harkins checks ID for visitors to Building 198.

Below: A forklift driver moves an entry control point shack to a new flightline home.



Michael W. Wynne sworn in as 21st secretary

Air Force Print News

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Michael W. Wynne was sworn in here Nov. 3 in front of 4,200 U.S. Air Force Academy cadets as the 21st secretary of the Air Force.

In this role, he is responsible for the affairs of the Department of the Air Force, including organizing, training, equipping and providing for the welfare of its nearly 370,000 men and women on active duty, 180,000 members of the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve, 160,000 civilians and their families.

As head of the Department of the Air Force, Secretary Wynne is responsible for its functioning and efficiency, the formulation of its policies and programs, and the timely implementation of decisions and instructions of the president of the United States and the secretary of defense.

Mr. Wynne replaces Pete Geren, who has



WYNNE

served as the acting secretary of the Air Force since July 29.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside America’s Airmen and their joint service partners to keep our nation safe,”

Secretary Wynne said.

“With their dedication, skill and sacrifice, they offer an incredible array of options to the president and the nation — from taking the fight to the enemy, providing strategic intelligence to the joint force, or providing humanitarian assistance at home and internationally in the wake of natural disasters.”

Prior to appointment, Secretary Wynne served in the Department of Defense as the principal deputy under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics.

Mr. Wynne served in the Air Force for seven years, ending his service as a captain and assistant professor of astronautics at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Mr. Wynne graduated from the United States Military Academy and also holds a masters’ in electrical engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology and a masters’ in business from the University of Colorado.

‘Virtual Commissary’ offers more online options

By Bonnie Powell Defense Commissary Agency

FORT LEE, Va. — Defense Commissary Agency shoppers looking for a different kind of gift can let their fingers do the clicking at the new Virtual Commissary.

Commissary officials said Virtual Commissary will open up new options of Internet shopping for authorized users.

“We’re excited about DeCA’s first adventure into the world of Internet shopping,” said Patrick Nixon, chief executive officer and acting director for the Defense Commissary Agency.

Virtual Commissary products can also be found on the shelves of “brick and mortar” commissaries, but the unique packaging of products into gift and special occasion baskets adds a new twist at the online store.

With titles like “Camouflage,” “Drill Sergeant” and “Touch of Home,” the baskets offer assortments of crackers, canned cheeses, cookies, candies and even beverages and coffee packs.

“The number of vendors and manufacturers participating will continue to increase — along with the variety of products,” Mr. Nixon said.

To access Virtual Commissary, shoppers

must pass through a secure portal found under the shopping link at www.commissaries.com.

Personal information entered by the customer is validated to ensure they are an authorized shopper.

Access is dependent on whether the customer is entered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.

Military exchanges use a similar method to check for authorization before permitting access to exchange Web sites or online shopping.

Department of Defense civilians stationed overseas who are otherwise authorized to shop at commissaries may not be able to access Virtual Commissary until changes are made to the DEERS database by the Defense Manpower Data Center, DeCA officials here said.

The data center is targeting completion of the changes for late November, just in time for holiday shopping.

Virtual Commissary customers can make selections and fill in their payment and shipping information in one easy and secure step before being transferred to a manufacturer’s site to receive the total cost for the product, including the shipping.

Customers then finalize their purchase.

Shipping and handling charges are similar to those of other Internet shopping sites, and charges will vary depending on the method of shipping selected, location and the speed of delivery requested by the shopper.

Customers can check for availability of delivery to Army Post Office and Fleet Post Office addresses, as well as receive more information on what is in the gift baskets by clicking on the image of the gift basket at Virtual Commissary.

Payment for orders can be made with any credit card accepted in “real” commissaries. Customer information is not archived by DeCA.

“We’re certainly energized by the possibilities offered to our customers through this partnership with industry,” Mr. Nixon said. “The future of online commissary shopping is unlimited.”

Down the road, Virtual Commissary expansion could include making a wide variety of commissary products available.

Such a feature that would allow deployed military servicemembers, retirees and other authorized shoppers to order items they want and need at commissary savings, even if they aren’t near a brick-and-mortar commissary facility.

Hurricane

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cleanup assistance and food services following Katrina, said Staff Sgt. Aaron Foote.

Their first task was to remove moldy carpet and bedding from many of the base housing units, which flooded as Katrina passed through.

“Some of the rooms had standing water up to four inches deep, and the carpet smelled horrible,” Sergeant Foote said.

The Airmen also served 1,500 hot meals a day to some of the 8,000 troops temporarily stationed in tent cities on base.

One of the tent cities, nicknamed Green Acres, stretched for up to a quarter mile, Sergeant Foote said.

“We didn’t get to interact with a lot of civilians, but I’m still glad I had the opportunity to help,” he added. “We were doing a really important mission.”

Next month: Read about the hurricane relief efforts of the 123rd Airlift Wing Chaplains’ Office and the 123rd Medical Group.



Photo courtesy 123rd Aerial Port Squadron

Kentucky’s Tanker-Airlift Control Element prepared 80 pallets of cargo for shipment from Alexandria, La., in two days’ time.

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