

THE CARGO COURIER

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

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Wing to add contingency response group



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Gov. Ernie Fletcher announced Kentucky's new 123rd Contingency Response Group during a ceremony held on base Nov. 28. Joining the governor for the announcement were Maj. Gen. Charles Ickes, deputy director of the Air National Guard, and Kentucky's adjutant general, Army Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm (seated, second from left).

New unit will answer emergency calls in eastern United States

By Staff Sgt. Matthew Rosine
Air Force Print News

The Kentucky Air National Guard is now home to the first and only contingency response group in the Air National Guard.

The 123rd Contingency Response Group — described as an “airbase in a box” — will soon be able to rapidly deploy to any location within a 400-mile radius of Louisville and set up air bases crucial for emergency-response efforts.

Expected to be operational by late summer, the unit will provide everything necessary to open a runway and establish airlift operations in areas affected by natural disasters or enemy attacks.

“This is the first Air National Guard unit of its kind in the nation,” Gov. Ernie Fletcher said Nov. 28 during a ceremony held on base to announce the group.

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Dornbush receives stars as new chief of staff, JFACC

Hunt named assistant AG for Air

By Maj. Kirk Hilbrecht
Kentucky Joint Forces Public Affairs

Michael J. Dornbush became the Kentucky Air National Guard's newest star when he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general during a ceremony held on base Jan. 6.

The promotion follows General Dornbush's appointment Dec. 1 as chief of staff for the Kentucky Air National Guard and Joint Forces Air Component Commander of the Kentucky National Guard.

Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Howard P. Hunt III was named the state's new assistant adjutant general for Air on Nov. 29.

“It's a great day to be here at the Kentucky Air National Guard

base, recognizing the promotion of this great American, Colonel Mike Dornbush,” said Kentucky's adjutant general, Army Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm.

“General Dornbush is an outstanding Airman who has done tremendous things for the Kentucky National Guard and guarantees to continue to make significant contributions to our Joint Force as our Joint Forces Air Component Commander,” General Storm told the hundreds of Airmen in attendance.

As the JFACC, General Dornbush will be responsible for overseeing air-component missions with General Storm and General Hunt to coordinate policy, guidance and direction of the Commonwealth's 1,200 Air Guard members and its Joint Forces.

General Dornbush is experienced in numerous airlift functions

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Program calls on every Airman to serve as an ambassador for the Air Force

Because of our Airmen, the United States Air Force is the best air and space force in the world, and we're gaining leadership in cyberspace.

Yet many citizens do not fully realize what you do and the sacrifices you make every day.

Because you do your job so well, most Americans simply don't think about the Air Force's contribution to the Global War on Terror — to include the efforts of those of you serving on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan.

To get this message out, we've embarked on an enhanced Strategic Communication program.

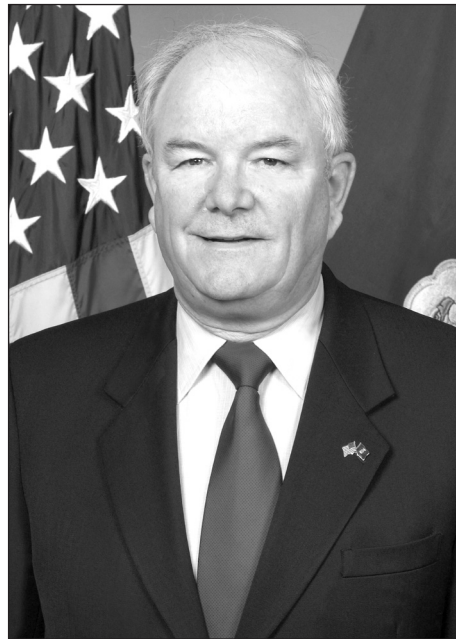
Our Strategic Communication efforts will build better relationships with key audiences and the support that is critical to operational success, force modernization, and the development of our most precious resource: Airmen.

Our major enhancement is you.

The success of this effort will rely on making every Airman an ambassador for our Air Force, at home and abroad.

Your stories resonate the most with local newspapers, schools, and rotary clubs. The American public looks up to you as a model of integrity, and by sharing your experiences you are the best spokesmen for our Air Force.

This responsibility means that Airmen



**Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force**

must understand air, space and cyberspace power and how the Air Force contributes to the Nation's defense.

To assist you, we are distributing "The Air Force Story," which will provide you with information to discuss with family, friends, and the public.

Airman's Cards also are available

to help guide your communication efforts.

It reminds you that when telling your story, "You represent the Air Force, its values, and its image. Be honest, candid, and stay within your area of expertise."

The new Air Force advertising campaign, "Do Something Amazing," harnesses the power of your individual story.

These television and Internet videos feature our outstanding Airmen describing the contributions they make every day to our nation's defense.

One person's story carries the hopes and dreams of a new generation of Airmen and confirms the public's belief that we serve on their behalf.

I encourage you to show your pride and share both your personal story and the Air Force story with others.

Your active involvement in this communications strategy will help the public better understand their Air Force and the contribution we make to the Nation's security every day.

You are the finest Airmen the world has ever seen.

Be proud of yourself, your Air Force, and your heritage.

Our Air Force is counting on you to communicate your story like no one else can.

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Our office is located in room 2118 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is Feb. 19.

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Banquet to honor top Airmen is March 3

The Kentucky National Guard's annual Outstanding Airman & Soldier of the Year Banquet is scheduled for March 3 at Churchill Downs' Millionaire's Row.

Tickets are \$20 per person and may be purchased from any chief master sergeant.

Social hour is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m., and a buffet dinner will be served starting at 7 p.m.

This year's honorees include Senior Airman Garrett Gerard of the 123rd Maintenance Squadron, Staff Sgt. John Posten of the 123rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and Senior Master Sgt. Ray Dawson of the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron.

Company Grade Officers' Council seeks members

The Thoroughbred Company Grade Officers' Council is seeking members who would like to take a role in developing tomorrow's leaders.

All company grade officers are encouraged to attend the February UTA meeting, which is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. tomorrow in the Wing Conference Room.

Nominations for the council's leadership posts will be accepted, and council members will discuss plans for hosting a hospitality suite at the National Guard Association of Kentucky's annual conference in Lexington Feb. 9-10.

Lunch will be provided.

Erratum

A photo caption in the Nov. 18 Cargo Courier incorrectly referred to Chief Master Sgt. Roger Hamilton as "Sergeant Hamilton." It should have read "Chief Hamilton."

CRG

Continued from Front Page

"The United States Air Force has always depended on Kentucky to answer the call to duty," the governor told dozens of Air Guardsmen in attendance. "Because of that demonstrated dedication and professionalism of the men and women of our Air National Guard, we have now been given the opportunity to have a unit such as this."

It is a role the Kentucky Air National Guardsmen are prepared to fill.

"One of the drawing cards to bring this mission to our particular unit is that all the specialties that are required for a CRG already reside within the 123rd Airlift Wing because of the mission we already have

here," said Col. Mark Kraus, 123rd Airlift Wing commander.

As a result, virtually all of the 140 Airmen needed to staff the new group will be transferred from existing units at the Kentucky Air Guard.

"It will be an easy transition for us to just roll folks from within the wing over to this group to basically provide this capability in a very short period of time."

These Airmen have plenty of experience responding to the mission's call, he said.

Kentucky has the only Air National Guard special tactics squadron containing both combat control and pararescue personnel. The state also has Airmen experienced in expeditionary command and control, and expeditionary medical operations.

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New star

Continued from Front Page

at unit and state headquarters levels. He has commanded both communications and personnel units, served as executive staff support officer and most recently was vice commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

Under General Dornbush's command, the 123rd Mission Support Flight won national recognition five times.

He was instrumental in the development of the Kentucky Joint Force Headquarters, which supports homeland defense and active-duty military operations around the globe.

During Operation Enduring Freedom, General Dornbush served as the deployed expeditionary commander of the 438th Air Expeditionary Group from November 2003 to April 2004.

General Hunt, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom with more than 32 years of military service, most recently served as the Kentucky Air Guard's chief of staff and JFACC.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Michael J. Dornbush receives the silver stars of the rank of brigadier general from his wife, Linda, and Army Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, Kentucky's adjutant general, during a promotion ceremony held on base Jan. 6.

Scherzer named wing's new vice commander

Colonel has served USAF for more than 19 years

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, has named Col. George Scherzer as the unit's new vice commander, effective Jan. 16.

Colonel Scherzer, a pilot who most recently served as commander of the wing's 165th Airlift Squadron, has been a member of the Kentucky Air National Guard since 2001.

"George has demonstrated keen judgment and a broad range of leadership capabilities during his tenure as commander of the 165th," Colonel Kraus said.

"He also has a great following throughout the wing, which is a testament to the tremendous amount of experience he has in operations. I'm glad to have him as our new vice commander."

Colonel Scherzer first entered the military through the Air Force ROTC program at the University of Kentucky, from which he graduated in 1987.

The following year, he became a T-37 flight instructor — his first Air Force job — immediately after completing the same undergraduate pilot training himself.

"I went to pilot training at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, and they kept me there as a first-assignment instructor pilot," Colonel Scherzer explained.



Staff Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

Col. George Scherzer is the wing's new vice commander. He joined the unit in 2001.

He switched to C-130s for his next assignment, which sent the colonel to Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., from 1992 to 1997. Colonel Scherzer then remained on active duty with a staff job at 21st Air Force headquarters until 2001, when he joined the Kentucky Air Guard.

In the past six years, he's served as chief of Stan/Eval and squadron operations officer for the 165th AS. Colonel Scherzer also deployed to multiple locations in Southwest Asia in 2003 as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, serving as an assistant opera-

tions officer in UAE and operations officer in Qatar. He was named commander of the 165th in early 2004.

As vice commander, Colonel Scherzer said he initially will help prepare the wing for its 2008 Unit Compliance Inspection.

"I'm humbled that I was even considered for this job," he said. "I get a lot of personal satisfaction out of serving, and I keep at it because I hope I can make a difference. I love this unit and wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. It's better than any active-duty unit I've ever been associated with."

Chaplain's Column

Are you a happy person?

February offers us a time to reflect on our heart's condition. Happiness is one indicator that our spiritual hearts are healthy.

Happiness really is an inside job.

Gail Sheehy, author of *Pathfinders*, describes 10 characteristics of people who are happiest with themselves.

- A life that has meaning and direction; happy people are involved with something outside themselves
- Rarely feeling cheated or disappointed by life; happy people learn from failures
- Attaining several important long-term goals, such as a comfortable life, family security and a sense of accomplishment
- Being satisfied with one's own personal growth and development; happy people are usually honest, loving, responsible, ambitious and courageous
- Being in a mutually loving

relationship; reciprocating love is the hallmark of happiness

- Having many friends; true friends bring value to life
 - Not being sensitive to criticism; happy people shake it off
 - Not having major fears; happy people have a centeredness of the soul
 - Experiencing important transitions in adult life and handling them well; healthy people adjust to changes in constructive ways
 - Being optimistic; happy people live in hope of better days to come
- Are you a happy person?

— Lt. Col. Tom Curry,
Wing Chaplain

Air Guard leaders exploring 'reset' of forces

**By Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau**

BALTIMORE — The challenges for resetting the Air National Guard became more apparent to its senior leaders here Dec. 11 to 13 when Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley, director of the Air National Guard, hosted the senior leadership conference, Minuteman Heritage — Preparing for New Horizons.

More than 1,000 leaders from all 50 states and U.S. territories, including adjutants general, wing and unit commanders, command chief master sergeants and others, listened to a detailed explanation about the Air Guard's future force.

Resetting the force includes reorganizing missions, manpower, equipment and training to meet the needs of the 21st century.

General McKinley provided several examples of how Airmen are already resetting the force, including flying MQ-1 Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

He also expressed his confidence in the leadership's ability to move forward.

For the first time, the leaders were told of the proposed reset of the Air National Guard on a national perspective.

Officials said all states and territories will be affected by the reset. It addresses the combined effects of the Base Realignment and Closure Act, Total Force Initiatives and the Quadrennial Defense Review.

Future mission changes will affect full-time and traditional positions across the

nation, a main concern of the leadership here.

"This has not been an easy process. Because of what BRAC and QDR have done, we need to get through it," General McKinley said.

Guest speakers provided congressional and active duty perspectives on the force and updated leaders on safety and cultural and enlisted views. General McKinley delivered the keynote address.

Maj. Gen. George F. Scoggins Jr., Air Guard assistant to Headquarters Air Force Plans and Programs, spoke about "Preparing for New Horizons."

His presentation highlighted the Air Guard's future from 2008 to 2013.

Most senior leaders agreed the reset is essential to the future of the Air Guard. And the timeliness, General McKinley said, was mostly due to the desire to move to the next step.

General Scoggins is commander of the Washington Air National Guard and served as a senior advocate for the adjutants general during the reset development process.

"General Scoggins is a closer," General McKinley said. "He is the most impartial and professional Airman I know, and this was not pleasant work, but if we did not do it we could not move on."

Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, also addressed the Air Guard leaders. He began by unveiling the newest National Guard Heritage Paint-

ing: "In Katrina's Wake."

The painting by Gil Cohen portrays the National Guard's relief operations Sept. 1, 2005, at New Orleans Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse, La., following Hurricane Katrina.

"I think that painting captures my feeling of what may be the Air National Guard's finest hour in domestic response in the history of this nation," General Blum said.

"I thought it would be a good starting point to focus the discussion."

He said he hoped leaders would return to their homes with a greater appreciation about the necessity for the Air National Guard to be an essential part of the Guard's joint capability for defending the homeland and supporting homeland security operations and other military support operations.

"The team that Maj. Gen. Roger P. Lempke and the adjutants general assembled with the help of the NGB staff has made lemonade from the lemons they were left with from the BRAC," General Blum said.

General Lempke is the president of the Adjutants General Association of the United States and adjutant general of the Nebraska National Guard.

"They have done an outstanding job of ensuring that every state kept their essential capabilities," General Blum added.

"And we mitigated or minimized the ill effects on our Airmen, and we provided opportunities for interesting and exciting future missions in the Air National Guard."

Blum extended as chief of the National Guard Bureau

National Guard Bureau

Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum was notified Jan. 26 that the United States Senate confirmed his nomination for a two-year extension as chief of the National Guard Bureau.

General Blum will have served as the chief for four years in April 2007.

During his tenure, General Blum has presided over the transformation of the National Guard from a strategic reserve to an operational force.

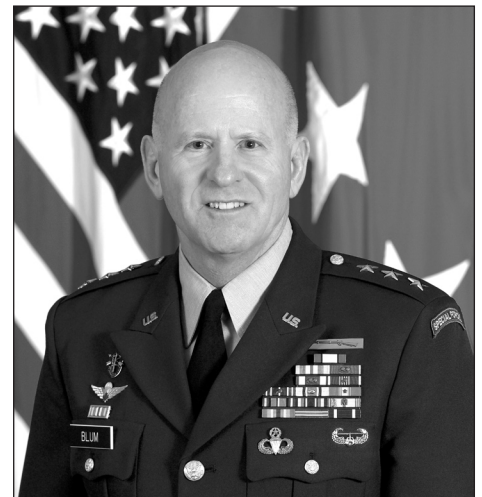
In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, he rebalanced the National Guard to ensure the nation's governors would have at least one-half of their National Guard avail-

able at all times to mitigate the effects of potential catastrophic events.

During Hurricane Katrina, he directed the largest military response to a national disaster in American history, sending more than 50,000 guardsmen from every state and territory to relieve the badly stricken Gulf states.

In 2006, General Blum answered the President's call to send up to 6,000 troops to support the Customs and Border Patrol mission along the Southern U.S. border. The largest mobilization of the Guard since WWII also occurred during General Blum's first four years as NGB Chief.

He is the nation's senior uniformed National Guard officer.



3rd Air Force reactivated in Germany

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The 3rd Air Force was reactivated during a ceremony here Dec. 1.

Lt. Gen. Robert D. Bishop Jr. took command. General Bishop has been vice commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

“My last three job titles have begun with deputy, assistant or vice,” he said during the ceremony. “I am personally delighted and humbled to be here this morning with that modifier gone.”

The reactivated 3rd AF, which has more than 1,400 members, includes the 603rd Air and Space Operations Center, the 603rd Support Group, the 4th Air Support Operations Group and former members of 16th Air Force, which inactivated today.

The numbered Air Force will plan combat and humanitarian operations in the USAFE area of responsibility, which includes Europe and Africa, and it also will conduct day-to-day operations for USAFE and European Command to organize, train and equip Airmen for the functions they could be called upon to accomplish around the world.

“We’ll be busy planning and exercising to be able to respond to a conflict or a humanitarian mission in this part of the world,” General Bishop said.

“And one of the additional things that also will be on our plate is for the headquarters to plan and train in order to be able to lead a joint task force.”

While 16th AF inactivated today, it will continue to exist through the 16th Air Expeditionary Task Force at Izmir Air Base, Turkey.

This allows the Air Force to continue the proud legacy and service of both the 3rd and 16th Air Forces.

Maj. Gen. Marc Rogers will take General Bishop’s place as the USAFE vice commander.

Active C-130 unit joins with Wyoming Air National Guard

Air Force Print News

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — The U.S. Air Force has proven that active-duty and Air Guard Airmen can successfully operate together on a daily basis with the right amount of communication and heart.

Just ask the Airmen of the 30th and 187th Airlift Squadrons at the Wyoming Air National Guard’s 153rd Airlift Wing.

The arrangement is called an Active Associate, and it combines active-duty 30th Airlift Squadron Airmen with Air National Guard crewmembers.

All the Airmen operate under the direction of the Wyoming Air National Guard and fly Wyoming Air Guard C-130 Hercules cargo planes.

It is the first of its kind for the Air Force’s Air Mobility Command — and the unit just hit a major milestone.

The active-duty Airmen flew through the first of three manning phases needed to become a fully deployable unit, months ahead of schedule.

Although it took years for the active duty and National Guard commands to come up with the agreements outlining the active-associate concept, it only took a month for the active-duty crews to start flying with the Wyoming Guard crews on Wyoming planes.

Currently, the 30th Airlift Squadron has 70 pairs of boots on the ground, including four aircrews that are fully integrated in C-130 cargo plane operations and maintainer units at the Wyoming Air National Guard Base here.

“Like all new relationships, there are bumps in the road, but we quickly address each issue as it comes up,” said Lt. Col.

USAF to unveil combat medal in April

Air Force Print News

The Air Force is set to unveil its first-ever combat action medal in April, officials announced last month.

The medal recognizes Airmen involved in combat operations on the ground or in the air, said Gen. Roger A. Brady, deputy chief of staff for manpower and personnel.

Steven Hopkins, commander of the 30th Airlift Squadron. “I’m pleased we’re ahead of schedule to ensure aircrew proficiency.”

Col. Harold Reed, commander of the 153rd Airlift Wing, said the new concept improves efficiency.

“Some people see the active associate as an experiment. We see it as a way to make sure the nation gets the most out of its airplanes, aircrews and tax dollars,” Colonel Reed said. “Mixing the two unique military cultures is producing better Airmen and a better way of doing business.”

“Phasing in the number of active-duty Airmen allowed both sides to prove to the other that we’re all very capable at accomplishing the mission together,” Hopkins noted. “We made it our focus to bring all our new members into the unit and qualify them in minimum time. That attitude and focus allowed us to get more than one-third of our crewmembers ready to fly in a short amount of time.”

The Wyoming Air Guardsmen welcomed their active-duty brethren on missions during Operation Coronet Oak, just a few months after the 30th Airlift Squadron stand-up ceremony in July.

Coronet Oak tasks Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units with providing airlift support to U.S. Southern Command.

Another opportunity for the 30th Airlift Squadron crews to prove their mettle came Oct. 19, during a 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron training flight. The unit filled every flight crew position with an active-duty crewmember.

“This is exactly the extended capability and mutual benefit that we were seeking when we established this association,” Colonel Hopkins said.

Deployed Airmen training Iraqi police force

By Maj. Richard C. Sater
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq — It beats patrolling the flightline and issuing traffic tickets on base.

Ask anyone assigned to the 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron's Detachment 6 here. They're one of just two Air Force teams doing what they're doing: training Iraqi policemen in the province of Salah ad Din to run a police station as a professional, task-oriented organization and provide good law and order.

Approximately 45 Airmen from 11 security forces organizations assigned to different bases have converged at COB Speicher as Det. 6.

There's nothing like a good, new mission: the jolt of adrenaline coupled with the confidence of well-trained troops and the awareness that this is a task worth doing well. In this different kind of war, one way to fight is to teach the Iraqis to fight back, to fight for their own security and stability. Functional law enforcement is Ground Zero, one of the cornerstones of civilized life.

"I'm going crazy here," said Lt. Col. Steve Kauffmann the wiry (and fully charged) detachment commander who is deployed from the Pentagon. "It's a good crazy, though. It's a great mission, although we were 'fragg'd' to it," he said, borrowing a slang term for "fragmentary order," or an unexpected change to the schedule.

The Airmen were due to fill a more traditional billet at a forward-operating base in Mosul, Iraq, but were redirected to COB Speicher instead, taking on the in-lieu-of mission — ordinarily tasked to the Army — of training Iraqi police.

The Det. 6 Airmen are divided into teams, working at provincial headquarters, district stations, or smaller stations. The size varies, from small village kiosks manned by three or four men to large centers with staffs of 70 or 80. The Army's 97th Military Police Battalion (under the 82nd Airborne Division) oversees Det. 6, and Colonel Kauffmann observes "more teamwork than I've ever seen before. It's all about communication, coordination and cooperation."

Daily, convoys hit the roads, four humvees each, and so far so good. Det. 6 is currently awaiting validation from the Army that it can perform the mission by itself, but that too is



Maj. Richard C. Sater/USAF

Airman 1st Class James Matthews checks his .50 caliber machine gun prior to convoy departure from Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq. Airman Matthews is assigned to the 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron's Detachment 6. The detachment sends convoys out daily to assess the capability of Iraqi police stations in the Salah ad Din province.

coming soon. In the meantime, each convoy carries Airmen, Soldiers and an Iraqi police liaison officer and translator.

They're working with police stations in and around Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown, and throughout the Salah ad Din province. It's a three-step process. The first involves locating the stations and assessing the capability. Second is training individual policemen to patrol and supervise and run a tight ship. Third is the final assessment, the end-of-course passing grade that allows the station to operate on its own.

Phase 1 is now in progress, complicated by the fact that some stations have been moved or destroyed, or they shut up shop for one reason or another. And new ones, yet unmapped, have turned up as well.

Phase 2 offers perhaps the biggest responsibility and challenge for Det. 6. "We'll assist them in developing their processes" in such areas as budget and logistics, personnel management, traffic and crowd control, reporting, weapons maintenance and discipline, and so on — how to keep a station running, Colonel Kauffmann said.

The third stage is up to the Iraqi police. It's their future, and their responsibility.

The police-training is off beat, perhaps, but "Air Force people are uniquely suited to it," Colonel Kauffmann said. "We train our Airmen for the ability to make decisions based on knowledge, feeling, intuition. We cultivate that into our troops. That's how we train and operate every day."

Half of the detachment has already been deployed in support of the war on terrorism, and two-thirds have been "somewhere" doing the mission, somewhere other than their home base, the colonel said. The flight brings together "a tremendous amount of experience." His enthusiasm is contagious, his confidence well-founded. It suits him.

"I'm proud of 'em," he said of his young Airmen.

One of those troops, Airman 1st Class Ryan Fontenot, characterized this as "the 'year of the police in Iraq.' And we're training them. We're getting them up to par. It's an honorable job."

And an important one: "I don't want my kids coming back here," he said.



Farewell

Kentucky's adjutant general, Army Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, presents Brig. Gen. Robert J. Yaple with a retirement certificate during a ceremony held on base Jan. 6.

General Yaple, who also received the Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal, was a navigator and pilot in the Kentucky Air Guard for more than 25 years. He last served as assistant adjutant general for Air.

KyANG photo by
Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora

CRG

Continued from Page 3

The Kentucky Airmen who will form the group already have participated in numerous response missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, including combat operations, and they formed a crucial link in the evacuation of thousands of residents from New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

"The formation of this unit puts us in a great position to be a first responder for emergencies within the United States," said Army Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, adjutant general for Kentucky. "We've got a great team, and the Air Force has recognized that. This mission truly puts the Kentucky Air Guard at the tip of the spear."

Colonel Kraus noted that the unit "provides a great deal of security in terms of

disaster relief."

"It would provide the ability to get relief supplies and personnel to the affected area in a matter of hours to start affecting the region in a positive manner," he said. "Hurricane Katrina was a perfect example, where this type of unit would establish airfield operations ... as they did in the New Orleans area to bring in relief supplies."

Maj. Gen. Charles Ickes, deputy director of the Air National Guard, said the unit also is positioned to be a first-responder world-wide.

He noted that since 9/11, the Air Force has stood up nearly 40 air bases from scratch in the Central Command AOR, which includes Southwest Asia and Africa.

"We congratulate you on standing up this new capability that is so vitally needed by the Air Force and all the warfighters around the world," said General Ickes, who was in Louisville Nov. 28 for the announcement.

"You'll bring something to the nation that we need, not only in the United States day in and day out, but also overseas in the Global War on Terror. You are truly on the leading edge."

All combined, the Airmen of the 123rd CRG represent more than 400 years of experience.

"The great thing about having this capability in the Air National Guard is that we already work and train together, and we typically stay in a unit for a long period of time," Colonel Kraus said. "So we get to work together, and we know each other and our capabilities, and so we can play to our strengths."

The unit will use existing facilities and equipment at the Kentucky Guard base, saving more than \$33 million in start-up costs.

The Kentucky National Guard, Staff Sgt. Bronwyn Benito and Capt. Dale Greer contributed to this story.

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