

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

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## Medics deploy to Japan for summer camp

By Staff Sgt. Amy Ziegler  
Cargo Courier Editor

More than 40 members of the 123rd Medical Squadron deployed to Yokota Air Base, Japan, May 18 to June 3 for their annual summer camp.

The training gave the medics an opportunity to work in a clinical setting and train for catastrophes, said Maj. Connie Carrillo, chief nurse.

"It was just a great overall experience," Carrillo said.

"For some this was their first time working in a real clinical setting and their first time deploying for summer camp. We really got a chance to get to know each other and intermingle with others, especially on the long plane ride."

The long journey across the ocean to Japan took four days, including 26 hours of actual flight time.

But according to Carrillo, the deployment was well worth it, especially for some of the younger troops.

"They got to experience so much," she said. "They got to go to a new country, see a different culture, and a couple of them even got to see the birth of a child."

Personnel trained by working with patient in hospital wards and honing their skills in administrative offices. They also participated in an earthquake-response exercise with active-duty troops.

"Our people were so anxious to jump in and help," she said. "At one point during the exercise, volunteers were requested, and our medics were the first to step up."

Tech. Sgt. Earnie Cays of the squadron's public health office agreed that the unit's deployment was a valuable one.

**TOP:** Maj. William Adkisson, a KyANG physician assistant, discusses a patient's X-ray with Maj. David Worley, chief development nurse

**RIGHT:** Senior Airman Steve Garrett and Senior Airman Bryan Ala, both medics in the 123rd Medical Squadron, train on drawing blood.



*KyANG photos by  
Tech. Sgt. Mark Rines*

**See JAPAN, Page 5**

# Mitro named command chief master sergeant

**L**ast month at UTA I was pleased to introduce Senior Master Sgt. Mike Mitro to the commanders and chiefs as the new 123rd Airlift Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant.

I say it was a pleasure because I find a real thrill in being able to recognize and promote an individual who has been close to the heart and soul of the Kentucky Air National Guard for a lot of years.

Mike and I grew up together in this wing—me in ops and he in maintenance. We have deployed all over the world together many times in F-4s and Herks to do the business of our country.

We have served on numerous committees together, attempting to do things that make the Guard a better place to serve.

We have played ball together—he used to be a pretty fair left-handed power hitter. And like me he married and served with another Guard member, since retired, Maj. Judy Mitro.

We commiserated together when we changed from the recce mission to the airlift mission, and we rejoiced together when we realized the Herk was a great aircraft and the airlift mission allowed us to better serve our country doing real world missions.

We mourned the loss of our crew in 1992 and the death of many fellow Guard members over the years yet marveled at the number of children of our Guard buddies who have enlisted to take their place.

Over the years we have developed a mutual respect for each other and a love for the institution of the Kentucky Air Guard.

Mike Mitro is a friend of mine, but make no mistake—he was not selected because of



**Col. Michael Harden**  
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

that friendship. He was selected after a very difficult process that involved reviewing the records and interviewing 10 outstanding senior NCOs who all could have done the job.

I made the call with the help of the outgoing command chief master sergeant, Dave Orange, who retires effective Oct. 1; and with the help of Chief Master Sgt. Junior Swanner.

Senior Master Sgt. Mike Mitro is the man I have proudly selected to become the leader, advisor and role model for the enlisted force of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

This outstanding NCO was selected because of his character and impeccable credentials as a worker, leader and all-around “go-to guy” for the Kentucky Air Guard.

In the very important position of line chief in the 123rd Aircraft Generation Squadron, his technical expertise and leadership quali-

ties have helped make the wing a word-class organization by ensuring its aircraft are always well-maintained and ready to fly.

In addition to his considerable technical skills, Mitro is the type of senior NCO who we have been blessed with over the years in the KyANG.

He is constantly involved in all the social and community activities of the wing and works tirelessly to see that new members become involved and truly feel part of the unit.

He is a true citizen-warrior who leads from the front by volunteering for every contingency operation that the wing is called upon to participate in.

From Coronet Oak to Joint Forge, Joint Guard and Southern Watch he is there working, motivating and leading his troops.

Senior Master Sgt. Mitro is well known in the wing as a guy who can get things done.

He has the respect and admiration of every member of this wing from the commander to the newest guy on the flight line.

I am proud to call him my friend and will be prouder to call him chief.

He will be a great command chief who will continue in the outstanding tradition of Chief Orange and Chief Master Sgt. Martin Anderson before him.

He will have my ear, and I expect him to tell me the good, the bad and the ugly as we go about trying live up to the standards set by our predecessors and make the 123rd even better. I know that you will support him in this quest.

Thanks Loads!

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If you have a story idea, photo or article to submit, stop by the public affairs office, room 2117 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is Aug. 30.

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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](http://www.kyang.ang.af.mil)



# Holcomb donates hair for use in wigs for kids

By Staff Sgt. Amy Ziegler  
Cargo Courier Editor

A propulsion technician from the wing's 123rd Maintenance Squadron cut off more than 23 inches of her hair last month to donate to Locks of Love.

The non-profit organization will use Tech. Sgt. Michelle Holcomb's braided ponytail to make a hair-piece for financially disadvantaged children who suffer from long-term medical hair loss.

Holcomb's hair had not been trimmed since 1988, but on July 14 she had Chief Master Sgt. Sheila Atwell braid her ponytail and snip it off.

"I really just wanted to do this to help the children," Holcomb said. "It's for such a good cause and I know how little girls love their hair."

"The wigs will help their self-esteem and help them to feel like they fit in with others."

Most balding children have lost their hair due to a medical condition called alopecia areata, which has no known cause or cure, according to the Locks of Love.

Holcomb said she got the idea from another unit member who attempted to donate hair but was turned away because she failed to meet the group's requirements.

Among the requirements:

- Hair length must be at least 10 inches tip to tip, with no falls or synthetic hair
- Hair should be bundled in a ponytail or braid
- Hair must be clean, dry and placed in a plastic bag

*Additional information on Locks of Love can be found at [www.locksoflove.com](http://www.locksoflove.com)*



Senior Airman Aleica Willis/KyANG

Chief Master Sgt. Sheila Atwell cuts more than 23 inches from Tech. Sgt. Michelle Holcomb's hair. The hair will be donated to Locks of Love to be made into wigs for children.

## New TRICARE clinic opens on base

By Staff Sgt. Amy Ziegler  
Cargo Courier Editor

A TRICARE Family Practice clinic opened here in May to provide medical care to military members, retirees and their families.

The new clinic has a staff of eight, including Dr. Lisa Corum, a family practice physician. Anyone who is eligible for TRICARE can be treated at the facility, which is located in the wing hospital.

Master Sgt. Laura Crowder, the 123rd Medical Squadron's senior health technician, said the new clinic is

a welcome addition for area residents.

"Military members who live in the area were having to drive to Fort Knox for medical care," she explained.

Another benefit of the clinic is that it currently treats full-time base technicians as a courtesy, Crowder said.

Before patients can visit the clinic, they must change their primary care physicians.

This change can be made when patients call to schedule an appointment, Crowder said.

*The clinic is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For an appointment call 364-9635.*

## Family Day planned for Oct. UTA

The 123rd Airlift Wing's annual Family Day is scheduled for Oct. 14 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

All activities will take place at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base.

Military members, retirees and their families are invited to attend.

*For more information, contact Lt. Col. Rich Frymire, event coordinator, at 364-9589 or on base at ext. 4589.*

# New chaplain finds home in Ky. Air Guard

By 1st Lt. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The wing's newest chaplain, Maj. Patrick Cooney, spent a good portion of his life seeking his place in the world.

The catholic priest says he's always felt drawn to the ministry, and he enrolled in a Texas seminary right after high school. But within a year of that decision, Cooney elected to pursue another area of interest, eventually earning a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Purdue University.

His next stop was the U.S. Air Force, thanks to a chance encounter with an ad he saw in a magazine.

"I was reading TV Guide my junior year," Cooney recalled. "Inside was a card that said, 'Be a research and developmental engineer.' I sent that card away, and lo and behold I got called by a recruiter, who came and told me what engineering was like in the Air Force. That kind of excited me. I had never really thought about the Air Force, and working on avionics seemed interesting."

Cooney completed Officer Training School in the summer of 1981 before being assigned to Air Force Systems Command. For the next three years, he supervised the development of guidance and control systems on the Maverick missile at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

"I just loved it," Cooney said of his Air Force experience. "I'd still be on active duty if it weren't for the priesthood."

But Cooney never quite escaped the feeling he was meant to be a man of God. During his next Air Force assignment, a one-year posting to a remote radar facility in Alaska's Aleutian Islands chain, he did a bit of soul searching.

"I'd never really stopped thinking about the priesthood," Cooney said. "I was at a place in my life where I needed—finally—to find out if I was supposed to be a priest or quit thinking about it."

And so in 1986, at the conclusion of his active-duty career, Cooney enrolled in seminary again, this time attending Saint Meinrad School of Theology in Saint Meinrad, Ind., where two friends had attended.

"I guess I was in denial during all those years of college and the military," he said. "Something was tugging at me, and I finally addressed it."

Cooney earned his masters of divinity in 1991, and he soon became a parish priest in Olney, Ill. He also ministered to the residents of Kaskaskia, Ill., a small island in the Mississippi River that became inundated by flood waters in the summer of 1993.

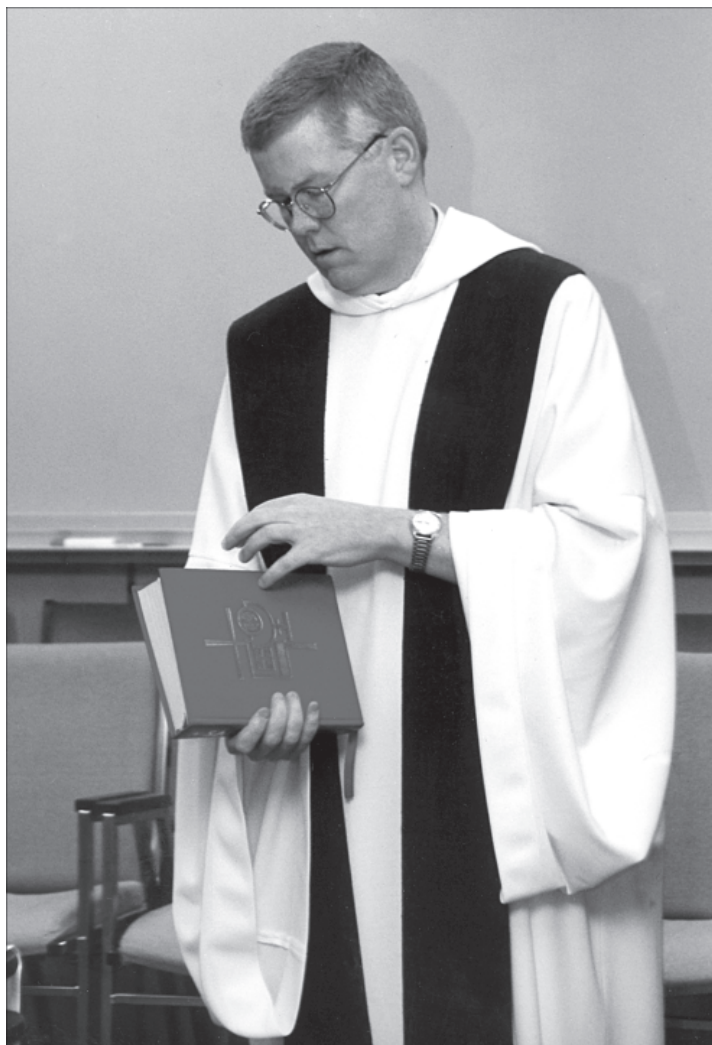
"It was nice to be there for people when they needed it," Cooney recalled of his time in Kaskaskia.

But something was still missing.

In August 1994, Cooney returned to Saint Meinrad hoping to fill the void with a position that would better match his skills and sensibilities. He found it by becoming a monk.

"This place fit," Cooney said of the archabbey. "I felt at home from Day 1. The cycle of prayer and work gave me the spiritual energy that I'd been longing for."

Today, Cooney is Saint Meinrad's director of academic and administrative computing, overseeing information technology for the school of theology and the monastery. He also is Saint Meinrad's



Master Sgt. Charles Simpson/KyANG

**Chaplain (Maj.) Patrick Cooney holds mass at the Kentucky Air Guard during a Unit Training Assembly weekend.**

webmaster. It was in this capacity that Cooney's path once again crossed that of the military.

He and Brig. Gen. Ed Tonini, the Kentucky Air Guard's chief of staff, both served on Saint Meinrad's communications board of advisors, and when Tonini learned of Cooney's Air Force background, he asked the monk to consider becoming an Air Guard Chaplain.

"I had never really thought of getting back in, but I was very interested," Cooney recalls.

After getting the green light from his abbot, Lambert Reilly, Cooney came to the base for a visit in July 2000. By October he was sworn in.

"I love the fact that people from all walks of life come together and throw on a blue suit for a weekend," Cooney said of the KyANG. "These people don't do this as a career, but because they feel a sense of duty and dedication. There's a real sense of family, too."

"I'm excited about being here. I've found another home."



# Japan

Continued from Front Page

Cays, who has been the unit here since 1996, said he was able to work directly with many active-duty personnel.

“They allowed me to go out on food inspections and get real-world training,” he said. “It really was a good experience.”



**TOP LEFT:** Lt. Col. Ralph Matacale, a KyANG dentist, meets with a patient to discuss her health care.



**TOP RIGHT:** Maj. Donald Sudy, a flight surgeon in the 165th Airlift Squadron, reviews a patient's chart.

**RIGHT:** Capt. Carmen Menting, a nurse in the 123rd Medical Squadron, prepares medication for a patient at Yakota Air Base, Japan.



*KyANG photos by  
Tech. Sgt. Mark Rines*

# Day at the Downs



**TOP:** Horses break from the gate June 30 at Churchill Downs as part of the track's day to honor members of the National Guard.

**ABOVE:** KyANG Chief of Staff Brig. Gen. Ed Tonini, far left, and Assistant Adjutant General for Air Brig. Gen. Richard Ash, far right, pose with the winning jockey, trainer and owners following a race dedicated to the Kentucky Air Guard.

**LEFT:** Senior Airman Tanika Pilgrim of the 123rd Airlift Wing sings the National Anthem to kick off the day's activities.

*KyANG photos by  
Senior Airman Philip Speck*



# TWA flight diverts to Whiteman saving 138 lives

**By Staff Sgt. Polly Orcutt**  
**509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs**

WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo.—A catastrophic engine failure fortunately did not end in tragedy July 12 for a TWA MD-80 traveling from St. Louis to San Jose, Calif. The pilots made an emergency landing here saving the lives of 138 passengers and crew.

The tower here received the call at 6:14 p.m. from the crew of the MD-80. They were about 12 miles north of the base having an in-flight emergency and they needed to land.

Because of the nature of the emergency, the crippled plane would not make it to Kansas City International airport and Whiteman's airfield was close by. The plane had suffered a catastrophic engine failure in one of its two engines that caused smoke to fill the cabin and crew compartment and the plane to shudder making it hard to control.

The plane was granted access to Whiteman's runway and the pilots safely brought it to the ground at 6:24 p.m.

"There was smoke in the cockpit and the plane was shaking quite a bit, I am grateful we are here," the unidentified TWA captain said.

The pilot also said the engine that failed was hanging from the plane.

"We are very fortunate to be here," he said. "We took off from St. Louis at maximum take-off weight and the crew did an extraordinary job of getting us on the ground safely."

"There was a serious problem with the plane," said Col. Tony Przybyslawski, 509th Bomb Wing commander. "These pilots saved 138 lives."

Not a single passenger was injured during the event, the landing or the egress from the aircraft. The 509th Civil Engineer Squadron Fire Department assisted passengers as they reached the bottom of the exit slide ensuring no one was injured.

Once the plane landed, passengers used the aircraft's emergency exit slides to get to the ground. The 509th Transportation Squadron had buses waiting to transport them to the community

center where they would wait to hear more on the condition of their plane and about how they would continue on their journey.

At the center, Chaplain (Capt.) Patrick Fletcher, a medical team and people from the life skills support center were on hand to talk to people about the incident or provide treatment if necessary. The passengers were able to use the telephone, play games, eat a meal and just try and relax after their ordeal.

"Our goal is to make you as comfortable as possible," said Col. Keith McDonald, 509th Support Group commander. "Don't worry about the belongings you left on the plane—this is the home of the B-2 bomber. There is no better security anywhere."

"This is the greatest place in the world," said Ravi Viswanath, a businessman from Cupertino, Calif. "I'm glad to be on the ground safely."

Viswanath was not scheduled to be on the flight from St. Louis, but because of the cancellation of a flight on another airline he ended up on this one.

"It was kind of like an out-of-body experience," he said. "Things were running in slow motion. It all still feels unreal."

At 8 p.m., McDonald gave passengers the word that TWA had given the authorization to send another aircraft to pick them up. He also told them that boxed meals were being prepared for them by the dining facility and would be available soon.

Medics assisted a diabetic passenger who had left his insulin on the plane during the emergency evacuation by getting him an injection. Airman 1st Class Nicole Schmitt, 509th Security Forces Squadron, was literally lending a hand to a hearing-impaired family. Schmitt knows sign language and was using it to communicate with them and keep them informed about what was happening.

"It's times like these that the hidden talents come to the surface," said Lt. Col. Rick Turner, 509th Security Forces Squadron commander.

"Airman Schmitt saw these people who needed help communicating and, without hesitation, took action. It just goes to show the amazing people we have in the Air Force."

A replacement aircraft arrived at 11:45 p.m. Passengers and luggage were loaded onto it and it headed for San Jose at 1 a.m.

# NCO Academy expands capability by adding 13 flights

**By Carl Bergquist**  
**Air University Public Affairs**

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala.—The Air Force is expanding its capability to provide training to midlevel non-commissioned officers with the addition of a 13-flight NCO Academy at Gunter Annex in Montgomery, Ala.

The addition of the school, with classes scheduled to start in January 2003, will bring the number of Air Force NCO academies worldwide to 14.

Students attending the new school will be "an overflow of NCOs requiring this

training—not to mention any 'must-trains' who may have a line number to master sergeant," said Chief Master Sgt. Vickie Helms, Gunter NCO Academy commandant.

Air National Guard and Reserve students will also take classes at the Gunter school.

The purpose of NCO Academy training is to provide leadership skills, communications skills and profession of arms knowledge to enhance a student's ability as an NCO, Helms said.

The new facility at Gunter will train 1,183 students annually, Helms said.

The course is 28 academic days long

with seven classes scheduled per year.

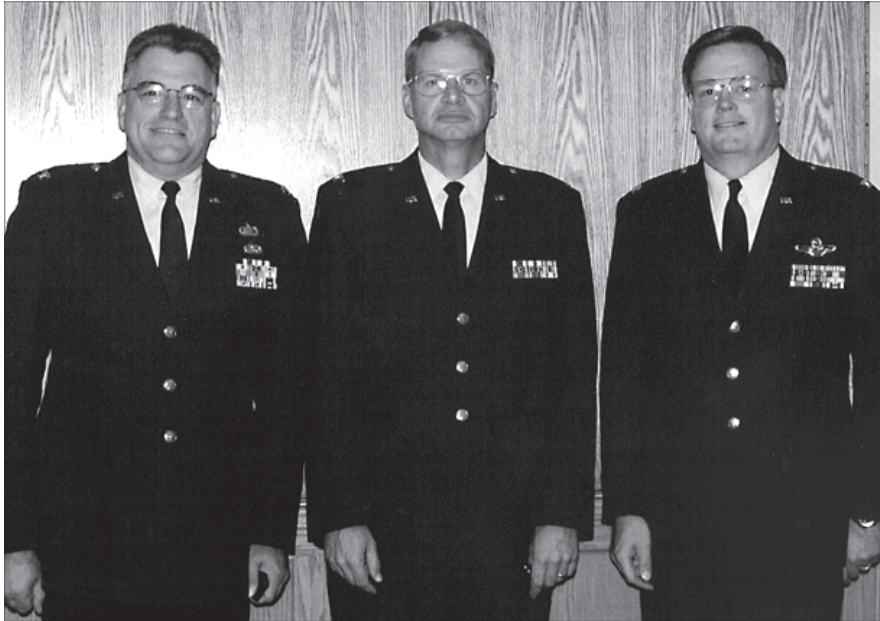
"Our staff is projected to consist of 27 active-duty (people)," Helms said. "There is a great need for technical sergeants to apply for instructor positions. We have 16 slots to fill."

The school is already hiring, she said.

To meet university academic standards, instructors must have a two-year or higher college degree, Helms said.

The NCO Academy is the second level of professional military education, and graduation from it is necessary for promotion to master sergeant. The first level of PME is Airman Leadership School, and the top echelon is the Air Force Senior NCO Academy.

# Three promoted to colonel



Tech. Sgt. Mark Rines/KyANG

Three members of the Kentucky Air Guard were promoted to colonel during the July drill. The new colonels are Col. Michael Dornbush, state support staff officer, Col. Michael Vanleuven, human resources officer and Col. Robert Yaple, state operation staff officer.

## Promotions



*The following individuals have been promoted to the rank indicated as members of the Kentucky Air Guard and reservists of the United States Air Force:*

### STAFF SERGEANT (E-5)

•**Michael McDonald,**  
123rd Maintenance Sq.

### MASTER SERGEANT (E-7)

•**David Buzan,**  
165th Airlift Sq.  
•**Melissa Evaline,**  
123rd Services Flt.  
•**Craig Smith,**  
123rd Security Forces Sq.  
•**Damon Williams,**  
165th Airlift Sq.

### SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT (E-8)

•**Gregory Reed,**  
123rd Logistics Sq.  
•**Donald Roberts,**  
123rd Mission Support Flt.

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