

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

Vol. XVIII, No. 1 • Jan. 12, 2002

## KyANG troops contribute to war effort



By Staff Sgt. Amy Ziegler  
Cargo Courier Editor

More than 450 Kentucky Air Guard troops have been called to active duty since the Sept. 11 terrorist acts against the United States.

Members of the unit are supporting the cause both in deployed locations and here at home, said Lt. Col. Paul Rhodes, 123rd Airlift Wing vice commander.

“Currently, we have personnel working in Topeka, Kan., providing airlift to contingency operations in support of homeland security,” Rhodes said.

“In addition, the wing also has personnel from operations, support and logistics in a variety of other locations in direct support of Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom.”

What has made the biggest impression, Rhodes said, is the way KyANG personnel manage to do good work and keep smiling even though the demands of being called to active duty can be stressful on their lives.

“People here have been eager to step forward to help out,” he said. The work they’ve done has been extremely professional considering they had such little planning time.”

Because of the demands of the mission, Rhodes said, extra burdens have been put on those left here in the support areas.

“They’ve been working extremely hard, long hours to fill the shortfalls and ensure the mission is accomplished,” he said.

Senior Airman Daniel Spradling, a customer support representative from the 123rd Logistics Squadron here, said his attitude during the activation has been positive.

“Although I’m taking a huge pay cut from my civilian job, I’m happy to be here,” he said.

“After what happened on Sept. 11, I wanted to participate, and I’m glad to help out in any way I can.”



**TOP:** Staff Sgt. Sean Swanson of the 123rd Aircraft Generation Squadron works to support homeland security.

**LEFT:** A Kentucky Air Guard C-130 Hercules taxis into Topeka, Kan.

Photos by Senior Airman Philip Speck/KyANG

# New Chief's Council offers experience and wisdom to advance KyANG's vision

**H**

appy New Year to everyone.

Recently, I asked Col. Harden about my writing a regular column regarding the Chief's

Council, and he thought it would be a great idea.

I believe this will be a tremendous means of communicating what is happening around base, and my first column will introduce you to the Chief's Council.

The council has been officially chartered by the wing commander and the assistant adjutant general for air.

In this charter, the council is to provide a forum to exploit the collective wisdom and experience of the senior enlisted force to further advance the vision of the Kentucky Air Guard.

The council will focus on issues that primarily affect the enlisted force and their ability to support the mission.

Issues will be brought to the council from the command to study for recommendations, or from individual members of the council from members in their units.

In either case, active participation from every chief is critical to ensure broad-based representation of the entire enlisted force.

The chiefs represent all of you on this council.

The charter authorizes the election of a chairman and officers and to create a constitution.

This has been accomplished, and I'm pleased to announce that Chief Master Sgt.



**Command Chief Master Sgt. Mike Mitro  
123rd Airlift Wing  
Senior Enlisted Advisor**

Thomas Downs of the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron will serve as chairman, Chief Master Sgt. Rich Cwiak of the 123rd Maintenance Squadron will serve as vice-chair, Chief Master Sgt. David Huestis, also of the maintenance squadron, will serve as secretary, and Chief Master Sgt. Jim Smith of the 123rd Operations Squadron will serve as council treasurer.

Please take time to congratulate these

chiefs when you see them and thank them for stepping up.

The constitution has also been written and approved.

Thanks to Chief Master Sgt. Jim Smith for all his hard work in putting it together.

The wing and state command chief master sergeants, who serve as advisors and nonvoting members of the council, provide a communication link between the commander and the council.

This council exists to serve you, the members of the KyANG, in any capacity it can.

I would like to say on behalf of the council that if any of you have any concerns, questions, problems or any other interests that you believe need to be brought to the attention of the council please do not hesitate to do so.

I also will ask that before doing so you use your chain of command.

We have learned that many of the concerns or problems we face today can be answered or solved at the lowest level.

The success of the Chief's Council is directly related to the future of the Kentucky Air Guard and the interaction the council has with the members of the base.

Together we can continue to uphold the reputation of the best Air Guard unit in the nation.

Have a wonderful UTA and a very prosperous 2002. I look forward to serving all of you this year.

*—Command Chief Master Sgt. Mike Mitro  
123rd Airlift Wing*

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The editorial content is edited and prepared by the public affairs office of the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard, Louisville International Airport, Louisville, Ky. 40213-2678.

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 Jan. 18.

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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)

# Unit raises 5,500 pounds of food

By Lt. Col. Rich Frymire  
123rd Airlift Wing Executive Officer

The Kentucky Air Guard raised a whopping 5,500 pounds of canned food during the recent Kentucky Harvest "Million in a Month" food drive.

The food drive, promoted as the unit's holiday gift to the community, was part of a community campaign that collected more than three million pounds of canned food from local businesses, schools, churches and factories.

Stan Curtis, founder of Kentucky Harvest, said he was delighted to see the KyANG deeply involved in the food drive.

"Organizations like the 123rd Airlift Wing were the backbone of the "Million in a Month" campaign," Curtis said. "Each time we asked for their support the unit leaped forward."

According to Col. Mike Harden, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, that support included not only raising canned food donations, but promoting "Million in a Month" on local television stations like WAVE-3.

"We're fortunate to live in a community like Louisville and southern Indiana that is among the best in the nation," Harden said.

"It's vital that we take an active leadership role in giving something back to a great community that has supported us."

Kentucky Harvest is a nationally recognized organization that serves more than 130 community centers in Louisville and southern Indiana.

In the past 15 years, Kentucky Harvest has supplied community centers with more than 23 million pounds of food donated by restaurants, farmers, hospitals, bakeries, caterers, groceries, hotels and motels.



**TOP:** Lt. Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 165th Airlift Squadron, hands out Kentucky Harvest flyers to unit members departing base during December drill.

**RIGHT:** Kraus, Col. Howard Hunt and Col. Mike Harden show off their flyers and hats to promote the KyANG canned-food drive. The unit's holiday gift to the community raised more than 5,500 pounds of canned goods.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Mark Rines/KyANG

## Airman of the Year Banquet to be held Feb. 2

The 123rd Airlift Wing will honor its outstanding airmen of the year during a banquet Saturday, Feb. 2, at Woodhaven Country Club.

The guest speaker for the event is a former KyANG wing commander, retired Maj. Gen. Carl Black.

Tickets are \$12.50 per person or \$25 per couple. Attire for the evening is dress blues, but mess dress is optional.

See any KyANG chief master sergeant for tickets.

## Bean Soup 2002 to be held March 14

Bean Soup 2002 is scheduled for Thursday, March 14 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the Fuel Cell Hangar.

Unit members raised a record \$11,000 last year.

Details on the 2002 event will appear in the February issue to the Cargo Courier.

For more information, call Lt. Col. Rich Frymire at ext. 4589.

## AF Academy slots open to ANG

The Air Force Academy holds 85 slots for Air National Guard and reserve members each year.

To apply, the member must be a U.S. citizen, unmarried with no dependents, of good moral character, at least 17 but less than 23 years of age by July 1 of the year of their entrance and meet high leadership, academic, physical and medical standards.

For specifications on applying, visit the admissions website at [www.academyadmissions.com/admissions/howtoapply/airmen](http://www.academyadmissions.com/admissions/howtoapply/airmen).



# STS troops rain from the sky

**TOP LEFT:** Tech. Sgt. Karl Grugel, a pararescue specialist from the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, checks his HALO parachute before a training jump in October. Grugel and three other squadron members deployed to Frankfort, Ky., for the training, which was conducted with a Kentucky Army National Guard helicopter crew.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Grugel gathers his parachute after completing the jump.

**TOP RIGHT:** Jumpers climb into the helicopter using a rope ladder. Special tactics troops also repelled from the HH-60.

**RIGHT:** Master Sgt. Jon Rosa, a combat controller, has his parachute checked by another troop prior to boarding the helicopter.



Photos by Master Sgt. Charles Simpson/KyANG

# Damico remembered as good man, troop

By Staff Sgt. Amy Ziegler  
Cargo Courier Editor

Tragedy struck the Kentucky Air Guard on Dec. 19 when Senior Master Sgt. August "Gus" Damico died after being fatally wounded by the accidental discharge of his hunting rifle.

Damico, 43, was a ground radio craftsman here in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron and had served in the military, on both active-duty and in KyANG, for more than 25 years.

He was the kind NCO who made the wing a great unit, said Col. Mike Harden, 123rd Airlift Wing commander.

"Gus not only did his job, he took initiative to do whatever needed to be done," Harden said.

"He believed in his unit, his buddies and his country and would do anything to make sure that he didn't let them down. He will be missed by his family, his friends and the 123rd."

Damico was considered by his coworkers to be the "go-to" guy in special tactics.

"Sgt. Damico always had the right answers," said one of his troops, Staff Sgt. Mimi Roy, a meteorological navigation systems craftsman.

"He was a great friend, supervisor and mentor," she added. "He was always looking out for people and always tried to make sure he was guiding them in the right path."

Roy, who had known Damico for more than eight years, served in the 205th Combat Communications Squadron with him before that unit was deactivated.

Because of Damico's dedication and service to the 205th, he was named 1999 Senior NCO of the Year for the Kentucky Air Guard.

"He was one of the original founding members of special tactics," she said. "He sort of ran the show while everyone was off at school."

Maj. Jeremy Shoop, 123rd Special Tactics Squadron commander, agrees with Roy.

"From our inception, while the original cadre was off-station attending various schools that constituted the combat control pipeline, Gus was the de facto commander, director of operations, superintendent, scheduler, training manager, quartermaster and, of course, chief of radio maintenance, in addition to wearing too many other hats to mention," Shoop said.



**Senior Master Sgt. Gus Damico**

"Whenever one called the unit for information on any subject matter, from how to get in, to the location of the best areas in Louisville to live, it was always Gus who had the answers."

Damico was a good man, a multi-talented airman and experienced senior NCO, Shoop said.

"We will miss him and honor his memory. We are all better airman and people in general for having known him."

*Damico was entombed at Evergreen Mausoleum in Louisville with full military honors. He is survived by his wife, two daughters, both parents and a half-sister.*

## Safety is the responsibility of all KyANG members

### Cargo Courier Staff Report

With many troops activated and busily working, safety officials are concerned that some unit members may be cutting corners when it comes to safety.

"So far this fiscal year, the unit's safety mishaps have exceeded the previous two years," said Master Sgt. Barry Wright,

wing safety and occupational health manager.

Supervisors should, therefore, redouble their efforts to ensure personnel are working safely, he said.

Each unit should have its own safety program that complements and supports the base safety program, he said.

"It's everyone's responsibility to make

sure we do things safely," Wright said.

"It's a matter of preserving life and valuable resources while continuing to accomplish our missions."

If your unit doesn't have a program in place, base safety personnel are available to assist in developing one.

*For more information, call ext. 4107.*

# Troop Support

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1170 in Middletown, Ky., presented 62 Christmas gift boxes Nov. 27 to KyANG members who are deployed for Operation Noble Eagle.

Front from left: Tech. Sgt. Tony Long, Debbie Antle, Tech. Sgt. Julie Webb, Martha Jo Casey, Kaye Phillips, Toby Conway, Nancy Garwood, Staff Sgt. James Moore; back from left: Tech. Sgt. Don Jordan, Jim MacDonald, Brian Duffy, Jeff Phillips, Ron Casey, Darrell Dody, Sue Christy and Staff Sgt. Jerry Zollman.



Staff Sgt. Tommy Downs/KyANG

## Junior officers help make MOWW conference successful

By Staff Sgt. Amy Ziegler  
Cargo Courier Editor

Several members of the Kentucky Air Guard played key roles in orchestrating the first ever multi-day Youth Leadership Conference for the Military Order of World Wars, Maj. Gen. Ben Butler Chapter.

More than 35 Marine Corps Junior ROTC students from Fern Creek, Jeffersontown and Seneca high schools took part in the three-day conference, held Dec. 9-11 at Otter Creek Park.

The students participated in activities that focused on leadership, teamwork, patriotic education and free enterprise.

Motivational speakers and local military leaders provided the training foundation for the conference, said Lt. Col. Rich Frymire, senior vice commander of the local MOWW chapter.

Frymire, who also is the executive officer of the 123rd Airlift Wing, said he's delighted to see the students' success.

"These young men and women arrived as individuals representing three separate schools—each with its own identity," Frymire said.

"They left as a single group which learned from actual exercises that leadership and teamwork are real difference-makers in the success or failure of a group."

Several KyANG junior officers helped make a the conference a success, Frymire noted.

"Capt. Dave Clements, 2nd Lt. Mary Decker and 2nd Lt. Jaime King each did a fantastic job of relating their personal military experiences to the students," Frymire said.

"Our junior officers now realize that they can make a big difference as role models for these young people."

Former presidential candidate Ross Perot has earmarked \$500,000 over the next four years to support MOWW youth leadership conferences.

MOWW is a patriotic, nonpartisan organization of commissioned, warrant or flight officers who have served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces. Kentucky has four local chapters—two in Louisville and one each in Frankfort and Ft. Knox.

KyANG members make up the majority of the Maj. Gen. Ben Butler Chapter.

*For information about membership or MOWW Youth Leadership Conferences, contact Lt. Col. Frymire at ext. 4589.*



Senior Airman Philip Speck/KyANG

Lt. Col. Rich Frymire, senior vice commander of the MOWW Maj. Gen. Ben Butler Chapter, joins students and instructors representing Marine Corps Junior ROTC units from Fern Creek, Jeffersontown and Seneca high schools. The students took part in a youth leadership conference at Otter Creek Park from Dec. 9 to 11.

# Every day challenging for troops in Afghanistan

By **Jim Garamone**  
**American Forces Press Service**

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan—“We are parked in a minefield. When you get out of the aircraft do not leave the concrete.”

That was “Welcome to Afghanistan” for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his party Dec. 16.

It might be stating the obvious to say that Afghanistan is a dangerous place, but it is. There is no such thing as “normal” in Afghanistan. Every day is a challenge for U.S. military personnel in the country.

The C-17 Globemaster III that Rumsfeld flew in on parked on a concrete apron right next to a minefield at Bagram Air Base about 20 miles from the capital of Kabul.

While no one is casual about the presence of minefields—explosive ordnance disposal teams are working on the problem—there seems to be a certain amount of acceptance of these difficulties. The airman who gave the warning was just being truthful—there has been a lot of fighting in the country throughout the last 30 years, and landmines and unexploded ordnance litter the area.

“There used to be a lot of souvenir hunting here until a Brit got his foot blown off here a couple of weeks ago,” said an Army reservist pulling duty at the base.

The British soldier stepped on a “toe-popper.” This particularly vicious mine is designed to maim, not kill, and to be virtually undetectable.

No one knows how many thousands of these mines are in Afghanistan.

Bagram is the temporary home of 10th Mountain Division soldiers supporting Army units and Air Force tactical airlift control element personnel.

It is not a charming place. The air base sustained heavy damage in fighting between Afghan warlords in the early and mid-1990s.

It was once the main base in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation. Most of the structures and facilities date from that time. Bagram was not particularly damaged during the current campaign against al-Qaeda. Still, the Taliban government, in power in the area from 1997 until November, does not appear to have been too handy.

“This is your classic fixer-upper,” said an Army engineer construction supervisor.

Bullets and shrapnel pockmarked all of

the buildings on base. There does not seem to be an unbroken window on the base.

The best hangar still has holes in the roof from where it was hit by mortar fire.

It is important to clean up this air base because it is going to be a major hub in the humanitarian rescue mission for Afghanistan, American officials said.

So American servicemembers are in Bagram, and they are coping with life Afghan style.

“There’s a certain wild West attitude,” said Army Sgt. Wayne, a civil affairs specialist. “This is certainly reinforced by the fact that everyone here carries a weapon of some sort.”

The Americans live in former Soviet barracks that were fought over for years. They call it “the Crack House” because the inside has been totally gutted. There are no walls, windows, doors, shelves, plumbing or roofs.

When the soldiers and airmen first arrived, they had to scavenge to make the building shells even remotely livable. What they could not scavenge on base, they had to buy in town.

“The Afghans really don’t like foreigners in their country,” Wayne said. “We try to blend in as best as an American can.”

To that end, the sergeant and many of his compatriots dress in civilian clothes, have grown beards and wear Afghan accoutrements. Many Army and Air Force people have bought traditional Northern Afghan hats called pakols.

“Oh, I guarantee this will be the latest style in another month,” said a young Army captain. “But it makes sense. Americans stick out like sore thumbs usually.”

There was no running water on the base when the people first arrived.

“We went 18 days without a shower,” said an Army officer. “We tried using those (pre-moistened wipes), but they don’t work real well.”

Another officer held out his hands.

“Look at that,” he said, showing ingrained dirt. “This is what happens here. Even if you do get clean, you won’t stay that way for long.”

“This will take a scrub brush to get off when we get back,” he said.

Supplies are another worry for the personnel at Bagram.

“The secretary’s C-17 was the first one to come in during daytime,” said Specialist Jerry. “We’re hoping this means the Air

Force will fly in supply missions via C-17. The C-130 Hercules is good, but the ones they use are half full of electronic gear, so there’s not a lot of room for supplies.”

Chow for these troops is still prepackaged field rations until regular resupply runs are established.

Given the difficulties, you might expect low morale. Nothing could be further from the truth. The American servicemembers are proud and excited about their mission.

“If folks in the Air Force saw how we live, they’d pee their pants,” said an Air Force security forces airman.

He was giving voice to an oft-repeated stereotype that airmen generally live in better conditions than their Army counterparts.

“But we know this is important to the United States, and we know we’re doing a good job,” the airman said. “No one here would trade the experience, believe me.”

## Uniforms allowed for official CONUS travel

By **Staff Sgt. Amy Parr**  
**Air Force Print News**

WASHINGTON—Rescinding the announcement made Sept. 21, Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, is once again authorizing the wear of military uniforms for people traveling aboard commercial aircraft.

While the original announcement was a force protection measure directly related to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York and the Pentagon, Lt. Col. Bruce Lovely, Air Force quality of life and uniform board chief, said rescinding the policy is just another step in returning to normal.

“Wearing the uniform on commercial flights by Air Force senior leadership shows that the Air Force is resuming normal day-to-day activities, while increasing our visibility to the American public,” he said.

“Thereby, (we) give the public a sense of pride and confidence.”

## Promotions, enlistments & separations



*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:*

### AIRMAN 1ST CLASS (E-3)

- James McCrocklin**,  
123rd Student Flt.
- Michael Moore**,  
123rd Student Flt.
- Richard Prewitt Jr.**,  
123rd Maintenance Sq.

### SENIOR AIRMAN (E-4)

- Lindsay Elwell**,  
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Gregory Kannapel**,  
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Patrick Lease Jr.**,  
123rd Aerial Port Sq.
- Daniel Spradling II**,  
123rd Logistics Sq.

- Timothy Strader**,  
123rd Aerial Port Sq.

### STAFF SERGEANT (E-5)

- Christopher Bensing**,  
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- James Stuckey**,  
165th Airlift Sq.

### TECHNICAL SERGEANT (E-6)

- Pamela Ahlstedt**,  
123rd Airlift Wing
- Arnulfo Guerrero**,  
123rd Special Tactics Sq.
- Beatrice Hultman**,  
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Karla Sheckells**,  
123rd Maintenance Sq.
- Norman Thomas Jr.**,  
123rd Civil Engineers Sq.

*The following individuals have separated from*

*the Kentucky Air National Guard:*

- Staff Sgt. James Burns**,  
123rd Civil Engineers Sq.
- Senior Airman Joven Looney**,  
123rd Logistics Sq.
- Senior Airman Tanika Pilgrim**,  
123rd Airlift Wing
- Airman 1st Class Andrew Thieneman**,  
123rd Civil Engineers Sq.

*The following individuals have enlisted as members of the Kentucky Air Guard and reservists of the United States Air Force:*

- Airman 1st Class Matthew Koehler**,  
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Airman 1st Class Erik Smith**,  
123rd Security Forces Sq.
- Staff Sgt. Christopher Webb**,  
123rd Medical Sq.
- Airman 1st Class Matthew Whitehead**,  
123rd Aircraft Generation Sq.

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