

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

Online Edition • March 3, 2007

## Gerard, Posten, Dawson named top troops

### Trio to be honored at banquet tonight

By Capt. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer

Senior Airman Garrett Gerard, Staff Sgt. John Posten and Chief Master Sgt. Ray Dawson have been selected as the Kentucky Air National Guard's 2007 Outstanding Airmen of the Year, edging out a competitive field of 33 other top troops for the prestigious title.

The trio will be honored tonight along with the Kentucky Army Guard's top soldiers during a banquet to be held at Churchill Downs' Millionaire's Row, said State Command Chief Master Sgt. Mark Grant.

"We received some excellent nominations this year, which made the evaluations extremely competitive," said Chief Grant, who chaired the committee of chief master sergeants that reviewed the contenders. The state sergeant major also served on the committee.

"The quality was truly incredible," Chief Grant continued. "We have some people in this wing who are doing amazing things in both the military and civilian communities."

Candidates were evaluated on the basis of leadership/job performance, personal improvement and community involvement.

Airman Gerard, a traditional Guardsman and turboprop engine mechanic in the wing's 123rd Maintenance Squadron, is described by his commander as "an outstanding troop."

"He truly embodies the Air Force Core Values of Integrity, Service and Excellence," said Maj. George Tomica. "He is a capable and trustworthy mechanic — the engine shop obviously thinks quite highly of him — but he's also actively involved with his community."

For example, Airman Gerard sponsors the care of an impoverished Peruvian child through an organization called Food for the Hungry, and he helps organize public speeches for local churches and other civic organizations.

Master Sgt. Gary Dunlap said other Guardsmen look to Airman Gerard as a role model, partly be-

cause of that community ethos and partly because of the way he approaches his work.

"Airman Gerard is very enthusiastic about his job, and he takes a lot of pride in his appearance," said Sergeant Dunlap, supervisor of the unit's propulsion element.

"He also spends a lot of time looking for ways to help other Guardsmen. Airman Gerard scored very high on his career development courses, so he started a new training program to assist others who were struggling with theirs. He's just that kind of individual."

Among Airman Gerard accomplishments during the past year, he helped repair and install four engines on a C-130 aircraft so efficiently that the transport plane was returned to service 24 hours ahead of schedule. Airman Gerard's diligence also contributed to the wing's "excellent" rating during the deployment phase of last year's Operational Readiness Inspection.

Sergeant Posten, representing the NCO category in the Airmen of the Year competition, was a traditional Guardsman whose work performance as a C-130 crew chief was so exceptional that he was hired full-time.

"Sergeant Posten is pretty new to the unit, but he's done such a great job for us that he was just awarded a technician job," said Maj. Barry Gorter, commander of the 123rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

"He really showed us that he's somebody we want working for us full-time."

Sergeant Posten's maintenance skills contributed directly to the exceptional performance of one of the wing's C-130s last year, Major Gorter said. That aircraft completed 1,074 sorties and 1,784 flying hours without a single mission delay or cancellation.

"That's very impressive," Major Gorter said.

The maintainer's skills also played a role in the unit's "excellent" rating during the initial response phase of the 2006 ORI.

Sergeant Posten has volunteered for numerous missions over the past year, including deployments to North Carolina, Alaska and Puerto Rico, the latter in support of Operation Coronet Oak.

"He pretty much raises his hand and volunteers



Senior Airman Garrett Gerard



Staff Sgt. John Posten



Chief Master Sgt. Ray Dawson

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# Airmen continue wing's history of excellence

*Fortes Fortuna Juvat.*

If that phrase sounds familiar, that's because it should. It is the motto ascribed beneath our wing patch.

Roughly translated from the Latin, it means, "Fortune Follows the Brave."

For 60 years, Airmen from the 123rd have adorned their uniform with that motto and have lived its promise in selfless service to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the nation.

We honor the vision of those who came before us and recognize the sacrifices that were made through the years to help make this wing what is a today — the best in the business.

Over the years, our aircraft and missions have changed. So, too, have our members. But one ingredient that makes us who we are has remained constant throughout our history — the desire for excellence.

It shows in our members through their indomitable spirit, unchallenged expertise, unquestionable integrity and sheer grit to fight and serve as Kentuckians at home and across the globe.

Just within the past month, I've been privileged to receive letters of recognition for many of our wing members as well as unit awards that epitomize the standards of performance we aspire to achieve.

— The 123rd Mission Support Flight is the recipient for the 2006 Gerrit D. Foster Jr. Air National Guard Outstanding Mission Support Flight of the Year Award.

— The 123rd Services Flight took top honors as the Air National Guard Services Flight of the Year, and two of its members,



**Col. Mark Kraus,  
123rd Airlift Wing Commander**

Senior Airman Brittany Ingram and Staff Sgt. Wendy Haight, were named the Air National Guard Outstanding Services Airman and NCO of the Year, respectively.

— The 123 Security Forces Squadron has been identified as one of only two squadrons still in contention for the Air National Guard Outstanding Security Forces Squadron of the Year Award (and I know that, official recognition aside, our folks are most truly deserving of this award).

— Tech. Sgt. Tony Moore was recognized as a superior performer while deployed and assigned to the 386th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, Ali Al Salem Air

Base, Kuwait.

— Senior Master Sgt. Barry Wright was lauded for his extraordinary performance as Ground Safety NCOIC while deployed to Antarctica with the 109th Airlift Wing for Operation Deep Freeze.

Aircraft maintainers Master Sgt. Walter Brewer; Tech Sgts. Larry Burba, Chad Chamberlain, Carl Shaffer and Charles Rodgers; and Staff Sgts. James Campbell, Kevin Cowell, Travis Howard and Robert Powers were noted as exceptional performers by the mission commander for Operation Joint Forge at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

— Master Sgt. Derek Whitmer of the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron was commended by the 129th Rescue Wing commander for his outstanding support to the 129th during their Air Combat Command Operational Readiness Inspection.

— Senior Master Sgt. Monica Rich received a letter of appreciation for her superb performance while deployed for duty in the logistics cell of the Air Guard's Crisis Action Team at the National Guard Bureau.

These are just a representative sampling of the great work that members of our wing do day in and day out.

One thing stands clear to me, however: Even though 60 years old, this wing is still climbing toward its peak.

I have no doubt that it will be as strong and vital to our national security and the Commonwealth of Kentucky over the next 60 years as it has up to today — as long as we remember that Fortune Follows the Brave. Fortes Fortuna Juvat!

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The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs office of the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

Our office is located in room 2118 of the Wing Headquarters Building. Deadline for the next issue is May 4.

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## Army Guardsman gets Distinguished Service Cross

Kentucky Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein received the Distinguished Service Cross on Feb. 17 for his extraordinary heroism in action during an ambush that took place almost two years ago in Iraq.

The award — the second highest decoration only to the Medal of Honor — was bestowed at the National Guard Association of Kentucky conference in Lexington, Ky.

In the presence of more than 800 of his peers, Sergeant Nein was presented with the Distinguished Service Cross by Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, while Gov. Ernie Fletcher and Army Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, the adjutant general of Kentucky, stood by Nein's side.

"While the name of Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein is already in the history books, his actions as a leader and as a Soldier typify the warrior spirit of all of our troops," Governor Fletcher said. "I'm honored to serve as commander-in-chief of the Kentucky National Guard because I know I have Soldiers and Airmen like Staff Sgt. Nein to answer the call of duty."

Sergeant Nein originally received the Silver Star — along with Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester and Sgt. Jason Mike — for his actions in Iraq on March 20, 2005, during the Battle of Salman Pak. It was upgraded after a final review. Assigned to the Kentucky Guard's 617th Military Police Company, Sergeant Nein and his squad, "Raven 42," successfully disrupted an ambush on a coalition convoy by an estimated force of 50 enemy insurgents.

Sergeant Nein is only the fifth U.S. Army Soldier, and the first Guardsman, to receive the Distinguished Service Cross in the Global War on Terror. He also is the first Kentucky Guardsman to receive the medal since World War II.



The Kentucky Air Guard's Master Sgt. Keary Miller is depicted in a new National Guard Heritage Print for his heroism under fire in Afghanistan.

## Painting honors 123rd troop

By Capt. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer

A Kentucky Air Guardsman's heroism during a 17-hour Afghan firefight is depicted in a new painting commissioned by the National Guard Bureau, "The Battle of Takur Ghar."

The painting features Master Sgt. Keary Miller, a pararescueman in the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron who helped save the lives of 10 fellow servicemembers during a rescue mission on a remote mountain ridge in Afghanistan on March 4, 2002.

On that date, Sergeant Miller was assigned to a Quick Reaction Force tasked to recover two American servicemen evading capture in austere terrain.

Just before touching down, Sergeant Miller's helicopter received rocket-propelled grenade and small-arms fire, causing it to crash land.

Sergeant Miller and the assault force formed a hasty defense but immediately suffered four fatalities and five critical casualties. Despite intense enemy fire, Sergeant Miller moved throughout the battlefield, crossing open danger areas on numerous occasions to assess and care for critically wounded servicemen.

As the battle drew on, Sergeant Miller removed ammunition from the deceased and, in multiple acts of extraordinary courage, proceeded through some of the day's heaviest rocket-propelled grenade, mortar and small arms fire while distributing the ammunition from position to position.

Shortly thereafter, another attack erupted, killing one pararescueman and compromising the casualty collection point. Sergeant Miller braved the barrage of fire in order to move the wounded to better cover and concealment.

His bravery and skill led to the successful delivery of 10 gravely wounded Americans to life-saving medical treatment and to the recovery of seven servicemen killed in action. For his efforts, Sergeant Miller was awarded the Silver Star in 2003.

Gov. Ernie Fletcher unveiled the painting Dec. 19 during a ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda, where Sergeant Miller downplayed the importance of his actions.

"Not one single person saved the day," Sergeant Miller told the crowd of military members and news media who gathered for the unveiling. "It was a team effort up there."

The painting is now on permanent display at the Kentucky Military Museum in Frankfort.

# Guardsmen serving in civilian-sector offices

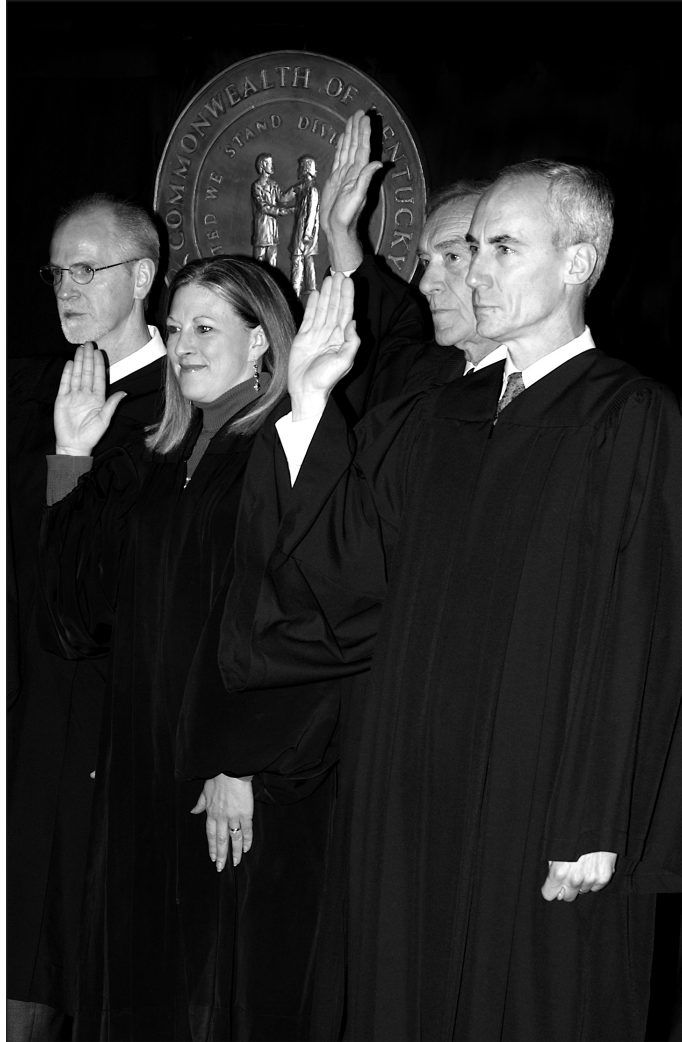
Perry, Moore elected in '06

Staff report

Two members of the Kentucky Air National Guard are expanding the Air Force concept of "Service Before Self" by applying it to their civilian jobs, too.

Lt. Col. Mitchell Perry, executive officer in the 123rd Airlift Wing, and Lt. Col. Tim Moore, a flight commander in the 165th Airlift Squadron, were elected to public office in the November 2006 elections.

Colonel Perry was sworn in Jan. 7 as one of the newest Jefferson Circuit Court judges, while Moore took office as a state representative from the 26th District.



Capt. Dale Greer/KyANG

Far Left: Lt. Col. Tim Moore, a flight commander for the Kentucky Air Guard's 165th Airlift Squadron, represents the commonwealth's 26th District in the General Assembly.

Near Left: Lt. Col. Mitchell Perry (foreground) takes the oath of office Jan. 7 at the Louis D. Brandeis Hall of Justice in Louisville. Colonel Perry, executive officer of the 123rd Airlift Wing, is one of 17 Jefferson District Court Judges.

## Top troops

Continued from Front Page

for anything that comes up," Major Gorter said.

"But there's more to him than just working at the Guard," he added. "Sergeant Posten is involved with his church and participates in a lot of community activities. I think that shows his character. He really wants to help in any way he can."

This year's senior NCO winner, Chief Dawson, is equally civic-minded.

A traditional Guardsman who works as a police officer in the civilian world, Chief Dawson also serves as a city councilman for the town of Scottsburg, Ind., volunteers for

the Prevent Child Abuse Council of Scott Co., Ind., and coaches numerous children's sporting events.

"I think Chief Dawson's community spirit really stands out," said his commander, Lt. Col. Jeff Peters of the 123rd Aerial Port Squadron.

As the squadron's air transportation superintendent, Chief Dawson maintains high standards in the military community, too, Colonel Peters said.

He assisted with the development of procedures that helped the wing score an overall "excellent" during the redeployment phase of the ORI last April, Colonel Peters noted, and he performed with distinction as superintendent of Patriot Partner in July. The joint-service training mission placed more than 180 troops from the Army, Navy and

Air Force under Chief Dawson's supervision.

"I've never seen Chief Dawson falter on anything he's ever done," Colonel Peters said. "I know he did a bang-up job during the ORI last year."

Colonel Peters also praised Dawson for stepping up to fill critical missions like Operation Jump Start, the National Guard-led effort to improve border security in the southern United States.

"He's definitely a citizen-Airman," Colonel Peters said. "Any time you need somebody to step in and help out, he's always the first in line."

*Tickets for tonight's banquet are \$20 per person and may be purchased from any chief master sergeant. Social hour begins at 6 p.m., and dinner will be served at 7.*

# 123rd celebrates 60th anniversary

By Capt. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The Kentucky Air Guard celebrated its 60th anniversary last month with two ceremonies that paid tribute to the unit's storied past.

During the first event, held Feb. 3 in the base Maintenance Hangar, 123rd Airlift Wing Commander Col. Mark Kraus reminded hundreds of drilling Airmen about the wing's Latin motto: Fortes Fortuna Juvat.

Loosely translated, it means, "Fortune Follows the Brave," a fitting credo for Airmen who have deployed for countless operations around the world since 1947, including the Korean War, the Bosnian conflict and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Colonel Kraus noted that much of the wing's current success can be attributed to the hard work of thousands of Kentuckians who served the state and nation during the past six decades.

"Today, as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Kentucky Air National Guard and the 123rd Wing, we honor the vision of those who came before us and recognize the sacrifices that were made

See **BIRTHDAY**, Back Page



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Above: Kentucky Air Guard leaders pose with the wing's 60th birthday cake during an anniversary ceremony held Feb. 4 in the base Maintenance Hangar.



Left: Capt. Dave Clements and Chief Master Sgt. Johnnie Cherry serve cake to hundreds of Kentucky Airmen who attended the drill-week-end celebration.

Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG



Staff Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG



Staff Sgt. Philip Speck/KyANG

Far left: Henry Meigs, the state's first Air Officer, attends a second birthday event on Feb. 16 — 60 years to the day that the Kentucky Air Guard received federal recognition.

Near left: In honor of the occasion, 123rd Airlift Wing Commander Col. Mark Kraus reads a proclamation from Gov. Ernie Fletcher in which Feb. 16 is declared "Kentucky Air National Guard Day."

# Gates promises fewer, shorter deployments

**American Forces Press Service**

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department is committed to implementing changes in policy that will mean fewer, shorter and more predictable deployments for reserve-component troops, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates told the National Guard's 54 adjutants on Tuesday.

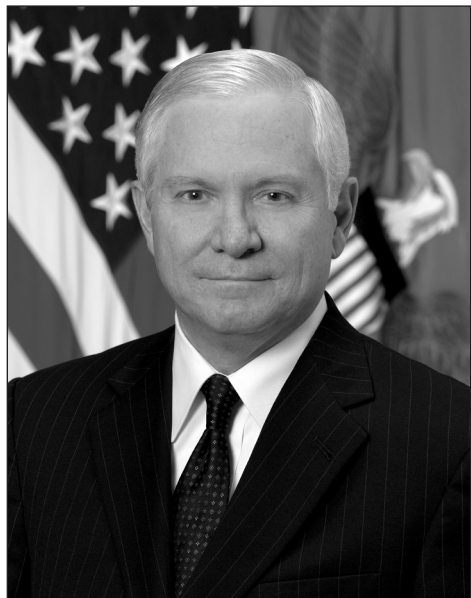
Speaking to the Adjutants General Association of the United States mid-winter conference, Secretary Gates said his goal is for Guard members to serve a one-year deployment no more often than every five years.

This met with resounding applause by the adjutants general, whose state forces have been strained in the past five years supporting federal and state missions of historical proportions.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 275,000 Guard members have been mobilized in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

This, in addition to state emergencies such as snow storms, floods and forest fires, and border-patrol missions have heavily strained pools of National Guard troops available for deployment.

In a historic mobilization in response to a natural disaster, 50,000 Guard members were called up in 2005 from across the nation in support of Hurricane Katrina disaster relief.



**DOD Secretary Robert M. Gates**

Until now, National Guard troops called up for the Army's standard one-year tour in Iraq would actually serve for 18 months, including pre-deployment training and post-deployment administrative requirements. Secretary Gates is imposing a one-year limitation to the length of deployment for National Guard Soldiers effectively immediately, he said.

The defense secretary stressed, though, that some troops may be caught in the start of the cycle and face deployments faster than once every five years. His department is looking at developing compensation for those who serve additional mobilizations, and officials are reviewing hardship policies that allow for the exemption of some troops based on personal circumstances. The one-to-five-year cycle does not include activations for state emergencies.

Secretary Gates said the influx of 92,000 troops into the active Army and Marine Corps over the next five years should help take some of the load off of the reserve component. He said the larger pool of ground forces available will make it less likely Guard troops will be needed for deployments.

"The goal is to distribute more fairly and more effectively the burdens of war among our active and reserve components, while providing more predictable schedule of mobilizations and deployments for troops their families and civilian employers," Secretary Gates said.

He added that since Sept. 11, 2001, the Guard has undergone a "remarkable transformation" from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve, and he pledged additional resources to help keep the Guard ready. In the next two fiscal-year budgets, Secretary Gates said, the Defense Department is asking for \$9 billion to reset and reequip the Guard. Many units face severe shortages after returning from deployments with either missing or broken equipment.

"Reconstituting and resetting the Guard and reserve ... is the top priority for the Department of Defense," Secretary Gates said.

Secretary Gates' goal is a National Guard that is fully manned, trained and equipped and capable of taking on a range of traditional and nontraditional missions at home and abroad, he said.

Despite the strain on the National Guard,

Secretary Gates said, recruiting and retention numbers show that troops still want to serve and believe in the mission.

In fiscal 2006, the Army National Guard exceeded its retention goals by 18 percent. Also that fiscal year, the Guard reached 99 percent of its recruiting goal and signed up 19,000 more soldiers than in fiscal 2005. The Army National Guard had a net increase of 14,000 soldiers in the past year, Secretary Gates said.

Other recent changes include rescinding the policy that stated a Guard member could not be activated for more than 24-months in a six-year enlistment. That caused the Army to have to put units together in a piecemeal manner, sometimes from different states, Secretary Gates said.

Also, DoD will quit the practice of slicing up units to fill deployment demands. This happened to many states that had to cough up cookie-cutter-sized task forces, leaving odd-sized units back home as basically non-deployable entities.

"It is important, I believe, that citizen-soldiers who live together and train also deploy and fight together," Secretary Gates said.

Secretary Gates also has directed officials to minimize the use of "stop-loss," a policy that freezes personnel in specific jobs or units and prevents them from getting out or changing jobs.

All of these changes represent a shift in how DoD intends to use the Guard and reserve in the future, Secretary Gates said.

"In the future, our troops should be deployed or mobilized less often, for shorter periods of time and with more predictability and with more quality of life for themselves and their families," Secretary Gates said.

Secretary Gates also praised reservists for giving leaders unabashed feedback. Secretary Gates said that when he eats with troops in Iraq or Afghanistan, they never hold back in telling him what they think.

"America's citizen-soldiers are unique in the history, ... not just because of their patriotism, dedication and skill, but because they are American citizens first and foremost," Secretary Gates said. "Thus, they are not overly impressed with rank, and they're not afraid to ask questions or offer advice or criticism. I hope we never change that, because it means American democracy is planted firmly in the spirit and the hearts of our citizen soldiers."

## Africa command may change role of USAFE

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — U.S. Air Forces in Europe Airmen have played an active role in Africa since the 1970s, but future participation has yet to be defined due to the recent establishment of U.S. Africa Command.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates announced the creation of AFRICOM on Feb. 6, but how that will affect Airmen assigned to USAFE is up to the new transition team operating in Stuttgart, Germany.

While the future is unclear, Airmen in Europe have already made a tangible difference in Africa, according to Brig. Gen. Michael A. Snodgrass, the director of Plans, Programs and Analysis for Headquarters USAFE at Ramstein.

“From 1970 forward, you can count all kinds of engagements we’ve had with Africa from Bright Star exercises in Egypt all the way through the Atlas series of exercises we’ve had with some of our friends in the Northern Mediterranean,” General Snodgrass said.

In addition to military assistance, USAFE Airmen have made contributions to the health and welfare of Africans. Countless missions have brought USAFE doctors and dentists to places such as Ghana, Niger and Liberia.

As of Feb. 20, explosive ordnance disposal technicians from Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, and Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, are in Guinea-Bissau in Western Africa clearing landmines and other dangerous remnants of a bloody civil war.

Despite the transition of some duties to AFRICOM, General Snodgrass expects USAFE to remain highly engaged in the coming years.

“There’s so much work left to be done in Eastern Europe that USAFE will remain ... fully employed,” he said.



Tech. Sgt. Cecilio M. Ricardo Jr./USAF

**Staff Sgt. Dan Maslowski prepares to release a wind sensor that provides weather analysis of drop zone winds just prior to the first employment of the Joint Precision Airdrop System in combination with the Improved Container Delivery System over Iraq on Feb. 16. Pairing the JPADS mission planning software with the new container system increases airdrop accuracy by 60 percent.**

## New system improves airdrops

By Staff Sgt. Carlos Diaz  
U.S. Central Command Air Forces

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — An aircrew from the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing used the Joint Precision Airdrop System for the first time over Iraq on Feb. 16, successfully delivering six 1,200-pound containers of supplies.

The new Air Force JPADS system uses mission planning software, a specialized laptop computer and a small, three-pound wind sensor to improve airdrop capability, officials said.

The software crunches data from a four-dimensional wind model that is downloaded to the laptop from the Air Force Weather Agency.

It then compares the data with current wind conditions captured by dropping the wind sensor outside the aircraft.

When the analysis is complete, the computer provides loadmasters with the aircraft’s

most accurate release point in the air.

The Feb. 16 test also used improved container delivery systems for the airdrops. Unlike conventional, non-steerable systems known as “dumb chutes,” the improved versions allow loadmasters to direct the cargo as it falls from the sky.

Combined with the JPADS mission-planning software, the synergy means a 60 percent increase in airdrop accuracy.

The new system also offers advantages on the ground, said Warrant Officer David Bird, an airdrop system technician assigned to the 368th Cargo Transportation Company here.

“The recovery time is faster, the loads are easier to download, the airdrop is faster because of the high velocity of 70 to 90 feet per second, and it’s low-cost, fast and safe,” he said.

The aircrew charged with the mission was deployed from the 463rd Airlift Wing at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark.

## Birthday

Continued from Page 5

through the years to help make us the wing we are today — and that is the best in the business, period,” he said.

“Even though it has been 60 years, this wing is still climbing toward its peak.

“Many of you will be here to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Air National Guard in Kentucky. Some of you will be here to celebrate the 80th, and even a few of you, no doubt, will be here to celebrate the 90th.

“I’ve got no doubt that on the 70th and 80th and 90th and 100th anniversaries of this wing, we’ll be as strong and vital to our national security and as important to the state of Kentucky as we are now.

“And it will be because of you — as long as you remember throughout your whole career that fortune follows the brave.”

The second event, held in the Base Annex on Feb. 16, provided an opportunity for Colonel Kraus to read a proclamation from Gov. Ernie Fletcher declaring the occasion as “Kentucky Air National Guard Day.”

Exactly 60 years earlier, the Kentucky Air Guard’s original four units received federal recognition — preceding the creation of the U.S. Air Force by more than five months.

Kentucky’s original four units were the 123rd Fighter Group, the 165th Fighter Squadron, the 165th Utility Squadron and the 165th Weather Squadron.

## Erratum

Because of an error at the printing plant, the last sentence of an article in the Feb. 3 edition of the Cargo Courier was incomplete. The sentence should have read:

“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.”

# Plans finalized for new ABU

By Senior Airman J.G. Buzanowski  
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — Air Force officials are moving forward with the Airman Battle Uniform roll-out and plans for a new service dress coat.

The new ABU, designed to eventually replace both the Battle Dress and Desert Combat Uniforms worn by Airmen, is currently in full production.

Early deliveries of ABU inventories in 2007 are earmarked for issue to a select group of deployers for Air Expeditionary Force 7 and 8.

Distribution plans also have the ABU replacing the BDU in the initial clothing bag at Basic Military Training in early fall.

Production expectations at this time support plans to have the ABU available for purchase in many Military Clothing Sales Stores later this year, with AAFES-wide availability in early 2008.

“Distribution decisions regarding which Airmen deploying in AEF 7/8 will be issued the ABU were based on a number of factors, with mission requirements and security paramount,” said Brig. Gen. Robert R. Allardice, the Airman Development and Sustainment director.

Battlefield Airmen will receive priority, he explained. These Airmen have Air Force specialty codes for combat rescue, special tactics, pararescue, combat control, tactical air control, special operations weather, battlefield weather and explosive ordnance.

Their missions take them “outside the

wire” for much of their duty. The majority of Battlefield Airman deploying in AEF 7 and 8 will each be issued four ABU sets. All other 7 and 8 deployers will receive the DCU.

General Allardice said the ABU is a uniform that is not only easy to wear; it’s easy to see the improvements as compared to current utility uniforms.

“While similar to other services’ uniforms in some ways, it carries a distinctive Air Force design,” the general said. “For example, the ABU has a four-color design. Additionally, the digitized tiger stripe pattern of the ABU pattern capitalizes on and skillfully employs a tested, proven pixelated camouflage advantage that proved very effective in tests.”

General Allardice’s favorite aspect of the ABU is its ease of care.

“I’ve had the same couple of ABUs for a year and a half and have not once put an iron or starch to it and it still looks good as new,” he said. “Airmen will never have to take this uniform to the dry cleaner. It’s comfortable and I love the way it looks, it feels and how easy it is to care for.”

General Allardice said now that the ABU is being fielded, development has started on other new uniform items. Specifically, Airmen can expect a field test of the new service coat later this year. The coat includes several design cues that reflect the Air Force’s heritage.

Once feedback has been received from the Heritage Jacket wear test, Air Force leaders will make a final decision on the new coat and send it into production, he said.

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