

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

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## Ceremony marks new era of base leadership

### Nelson assumes command of wing as Kraus bids farewell to 123rd's Airmen

By Capt. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The 123rd Airlift Wing's new commander hit the ground running Oct. 5 with a promise to seek additional missions, volunteer for more assignments and embrace a forward-leaning approach to all aspects of military and personal readiness.

Speaking to 1,100 members of the Kentucky Air Guard who had gathered on the base flightline for a wing change-of-command ceremony, Colonel Nelson said the U.S. military and the National Guard "hold the responsibility for the security and defense of our freedoms."

"I don't believe Kentucky is that state that's always there when you call," he said. "I believe Kentucky is the state that picks up the phone and says, 'You need help? We're there.'"

"I believe Kentucky is the first out the door. You need to know

See **COMMAND** on Page 7



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

**Col. Greg Nelson addresses members of the 123rd Airlift Wing after taking command of the unit Oct. 5. He began his career as an enlisted Airman and has served for more than three decades.**

## Rodeo tests skills of Air Force, Canadian special tacticians



Master Sgt. Gerold O. Gamble/ANG-RC

**Senior Airman Harry Bromley, a pararescueman with the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, prepares for a simulated rescue operation at Fort Knox, Ky.**

### Kentucky Air Guard hosts international competition

By Capt. John Stamm  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

FORT KNOX, Ky. — The shouts rang out: "Go, Go, Go!" as ropes were lowered, "bullets" flew and boots hit the ground.

Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron were launching a simulated rescue operation into "hostile" territory here as part of a competition between teams of elite Air Force Pararescue Jumpers.

The competition, known as a rodeo and sponsored this year by the Louisville-based 123rd, was held primarily at Fort Knox, Ky., from Sept. 2 through Sept. 4 and drew more than 100 participants from across the United States and Canada.

Known as "the quiet professionals," pararescue units are among the best the

world has to offer when it comes to conducting rescue and recovery missions in hostile environments.

The annual rodeo simulates real-world scenarios, offering PJ teams a chance to test and hone their skills, learn new ones or adapt and utilize current abilities to a different situation, said Senior Master Sgt. Karl Grugel, superintendent of the 123rd STS.

"Every time we can get together in mass formation like this, the cross-tell is phenomenal," he said. "Teams have different experiences, and they use those experiences to tweak their tactics."

Represented were teams from the 123rd, the 58th at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., the 38th at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., the 23rd at Hurlburt Field, Fla., the 212th from the Alaska Air National Guard, the 103rd from the New York Air National Guard and a team from the Canadian Air Force.

Teams demonstrated fast-rope techniques,

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# *Take time to count your blessings and consider the less fortunate this holiday season*

**H**appy Thanksgiving. We are approaching a holiday season when we take time to recognize how blessed we are.

Our blessings are countless, from the freedom of our nation to our individual health and welfare.

I am thankful every day for all that I have been given.

Please take some time to think about how lucky you are. Think about how much you have been given, including your health and your ability to serve in the United States military and Kentucky Air National Guard.

Not everyone was given the opportunities you have.

Also, I ask that you take some time during this season to think about those who are not as fortunate as you and I.

This UTA weekend, we will



**Col. Greg Nelson**  
123rd Airlift Wing Commander

kick-off our Combined Federal Campaign, which is an opportunity for us to give a portion

of our gifts to someone or some organization that is not as fortunate as you and I.

Take a look at the CFC program and see if there is a need that you feel is worthy of your support.

Lastly, I want to tell you again how thankful I am for the opportunity to command our great Wing!

Our motto is, "Fortune Follows the Brave," and I have been given the fortune to lead the wing I grew up in.

What a blessing!

Please take care during the holidays. Take some time with your family, and take a moment to count — and be thankful for — your blessings.

I am thankful for each and every one of you.

— *Colonel Greg Nelson*

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Our office is located in room 1160 of the Wing Headquarters Building.

We welcome your feedback. Please contact the Public Affairs Office directly if you have suggestions for articles or photography. Publication deadline for submissions to the next issue is Nov. 14.

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## Recruiting assistance program suspended

The Air National Guard's Recruiting Assistance Program has been suspended, effective Oct. 13.

According to contractors administering the program, the freeze is expected to be temporary.

No new nominations are being accepted into the program, which provided financial incentives for traditional and retired Air Guard members to recruit new troops.

## Deductible waiver now a permanent Tricare benefit

Eligible families of activated National Guard and Reserve members will continue to save up to \$300 in annual deductibles now that a Tricare program to waive the deductibles is a permanent benefit.

Family members of Guard personnel activated for more than 30 days under federal orders can sign up for Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra, which have annual deductibles.

The waiver on those deductibles was introduced on a trial basis following Sept. 11, 2001, and is now permanent.

## Staff titles changing at State Headquarters

The Kentucky National Guard has announced several title changes for key leadership at State Headquarters.

Col. (Brig. Gen. Select) Mark Kraus is now assistant adjutant general for Air, while Brig. Gen. Michael Dornbush is director of the joint staff and chief of staff of the Kentucky Air National Guard.

Col. George Scherzer is director of strategic plans for the joint staff (J-5), and Lt. Col. Mitch Perry is the operational plans and joint forces development officer (J-7).

# Pope memorializes Ky. Airman

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare  
Cargo Courier Editor

Tech. Sgt. Christopher A. Matero, a Kentucky combat controller who was killed in the line of duty, now has a road in his name at Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

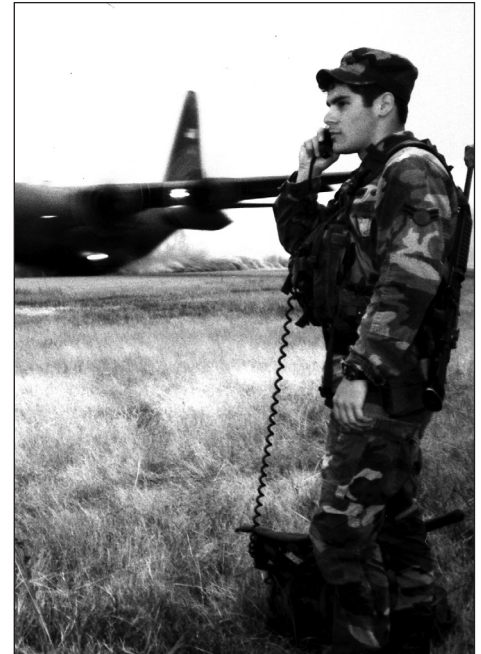
Matero Drive, named in his honor earlier this year, is home to a new building for the Air Force Combat Control School. Before enlisting in the Kentucky Air National Guard, Sergeant Matero was an instructor at the school.

He and eight other Airmen died in a MC-130H crash during a training flight in Puerto Rico on Aug. 7, 2002.

"Chris was an excellent instructor and mentor who embodied all the qualities we seek in a modern special operations warrior," said Lt. Col. Jeremy Shoop, commander of Kentucky's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

Chief Master Sgt. Jon Rosa, the unit's superintendent of combat control, and other Kentucky Airmen were among more than 300 people who attended a ceremony honoring Sergeant Matero in April.

"Many of his students, now combat-hardened veterans of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, told of his exacting standards and high ethics — and how he helped mold the next generation of special tactics warriors for combat against our nation's enemies," Colonel Shoop said. "His legacy lives on in those Airmen who now wear the scarlet beret."



Photos courtesy Chief Master Sgt. Jon Rosa

**Above:** Tech. Sgt. Christopher Matero, a 123rd Special Tactics combat controller, died in a 2002 plane crash during a training mission in Puerto Rico. Sergeant Matero was a schoolhouse instructor at Pope Air Force Base, N.C., before enlisting in the Kentucky Air National Guard.

**Below:** From left, Senior Master Sgt. Tom Deschane, Chief Master Sgt. Jon Rosa, Master Sgt. Wes Brooks and Capt. Sean McClane stand at Pope Air Force Base's Matero Drive.



# special tactics

# RODEO



Master Sgt. Gerold O. Gamble/ANG-RC



Tech. Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG



Master Sgt. Gerold O. Gamble/ANG-RC

**Clockwise from top: A special tactician fires paintballs during a Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) competition; a rodeo participant secures a simulated casualty for evacuation; a combat controller patrols for simulated enemy combatants during MOUT.**

# Rodeo

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performed static-line parachuting, practiced mass-casualty aid, engaged in combat, extracted prisoners and downed pilots, and conducted confined-space operations.

MOUT training — short for Military Operations Urban Terrain — was conducted at Zussman Village, an urban combat training facility at Fort Knox.

Teams were air-lifted in via Blackhawk helicopter, courtesy of the U.S. Army Reserve, and either exited the aircraft upon landing or had to use their repelling skills while still airborne.

Under simulated enemy fire provided by volunteers in the form of paintballs and professionally detonated explosives, teams had to locate and rescue personnel amidst smoke and fire before proceeding to a rally point to be extracted.

A confined-space/structural collapse exercise was held at Marble Hill, Ind., on the site of a decommissioned nuclear power plant currently being demolished.

The remote location provided the perfect simulation of a “bombed out” facility, Sergeant Grugel said.

Teams had to enter and locate precious cargo weighing hundreds of pounds in the midst of rubble.

Once located, the teams had to monitor the area for hazardous gasses and possible explosives, and extract the cargo from several feet below through an opening in the floor just barely large enough for it to fit.

They then were required to move into a position where the cargo could be loaded onto a transport vehicle and delivered to safety.

According to Master Sgt. Ishmael Antonio (retired), a former PJ and one of the facilitators of the competition, the rodeo was all about demonstrating abilities, use of tactical tools and teamwork.

“They really have to fine-tune their skills in this environment,” Sergeant Antonio said.

“Sometimes these guys work in a small area, sometimes with no lights and often with only what they can carry.

“They have to be aware of atmospheric monitoring, enemy position and capabilities and weapons control. But they make it work because they have no other choice.”

The overall winner of the competition was the team from New York, followed by the Alaskan team in second and the Hurlburt Field crew rounding out the top three.



Tech. Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

**A Canadian participant parachutes during the rodeo, which was hosted by the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.**



Master Sgt. Gerold O. Gamble/ANG-RC

**Pararescue troops transport an “injured” Airman by litter.**



Tech. Sgt. Phil Speck/KyANG

**A Kentucky Air Guard C-130 Hercules aircraft banks above rodeo participants at Fort Knox, Ky.**

# Last remaining veteran of Pueblo Crisis retires

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare  
Cargo Courier Editor

Jerry Buehner was just 18 years old in 1968 when he and his fellow 123rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing Airmen were called to duty for the historic Pueblo Crisis.

After returning to the wing in 1992 following an 18-year break in service, the master sergeant retired Oct. 5, becoming the last remaining member of the Kentucky Air Guard to have served during that era.

The Pueblo Crisis occurred four decades ago when the USS Pueblo, a spy ship, was captured by the Democratic People's Republic of China. More than 80 Americans were held prisoner by the communists for nearly a year.

"I was in jet school when we were activated, and I thought that it was the end of my life," Sergeant Buehner recalled. "I talked with my father and he said that the end was later than you might think."

As a result of the international incident, Sergeant Buehner was deployed as an RF-101 Voodoo crew chief. The Voodoo was the world's first supersonic photo reconnaissance aircraft and was used extensively to monitor the situation in Korea.

After six years of service, Sergeant Buehner was discharged and became a full-time civilian. But the military called him back 18 years later.

"Most of us would ask, 'Why in the world would someone return after such a long break in service?'" said Col. Neil T. Mullaney, commander of the 123rd Maintenance Group.

"I believe we are called into service. This calling is what led Jerry back to service in 1992."

According to Colonel Mullaney, the sergeant has set an example for his fellow Airmen.

As a quality assurance inspector, his "quiet and professional" approach and "infectious, positive attitude" have contributed im-



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

**Master Sgt. Jerry Buehner, a veteran of one of the Kentucky Air Guard's most historic operations, closed two decades of military service last month after a nearly 20-year break in service.**

measurably to the unit's legacy of excellence.

"I thank all of you for all you have done for me," Sergeant Buehner said during a retirement ceremony held in his honor last month. "Thanks for the memories. It's been very rewarding for me personally, and I'm just glad that I had the opportunity to be here with all of you."

# Senate confirms McKinley as new chief of Guard Bureau



Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley

By Staff Sgt. Andrea Thacker  
Air Forces Central Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. — Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley was confirmed as the 26th chief of the National Guard Bureau by the Senate on Oct. 2.

He also will become the first four-star general in the nearly 372-year history of the National Guard.

General McKinley, who has served as director of the 107,000-member Air National Guard since May 2006, was nominated by the president in September.

He succeeds Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, who was also confirmed Oct. 2 by the Senate to become the first National Guard deputy commander for the U.S. Northern Command.

As chief of the National Guard Bureau, General McKinley will be the senior uniformed officer representing nearly 468,000 citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen. He also will serve as the principal adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on National Guard issues.

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates recommended General McKinley for the upgraded four-star position in July following the recommendations of the Commission on the Guard and Reserve.

"General McKinley has earned this place in history," Secretary Gates said. "I trust he will continue to lead the Guard to new heights."

The last Air Force officer to serve as NGB chief was Lt. Gen. Russell C. Davis, who held the position from 1998 to 2002.

# Command

Continued from Front Page

that we're not going to wait to be called. We're going to go out and look for ways that we can support the citizens of the commonwealth, the United States and our allies abroad.

"I make this promise to each and every one of you: I promise that I will not let you down. I promise every day that I'm going to do the best, with the abilities I'm given, to do the right thing."

Colonel Nelson also vowed to seek new missions for the wing's Airmen despite cut-backs in many areas of the defense community. In 2006, for example, the Air Force downsized the wing's flying capacity by reassigning four of its original 12 C-130 aircraft.

"I'm going to look for ways to put more aircraft back on this ramp, more buildings on this base, and more Airmen and officers in the Kentucky Air National Guard," the 34-year military veteran said.

"Every bit of that success depends on what you all do every day. I want to thank you in advance, and if you'll stick with me, I also promise that we'll have fun."

Brig. Gen. Michael Dornbush, the Kentucky Air Guard's Chief of Staff, had high praise for Colonel Nelson during the ceremony, calling him a distinguished leader who earned a Bronze Star for his exceptional performance during deployments to CENTAF for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

"It's a pleasure to see Greg being given the opportunity for wing command," said General Dornbush, who officiated the change-of-command ceremony. "I am confident he will maintain the great legacy of wing leadership."

General Dornbush also had high praise for the unit's outgoing leader, Col. Mark Kraus, who has done "simply a superb job as commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing," he said.

During Colonel Kraus' four-year tenure, the wing scored three Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards, aced a grueling schedule of higher-headquarters inspections and successfully supported a challenging series of overseas deployments to Afghanistan, Europe and Puerto Rico while beefing up U.S. border security through Operation Jump Start and responding to natural disasters back home, including Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Gustav.

Colonel Kraus earned his second Bronze Star in 2007 for exceptional performance as deputy commander of the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group in Afghanistan, where he expertly managed six flying squadrons responsible for providing close-air support,



Tech. Sgt. D. Clare/KyANG

Left: Col. Mark Kraus bids the wing farewell during his comments Oct. 5.

Below: The Base Color Guard opens the change-of-command ceremony as the wing stands at attention on the KyANG flightline.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

electronic attack, military airlift and aeromedical evacuation in an extreme combat-flying environment.

"Mark, the 123rd's many accomplishments under your direction have brought worldwide credit and acclaim," General Dornbush said. "I salute you."

Colonel Kraus used the occasion to express his gratitude to the men and women of the Kentucky Air National Guard for their dedication to duty and excellence.

"I want to tell you how proud I am of you and the multitude of your accomplishments in the past four years," he said.

"We have indeed walked the long road together. We have safely flown through combat deployments, we've weathered seasons of readiness and compliance inspections, and performed countless humanitarian and community-service missions. You have ex-

celled at all and readied yourself for more.

"You modeled the highest attributes of the citizen-Airman of a nation at war. You answered the call of your community, state and nation. I am humbled to have had the opportunity to serve as your commander, and I count this time as a treasure to keep. You have my untiring gratitude and thanks for a job well done every step of the way.

"Finally, congratulations to Colonel Nelson on your new command. The men and women of this wing before you are individually the best — the very best — that America has to offer. And collectively, they are the best wing in the Air National Guard.

"After 34 years, as I step beyond the shield of this wing, I will encourage you to remember its motto, which has served well so many Kentucky Airmen in the past: Fortune Follows the Brave."

# Hunt retires after 34 years of dedicated service

**By Lt. Col. Kirk Hilbrecht  
Joint Forces Kentucky Headquarters**

The men and women of the Kentucky National Guard gathered in the Base Annex Oct. 4 to pay tribute to Brig. Gen. Howard P. Hunt III on the occasion of his retirement from more than three decades of faithful military service.



Airman 1st Class Max Rechel/KyANG

**Brig. Gen. Howard P. Hunt III speaks to audience members during a retirement ceremony held in his honor in the Base Annex on Oct. 4.**

General Hunt officially stepped down as the assistant adjutant general for Air and the commander of the Kentucky Air National Guard on Sept. 30.

“General Hunt is closing out a military career of over 34 years of dedicated service to the Kentucky Air National Guard, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the United States of America,” said Brig. Gen. Michael Dornbush, director of joint staff for the Kentucky National Guard.

“General Hunt has distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious conduct in a performance of outstanding service to the Kentucky National Guard for his entire career.”

General Hunt graduated from Texas Christian University’s Reserve Officer Training Corps program in 1974. He joined the Kentucky Air National Guard in 1975 and has held a variety of positions here through the years, including wing executive officer, maintenance group commander and executive staff support officer.

During his KyANG career, General Hunt has been responsible for the Air National Guard’s participation in numerous operations involving military support to civilian authorities. These include

multiple subject-matter-expert exchanges with Ecuador through the State Partnership Program. He was also instrumental in the early development of statewide Homeland Security processes and the creation of the Kentucky Guard’s Weapons of Mass Destruction team.

In March of 2003, General Hunt was selected to command the 485th Expeditionary Maintenance Group in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and two months later he was named commander of the 379th Expeditionary Maintenance Group in Al Udeid, Qatar.

Both posts supported Operation Iraqi Freedom.

General Hunt’s decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, the Air Force Achievement Medal and the Army Achievement Medal.

“His dynamic leadership forged the way for Kentucky and the National Guard to evolve into one of the few truly joint forces of the Army and Air National Guard in the nation,” General Dornbush said.

“General Hunt is a leader in the Kentucky National Guard, and we are proud to have had him serve in the commonwealth.”

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