

# THE CARGO COURIER

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

Online Edition • March 14, 2009

## Wing helps thousands during ice-storm call-up

Ky. Airmen join Soldiers to assist area residents, distribute food and water

By Capt. Dale Greer  
Wing Public Affairs Officer

Members of the 123rd Airlift Wing played a key role in recovery efforts following January's devastating ice storm, helping distribute more than 2 million meals to stranded Kentuckians and conducting thousands of door-to-door "wellness checks" that have been credited with saving at least two lives.

The storm wreaked unprecedented damage on the Commonwealth when it hit Jan. 27, knocking out power to more than 700,000 customers before claiming 36 lives.

Calling it the worst natural disaster in Kentucky history, Gov. Steve Beshear activated 4,600 Army and Air National Guard troops so they could begin clearing fallen trees from roadways, help utility crews gain access to damaged transmission lines, assist needy residents and provide military support to civil authorities.

The Air Guard's first mission, staffed primarily with full-time employees on Jan. 29 and 30, was to provide forklifts and material-handling personnel for use in Western Kentucky, where damage was most severe, said Lt. Col. Matt Stone, the wing's mission support officer.

Additional missions soon followed, requiring the activation of about 300 Air Guard personnel for State Active Duty beginning Jan. 31.

Those Airmen were charged with performing door-to-door assessments in several hard-hit, rural communities and distributing food and water to citizens without power.

The first deployment site was Breckenridge County, where the majority of



Above: A member of the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron clears debris from a road outside Hardinsburg, Ky., so military vehicles can gain access to remote areas of the community. (KyANG Photo by Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora.)



Left: Kentucky Airmen ask a resident if he needs assistance during wellness checks being conducted in Breckenridge County, Ky. Troops went door-to-door until every home in the county was canvassed — a process credited with saving at least two lives. (KyANG Photo by Capt. Dale Greer.)

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# *Every one of us is a recruiter: Help the wing benefit from our diverse community*

Every day I am glad I am a member of the 123rd Airlift Wing, and every day I take the opportunity to tell someone about the benefits of the Kentucky Air National Guard.

Every one of us has received a multitude of benefits from being a member of the 123rd Airlift Wing, and every day we come in contact with someone we should invite to join.

Every one of us is a recruiter.

When I joined, I learned a skill I could use in both the Kentucky Air National Guard and in the civilian environment.

I have always been paid an honest wage for my duty and received benefits for my family. I used the tuition assistance toward my college degree, which helped me advance in the Kentucky Air National Guard and in my civilian career at the time.

My story is no different than yours. We need to share our stories with others in our community.

Soon, a lot of quality young people in our area will graduate from high school without the skills necessary to guarantee employment. Many will not have the finances necessary to continue education at the collegiate level.

Others in our community may lose their jobs due to the economics of their businesses, through no fault of their own.

All these people could benefit from



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

membership in the 123rd Airlift Wing. We need to tell them about the opportunity to join.

We all know someone in our family, a friend, someone in our neighborhood, at work, or at church who could benefit

from joining the 123rd Airlift Wing and Kentucky Air National Guard.

We need to seek out these quality men and women and tell them about the Kentucky Air National Guard. Take every opportunity to tell someone about what you do. Tell them about the training you received, and the benefit of your experiences. We need to look outside of just our immediate contacts and neighborhoods. Our local area contains a wide variety of quality people we need to seek out for membership.

The 123rd Airlift Wing and Kentucky Air National Guard must recruit from all groups of our community, and we will benefit from the power our diverse representation will bring.

Our recruiters do an outstanding job bringing quality men and women in the 123rd Airlift Wing and Kentucky Air National Guard, but they need your help. Your Commanders are responsible to fill every position in their units with quality men and women, but they also need your help.

My goal is to grow the 123rd Airlift Wing — and this is where I need your help. The strength of our unit depends on our continued growth in membership. Every one of us is responsible to bring quality Airmen into our ranks.

Everyone is a recruiter.

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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 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 April 10.

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## Tools help you take control of your career

There's no better time than the present to evaluate your goals and develop a strategy to achieve them.

Enlisted Airmen have valuable tools at their disposal in "My Enlisted Development Plan," located on the Air Force Portal Web site.

MyEDP helps Airmen track their own careers and the careers of those they mentor.

Here are some things you can do on MyEDP:

- **Virtual mentoring:** You can upload documents, certificates, transcripts, packages or any other items you would like to make accessible to your supervisors and mentors anywhere in the world.

- **Outline goals:** Under "Enlisted Development Tools," you can view the enlisted career path which can help guide your career from airman basic to chief master sergeant. The enlisted career path outlines promotion requirements, education and training requirements, professional development, career broadening and leadership roles that can help Airmen achieve personal and professional goals.

- **Journal accomplishments:** The journal feature on MyEDP can serve a variety of purposes. It can be used to keep track of bullets to prepare for an upcoming enlisted performance report or keep a list of accomplishments or current events that impacted your day.

MyEDP also gives you access to your Air Force Personnel Center record information, Community College of the Air Force credits and more. You can view your past duty history, professional military education as well as ancillary training data all in one place.

— *Senior Master Sgt. Monica Rich  
Wing Human Resources Advisor*



## Maintainers

**Above: Members of the 123rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron inspect the main landing gear of a C-130 Hercules aircraft in full Mission-Oriented Protective Posture as part of chemical warfare Task Qualification Training held on base in January. The training is required to ensure that Airmen are able to survive and operate in the event of a chemical or biological attack.**

**Right: Tech. Sgt. Chris Hamilton makes sure aircraft front landing gear is properly secured.**



Photos by Senior Airman Max Rechel/KyANG

## State Guard conferences rescheduled for June

### Cargo Courier Staff Report

The 78th annual conference of the National Guard Association of Kentucky and the Senior Enlisted Leadership Conference, both originally slated for February, have been rescheduled for June 12 to 14 because of January's ice storm.

The location for the events will continue to be the Drawbridge Inn and Convention Center in Ft. Mitchell, Ky. All previous hotel registrations have been automatically rescheduled for the new dates.

All conference and spouse-activity

registrations also will remain in effect for the June dates unless cancelled by the individuals.

Questions regarding hotel registrations should be directed to the Drawbridge Inn and Convention Center at (800) 354-9793 or via e-mail at [info@drawbridgeinn.com](mailto:info@drawbridgeinn.com).

Questions regarding the NGAKY Conference should be directed to association staff at (502) 564-7500 or (800) 251-2333; or via e-mail at [NGAKYGinger@fewpb.net](mailto:NGAKYGinger@fewpb.net).

Questions regarding the SELC should be directed to Chief Master Sgt. John Grant at (502) 607-1479 or (502) 773-4667.

# Relief

Continued from Front Page

residents were starting their fifth day without heat or electricity when 145 Kentucky Airmen began arriving around 8 a.m. Feb. 1.

The sparsely populated community of farmers is one of the state's largest counties, making it difficult at times like these for local officials to determine if citizens are in distress, said Breckenridge County Judge-Executive Ray Powers.

"We're the sixth-largest county in the state, and we have a lot of geographical area to cover," he said. "It would be extremely difficult for us to accomplish these wellness checks without the National Guard's help, which we truly appreciate."

The deployed Airmen began canvassing homes within an hour after their arrival — a statistic all the more impressive considering that many of them had been told to report for duty a scant eight hours earlier, Colonel Stone said. By early afternoon, the house-to-house campaign had already proven its worth when two Airmen discovered an elderly couple who appeared to be dazed and confused.

Suspecting carbon monoxide poisoning, Staff Sgt. Jason Scharf, a chaplain's assistant in Wing Headquarters, and Staff Sgt. Thomas Moses of the 123rd Maintenance Squadron, requested that local fire officials take an air-quality reading in the couple's home.

According to Jerry Martin, chief of the Hardinsburg City Fire Department, the test confirmed a positive reading of 72 parts-per-million of carbon monoxide. Chief Martin said that even 35 parts-per-million can be a lethal amount.

"I don't think (the couple) would have lived if we hadn't found them," said Chief Martin, who attributed the poisonings to a faulty gas furnace. "That's a pretty high carbon monoxide level."

The two victims were taken by ambulance to Breckenridge Memorial Hospital in Hardinsburg where they were treated for carbon monoxide poisoning and released.

Sergeant Moses said he was pleased to be able to participate in the door-to-door mission.

"It's a great feeling to know that we may have saved some lives today," he said.

Kentucky Air Guard troops also conducted door-to-door wellness checks and recovery operations in several other communities, including Daviess, Grayson, Hancock, Hopkins, Ohio, Marshall, and Muhlenberg counties.

In other Air Guard relief operations:

— A C-130 from the 123rd Airlift Wing transported 100 Kentucky Army National Guard personnel from Lexington to Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, Ohio, on Feb. 1 to pick up 50 Humvees from the Ohio National Guard. The Soldiers, assigned to 149th Infantry Battalion, then drove the vehicles

back to Kentucky for use in relief efforts in the western part of the state.

— More than 60 Kentucky Air Guardsmen deployed to the cities of La Center, Paducah, Bandana and Wickliffe on Feb. 3 to augment Kentucky Army Guard troops and civil authorities who were staffing three distribution points. The points served as staging areas for moving prepackaged meals, water, oxygen and kerosene into affected communities across Ballard and McCracken Counties.

"Many of these local families are without power and sustenance, so there's a critical need for this mission," said Capt. Craig Mohr.

"Everybody has been great to work with, from the local residents and county officials to the Army National Guard and the American Red Cross," Captain Mohr added. "Our Airmen have great attitudes, and everybody is really pitching in to get the job done. We're just happy that we can do our part."

By the time the Guard's relief operations concluded in mid-February, officials had distributed more than 2 million meals and 1.9 million bottles of water statewide, according to Lt. Col. Armand Bolotte, the wing's installation deployment officer.

Col. Greg Nelson, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, praised unit members who stepped forward for such a challenging mission on short notice and performed to the highest standards of excellence.

"The 123rd Airlift Wing played a key role in the state's response to this ice storm," Colonel Nelson said. "The Governor gave us the leverage to selectively call up portions of the 123rd Airlift Wing, allowing us to provide specific capabilities for immediate response. In addition to providing C-130 aircraft and crews for tactical airlift, we also performed numerous non-traditional missions.

"Our Airmen saved lives during this response, and that makes us all proud to be members of the 123rd Airlift Wing and the Kentucky National Guard."

Colonel Nelson noted that the first wave of Air Guardsmen to deploy for wellness checks left Louisville on Super Bowl Sunday, giving up any plans for parties or relaxation.

"For most of our nation, it was Super Bowl Sunday — but not for the 123rd Airlift Wing," he said. "Many of our Airmen were called at 11 at night to report for duty at 7:30 the next morning, and they did it without complaint. I could not be more proud of everyone's response."

Colonel Nelson also expressed his appreciation to civilian employers for the support they provided to workers who took time away from their jobs during the call-up.

"Our troops are Citizen-Airmen and Citizen-Soldiers who come from all sectors of the civilian community," he said. "During times like this, they have to leave their homes, their communities and their civilian jobs to respond to the call for help.

"We want to thank all the employers for making that possible. We simply could not do our job as Guardsmen and women without their support."



Above: Staff Sgts. Thomas Moses, suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, and Staff Sgt. Jason Scharf, performing wellness checks in Hardinsburg, Ky.



Right: Tech. Sgt. Monique Yuill, Airmen 1st Class Windy Wagner and Tech. Sgt. Gene Jones gather meal kits and bottled water to distribute to needy residents in Bandana, Ky.



Members of the 123rd Civil Engineer





...ses, and Jason Scharf identified a couple  
...de poisoning during door-to-door wellness



Above: Meals, Ready-to-Eat provided the main  
sustenance for nearly 145 Kentucky Airmen  
who were conducting relief operations and  
wellness checks in rural Breckenridge County  
on Feb. 1.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

...gineer Squadron clear a path on an icy road as they go door-to-door in Breckenridge County.

## Airmen take child under their wing

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare  
Cargo Courier Editor

When Kentucky Airmen serving at an aid distribution site in La Center, Ky., found a young boy in need, they went above and beyond the call of duty to make a difference.

“We were back in our quarters in Paducah reflecting on why we were there, and Master Sgt. Karen Folton spoke up about this boy she’d met. She said she was going to buy some clothes for him,” said Capt. Kerry Wentworth, a chaplain in the 123rd Airlift Wing. “Within a matter of minutes, with some help from Tech. Sgt. Chris Sharpe, they had gathered around \$400 from their fellow Airmen.”

The boy was named Tristan.

Aside from having no electrical service following the ice storm, the child lived with his grandmother and great grandmother in a home in need of repair. As the Red Cross worked with local churches and community members to help, the Guard members thought their own donation could make life easier for the boy.

“I prayed for an angel and instead of sending one, God sent a whole group of angels,” said Dorothy Brown, the child’s grandmother. “You (Guard members) could have come in here and just done your job, but you didn’t do just that. You all came in here and became one of us.”

In addition to the boy’s gift, his guardians were given \$80 to help care for Tristan.

“It was one of those moments where we all realized what we were there for,” Chaplain Wentworth said. “We weren’t just providing food and water, we were giving people hope and optimism.”

“We were the first positive thing to happen in many of these people’s lives since the storm came around.

“There were many needs to address, but I believe we got as much out of helping people as they got out of being helped. That little boy in Ballard County did as much for us as we ever could have done for him.”

# Gates: Guard's domestic missions must not suffer

## Secretary reaffirms need for citizen-Airmen

Air Force News Service

The National Guard's domestic responsibilities must not suffer because of operational missions, Defense Secretary Robert Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee today.

"The demand for Guard support of civil authorities here at home remains high," Secretary Gates said in a statement to the committee. "For example, the 'man-days' that Guardsmen have spent fighting fires, performing rescue and recovery, and other duties increased by almost 60 percent in 2008 as compared to 2007."

To compensate, the DoD has "substantially increased" support for the Guard and Reserve, which for decades had been consid-

ered a low priority for equipment, training and readiness.

"Today, the standard is that the Guard and Reserves receive the same equipment as the active force," he said. "For FY 2009, the base budget request included \$6.9 billion to continue to replace and repair the National Guard's equipment."

Secretary Gates said the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve, a panel created by Congress four years ago, has also helped to ensure that both reserve components are better trained, manned, and equipped for this new era.

"We have taken, or are taking, action on more than 80 percent of the commission's recommendations," he said.

For example, the panel suggested a combined pay and personnel system to fix problems that arise when Guard and Reserve members shift from the reserve pay system to the active duty system. Secretary

Gates said DoD is now launching that integrated system.

Shortly after he became the secretary of defense, Secretary Gates implemented mobilization policies that are more predictable and conducive to unit cohesion.

"I have tried to ease, to the extent possible, the stress on our reserve components," he said. "We have provided greater predictability as to when a Guard member will be deployed by establishing a minimum standard of 90 days advance notice prior to mobilization. In practice, on average, the notification time is about 270 days.

"There is no longer a 24-month lifetime limit on deployment, but each mobilization of National Guard and Reserve troops is now capped at 12 months."

The goal is five years of dwell time for one year deployed.

"We have made progress towards this goal but are not there yet," he said.

# Workshop aids preparation for 2009 hurricane season

Air Force News Service

"One team, one fight" is the mantra for local, state and federal leaders preparing for a 2009 hurricane season that forecasters say could include nine major storms.

"If that forecast is even close to being accurate, the timing of this [workshop] is vital to us being ready," said Gen. Craig McKinley, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, at a hurricane planning workshop in Hilton Head, S.C., Feb. 19. "The American public expects this team to pull together to do the job right."

For the first time, this annual NGB workshop was co-sponsored by U.S. Northern Command and attended by key leaders from partner agencies.

National Guard leaders from 11 hurricane states have met annually for several years to coordinate plans and exchange ideas for the storm season.

This year was the first time they were joined by so many federal and state partners — a team drawn from 27 states, five major commands, three territories and the District of Columbia.

"This is the first of what I think will be many in the future: joint hurricane planning workshops," said Gen. Gene Renuart, the commander of NORTHCOM. "It gives us

an opportunity to pull together the National Guard Bureau and U.S. Northern Command as we prepare. It gives us a chance to pull together not only the [Department of Defense] but the civilian responders."

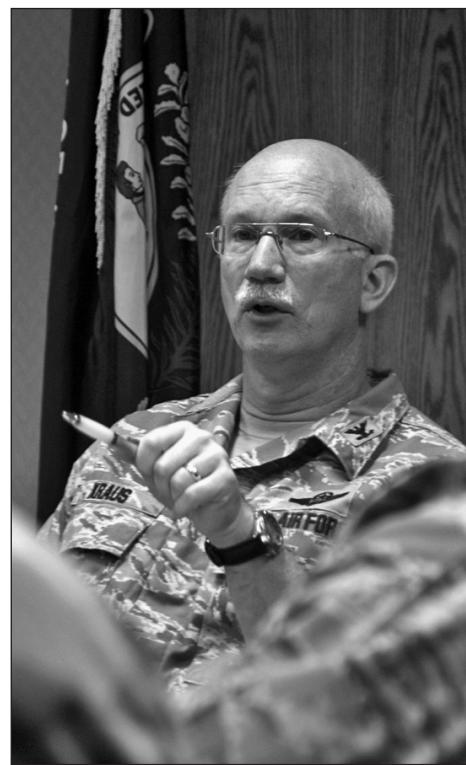
The hurricane workshop came just three weeks after the latest batch of National Guard leaders graduated from a Joint Task Force Commander Course taught at NORTHCOM in Colorado Springs, Colo., to prepare for a unified response to just such a domestic crisis as a major hurricane.

"For us to work jointly to achieve the desired results of being prepared to assist the citizens of the United States, in this case with natural disasters, that's what we're being paid to do," General McKinley said.

Joint local and regional planning conferences have been held in the past, General Renuart said.

"We learned after Katrina that the only way to ensure that you don't repeat those lessons is to pull together all of the players and to pre-plan the kinds of responses that'll be necessary," the general said.

"Clearly the governors, the state emergency managers, the adjutants general will have the lead ... but bringing in the federal partners ... allows us to integrate our efforts ahead of time so that the response can be more effective and certainly more timely."



Tech. Sgt. D. Clare/KyANG

**Brig. Gen. Mark R. Kraus, then wing commander, briefs civilian and military responders as the base prepares for Hurricane Gustav operations in August 2008.**



# Air Force Good Conduct Medal reinstated

**Action will be retroactive through February 2006**

**Air Force News Service**

WASHINGTON — Air Force officials announced Feb. 11 the reinstatement of the Air Force Good Conduct Medal for enlisted members, effective immediately and retroactive to Feb. 6, 2006, when the medal was discontinued. Airmen who are eligible should see an update automatically in their records on the virtual Military Personnel Flight Web site.

The medal, which is the same as the Army Good Conduct Medal, is given to Airmen who receive excellent character and efficiency ratings during a three-year period of active military service or for a one-year period of service during a time of war.

Lt. Gen. Richard Newton, deputy chief of staff for manpower and personnel, and Chief

Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley announced the reintroduction of the medal.

“This is a great day for the Air Force,” said Chief McKinley. “The Air Force Good Conduct Medal has a positive impact on good order and discipline in the unit. It’s part of our history and we needed to bring it back to where it rightfully should be, part of our enlisted heritage.

“When an Airman is pinned with their first good conduct medal it’s an event they will never forget,” he said. “I still remember, vividly, receiving my first Good Conduct Medal.”

General Newton echoed Chief McKinley’s words.

“Bringing this medal back shows the Air Force commitment of being all in when taking care of our Airmen and their families,” Gen. Newton said. “This is a great tool for our commanders to recognize deserving Airmen.”

The return of the medal comes after the secretary of the Air Force approved a recommendation from a January 2008 awards summit co-hosted by representatives of the office of the secretary of the Air Force for manpower and reserve affairs and the directorate for manpower and personnel.

Both directorates contended that the AF-GCM, one of the oldest military decorations dating back to World War II, has a long-standing tradition in the Air Force and links Airmen with those who served throughout the history of the service. In addition, Air Force officials solicited input from the field regarding the Good Conduct Medal.

“All services present the Good Conduct Medal to those who distinguish themselves by exemplary behavior, so Airmen will now have the same opportunity for recognition as Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Coastguardsmen,” said Gen. Newton. “Chief McKinley is exactly right that this is a great day for the Air Force. A time-honored tradition is back.”

## Suicide prevention hotline saving veterans’ lives

**By Army Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden  
American Forces Press Service**

SOUTHWEST ASIA — Help is only a phone call away for military veterans considering suicide.

Nearly 100,000 veterans, family members or friends of veterans have reached out for help by calling the Department of Veterans Affairs suicide prevention hotline at 1-800-273-TALK. The hotline, which is available for Guard Members, was launched July 2007.

The VA initiative is part of a collaborative effort with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a nationwide network of 133 crisis centers. Calls automatically are routed to the nearest center based on the caller’s area code.

The hotline operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is staffed by trained mental health professionals prepared to deal with an immediate crisis. Although the lifeline isn’t restricted to military veterans only, callers are prompted to “please press 1 now” if they are a U.S. military veteran or are calling about a veteran. Callers who press 1 are transferred to the nearest VA call center.

More than 2,600 veterans have been “rescued” through the hotline, according to a recent VA statement.

“I urge veterans and their loved ones to take advantage of our suicide-prevention program,” VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said in the statement. “Help for these heroes is a phone call away.”

An estimated 5,000 veterans commit suicide annually, with Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans 35 percent more likely to commit suicide than the general population. VA statistics show that between 2002 and 2006, more than 250 veterans who left the military after Sept. 11, 2001, committed suicide.

The trend has grown within the active-duty military ranks, too. A steady increase in suicides among veterans and active-duty members has been persistent in recent years. Army officials recently announced 2008 as the highest suicide year since 1980, with at least 128 soldiers confirmed to have taken their own lives, while 15 other cases are pending investigations.

Specialists in the VA, Defense Department and local communities are making it a point to understand suicide and determine better prevention methods. Defense leaders, including Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have voiced concerns for short- and long-term solutions.

Admiral Mullen routinely advocates for solutions to increase the amount of rest and time at home troops have in between deployments. Officials recognize the high tempo of deployment rotations as being a likely factor for the increased suicide rates.

VA and active-duty military officials are working with outside research organizations to improve their programs and lower the numbers. Officials at the Army and National Institute of Mental Health recently launched a five-year research initiative to gain a better understanding in the hope of preventing suicides in the military and nation.

To identify and treat at-risk patients, prevention efforts and initiatives are in place in each of VA’s 153 medical centers and more than 750 outpatient clinics across the nation. Also, suicide prevention coordinators are on hand at each facility.

Troubled veterans, whether they call the suicide prevention hotline or walk in, receive follow-up care almost immediately. Preliminary evaluations occur within 24 hours of requests, and referrals are given for mental health appointments. Comprehensive evaluations are conducted within 14 days, with emergency cases handled immediately.

# Wing names two new E-9s, honors a third at retirement



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG



## *to the* **Chiefs**



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG



Airman 1st Class Max Rechel/KyANG

The Kentucky Air National Guard welcomed its newest chief master sergeants and bade farewell to another during the February drill. Clockwise from top: Chief Master Sgt. Michael Shepherd of the 123rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron dons his service coat and new rank insignia with the help of family members; Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Radke of the 123rd Security Forces Squadron addresses guests during his promotion ceremony; Chief Master Sgt. Kristine L. Mullaney of the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron receives a certificate of retirement from Lt. Col. Doug Rose in recognition of her years of dedicated service and commitment to excellence.

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