

123RD AIRLIFT WING HONORS ITS TOP TROOPS TONIGHT by Maj. Dale Greer
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

March 12, 2011 - Kentucky Air National Guard Base, Louisville, Ky. -- The Kentucky Air National Guard will recognize three of its most exceptional Airmen tonight, honoring Senior Airman April Kennedy, Staff Sgt. Jeff Kinlaw and Master Sgt. Gary Pelletier as the organization's top troops for 2011 at the annual Outstanding Soldier and Airman of the Year Banquet.

The three were chosen because of their excellence in leadership, job performance, self-improvement and community involvement, according to the Kentucky Air National Guard Chiefs' Council, which selects the winners each year from a pool of eligible nominees.



Senior Airman April Kennedy, the Kentucky Air Guard's Airman of the year, is a material management handler in the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron. During the past year, she performed superior quality-control checks on 35 deploying aircraft, ensuring the safe delivery of 409 short tons of cargo. She also expertly conducted the inventory and re-stocking of chemical warfare protective equipment valued at more than \$198,000 and coordinated with multiple clothing distributors to track thousands of mission-critical items issued to personnel deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Air Force by Master Sgt. Philip Speck)

Airman Kennedy, winner of the Airman category, is a material management handler in the 123rd Logistics Readiness Squadron. During the past year, she performed superior quality-control checks on 35 deploying aircraft, ensuring the safe delivery of 409 short tons of cargo. She also expertly conducted the inventory and re-stocking of chemical warfare protective equipment valued at more than \$198,000, and coordinated with multiple clothing distributors to track thousands of mission-critical items issued to personnel deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

NOTE: This online-only information was added to the CCT history after publication of *The Eye of the Storm – A history of Combat Control Teams*.

"Senior Airman Kennedy represents the best of the best in the Kentucky Air Guard," said her supervisor, Lt. Col. Armand Bolotte. "Shortly after joining the unit, she wasted no time establishing herself as a dedicated member with true leadership potential. This was evident by her performance during the 123rd Airlift Wing's 2010 Operational Readiness Inspection and her support of numerous Air Expeditionary Force deployments overseas."



Staff

Sgt. Jeff Kinlaw, the Kentucky Air Guard's non-commissioned officer of the year, is a combat controller in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron. During 2010, he volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan for five months, conducting 15 combat missions with NATO allies, destroying 15 improvised explosive devices, executing 75 presence patrols and engaging the enemy on numerous occasions with both small-arms fire and calculated airstrikes resulting in more than 10 enemy casualties. (U.S. Air Force by Master Sgt. Philip Speck)

Sergeant Kinlaw, the Kentucky Air Guard's NCO of the Year, is a combat controller in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron. During 2010, he volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan for five months, conducting 15 combat missions with NATO allies, destroying 15 improvised explosive devices, executing 75 presence patrols and engaging the enemy on numerous occasions with both small-arms fire and calculated airstrikes, resulting in more than 10 enemy casualties. He also educated U.S. and Afghan National Army soldiers on air power integration, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, munitions and tactics.

"Sergeant Kinlaw is relatively new to the unit, but he came out of the gate hungry for action," said his supervisor, Capt. Garrett Dawson. "He's extremely motivated and dedicated to exercising his technical skills -- a true warrior committed to taking the fight to the enemy."

Sergeant Pelletier, the winner of the senior NCO category, is a special operations weather specialist in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron. He distinguished himself in the past year by becoming a resident expert on assault-zone surveys, allowing him to deploy as a lead surveyor in

NOTE: This online-only information was added to the CCT history after publication of *The Eye of the Storm – A history of Combat Control Teams*.

support of Combined Joint Task Force -- Horn of Africa. Sergeant Pelletier conducted 14 assault-zone surveys in five countries in minimal time, greatly expanding CJTF HOA's ability to execute personnel recovery, humanitarian relief and U.S. Embassy support operations throughout East Africa.



Master Sgt. Gary Pelletier, the Kentucky Air Guard's senior non-commissioned officer of the year, is a special operations weather specialist in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron. He distinguished himself in 2010 by becoming a resident expert on assault-zone surveys, allowing him to deploy as a lead surveyor in support of Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa. Sergeant Pelletier conducted 14 assault-zone surveys in five countries in minimal time, greatly expanding CJTF - HOA's ability to execute personnel recovery, humanitarian relief and U.S. Embassy support operations throughout East Africa. (U.S. Air Force by Master Sgt. Philip Speck)

"Sergeant Pelletier really grabbed hold of some very big programs and challenges, impacting both the squadron and the Special Tactics community as a whole," said Captain Dawson, who also is his supervisor.

"He stepped outside the traditional lines of his weather specialty to learn more about conducting assault zone surveys and to pioneer cutting-edge Tactics, Techniques and Procedures and technology. He then deployed as a lead surveyor on a special mission to east Africa, where he and his team truly made an impact in the region."

The Kentucky National Guard's Outstanding Soldier and Airman of the Year Banquet will be held tonight at the Louisville Airport Crowne Plaza Hotel, 830 Phillips Lane. Social hour gets underway at 6, and the banquet is scheduled to begin at 7. For more information, contact any chief master sergeant.

NOTE: This online-only information was added to the CCT history after publication of *The Eye of the Storm – A history of Combat Control Teams*.