

123rd SPECIAL TACTICS SQUADRON



LINEAGE

123rd Special Tactics Flight
123rd Special Tactics Squadron

STATIONS

Louisville, KY

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Major Jeremy C. Shoop

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

On a disc Azure, between two wings conjoined in base Argent (Silver Gray), a life buoy White, banded and garnished with a rope Or, issuant therefrom the head of a Pegasus of the second detailed Sable, eyed Vert, teeth of the third, in front of a ram-air parachute in chief of the second, detailed of the fifth, all within a narrow border Silver Gray. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Silver Gray border and inscribed "INGENIUM SUPERAT VIRES" in Silver Gray letters. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Silver Gray border and inscribed "123D SPECIAL TACTICS SQ" in Silver Gray letters.

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The parachute is significant to the unit as a primary means of worldwide deployment, indicating that all Special Tactics Squadron operators are airborne qualified. The Pegasus symbolizes genius and inspiration and also represents the unit's amalgamation of the ground and air elements, which is key to the mission of the unit.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Provides combat controllers and pararescuemen for worldwide operational needs.

As part of Enduring Freedom, in March 2002 a joint military operation named "Anaconda" was mounted in Paktia province to surround and defeat Taliban forces hiding in the area. On the third day of Operation Anaconda an Army MH-47E Chinook helicopter was fired upon as it attempted to land on a ridge on Takur Ghar mountain. Taking heavy fire, the helicopter lurched and attempted to take-off to extricate itself from the field of fire. When the Chinook lurched, one of the Navy SEALs on board, Petty Officer First Class Neil C. Roberts, fell from the rear ramp. Too damaged to return for Petty Officer Roberts, the Chinook landed further down the mountain. A second MH-47E attempted to land and rescue Roberts, but it too was fired upon and forced to leave the immediate area. The third MH-47E to attempt a landing on what became known as Roberts' Ridge was hit with automatic weapons fire and rocket-propelled grenades while still 20 feet in the air. The helicopter, containing an Army Ranger Team and Technical Sergeant Keary Miller, a Combat Search and Rescue Team Leader from the 123d Special Tactics Squadron, Kentucky Air National Guard, hit the ground hard. Within seconds, one helicopter crewman, the right door gunner, was killed, as were three Army Rangers. The 17-hour ordeal that followed would result in the loss of seven American lives, including Petty Officer Roberts." Technical Sergeant Miller not only managed to drag the wounded helicopter pilot to safety, but also orchestrated the establishment of multiple casualty collection points. In between treating the wounded, Miller set up the distribution of ammunition for the Army Rangers who were taking the fight to the enemy. For his extraordinary life-saving efforts while putting himself in extreme danger under enemy fire, Technical Sergeant Miller was awarded the Silver Star by the U.S. Navy, one of the few members of the Air National Guard to be so honored.

On 29 August 2005, Hurricane Katrina swept through Louisiana and Mississippi, leaving a wide swath of destruction. That same afternoon, two Kentucky Air National Guard aircrews scheduled to fly routine local training sorties were tasked to fly the first hurricane relief sorties into Navy New Orleans airfield and by 31 August the 123d Special Tactics Squadron was conducting search and rescue and helicopter evacuation operations in New Orleans with seven pararescue personnel, six FAA-certified combat/air traffic controllers and four Zodiac rescue

boats. By the end of September, Kentucky Air Guard personnel had reinforced the unit's reputation as a world-class organization with an outstanding record of support to Katrina victims. Twenty-four members of the 123d STS took control of Air National Guard rescue operations from 31 Aug-8 Sep, managing additional STS personnel from the Alaska, California, New York and Oregon Air National Guard, establishing temporary control of the Navy New Orleans airport tower, and operating round-the-clock rescue and evacuation operations. They evacuated 10,635 people by helicopter, 1,206 by boat and 86 by motor vehicle. Additionally, on 23 September 15 members of the 123d STS deployed to Meridian, Miss, to await the landfall of the hurricane season's second Category Five hurricane, Rita, in Texas. Rita made landfall on 24 Sep but did not pack the destructive force of Katrina, so the STS personnel were released to return home and prepare for the 123d STS' first quarter 05 deployment to Afghanistan.

HURRICANE KATRINA/RITA RELIEF EFFORTS:

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to deployed servicemen and remained in place through 30 Sep. The 123d Medical Group deployed detachments of nine personnel under Col. Richard Kimbler to Baton Rouge from 6 to 24 Sep, three personnel to Camp Shelby, Miss. from 5 Sep to 15 Oct and two personnel to Belle Chase from 20 Sep to 4 Oct. The Medical Group assigned 10 staff members to work with the Veterans Administration and local volunteers to train them to handle litters and other details for patients expected to arrive in Louisville through the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). Seventy-five patients arrived at the base by C-130 airlift shortly after midnight the morning of 24 Sep, were processed in at the main maintenance hangar and transported to various local hospitals. Wing Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Thomas Curry led a two-person Religious Support Team to Natchez, Miss. from 6-18 Sep 05 to assist both soldiers and civilians.

123 STS Global Patriot Jul (05) 32 Volk Fld

123 STS Hurricane Relief Aug-Sep 05 13 New Orleans, LA

123 STS Hurricane Relief Sep (05) 9 New Orleans, LA

123 STS Hurricane Rita Sep (05) 14 Meridian NAS, MS

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources