

# NORTHSTAR Guardian

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Minnesota Air National Guard

133rd Airlift Wing, St. Paul, Minn.

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## 774th EAS rolls up, out of SW Asia

**2nd Lt. Ann Todd**

**Public Affairs**

After six months of duty in Southwest Asia supporting Operation Enduring Freedom, the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron rolled-up operations and headed home.

During the deployment, the 774th EAS flew nearly 6,500 hours and 3,000 sorties, and hauled over 7,600 tons of cargo and over 14,000 passengers. All this was accomplished while maintaining an 88 percent mission capable rate and a 90 percent departure reliability rate.

"These are unbelievable accom-

plishments that could not have been achieved without the hard work and commitment of every unit member," said **Col. Patrick Meagher**, 774th EAS commander. "This track record has not and will not be matched in this theater."

Members from the 133rd Airlift Wing and the 145th Airlift Wing, North Carolina Air National Guard, were combined to form the 774th EAS. One of the keys to the success of this deployment, said Meagher, was the ability of the two units to come together as a team.

"We built on each other's strengths and accomplished some

truly amazing things," added Meagher. "I believe many lasting friendships were forged during this deployment. Members of the Minnesota Air National Guard will carry away a great respect for their fellow Guard men and women from North Carolina."

One challenge faced and overcome by the 774th EAS was the tasking to operate from multiple locations, while maintaining a continuous level of mission capability.

"Although we were manned to operate from one location, we operated

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*2nd Lt. Ann Todd*

**Maj. Dan Gabrielli, pilot, 109th Airlift Squadron, completes preflight checklists prior to departure from Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, on a mission headed for a forward-deployed location in Pakistan.**

# Deployed Wing members continue success

□ Staff Sgt. Michael Kadow, crew chief, 133rd Aircraft Generation Squadron, marshals a C-130 while enduring soaring Kuwaiti temperatures. During July, temperatures above 130 degrees were not uncommon.



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□ Chief Master Sgt. Dave Mach, loadmaster, 109th Airlift Squadron, boards a C-130 headed for the forward-deployed location in Pakistan.



2nd Lt. Ann Todd

□ Tech. Sgt. Michelle Rastall (right), 133rd Logistics Squadron, and Master Sgt. Peg Sharkey (left), 145th Airlift Wing, practice the buddy system during a bunker dive exercise.



□ Master Sgt. Peg Sharkey, 145th Airlift Wing, practices the buddy system during a bunker dive exercise.



# Guardians of Freedom



2nd Lt. Ann Todd

*gt. Jeff Rosenthal a flight engineer with the 109th Airlift Squadron, completes a preflight inspection of the cargo door area of a C-130 headed from Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, to Afghanistan.*



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□ *Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Maxey, loadmaster, 109th Airlift Squadron, serves amidst the dust during a July 4 volleyball tournament. Team Minnesota finished in the top four.*

□ *Staff Sgt. Darryl Stunek (left) and Tech. Sgt. Matt Hill, 133rd Maintenance Squadron, repair a cracked C-130 engine cover.*

## 2nd rotation...

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from as many as three simultaneously during our deployment,” said Meagher.

The three locations where the 774<sup>th</sup> EAS operated from were Kuwait, Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

“We set the standard for maximizing the number of planes and crews ready to fly,” said **Lt. Col. Jake Shetka**, assistant director of operations for the second rotation. “We showed the ability to pack up on short notice and deploy to forward areas, while continuing to provide contracted airlift through all swap-outs.”

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“Seeing seven broken aircraft at the end of a flying period and coming to work the next day and all were ready to fly showed the determination and commitment of the group here,” said **Chief Master Sgt. Dave Speich**, maintenance superintendent for the second rotation. “The effort from the maintainers was unbelievable.”

Another challenge for members on this deployment was integrating personnel and operations of the 774<sup>th</sup> EAS into some of the existing operations at the deployed locations. Many individuals worked side-by-side with their active duty counterparts and made other

contributions of time and effort whenever possible, including helping to boost the morale.

“This deployment was a great personal challenge for many members of our unit,” concluded Meagher. “Every member of the 133<sup>rd</sup> AW had a part in its success. Whether they actually deployed or remained at home station, this could not have been done without a Wing effort. Feel proud about what you have done. Thank your family, employers, and friends for their support. For those returning, enjoy your time off. This fight is not over. We will be challenged again.”