

LOCKLEED NEWS



Celebrating a Century in the Skies

SAINT PAUL, Minn. – Sunday will mark exactly 100 years since a squadron at the 133rd Airlift Wing received federal recognition, creating the first Air National Guard unit in the country.

It started on Sept. 26, 1920, when U.S. Army Gen. Walter Rhinow, Lt. Col. William Garis and Capt. Ray Miller rented a Curtiss Oriole biplane and made a daring seven-day journey to Washington, D.C. to lobby for the formation of a flying squadron. Due in part to this impressive display of aircraft capability, even with a significant lack of air support,

the Militia Bureau formed the Air National Guard and on January 17, 1921, the 109th Observation Squadron was federally recognized as the first Air National Guard unit in the nation.

Today's 109th Airlift Squadron is the direct descendent unit of the original 109th Observation Squadron, located at the 133rd Airlift Wing. The Wing is attached to the Minneapolis – St. Paul International Airport.

Lt. Col. Dana Novinskie is the current commander of the 109th Airlift Squadron. She is the first female flying squadron commander in the Wing's history.

"I consider it a privilege to serve, both at the state and federal levels. Our Wing has an important mission. I am honored to command the 109th Airlift Squadron and look forward to being a part of expanding its legacy," said Novinskie.

The 133rd Airlift Wing operates C-130 Hercules aircraft. Last year the Wing logged an impressive 2,000 flying hours in support of overseas missions, and here at home members were called up at a record pace to assist with civil unrest, COVID testing, support in long term care facilities and other State Active Duty missions.

"I continue to be impressed by the caliber of men and women I serve with here at the 133rd Airlift Wing," said Col. James Cleet, 133rd Airlift Wing commander. "Last year was a difficult one, and our hard work is not yet over. Trying times define people and organizations, I have no doubt the 133d Airlift Wing will continue to meet the needs of our state and nation."

ABOUT THE 133RD AIRLIFT WING

The 133rd Airlift Wing operates C-130 Hercules aircraft and is one of two Air National Guard flying units in Minnesota. Established in 1921 through the 109th observation squadron, there are now 1,200 Airmen assigned to the Wing, including the 133rd Operations Group, 109th Airlift Squadron, the 133rd Maintenance Group, the 133rd Medical Group and the 133rd Mission Support Group. In addition, the Wing provides support to the 210th Engineering Squadron and the 208th Weather Flight. The citizen-airmen of the Minnesota National Guard are 'Always Ready' to fight the nation's wars, protect the country, respond to state emergencies and contribute to local communities. For more information about the 133rd Airlift Wing visit www.133aw.ang.af.mil/



Year in Review: Partnerships enable Guard support to the community

(ST. PAUL, Minnesota) – Partnerships with other local, state and federal agencies enabled the Minnesota National Guard to serve the state through multiple activations throughout 2020, to include responses to flooding in northern Minnesota in April, civil unrest at the end of May and beginning of June, and an ongoing response to COVID-19.

In April, about 20 Soldiers with the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 136th Infantry “Bearcats” based out of Moorhead, Minnesota, worked with the city of Oslo and Marshall County to assist the community with monitoring levees and flood protections systems. The Soldiers were also able to support any potential rescue and evacuation operations.

At the end of May into the beginning of June, the entire Minnesota National Guard was activated in response to civil unrest in the Twin Cities with about 7,000 Soldiers and Airmen on duty. The Guard assisted law enforcement officers from the Minnesota State Patrol, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and several local police departments in protecting people, property, and maintaining peace. By partnering with local law enforcement agencies, the Guard frees officers for other critical law enforcement missions.

At the end of March, the Minnesota National Guard assisted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Minnesota Department of Health, and other agencies in identifying alternative care sites in communicates across Minnesota in the event additional medical facilities were needed.



Over the next months and the rest of the year, Soldiers and Airmen assisted the Department of Health in COVID-19 testing in long-term care facilities and at armories across the state. More than 270 Guardsmen were also trained as temporary nurse’s aides to support staffing shortages at long-term care facilities impacted by COVID-19.

“It’s always a pleasure to serve the citizens of the state of Minnesota, primarily in those long-term care facilities where a lot of these senior citizens haven’t had the chance to see their families since April when COVID started,” said Col. Scott Rohweder, the Director of Operations for the Minnesota National Guard. “It’s a huge honor to be able to support them and provide that aid that they need.”

The Minnesota National Guard is a part of the community. When the Guard partners with various agencies, it helps to ensure the safety and security of Minnesota communities.

“It’s a time for us to reflect as an organization on the past and a time to look toward the future,” said Minnesota Governor Tim Walz. “There are few institutions that have the credibility and the trust of the American people as the National Guard; and that comes from the quality of the people who are there and it comes from the leadership.”

