

NEW YORK

The AIR NATIONAL GUARD

GUARDING AMERICA,
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Skibird



Magazine of the 109th Airlift Wing, Stratton Air National Guard Base, Scotia, N.Y.

Engine check on the ice



Winter 2010

Reflecting back on '09

By Col. Mary Brandt
109th Medical Group commander

Where has 2009 gone? Reflecting back as Commander of the 109th Medical Group, we have come together and grown as a team! Yes; there were changes made in the best interest of the group. These changes were NOT made lightly; they came with a lot of thought and what it would take to get us to the next level as we get ready for our upcoming Health Service Inspection (HSI) in 2010.

In May 2009, we obtained an "Excellent" on our Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI).

In June 2009, the Medical Group's Chemical Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P) homeland defense element was tasked to support a local exercise in Albany. In addition, Pediatric Life Support (PALS) was added to our vast array of certifications in support of this mission. While we were considering going to Hawaii for hospital training, although short lived, we all picked various dates that worked around our military and civilian job to attend Center for Sustainment of Trauma and Readiness Skills (C/STARS) and STARS. The consensus by the group was this was an awesome training platform that enhanced our medical and trauma skills to provide the best possible care to our patients. Those AFSCs that were not eligible to go to this training platform were afforded the opportunity to go where they could equally obtain the best training to increase their knowledge base. In addition, 35 members participated in a weeklong ancillary Block Training at the base.

In September 2009, the Mobile Aeromedical Staging Facility (MASF) headed out to Andrews Air Force Base, Md. Here we were fast at work learning our new role as we recovered and unloaded an aircraft in bound from Afghanistan and Iraq with wounded soldiers. We provided medical care and conversed with them until we "attempted" to fly home on Sunday. Yes, the plane broke and while the majority stayed behind with the plane, some of us headed to the airport to rent a van and proceeded to drive home so we could be at our civilian job on Monday. This is truly

where "all in a day's work" comes from.

In October 2009, we had our first Hail and Fairwell since Colonel Green retired (how long ago was that?) The majority of the Group attended as well as some past retirees. The evening was filled with catching up on old times, dancing and getting to know one another better. We look forward to continuing this tradition in the years ahead and hope more retirees will join us.

In November 2009, our Expeditionary Medical Support (EMEDS) and TEAM Med element was tasked to support a Vigilant Guard Exercise in Buffalo. We left on Halloween (which was not ideal or our first choice), but our team did what was asked of us. We arrived to find out the majority of our personnel would be housed in a hangar for a week with the companionship of "Pigeons" housed overhead! Now you talk about someone looking after you? The team took it in stride, selected a cot which they would call home as we carried out our mission throughout the week. During our outbrief, two of the Medical Group members, Major Jones and Lieutenant Flanigan were recognized by Brigadier General Miller, US Army National Guard Bureau J7, for excellence and outstanding performance during this exercise. TEAM Med was a new concept that was stood up during this exercise and we were commended for a job well done!

What should have been done with a dozen personnel was pulled off with five. Early on during the exercise, I had to convince Brigadier General Swezey that TEAM Med was part of his Joint Task Force (JTF), and by Wednesday, he said he was thrilled to have us. By Saturday, he looked forward to having this asset by his side for upcoming deployments. He did not initially understand what this element did or how it would ultimately contribute to mission success by the end of the week.

I can't forget to mention the five Airmen who deployed throughout the year supporting the global war on terrorism, whether it was Operation Iraqi Freedom and/or Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF). Thank You for your service to our country and the sacrifices you made.

The 109th MDG supported the following



109th AW deployments with pre- and post-deployment medical screening, physical exams, blood work, dental exams and immunizations:

- 167 for OIF and OEF necessitating nearly 600 clinic visits
- 465 for Operation Deep Freeze, requiring more than 1,600 estimated of clinic visits
- 250 for Operation Raven Dew, necessitating nearly 900 visits
- About 200 visits for 100 people who were alternates for these deployments, but never deployed

It would be wrong not to take a moment and mention three Distinguished Graduates from technical schools: Master Sgt. Scott Bailey (Bioenvironmental Engineer Technician), Staff Sgt. Mike Lewis (Biomedical Equipment Technician), and Staff Sgt. Laura Jennette (Public Health Technician). Congratulations for a job well done! Keep up the good work and always remember to mentor and share your knowledge with your co-workers.

As I reflect back over the past year, I am very grateful to be working side by side with this fantastic group of Airmen. Success is not possible without each and every one of the members of the 109th MDG supporting me through the year and giving it their all through good times and bad. Thank you all for your contributions to the mission and what you have personally given of yourself and your time to get the job done. I wish you success in your personal and professional endeavors as we start up the next decade!

The 109th MDG supported the following

109th Airlift Wing



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On the cover:

Tech. Sgt. Jack Flanigan and Senior Airman Joe Dugan work on Engine No. 3 on Aircraft 02 in Antarctica. The 109th Maintenance Group Airmen are deployed supporting Operation Deep Freeze.
See Page 15 for more coverage. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen Girolami)

4

Taluto to retire

Division of Military and Naval Affairs

5

Council gives junior enlisted voice

By Airman 1st Class Jonathan Markowicz

6

Father, son team up for academy

By Master Sgt. Mavi Smith

8

Morrell keynote speaker at event

U.S. Family Health Plan at Martin's Point

10

Muncy shares secret of success

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith

12-13

Airmen of the Year

Public Affairs

14

Muncy visits South Pole

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith

20

Services' Airmen stay busy

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt

Plus:

Firehouse Facts 11

Haiti Relief 16-17

Chaplain's Corner 18-19

Alumni News 21

Promotions/Awards 23

Taluto to retire after 44 years of National Guard service

ALBANY, N.Y.—Gov. David Paterson announced Jan. 28 that the Adjutant General of New York, Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, will retire after a 44-year career with the National Guard in which he rose from private to two-star general.

Major General Taluto was appointed as Adjutant General in 2006 after serving as the commander of a combat division in Iraq in 2005.

"During his tenure as Adjutant General, Major General Taluto worked tirelessly to bring the New York Army and Air National Guard to full strength, improve the Guard's capabilities to respond to domestic emergencies, and ensure that our Citizen Soldiers and Airmen and their families are cared for, both during and after their service," Governor Paterson said. "Under his direction, the Air National Guard has undertaken new missions with new aircraft, the Army National Guard has deployed more than 2,500 soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan, and the New York National Guard's ability to respond to domestic terrorist attacks and disasters has been tested and refined."

"Major General Taluto has had a long and distinguished career during which he has served our State and nation with distinction. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to work with him and wish him and his wife Susan well in a well-earned and much deserved retirement,"



I believe as I did last year, while contemplating retirement, that we have accomplished what we set out to do four years ago. It is the right time for the Governor to select a new Adjutant General.

Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto
Adjutant General of New York

Governor Paterson added.

Major General Taluto was nominated by President Barack Obama to become a three-star lieutenant general and director of the Army National Guard in May 2009. After a delay in the confirmation process, he has asked that his nomination be withdrawn so that he can go forward with his long-deferred retirement.

"While lengthy delays in confirmations are not unusual, I believe this prolonged confirmation process has become a distraction to the New York National Guard and the National Guard overall. While I appreciate all the urging and support I have had to stay the course, this is a crucial time for our National Guard. I feel that withdrawing is the right thing to do because the Army National Guard needs a director as soon as possible," Major General Taluto said. "I believe as I did last year,

while contemplating retirement, that we have accomplished what we set out to do four years ago. It is the right time for the Governor to select a new Adjutant General."

Major General Taluto pushed for the successful creation of a second National Guard team designed to detect the use of chemical and biological weapons known as a Civil Support Team (CST) in New York. This team, based at Fort Hamilton, is focused on operations in the New York City area. He also made the organization of a special 350-member National Guard unit that is trained to extract, decontaminate, and treat victims of a terrorist attack on a building a priority. Under his tenure, this team, known as a CERFP for chemical, biological, radiological, high-yield explosives, Enhance Reaction Force Package, became the second of 17 in the nation to be certified as ready.

As Adjutant General, Major General Taluto led the effort to grow the strength of the Army National Guard by 2,000 members, resulting in the eighth largest Army National Guard in the country and a force that is at assigned strength of 10,400 soldiers.

The New York Air National Guard has also maintained its strength and status as the largest Air National Guard in the country, and two of the five air wings have taken on different missions. The 107th Airlift Wing in Niagara Falls has gone from flying air refueling tankers to flying C-130 cargo aircraft in partnership with the Air Force Reserve, and

Major General Taluto enlisted in the New York Army National Guard in 1965 and

See TALUTO, Page 7

Council gives junior Airmen voice on base

By Airman 1st Class Jonathan Marcowicz
139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

Once a quarter, all the junior enlisted members (E1-E6) of the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron meet without senior NCOs and officers during drill weekend to share thoughts and discuss concerns particular to the junior enlisted experience. Ideas expressed during these meetings are often brought to squadron leaders and used to enhance existing programs or develop new ones that will benefit Airmen so that they are mission ready.

Other units at the 109th Airlift Wing are now emulating this experience among their own junior enlisted ranks and hosting "First Six" meetings. Even the Wing is trying to evolve this into a base-wide initiative by establishing a formal Junior Enlisted Council for the entire base. The 109th is one of the only Guard base in New York not to have a wing-level JEC.

AES recognized that new Airmen often go through many transitions very quickly in their first few years of enlistment. Young guardsmen find the limited time on base each UTA weekend a difficult adjustment and often feel overwhelmed finding ways to accomplish all their CDC, CBT, and on-the-job training requirements. The JEC is also trying to coordinate a "resident expert" program that identify Airmen in the squadron who will offer their expertise to others. Some Airmen who are writers may be able to offer their grammatical expertise, or Microsoft whizzes can quickly answer questions on various applications.

Chief Master Sgt. Dennis Morgan of the 139th believes the successful JEC keeps young Airmen connected "with the basics." The resources and information provided by a JEC should help "all junior enlisted know the fundamentals of their personal responsibilities as airman and their job."

"Apparently the need has been known by senior leadership, but it isn't something that can be created from the top down," he said. For any junior council to succeed, "it has to come from the junior ranks."

Even though the senior NCOs and officers are excluded from the group's conversations, they are still a necessary part of a successful council. Sergeant Semerad said that without the senior leadership in the room, "Airmen can feel comfortable opening up about their concerns" while keeping discussion "respectful and honest."

Staff Sgt. Sophia M. Mantzouris, 139th AES Health Services Management Craftsman, agrees. "We want to have all Airmen succeed. Junior enlisted can help make that happen by having the most supportive system in place."

Staff Sgt. Steven Chandler, an Aircraft Structural Maintenance Journeyman for the 109th and former active duty F-111 Avionics Technician, has just started a JEC in his own section and is currently talking to senior leaders on base to start a wing-level JEC. With the support of wing leaders, he is trying to help all Airmen, enlisted and officer, realize the value of

supporting the junior ranks.

After talking to the 1st Sergeants Council and the Chief's Council about a Wing JEC, Sergeant Chandler found the positive feedback "overwhelming."

"Apparently the need has been known by senior leadership, but it isn't something that can be created from the top down," he said. For any junior council to succeed, "it has to come from the junior ranks."

Whether an Airman fresh from basic training or NCO experiencing new supervisory responsibilities, the junior enlisted council benefits E1s through E6s equally.

"This council will ensure all junior enlisted reach their full potential and become great leaders at the 109th for a long time to come," Sergeant Chandler said.

"The enlisted are the future of the Air Force," said Sergeant Mantzouris, who will be one of two 139th representatives on the wing-level JEC.

Staff Sgt. Steven Chandler, an Aircraft Structural Maintenance Journeyman for the 109th and former active duty F-111 Avionics Technician, has just started a JEC in his own section and is currently talking to senior leaders on base to start a wing-level JEC. With the support of wing leaders, he is trying to help all Airmen, enlisted and officer, realize the value of



Father, son team up for satellite academy

By Master Sgt. Mavi Smith

The I.G. Brown Air National Guard Training and Education Center

McGHEE TYSON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Tenn.

—A father and son from the New York Air National Guard were among 130 Airmen from 14 units who graduated from the Satellite Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Academy Class 10-2 in a ceremony held at The I.G. Brown Air National Guard Training and Education Center here, Dec. 15.

Tech. Sgt. Robert J. Helligrass and his son Tech. Sgt. Adam C. Helligrass, both aerospace maintenance craftsmen, or crew chiefs, are members of the 109th Airlift Wing, in Scotia, N.Y.

Their unit operates the LC-130H, a ski-equipped version of the C-130 aircraft, and provides airlift in support of Arctic and Antarctic operations.

Robert is a traditional guardsman and a full-time police officer with the Bethlehem Police Department. Adam is an active guard and reserve member at the unit.

"We are very close," said Robert of his relationship with his son. "We're always together and we get along so great that people sometimes think we're brothers."

"When our unit started getting involved in the Satellite NCO Academy program," said Robert. "We thought it would be a good idea to do it together. It was a good way to get it done and we had a lot of fun with it."

The NCO Academy is a requirement for promotion to master sergeant. Air Force members must take the course in-residence but Air National Guardsmen have the option of taking the correspondence course or attending either the

traditional 6-week in-residence school or the satellite program. A 12-week distance learning version of the NCO Academy, the satellite program was specifically designed for Airmen who cannot attend the six-week program for whatever reason, but still want the education,

experience and credit of attending the program in-residence.

During the first phase, students attend four-hour training sessions two nights a week at their home station. Trained facilitators at their unit help them participate in interactive training lessons which are broadcast over the Air National Guard's Warrior

See ACADEMY, Page 9



Courtesy photo

Satellite NCO Academy at Stratton

The 109th Airlift Wing participated in the Satellite Noncommissioned Officer Academy provided by McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base in Knoxville, Tenn.

The academy ran from Sept. 8 through Dec. 15. The students took classes here on base Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6 to 10 p.m. and completed the final 10-day schedule at McGhee Tyson.

This program allowed the students to earn in-residence credit for their Professional Military Education.

The next available NCOA satellite class begins March 23 and runs through June 10. Please contact your unit training manager or Senior Master Sgt. Penny Sheedy in Base Education and Training for additional information and enrollment completion.

Congratulations to these

fine men and women for taking advantage of this opportunity.

Pictured are (Top row, from left) Tech. Sgts. Christopher Orth, Larry Howington, John Stiles, Adam Helligrass, Robert Helligrass, Andrew Wagner and Jerod Chapko. (Bottom row, from left) Tech. Sgts. Darci Novak, Emma Callahan, Keith Eriole, Terra Martin and Thomas McCauley.

Taluto, from page 4

was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant through the Officer Candidate School program in 1968. He began his career as an officer assigned to a Nike-Hercules missile battery whose mission was to protect New York City from attack by Russian bombers during the Cold War, and then became an armor officer, commanding a tank company and working as a staff officer in a tank battalion.

He has served as chief of staff of the New York Army National Guard's 53rd Troop Command, the 27th Brigade, and the 42nd Infantry Division, as well as in positions at the State headquarters during his career. In 2000, he was named deputy commander of the 42nd Infantry Division and promoted to brigadier general. In that role he assumed command of the New York National Guard's response to the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. He directed almost 2,500 members of the National Guard, New York Naval Militia and New York Guard in assisting the New York City Office of Emergency Management.

In 2002, he was named commander of the 42nd

Infantry Division, responsible for Army National Guard units in New York and surrounding northeastern states. He was promoted to two-star Major General in March 2004.

Shortly after that, the 42nd Infantry Division was tapped to deploy to Iraq to assume command of forces in the region just north of Baghdad, known as Multi-National Division North Central. Major General Taluto went on active duty for 20 months, leading the soldiers of the division through the process of training and deploying into combat.

Almost 3,500 New York Army National Guard Soldiers were deployed to Iraq in 2004/2005.

In Iraq, Major General Taluto commanded 23,000 Active, Reserve and National Guard Soldiers in four ground maneuver brigades responsible for operations in an area the size of West Virginia. The division received the Meritorious Unit Citation for its efforts in securing critical power transmission systems and oil pipelines in the region, ensuring that the Iraq Constitutional Referendum was conducted successfully, training an Iraqi Army Division, working with local police, and rebuilding local



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone.

Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, the Adjutant General, speaks to members of the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs staff Jan. 28 as he announces his plans to retire after a 44-year career in the New York Army National Guard.

governments and businesses.

Major General Taluto's individual awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the several awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, the National Defense Service Ribbon, the Iraqi Campaign

Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, several awards of the Army Commendation Medal and Army Achievement Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal.

He and his wife Susan live in Fort Ann, Washington County.

Recognition program continues in 2010

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — An Air National Guard award campaign that has honored thousands of Citizen-Airmen, families and civilians this year will continue into 2010, officials said.

The Air Guard's Hometown Heroes Salute campaign recognizes Airmen who have deployed since 9/11 as well as their families and personal "centers of

influence," who supported them. "It's to celebrate every single Airman that you have, and their family and the community that is taking care of you," Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Muncy, command chief of the Air National Guard, recently told the National Guard's top leaders.

The success of the program was measured through the dozens of events that took place around the nation in 2009. During the recognition ceremonies, Airmen are awarded a cherry-wood encased letter of

appreciation signed by the Air Guard's director and command chief, which is enclosed with a commemorative coin.

In addition, spouses or significant others receive an engraved pen and pencil set and medallion. Each child receives engraved dog tags.

"They have gone off very well," said Linda Brooks, the campaign's program manager at the Guard Bureau. "The average unit has about 500 people to recognize."

See RECOGNITION, Page 11

He walks the talk

Speech captivates audience at Veterans Day Breakfast

U.S. Family Health Plan at Martin's Point

CLIFTON PARK, N.Y. – It began as an effort by the U.S. Family Health Plan at Martin's Point to show Albany-area veterans their appreciation for their service. It ended up as one of the most talked about events of the year.

"It was amazing," said Von Ahouse, a representative of the U.S. Family Health Plan and one of the event's planners. "I was getting calls and e-mails from folks who attended, wanting to know who the Keynote Speaker was!" Words like "amazing," "inspirational," and "moving" were just a few adjectives used to describe his speech.

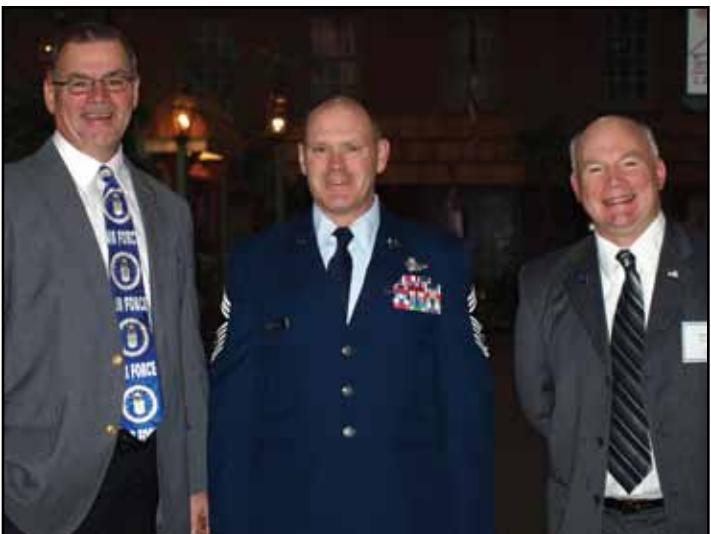
The event was initiated by Bill Hall, the Marketing Manager at Martin's Point, in collaboration with fellow Martin's Point employees Retired U.S. Navy Capt. Dan Wasneechak and Alison Nason. "It was meant to be a show of appreciation for our Albany-area veterans on their day," Mr. Hall said. Plans were put into place in the spring for the November event. Venues were contacted, menus were planned, and invitations were printed. As they began considering who to invite as the Keynote Speaker, Mr. Ahouse received an e-mail from Chief Master Sgt. Charlie Lucia. In it, he relayed a story about Chief Master Sgt. Don Morrell who was stationed in Afghanistan. "I was so moved by his story, that I decided to ask if he would address the gathering at the breakfast", Mr. Ahouse said. Luckily, he agreed.

Early in the morning on Nov. 11, several Martin's Point employees gathered at The Desmond to prepare for the event. Banners were hung, registration tables were set up, and the band arranged their gear in a corner of the room. Red, white and blue was everywhere to be seen. Stanzas of patriotic songs were heard as the band conducted sound checks and rehearsed. Guests began arriving, and there was an air of celebration beginning to permeate the room.

Folks were mingling, small talk was being made, old friends were reacquainted and new friends were being made.

Mr. Wasneechak, the emcee for the event, began with welcoming remarks. He led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance and then in a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday" for one of the attendees. "War stories" were shared and remembered. Those in attendance remembered those they had served with, and those who, for whatever reason, could not be with them on this special day. Those who have paid the ultimate price in defense of our great nation were also remembered.

Appetites sated, the attendees sat back as Chief Master Sgt. Don Morrell was introduced as the Keynote Speaker. He began his speech with the importance of the day. He was eloquent, he was determined, but most of all he was passionate. There was no doubt that he believed in the purpose of the day. His salute to those in attendance signified



Courtesy photo

(From left) Retired Master Sgt. Von E. Ahouse, Chief Master Sgt. Don Morrell and Retired Capt. Michael Rathman pose for a picture during the Veterans Day Breakfast hosted by Martins Point Health Care on Nov. 11. Chief Morrell was the keynote speaker for the event. Mr. Ahouse and Mr. Rathman are Health Benefits Specialists for the Uniformed Services Family Health Plan at Martins Point; Ahouse for the N.Y. Capital Region and Rathman for Vermont.

this. There was no doubt that he believed in the patriotism of the Veterans that had come before him. His stories of friends and family, having served, qualified this. He believed in duty, honor and country. He believed in the steadfastness and resolve of those currently serving. He held out hope for those yet to serve. He was, in the opinion of this writer, the perfect person, in the perfect place at the perfect time.

Toward the end of his speech, Chief Morrell regaled the crowd with a tale of his mission across the globe - of landings made using night vision goggles, of troops stretched far and wide,

of his reason for being there. They were there to pick up two fallen comrades. Not the best of missions, but one which was carried out with purpose and dignity, in spite of the conditions. He told about his tribute to the fallen heroes via his bagpipes. And he told about the horrors of war. While it was hard to find a dry eye in the room, the crowd came away the better for having been the recipient of Chief Morrell's words.

Mr. Ahouse shared after the event, "I have always been proud of my service, but never more so than on that morning, November 11th, 2009."

Deadline Notice

Articles for the next issue of *the Skibird* are due by April 18.



The Skibird



Photo by Master Sgt. Kurt Skoglund

Tech. Sgt. Adam Helligrass (left) and his father, Tech. Sgt. Robert Helligrass, both aerospace maintenance craftsmen with the 109th Airlift Wing, graduate together from the Satellite Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Academy Class 10-2 at The I.G. Brown Air National Guard Training and Education Center at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tenn., on Dec. 15.

Academy, from page 6

to make sure we were prepared."

In the second phase of the program, students travel to McGhee Tyson ANGB, Tenn.,

for a two-week capstone in-residence experience at the Training and Education Center. Here, they are separated from their fellow home station students and mixed in with the other units participating in the program.

"It was a great experience,"

said Adam, who was also selected as a flight leader during the in-residence portion of the class. "The instructor interaction and learning from other people's experience and input was great."

Both men excelled during the class but ultimately, the Satellite NCO Academy was an opportunity for them to meet their unit's mission objectives.

Robert may be a traditional guardsman but he is dedicated to his military responsibilities. He performs more than 30 days per year in support of his

unit's Antarctica mission and this year he also spent several weeks in Greenland. He and Adam frequently travel together.

"I do commit a lot of time to the unit but I also have responsibilities at home," said Robert, whose duties as a police officer are similar to those of a military first sergeant.

"For people that have those responsibilities, the Satellite NCO Academy program is a good way to fulfill the requirement for professional military education."

"It's not just a personal benefit," added Robert. "It's a benefit for the mission. It's a win-win for everybody."

Both father and son said they enjoyed the experience of studying, hanging out and helping each other through the program.

"I think it's fantastic that I got to take this class with my father," said Adam. "We've always had a good relationship and doing this is just one more thing we can put under our belt as something we've experienced together."

'Thirty days through Afghanistan' project, Web site announced

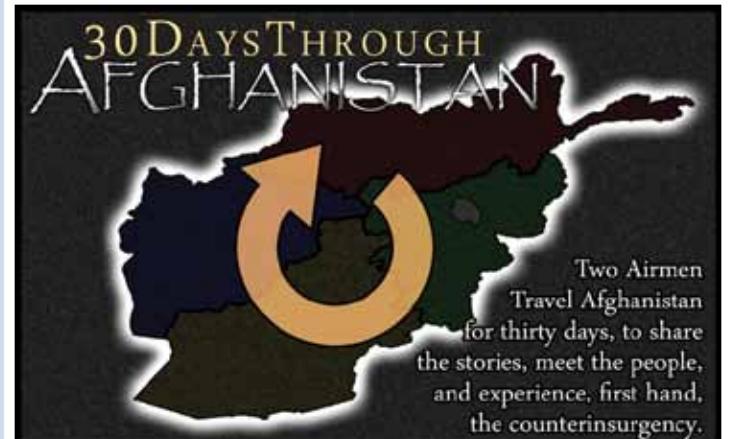
of ISAF service members."

Sergeant Raimondi, a broadcaster, and Sergeant Gallahan, a print journalist, will travel throughout Afghanistan for 30 continuous days visiting each of the five regional commands and giving a first-hand perspective of the counter-insurgency mission.

The two reporters will produce video and print news stories as well as document daily adventures through blogs and video blogs to showcase the troops in an interactive manner.

"The goal is to create a 30-day online conversation with people across the world," said Sergeant Gallahan. "We hope to raise an understanding of Afghanistan and the ISAF mission."

For more information, visit the Web site at <http://30days.isaf.nato.int>. Twitter users can receive tweets on the team's progress at www.twitter.com/30DaysThrough.



U.S. Air Force graphic

Muncy: One little brown book can make you a successful NCO

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — Now that 2010 is well upon us, there's a book that the Air National Guard command chief wants you to curl up with this winter.

It's the newest version of Air Force's "The Enlisted Force Structure," which was recently revised and republished.

Although it's not a suspenseful "whodunit," Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Muncy said NCOs and officers alike will gain much from its pages. It's the not-so secret of his success.

"I lean to this, a lot," he said, holding up the little brown book in his office, at the National Guard Bureau in September. The thin 20-plus-pager fits easily into a uniform pocket. Although it has no photos, "it does not take a lot to read," he said.

Last May, after becoming the top enlisted Airman in the National Guard, Muncy immediately went to work visiting units around the nation and engaging senior leaders at the Bureau and the larger Air Force. He carried the little brown book wherever he went.

If there is an "Airmanship for Dummies" manual, then Muncy used the Enlisted Force Structure as his Air Force NCO guide, which he pushes today with the newest edition.

"I give this to joint servicemembers to understand who we are," he said. Also called "Air Force Instruction 36-2618," the book applies to all enlisted members of the Air Force, including the Air Guard

and Air Force Reserve.

In short, it defines the enlisted force and its purpose. It describes the ranks, their expectations and responsibilities. It also tells readers what broad duty titles like "NCO-in-charge" or "superintendent" mean and what's expected in those roles.

Bound to be successful

Muncy calls it an "irreplaceable reference tool of the trade" for Airmen. Journalists have their dictionaries; priests have their bibles; Airmen should consult their little brown book with as much conviction, he says.

"A lot of things have changed and we've had to change to rewrite this edition," he said. "We put a lot in ... about our 'Wingman' concept, which is the same thing as our 'Battle Buddies' on the Army Guard-side. We talk a little bit more about resiliency, about preparing for the fight, preparing to take care of each other."

Although the book is studied Air Force-wide during professional military education courses and basic military training, Muncy said too many Airmen leave it behind.

He used the little brown book in his career as a combat communications specialist for the Ohio Air Guard and deployments overseas.

"I talk to [Airmen], I talk to commanders and supervisors, and I tell them, 'if you can take this little brown book and apply it and roll through, the rest should be easy.'"

"It's not going to tell you how to be the best avionics technician or the best security forces or



Photo by Master Sgt. Mike Smith

Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Muncy, ANG command chief, recommends reading the recently revised Air Force's "The Enlisted Force Structure."

He's given it to military officials from Hungary and Serbia - Ohio's state partner nations - as they work to build an NCO corps.

tactical air control person, but it is going to get you through the basic airmanship stuff, enroll you, and help you be prepared."

A storied career

Muncy enlisted in the Air Force in 1977 while still in high school. His grandfather, who served during World War II, was the last person in his family to serve.

"I went on active duty

See BOOK, Page 11

A look back at 2009

By John Saupp
Base Firehouse

aircraft mock up. Firefighters gained valuable hands-on skills and experience during this training deployment.

In early January 2009 numerous 109th firefighters deployed with Civil Engineers to Badin/Charlotte, N.C., for training in preparation for the upcoming Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI). While deployed, firefighters trained on various deployed tasking and skills. Members went to the Charlotte Air National Guard base and performed live aircraft fire training using a large frame

systems, which helped build my background and knowledge."

At book's end

Now the Air Guard's top sergeant says the biggest and best part of the job is seeing Airmen and Soldiers, seeing what they do and being "absolutely fascinated" by their talents.

"The Air Guard is still misunderstood after 62 years

of existence, but the Guard's misunderstood after 373 years of existence," he said. "I think ... it's because we're good. And that's our traditional-status guardsmen, all that strength that they bring from their jobs and their employers from hometown America."

Following 9/11, Muncy deployed to Germany in theatre-level management. He returned home only to deploy again in the invasion of Iraq as an Air Force-in-Europe liaison to U.S. Central Command at a combined operations center. On his return from Saudi Arabia, he became the command chief of Ohio.

"At the back of that [revised] book, we put in the Airman's Creed, which is what we are all about," he said. "To be an NCO in [the Guard], Air or Army side, you're the core. You are the core of what we do."

responding. The exercise went well as crews performed their assigned tasks properly and professionally. A structural fire was simulated, and once again 109th members were evaluated on their performance. The simulated victims were rescued and the fire put out in record time. The evaluators were extremely impressed, and the fire department was awarded a special Outstanding Team award for their efforts. The Fire Protection section was graded an "Excellent" by the IG team.

Training plays a vital role at the Stratton ANGB Fire Department. Live structural fire training was conducted at the Saratoga County Fire Training Center during the spring. During the summer, firefighters completed the New York State Firefighter Safety and Survival and FAST courses. Along with this, they continue their assigned upgrade CDCs and hands-on training sessions are conducted monthly.

The Stratton Fire Department responded to more than 300 calls during 2009. These calls included aircraft in-flight and ground

Recognition, from page 7

Thousands of Airmen will eventually be honored through the campaign for their deployments in Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Noble Eagle.

About 10 percent of the 135 eligible Air Guard units held ceremonies this year, Ms. Brooks said.

"Everyone has done it with the pomp and circumstance that not only honors Airmen, but honors their families and the community," she said. "They are proud of them for doing what they do."

Although the program was

emergencies, structural, hazmat and emergency medical calls. Also the base fire department continues to respond regularly off base through the county mutual aid plan. A few notable calls from 2009 were:

The year started out with crews responding to a working house fire in East Glenville where the temperature was 22 degrees below zero.

A serious auto accident on Maple Ave where two vehicles had collided and one was split in two. The driver had to be extricated and then flown by helicopter to Albany Med.

Numerous fire alarms, auto accidents, FAST team requests and other offbase responses were handled. The year finished out with a house fire on Christmas morning in Glenville. Engine 707 and crew responded as a FAST team and then assisted our local volunteer departments with overhaul operations.

As you can see, 2009 was a typical busy and productive year. 2010 promises to be much of the same. Please continue to be safe both here on base and in your own homes and communities.

introduced in January of 2009, the first batch of awards only began arriving in the field in May.

The first ceremony was held by the Louisiana Air Guard, and many units are still awaiting their awards or are awaiting the best time to hold their ceremonies, Ms. Brooks said.

A Web site, launched in April, connects units to award ordering, eligibility criteria and other valuable information and is accessed through the Air Force Portal.

"Bottom line, this is the right thing to do," Chief Muncy said. "So take care of your Airmen, the greatest Airmen in the United States Air Force."

Airmen of the Year

Airman

Senior Airman Michael R. Lee
109th AW Command Post



Senior Airman Michael Lee is a Command Post controller. He performs Command and Control (C2) actions to support Homeland Security, National Defense, Air Force and Air National Guard operations throughout the full spectrum of operations including peacetime, emergency and disaster situations, crisis, contingency and war. On a daily basis Airman Lee disseminates time-sensitive critical information to senior leaders and support agencies constantly coordinating with other agencies and organizations during planning, executing, and evaluation phases of Command Post operations. He receives and takes action on critical alert messages along with monitoring status and location of key personnel, such as wing and group commanders, to facilitate immediate communications with higher headquarters when necessary. Airman Lee flight-follows and manages aerospace resources and monitors mission status to include aircraft, aircrew support, transportation, maintenance support, fleet services, and passenger and cargo support for the Wing.

Airman Lee graduated from Shenendehowa High School in 2005. In August 2005, he attended The College of Saint Rose in Albany to pursue a degree in Computer Information Systems, and in October 2005 he enlisted in the NY Air National Guard. Airman Lee has continued to be an integral member of the Command Post taking over as the Assistant NCOIC of Reports and as one of the key trainers in the Command Post.

NCO

Tech Sgt. Charles W. Powers
109th Civil Engineer Squadron



Tech. Sgt. Charles W. Powers III is a production controller. He is responsible for establishing and managing the Civil Engineer Squadron operations and control center. He prepares, schedules and manages work requirements during the approval, processing and completion stages. Sergeant Powers operates computer and communication equipment to support work force management activities. He monitors priorities, work plans and work status. He manages the recurring work program, to ensure the maximum efficiency of all real property equipment valued at \$45.3 million.

Sergeant Powers graduated from Troy High School in 2000. Immediately after graduating, he entered the U.S. Air Force on active duty as an apprentice production controller, and his first duty station was Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D. He separated from the Air Force in May 2005 to continue his education. Answering his desire to serve again, he joined the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing in January 2006 as a production controller for the Civil Engineer Squadron. Months after enlisting in the Guard, he was deployed to Ali Base, Iraq, where he was named the top performing NCO of the rotation. He was selected as the full-time NCO of Production Control in August 2007. In May of 2008 he volunteered to deploy and served at Sather AB, Iraq, until September 2008.

SNCO

Master Sgt. Garret Cowser
109th Communications Flight



Master Sgt. Garret Cowser is a knowledge operations manager. In this position, he is responsible for training and educating more than 20 other knowledge operations managers who serve the 109th Airlift Wing. Both non-prior service and prior service Airmen train through this functional manager.

Sergeant Cowser graduated from Broadalbin-Perth Central High School in 1990. Right after graduating, he entered college part time at Fulton Montgomery Community College pursuing an Art degree during 1990-1992. In March of 1997, Sergeant Cowser went to Basic Military Training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. After completion of technical school, Sergeant Cowser was stationed at Fairchild AFB, Wash., in 1997, to work with the 92 Aircraft Generations Squadron, Gold Flight. In 2001, he joined the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing and worked in the 139th Airlift Squadron, Operations Group as an information manager supporting the Arctic and Antarctic missions. In 2007, Sergeant Cowser moved to the 109th Communications Flight to become the functional manager for the KOM career field at the Wing. In 2007, Sergeant Cowser was deployed to Bagram AB, Afghanistan. In 2009, he volunteered to join the BRATS (Basic Recruits Attending Training at Stratton) flight as a cadre member responsible for preparing new recruits for basic military training and technical school.

Honor Guard

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Naparty
139th AES



Staff Sgt. Jeremy C. Naparty is an Aerospace Medical Apprentice assigned to the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. He is also a full-time Ceremonial Guardsman with the 109th Mission Support Group.

Sergeant Naparty entered the Air Force in 2000. After completing Basic Military Training and Technical School as an Aircraft Armament Systems Specialist, he was assigned to the 67th Fighter Squadron at Kadena Air Force Base, Japan. Sergeant Naparty volunteered to deploy on Sept. 12, 2001, in support of Operation Northern Watch to Incirlik Air Force Base, Turkey. He volunteered to deploy again in 2003, as a Weapons Standardized Lead Crew Member in Support of Operation Southern Watch and Operation Enduring Freedom at Prince Sultan Air Base. After completing his term at Kadena Air Base, he transferred to Ghedi, Italy where he had the unique opportunity to work jointly with several branches of the Italian host nations military to complete day to day NATO Missions.

Sergeant Naparty returned to New York after his enlistment. He soon found that he missed being associated with members of the military and decided to join the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing. It wasn't long after joining the unit that he was welcomed into the Honor Guard where he has performed more than 150 funeral honors as well as a number of colors ceremonies.

Honor Guard Manager

Chief Master Sgt. Denny Richardson
139th Airlift Squadron



occasions in support of Operation Deep Freeze and has also deployed to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

*Editor's Note: Chief Richardson was selected by New York state as the Honor Guard Program Manager of the Year. He will now go on to compete to represent the Air National Guard.

First Sergeant

Master Sgt. David Guerrera
109th Security Forces Squadron

Master Sgt. David Guerrera is the First Sergeant of the 109th Security Forces Squadron. As the first sergeant, he works directly for and derives his authority from the unit commander at home station, deployed commander when deployed, and serves as a commander's critical link within the unit for all matters concerning enlisted members. He is the First Sergeant for more than 80 Airmen in the Security Forces Squadron.

Sergeant Guerrera entered the New York Army National Guard in May of 1986. After five years of honorable service, he joined the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing. He then attended the Security Police technical school at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in May 1991. Since his enlistment in the 109th Security Forces Squadron, Sergeant Guerrera has completed both the NCO and the Senior NCO Academy via correspondence courses.

He has deployed numerous times since joining the unit and has supported operations such as Southern Watch, Northern Watch, Resolute, Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle. He deployed to Christchurch, New Zealand, in November 2001 as one of the first Security Forces members to ever deploy to that location in support of Operation Deep Freeze.

*Photo not available

Deep Freeze

Muncy visits Airmen in South Pole

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Air National Guard's top enlisted leader returned here Dec. 12 after visiting Air National Guardsmen involved in Operation Deep Freeze in Antarctica and in Christchurch, New Zealand.

It took three days of traveling for Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Muncy, command chief of the Air Guard, to reach McMurdo Station, Antarctica, and then on to the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, which officials call the "southernmost continually inhabited place on the planet."

Col. Mike McDonald, commander of the Air Guard Readiness Center in Maryland, accompanied him.

"The thing that most impressed me was the mission capability rate that the 109th projects in those austere conditions," Chief Muncy said. "They have an over 90-percent in-commission rate for their aircraft, and all of their maintenance is done outside in the elements, with no hangars."

Chief Muncy flew aboard a ski-equipped LC-130 Hercules aircraft flown by the New York Air Guard's 109th Airlift Wing.

He stepped off the plane and onto the ice cap Dec. 8 and returned Dec. 12.

Chief Master Sgt. Mike Cristiano, command chief for the 109th, said the visit allowed the leaders to see the greater part of ODF and meet the Airmen, civilians and others who support and conduct important scientific research projects there.

The 109th is the on-

continent airlift provider for the National Science Foundation's U.S. Antarctic program. It carries millions of pounds of cargo and fuel as well as thousands of passengers each flying season.

"If something comes across their desks that could assist us in Antarctica, they will [now] have a better understanding of the mission to advocate for us," Chief Cristiano said.

The wing flies hundreds of missions in and around the frozen continent during the annual, four-month ODF flying operation, which ends in mid-February.

"We have 389 missions scheduled for this season," Chief Cristiano said. "The men and women of the 109th are doing a spectacular job of trying to keep us on schedule."

The airlifters land and take off on barren ice and operate under challenging, extremely cold temperatures.

Chief Muncy landed on groomed ski-ways at McMurdo and at the South Pole.

There, he got a first-hand look at the operations where the wing's aircraft routinely fly out to remote science camps to land and take off from unprepared areas.

"Everybody is outside in subarctic temperatures and they probably have a higher in-commission rate than anybody we have stateside," Chief Muncy said. "They are very proud of what they do."

Chief Muncy said the wing's LC-130s - the world's largest ski-equipped cargo aircraft - fly an average of six to seven flights a day to the South Pole and to the outer, remote science stations where only such ski-equipped aircraft can reach.



Courtesy photo

Col. Mike McDonald, commander of the Air National Guard Readiness Center; and Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Muncy, command chief of the Air Guard, stand outside the newly constructed Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station in Antarctica on Dec. 10. Chief Muncy visited the Airmen across that frozen continent and in Christchurch, New Zealand, to gain a better understanding of their missions in Operation Deep Freeze.

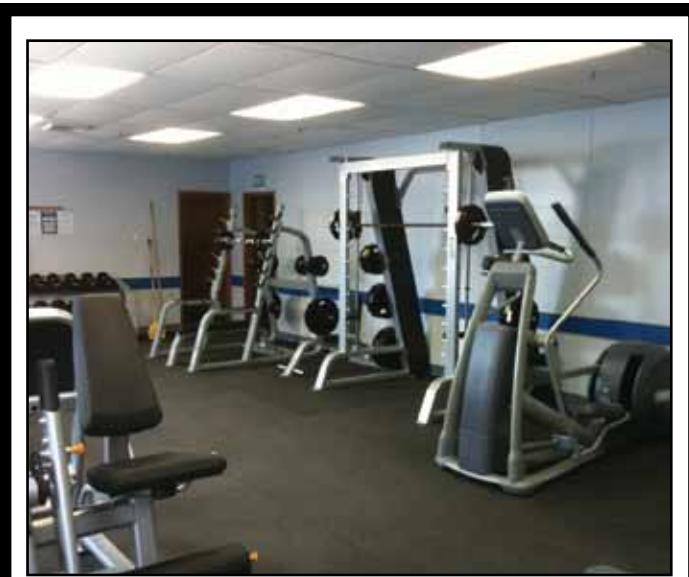


Photo courtesy of Senior Master Sgt. Ford Chambers

Airmen set up new gym

Airmen with the 109th Airlift Wing got together to set up a gym in the NSF Hangar in Christchurch, New Zealand. The new gym is available to all deployed military members assigned to Christchurch. The equipment was purchased by 13th Air Force and MWR.

Deep Freeze



Photo by Staff Sgt. Gregory Urstadt

A major early season wind and snow storm in November buried the landing gear of a 109th Airlift Wing LC-130H. Some of the snow drifts were over 5 feet around the aircraft and over 6 feet in town.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephan Girolami

Master Sgt. Frank Cardabone swipes icicles off of "96" prior to crew show for fuel missions to the pole in January.

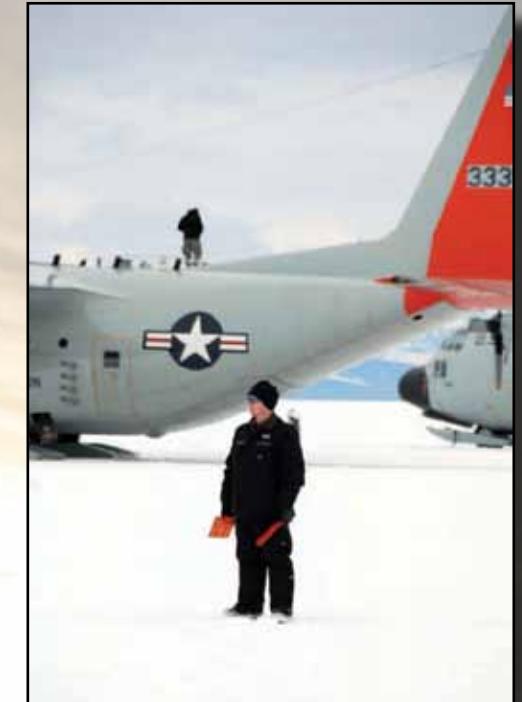


Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephan Girolami

Tech. Sgt. Leslie Gould waits to "catch" Skier-95 in the fuel pits while Master Sgt. Frank Cardabone inspects the dry bays on Skier-00.

109th Airmen, planes on the ice

(Background photo by Staff Sgt. Gregory Urstadt Two 109th Airlift Wing LC-130s sit on the flightline at midnight. This is about as low as the sun gets this time of year in Antarctica.)



Photo by Staff Sgt. Gregory Urstadt

A major early season wind and snow storm in November partially buried all five aircraft on the ice. It took maintenance crews more than 12 hours to dig them out.

Niagara Falls units support Operation Unified Response

By Staff Sgt. Peter Dean
107th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

NIAGARA FALLS AIR

RESERVE STATION, N.Y. – After a week of missions into and out of Haiti, aircrews from the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing and the Air Force Reserve's 914th Airlift Wing returned here Jan. 21 as new crews rotated in to take their place.

During the mid morning hours of Jan. 21, a C-130 Hercules with 16 personnel departed Niagara for Pope Air Force Base, N.C., to relieve the existing aircrews and bring those who had been flying missions since Jan. 16 back home.

The Niagara aircrews, a combination of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve have been flying missions from Pope AFB en route to Port-Au-Prince throughout the week. While at Pope AFB, the planes were loaded with fresh supplies such as pallets of water, food and basic necessities.

"It was an experience I'll never forget," said Capt. Justin Pautler, a 107th C-130 pilot. "Whenever you can utilize your training for the benefit of others, it's a good thing."

In the short time that the crews spent there, a noticeable change had become apparent.

"The first night we got there it was total chaos," said Captain Pautler. "But as the week rolled on, a sense of control had been established."

After the several hour flight to Haiti, cargo was unloaded

and Haitians were brought aboard the C-130 destined for Homestead Air Reserve Station, Fla.

Upon arrival at Homestead ARS, the Haitians were evaluated, given nourishment and medical care. Homestead ARS has converted its base gym into a medical center to accommodate the influx of victims.

"We delivered medical and relief supplies down and returned with evacuees," said Capt. Richard Konopczynsky, a 914th C-130 pilot.

"We brought them back to the United States for medical care," he added. "Seeing the despair in the faces of the victims, it's hard not to think of your own family. ... They were devastated, but were very thankful for what we were doing."

According to the captain, he flew 20-plus hour and flew six sorties, transporting thousands of tons of supplies into Haiti and airlifting more than 100 Haitians to Homestead ARS for medical treatment.

The Niagara crews were flying around the clock, day and night. The locality of this mission to Niagara allows for frequent crew swaps, ensuring the crews remain fresh and able to respond at a moment's notice.

"Initially there were so many different planes coming in, that a rhythm had not been established," said Tech Sgt. Rick Ackley, 914th C-130 flight engineer. "By the second night, time slots were in place and it was a

little easier getting in and out."

Answering humanitarian missions is not unique to Niagara, but this mission is.

With this being the first AFRC/ANG association of its kind, the collocated units now fly and maintain the same C-130 aircraft, sharing the same tail flashes. In the past, the 107th and the 914th will be an airlifting force second to none.

Whether it is a humanitarian mission, an in-country disaster or a world contingency, the 107th and the 914th will be ready and able to answer the call.

When asked if he was making a difference, Captain Konopczynsky said, "The fact that those little kids aren't going to be spending the night there makes it all worth it; yes, we're doing good."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Dean

Master Sgt. Scott Dixon, a C-130 loadmaster with the 107th Airlift Wing at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, N.Y., secures the cargo area for takeoff Jan. 16 as the crew prepares to leave on a mission for Haiti. Crews from Niagara spent five days airlifting supplies into the affected area of Haiti.

Airmen airdrop relief supplies to Haitians

By Thomas G. Kistler
628th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. (AFNS) – Charleston Air Force Base Airmen airdropped about 14,000 bottles of water and 14,500 Meals, Ready to Eat on Jan. 23 to the outlying area of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

The airdrop mission was flown as part of Operation Unified Response to save lives and bring relief to Haitians suffering after the Jan. 12 7.0 earthquake devastated the island nation.

Lt. Col. Leon Strickland, the 437th Operations Group standardization and evaluation chief, began working the airdrop mission Jan. 17 and three hours later was on the road to Pope AFB, N.C., to become the leader of the mission planning cell, or MPC.

His team – Capt. James Long, a weapons officer from the 16th Airlift Squadron, and Capt. Ryan Spodar, a tactician, Tech. Sgt. Peter McCann, a loadmaster, and Army Sgt. 1st Class Spencer Polwort, a ground liaison, all assigned to the 437th Operations Support Squadron – drove to Pope AFB to begin planning and coordinating the first air delivery of humanitarian supplies to the people of Haiti.

Working with the 43rd Airlift Wing at Pope AFB and the Army Soldiers from Fort Bragg, N.C., was nothing new for Charleston AFB Airmen, Colonel Strickland said.

"This sequence of events was not foreign to us as we've accomplished this type of integration at Pope many times during joint forcible entry exercises," he said. "We had to ensure we had taken every precaution and meticulously planned the aerial delivery to ensure both the safety of the Haitian people as well as our aircraft and crew."

Also included in the planning was an Air Force special tactics squadron staff who surveyed the ground in Haiti to find possible delivery zones. Fort Bragg Army riggers, assisted by Sergeants McCann and Polwort, built more than 700 container delivery system bundles of MREs and water.

After construction, the bundles were coordinated with the air delivery inspectors. Air Mobility Command air, space and

information operations officials coordinated with Joint Task Force-Haiti officials and the Tanker Airlift Control Center staff. Finally, Captains Long and Spodar gathered and molded the information into the tactical plan.

"The first air delivery was a proof of concept mission to see if air delivery of supplies in Haiti was a viable way to provide emergency food and water to the Haitian people," said Col. Robert Holba, the 437th Operations Group commander.

"This method of delivering food and water allowed us to work around the logistical bottleneck at the International airport and put a huge number of MREs and bottles of water on the ground near where it was needed most," Colonel Strickland said.

Colonel Strickland is part of the air component coordination element for Joint Task Force-Haiti. He said the ACCE works diligently to find pockets of displaced persons within Haiti using U.S. intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms, which also assess damage across the JTF-H area.

"The ACCE teams coordinate activities at the operational level to ensure commanders are getting the required air, space and information operations support and that the information is integrated at all levels of military planning and execution," Colonel Strickland said.



Haitians collect bottles of water and rations of food air delivered by a Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., C-17 Globemaster III aircraft Jan. 23 in the outlying area of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The mission was flown as part of Operation Unified Response to save lives and bring relief to suffering people in Haiti.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. James L. Harper Jr.

Suicide isn't the answer, and it can be prevented

By Master Sgt. Ottavio LoPiccolo
Chaplain Assistant

Suicide is an uncomfortable topic, however, we have to learn to talk about it and reach out for help, because in one way or another, it affects many of us. In fact, most people, at least once in their lifetime, will have thoughts of suicide.

I had such an experience once. My parents had retired and returned to Italy. I was single and living alone in Schenectady, and for several weeks I was feeling lonely and depressed. One morning I woke up at about 4 a.m. with a strange pain in my chest. It felt as if my heart was going to explode. I needed to talk to someone, but I felt there was no one I could relate to. I had feelings of hopelessness, and was asking myself why I was working in the United States alone and away from my family, and what the point of living was.

Those thoughts I had are not that uncommon among many people. Statistics show that suicide ranks among the 10 leading causes of death in most western countries, and in the United States, it is the 8th or 9th leading cause of death. The yearly estimate is 31,000 suicides each year (National Vital Statistics Report, 2003). However, according to most experts, the actual number of deaths is more than the official figures report.

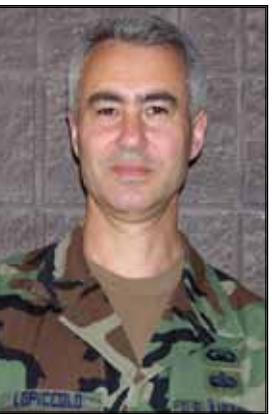
So, what can we do if we find ourselves thinking about suicide? Reaching out to a person we love and trust could save our life. Use any means available to do this, a

telephone call, a visit, etc.

Turn to your faith/spirituality. It's OK to be upset at God, and ask Him questions. He needs to hear our pain also, so that He can help us. But I believe that we must also keep on believing that God will take care of us. Unfortunately life isn't free from pain, but pain will not last forever. Yes, we can feel better again, we can find another job, we can regain normal life after a long and stressful deployment, and we can find love again after a separation/divorce/death. This may not seem comforting, but we must persist and have strength and trust, because our loved ones will not abandon us in a time of need. And we will get out of the pit, the low points of our life. With God's help we shall overcome.

The chaplains on base are here to talk with you, should you or someone else need help in suicide prevention and/or any other stressful situation you may encounter. Our chaplains on base are caring and helpful. They can be reached at (518) 344-2355

See SUICIDE, Page 19



The chaplains on base are here to talk with you, should you or someone else need help in suicide prevention and/or any other stressful situation you may encounter.

Master Sgt. Ottavio LoPiccolo
Chaplain Assistant

Signs of suicide

Experts in suicide prevention tell us to look for these signals when someone may be depressed and at risk of suicide:

- ◆ Withdrawing from friends and social activities
- ◆ Having trouble eating or sleeping
- ◆ Having a drastically different behavior than usual
- ◆ Taking unnecessary risks
- ◆ Appearing to say goodbye
- ◆ Having preoccupations with death and dying
- ◆ Often sad and/or anxious, sleeping too much/little, being impulsive, aggressive and/or pessimistic
- ◆ Having loss of hope and/or a sense of meaning in life and hopelessness about the future
- ◆ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, (PTSD), difficulty adjusting to life changes
- ◆ Intense embarrassment and humiliation before family/friends
- ◆ Low self-esteem, overwhelming guilty feelings when one's actions have caused or perceived to have caused serious injury or death of a person
- ◆ Losing interest in hobbies, school, work, personal appearance
- ◆ Changes in weight or appetite
- ◆ Giving away prized possessions.

Suicide, from page 18

Making a phone call to the person I loved and trusted worked for me. Calling my fiancé in Italy that time I was depressed and having suicidal thoughts possibly saved my life. In fact, after talking to her I immediately felt better. And soon after that, I went to Italy and visited my family. Thanks to her and my family, I've never had those thoughts again.

So, caring, listening and paying attention to others and ourselves can help save lives. Our commitment in strengthening our bonds and relationships can have a positive impact in preventing suicides and violence in our environment.

So let's work together and begin applying some of the techniques discussed in this article. Saving even one life is the noblest of all causes.

Resources for help

- ◆ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK
- ◆ Samaritan Suicide Prevention Center (day and early evening hours): (518) 689-4673
- ◆ Suicide Prevention Resource Center: www.sprc.org
- ◆ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org.

According to Abnormal Psychology (2010 ed., page 262-3);

- ◆ In 2002 people between the ages of 25-44 were mostly affected by it.
- ◆ The latest findings show that younger people aged 18-24 are increasingly affected.
- ◆ Women are three times likely to commit it than men.
- ◆ People who are separated and/or divorced experience suicide more than any other marital status.
- ◆ The highest rate of completed suicides is in the elderly (65+), with a high proportion being divorced or widowed, or suffering from a chronic illness (often caused by depression).

Other risk groups are people with:

- ◆ Mood disorders (15 percent higher risk, schizophrenia 10-13 percent higher risk).
- ◆ Those hospitalized because of alcohol related problems are at 3-4 percent higher risk.
- ◆ Individuals with borderline personalities and antisocial personalities disorder.
- ◆ People living alone.
- ◆ Highly creative people like scientists, health professionals, business people, composers, writers and artists are all at higher than average risk.
- ◆ The risk in children of 10-14 years has drastically increased to 70 percent since 1981 (Nat. Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2003). This trend isn't limited to deprived/troubled backgrounds.
- ◆ Children who have lost a parent or have been abused are at a higher risk (Jamison, 1999), in addition to those who suffer from several forms of depression, anti-social behavior, and high impulsivity.
- ◆ Adolescents/young adults between the ages of 15-24 rate of successful suicide attempts has increased three times between the 1950s to mid 80s. Suicide ranks as the 3rd most common cause of death in this age group (Nat. Vital Statistic report, 2003).
- ◆ College age students are at about 10 percent.
- ◆ Risk Factors for adolescents. Suicide studies indicate the following as increasing the risk; Mood and conduct disorders, substance abuse (especially alcohol), use of antidepressant medications, increased availability of firearms, exposure of suicides (especially by celebrities) by the media has probably increased imitative behavior in this age group.

What can we do to prevent suicide?

These are some of the general suicide prevention guidelines found in the Quick Series Suicide Intervention pocket booklet; (you may request/get a free copy from the chaplains)

- ◆ Be patient, calm and flexible, listen carefully and do not argue moral issues and/or their feelings. Instead respond to their emotions with a positive and caring manner. You may say "This situation must be very painful for you," or "I'm sorry this event has caused you so much pain."
- ◆ Validate feelings. You may say, "It's OK to be angry and upset under these circumstances," or "I think anyone would be sad if this happened to them."
- ◆ Know your objectives (minimize the suicidal behavior and try not to solve all their problems).
- ◆ Be direct in questioning, and guide the person in defining the problem. If you think or suspect the person is in danger of hurting themselves/others, do not be afraid to ask, "Are you contemplating hurting/killing yourself?"
- ◆ Focus on the main issue and emphasize the temporary nature of the problem (things can be replaced, a life can't)
- ◆ Identify reasons to live to the individual (your family/kids need your love/support. Who will take care of them?)

Do not:

- ◆ Leave individual alone, and/or let him/her leave and/or wander about.
- ◆ Sound shocked.
- ◆ Promise anything you can't guarantee.
- ◆ Overlook the sign of suicide.
- ◆ Agree to keep suicidal threats a secret.

Things to do:

- ◆ Isolate individual from additional tension or anything/anyone who may cause more stress.
- ◆ Keep him/her in a specific area (and remember not to leave them alone).
- ◆ Whatever you can do to reduce his/her level of pain.
- ◆ Establish privacy and make them comfortable without rushing and/or dragging the time.
- ◆ Slow down his/her thoughts to reduce the threat level so you'll have time for intervention by others.

Services Airmen stay busy

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt
Public Affairs

Over the past few months, the Airmen of the 109th Services Sustainment Flight have kept themselves pretty busy. They've been involved in exercises, training, deployments, a college internship program and all while striving to meet the needs of their customers – the members of the 109th Airlift Wing.

Recently, students from the Schenectady County Community College's culinary program got the opportunity to visit the dining facility here during a Unit Training Assembly. The visit was

part of a joint effort between the food service program here and SCCC's culinary program.

"It's a real nice opportunity for students to piggyback to complete their college degree," said Chief Master Sgt. Deb Morris, 109th SSF chief. She said the program is also a great recruiting tool, giving the students an idea of what the military is.

"They seemed very receptive to wanting to help us with any events where we may be able to use their assistance," Chief Morris said. "It's a great safety net for us and a good opportunity for them."

Along with many others on

base, some Services Airmen were involved in Vigilant Guard in September. The exercise included components of the Army, Air National Guard and FEMA.

But that hasn't stopped them from making improvements around the base.

"Services this year received significant end of year money, which we've used for purchasing flat screen TVs, ice cream freezer units, brand new lock-in refrigerators and freezers for the kitchen; as well as continuing upgrades on our base gym."

Chief Morris welcomes feedback from everyone on the base.

"We have comment cards available for our lodging program, our food service program and our fitness program," she said. "We're here for the customers."

Guard News

VA reaches out to guardsmen with 'seven touches' program

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs recently implemented many new initiatives and programs as a way to specifically engage National Guard and Reserve veterans who have been deployed, VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said Nov. 19.

Called the "Seven Touches of Outreach" the goal of the program is to "engage Guard and Reserve veterans at least seven times during the deployment cycle with targeted messages and face-to-face encounters with VA staff members,"

Mr. Shinseki told an audience at the National Guard's Joint Senior Leadership Conference held here.

And during that demob process, servicemembers are required to fill out the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment, meet with a health care provider and self-evaluate his health status as compared to how it was prior to the deployment.

Those engagements start when servicemembers arrive at the demobilization site from theatre.

"They receive an overview on VA services and benefits and are enrolled in VA health care," Mr. Shinseki said. "Members are assigned an OEF/OIF program manager to contact, who will set up their initial health and

He added that of 298,000

RC veterans screened, 107,000 have been referred for further evaluation, 61,500 members received appointments for health care and 25,000 to vet centers for readjustment counseling.

And for those who may need assistance once they return to their state, Transitional Assistance Advisers have been set up in each state, who work with the adjutant general to link guardsmen with VA services.

"TAAs have reached out to (more than) 360,000 RC veterans and referred (more than) 76,000 to VA for services or benefits," Mr. Shinseki said.

"VA supports the health assessment conducted by Department of Defense providers and is able to link (reserve component) veterans with appointments to VA for mental health or other follow-up requirements," Mr. Shinseki said.

Additionally, as part of the Yellow Ribbon Program, the VA sends representatives to reintegration programs that returning guardsmen attend 30, 60 and 90 days after returning from deployment.

Celebrating a new decade

By Retired Lt. Col. Tom Noel
Alumni Representative

The Annual Holiday Christmas Party, which is always one of our premier events of the year, was held at the Phelan's Banquet House in Clifton Park on Dec. 16. It was a great party with about 106 alumni members and their spouses and guests in attendance. This attendance was the highest compared to previous annual holiday Christmas parties. As in the past, ladies brought a new unwrapped toy to be given to a local charity. This year a different atmosphere was created with an Alumni Raffle. Instead of many people participating in a 50/50 raffle and only one person winning, donations from members and local businesses were donated for this exciting raffle for everyone present.

Election of officers took place at our January meeting, and the new officers of the 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association will be published in the next Skibird Quarterly Magazine. Congratulations to the new officers and also to the previous officers for their excellent service and dedication.

Upcoming Events:

Some of the upcoming premier events and functions to look forward to this year are the Annual St. Patrick's Day corned beef and cabbage meal scheduled for March. The Wednesday Noon Lunches are scheduled to start April 28 and continue through Aug. 25. The Annual Summer Picnic will be held in either July or August, and the Annual Holiday Christmas Party is set for Dec. 15. More details for these events and future events and functions will be forthcoming in the future issues of the Skibird Quarterly Magazine.

The "Firebird Association" will be holding their 2010 Reunion at the LaQuinta Inn and Suites in Galveston, Texas, from April 11 to 14. The Firebird Association would like the 109th Airlift Wing to supply a static display of an LC-130H Hercules ski aircraft for their reunion if approval is received from the USAF at the Pentagon. The Firebird Association is dedicated to those individuals who gallantly and courageously supported the Distant Early Warning (DEW) mission from Greenland.

Special recognition is given to the extraordinary accomplishments of the personnel who have crewed or supported the LC-130 Hercules "ski model" of the 61st, 17th, Navy VXE-6 and the 139th Airlift Squadron of the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing. It would be great to have many past and present members of the 109th AW to attend this reunion. For more information and details visit their Web Site at www.firebirds.org.

Constance "Connie" Adams, 56, of Kettle Road, Amsterdam, passed away Dec. 3. She worked as a supply person for the 109th Maintenance Group for many years. She served in the U.S. Army for three years in Germany and later was a member of the 109th Airlift Wing, Stratton Air National Guard Base, for 20 years, retiring in 2000.

Edward C. Hopkins, 81, passed away Oct. 12. In 1949 he joined the 109th Airlift Wing and in 1950 he was hired as a full time aircraft mechanic. He worked on 15 different types of aircraft including P-47s, B-25s, F-8s, and C-130s. He participated in several active duty periods during the building of the Berlin Wall and other national emergencies. He participated in several state operations, including duties in Alaska, California and Greenland. He retired in 1978 and moved with his family to Sparta, N.Y.

Lorraine Stobeck, 82, died in November. She worked in Maintenance Operations as a civilian.

Walter J. LeClair, 73, the father of Lt. Col. Matthew LeClair, died Jan. 7, at the Indian River Medical Center in Vero Beach, Fla. He was born in Glens Falls, N.Y., and lived in Vero Beach since 1996, leaving from Burnt Hills, N.Y. He received a Bachelor's Degree from Siena College in Albany, N.Y., and a Master's Degree from the University of Albany. He was a middle school and a high school principal in Schenectady, N.Y., and later a director at Northeast Parent and Child Organization. He was also a veteran of the Korean War, serving in the U.S. Navy.

Our thoughts and prayers are with these individuals, and they will be missed greatly.

There have been a lot of 109th AW individuals who have retired in the previous year. If you know any of them, please invite them to our meeting the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the All Ranks Club. Their first year membership of the Alumni Association is free. We always look forward to seeing new faces and members at our meeting.

Until the next quarterly issue of this Skibird Magazine, I hope you all had a wonderful and safe Merry Christmas, and a great Happy New Year. Stay Happy, Healthy, Safe and I hope Prosperous. Stay Warm and Think Spring. Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy 2010.

Airmen awarded CCAF degrees

The 109th Airlift Wing had 12 graduates from the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) in October. CCAF awards Associate in Applied Science degrees to enlisted members in 67 career field focused degree programs. Fourteen programs are linked to 40 licensure and certification programs. Congratulations to the following members:



Photo by Senior Airman Ben German

(From left) Tech. Sgt. Corey Weeden, Staff Sgt. Steven Chandler, Master Sgt. Rebecca Graham, Staff Sgt. Joshua German, Staff Sgt. Michael Aversano, Master Sgt. Faye Reynolds, Tech. Sgt. Matthew Pierce and Staff Sgt. Eric Rising receive their Community College of the Air Force degrees during a graduation ceremony at the base Nov. 7. Not pictured are Staff Sgt. Gary Fiorillo, Master Sgt. Scott French, Tech. Sgt. Jodi Habbinger and Senior Airman Damien Jepson.

Staff Sgt. Michael J. Aversano
Aerospace Ground Equipment Technology

Staff Sgt. Steven B. Chandler
Aviation Maintenance Technology

Staff Sgt. Gary S. Fiorillo
Aviation Maintenance Technology

Master Sgt. Scott C. French
Aviation Maintenance Technology

Staff Sgt. Joshua A. German
Aerospace Ground Equipment Technology

Master Sgt. Rebecca L. Graham
Public Health Technology

Tech. Sgt. Jodi L. Habbinger
Information Systems Technology

Senior Airman Damien J. Jepson

Transportation

Tech. Sgt. Matthew D. Pierce
Transportation

Master Sgt. Faye N. Reynolds
Logistics

Staff Sgt. Eric D. Rising
Information Systems Technology

Tech. Sgt. Corey J. Weeden
Avionic Systems Technology

There are multiple Web sites to assist you with CCAF information.

www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf - Go directly to CCAF!

<https://rso.my.af.mil/afvecprod/afvec/selfservice/MyAFVEC.aspx> - AF Virtual Education Center (AFVEC) From this Web site you can request a transcript from CCAF, view your education record (progress report), get study guides and apply for Tuition Assistance (if eligible).

Please contact the Base Education & Training Office at 344-2406/2107 if you require additional assistance.

Family Programs now online

Find information on:

Readiness

Programs

Resources for Assistance

Offers

Youth Programs

FAMILY MATTERS

NEWS & INTEREST FOR FAMILIES OF THE 109TH AIRLIFT WING



www.109aw.ang.af.mil/resources/familyreadiness

Promotions & Awards

Oct. 5, 2009 through Jan. 10, 2010

Officer Promotions

Lieutenant Colonel

George Tusang – AES
Janice Zautner – AES

Major

Sharon Westbrook – MDG
Allen Styno – AS

Captain

Patrice Sheehan – MDG

First Lieutenant

Amanda Elwell – AS
Jess Endres – AS
Christine Reape-Schwab – AS

Enlisted Promotions

Senior Master Sergeant

Deborah Walter – MOF

Master Sergeant

Jeffrey Dorman – FSS
Patrick Fitzgerald – LRS
Charles Powers – CES
Shawn Talbot – MXM

Technical Sergeant

Joshua Bartman – SFS
Jeremy Naparty – AES
Michael Riggins – AS
David Rodriguez – AS
Corey Weeden – AES

Awards

Aerial Achievement Medal

Col Gary James – OG
Lt Col George Alston – OSF
Lt Col Thomas Esposito – OG
Maj Blair Herdrick – AS
Maj Jeffrey Smith – AS
CMSgt Dennis Morgan – OSF
TSgt Bret Backus – AS

Meritorious Service Medal

Lt Col Mark Brownell – MDG
Maj Roger Shapiro – AS
CMSgt Michael Delgiacco – AS
CMSgt Joseph Fedor – LRS
SMSgt Garry Quick – AS
MSgt Scott Hansen – AS
MSgt Douglas Kimmell – SFS

Air Force Achievement Medal

Lt Col Ernest Grey – AW
TSgt Jason Bach – AW
TSgt Mark Friss – AW
TSgt Terra Martin – FSS
TSgt Gary Whitworth – LRS
SSgt Edward Hague – AW
SSgt Brett Pacanowski – AW

COMM receives ANG excellence award



Photo by Senior Airman Ben German

The 109th Communications Flight is the proud recipient of the "2008 Air National Guard Excellence - Communications and Information Unit Award". The award was presented to the overall winner in the "Base Communications" category and recognizes the superior accomplishments and outstanding customer support of the 109th CF, supporting the 109th Airlift Wing's various missions worldwide."



Photo by Master Sgt. Christine Wood

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Scotia, NY 12302-9752

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Photo illustration by Staff Sgt. Brett Bouchard

Mission statement

Provide the most professional theatre combat forces, ready to rapidly deploy statewide, worldwide and pole to pole.

Vision statement

A united military organization of empowered individuals building on our proud tradition of serving country, state and community; leaning forward, ready to meet combat and peacetime challenges throughout the world.