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The AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Skibird



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

Summer 2009



Farewells and Fini Flights

Wing Airmen stay busy, focused

By Col. Gary James
109th Operations Group commander

With another month left of summer, it's already been a busy, busy year. April started a string of inspections and deployments that continue through September and already put us right back into the next DEEP FREEZE season. Although this past year's ODF season goals were less robust than the past, this last season was just as busy to those down south flying and supporting the mission as others have been in past years.

When we look back at our accomplishments this September, we will have collectively been through four deployments (Operations DEEP FREEZE, ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM, and RAVEN DEW); a UCI, HSI, JSIVA, MSEV, and ASEV, and finally an Airfield Inspection. Sounds like a big, busy bowl of alphabet soup! You're probably asking or thinking to yourself, why is this good news? I think so, because I believe being busy is good, especially in

today's economy. First, it keeps us focused on the mission. Second, it clearly says to anyone watching us that we are a valuable military commodity. While other active duty, Reserve and Guard units are being closed or realigned via the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, we continue to perform the tasks of our nation.

And being busy doesn't mean we need to run ourselves into the ground. As we stay busy, I'd like to remind all the wing supervisors to make sure you take care of your people. Afford them time off when you can. Encourage them to use their leave and grant them the passes they deserve. To all the wing's deployers, please take time to recharge your batteries when you can: reconstitution time is there for you to get things done at home that went neglected while you were deployed. The wing has a pass and leave policy (109AWI 36-3003) that gives you down time for your time away. Use it: your family needs you!

The 109th AW is first and foremost a Guard unit with a Guard mission. We serve our nation proudly and we are accustomed



File Photo

to the highest scrutiny. Other than the 89th AW (Presidential and other VIP airlift), I'd have a tough time finding another airlift wing that has more contact with high ranking government officials, both civilian and military than does the 109th AW.

109th Airlift Wing



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Col. Anthony German
Vice Commander
Col. Timothy LaBarge

The Skibird

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Volume 47, No. 3

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David Stott Scholarship

TSgt David Stott was a member of the 139AES who passed away 13 Jan 03 following a short illness.

TSgt Stott's parents continue to carry on his memory by offering a scholarship in his name each year.

The scholarship is worth \$1,500.

All 109th AW members, any career field, Officer or Enlisted, pursuing a medically related degree are eligible to apply.

Applications should be made through your respective 1st Sgt on a standard AF form 1206. Submissions will be due to your respective 1st Sgt by close of business **Saturday of the October UTA**

On the cover:

(Top center) Chief Master Sgt. Jerry Stoddard and his wife, Cindy, at his retirement ceremony July 9. (Left) Chief Master Sgt. Mike Cristiano (left) and Chief Master Sgt. Ray Morgan (right) congratulate Chief Master Sgt. Dennis Morgan following his fini flight July 14. (Right) Col. Timothy LaBarge (left) congratulates Col. Brian Gomula following his fini flight July 20. See Pages 8-9 for more coverage. (Photos and photo illustration by Airman 1st Class Ben German)

Fourth of July in Afghanistan

While many of us enjoyed barbecues with our friends and families this Fourth of July, some of the unit's members spent the holiday in deployed locations. For one of our crews in Afghanistan, it was an Independence Day they'll never forget...

(From Lt. Col. Paul Breton, Aircraft Commander)

We had a very memorable 4th of July here. Our crew was scheduled to fly three routine resupply missions, but early in the morning there was an attack on a base not far from here. A gravel truck loaded with explosives was trying to crash through the gate onto the base, and the guards fired at the truck to stop it. They did stop it, but in the ensuing explosion two soldiers were killed and several others were injured. Our crew was chosen to go and pick up the Fallen Heroes and bring their bodies back to base so that another airplane could take them home.

It truly feels like my entire deployment -- all of the training, and all of the preparation -- was meant for this single day. As we taxied out, I said to the crew that I was proud to have been chosen to fly this mission, and that I was honored to be performing it with them. They all chimed in and agreed.

We took off just before sunset, and by the time we got to the base it was dark. The short strip we were going into was at an elevation of 7,400 feet, and it was the one with a pretty significant up slope. We landed on NVG's (Night Vision Goggles) and pulled up to the loading area at the very end of the runway. Through the goggles, we could see 300-400 army soldiers all standing in formation in the dark waiting for us. We don't normally shut engines down there because it's a bit of a hot spot and you may want to leave pretty quickly, but we shut down so that it would be quiet.

Our flight engineer, Don, plays the bagpipes, and he brought them with him on this flight. By now it was already very dark, and it was getting pretty windy. Don played "Amazing Grace" as we all stood at attention and saluted as the two soldiers were carried up the ramp of the plane on flag covered stretchers. It was one of the proudest, and yet saddest, moments of my life, and I was crying along with all of the other service members who were there.

As the bodies were set down, the chaplain said a prayer and then read a passage from the Bible. Then a one star general came on board, knelt down beside each soldier, said a prayer, and then laid a unit coin on each of the flags. The sergeant majors did the same thing, and then the friends of the soldiers came on to say their last good-byes. The entire ceremony was very moving and extremely beautiful. There wasn't a dry eye on the airplane, and none of us could speak. As I got back in my seat in the dark and started to strap in, I just looked out the window and tried to compose myself to prepare for the takeoff

-- it wasn't easy.

It was going to be tough to get off of that runway with its high elevation and short length. Everyone takes off downhill at this place, but the winds were coming from the wrong direction. We figured we needed 30 knots of wind right down the runway to be able to take off -- someone was watching out for us, and the winds were called at 20 gusting 30, straight down the runway! We taxied down the hill, turned around so that we could use every last brick, pushed the power up, and took off.

I let the copilot, Dan, have the approach back here at Bagram, and told him as we began our descent that he would remember this landing for the rest of his career (nothing like putting the pressure on!). He did great, and after we shut down there was another small ceremony with all of the personnel that were there. I said a prayer for the soldiers and their families, and just imagined how very sad it would be as these men would arrive home in a couple of days, and their precious bodies given back to their families for burial. May God Bless these two brave young men, Aaron and Justin, and comfort their families in their time of grief.

It was just after midnight, but we still had another mission. We had to fly about an hour down south with an aeromed team and pick up seven wounded soldiers and bring them back to the bigger hospital here. We landed, and waited on the ground for about two hours while they brought the patients to the plane in these old army ambulances that looked like something right out of MASH! While we were there, helicopters were flying around, and other C-130's were taking off and landing. It was cool to watch, because we hardly ever get to see that from the ground. It was about 2:00 AM, and none of the airplanes use landing or taxi lights (we take off and land with the goggles), so it was awesome watching the airplanes appear out of the darkness to land, and then takeoff and disappear into the night! There is a big push with the marines down south, and the reason we are transporting patients out of that hospital is to open up more space. May God watch over them all.

I would have really liked to have been home for the barbecues and the fireworks, but I know that I am supposed to be here right now. Just wanted to relate a special story about two American Heroes, the beginning of their long journey home, and a 4th of July that everyone on our crew will remember for the rest of our lives.

Hope you are all doing great, and I look forward to seeing you soon!! Paul

(From Chief Master Sgt. Don Morrell, Flight Engineer)

The crew of Torque 83 awoke late afternoon on July 4, 2009 to find the camp decorated in red, white and blue ribbons, balloons, and posters in preparation for scheduled 4th of July events. I began my day a couple of hours earlier. I dressed in a digital camouflaged kilt and went about the camp to honor those working. I played God Bless America in front of Operations. My aircraft commander went with me to maintenance to thank them for the hard work they do in keeping our planes in the air. It was the Wild Blue Yonder (Air Force Song) for maintenance followed by a heartfelt thank you. Anchors Aweigh at the Navy tent. On to the Marine Corp hut where a Colonel stood at attention for the Marine Corp Hymn. Time was running out and we had to get ready for work. Back to the hut and change into my flight suit.

The rest of the crew had been alerted we dressed and walked to the DFAC (dining facility) for your 4th of July BBQ, to go of course. We piled our Styrofoam clamshells high with ribs, chicken, prime rib, sausage, potato salad, and macaroni salad. I grabbed a chocolate chip cookie to satisfy my sweet tooth and ate it on the way back to the operations building. Someone said, "my plate looks just like the one I would make back home". We filled the silence with thoughts of our family and friends celebrating the 4th; in what I hoped would be a great day for them. In to the briefing room for our Intel brief.

Not so fast, 2 crews are leaving at the same time. We are briefing in the Intel Office. Now it is really like a crowded picnic back home, dinner on our laps. Our mission had changed 3 times in the past hour. Our first leg would now be to FOB Sharana. We'll drop off a few pallets of cargo and pick up 19 passengers plus 2 HR. Here HR stands not for Human Resources, but for human remains. HR on the 4th of July! Not the way we wanted to remember today. The enlisted crew grabbed our gear and left to get our plane ready and loaded, while the officers flight planned. The sun was setting by the time we took off.

The short flight was fairly busy as we transitioned to NVG (night vision goggles) for the remainder of the night. We fly without lights to darkened runways, illuminated only with infrared lighting. Winds had shifted and picked up at the camp. As a crew we discussed our options are we within limits to land; should we hold and wait; will be able to take off? We notified the tower and began our approach. We asked the tower, do crews shut down engines (not normally done at FOB) to load HR? Yes was the reply. Under the cloak of darkness, aided by NVG's we descended on FOB Sharana for a 4th of July we won't soon forget.

Our arrival was just the way we like it. No small arms fire or missile warnings, no TIC (troops-in-contact) in the vicinity. We notified the tower of our parking intentions. Be careful of the vehicles and troops in formation she told us. We saw what looked like a couple hundred troops but there were probably

less than a hundred in-formation. We parked our aircraft and shutdown.

Our Cargo was quickly offloaded and 19 passengers boarded, but none sat down.

Someone boarded (a chaplains representative?) and told us of the Fallen Comrade Ceremony to take place. I asked if I could play Amazing Grace as the bodies were brought on board. That would be great I was told. I grabbed my "pipes" and out the cargo door I went. By the light of several vehicles I saw more soldiers in formation extending beyond the loading ramp. I found a spot were I could see and stood at parade rest. The rest of the crew either stood across from me or in the aircraft with the other passengers. And then I saw the approaching Humvees pallbearers sitting inside.

My mouth began to dry; I began to notice the 35knot gusting winds. My eyes shifted looking at everyone. ATTEN-SHUN came the call, everyone snapped to attention. Here they come I thought...don't mess up. It's the 4th of July for crying out loud this shouldn't be. The pallbearers jumped down wait, those aren't caskets there litters. Forget about it start playing I told myself. Slow down, take your time show your respect. I played the wind blew, take deep breathes, play, play. Four maybe five men fell in behind the litters, slowly they marched past me up the ramp and into the plane. A General, Sergeant Major, Colonel I couldn't see all of them.

The litters were placed on the floor. I finished playing. The General knelt others followed, the chaplain prayed. I couldn't hear it, that darn wind. My mouth was dry, tasted dusty. I felt congested, something in my eye. Wait...don't cry. I bet they're younger than MY son I thought. Just like that it was over. The command staff turned and marched out.

The formation began to disperse. The Sergeant Major came back up the ramp knelt before the bodies, prayed and placed a unit coin on each man's chest. Feeling helpless, selfishly, my way of honoring the fallen was to play. I hope I sounded OK to others I thought.

I turned to walk away and noticed someone was taking a picture, so I tried to get out of the way. It was me they were trying to get a photo of. The General came over to thank me, followed by the Sergeant Major and the Chaplain, another Lieutenant. It was time to go. I walked past the bodies and couldn't help but think of the heroes they were. Like Jesus on the cross they died for myself, and others. Earlier I learned that a vehicle attempted to breach the gates of the base only to be shot at by the 2 heroes now in our plane. The resulted explosion killed both of them. "Caught in the action of kill or be killed, no greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for another."

I will never forget Independence Day 2009. Henceforth on every 4th of July, I shall remember these 2 heroes and others like them. I will remember the high cost of freedom. I will not take the rights and freedoms afforded me lightly. I ask that all of you do the same.

109th supports Operation Enduring Freedom



Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Greg Urstadt

109th Airlift Wing members of Rotation B deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on June 9 and returned home to Stratton Air National Guard Base, N.Y., on July 17.



Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Greg Urstadt

From left, Tech. Sgt. Dan McLoughlin, Staff Sgt. Greg Urstadt, Master Sgt. Scott French and Tech. Sgt. Jim Touchette build a pallet box with scraps from old buildings while deployed to support Operation Enduring Freedom. The Airmen are all maintainers with the 109th Airlift Wing.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Greg Urstadt

Aircraft 0487 sits on the ramp during a pre-flight inspection. The 109th Airlift Wing aircraft and Airmen were deployed to Afghanistan to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

109th mourns death of South Pole doctor

By news reports

ARLINGTON, Va. - Members of the 109th Airlift Wing of the New York Air National Guard are mourning the death of Dr. Jerri Nielsen FitzGerald, who was rescued by the unit when she was diagnosed with breast cancer while stationed at the South Pole in 1999.

"She lived life to the fullest and squeezed every last bit out of life until the very end," said Lt. Col Kim Terpening at a news conference at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Schenectady, N.Y., on June 24. "She was such a good-hearted soul, who expressed gratitude for being given 10 additional years of life."

Dr. Nielsen FitzGerald, who was stationed at a National Science Foundation facility in Antarctica at the time of

her diagnosis, died June 23 at her home in Southwick Mass., said her husband, Thomas FitzGerald. Her cancer had been in remission, but returned in 2005.

The rescue made headlines around the world, and in her memoir, "Ice Bound, A Doctor's Incredible Battle for Survival at the South Pole," she praised the 109th crew that saved her. "They're heroes, and I owe them my life," she wrote.

Dr. Nielsen FitzGerald was the only doctor at the NSF facility when she discovered a lump in her breast. She performed a biopsy on herself and gave herself chemotherapy for several months while waiting for the weather to improve so she could be rescued.

Her condition worsened in the weeks leading up to the unit's traditional first flight of the year, so the leadership of

the 109th decided to attempt a rescue. It was risky, because the temperature was about 58 degrees below zero, which is cold enough to turn the LC-130's fuel into gel.

Colonel Terpening, who was the flight nurse on the rescue mission, said the pilots made two attempts to land on Oct. 15, but aborted because of the weather. Two days after their first attempts, they landed successfully. It was one of the earliest flights ever into the area.

"Everything was a normal mission except for the extreme cold," said Colonel Terpening. "It takes a great deal of skill to do that."

The 109th provides logistical support to the NSF each year and is the only airlift wing in the world with ski-equipped C-130s. It does not usually start its mission to Antarctica until November, when temperatures rise above 50

degrees below zero.

After the rescue, the 109th crew returned to a hero's welcome in New York. "We had no idea the world was watching," said Colonel Terpening, who added that she and Dr. Nielsen stayed in touch over the years.

Dr. Nielsen FitzGerald visited Stratton ANGB several times, and last year she attended the wing's 60th anniversary.

Colonel Terpening said Dr. Nielsen FitzGerald told her several weeks ago that her cancer was terminal, but "she was ready, she was upbeat and she was very determined."

Colonel Terpening learned of her death on June 25, when she was flying back from Greenland, where the 109th trains for its polar mission. "I was sad," she said. "I knew she celebrated life. We should be so fortunate to do such wonderful things as she did."

Chief: Guard's mobilization training, readiness good for America

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- The National Guard is giving more back to the America in the 21st Century through its increased readiness and ability to rapidly deploy for federal and state callouts, the Guard Bureau's top military officer said.

Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, told an audience June 1 at the Center for National Policy here that since 9/11 the Guard has drastically reduced the time

it takes to mobilize in support of the president and the governors.

"We've accelerated the training, we've accelerated the equipping, our leadership has changed dramatically, so today most of our formations take less than 90 days to go through a pre-mobilization buildup," said the general. Aside from the advantage of getting boots on the ground faster in support of theater commanders, General McKinley said the consequences of a Guard that's always ready is that it provides "a highly

trained force" that can be used in state callouts for disasters and national security events.

"The military first responders in a state more than likely today will be your National Guard," he said. In his first six months as the Guard's first four-star general, General McKinley said the National Guard has continued its engagements around the globe while responding to historic callouts by the governors for support in disasters like the Kentucky ice storms in late January and security events like the presidential inauguration.

General McKinley also



pointed out that the National Guard is heavily involved in supporting the active-duty Army and the Air Force overseas.

"While we sit here, between 30,000 and 35,000 members of the National Guard are involved either in Iraq or Afghanistan," he said.

Finis Flights

Photos by Airman 1st Class Ben German



Col. Brian Gomula flies his last flight as the 109th Maintenance Group commander over Scotia, N.Y., on July 20, and gets hosed down afterward. His wife, Nancy, was there to watch with numerous 109th Airlift Wing members.



Chief Master Sgt. Dennis Morgan flew his final flight as the 109th Operations Group loadmaster chief over Scotia, N.Y., on July 14. His brother, Chief Master Sgt. Ray Morgan, along with Chief Master Sgt. Mike Cristiano were there to hose him down following his flight.

Chief Stoddard says farewell

Wing celebrates chief's 25-year career with ceremony, dinner



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Chief Master Sgt. Jerry Stoddard speaks during his retirement dinner celebration at the Glen Sanders Mansion on July 9. About 150 guests attended the dinner.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Ben German



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Left, Col. Anthony German (left), wing commander, waits to retire Chief Master Sgt. Jerry Stoddard (right) as Airman 1st Class Anthony Amico (center) reads the retirement order during a ceremony on base July 9. Above, Chief Master Sgt. Jerry Stoddard holds the flag that was presented to him by the Base Honor Guard during his retirement dinner at Glen Sanders Mansion July 9.

AFPC seeks GEICO award nominations

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS) -- Air Force Personnel Center officials here are currently seeking nominations for the 2009 Government Employees Insurance Company's Military Service Awards.

The annual GEICO awards recognize enlisted servicemembers from all military service branches, Guard and Reserve for their contributions to military and civilian communities.

Awards will be given in three categories: drug and alcohol abuse prevention, fire safety and fire prevention, and traffic safety and accident prevention. The accident prevention category applies specifically to vehicle or motorcycle related accomplishments.

Organizations and base-level

personnel must contact their major command, field operating agency, direct reporting unit or MAJCOM equivalent for applicable suspense dates and for additional information regarding nomination procedures. Nomination packages for all MAJCOM or equivalent agencies are due to AFPC by Oct. 15.

The award's period of service runs from Oct. 1, 2008, to Sept. 30, 2009. However, nominees' accomplishments could have been performed during the award period, be ongoing or span a period of several years. Nominees must have at least one year of obligated service through Dec. 31, 2010, to be eligible.

For more information, contact Tech. Sgt. Aletha Della Rocco in the military personnel flight at 344-2336.

President signs bill authorizing changes to TSP for civilians

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- On June 22, President Obama signed into law the Thrift Savings Plan Enhancement Act of 2009 as part of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (Public Law 111-31).

One of the provisions of the new law eliminates the waiting period of appropriated fund civilian employees covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System to receive Agency Automatic 1 percent and Agency Matching Contributions to their TSP accounts.

Prior to enactment of the new law, new FERS employees had to wait 6 to 12 months, depending on their date of hire, before becoming eligible for agency TSP contributions. Employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System are not eligible for agency TSP contributions.

Department of Defense employees who are covered under FERS and who are hired or rehired on or after July 5 will be immediately eligible for Agency Automatic 1 percent

See TSP, page 11

Air Force officials update uniform board decisions

By Tech. Sgt. Amaani Lyle
Secretary of the Air Force
Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Air Force officials announced June 12 policy updates in the 98th Virtual Uniform Board decisions posted June 10. The following provides a snapshot of approved uniform wear.

Follow-on messages will be released that contain detailed guidance and instructions. All information will be incorporated into AFI 36-2903.

- Effective Oct. 1, 2010, trousers on utility uniforms will be tucked into boots and give a bloused appearance. Tucking had previously been optional.
- The green fleece formerly worn only as the All-Purpose Environmental Clothing System liner is authorized Air Force-wide as an outer-wear garment. The addition of the name, rank and service designators to the green fleece when worn as an outer-wear garment is authorized.
- Airmen may use personal cellular telephones while in uniform and walking. Cell phones may be worn on either left or right side; however, the cell phone must be a conservative color. Military customs and courtesies are required and take precedence. Talking on a phone is no excuse for not saluting. Still prohibited is wearing hands-free devices such as cell phones attachments worn on the ears.
- Enlisted chevrons will be worn on light weight blue jacket sleeves instead of the metal rank insignias on the collar effective Jan. 1, 2010.
- The ends of boot laces must be tucked into boots. Wrapping the laces around boot is authorized.
- The length of airman battle uniform lower leg pocket will increase by approximately 1/2 inch.
- Upper sleeve pockets are authorized on fire-resistant clothing authorized for the Central Command region.
- Airmen earning and awarded the Army Parachute Riggers badge are authorized permanent wear on all uniform combinations. For the airman battle uniform and the battle dress uniform, the badge will be blue. On the desert combat uniform the approved color is brown.
- Wearing the black Army Air Assault Badge on the battle dress uniform is authorized upon graduation from Air Assault School.
- Organizational ball caps are not authorized to be attached to either lower leg cargo pockets on the BDU trousers.
- The female ABU trouser fly buttons will be the same as on men's pants.



Photo by Staff Sgt. David Murphy

Exercise, Exercise, Exercise!

Members of the 109th and 106th Medical Groups participate in Empire '09 Plus, a National Guard Support to Civil Authorities Exercise on June 6 at the Office of Fire Prevention and Control's Urban Search and Rescue Center in Albany.

TSP, from page 10

contributions. When they begin contributing to TSP, they are also immediately eligible for Agency Matching Contributions.

"This is good news for FERS employees who are currently waiting to become eligible for agency contributions," said Fran Campbell, a human resources specialist at the Air Force Personnel Center. "They will become eligible for Agency Automatic 1 percent contributions on July 5, and if they are contributing to TSP, they will also be immediately eligible for Agency Matching Contributions."

FERS employees who are currently serving the waiting period should have seen their first agency TSP contributions on their Leave and Earnings Statements for pay date July 24.

"New FERS employees who have delayed enrolling in TSP because they were waiting to become eligible for agency contributions should make their election as soon as possible to take advantage of this new provision," said Ms. Campbell.

Employees may contribute a whole dollar amount or a whole percentage of their basic

pay to TSP, but they must contribute at least 5 percent of basic pay each pay period in order to receive the maximum Agency Matching Contributions. Employee contributions are subject to the \$16,500 annual maximum for 2009.

Air Force-serviced civilians can enroll or submit TSP contribution elections by using the Employee Benefits Information System Web application or the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team's phone system. EBIS can be found on the Air Force Portal and on AFPC's "Ask" site by entering "Employee Benefits Information System" in the search function.

Employees can reach the BEST phone system by dialing 800-525-0102. When the phone system answers, press "2" for civilian employees, then "2" again for BEST benefits and entitlements, and follow the prompts. AT&T direct access numbers can be found at http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp.

TSP elections are effective on the first day of the next pay period after the election is submitted.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Connelly

First-Place Finish

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Peck, of the 109th Logistics Readiness Squadron, crosses the finish line of the 2nd Annual New York National Guard Family Readiness Council, Inc., 5K Fundraising run in Colonie on June 20. He finished with a time of 18:56. Numerous other 109th Airlift Wing members ran the event, including Staff Sgt. Angela Vasilakos of the 109th Communications Flight, who finished first for her age category, with a time of 24:26. The event raises money to be used to aid National Guard Soldiers and Airmen and their families during deployment emergencies.

Deadline Notice

Articles for the next issue of *the Skibird* are due by **Oct. 4.**



Post-9/11 GI Bill: General Information

Who is eligible for benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

Individuals who serve at least 90 days of aggregate service after September 10, 2001 are eligible.

To be eligible for 100 percent of the benefit, an individual must have served an aggregate of 36 months of active duty service, or have been discharged for a service-connected disability after 30 days of continuous service. *NOTE: Active-duty service time required by graduates of a Service Academy or ROTC does not count toward the three years necessary to qualify for full benefits.*

For those who served fewer than 36 months, the percentage of benefit ranges from 40 percent to 90 percent:

- 90 percent - 30 total months (including service on active duty in entry level and skill training)
- 80 percent - 24 total months (including service on active duty in entry level and skill training)
- 70 percent - 18 total months (excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training)
- 60 percent - 12 total months (excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training)
- 50 percent - 6 total months (excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training)
- 40 percent - 90 or more days (excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training).

For example, an individual with five months of qualifying service could receive 40 percent of the tuition benefit, 40 percent of the monthly housing allowance, and a maximum of \$400 books and supplies stipend.

Veterans must have an honorable discharge or other qualifying discharge (e.g. hardship, condition interfering with duty, etc.) to be eligible.

What benefits do students receive under the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

Depending on each individual's situation, benefits could include payment of tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, a stipend for books and supplies, college fund ("kicker") payments, a rural benefit payment, and a Yellow Ribbon benefit. Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits differ from other education assistance programs in that each type of payment is issued separately, with some payments made directly to the school and others issued to the individual.

Tuition and Fees: These payments are issued to the school on behalf of the individual at the time the certificate of enrollment is processed

- Not on active duty: For individuals not on active duty, the amount is prorated according to length of service. The amount paid is limited to the highest amount of tuition and fees charged for full-time, undergraduate training at a public institution of higher learning in the state where the student is enrolled. (A chart of maximum in-state tuition and fees for 2008-2009 is on the VA GI Bill website at http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/CH33/Tuition_and_fees.htm.)
- On active duty: Individuals on active duty may receive the total amount of tuition and fees. The amount is not limited to the state maximum.

Monthly housing allowance: This payment is issued directly to the student at the beginning of each month for education and training pursued the previous month. The amount is prorated based on length of service. *NOTE: Active duty personnel are not eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill monthly housing allowance. Students enrolled exclusively in online training are not eligible for the housing allowance.*

Books and supplies stipend: This payment issued directly to the student when the school certifies and VA processes the enrollment. This benefit is prorated based on length of service. *NOTE: Active duty personnel are not eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill books and supplies stipend.*

Yellow Ribbon payments: The Yellow Ribbon Program allows degree-granting institutions to enter into a voluntary agreement with VA to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate for individuals eligible for the 100% payment tier. The institution can contribute up to 50% of those expenses and VA will match

the same amount as the institution. This payment is issued to the school when the school certifies and VA processes the student's enrollment. (For details on this program see Yellow Ribbon Program on the web page — http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/CH33/Yellow_ribbon.htm.)

College fund or "kicker": These payments are issued directly to the student based on "rate of pursuit" (full- or part-time study) and the education benefits program under which the kicker is payable. Post-9/11 GI Bill kickers will be issued monthly with the housing allowance; all other kickers will be issued in a lump sum when the student's enrollment certification is processed.

Rural benefit payments: This one-time, lump-sum payment of



New GI Bill Transfer Options Take Effect Aug. 1

By Rob McIlvaine
Special to American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Post-9/11 GI Bill takes effect Aug. 1, but in the meantime, servicemembers may submit a request to transfer benefits to their spouses and children now. "Transferability of Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits has been the most requested initiative we receive from our servicemembers," said Bill Carr, deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel policy, "and we believe it will assist us in retaining highly qualified military personnel."

Career servicemembers on active duty or in the selected reserve on Aug. 1 may be entitled to transfer all or a portion of their unused entitlement to one or more family members.

Army 1st Sgt. Steven Colbert, who serves with Headquarters

and Headquarters Company, 3rd U.S. Infantry, at Fort Myer, Va., is among the first soldiers to take advantage of the new entitlement.

"I will be the first to say that the Army is probably the best thing that has ever happened to me," Colbert said. "It has given me some of the advantages that I didn't have as a child growing up. One of the reasons why I stayed in so long is because of Jordan, my son. Now I have the opportunity to give him something I never had."

Colbert has spent 23 years in the Army with tours throughout Europe and across the United States. During that time, he took advantage of tuition assistance and graduated with a bachelor's degree in management. His wife, Danielle, is working on a bachelor's degree in business administration at Prince George's Community College in Maryland. Jordan Colbert already has similar plans.

"I want to go in the Army and play football," he said with a big smile. "But I want to attend Virginia Tech first."

"I didn't put that in his head," his father said. "He already has picked that out, and with us being here in the D.C. area, the Post 9/11 GI Bill is perfect. [Virginia Tech] is a pricey school, but these benefits are going to help me be able to take care of that."

"It's just wonderful," he continued. "I'm just overwhelmed about the opportunity to really be able to take care of him."

For servicemembers and spouses who might want to continue with their studies, the Post 9/11 GI Bill can be used for all levels of degree programs, including a second degree, a master's degree or even a doctorate.

Defense officials advise servicemembers to transfer at least a month's worth of GI

Bill benefits to every dependent before they leave service to lock in an opportunity to change the number of months transferred at a later time.

Any family member not approved for transferability before a member retires or separates will be denied the opportunity forever, unless the member re-enters service. Likewise, veterans who remarry or have more children after leaving service will not be able to transfer GI Bill benefits to these new family members.

"It's recommended that soldiers add all family members as potential beneficiaries of their Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits," said Bob Clark, the Defense Department's assistant director for accession policy and military personnel policy.

Once servicemembers retire or separate, he explained, they can no longer add new family members as potential beneficiaries.

\$500 is issued directly to a student who resides in a county with six persons or fewer per square mile (as determined by the most recent decennial census), and who either:

- Physically relocates to at least 500 miles to attend an educational institution, or
- Relocates by air (any distance) to physically attend an educational institution, if no other land-based transportation exists.

What kind of education and training does the Post-9/11 GI Bill cover?

Approved training under the Post-9/11 GI Bill includes graduate and undergraduate degrees. All training programs must be offered by a degree-granting institution of higher learning (IHL) and approved for GI Bill benefits. Additionally, tutorial assistance and reimbursement for one licensing or certification test reimbursement are available under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

NOTE: If an individual is eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill as well as other GI Bill benefits, s/he will be required to make an irrevocable choice of which benefit to receive. Individuals who were previously eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty (MGIB-AD, Chapter 30), Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR, Chapter 1606), or the Reserve Educational Assistance

Program (REAP, Chapter 1607) may continue to receive benefits for approved programs not offered by degree-granting institutions. These programs include flight, correspondence, apprenticeship/on-the-job training, preparatory courses, and national tests. Individuals in these programs will be paid as if they are still receiving benefits under Chapters 30, 1606, and 1607.

When will benefits be paid?

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is effective for training on or after August 1, 2009.

What is the eligibility period?

The period of eligibility for the Post 9/11 GI Bill ends 15 years from the date of the last discharge or release from active duty of at least:

- 90 consecutive days
- 30 days but less than 90 days if released for a service-connected disability

Or: 15 years from the date of discharge for the last period of service used to meet the minimum service requirements of 90 aggregate days of service.

For more information, visit the VA GI Bill Web site at <http://www.gibill.va.gov>, or call toll-free 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).

Art Mission

Crew chief designs COMM's new logo

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt
Public Affairs

A sketch that began on the back of an Air Force sticker now encompasses one of the walls in the 109th Communications Flight's new building.

Staff Sgt. Stephen Girolami, a crew chief with the 109th Maintenance Squadron, brought his artistic abilities to the unit and created a new logo for the Communications Flight. Sergeant Girolami, a traditional guardsman, began picking up days wherever and whenever he could. One of his stints was with the Communications Flight helping them with various computer projects. It was then that flight members caught wind of his talent.

"When I first came into this job, we started talking about the existing logo and how it would work with our reorganization to a two-flight Communications Squadron," said Lt. Col. Mark Armstrong, 109th Communications Flight commander. "We wanted to see if we could come up with something (that would represent the new squadron) better and take advantage of Steph's capabilities, which we thought were going to be very suitable to our project."

Sergeant Girolami got right to work and began sketching out ideas.

"We gave him some very loose parameters; we wanted Steph to use his unique ability," Colonel Armstrong said.

Colonel Armstrong said he wanted the unit's unique polar mission somehow included in the logo. He also wanted a lightning bolt, the traditional Communications symbol.

"Through the course of my years being with the unit, I know that we played off the polar bear and penguin concept in a lot of different organizations," said Chief Master Sgt. Doug Miller, 109th Communications Flight Plans Branch chief.

Chief Miller and Colonel Armstrong wanted to incorporate those ideas into a more professional-looking logo.

"I just told Steph that we were going to rely on his abilities as an artist to bring all those different factors together," Chief Miller said.

"They gave me some ideas, but then gave me the freedom to interpret it the way I wanted to," Sergeant Girolami said.

As Sergeant Girolami started bringing his ideas to paper, coincidentally, the 109th Airlift Wing logo's artist, Dave Getty, stopped in. The two began talking about the logo Sergeant Girolami had started, and Mr. Getty offered some advice.

"He's the one who told me that everything had to mean something," Sergeant Girolami said. "I kind of already knew that things needed to have symbolism, but he said everything, even the colors, had to mean something."

During the sketching process, Sergeant Girolami also did a lot of research, including a call to the Office of Heraldry at the Pentagon, on the images he was creating and the symbolism he would bring into his drawing.

He would then transfer his sketches, which were scanned into the computer. With the help of the Visual Information office, his illustration was transferred to a computer, and that's when he was able to put all the aspects of the logo together and perfect the details.

From there, he projected his drawing onto the wall where the mural would go, and began painting. Over the course of several weeks in between jobs, the new Communications logo covered an entire wall in the flight's new building.

"We needed a new building to process our lifecycle computer replacement; we get about 25 percent of our computers replaced every year," Colonel Armstrong said. "We thought this would be a great location for a Comm logo and a good way to spruce up the space."

Members of the Communications Flight were nothing but impressed with what Sergeant Girolami came up with.

"I was blown away when I saw the final product," Colonel Armstrong said. "It was just incredible. The level of sophistication and the level of skill that he possesses is remarkable. I'm surprised, but then again I shouldn't be. People on this base have so many different talents."

Master Sgt. Craig Gronlund, 109th Communications Flight Plans and Programs superintendent, was so impressed that he now has a framed picture of the mural, with all the meanings written out, hanging on his office wall.

"It's just unbelievable," he said. "He did such a good job and there was so much meaning in there, which is why I wanted to somehow honor that."

"Steph by far took it to the extreme where I never envisioned that he could possibly take this thing," Chief Miller said. "He has so much symbolism built into this logo. Everything from part of our state mission to our federal mission. There's so much there that he's brought in. We had the perfect guy for the job."

See Sergeant Girolami's final product, with all the symbolism outlined, on page 16.



Staff Sgt. Stephen Girolami paints the Communications Flight logo he created as a mural onto one of the walls in the new COMM building.



Staff Sgt. Stephen Girolami transfers his sketches to a wall in the new Communications Flight building. The COMM logo Sergeant Girolami created now covers the entire wall in the new building.

(Background photo) Staff Sgt. Stephen Girolami sketches out his design of a new logo for the Communications Flight. He is a crew chief with the 109th Maintenance Squadron.

Photos by Master Sgt. Christine Wood

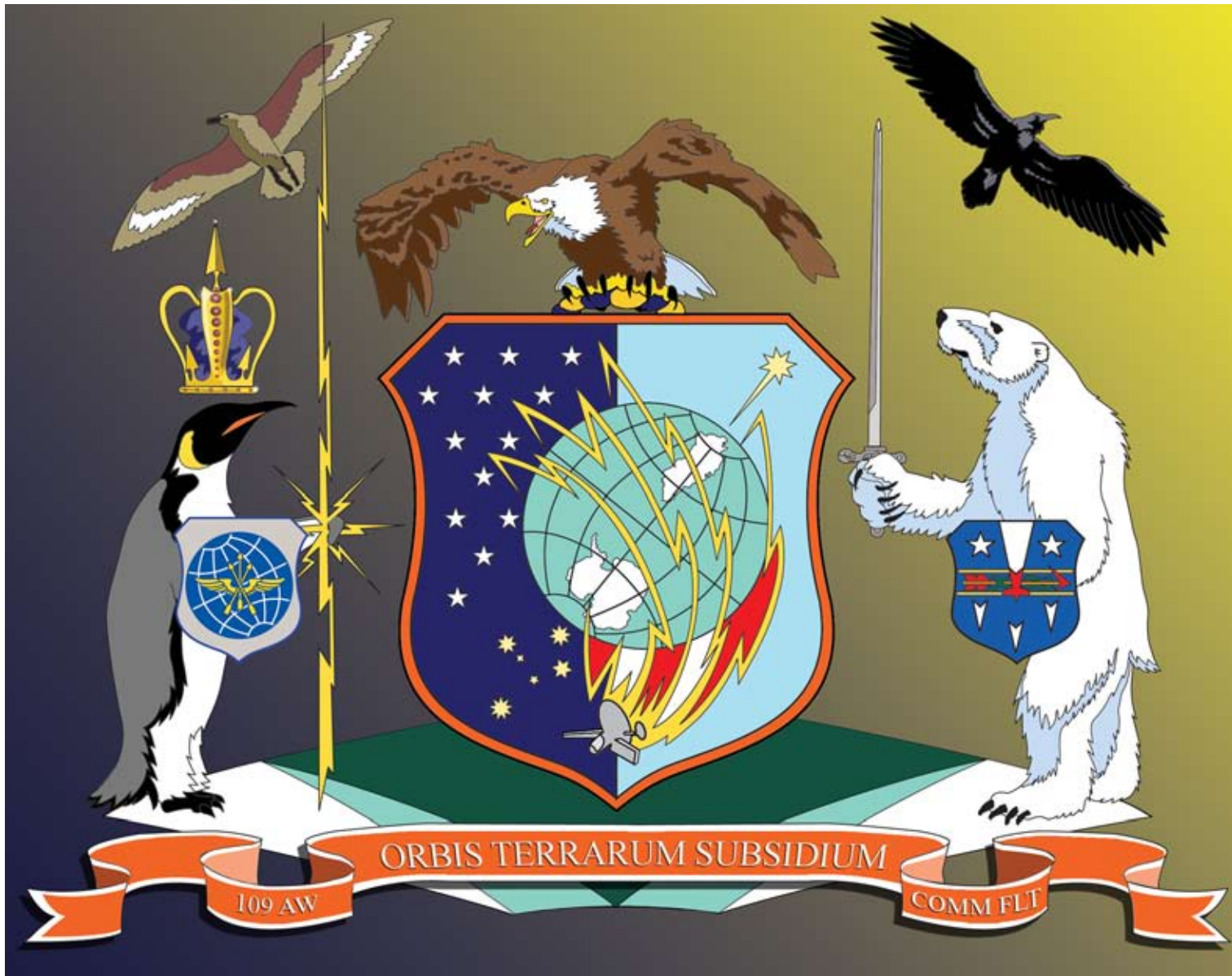


Illustration by Staff Sgt. Stephen Girolami

109th Communications Flight logo

- **Emperor Penguin** is a native of Antarctica
- **Lightning bolt** depicts peacetime mission
- Penguin's **shield** is the Air Mobility Command badge
- **Emperor Crown** symbolizes New York State "The Empire State." Blue felt and gold bars represent New York State's colors. Garnets are New York State's official stone. The 15 1/2 garnets represent 62 counties of New York. (15 1/2 stones x 4 crown sides = 62 counties.)
- **Skua** flying over the penguin represents unit's flying mission over Antarctica
- **Orange** outline of shield and orange banner coincide with LC-130 tail markings
- **Dark blue background** on Antarctica side of shield signifies constant night for six months
- **13 U.S. stars** represent stars at night as well as 13 colonies on upper left-hand corner in compliance with U.S. Flag displaying regulations
- Constellation, "**Southern Cross**" on bottom left of shield; six stars represent the six ground points when flying between Schenectady, NY, and McMurdo Station, Antarctica.
- **Satellite** shooting out five bands of electricity, depicting an "electric hand" holding the Earth to represent the Communications Flight's world support. One band points to McMurdo Station, Antarctica, and the other points to Kangerlussuaq, Greenland.
- **Red and white shapes** between bands signify red and white stripes of U.S. Flag, and each shape represents 10 states
- **Light blue background** on Greenland side signifies constant daylight for six months
- **Globe** shows graphic of Greenland Island on the top right and graphic of Antarctica on the lower left side
- The **North Star** is depicted above the Earth
- **Bald Eagle**, the National Symbol, carries the Communications Flight's shield by its Air Force blue and gold torse. The eagle looks to its right, portraying its call for peace.
- The penguin and bear stand on a **tri-colored, curved Pentagon**. The **white** illustrates icecaps/glaciers; the **teal** illustrates Pacific/Atlantic oceans; and the **green** illustrates land in between the two bodies of water. The curve defines curve of the Earth, and the Pentagon represents the unit's role in the military.
- The **Latin phrase** "Orbis Terrarum Subsidium" on the banner translates to "World support provided by the military"
- **Polar Bear** is a native of Greenland
- The bear is holding the **Air Force sword** which represents the Air Force's historical role in the Cold War
- Bear's **shield** is the 109th Airlift Wing badge
- **Common Raven** flying over the Polar Bear represents unit's flying mission over Greenland and surrounding Arctic locations.

Healthy Living

Heat Cat / Flag Color	WBGT (F)	EASY WORK		MODERATE WORK		HARD WORK	
		Work Rest Cycle	Water Intake Qt/hr	Work Rest Cycle	Water Intake Qt/hr	Work Rest Cycle	Water Intake Qt/hr
1	78-81.9	No Limit	0.5	No Limit	0.75	40/20 min	0.75
2	81-84.9	No Limit	0.5	50/10 min	0.75	30/30 min	1.0
3	85-87.9	No Limit	0.75	40/20 min	0.75	30/30 min	1.0
4	88-89.9	No Limit	0.75	30/30 min	0.75	20/40 min	1.0
5	>90	50/10 min	1.0	20/40 min	1.0	10/50 min	1.0

OSHA Heat Facts

AFPAM 48-151

HEAT DISORDERS

SYMPTOMS, FIRST AID AND PREVENTION

Heat Cramps - due to an excessive loss of salt

Symptoms:

- Painful spasms of extremities and abdominal wall muscles
- Vomiting
- Fatigue

First Aid:

- Promptly relieve by drinking .1% saline solution (1/2 + salt in 1-8 oz glass of water), replacing the salt loss from the body, and allowing rest

Heat Exhaustion - due to excessive water loss

Symptoms:

- Profuse sweating
- Pale, moist and cool skin
- Rapid pulse
- Weakness, fatigue, thirst
- Giddiness, in coordination, confusion, and headache

First Aid:

- Cool Immediately!!
 - Get out of sun
 - Sprinkle with water, submerge in cool water, or place ice in groin, armpits and neck
 - Remove clothing
 - Fan
 - Massage extremities
- Drink water
- Elevate legs
- Seek medical attention immediately

Heat Stroke - Medical Emergency!! - Thermoregulatory system simply breaks down

Symptoms:

- Skin is dry, red and hot (sweating has stopped)
- High core temperature (over 105.8 degrees F)
- Abrupt onset
- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness
- Delirium
- Convulsions
- And sometimes death

First Aid:

- Cool Immediately!! (same ways as for heat exhaustion)
- Transport immediately to medical facility

HEAT STRESS PREVENTION:

Education

- Signs/symptoms of heat stress
- First Aid procedures
- Protective clothing/equipment
- Effects of various factors (ex. Obesity, alcohol)
- Buddy System - watch each other for early warning signs of heat illness

Maintain proper hydration

- Pre-hydrate - drink 1 pt to 1 qt before you start work
- Forced or mandatory water intake may be necessary
 - Drink 1 cup to 1 pint every 15-20 minutes
 - Cool (60-70 degrees F) water is better
 - Commercial flavorings (ex. Gatorade, kool-aid) have agents like vitamin c which neutralize water disinfectants
- Perform midday urine checks if necessary: shouldn't be darker than diluted lemonade.

*** Thirst is not a good indication of hydration; your body losses 1.5 qt before you feel thirsty. Heat stress begins when your body has lost 4.5 qt of liquid, therefore, by the time you feel thirsty you are well on your way to developing a heat disorder. ***

Wear Proper Clothing

- Cover body if working in sunlight to avoid getting sunburn
- Choose permeable material (ex. Cotton)
- Light weight and loosely fitting

Get 8 hours of sleep a night

- Maintain good physical condition

Modify Schedules/Conditions

- Allow for more frequent and/or longer breaks (rest periods) and provide cool areas to rest
- Schedule hard/hot jobs for cooler part of the day or year.
- Add extra personnel or use machines to complete the job, if needed.

Environmental Controls

- Decrease air temperature
- Increase air circulation
- Shield workers from source

109th BHG Spotlight: Volunteerism is key!

By Staff Sgt. Al Moon
109th Base Honor Guard

The first half of 2009 has been a busy one for the 109th Base Honor Guard. Personnel changes on the full-time team, deployment, Operation Deep Freeze and a high tempo "spring burial" season have posed various challenges in completing the mission we are tasked, and honored, to perform.

The tempo does not always bend in our favor just because we are low on members, we must adjust to the ebb and flow of the honors to perform. The number of "details" can vary from a few a week, to 12 in the same timeframe. Performing these many honors in a short period of time can only be achieved through the use of the volunteer team of the Base Honor Guard. The four personnel assigned to the full-time team do handle the bulk of the honors during the year; however, when the tempo picks up and we're looking at up to four details in one day, the volunteers come to the rescue!

The 109th Base Honor Guard is on pace to perform more than 200 details this year, honoring veterans, retirees and active members of the U.S. Air Force/Army Air Corps/Army Air Forces. We will cover a 175-mile radius to ensure all requests for our presence are answered. We will travel more than 14,000 miles in a ll weather. Volunteers are required to remain trained and proficient in the many aspects of military funeral honors in addition to their full-time duties.

The sacrifice of the volunteers, the absence in their shops and civilian jobs, and the missed time with families is an integral part of why the 109th Base Honor Guard is a top-notch team. The mission could not be completed without them! We would like to recognize a few volunteers who have truly "stepped up" and made the effort to answer the call in the last six months:

Maj. Benson Louie
109th Medical Group

Member since: 2007
Details performed this CY: 31
Details performed career: 67

Senior Airman Michael Crouse
139th AES

Member since: 2008
Details performed this CY: 29
Details performed career: 31

1st Lt. John Shakeshaft
139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

Member since: 2003
Details performed this CY: 18
Details performed career: 118

Senior Airman Anastatsios Mantzouris
109th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Member since: 2008
Details performed this CY: 19
Details performed career: 78

Tech. Sgt. Terra Martin
109th Services Squadron

Member since: 2003
Details performed this CY: 7
Details performed career: 42

Without the assistance of these volunteers, the ability of the 109th Base Honor Guard to perform its mission would have been severely impaired. Every volunteer, whether they perform 10 details a year or 100, enhances our ability to continue performing the most honorable of duties.



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Senior Airman Anastasios Mantzouris (left) and Master Sgt. Nicole Della Rocca fold the flag for Chief Master Sgt. Jerry Stoddard's retirement July 9 at the Glen Sanders Mansion.



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Staff Sgt. Gregory McMullen dresses the U.S. Flag at Chief Master Sgt. Jerry Stoddard's retirement dinner July 9 at the Glen Sanders Mansion. Chief Stoddard was instrumental in the forming of the 109th Base Honor Guard. He will be missed!

(Background photo by Master Sgt. Christine Wood)
A 109th Base Honor Guard firing party renders three volleys to honor a U.S. Air Force retiree.

INTERESTED IN JOINING?

Would you like to join the 109th Base Honor Guard in representing the unit, the ANG and the USAF by rendering honors for America's veterans? Are you looking for a truly memorable experience? Maybe you have what it takes to join us!

If you are interested in joining the 109th Base Honor Guard, contact:

CMSGT Denny Richardson
109th Base Honor Guard
Superintendent x2574

SSgt Allen P. Moon
109th Base Honor Guard
Full-time Staff x2586

General: Air Guard facing recapitalization issues

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

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- One of the biggest challenges facing the Air National Guard today is replacing its fleet of aircraft that are approaching the end of their service lives, a senior Air National Guard official said July 29.

"A big problem we have in the Air National Guard is figuring out how to recapitalize our aging fleet," Lt. Gen. Harry Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard, said here at a Defense Writers Group breakfast.

"It's not just fighters. It's tankers, it's airlifters, it's AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control Systems), it's the early warning radars. It's the whole system that is old and needs to be recapitalized."

It's an issue facing not only the Air Guard, but the Air Force as a whole.

"To be quite honest with you, the Air Force has the same recapitalization problem as the Air National Guard," he said. "Ours

is a little bit more acute and a little more immediate, because our airplanes are a little bit older."

And that immediacy affects the readiness status of Air Guard units.

"If you take a look at our F-16s that do the air sovereignty alert mission, 80 percent of those will be aging out within the next eight years," said General Wyatt. "Right now the recapitalization plan for those units doesn't have (replacements) going to those units until the mid-2020s, and that is several years too late."

Discussions are under way about how to retool the Air Guard fleet. "We're working with the Air Force to address that problem, and we're making some progress, but to date there is no plan that addresses Air National Guard issues," said General Wyatt.

One of the issues that is taking shape within those discussions is rebalancing the force structure of the Air Force as a whole.

For General Wyatt, that rebalancing should come at the same rate across all components of the Air Force. "In my

opinion, since the Air National Guard provides 34 percent of the capabilities of the United States Air Force-at 7 percent of the budget I might add-that the smart thing to do would be to take a look at bedding down whatever capability the Air Force requires concurrently and proportionally in the Guard."

General Wyatt said he is afraid to see a return to the days of the Air Guard flying castoffs from the active duty force. He has personal experiences with the results of that formula. He flew the A-7 Corsair II for the Oklahoma Air National Guard in the early 1990s.

"When Desert Storm kicked off, we had some great capability within the Air National Guard and the A-7 platform," said General Wyatt. "But the active duty was not flying the A-7 and they were concerned with getting the top of the line weapons in the fight and we were not asked to participate. That seems to me to be a great waste of money. It makes no sense to have a platform that you're not going to use in war."

MWR Announcements

"Tickets for Troops" is a new program from Proctors in Schenectady. This is an effort to show appreciation to the men and women in uniform and their families. They have generously offered a 20% military discount to most of their shows. You must call the box office to verify show times and dates and order your tickets. The discount is for military ID card holders. Please visit their website for a complete listing of events at www.proctors.org.

Airport Clear Program: Members will be pre-registered and given a biometric card (requires you to physically go to the Airport for a retina and or fingerprint scan) which will afford you special processing through the secu-

rity line at certain airports across the country - including Albany. Normally a \$100 annual fee, it is free to active duty, guard and reserve military members (not retired) with the presentation of a current military identification card. It is NOT just limited to military travel.

Bronx Zoo & New York Aquarium Discount Ticket Program: You may purchase tickets immediately by visiting the exclusive Wildlife Conservation Society Online Discount Ticket Store in one or both of the following ways:
1: Clicking on the web link (URL) Intranet site: <https://tickets.wcs.org/affiliate.asp?ID=12D3D2A2-0E2B-47-C8-890D-21100054D241>

2: Go to the online store at <https://tickets.wcs.org> and enter this personalized Store Name: 109aw.

Child Development Homes: If you are a parent looking for quality child care or would consider being a childcare provider, please contact the CDH office which is located in the Fleet and Family Support Center at NSU. (518) 885-0200 x9160 or x9161. We are located in the first office inside the Fleet and Family Support Center at NSU, Saratoga Springs. Phone: (518) 886-0200 ext. 161 Fax: (518) 886-0121

Hero Salute: You can receive free admission for you and your family (military dependents) at Sea World, Busch Gardens and

Sesame Place. Visit www.herosalute.com and register when you are planning your trip. You are only eligible to use this offer once a year so plan accordingly.

Six Flags Tickets: \$26.50 per person
Regal Tickets: On sale at MWR for \$7.25

Naval Exchange & Commissary: Telephone: 581-2181; Saratoga NSU Commissary Hours: Sun/Mon - closed; Tues/Wed - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thurs - 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Fri/Sat - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Navy Mini-Mart (NEX) Hours: Mon-Fri - 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sat - 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sun - noon to 4 p.m.



Photo by Col. Gary James

Load 'em up

Airman 1st Class Danielle Mittler and Master Sgt. Mark Janey load cargo onto a 109th Airlift Wing LC-130 at Raven Camp, Greenland on June 22 as a part of training. They are loadmasters with the 109th Operations Group.



Courtesy photo

Royal visit

109th Airlift Wing members stand in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, with the Nordic Royals, (center, from left) His Royal Highness Crown Prince Frederik (Denmark), Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Victoria (Sweden) and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon (Norway). The royals were on a fact-finding expedition on climate change in conjunction with the International Polar Year. The crew flew the royals to NEEM Camp on May 30, where they spent the night on the icecap, and brought them back to Kangerlussuaq the following day. The mission was flown to support the Joint Committee of the United States-Denmark-Greenland.



Photo by Master Sgt. Christine Wood

Students from Stevens Elementary School collected supplies to send to students in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland.



Courtesy photo

Students in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, open up boxes of toys and school supplies donated by Stevens Elementary School during the 2nd Annual Community Day hosted by the 109th Airlift Wing.



Courtesy photo

Students in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, enter a 109th Airlift Wing LC-130 for a tour during a Community Day on June 2.

From Scotia to Kanger



Photo by Master Sgt. Christine Wood

Senior Master Sgt. Martin Herzog, of the 109th Aerial Port Squadron, carries out supplies donated by Stevens Elementary School to students in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland.



Courtesy photo

Members of the 109th Airlift Wing brought supplies to students in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, during a Community Day.

New AF sexual assault prevention, response Web site announced

By Staff Sgt. Steve Grever
Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS) -- To reinforce the Air Force's commitment to eliminating incidents of sexual assault, officials here have debuted a new sexual assault prevention and response Web site to raise awareness and provide prevention training, education and victim advocacy.

"Sexual assault is absolutely inconsistent with our core values and it has no place in our Air Force; in a deployed context, at or anywhere in between," said Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley.

The new SAPR Web site provides prevention and awareness information and recommendations that may prove useful in reducing and eliminating sexual assaults in the Air Force, said Lawna Swellander, the Air Force's sexual assault prevention and response operations chief.

The Web site contains informational video spots that highlight ways in which members can intervene as bystanders to help others from becoming victims of sexual assault," Mrs.

Swellander said. "However, the primary focus of our new Web site is to serve as a resource for anyone who is interested in learning more about what the Air Force is doing to combat sexual assault and provide comprehensive listings of available resources."

The Web site contains a range of material, including definitions and policy, general information to victims and the public, and discusses the availability of medical treatment, advocacy, and referral services with contact lists for the proper agencies that provide critical services.

The site will also include contacts for local sexual assault response coordinators and links to military and civilian organizations like the Department of Defense SAPR Program and Military OneSource. It will also contain current policies and Air Force Instructions as well as photos, news articles, and public service announcements.

The Air Force SAPR Program is focusing their efforts on the primary levels of prevention that work to stop sexual assaults before they occur.

"The key to prevention is for

all Airmen to be engaged and committed to stopping these crimes before they occur by intervening when they witness situations or circumstances that lead to sexual assault," said Carl Buchanan, Air Force SAPR program manager.

While prevention has been included in the formal Air Force SAPR Program since it began in 2005, Mr. Buchanan said the new initiative concentrates extensively on educating Airmen and caring for victims of sexual assault.

"To shift to a full-scale prevention approach requires consistent and continuing education and training. It also requires emphasizing standards and values by leadership as well as a consistent, visible support for victims. Deterrence and holding perpetrators accountable is represented by our well-trained investigators, prosecutors, and commanders," he said.

From the launch of the official Air Force SAPR Program, Air Force leaders have dedicated full-time resources for SARCs, enhanced collaboration between first-responder communities, developed career-stream learning, continued partnerships with civilian subject matter experts, and released supportive


campaign messaging to enhance the well being of all Airmen.

"The United States Air Force does not tolerate sexual assault," said Gen. Norton Schwartz, the Air Force chief of staff. "Sexual assault is criminal conduct that falls well short of the standards America expects of its men and women in uniform. The Air Force is dedicated to eliminating sexual assault by fostering a culture of prevention, providing education and training, response capability, victim support, reporting procedures, and accountability that enhances the safety and well-being of all its members."

All members redeploying to the 109th AW are reminded that counseling services on any subject to do with Sexual Assault are available free of charge in the Schenectady community. Please contact Lt. Col. Sharon Stepp, 109th AW SARC, at 344-2084 or 588-7308 (24/7).

For more information, visit the new SAPR Web site at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/library/sapr/index.asp or call the Air Force SAPR Program Office at 210-565-4448.

In addition, the 109th Airlift Wing has its own Community of Practice site for local information along with the Wing's training statistics. The site is <https://www.my.af.mil/afknprod/ASPs/CoP/EntryCoP.asp?Filter=AN-ED-00-66>.



Chaplain Services

<p style="text-align: center;">CATHOLIC SERVICE UTA Sunday 7:45 a.m. Aeromedical Briefing Room</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PROTESTANT SERVICE UTA Sunday 7:45 a.m. Aircrew Briefing Room</p>
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Summer picnic just around the corner

By Retired Lt. Col. Tom Noel
Alumni Representative

The 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association's Annual Summer Picnic is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 8, at the Pavilion at Stratton Air National Guard Base. Lunch is noon to 3 p.m. The lunch menu includes hot dogs, hamburgers, corn on the cob, clams (both steamed and raw), clam chowder, baked beans, salad, and chips and dips. Dinner is scheduled to be served around 5 p.m., and the menu includes shrimp, steak, salads, corn on the cob, coffee and dessert. Beer, wine and soda will be available throughout the day. Reservation deadline was July 26. Our Wednesday Lunch Enterprise at the Base allowed us to keep the cost at \$10; additional guests are \$20 each. Make checks out to: 109th Alumni Association, send to: Ken Bliss, 365 Wolf Hollow Road, Scotia, NY 12302, Any questions, call Bob Guzior at (518) 372-5135.

The Firebird Association Reunion for 2010 is scheduled for April 11-14, 2010, in Galveston, Texas. They are trying to get approval from the U.S. Air Force representative at the Pentagon to allow the 109th Airlift Wing to fly a LC-130H ski Hercules aircraft down to Galveston for a static display during the reunion. If approved, I hope as many members of the Firebird Association from the 109th AW will be able to attend the 2010 Reunion.

Doctor in Dramatic South Pole Rescue Dies at Age 57: Dr. Jerri (Nielsen) FitzGerald, who diagnosed and treated her own breast cancer before a dramatic rescue by the 109th Airlift Wing from the South Pole in October of 1999, died June 23. Her husband, Thomas FitzGerald, said she died at their home in Southwick, Mass. Her cancer had been in remission until it returned in August of 2005, he said. She was the only doctor at the National Science Foundation's Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station in the winter of 1999 when she discovered a cancer lump in her breast. Extreme cold didn't permit a rescue, so with guidance from U.S. based doctors via the Internet, she performed a biopsy on herself with the help of the staff. She treated herself

with anti-cancer drugs delivered during a mid-July airdrop by a U.S. Air Force aircraft in blackout, freezing conditions, until she could be rescued by the 109th AW Air National Guard in October of 1999. Dr. Nielsen documented her ordeal in a best-selling book "Ice Bound: A Doctor's Incredible Battle for Survival at the South Pole." She spent the last decade speaking around the world about the cancer and how it changed her life, and also worked as a roving ER doctor in hospitals around the Northeast. "She fought bravely, she was able to make the best of what life and circumstance gave her, and she had the most resilience I have ever seen in anyone," said her husband. The couple would have celebrated their third anniversary the following week after she died. In addition to her husband, the Ohio native is survived by her parents, two brothers and three children.

The members of the 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association would like to send their condolences and prayers to the families of the following individuals who have passed away over the last few months:

Retired Chief Master Sgt. Anthony (Tony) Perretta, age 72, of Charlton, died June 15 at home after a short cancer illness. He was born in Schenectady, and graduated from Nott Terrace High School, class of 1955. Anthony worked for and was a member of the 109th Airlift Wing, New York Air National Guard, for 38 years, retiring in 1992. He was a former 109th AW Alumni Association member, and also a former member of the Charlton Volunteer Fire Department, coached Little League baseball, and was involved with Boy Scout Troop 65, and enjoyed gardening and fishing. Survivors include his wife of 45 years, Sandra (Maisenbecker) Perretta; sons, Anthony (Debbie) Perretta, Maj. Patrick (Cathy) Perretta, United States National Guard, and James W. (Mia) Perretta.

Joe Fitzgibbons passed away June 7. Joe was an aircraft radio repairman, and after retiring he was also a member of the 109th AW Alumni Association until he could no longer drive at night.

Retired Senior Master Sgt. Wes Ryerson's wife Betty (Beth) has passed away. Wes worked at the 109th AW for Recruiting/



Photo by Airman 1st Class Ben German

(From left) Retired Lt. Col. Victor Ferranti, Retired Senior Master Sgt. Bill Pickney and Retired Master Sgt. Howard Ray cook up hamburgers and hot dogs during the Alumni Association's Summer Wednesday Lunch Program at the base.

Retention and the Mission Support Flight. He retired militarily in November 2005 and left as a technician in December 2007. It is with deep sympathy that we heard the announcement about the passing of his wife.

Kathy Knauff, the wife of Maj. Gen. Robert Knauff, has also passed away. It is with great sorrow that we heard of her death. Please keep the General and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

The 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association members would like to welcome home many members of the 109th that spent a lot of weeks deployed in Afghanistan this year.

There have been many individuals who have retired in the past few months. 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 of membership of the alumni Association is "free." We always look forward to seeing new faces and new members at our meetings.

Until the next quarterly issue of this Skibird Magazine publication, stay Happy, Healthy, Safe, Prosperous and "Think Fall."

Master Sgt. Ottavio Lo Piccolo 109th Chaplain Assistant

Master Sgt. Ottavio Lo Piccolo became interested in joining the New York Air National Guard after leaving active duty. "I liked the military discipline, job training and educational opportunities that I received."

He came to the unit in 1996 where he spent a few years in the audio-visual shop. He transferred over to the Services Squadron where he spent 12 years before becoming a chaplain's assistant in 2007.

Off duty, Sergeant Lo Piccolo is very active in the community and has been an itinerant ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher since 2001. He graduated from UAlbany with a Masters of Science degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

"I teach children and adults who speak another language at home and need to learn all English skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing)," he said.

Sergeant Lo Piccolo came to the U.S. as a teenager and had to learn English. He's fluent

in Italian, understands Spanish and knows a little bit of French.

"I was deployed to Saudi Arabia after 9/11 for over three months and taught ESL to French air force personnel stationed there," he said.

He also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from Utica College. He's had several art exhibits and even painted many murals seen throughout the Services Squadron.

Sergeant LoPiccolo coaches youth soccer for the Schenectady Soccer Club and paints and restores religious statues during the summer and maintains many of the statues at his parish, St. Anthony's, as a volunteer in-resident artist. Sergeant Lo Piccolo said the people and their teamwork have made the Air National Guard a wonderful experience.

The people in the military have taught me valuable skills, lessons and values that I believe are central to success when dealing with others," he said. "Some of those values are integrity (doing the right thing even when



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt

no one is looking), leading by example, taking care of the people under and above me by treating them with respect and dignity, and excellence (doing/accepting only the best I possibly can.) In addition, having a sense of belonging and similar vision are other factors that make my Guard experience worthwhile and meaningful."

Family Support Center

Strong Bonds-Marriage Enrichment Seminar

Our Strong Bonds-Marriage Enrichment Seminar is a hands-on, team building weekend along with PREP, (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program) which is one of the most comprehensive and well respected marriage enrichment programs in the world. PREP is a skills and principles-building curriculum designed to help partners increase their connection with each other. PREP is a fresh approach and is education, not therapy, for couples who want to make and continue a healthy and fulfilling marriage. These seminars are offered by Chaplains and the Family Program Coordinator at an offsite location to encourage relaxation, fun and education.

This year the Strong Bonds-Marriage Enrichment Seminar will be held Sept. 25-27 at the Six Flags Great Escape Lodge and Indoor Waterpark in Queensbury, NY. Check-in starts Friday, Sept. 25 at 4 p.m. with a maximum of 25 couples. Registration begins Aug. 1 with forms and additional information available through the Family Program Office. Take some time out and join us for a fun-filled weekend!





Albany Stratton VA Medical Center
Proudly Presents



Welcome Home!



Friday, August 7, 2009
2:30 – 4:30pm

NY Giants

Autograph Day!

Watch the NY GIANTS practice
at SUNY Albany, near SEFCU Arena

Free parking with Military or VA ID
*light refreshments available



For more information contact
the Stratton VAMC OEF/OIF
team: (518) 626-5403



Promotions & Awards

April 24, 2009 through July 16, 2009

Officer Promotions

Lieutenant Colonel
Tammy Street – JFHQ

Captain
Nathan Phelps – AES
John Patton – AS

First Lieutenant
Paul Benintende – AS
James McCauley – AS

Senior Master Sergeant
Jeff Lapp – CF

Master Sergeant
Gary Brown – SFS
Nicole Della Rocco – LRS
Craig Gronlund – CF
Jonathan Michael – AES
Mark Rising – AW
David Ristau – MXM
Dustin Snyder – AS
Joshua Walters – SFS

Enlisted Promotions

Technical Sergeant
Sean Bathrick – AW
Carlos Bonilla-Diaz – AMXS
Robert Florio – LRS
Thomas Heyman – AES
Shawn Keating – MSF
Marshall Kline – LRS
Glenn Mitchell – LRS
Matthew Pierce – LRS
Daniel Price – LRS
Shawn Rulison – LRS
Ronald Valentine – MXM

Staff Sergeant
Joshua German – MXM
Jessica Mattingly – SVS
Matthew Plank – LRS

Senior Airman
Jamie Mehm – AMXS
Leonard Munday – CES

Awards

Meritorious Service Medal
Lt Col Vance Bateman – JFHQ
Lt Col Mark Doll – ANG
Lt Col Wendell Garlic – MSF
Maj Bridget Crouch – LRS
SMSgt Fred Bochenek – AMXS

Air Force Commendation Medal
Lt Col Shawn Clouthier – OSF
Maj David LaFrance – AS
MSgt Stephen Boomhower – LRS

Air Force Achievement Medal
Lt Col Mark Armstrong – CF
Lt Col Marc Lecours – AS
Maj Paul Bernasconi – AS
CMSgt Charles Del Toro – AMXS

SMSgt Brian Bik – AMXS
SMSgt Mark Olena – AS
SMSgt Robert Thivierge – AMXS
MSgt Joseph Archambeault – AMXS
MSgt Thomas Flynn – AMXS
MSgt Jamie Hill – AS
MSgt Mark Piehler – AMXS
MSgt Jennifer Ray – AES
MSgt Jerard Roper – AMXS
MSgt Darren Rutigliano – AMXS
MSgt Joseph Sinatra – AMXS
MSgt Kenneth Towne – MXM
MSgt Kenneth Voelker – AMXS
TSgt Joseph Axe – AS
TSgt Carlos Bonilla-Diaz – AMXS
TSgt Richard Carrier – AMXS
TSgt Michael Dixon – LRS

TSgt George Dunkley – AMXS
TSgt Ralph Fiorillo – AMXS
TSgt Anthony Fusco – LRS
TSgt William Lounsbery – AMXS
TSgt Michael Manzi – AMXS
TSgt Pedro Negron – CF
TSgt Christopher Nelson – AMXS
TSgt Brian Pritchard – AMXS
TSgt Stephen Radz – AMXS
TSgt Kevin Ritton – AMXS
TSgt Paula Sinatra – AMXS
TSgt Raphael Smith – AMXS
TSgt Daniel Spiewak – AMXS
TSgt John Stiles – AMXS
TSgt Daniel Swatling – AS
TSgt Justin Taylor – AS
TSgt Shawn Wells – AMXS

NEWSPAPER READERSHIP SURVEY

We'd like to hear from you about how *the Skibird* is doing. Is there something you'd like to see more of or even less of? Let us know! We'll be looking closely at the results of the survey to see how we can make *the Skibird* an even better magazine for our readers.

The link to the survey is,
<http://dmna.state.ny.us/skibirdsurvey>.

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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.