

The

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Eagle's Eye

Florida Air National Guard

Volume 9, Issue 1

A large silhouette of a person wearing a flight helmet, shown in profile facing left. The background is a warm, golden sunset sky. At the bottom of the image, the top of a chain-link fence is visible.

One Team;
One Excellent Result

*Team FLANG proves once again
just how 'uncommon' it is*



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FRONT COVER: Staff Sgt. Art King, 125MOF, Avionics Systems Journeyman, is silhouetted by the rising sun May 7, 2009. This photo captured the essence of the 125FW Team for the Phase II ORI May 7-13. The Wing was standing at the ready, locked and loaded, One Team, One Fight!
BACK COVER: Tech. Sgt. Corey Clark, 125MXS, Crew Chief, works on a simulated contaminated F-15 Eagle at the 125FW May 9, 2009.

Commander's Column

By Brig. Gen. Joseph G. Balskus
Assistant Adjutant General for Air
Commander, Florida Air National Guard

"Uncommon."

It is truly amazing and humbling to serve as a commander of the Florida Air National Guard; an organization with a 62-year history of excellence and numerous stories of lives that have been changed, missions that have evolved, challenges that our members have faced, and benefits that our state and nation now enjoy. Our Airmen have inspired others to seek greater purpose and service to our community. Our commanders reflect great vision and skill in training and leading our most valuable resource: the men and women serving in the Florida Air National Guard.

The 125th Fighter Wing has once again demonstrated superior performance on their recent Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI), by posting an "Excellent" rating on the Phase II. The command emphasis of "One Team; One Fight" has permeated every one of our units in Florida and consistently surfaces on inspections, deployments, achievements, and other evaluation venues.

More than 80 inspectors evaluated the Wing and the acco-

lades are still coming in from around the highest levels of Air Combat Command and the National Guard Bureau. The Adjutant General and I have had numerous discussions on the formula for success at the 125th and here is some of what we observed: Commanders from the wing to squadron level who believe in their Airmen, pick the right people to be in the right places at the right time, develop exceptional plans, and execute flawlessly to prove that the National Guard construct works. Performing at this high level of capability has provided our Adjutant General the ammunition he needs to present our record of excellence to the Governor, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and with congressional leaders for our Total Force Initiatives, our equipment modernization, and our military construction needs. What the Fighter Wing accomplished is nothing short of phenomenal and we are all elated. However, what gets me even more excited is the sustained level of excellence we have at the Wing and in every one of the Florida Air National Guard organizations.

The 601st Air Operations Center responds every single day to real-world issues and sustains



operational excellence that validates the greatness and versatility of this world-class unit. The 125th Fighter Wing Alert Detachment in Homestead has a similar day-to-day mission and has established a reputation as the most "Fully Mission Capable" alert detachment in the country. These two missions provide the United States with safety and security - more important today than ever before.

The 325th Fighter Wing ANG Associate Unit commander has developed a proposal to meet the challenge of the F-15 drawdown with an aggressive strategic plan, placing our pilots in the fifth generation F-22 and F-35.

The 202nd RED HORSE Squadron is preparing for a Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI), while simultaneously preparing for an-

Continued next page...

"Our Airmen have inspired others to seek greater purpose and service to our community. Our commanders reflect great vision and skill in training and leading our most valuable resource: the men and women serving in the Florida Air National Guard."

other deployment to Afghanistan in 2011.

The 290th Joint Communication Support Squadron was recognized as an "Outstanding Unit" for 2008! More than 60 members are certified "Qualified" Regional Emergency Response Network (RERN) members ready to respond to the most severe terrorist attacks on the United States.

The 114th Range Operations Squadron is preparing for an expanded mission with the 45th Space Wing at Cape Canaveral and now owns certified Ballistic Missile Range Technology equipment that provides exclusive capability in the AFSPC toolbox.

The 159th Weather Flight and Weather Readiness Training Center provide forecasting capabilities around the world in support of active Army and U.S. Air Force troops engaged in the

Global War on Terrorism. Plans to expand the WRTC into an Air Force Weather National Center of Excellence are underway at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center that will provide all weather forecasting training for the United States Air Force.

Volunteers from the 125th Medical Group and the 202nd RED HORSE Squadron have established a CERF-P unit; one of the first to be certified mission capable. They will be called upon with the civilian first responders if a chemical or biological event were to occur in the southeast United States. State Headquarters provides an entire A-staff and NCO support staff to serve all of the geographically separated units in the state. Our recruiting and retention team has set national records this year and we continue to set a

pace unequalled in the nation by looking at continuous process improvement.

I love working with the absolute best Airmen/warriors in the world today! Tony Dungy, the great World Champion NFL coach has a new book titled *Uncommon*. He speaks of how it is easy to be common but it takes extraordinary dedication and courage to be uncommon. Excellence and sustained excellence for some is uncommon, but not for us. Not for this awesome Florida Air National Guard team that demonstrates day after day after day the amazing ability of an organization refusing to be common.

God speed to all for continued success and enjoy this edition of *The Eagle's Eye!*

Chief's Counsel

By Chief Master Sgt. Chuck Wisniewski
State Command Chief Master Sgt.

What makes for a successful organization?

People.

Every position in our organization is vital to mission accomplishment and success. In these times of tight budgets and manpower, if your position was not critical to mission success it would have been eliminated a long time ago.

That being said, it is imperative that each one of us performs our duties and responsibilities to the best of our ability. We need to know our jobs and do them well. We need to maintain our personal readiness: training, medical, dental, etc. and we need to maintain our equipment ensuring that it is mission ready at all times. The success of our units and the success of our missions are assured when every spoke in the wheel is doing its part.

We serve a great nation and we defend it from our enemies.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Shelley Gill

Our challenge is to always be vigilant, always be ready, always strive for perfection and keep learning and growing as individual Airmen.

If we succeed as individuals and accept nothing less than perfection in all we do then our organizations/units will always be successful.

The Florida Air National Guard has been a success for many years and is recognized nationally as one of the best in the country.

That success is based on the fact that our Airmen will settle for nothing less than being Outstanding.

That is our heritage and that is our future.

Florida trains communications experts for upcoming hurricane season

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa
Florida National Guard Public Affairs

CAMP BLANDING JOINT TRAINING CENTER, Fla. (May 22, 2009) – The recent torrential rains in Florida gave a realistic backdrop to National Guard training this week, as Soldiers and Airmen prepared their emergency response efforts for the upcoming hurricane season.

More than 100 members of the Florida National Guard completed three week-long courses in Northeast Florida May 5-22, learning how to operate mobile Regional Emergency Response Network (RERN) systems. The systems are capable of providing high-speed Internet connectivity to computers and laptops, and signal strength for hand-held radios. The RERNS use a variety of frequencies to provide defense support to civilian authorities in times of state-wide emergency, helping them assist in disaster recovery.

This is the fourth year the RERN classes have been held at Camp Blanding.



Senior Airman Clint Williams, 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron, troubleshoots a possible equipment malfunction during Regional Emergency Response Network (RERN) system training at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Fla., May 21, 2009.



Despite the soggy weather, the trainees studied all aspects of the systems, including troubleshooting, basic repair, and responding to the communications needs of their "customers" in the field. The course even included a "night operation" where the Soldiers and Airmen set up and operated the systems in the dark.

The Florida National Guard currently has 17 RERN systems available for emergency response missions. They have been used by Florida National Guard members in disaster recovery operations in Florida, Texas, Louisiana and Kentucky, and even during the Presidential Inauguration ceremony in Washington, D.C., earlier this year.

According to 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Loretta Lombard, nearly 90 percent of her squadron has attended the training and about half of her Airmen have actually operated the systems during missions.

"It's a mission they enjoy and we're very happy to help Florida and other states," Lombard said. "We're hoping for a quiet (hurricane) season, but we're very prepared for whatever it might bring."

Hurricane season 2009 begins June 1.

Members of the Florida Army and Air National Guard discuss the video teleconference capabilities of the RERN systems during training.

From the Cockpit

By Lt. Col. David W. "Fester" Lynch
125FW Program Manager



Preparing pilots for the Operational Readiness Inspection was similar to prepping a team for any other performance sport. Football teams get ready for their season by off-season workouts starting at the end of the regular season, followed by mini-camps in the spring and early summer, then by team drills in late summer, all in an effort to begin the next year with the team in synch and ready to play at the first kickoff.

For the 125th Fighter Wing pilots, the key was a training plan built by Maj. Jerry "Stoner" Reedy, squadron weapons officer. The intent was to have the pilots at peak performance in large-force mission skill sets in May 2009, so he backed up the beginning of the training cycle to October 2008. The F-15 Eagle Community starts the training plan with the basics - the blocking and tackling drills for the F-15: Basic Fighter Maneuvers (BFM), or dog-fighting.

After a few weeks of working on flying the jets to the edge in close-range, edge-of-departure engagements, we moved on to Air Combat Maneuvering (ACM), where two blue-air pilots work as a team at close-range to defeat one red-air (bandit) pilot using communication and cooperative maneuvering—layering in elements to slowly up the complexity.

Next, the pilots continue the process with Tactical Intercepts (TI), the hallmark of air-to-air employment. Here, you build up to two or four F-15s us-

ing three-dimensional geometry, communication-out targeting planning, long-range sensor work, etc., to defeat a numerically superior enemy. These flights don't have a mission scenario (that's next); this is simply running through the plays so everyone knows where to go and when, regardless of the situation.

The final phase of the training adds the mission element: the scenario such as the one the Inspector General team created for our ORI. At this point, you might add friendly strike aircraft and surface-to-air missiles for an Offensive Counter-Air mission, or enemy strikers for a Defensive Counter Air mission. With just 18 aircraft and a 24/7 alert commitment, the 125th can not generate enough planes for a complex eight vs. eight aircraft mission. So we normally have to rely on other wings in the local area to fly as adversaries for the large-force training missions.

Major Reedy set up a different option. Using money set aside for dissimilar aircraft training, he invited F-16 pilots from the Aggressor Squadron at Nellis AFB, Nev., to deploy to the Air Guard Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) in Savannah, Ga., to fly against us. The Aggressors are specifically trained to fight like our most advanced real-world adversaries and they brought advanced radar-jamming pods with them to further challenge us. Although they usually could only launch

six 'enemy' jets, the jamming pods were a force-multiplier, giving us training at home we normally would not experience until wartime.

After two weeks fighting the red-air professionals in early April, Major Reedy was also able to get F-16s from Luke AFB, Ariz., to the Savannah CRTC for the next two weeks. These planes are owned and flown by the Taiwanese Air Force, as well as by their USAF instructor pilots. While these jets did not have the jamming pods the Aggressor Squadron F-16s had, they had greater numbers and presented a challenge in a slightly different way.

The 125th Maintenance Group generated the jets needed to launch at least eight fully mission capable aircraft daily, so the Wing had an entire month of flying large force missions of greater complexity than the Inspector General team envisioned.

When the ORI finally arrived, the FANG pilots had been prepping with one focus for months; the result was predictably "Outstanding."

Photos by Staff Sgt. Jaclyn Carver



F-16 Falcons from the 64th Aggressor Squadron, Nellis AFB, Nev., sit on the ramp at the ANG Combat Readiness Training Center in Savannah, Ga. April 7, 2009. The 64th deployed to the CRTC for two weeks in April to help the pilots from the 125th Fighter Wing prepare for a Phase II ORI.

From the cockpit - part deux

It probably went unnoticed by almost everyone on the base during the ORI—a small, white van parked near the alert pad with a large mast of antennae attached to it—but the pilots and command and control (C2) knew of the vans' importance.

The van housed a Link-16, Fighter Data-link (FDL) terminal. For those unfamiliar with Fighter Data-link, it is a cornerstone of modern fighter employ-

ment. Maj. Gen. Douglas Burnett, our Adjutant General, was instrumental in helping the Air Guard, including our F-15 Eagles, secure it.

If you've ever set up a wireless network for your home computer and peripherals, the concept is the same. Each F-15 on our ramp can connect with one another wirelessly over a special radio, and electronically 'talk' to each other as a group. Essentially the flight lead of an eight-ship flight of Eagles (or other Link-16 air-

craft) can see all the folks in his formation on the multi-purpose color display (MPCD) screen, their locations, altitudes, how much fuel and weapons they have, if and or who they are targeting, etc.

The amount of information available is staggering, but it's mechanized to be read quickly and easy to interpret. That information is critical to the lethality of the F-15 these days.

The one-of-a-kind van was brought in to establish the network here at Jacksonville for the entire ORI. There is a similar terminal located in Savannah, Ga., but the Eagles here at Jacksonville are out of its range while on the ground. There normally isn't a way to ensure the network and all of our terminals are working properly until we get airborne and within radio range of Savannah. The Link 16 van allowed our planes to get into the network and troubleshoot our systems prior to launch. Most failures can only be fixed on the ground allowing our pilots to jump to a spare jet if necessary if a system was found lacking.

C2 technicians could observe the war from the van. They knew exactly where the planes were, how many weapons were expended, how much fuel the planes were carrying, etc. They had almost the same information the pilots flying the sortie did. In some ways, it sounds like Big Brother, but more information is often key to making the right call.

If the van helped garner an "Outstanding" for C2, then it was worth it. For the pilots, the peace of mind that comes with knowing your FDL terminal is working was also worth it. And if you think the bandits would like to know how to get the information we pass between jets...it's encrypted and hops over a set of frequencies at 77,000 times a second!



A Link 16 truck is parked in the 125th Fighter Wing alert area April 30, 2009.

Son-rise Service

...the pause before the storm

Several members of the 125th Fighter Wing, including the Wing commander Col. Bob Branyon, and his wife Leslie, who provided breakfast, paused from preparations for the Phase II ORI early Sunday, April 19, to enjoy a bonfire, food, fellowship and a belated Easter Sunday Sunrise Service.

Senior Airman George Black, 125th Communications Flight, provided a musical interlude of Amazing Grace on Bagpipes as the fire roared in the background and then Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Steve Thompson, 125th Fighter Wing Chaplain, provided words of encouragement to the group.

Thompson spoke of Susan Boyle, the frumpy 47-year-old unlikely singing sensation who recently wowed the audience and judges on Britain's Got Talent 2009 in April with her rendition of *I Dreamed a Dream* from *Les Miserables*. He related that, just like Susan Boyle, things aren't always as they seem.

"That first Easter morning was much like her surprising performance. The Bible is very clear that no one expected Jesus' tomb to be empty. Jesus' resurrection was a surprise ... a surprise that rocked the world!" said Thompson.

"Every day we encounter people and opportunities that are divine surprises waiting to be discovered. Like a hidden talent or an empty grave, there is often more to that which is before us than meets the eye. Our challenge is to see as God sees and respond as He leads. Doing so allows us to participate in a kind of life that can only be described as "abundant." Easter is all about God saying, "SURPRISE! I love you! Now go and do the same."



Senior Airman George Black plays Amazing Grace on the Bagpipes at the 125th Fighter Wing UTA Easter Sunrise Service, Sunday, April 19, 2009. Black began playing bagpipes in August 2003 with the Caledonian Pipes and Drums and currently plays with the City of Melbourne Pipes and Drums. Black was also chosen recently to be an ancillary piper for the USAFR Pipe Band. Ancillary members work within their units on active duty or in the reserve and are put on orders for events. Pipers range from Airmen to Colonel, both male and female, and come from all parts of the country. Based out of Dobbins ARB near Atlanta, Ga., the band performs at the White House on St. Patrick's Day, at the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade, and a number of other events in support of USAF morale and recruiting.

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Shelley Gill



Photo above: Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Steven Thompson offers words of encouragement and advice to members of the 125th Fighter Wing during a prayer breakfast and bonfire, April 19.

Photo right: 125th Fighter Wing members enjoy a morning bonfire while listening to Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Steven Thompson prior to reporting to work during the April Unit Training Assembly.



202nd Red Horse Squadron riding hard

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Bill Nicholls
202RHS UPAR

CAMP BLANDING JOINT TRAINING CENTER, Fla. (May 8, 2009) - The 202nd RED HORSE Squadron held its annual Field Training Exercise here May 3-8, 2009, with a multi-task format.

Colonel Jack Paschal, 202nd commander, said the exercise had two primary purposes.

"We're actually accomplishing two goals in one swing: preparing for a Unit Compliance Inspection this August, and getting ready for an Operational Readiness Inspection in April 2010. That's a lot of spaghetti on one fork. Normally there are several years between a UCI and an ORI, but this is the way it worked out, and we're getting it done," said Paschal.

UCI prep this year involved an extraordinary behind-the-scenes effort whereby every 202nd Airman was required to successfully complete several "on-line" computer courses in ADLS (Advanced Distance Learning System). Mandatory courses included CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear) Defense, ATSO (Ability to Survive and Operate), Self Aid and Buddy Care, Law of Armed Conflict, Information Protection, Human Relations, SERE 100 and Force Protection.

Chief Master Sgt. Douglas Gilbert, 202nd Civil Engineer Manager, came up with an innovative way to accomplish the courses.

"We took a vote, and agreed on an experimental program in which our Airmen completed the courses off-duty. It was very, very successful," said Gilbert.

Chief Master Sgt. Larry Linton, 202nd Supply Chief, noted that the FTX was extremely fast-paced, with a mixed bag of tasks for all sections.

"We threw a lot of things at every section, including how to handle EPW's (enemy prisoners of war), KIA's (killed in action); all sections responding to attacks, self aid and buddy care scenarios in each section, plus equipment and vehicle processing. It was very, very intense," said Linton.

All 202nd Airmen received extensive self aid and buddy care training, both on-line and in real



Tech. Sgt. Tom Lindsay, a pavement and construction specialist, uses a backhoe on a road project May 3 during the 202nd Red Horse Squadron field exercise at Camp Blanding.

life. Captain Rafael Palacios, 202nd Physician's Assistant, said responsiveness is essential. "The real test is how you all respond. Everything we saw was pretty good. People utilizing radios to call Operations, breaking out first aid kits, checking airway, breathing, circulations, and initiating immediate self aid and buddy care. Yes, call for a medic, but it might be a few minutes before we arrive. You need to use that time to keep that person alive," said Palacios.

Chemical warfare preparation was also a major part of the field exercise.

Unit members experienced two new aspects - the introduction of "split-MOPP" (mission oriented protective posture) zones, and the wear of the new "JSLIST CPO" (Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology Chemical Protective Over-garment), slightly cooler than previous chemical protection uniforms.

In past exercises, the entire base would be in one MOPP condition with all Airmen in the same MOPP level. New procedures allow the commander to vary MOPP levels throughout the base, depending on the contamination levels throughout the base.

Another new program involves the use of PAR

teams (post attack reconnaissance team). The PAR team sweeps the base following an attack, with one mission: search for chemical contamination or UXOs (unexploded ordnance).

Master Sgt. Gus Maura, 202nd Readiness NCO, stressed the importance of knowing the various alarm and MOPP levels.

Airmen going from a contaminated area to a "clean" zone would process through the CCA (Contamination Control Area), to eradicate chemicals, and prevent contaminating other Airmen. One hundred twenty-eight Airmen processed through the CCA during the exercise.

Senior Master Sgt. Jerry Saddler, 202nd First Sergeant, found time to reaffirm military customs and courtesies and advise members regarding the proper wear of the uniform. "Guard is family, but we're also a military organization. That means wearing the blouse, addressing each other by rank and last name, and wear-

ing the uniform properly; things of that nature. Discipline in peacetime breeds discipline in wartime," said Saddler who has served in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Gilbert said future exercises will incorporate a dedicated security team, a group of Airmen who will train extensively in ECP/QRF (entry control point/quick reaction force) procedures.

"They're going to become very, very good," said Gilbert.

Paschal said much more is expected of today's Airmen than in previous years.

He continued: "It used to be the Guard was primarily a home-station force, called out for natural disasters primarily. Today, we're called upon to fly halfway around the world and fight two wars, as well as natural disasters, field exercises, administrative inspections, drills, and extensive computer coursework. It's a lot of work, but we'll get it done," said Paschal.

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Shelley Gill



FLYING HIGH

Above: A four-ship formation of F-15 Eagles from the 125th Fighter Wing soars through the air during the 2009 Cecil Field Airshow in Jacksonville, Fla., April 19. The weekend airshow featured 35 aerobatic performers; more than any other airshow in the U.S. Performances included skydivers, wing-walkers and military tactical demonstrations with simulated aerial dogfights.

Inset: Florida Air National Guard recruiter, Master Sgt. Ricardo Montalvo, hands a football to a child during the airshow.



Guard team tests its ability to save lives after mock disaster in Florida



Search and extraction CERF-P members rescue trapped and buried 'victims' during the day-long training and evaluation mock disaster at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, near Starke, Fla., Feb. 28.



Major Michael Ladd, CERF-P commander, briefs his team prior to the training and evaluation.

*Story and photos By Tech. Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa
Florida National Guard Public Affairs*

CAMP BLANDING JOINT TRAINING CENTER, Fla. (Feb. 28, 2009) - Nearly 200 members of the Florida National Guard participated in a unique exercise and evaluation here, testing their ability to support civilian authorities if a major disaster struck Florida.

Soldiers and Airmen of the Guard's CERF-P (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force - Package) conducted the exercise at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center near Starke, Fla., Feb. 28. Under scrutiny of evaluators, the Guard members worked through a scenario simulating a large scale explosion with injured civilians trapped in collapsed and damaged buildings. The CERF-P tested its abilities to provide search and extraction, medical tri-



Doctor (Lt. Col.) Philip Carnevale, CERF-P triage team, treats a role player for simulated wounds during the evaluation.

age and chemical decontamination, working with role-players acting as injured civilians.

The Florida National Guard CERF-P team - one of 12 validated regional teams - is designed to augment first response agencies in incidents potentially involving hostile use of chemical, biological or radiological agents.

CERF-P commander Maj. Michael Ladd explained that his team was tested on more than 540 tasks during the evaluation, and was a chance to prove its abilities to respond quickly and professionally if a major disaster or terrorist incident occurred.

"We want to show the nation, the region and most importantly the citizens of the State of Florida that we have the capability and are up to par with any other CERF-P in the country," Ladd said. "We have the capability that will save lives of Floridians, folks in our (Federal Emergency Management Agency) region and nationally."

The team is comprised of members of the Florida Air National Guard's

202nd RED HORSE Squadron, 125th Fighter Wing's Medical Group and Florida Army National Guard's 927th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

Ladd noted that roughly six hours after being notified of an incident, the CERF-P team could be ready to augment emergency first responders.

"We fit in right after the first responders... working with them to help make sure we mitigate any contaminants on site, provide that decontamination, provide that extraction and medical triage," Ladd said.

At the start of the exercise Airmen from the 202nd RED HORSE began rescue operations in a large rubble pile simulating a collapsed building, searching for "victims" as they crawled through tight spaces and down steep shafts.

"What this challenges my team to do is go in and do the technical search and extraction," Ladd explained, pointing to the rubble pile where the Airmen were working.

"Particularly, this obstacle is a

high-angle extraction which would simulate an elevator shaft or some sort of vertical obstacle where we've got folks who need help in the bottom. It is a very critical task and gives our Airmen and Soldiers just another tool they can leverage."

After the Airmen brought the victims safely out of the pile, the next step was to take them to a medical triage and a decontamination line for anyone exposed to chemicals. If the scenario had been real, the victims would then be moved as quickly as possible to civilian hospitals. According to Ladd, the entire CERF-P is made up of volunteers.

"What we've asked - and what the National Guard Bureau and the states around the nation have asked the Soldiers and Airmen to do is once again answer the call to be that 'Minuteman,'" he said. "And with a sort-of volunteer firefighter mentality these Soldiers and Airmen volunteer for about 14 extra days of training per year.

"Routinely they train hard to make sure they can save the lives of American people," Ladd added.

Weather Flight tests combat skills

By Master Sgt. Nick Barnhardt
159WF UPAR

"Contact front!" an Airman yells. The sudden gunfire shakes the morning air. The unmistakable percussion of an AK-47 rattles the palmettos. "Alpha, shift fire left!" belts a senior master sergeant.

A team of four Airmen with M-4 rifles release a raucous salvo of short bursts, adding to the confusion in the environment.

At the same time other squad members leap from their positions and rush to expose the right flank of their heavily armed, but unsuspecting enemy. Once the team of three is in position and they take cover, the order is given by the sergeant, "Bravo; engage!" The exposed and overwhelmed insurgents offer their surrender to the squad or are taken out.

The scenario above doesn't take place in Iraq or Afghanistan (the rattling palmettos should have given it away), but is just another training scenario performed at the 159th Weather Flight at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center on a typical monthly Unit Training Assembly (UTA).

Most folks are not aware, both in and out of military circles, that one of the unique nuances

of being in the 159WF is the fact that our members are adept in the skills of the "Battlefield Airmen" (BA) group of Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs).

The lessons learned during the Global War on Terrorism have highlighted the need for certain Air Force specialties to operate as uniquely trained and qualified Airmen who fight alongside Soldiers and Marines in an austere tactical environment.

Air Force Policy Directive 10-35 paragraph 1 states that Battlefield Airmen will "directly assist, control, enable, and/or execute operational air and space power functions in the forward battle-space independent of an established air base or its perimeter defenses."

Battlefield Weathermen are the result of this philosophy, becoming as versed in specialty combat training as they are in meteorological skill. Some other Air Force specialties that are included in the BA group include security forces, transportation, explosive ordnance disposal, survival, tactical air control, combat control and para-rescue specialists.

The Common Battlefield Airman Training (CBAT) is in development and will be the first stop for Airmen after basic training.

There, Airmen will be taught everything from operational teamwork, weapons, and ground navigation skills to survival, evasion, resistance and escape (SERE) training.

Today, the U.S. Air Force is taking a number of steps aimed at making its group of battlefield Airmen a more effective force and Florida's own battlefield weathermen are at the leading edge of that effective force.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Julio Flores

Senior Master Sgt. Charlie Delanuez, 159th Weather Flight, assumes a prone firing position Sunday April 19, 2009, during 'Battlefield Airman' training at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Fla.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Israel Velez

Senior Master Sgt. Charlie Delanuez, 159th Weather Flight, uses a pine tree for cover Sunday April 19, 2009, during 'Battlefield Airman' training at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Fla.



Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Tom Kafka

BCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP OVERFLIGHT

The Florida Air National Guard's own, Lt. Col. Tom E. 'House' Kafka, (fourth from the left in the line) 325th Fighter Wing ANG Associate Unit F-22 Instructor Pilot, was the 'Ground FAC' or Forward Air Controller, for the BCS National Championship Bowl flyby Thursday Jan. 8. The two-ship F-22 over-flight was conducted by active duty Airmen from the 325FW, Tyndall AFB, Fla. Lt. Col. Kafka coordinated with SAF/PA and the 325FW leadership to obtain approval for the 325FW jets to perform the fly-by, and with the Orange Bowl Committee for timing criteria and other issues. Kafka, pilots and ground crew are recognized on camera during nationally televised game.

Celebrating 20 years of changing missions

By Chief Master Sgt. Leigh C. Dumas
114ROPS

Created on the premise of a Cold War mission and now, 20 years later, poised to be on the leading edge in space launch safety in the 21st century, the 114th Range Operations Squadron's story is an example of perseverance and patience.

Members of the 114ROPS spent time May 9 to honor the past and celebrate the future by hosting its annual family day cook out. This year, former members and retirees were extended an invitation to reconnect and reminisce with old acquaintances.

The 114th commander, Lt. Col. Todd Oller, pushed the effort to invite former members to recognize the squadron's heritage while still steering the unit towards its future in space

launch range safety.

The 114th Communications Squadron was created in 1989 to support a NATO satellite ground communications mission. At the time, the unit was comprised of five enlisted technicians, 67 enlisted drill status Guardsmen and one drill status officer.

"I walked into my first drill at the 114th and all we had were a bunch of folding chairs and tables" said retired Master Sgt. Bruce Haglund, a charter member of the unit. "We spent the first few drills setting up boxes of new furniture and trying to create some sense of organization out of the chaos."

After the dust settled and the squadron began to take shape, members began supporting satellite communications missions all over the world. In 1991, the squadron was re-designated the 114th Combat Communications Squadron and given a more diverse mobile communications mission providing communicators and equipment to hotspots such as Saudi Arabia, Bosnia and Colombia. As communications technology improved, the FLANG HQ state leadership had the vision to know that the future of a continued Florida Air National Guard presence at Patrick AFB hinged on space and integrating our mission with the Eastern Range.

The first five "seed" space positions were created in 1994 on the 114CBCS unit manning document and in 2000 space related career fields grew to a total of 13 positions. Also in 2000, the squadron began its involvement in the development of the Ballistic Missile Range Safety Technology in partnership with Air Force Research Laboratories. Its emergence was timely and incorporated the existing skill sets of the sunset combat communications mission.



Former 114th member, retired Master Sgt. Bruce Haglund, grills hamburgers May 9, at the 114ROPS annual family day cookout and 20th reunion celebration. Retired 114th Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Scheitwzer is in the background.

After nine years of testing and deployments to Kodiak, Alaska and White Sands, New Mexico, the technology has matured enough to become the prominent mission of the 114th.

In 2005, the squadron was realigned under Air Force Space Command and re-designated the 114th Range Operation Squadron. Today the squadron has thirteen officers and ninety-two enlisted members on its books.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Robert Chandler, the 114th's first commander, and his wife Kathleen, enjoy the festivities May 9.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Akintunde Akintewe



OLYMPIC START

Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Gary Helfeldt

Lt. Col. Gary Alan Helfeldt, 114th Range Operations Squadron (ROPS), Patrick AFB, Fla., dives onto a sled during training for Skeleton competition from the top of the track at the Utah Olympic Park Bobsled/Skeleton/Luge track in Park City, Utah. A start is made with the athlete sprinting down the start ramp from a start block while pushing with one hand on the side of his sled, until ready to load by diving onto the sled and positioning for best aerodynamic control. Helfeldt is trying to make the USA national team. There are several levels of international competition, starting with the America's Cup, the Europa Cup, the Intercontinental Cup, the World Cup, and the World Championships. As an athlete improves, he or she can move up to higher levels of competition. The World Cup athletes are typically the contenders for the Olympic team, and as a new athlete to the sport, Helfeldt hopes to land a spot at the 2014 Winter Games in Russia.

Celebrating diversity

Potluck lunch at 125FW marks the end of a month of Black History festivities

The month of February serves as a special time at the 125th Fighter Wing as the members of the unit take time to reflect on Black History and pay tribute and appreciate the contributions of African Americans to our nations culture.

The Wing conducted a handful of events this year including a prayer breakfast Feb. 6 and a special Sunday morning worship service during the February UTA Feb. 8.

The most 'fulfilling' event each year, is the pot-

luck luncheon, held Feb. 26 this year. Usually Wing members bring samples of their favorite dishes to the lunch and this year's spread was tremendous. No one went away hungry.

The Wing also hosts a prominent guest speaker for the luncheon and this year's address was offered by Dr. Barbara Darby, President of FCCJ North Campus. Dr. Darby was accompanied by Dr. Claudette Williams, President of Edwards Waters College.

Dr. Darby spoke to the Wing members about community. She spoke about the character of the individuals involved in military service and what those qualities bring to the community. She spoke of mentoring and opened the door for interaction between 125th members and students at her school. Her words were thought provoking and inspiring. Her talk is leading to more interaction between FANG members and the north Jacksonville community in which the base resides.

Below: The serving crew is recognized for their efforts during the 125FW Black History Month potluck lunch.



Above: Wing members and guests enjoy the diverse potluck offerings Feb. 26.

Top right: Dr. Claudette Williams, President of Edward Waters College, offers a greeting during the Black History Month potluck lunch Feb. 26 at the 125FW.

Right: Dr. Barabra Darby, President of FCCJ north Campus, addresses Airmen and guests during her talk at the 125FW Black History Month potluck lunch.



Helpers prep the bounty of food on the serving table at the Black History Month potluck lunch Feb. 26 at the 125FW.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Potts



Communicators to the rescue

Florida National Guard sends emergency communications support to Kentucky during winter storms

A Florida National Guard Regional Emergency Response Network (RERN) vehicle drives through intense weather conditions in Kentucky Feb. 3, 2009. Six RERN teams comprised of about 30 Airmen and Soldiers deployed to Kentucky in February to assist in recovery from winter storms.

By Tech. Sgt. Michelle Thomas
125FW Public Affairs

The Florida National Guard deployed six Regional Emergency Response Network (RERN) teams comprised of about 30 Airmen and Soldiers to Kentucky Feb. 1 to assist in their recovery from winter storms.

The RERNS were operated by the Florida Air National

Guard's 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

After a quick, weekend-long spin-up and preparation time at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, they immediately headed to Kentucky where they quickly saw the devastation that Mother Nature had caused throughout the state.

The teams were sent to weather-impacted areas in Clinton, Marion, La Center, Eddyville, Calhoun, Princeton and Owensboro, Ky.

Each team was located in separate areas so they could communicate with each other and send reports back to the EOC with updates on conditions.

"There were a lot of people in shelters... most of them filled to capacity," said Master Sgt. John Maye, a fulltime power production supervisor for the 290th and the Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge of one of the teams that deployed to Princeton.

"Just about all of the area was without power," said Maye of the small town of about 6,600 residents. "Some of the people I talked to said it could take up to a month or two to restore the power in some of the rural areas outside of Princeton," added Maye. "I grew up in Boston. I've seen a lot of snow storms, but I've never seen so many trees split in half and fallen over. Some of the trees split into four sections."

Working with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and supporting the Kentucky Army National Guard Military Police, each team set up a Regional Emergency Response Network trailer, which uses a variety of frequencies to provide defense support to civilian authorities in times of state-wide emergency.

The RERN is capable of providing high-speed Internet connectivity to 40 computers and laptops, signal strength for hand-held radios, and the ability to provide a minimum amount of electricity at full-capacity for two and a half days using only two diesel-fueled generators.

"Our team started in Eddyville for about two days until they started getting power back and didn't need our services as much as another county," said Tech. Sgt. Marianne Whelan, whose team eventually went on to Dixon City.

"The EOC had decided Dixon City in Webster County needed our services

and had us move the team and equipment there for two and a half days."

Whelan, who is on orders as an administrative assistant for Headquarters Special Operations Command at MacDill, said she was really impressed with how the people from Kentucky worked together and really looked out for each other.

"People had been without power and heat for over a week but they kept their spirits up," she said. "When we came to town, people were asking us if we needed anything. They were just so appreciative of everyone being there for them that they just wanted to give back. I just couldn't believe how neighborly everyone was to each other and to us."

The 30 Airmen and Soldiers stayed in Kentucky for about eight days before returning home.

"I would go back to Kentucky in a heartbeat," said Whelan. "The Kentucky Army National Guard made us feel so welcome and really looked out for us by supplying shelter with electricity and heat, bathroom facilities, food, and checking on us throughout the day to see if we needed anything."

If the Florida National Guard is called on again to help out during future natural disasters, Airmen like Maye and Whelan will once again respond in a moment's notice.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Joseph Vadder
Captain Andrew Bennett, 290JCSS Mission Support Flight OIC, helps load canned water at an Anheuser-Busch facility in Kentucky. The water was donated by Anheuser-Busch for distribution to winter storm victims.

One Team; One Fight One Incredible Result

By Col. Bob "Squirt" Branyon
125FW Commander

It's Day One of the "war," and our F-15 Eagles – each fully loaded with six Aim-120 radar missiles and two Aim-9X heat seeking missiles – prepare to launch for their mission: grueling air-to-air combat against 16 SU-30 adversaries. Suddenly, the "bat phone" rings and a warning passes to our Command Post: "Missile Launch detected; missiles targeted your base!"

The loud speakers and radios blare "Alarm Red!" across the base as more than 750 combat Airmen of the 125th Fighter Wing take cover, and quickly and efficiently don their chemical masks and protective suits. In minutes, the missiles explode overhead, spreading unknown chemical agents

over our base. As quickly as it began, the attack is over. We wait impatiently as the chemicals continue to fall, and then launch our scouts, the Recce Teams, for an initial assessment of the damage. They report back: "We have been hit by a chemical nerve agent."

Twenty minutes later, Post-Attack Reconnaissance (PAR) teams investigate the damage and assess the extent of chemicals spread across the base. Timing is crucial since base personnel cannot resume combat operations until the PAR teams have completed their sweeps.

The PAR teams efficiently complete their sweeps call in reports to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Our Airmen resume their duties however all personnel must remain in full chemical garb, due

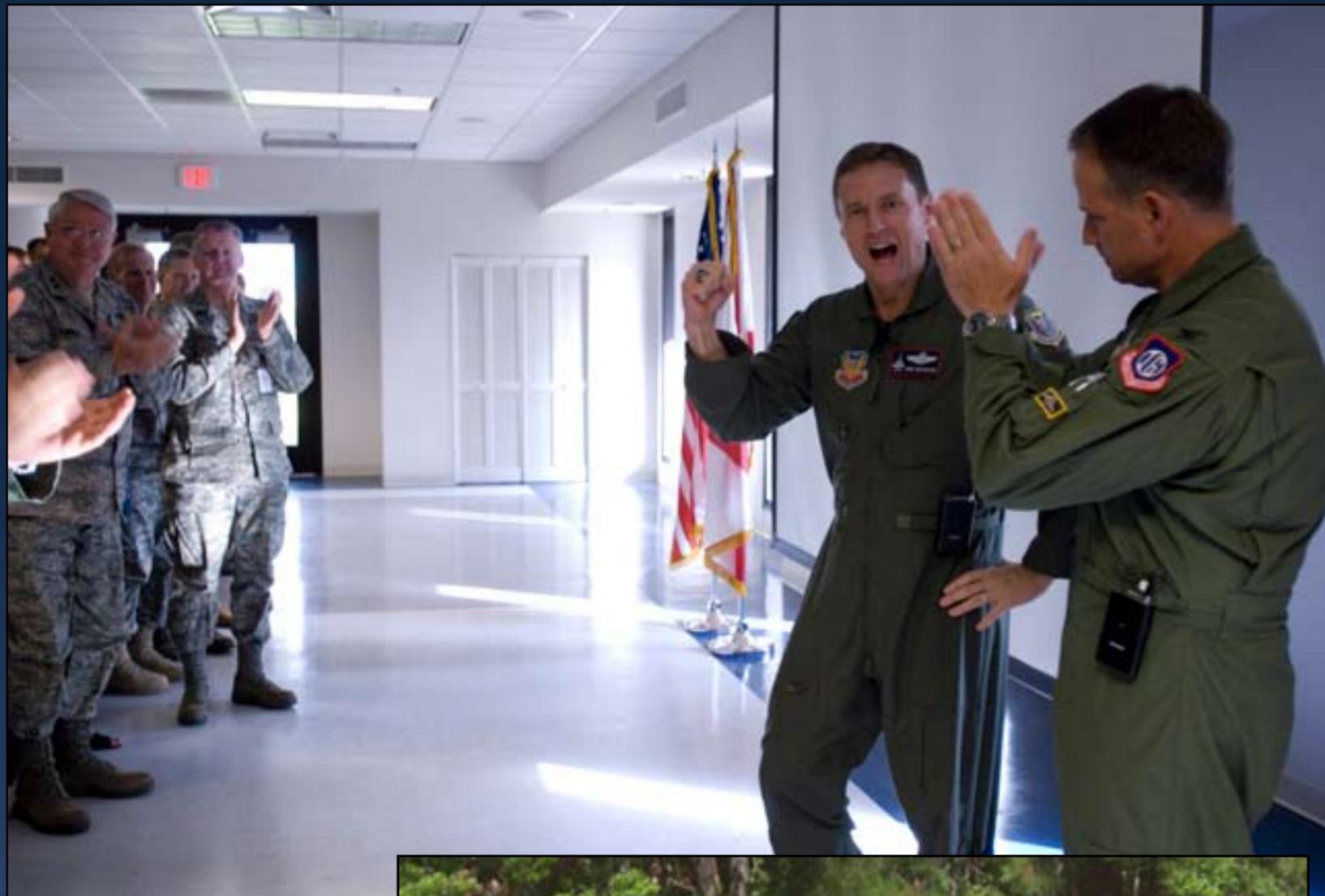
Right: Col. Bob Branyon, 125FW Commander, (second from the right) gets excited after the ACC IG Team Chief announced the final grade of EXCELLENT for the 125FW ORI Phase II May 13.

Bottom right: 125th Security Forces members come under simulated attack while during the ORI May 10.

Below: A 125th Fighter Wing F-15 Eagle pilot prepares to fly a mission during the ORI May 9.

Left: 125th Fighter Wing Firefighters respond to a simulated building fire during the ORI May 9.

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Shelley Gill





to the deadly nerve agent's persistence. Wearing this stifling garment, teams throughout the base fix jets, load missiles, provide medical treatment, recover our dead and wounded, account for our people, and accomplish all the necessary duties to keep our war machine in motion. These teams do their jobs in record-setting May temperatures. They ignore work-rest cycles which would keep them out of injury threatening heat. They continue, and get the job done!

Terrorists attack the base perimeter throughout the war. Our security forces successfully repel each attack, including base intrusions and IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices). The firefighters adeptly fight the fires started by mortar attacks. The medical warriors treat the sick and wounded.

Our base is hit with armed robbers, computer viruses, power outages, system failures, building fires, and killed and wounded supervisors — all of which test our contingency plans, operating skills, and ability to overcome adversity while continuing to support and fight the war.

For 48-hours we fight the war, flying five different mission packages each day, as the ACC Inspector General (IG) team evaluates our performance. And we didn't just get a few good hits off the IG; we knocked it out of the park!

The 125th Fighter Wing was rated "EXCEL-

LENT" on our Phase II ORI. Only two ANG fighter wings in the last five years have received a score that high. And, prior to our inspection, six of the last seven ANG fighter wings failed the inspection. It was an impressive win; however, the overall score is not even as significant as the specific comments of the report and the impression we made on the IG team.

If you have not had a chance to read the 77 page report, let me share some of the most impressive comments with you. Of the 104 graded sub-areas, we achieved 27 OUTSTANDINGS, 47 EXCELLENTS, 24 SATISFACTORYS, five MARGINALS, and only one UNSATISFACTORY. That's 71 percent of all rated areas receiving an OUTSTANDING or EXCELLENT!

The IG team report was filled with accolades. Paraphrasing just a few they noted that the Command Post, ICC and EOC coordination was "exceptional" and "superb." The Communication Flight's base alarm system was noted as "outstanding." The pilots kill ratio was 109-to-0, while outnumbered 2-to-1 and 189 of 189 of the missile shots were effective. Maintenance generated 100 percent of the required sorties and control of maintenance was, "best seen to date" according to the inspectors. The coordination between Intel and the pilots was noted as "superb" and the entire base was rated as "outstanding" for OPSEC procedures. The Security Forces



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Shelley Gill



Top left: 125th Fighter Wing Crew Chief Airman First Class Sara Delle, cleans the canopy of an F-15 during the ORI May 9.
 Top right: Lt. Col. Robert Wetzel, 159th Fighter Squadron Commander, reviews sortie information during the ORI May 10.
 Right: Maj. Steven Edwards (left), 125th Medical Group Nurse Practitioner, and Capt. Deborah Congdon, 125th Medical Group Nurse, care for a simulated patient, during the ORI May 10.
 Above: Col. Bob Branyon makes a point during his speech after the ORI grade was announced May 13.

defensive fighting position were “best seen to date” as well! Food Services provided hot meals and had “zero discrepancies” in accounting. The Chaplain Team performance was “remarkable, superior and superb.”

Throughout the entire base, individual protection was “Outstanding,” as 98 percent of our people correctly donned the MOPP gear! Our overall ATSO (Ability To Survive and Operate) grade, one of the three major areas, was rated EXCELLENT! The IG Team Chief said that no unit ever gets an EXCELLENT in ATSO!

If those remarks from the report don’t excite you or you’re not proud to be part of this team, then you need to have your pulse checked! The 125th Fighter Wing ROCKS!

When the IG announced “End-Ex” Sunday night at midnight, all 12 “deployed” F-15 fighters were ready for the next day’s combat sorties.

Yes, we definitely impressed the IG Team... and the ANG...and mother Air Force! The day after the report was released the Vice Commander of Air Combat Command called our Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Doug Burnett, to congratulate him and said he had not seen a report that good in a very long time. The phone is already ringing off the hook from other ANG bases looking for help with their inspections and asking for our ideas and expertise.

If you are reading this article and you were not part of the “war,” I know you are proud of the men and women of the 125th Fighter Wing.

If you were part of the war machine, savor the moment, be proud of what you have accom-

plished and thank your brothers and sisters in arms.

Wherever we may deploy in the future, if any enemy country or terrorist threat contemplates testing our resolve or our capabilities, I say, “Bring it bad guys...we got something for you!”
One Team; One Fight!

Right: Tech. Sgt. Cecil Wright checks Senior Airman Anthony Tuosto for chemical contamination as he processes through the CCA (Chemical Contamination Area) during the ORI May 8.

Bottom right: Staff Sgt. Jackie Carver, 125th Public Affairs Office, gives the thumbs-up while performing video documentation of flight line activities in MOPP 4 during an ORE Jan. 21.

Below: Senior Airman Justin Smith administers an ATNAA (Antidote Treatment, Nerve Agent, Auto-injector) to a fellow Airman who was simulated to be exposed to a chemical agent during the ORI May 9.

Below left: Tech. Sgt. Nevzat Ozbaltaci, 125th Fighter Wing Finance Office, performs cash cage duties during the ORI May 9, 2009.



Photos (except as noted below right) by Tech. Sgt. Shelley Gill



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeff Trumble



HONORING THE FALLEN

125FW Wing Commander and Honor Guard participate in Memorial Day commemoration

The nation celebrated Memorial Day, Monday May 25, and the 125th Fighter Wing was honored to be a part of Jacksonville's remembrance downtown.

Memorial Day was first celebrated after the Civil War by order of John A. Logan, Commander-in-Chief, Headquarters Grand Army of the Republic, by issuing General Order Number 11, May 5, 1868.

The order states in part: "The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet church-yard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit."

It further reads, "If other eyes grow dull, other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remain to us. Let us, then, at the time appointed gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with the choicest flowers of spring-time; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us a sacred charge upon a nation's gratitude, the soldier's and sailor's widow and orphan."

The city of Jacksonville honors this sacred trust each year by holding a commemorative service at the Veterans Memorial Wall located near the stadium. The 125th was asked to provide the color guard, firing detail and an officer to lay the USAF wreath this year. Col. Bob Branyon, 125FW Commander (below left) laid the USAF wreath and Staff Sgt. John Citrullo (below right) led the effort to put the color guard and firing teams together. The teams included:

Senior Master Sgt. Daryl Evans, Master Sgt. Dennis Petty, Master Sgt. Emmett Dzioba, Staff Sgt. John Citrullo (Color Guard); Senior Master Sgt. Mike Hall, Master Sgt. Gene Aultman, Master Sgt. Robert Conner, Master Sgt. David Kozdras, Master Sgt. Coran Williams, Tech. Sgt. Paul Still, Tech. Sgt. Robert Kennedy and Staff Sgt. Lorenzo Fox (Rifle Team).



Photos by Staff Sgt. Jaclyn Carver

Photos by Staff Sgt. Jaclyn Carver



3000 HOURS IN THE F-15 EAGLE

Flying any aircraft for 3000 hours is a feat but doing it in fighters is a real trick. Col. Jim Eifert, 125FW Vice Commander, accomplished that milestone in the F-15 Eagle April 24 and was rewarded with a shower for his efforts. Doing the honors left to right are daughter Kathryn, wife Beth, 1st Lt. Ryan Stravye and Col. Bill Bair, 125th Operations Group Commander.

Keeping it in the family



The Guard is family as they say and Senior Master Sgt. Joe Brunson, 125th Operations Group, is ensuring it stays that way. His daughter, Kelsey, decided to follow her father into the Florida Air National Guard and graduated from USAF basic training May 29. Joe strolled down memory lane with Kelsey after the May 31 basic training church service.

Airman 1st Class Brunson will complete technical training at Lackland AFB, Texas then return to the 125th to serve in Services as a drill status guardsman. She will begin college August 26 at North West Florida State College in Niceville, Fla. Kelsey is a recent high school graduate from Trinity Christian Academy in Jacksonville.

Photos courtesy of Senior Master Sgt. Joe Brunson



Lending a helping hand

Photos by Staff Sgt. Jaclyn Carver

The City of Jacksonville Military Affairs, Veterans and Disabled Services Division, held a Homeless Veterans Resource Fair April 17-18, 2009 at the Jacksonville Agricultural Fair Grounds and several members of the Florida Air National Guard helped with the event. The Fair offered VA Services, medical screenings, dental/eye/hearing services, haircuts, food and clothing, shelter and housing guidance, debt management advice, substance abuse awareness counseling and legal services and more fully free of charge.

Harrison Conyers, with Jacksonville's Military Affairs, Veterans and Disabled Services Division, asked the FLANG for help and members and spouse from the 125th, FLANG HQ staff and 202nd Red horse joined U.S. Navy sailors and spouses and several veterans' organizations sort clothing, boots, tents, sleeping bags healthcare products and other give away items Friday and Saturday April 17-18. The items were to be given away on day two of the fair; Saturday April 18.

Conyers estimated there are more than 4,000 homeless veterans in the Jacksonville area. Friday's focus was career building. Help was available to provide the more



Nola Bonner, FLANG Family Programs, sorts and bags donated hygiene items Friday April 17, 2009, for give away Saturday April 18, at the Homeless Veterans Resource Fair.



Senior Master Sgt. Yancy Bowen (right), 125th Logistics Readiness Squadron, and an unidentified volunteer, move donated clothing Friday, April 17, for give away Saturday, April 18, at the Homeless Veterans Resource Fair held at the Jacksonville Agricultural Fair Grounds, April 17-18, 2009.

than 150,000 area vets and active service members with resume prep skills, financial planning advice, interview techniques and even tips on dressing for success. Several local employers were on hand conducting interviews. Conyers estimated at least 1,000 veterans would be provided assistance through the fair.

Nola Bonner, with FLANG Family Programs, led the FLANG effort to gather materials, sort donated items and generate the 30 plus volunteers from the FLANG, U.S. Navy, American Legion and Navy Wives Club of America that helped with the event. Nola estimated that the materials the FLANG helped collect and organize, was enough to help more than 300 veterans alone.

Senior Master Sgt. Yancy Bowen, 125th Logistics Readiness Squadron, said of the event, "I think it's great the 125th is getting more involved in the community and it's always good to give back to the veterans and that's why I'm here. It makes me feel good."

Right: Tech. Sgt. Robin Reynolds, HQ FLANG sorts clothing and other materials donated by the DoD, Friday April 17, 2009, for give away Saturday April 18, at the Homeless Veterans Resource Fair.



Community Relations

In an effort to raise the profile of the 125th Fighter Wing in the local community, Col. Bob Branyon, 125th Fighter Wing Commander, is encouraging active engagement with local civic organizations. Col. Branyon volunteered to be the guest speaker at one such organization, the Fernandina Beach Rotary Club, Tuesday April 21, 2009. Branyon briefed the 40 or key Nassau County leaders on the mission of the 125th Fighter Wing and its role in national defense. In the photo at right are: Mr. Tom Basore, former USAF member who invited Col. Branyon to speak, Col. Branyon, Ms. Kim Harding incoming Rotary Club President (as of July 1, 2009) and local banker, and current Rotary Club President Sean McGill, whose family operates the Fernandina Beach Airport.



Photo courtesy of Sandy Price, Executive Director of the Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival, Inc.

Communicators get technical at MacDill



Members of the 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron (JCSS) assemble a satellite dish at a remote communications site during training at MacDill Air Force Base, May 16. Opposite Page: Technicians from the 290th JCSS establish a communications link.

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa
Florida National Guard Public Affairs

When U.S. forces in remote overseas locations need to talk, chances are slim they'll find an Internet café or payphone.

Instead they'll turn to military communications experts like the Florida Air National Guard's 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron (JCSS) who can provide fast and reliable support regardless of the location, weather or mission.

Specialists from the 290th offer voice and data communications, video or radio transmissions, and even Internet access using specialized, mobile equipment packages.

The 290th JCSS recently underwent an intense exercise at its headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, testing its abilities to provide communications services to any customer units including the U.S. Army Special Forces or the U.S. Marines.

The exercise included deploying and setting up mobile communications stations, maintain-

ing satellite transmissions, and even training on their marksmanship skills.

The training was especially important because members of the unit will be deploying overseas later this year, and according to 290th Commander Lt. Col. Loretta Lombard the majority of her Airmen are highly trained experts whose technical skills will be invaluable in any environment.

"We are very fortunate and I feel very blessed to have the people in this unit that we do," Lombard explained, noting many of the Airmen hold civilian jobs in the communications industry. "... (They do) everything from the front-end customer service to working with CISCO, Verizon telephone and everything else. They've got day-to-day capabilities that they're bringing over and rolling in on the military mission."

One of those experts was Staff Sgt. Glenn Shotwell, a satellite operator and maintainer who is a full-time student studying electrical engineering. During a break in the training he

Continued next page...



Above: Staff Sgt. Justin Carr checks the sites on an M-4 rifle during training at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., May 16.
Below: Tech. Sgt. Raymond Hundley establishes communications via satellite.

noted that many of the other Airmen he works with at the 290th bring their civilian skills to the Air Guard mission and are enthusiastic about being part of the unit.

“Some bring their expertise from satellite companies,” Shotwell said. “Some of them work with network companies and different firms, and they actually bring their knowledge from there... We have some resident experts that are good at

switches and routers, and they bring that from their civilian jobs to us to help train us.”

The 290th’s Senior Master Sgt. Troy Herr agreed that the technical expertise of some of the Airmen was necessary to train the rest of the unit on the intricacies of military communications. He said this was especially important because some of the traditional members of the unit were only exposed to communications equipment a couple times a year.

“Our skills here are amazing,” Herr explained. “But it takes a long time to master these skills and we don’t have the same luxuries of an active duty unit that trains 24-7. We’ve got to train these Airmen on extremely technical equipment once a month, and during annual training.”

Throughout the year members of the 290th JCSS are deployed to locations throughout the world supporting U.S. military exercises and operations. The unit also has responsibility this year for a communications mission to support first responders during state emergencies like hurricanes and other natural disasters.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Jaclyn Carver

Above: United States Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Cadets (JROTC) from Fleming Island High School march in formation after touring the 125th Fighter Wing’s C-130 Hercules March 30.

Right: Master Sgt. Joseph Kane, 125th Security Forces Squadron, observes while a Mainland Daytona High School U.S. Air Force JROTC cadet handles an M-240B machine gun during a tour of the security forces facility April 27.

Future military hopefuls tour FLANG facilities

Students with one U.S. Navy and two local U.S. Air Force Junior ROTC programs - Fleming Island High School, Flagler Palm Coast High School and Daytona Mainland High School - toured the base recently.

Fleming Island toured March 30. Flagler Palm Coast High School and Daytona Mainland High School followed April 23 and 27 respectively.

The tours allow the cadets to



see their U.S. Air Force and some of the ANG missions up close and personal.

Each tour group received close up viewings of an F-15 Eagle and thorough OPS and Security Forces briefings.

Security forces specialists also showed the cadets a few tools of their trade.

The tours provide these promising young adults with an eye-opening education to the benefits of military membership, the ANG in particular and several have remarked that the new information may lead to alternations in their career goals and plans.

CONR and 601AOC support successful Space Shuttle launch

By Master Sgt. Jerry D. Harlan
AFNORTH Public Affairs

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla. – When the Space Shuttle Discovery lifted off Sunday March 15, the Continental U.S. NORAD Region and Air Forces Northern provided crucial airspace control and manning support to the successful launch of Space Shuttle Discovery. “The members of CONR protect the surrounding airspace overhead the shuttle, while AFNORTH personnel provide manning to potential search and rescue operations,” said Maj. Gen. Hank Morrow, commander of CONR-AFNORTH. “The Space Shuttle is a highly-visible national asset, one I am proud to be supporting and protecting.”

CONR ensured airspace sovereignty by enforcing the FAA flight restricted area established around Kennedy Space Center using F-15 Eagle fighters from the 33rd Fighter Wing, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

CONR also deployed the Joint-Based Expeditionary Connectivity Center team to Cape Canaveral Air Force Station to provide an overarching air picture to the supported entities.

AFNORTH provided the headquarters manning for U.S. Northern Command’s Joint Task Force-Space Transportation System, responsible for the search and rescue of the astronauts and recovery of the orbiter if the need arises.

AFNORTH also serves as the operational level focal point for situational understanding and crisis response to space shuttle mission contingencies.

JTF-STs provide the command and control of Department of Defense forces during crisis response from the Morrell Operations Center at Cape Canaveral.

“The JTF has assets prepositioned nation-wide to provide search and rescue if the astronaut have a bad day,” said Col. Randy Spear, JTF-STs commander and 601AOC Vice Commander. “We are ready and prepared to support, but hope that we are never called upon.”



Photo by Master Sgt. Shaun Withers

Photo pulled from public website



Photo above:
A Florida Air National Guard F-15A Eagle assigned to the 125th Fighter Wing, flies a Combat Air Patrol (CAP) mission over Cape Kennedy, Fla. in support of Operation Noble Eagle. The Space Shuttle Endeavor is shown on the launch pad in this historical photo.

Photo left:
A USAF F-22 Raptor provides air cover during the STS-122 Shuttle launch Feb. 7, 2008

Mission Support Director retires after 27 years of service

By Ms. Carol Carpenter
AFNORTH Public Affairs

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - It was, at least in part, a dare that prompted Col. Debra Skelton to enter the military—the Air Force ROTC program at the University of Connecticut—when she was just a young college student.

Now, after 27 years of Air Force and Air National Guard duty, Skelton retired from uniformed service March 12.

She smiles when she recalls those well-meaning taunts about her future.

“My friends didn't think I had what it took to do it, but I joined anyway and even became a Corps commander,” said Skelton with a touch of pride. But it wasn't just her friends who pushed her toward a military career; she also noticed in mid-1981 that many of her fellow college graduates were moving back home rather than finding a job.

Today, nearly three decades later, as Director of Mission Support for the 601st Air and Space Operations Center, Skelton knows her decision to join the two-year ROTC program was wise.

“Being in the Air Force has been a great experience, and it has been especially exciting to see the changes for women, who are paid the same as men and who, if they work hard, can get promoted as well,” she said.

Skelton's Air Force career has taken her from far-flung assignments in cold, barren Iceland to the sunny, warm shores of Panama City, Fla., with a few other stops in between, including the North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado and Langley AFB in Virginia. The remote Iceland experience in the mid-1980s was, perhaps, her most memorable. “It was a fascinating, stark place where we were stranded from civilization,” she said. “I made the best of it.”

Moving to 1st Air Force in 1996 and transitioning to the Air National Guard, she has been proud to be a part of the homeland defense mission, serving as chief for both C2 (Command and Control) Requirements and Integrated Command and Control Systems, and then moving to the AOC in 2001. “I will definitely miss my support people here,” she said. “I am truly blessed to have worked with such a good, hard-working team.”

The colonel is pleased that, while she will miss her daily work in uniform and her staff, she is not leaving the area nor 1st Air Force. In mid-March, she accepted a civil service position in the agency's Installations and Services Division, working on contingency planning.

Considering her 27 years of military service, Skelton believes she has benefitted in many ways, both personally and professionally, by the experience. On a personal level, she has come to realize that the individuals she has met and worked with during her Air Force years are very much an extended family. And, professionally, she understands that she was given many mentors and various learning experiences that helped steer her course to success.

“I came in young and the experience has helped form the person I am today,” she said.

“It has shaped me in good ways, like my parents did, instilling integrity and service before self. I will always be glad I joined the Air Force.”



Photo by Ms. Lisa Norman

Brigadier Gen. Joseph Balskus, Commander, Florida Air National Guard, presents Col. Debra Skelton, Director of Mission Support for the 601st Air & Space Operations Center, with the Florida Cross March 12 at her retirement ceremony.

News from HQ

Duty, honor, country - words to live by

By Brig. Gen. Kirk Martin
HQ FLANG Chief of Staff

As I write this column, Memorial Day 2009 is drawing to a close. Like many of you, I spent the day thinking of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

Memorial Day is a day to recognize those who have served our country. It is about reconciliation, and coming together to remember all those who have died in our nation's service.

During the day, I shook hands and thanked veterans that I came in contact with. I thought about the times I have visited the sacred ground of Arlington National Cemetery where Memorial Day was first observed May 30, 1868 when General John A. Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, ordered flowers placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers.

I also spent the day reading an autobiography by retired USAF Col. George "Bud" Day entitled *Duty, Honor, Country*. Colonel Day was awarded the Medal of Honor for his service in Vietnam, which included five years and seven months as a prisoner of war after his F-100 was shot down. The story of his captivity and torture is at once sickening and awe inspiring. The courage necessary to maintain his honor under the most horrendous conditions, and his commitment to the Code of Conduct are a model for all military members to emulate. He lived the U.S. Air Force Core Values of Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all we do.

"Duty, Honor, Country is the motto of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. It is a fitting title for this book because it too, is about duty, honor, and country; subjects that the soldier must live out 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. There is no escape from them.

Our 19th U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, General Norton Schwartz, placed *American Patriot: The*

Life and Wars of Colonel Bud Day by Robert Coram first on his 2009 Chief of Staff Reading List. The book details the life of the most decorated living American veteran. I recommend you read about Col. Bud Day as an essential part of your military education. I suspect you will put on your uniform with a greater sense of pride after reading it.

I recently was honored to be a Fellow in the National Security Studies Program at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Government of Syracuse University, New York. One of the many distinguished speakers there was retired U.S. Army General Montgomery C. Meigs, former Commander of U.S. Army Europe (1998-2002) and a Senior Strategic Planner for the Joint Staff at the Pentagon.

General Meigs is a descendant of U.S. Army Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs, who, on June 15, 1864, authorized the creation of a

national cemetery on 200 acres surrounding Arlington House. Subsequently, Arlington National Cemetery became the burial ground for casualties sustained from all the U.S. wars fought since the American Revolution. Now more than 260,000 gravestones mark the resting place of our brothers and sisters buried there, including the grave of Gen. Montgomery Meigs.

The contemporary General Meigs talked with my class about leadership. One of his observations struck me. He warned, "You get what you settle for. Never overlook a discrepancy." It seems to me to be all tied together; Duty, Honor, Country and Integrity, Service, and Excellence.

It is the duty of each of us to make the Florida Air National Guard better. This yardstick should apply to everything we do - every day. It is our duty as Airmen and Guardsmen. It is our solemn obligation to those who came before us, and to those who will follow us.

Photos by Ms. Lisa Norman

Two 'fini' flights mark changes to the 601AOC command structure



Two back-to-back Fridays in May marked sad days and the end of the flying careers of the 601st Air and Space Operations Center commander and vice commander, Col. David Kriner and Col. Randy Spear. When a USAF pilot flies his final sortie in their assigned aircraft, the flight is referred to as a 'fini flight,' and it marks the end of a pilot's flying career at his unit or in his military career. In keeping with custom, after landing, the pilots are greeted by family and well wishers and subsequently hosed down with water and other liquids.

The commander and vice commander positions at the 601st, 'America's AOC,' were recently changed and are no longer 'flying' billets and so Kriner and Spear were required to call it quits in their beloved F-15 Eagle.

Col. Kriner (photo above) made his last flight Friday May 8 and is shown taxiing his aircraft to his parking position after completing his flight. He was subsequently hosed down by family and friends.

Col. Spear (the soaking wet guy in the photo at left) is pictured shaking hands with Maj. Gen. Hank Morrow, Continental U.S. NORAD Region and Air Forces Northern commander, after completing his final F-15 Eagle flight Friday, May 1.



Members of the 125th Fighter Wing Color Guard present the colors at Jacksonville Floridas Memorial Day Tribute to fallen heroes at the Veterans Memorial Wall in downtown Jacksonville, May 25, 2009.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jaclyn Carver



Safety Matters

By Master Sgt. Dana Gaffney
125FW Safety Office

It's that time of year again and according to officials at the Air Force Safety Center the summer months are a period of increased off-duty related injuries due to participation in more recreational activities and risk taking. Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend (May 22 - Sept. 8) marks the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard's annual "101 Critical Days of Summer" campaign created to increase personal awareness of summer related risks. Historically, a few Air National Guard personnel will tragically lose their lives in some type of off-duty related mishap, thus changing the lives of family and co-workers forever.

This summer, please do not take any unnecessary chances and enjoy your summer responsibly. Remember to stay focused on safety by using common sense in all of our day-to-day pastimes and be a good Wingman and watch out for each other! Some safety tips can be found online:

- Beach Safety** <http://www.webmd/parenting/features/beachsafety-101>
- Motorcycle Safety** <http://www.msf-usa.org>
- Boating Safety** <http://www.uscgboating.org/index.aspx>
- Sports Health and Safety** <http://pueblo.gsa.gov/cfocus/cfsports05/focus.htm>
- Firework Safety** <http://www.fireworksafety.com>
- Sun Safety** <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/summertips.cfm>

If you witness a safe practice or a 'safety attitude' nominate that individual for an award by submitting an AF Form 1206, to the 125FW Safety Office. E-mail it to wingsafety@fljack.ang.af.mil or call 904-741-7015.

Safety...It's an attitude!

Security Issues

Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Cline
125FW Antiterrorism Office

The 125th Fighter Wing hosted the Antiterrorism (AT) Level II course Jan. 6-9, 2009.

Members of the 610th Security Forces Squadron's Mobile Training Team (MTT) from the Air Force Reserve Command, traveled to Jacksonville to provide this critical, DoD directed training for the Wing's unit Antiterrorism Officers (ATOs) and other TDY personnel from around the nation.

Forty ATOs, including military members and

civilians, attended this valuable training. Students gained knowledge on numerous skill sets to include, assessing threats, terrorist operations, detecting surveillance, individual protective measures, mitigating vulnerabilities, preparing AT plans, resource management, and hostage survival.

With this training comes tremendous responsibility. Upon completion of this course, students returned to their units qualified to serve as the primary advisor to their commanders for anti-terrorism planning and program management both at home and in forward deployed locations.

Family Focus

By Mrs. Laura Pageau
FLANG Family Program Coordinator

"Counseling available."

Often, when you hear those words, there is an automatic response that others may need counseling, but my situation is not that bad. It's not that dire, I'm not falling apart or anything.

If you talk to any counselor they will all tell you that they wish people would come to them sooner rather than later.

Like any problem, whether it's your car, your garbage disposal or your teeth, if you ignore it it's not going away and it usually gets worse (and more expensive to fix).

There is counseling available for you in through the Florida JFSAP Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC) program.

The Florida JFSAP team has two adult MFLC's and one Child and Youth MFLC. Our MFLCs are licensed, Master's level counselors who are here to serve the Florida National Guard. They are available for one on one, family and child counseling.

Issues may include: teenagers, spouses, the economy, disappointments, loneliness, deploy-

ment or the stresses of life's demands.

Sometimes doing the same thing over and over doesn't work anymore and you need some help and some clarity. Counseling has been described as giving a person new tools to work with and, as you know, some jobs can be so easy if you just have the right tools. If you are having a problem and are using the same old tools (ways of coping) and you feel stuck and nothing changes, maybe you need to acquire some new tools for yourself and your family. Please contact the Florida JFSAP team MFLC's to schedule an appointment.

Harry MacNeill
904-718-9987

Alice Fulghum
904-237-2750

Jennifer Matthews
904-738-3657

Our MFLCs can meet with you in person or over the phone. They are available statewide and will come to you if needed and help with local resources too. Our MFLC resources are 100% free and confidential. Remember, we can help you and your family.

Information Operations

Can I use a wireless keyboard or mouse?

By Master Sgt. Paul R. Bryant
125FW Information Assurance Manager

Federal, DoD, and USAF wireless policies require use of FIPS 140-2 encryption to protect wireless communication. However, there are currently no wireless keyboards available that meet this requirement.

With the passage of the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002, there is no longer a statutory provision to allow for agencies to waive mandatory FIPS. FIPS 140-2 is a mandatory standard.

According to DISA FSO, "USB is a very open protocol and many things are possible. With wireless exploitation of the USB port is now possible from a greater distance. So there are multiple vulnerabilities that need mitigation with a wireless keyboard/mouse solution."

"The threat to Bluetooth and 802.11 keyboards and mice stems from two sources. First, the wireless signals from a wireless keyboard or mouse may be received by another keyboard or mouse in a nearby area. There are instances where typing on one keyboard may be picked up by a receiver attached to a nearby workstation which is also using a wireless keyboard or mouse. Second, the receiver that is attached to the USB port of the client workstation could provide a method for an attacker to breach the security of the workstation without requiring physical access to the USB port."

AFI 33-200, Information Assurance (IA) Management paragraph 3.41.6 - Wireless Mice and Keyboards - states the following:

Wireless keyboard and mice are widely available and use various wireless technologies such as WLAN, WPAN, Radio Frequency (RF), and Infra Red to transmit data to the computer. Wireless mice and keyboards must meet EMSEC requirements according to the AFSSI 7700-series of publications and comply with DISA's Wireless STIG.

Medical Mentions: Sorting out the truth about the flu vaccine during a pandemic scare

By Lt. Col. Pamela Y. Blunt
125MDG Deputy Commander

Did you get your flu shot this year? Did you try to avoid it?

Would you believe some people make it a habit of putting off getting the flu shot every year in hopes we run out of vaccine or will tell them it's too late to bother? Then they ask, "How come you're giving me this shot when flu season is over?"

There are really good answers to that question.

First, flu season is not necessarily over. Second, it's an annual requirement for all Air National Guard members and not getting the shot affects your individual medical readiness (IMR) and may exclude you from participating in certain deployments or exercises.

The optimal time to get the flu vaccine in Florida is October/November.

However, even in the civilian sector, flu vaccines are given in December and later, for as long as vaccine is available.

In the United States the flu season can run from November through April and often doesn't peak until February or March.

You can bet in the years past when peak activity occurred in March, there was still quite a bit of the flu virus going around in April. According to the CDC Weekly Surveillance Report:

"During the week ending April 27, 2002, one state health department reported widespread influenza activity, four reported regional activity and 23 reported sporadic activity."

That year, Florida was among the states reporting sporadic activity and 22 states were still reporting flu activity through the month of May.

The reason the USAF pushes for us to get the flu vaccine has very little to do with making sure we spend a healthy winter in sunny Florida. It's that worldwide deployable thing again.

So, there are quite a few more reasons why you need to give up the old argument and quit saying, "But, flu season is over!"

Depending on where you are traveling, you can be at risk of getting the flu year round.

The CDC recommends getting the flu vaccine when traveling with "large organized tourist

groups at any time of the year."

From 1997 through 1999, the CDC investigated three summertime influenza outbreaks among tour groups in North America and more recently there have been reports of flu outbreaks among tour groups in the Caribbean in spring, the Mediterranean in summer, and in the northern European waters in summer.

It might be a bit of a stretch for us to think of ourselves as traveling with an organized tour group when we are being deployed with our FLANG unit, but there are some similarities.

We could be confined in close quarters for a long flight aboard a C-130 aircraft. We could be living in dormitory style quarters, or even in tents. We may find ourselves working closely with military members from other parts of the world, and it may have been flu season where those people just came from!

And did anybody notice that a little flu virus called H1N1 didn't pay much attention to the calendar?

It's not so much that the symptoms of swine flu are different than our typical "seasonal flu." Both are strains of influenza A.

The big difference is that this is a new strain of the virus and we don't have any immunity to it and haven't yet developed a vaccine, so it would be very difficult to stop it from spreading.

Even with vaccine readily available, seasonal flu kills 36,000-40,000 Americans each year and more than 200,000 are hospitalized. Yet, some people still try to avoid getting the vaccine!

Well it's not a pandemic yet and "prevention is the best cure" so keep your immune system strong.

The best way to do this is to get plenty of sleep (at least seven hours a night), eat a healthy diet and maintain an active lifestyle. Second, maintain good health hygiene; wash your hands frequently and especially after touching common items in public places—door knobs, handrails, bathrooms, etc.

Avoid touching your mouth, nose, eyes, etc. without first washing your hands. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve.

If you have flu like symptoms, stay home from work, school, church, etc.

And, when the flu vaccine is offered next year, don't put it off. Getting it early will better protect you, your family and your fellow travelers.

Just do it!

Chaplain's Corner... Hands, heart and hard work!

By Lt. Col. Steve Thompson
125FW Chaplain

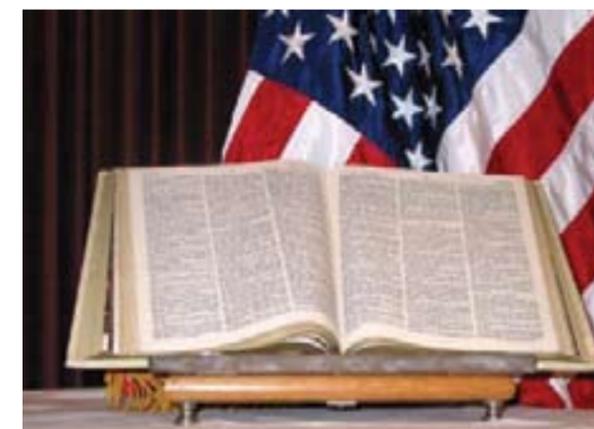
I imagine that everyone you know is more than a wee bit weary of hearing you talk about how well we did during our ORI Phase II. That's OK ... they will get over it! As the Bible says, there are some things you just can't quit talking about. (Acts 4:20)

Hey, did I mention to you, "We got an EXCELLENT!!!"

No doubt you have analyzed the entire 48 hours of ORI exercises from every direction, over and over again. With that in mind, please indulge me as I share how I believe we arrived at what I consider to be an accurate and exciting evaluation. I can summarize my thoughts into three categories: Hands, Heart and Hard Work!

First, we all worked incredibly hard to obtain the scores that were recorded by the HQ/ACC IG Team. In some cases we actually worked harder, and possibly deserved a better mark, than our scores indicated. But, make no mistake about it; we earned every letter of our "EXCELLENT" evaluation. We worked hard and our hard work was recognized and rewarded.

Second, our Wing has heart. We were told from the get-go that the IG Team looks for attitude almost as much as aptitude. Our Wing's attitude carried us over the top during our Phase I inspection and it did not fail us during our Phase



II. We've got heart and our enthusiastic approach to getting our tasks right, on time and on target, was both noticed and noted.

Lastly, God's hand was upon our Wing during those often grueling 48 hours. Our real world issues were minimal; our planes did what was asked of them and, in most instances, our Airmen performed better than in any of our ORE's. Yes, we are good; but, I hope you will join me in acknowledging, we were blessed. The prayers on our behalf lifted up by our families and friends were answered.

"At-a-boys" and "at-a-girls" go to all, especially our leadership. However, we could never have successfully gotten through this test without Hands, Heart and Hard Work!

Oh, did I mention? "We got an EXCELLENT!" God Bless You!

Chaplain Thompson

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Shelley Gill



125th Fighter Wing Chaplains, Lt. Col. Steve Thompson (right) and Capt. Gary Poplin, greet members with smiles and encouragement at the Jacksonville, Fla. base front gate as they arrive for work May 11, 2009, following the war portion of the ORI Phase II and before the overall grade of Excellent was announced May 13.

STARBASE News

By Mr. Gregory Stritch
Director, STARBASE Florida

We closed out our adventurous year this spring with a flourish and lots of changes. As with other years, we targeted the most challenging schools in the Duval County Public Schools district, and that makes for some lively scholars.

We served more than 850 children this year, with an updated aerospace curriculum designed to prepare our fifth graders for FCAT math and science.

This year has seen us become more intentional in our alignment with national Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) benchmarks.

This year Melissa Quinto was out for a few months with baby Emma en-route. Mom and baby are doing great and Melissa is back with us again.

We will be losing Dorothy Train-Marsh as she rejoins her husband at Fort Benning, Georgia. Simon returned safely back from Iraq with a Bronze Star. We'll miss them both.

Joining our staff is Mr. Lee McCook. Mr. McCook is one of the Math Standards Coaches in the district and comes with a wealth of talent as a conceptual math expert. Formerly at Rutledge Pearson Elementary, Lee has a wonderful gift set for teaching our urban scholars and a missionary zeal for their success. Lee will be an awesome asset to the STARBASE Florida staff.

FLANG RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

By SMSgt. (Ret.) Don Bunk
FLANGRA President

The semi-annual dinner meeting of the Retirees' Association was held at Magnolia Point Golf and Country Club in April with another record crowd. This dinner was highlighted by entertainment from one of our own. Retiree Verne Foster and his wife, Liz, provided the entertainment. They performed a skit and Verne sang some patriotic and romantic music. A great time was had by all.

Memories were shared and laughs were plentiful. We were blessed to have in attendance Roger Holmes (aka "Tiger"), who is one of our senior retirees. Lots of names from the past were mentioned by "Tiger" and Verne as many old memories were revived.

We had a short briefing on the new national cemetery in Jacksonville and what this means to us as eligible patrons. The details of how to obtain a National Guard license tag for our automobiles was also discussed.

We also conducted a raffle drawing featuring a round of golf for four at Magnolia Point Golf and Country Club, dinner for two at Magnolia, three free oil changes, two Starbucks coffee gift baskets, a Wal-Mart shopping card, a Longhorn dinner card, a Silver car-wash and a novel – *The Saga of Robert E.* by our own, Verne Foster.

The next dinner is scheduled to be held in October and we will have a very special dinner guest.

To sign up for retiree emails or dinner information contact: Don Bunk, 910-9428 or fang.125@bellsouth.net.

In the Spotlight...

Tech. Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas

125th Fighter Wing PA Team bids aloha to one of its own

By Lt. Col. Richard E. Bittner
125FW Chief of Public Affairs

Let's begin with a short FLANG history of Tech. Sgt. Michelle Lee Thomas.

Tech. Sgt. Michelle Thomas joined the 125th Fighter Wing public affairs staff in October 2000, coming to us after beginning her USAF career in 1997 in the Reserves as an Operations Aviation Resource Management Journeyman at Patrick AFB, Fla.

She joined about a month after I entered the career field. To her credit, she came armed with a bachelor's degree in English and a lot of creative talent.

My public affairs skill set was sorely lacking at the time.

Thus began a joint venture in public affairs for the two of us that now draws to a close.

After graduating from the University of Florida in 2001, Michelle worked fulltime for me on active duty orders until 2003 when she accepted a teaching position at a college preparatory middle school in Jacksonville where she taught gifted sixth graders until 2006. Although she loved the work, she eventually went on to work fulltime for the Florida National Guard Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs Office in St. Augustine.

Since her arrival back in 2000, she and I turned a Wing newsletter into a state-wide publication, highlighting the entire Florida Air National Guard and using graphics generated by the visual information section (now combined with the Public Affairs Office). The Eagle's Eye has placed favorably in Department of Defense media contests and has become a highly regarded publication by leaders throughout the Florida Air National Guard.

If it wasn't for her creative nature, you folks would be looking at a magazine with a lot of right angles and very little pizzazz. Michelle would agonize for hours over just the right pictures, placement, color textures, etc. Whereas I would agonize over misspelled words and lining



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Shelley Gill

Tech. Sgt. Michelle Thomas drafts a story from a Humvee while on state active duty in Navarre Beach, Fla. Like hundreds of other Florida National Guardsman, Thomas, then a fulltime English teacher, was called up to support the state during one of its busiest hurricane seasons in 2004.

up text. We were very much the artsy vice the squared box pair.

But we made a good team. Michelle and I would work late into the night if necessary to get the magazine done.

Toward the end we could almost read each other's minds. I would start to ask a question and before I could finish my sentence, she would be in the process of answering it. Scary huh?!

Well Michelle is off to bigger and better things. She leaves us to assume a civilian DoD position in Hawaii with the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) as the Deputy Director of Public Affairs. The JPAC mission is and noteworthy as we just finished celebrating Memorial Day. JPAC is driven to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of the nation's past conflicts. Michelle's new position is a pretty nice step up from working with little old me! She will be in the thick of things traveling to Korea, Vietnam and other locations where some of our fallen remain unaccounted for.

Michelle - I wish you the best in your new endeavors. You certainly left your mark on this office, the 125th Fighter Wing and the Florida National Guard.

God speed!

Promotions

To Lt. Colonel

Richard E. Bittner, 125FW
Mark C. Carrier, 601AOC
Richard L. Coffey, III, 125MXS
Dexter V. Davis, 125FW
Mark F. Gutchner, 601AOC
David W. Lynch, 159FS
Brian D. Porter, 325FW ANG AU

To Major

Williams R. Cannon, 601AOC
Teresa R. Frank, 125MSF
Matthew L. Giles, 114ROPS
Brian A. Vitetta, 125CES

To Captain

Gary D. Eldridge II, 601AOC
Caesar Kellum, 601AOC
Anthony A. McPherson, 202RHS
Brenda M. Wisham, 601AOC

To 1st Lieutenant

Logan M. Jergens, 202RHS
Jonathan A. Kilpatrick, 601AOC
Amber K. Martinez, 601AOC

To 2nd Lieutenant

John H. Colonna, 125OSF
Ronald E. Harrelson, Jr., 125OSF
Joshua A. Hornick, 202RHS
Matthew K. Rockwell, 202RHS

To Chief Master Sgt.

Martin E. Chambers, Sr., 125AMXS
David G. Hasty, 601AOC
Sandra J. King, 125MDG

To Senior Master Sgt.

Stephen M. James, 125CES
William C. Lamb, 114ROPS

To Master Sgt.

Charlie Brown, 601AOC
Kirt D. Carpenter, 601AOC
Robert W. Gillis, Jr., 125AMXS
Jerome Howard, 601AOC
Jason A. Lewis, 125MXS
Christopher S. Liston, 202RHS
Marc J. Myers, 125AMXS

Murray L. Nelms, 125LRS
Nevzat K. Ozbaltaci, 125FW
John E. Potts, III, 290JCSS
Kevin C. Puckett, 125AMXS
Shane D. Smith, 601AOC
Gregory S. Ward, 202RHS
Kenneth L. Wells, 601AOC
Saundra A. Wescott, 125MDG

To Technical Sgt.

Donald K. Abell, 601AOC
Jeremy R. Ayres, 125MXG
Rex E. Barrentine, 601AOC
Robert C. Carnall, 601AOC
Scott M. Crawford, 290JCSS
Brandon K. Danford, 601AOC
James P. Davis, 290JCSS
Brian E. Devine, Sr., 125LRS
William J. Felder, 125MXS
Latisha De Georges, 290JCSS
William W. Hammons, 125MXG
Sharita D. Jackson, 601AOC
James J. Lawrence, 290JCSS
Eric J. Masciulli, 290JCSS
Tiffany J. Saavedra, 601AOC
Jonathon Sotomayor, 125MXG
Esther Whitcomb, 601AOC

To Staff Sgt.

Chad M. Alfred, 125SFS
Raymond A. Bell, 125AMXS
George K. Black, Jr., 125CF
Emily K. Blood, 125MXS
Maximo Caba, 202RHS
Joshua S. Chambers, 125AMXS
Nicole L. Egbert, 601AOC
Duane A. Ellis, 202RHS
James S. Gaulden, Jr., 125AMXS
Jeremy A. Goff, 601AOC
Aaron J. Hartley, Det. 1, 125FW
Marcus R. Hinshaw, 125AMXS
Frank E. Johnson, 601AOC
Carlos E. Leal, 202RHS
Christopher L. Lemley, 125AMXS
Cheryl J. Mapp, 125MOF
Maresa C. Martone, 601AOC
Ryan J. Mitchell, 125SFS
Jimmy L. Randolph, 125SFS
Manuel D. Santana, 290JCSS
Philip D. Spradley, 290JCSS
David R. Stoler, 290JCSS

Promotions (cont.)

Derek J. Williams, 290JCSS
Mark A. Wilson, 125AMXS

To Senior Airman

Daphne J. Barbour, 601AOC
Cecile J. Durand, 290JCSS
Michael H. Hamilton, 125SFS
Christopher S. Hancock, 202RHS
Steven J. Reilly, 125MXS
Matthew B. Valenti, 114ROPS
Kevin C. Vaughn, 125CES

To Airman 1st Class

Aaron M. Potts, 290JCSS

Retirements

Col Debra A. Skelton, 601AOC
Lt Col Daniel J. Claveau, 601AOC
Lt Col Johnny L. Kelley, 601AOC
CMSgt Terry D. Libbert, 125CF
CMSgt John V. Poreider, 601AOC
CMSgt James Smith, 125MXS
CMSgt Gilbert R. Thompson, 125AMXS
CMSgt Mark W. Westover, 290JCSS
SMSgt Emilio Gelfenstein, HQ FLANG
SMSgt John K. Schneider, 601AOC
MSgt Gregory W. Burnette, 125AMXS
MSgt Walter C. Davis, 125MXG
MSgt Cheryl A. Dove, 601AOC
MSgt Doris L. Grey, 125FW
MSgt Ronald H. Harris, 325FW ANG AU
MSgt Thomas W. Harris, 125LRS
MSgt Martin D. Mailhot, 601AOC
MSgt Clyde L. Markham, III, 125MXS
MSgt Anthony J. Popchok, 601AOC
MSgt Gilberto Sanchez, Jr., 601AOC
MSgt Eric Soeder, 290JCSS
MSgt Michael J. Williams, 114ROPS
TSgt Alfred N. Adams, 125SVF
TSgt David J. Ballard, 125MXS
TSgt Gregory W. Beckman, 202RHS
TSgt Stephen L. Dudra, 125CF
TSgt Michael A. Kilgore, 125MXS
TSgt Kim Lovejoy, 202RHS
TSgt Jenny Madden, 125MSG
TSgt Kathleen O'Brien, 601AOC
TSgt Timothy L. Parnell, 125AMXS
TSgt Johnny R. Perry, 125CES

TSgt Lonnie A. Poole, 125SVF
TSgt Wayne G. Watson, 125SFS
TSgt Lance A. Weston, 125AMXS
TSgt Leslie R. Wright, 125MDG
TSgt Bradley A. Youngblood, 601AOC
SSgt Terrence R. Dubignon, 125MXS
SSgt Lori A. Pyper, 601AOC

125FW ORI Phase II Superior Performers

Major Brian T. Bell, 159FS
Major Todd C. Giggly, 159FS
Capt Sarah N. Adams, 125OSF
Capt Brenda F. Brinkley, 125MDG
MSgt Joseph K. Crews, 125MOF
MSgt Karen D. Edwards-Baggs, 125MSG
MSgt Gary W. Holland, 125AMXS
MSgt Danielle L. Jones, 125OG
MSgt Sheila D. McGlothlin, 125LRS
MSgt Jerry O. Rhodes, 125MXS
MSgt Kenneth R. Sexton, 125MXS
MSgt Kevin M. Souza, 125MXG
MSgt David T. Tuttle, Jr., 125MXG
MSgt Chad E. Wedekind, 125MDG
MSgt Homer W. White, Jr., 125MXS
MSgt Jason L. White, 159FS
TSgt Abea S. Balala, 125LRS
TSgt Stewart L. Bowles, 125AMXS
TSgt Brian E. Devine, Sr., 125LRS
TSgt Carlos J. Garcia, 125FW
TSgt Christina M. Gordon, 125LRS
TSgt James M. Healy, 125MXS
TSgt Jimmie L. Lee, 125CF
TSgt Patricia R. Loffredo, 125LRS
TSgt Liesl M. Powers, 125FW
TSgt Stephen R. Sizemore, 125CF
TSgt Charles W. Wilkie, Jr., 125SFS
SSgt Justin M. Odonoghue, 159FS
SSgt Daphne V. Clemons, 125CF
SSgt Crystal S. Fulco, 125LRS
SSgt Lacy A. Hogan, 125MDG
SSgt Joshua S. Leis, 125MXS
SSgt Sakinah N. McDuffie, 125SVF
SSgt Erik M. Sheppard, 125AMXS
SSgt Tyra L. Williams, 125SVF
SrA James S. Debow III, 125SFS



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