



T HUNDER B I R D

107th Air Refueling Wing, New York Air National Guard, Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Inside and In Brief

The new year is here

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January 2008



U.S. Air Force photo / Senior Airman Peter Dean

Master Sgt. Jennifer Mahoney, 107 ARW CES, steps on to a KC-135 headed for Norfolk, Va., more on Page 4.

New year brings new challenges

It's a true privilege to wish all members of the best wing in the Air Force a prosperous and healthy New Year. At the risk of sounding repetitive, 2008 promises to be one of the most challenging years for the 107th Air Refueling Wing.

It's hard to reflect back to prior to September 11th 2001, to what a normal year's challenge was. The operations and personnel tempo, the numerous inspections, deployments and fight for our livelihood, the Base Realignment and Closure reversal, have all created some cynicism towards another "most challenging year ahead" claim.

Instead of addressing every problem or challenge of 2008 as such, I picked up a refreshing approach from a deployed commander when a day was progressing straight for the dumpster. He advised me not to look at all problems as burdens, but as multiple opportunities to excel.

This year has set forth a plentiful bounty of opportunities for the 107ARW to excel and it is this wing's mindset and culture to do just that.

It is only the first week of the New Year and our civil engineers have deployed to Iraq. Soon the security police will be joining them in the CENTCOM AOR. We've maintained two ALERT lines of the Northeast Tanker Task Force, but soon, the initial cadre from the operations and maintenance groups are departing to learn how to surpass in our new C-130 mission.

Every week the logistics readiness squadron presents at least a two page list of worldwide deployed 107th personnel who are on the road testing their skills.

The process for changing to a C-130 Wing is well under way and multiple opportunities exist in the



So why the long recap of information most of us already know? It came to me on the drive home just before Christmas. After a long day of conversion meetings, interviews, Christmas planning and shopping, home was almost in sight. I realized I was so far removed from the job of driving my car that I couldn't tell you if I was going 40 miles per hour or 80!

There are so many opportunities to outshine, that it can easily overwhelm daily routines. We have made it through some busy and stressful times, but the danger of being distracted is a real concern.

I touched briefly on major commitments the wing faces currently, which doesn't begin to address the daily duties performed at both work and home.

When you start adding them all together, the list of accomplishments and success can be very impressive. However, keep in mind that no job is as important as the one you are presently doing.

If it calls for a checklist, then use it. If it takes ten minutes more to get there safely then, by all means, leave early. And if you need a safety harness, wear it.

The 107th has a rich history of mission accomplishment, and I have no doubt that it will continue into the new year and well into the future.

In order to do it safely, we must stay keenly focused on the existing task in the present day.

T HUNDERBIRD

Commander

Col. Patrick D. Ginavan

Vice Commander

Col. Dale Howard

Executive Officer

Maj. Deanna Miller

Public Affairs Officers

Capt. Bryan DalPorto

Capt. Andrea Pitruzzella

Editors

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Two AFSC's to become one

By Chief Master Sgt. Donald Hurley

107th Aircrew Flight Equipment Superintendent

I would like to take this opportunity to inform unit members of a change that is taking place behind the scenes in addition to the aircraft conversion and our association with the 914th. In order to streamline two formerly overlapping specialties, the Air Force is merging the aircrew life support (1T1X1) and survival equipment (2A7X4) career fields into a single organization. The new Air Force Specialty Code is 1POX1, is titled Aircrew Flight Equipment and will fall under the 136th ARS in the 107th Operations Group.

Both sections worked on the same equipment, with life support providing the aircrew support, equipment fitting and inspection while survival equipment was responsible for repair, major inspections and parachute repacking. The merger makes sense in that it will streamline maintenance processes, reduce or eliminate redundancy, and increase equipment availability.

The merger will take place in two phases. Phase I, currently underway since 1 Oct 2007, organizationally aligns all survival equipment functions at the wing under the operations flying squadron. This requires things such as transferring equipment accounts, changing organizational and shop codes within base supply, changing office symbols, establishing a budget and transferring funding from the maintenance group to the flight equipment accounts and providing an effective cross utilization and training plan.

Phase II becomes effective 30 January 2008. At that time all manpower authorizations for both career fields will convert to the new 1POX1, Aircrew Flight Equipment AFSC and the new 1POX1 CFETPs and CDCs should be released.

The four mission components of Aircrew Flight Equipment are aircraft/aircrew equipment, aircrew

continuation training, chem./bio. defense and equipment inspection /maintenance. The biggest challenge for the personnel from each career field will be learning each others jobs. This will be done by on-the-job-training using the cross utilization and training plan developed during phase I. The life supporters will have to learn to repack parachutes, inspect and repair life rafts and life preservers, and work with and sew a variety of fabrics. The survival equipment personnel will learn to disassemble and inspect aircrew helmets and oxygen masks, Quick-Dons, emergency passenger oxygen systems, survival kits and vests, night vision goggles along with the inspection and testing of survival items such as strobe lights, emergency beacons, flares and survival radios. They also will be required to attend combat and water survival schools along with instructor training courses to be qualified to give our aircrew continuation training in combat and water survival, chem./bio. defense and equipment donning/use.

With the exception of helmet-mounted night vision goggles, the prepositioned equipment on the C-130 is the same as what is on the KC-135. This will make the conversion to the C-130 easier for the aircrew flight equipment personnel, but as one can see, there will still be plenty to do in the coming year between the cross utilization training, the transferring of the KC-135 equipment and the acceptance of the C-130 equipment.

Lack of space will require parachute repacks and inspection of the "rubber gear" to still be accomplished in the old "chute shop" in building 902. Even though physically it may still look like two separate shops, as of now, we are one. During the foreseeable future, aircrew flight equipment personnel will be spending the majority of their time in the old life support shop in building 912. Therefore, more times than not, you may see the old survival equipment shop locked up.

107th IG introduces his role

By Lt. Col. Blair Webster

107th ARW/IG

In 1778, upon Gen. George Washington's recommendation, Congress appointed the first United States Inspector General. Capt. Baron Wilhelm von Steuben was a Prussian officer who had formerly served with Frederick the Great. He was recognized by Gen. Washington as having the skills necessary to maintain good order and discipline among his troops and offered a step promotion to Lieutenant General in the Continental Army. Seeking adventure and need-

ing a job, Capt. von Steuben accepted the offer and so began the long tradition of American Inspector Generals.

The duties of the IG have certainly changed over the last 229 years, but the goal has remained the same. That goal is to make our military a more effective fighting force. In 1778, that meant standardized training and technical knowledge. Today, the inspector general's goal is still standardization, as well as responsive and objective complaint resolution.

My job, as your wing Inspector General, deals

See Inspector General Page 5



Members deploy to Middle East

By Senior Airman Peter Dean

107th Public Affairs Office

It was a cold and windy day. Temperatures were in the 30s with a wind chill in the single digits, but that did not stop more than 25 unit members from gathering their gear and piling into a KC-135 headed for Norfolk Va. This was the first leg of their journey to the Middle East.

On Jan 4 deploying unit members and their loved ones gathered in the operations lounge for one last hug, one last kiss, and one last look before separating from each other for four months.

Due to the hard work, superior leadership and organization skills of Maj. Deanna Miller and Capt. Andrea Pitruzzella, both from the 107th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Office, the unit was able to receive some well-deserved public recognition.

More than 10 media outlets from as far away as Rochester came to cover the event. The media outlets included television, print and radio. The 107th ARW Public Affairs Office would like to thank Tech. Sgt. Pat Puolini who stepped out of his role in the 107th ARW JAG Office to help escort the media.



Lt. Col. Patrick Roemer, 107th ARW CES, and Master Sgt. Ricardo Flores, 107th ARW CES, are interviewed by Julie Fine, reporter, channel 7 news.

Officers serve holiday meal



Air Force photo / Master Sgt. Paul Brundage

Col. Timothy Vaughan, 107th ARW MSG, Chief Master Sgt. Richard Boxhorn, 107 ARW LRS, and Lt. Col. Steven Hefferon, 107th ARW LRS, serve a member of the student flight in the dining hall Dec. 8. Members of the 107th were served ham, roast beef and sweet and mashed potatoes.



More orientation flights to come



Air Force photo / Senior Airman Peter Dean

Airman 1st Class Michelle Schmitt watches a refueling mission on a KC -135. Schmitt is new to the 107 ARW and was attending an orientation flight. Interested airman who have never flown on an incentive flight should contact their supervisors. Spouse orientation flights are planned for March 8. For more information contact Maj. Deanna Miller at 236-3142 or deanna.miller@nyniag.af.mil. Paperwork must be submitted no later than Jan. 17.

Inspector General cont.

with the latter, complaint resolution. At the wing level I am not an inspector. It is not my role to inspect your squadron or agency and "write you up."

What then do I do? My primary job is to act as an ombudsman for the base populace, whether military, civilian, dependant or retiree. The dictionary defines ombudsman as "a government official charged with investigating citizens' complaints against the government and assisting in achieving fair settlements," which is a perfect description for what this office does. I am here to help you resolve your complaints or to find solutions to problems you may have with the military system. I have ready access to all levels of the IG complaint system so I can elevate the problem to the State, the Guard Bureau, Major Command-level, Air Force-level, or Department of Defense-level, if the situation dictates.

It is important, however, that using your chain of command to resolve problems should always be your first course of action. In most cases, the leadership in your squadron has the expertise, the past experience and the tools required to resolve whatever problem you may have. And because of these advantages, the problem can be resolved most expediently. When people

feel that their complaint has not received the attention they think it deserves within the chain, or if the problem lies within the chain, that's where I can help.

I also want to caution you that you may not get the answer you seek by bringing me your complaint. My responsibility is to research the complaint and discover the truth the best way I can. However, my authority to right wrongs is limited; I can expose wrongdoing to commanders, but I cannot direct commanders to take any specific actions. And, believe it or not, when people come to see me, not all of them have all the details of a situation, and not all of them tell the whole truth. Therefore the results I get may or may not be the results you were hoping for. But I promise you that your complaint will get a thorough, unbiased look.

The IG system has a great track record. Approximately 80 percent of individuals seeking IG assistance receive help in some way. From Lt. Gen. Baron Von Steuben to the present, IGs have played an important role in assuring American military dominance. Here at the 107th ARW my office is in the business of problem resolution, and I believe a lesson I learned in communications officer tech school applies to my job as the IG: if you take care of your people and their problems, your people will take care of the mission.



107th ARW Airmen of the Year

First Sergeant

Master Sgt. Daniel Durant

Master Sgt. Durant put service before himself when he left his 3-month-old son to deploy as the 385th EARS 1st Sgt. to Incirlik Turkey. Durant coordinated the purchase, set up and installation of over \$2,500 of new equipment for the 107th ARW maintenance group's satellite fit center. Because of this, shift workers are now actively engaged in fit programs. Durant is a Junior Enlisted Council mentor. He mentored the first maintenance traditional guardsmen to attend the Air Force Senior Non Commissioned Officer Academy with a school date of January 2008. Durant runs in local races and he has performed honor guard duties as Adjutant for the Air Force's 60th Anniversary. He is currently working on his second CCAF degree.



Senior NCO

Master Sgt. Jason M. Folckemer

Master Sgt. Folckemer assisted the 156th SFS/PRANG with an upcoming UCI. He conducted thorough program inspections, initiated combat arms programs and ensured the unit is in compliance. The National Guard Bureau requested Master Sgt. Folckemer to assist with force on force training of Department of Energy personnel during a four week training deployment to Camp Grueber, Okla. Folckemer rewrote the CATM and Explosive Safety operating instructions for 107th ARW Security Forces, ensuring security forces received a passing grade on all safety inspections with minimal deficiencies and no safety instances noted by safety inspectors. He worked with community resources to create the first ever realistic joint training with local law enforcement. Folckemer is enrolled in courses at Troy University and with CCAF.



107th ARW Airmen of the Year

NCO

Staff Sgt. Sylvia V. Kirchner

Staff Sgt. Kirchner volunteered for Operation Jump Start and deployed to support border patrol operations. She supervised a joint Air and Army Guard team that was responsible for spreading one mile of gravel per day. Kirchner received on the job training outside of her primary Air Force Specialty Code. She trained on the job as a drill operator, welder, and metal cutting member. Kirchner drilled 120 holes per day; she welded 80 car barriers per day and cut over 70 metal posts. She has recovered over \$2,300 unit critical travel funds. Kirchner has also assisted 107th ARW family support with activities for deploying airmen and their families.



Airman

Senior Airman Jesse Schmidt

Immediately following tech school, Senior Airman Schmidt accepted the responsibility to maintain all aerospace ground equipment, a duty previously assigned to a seven-level master sergeant. Schmidt performs scheduled inspections on AGE equipment, as well as unscheduled maintenance to minimize down time for repairs. During the award period, Schmidt deployed twice to support both federal and state missions. He was activated for Operation Empire Shield and deployed for six weeks to guard a nuclear power plant. Schmidt is 13 credit hours away from an Associates Degree in AGE Technologies. He is also furthering his education by pursuing a degree in Pharmacology at the University of Buffalo.





Family News

The 107th ARW Unit Public Affairs Representatives

Aircraft Generation Squadron

Senior Airman **Jennifer Martin**
Senior Airman **Kristan Smith**

Civil Engineer Squadron

Staff Sgt. **Bill Dunlap**
Senior Airman **Kristen Kochems**

Communication Flight

Tech. Sgt. **Christopher Zastrow**

Logistics Squadron

Tech. Sgt. **Ken Devole**
Staff Sgt. **Tina Cox**
Staff Sgt. **Kenya House**

Maintenance Gp/OF

Staff Sgt. Andrew Demmin
Staff Sgt. **James C. Malcolm**

Maintenance Squadron

Master Sgt. Burt Kelkenberg
Tech. Sgt. **Robert Spahn**

Medical Group

Senior Master Sgt. Virginia Ballester
Master Sgt. **Jeannie Mang**

Mission Support Flight

Master Sgt. **Nella Perrine**
Tech. Sgt. **Heather Sweeney**

Operations

Capt. **Keith Walker**
Tech. Sgt. **Lindsey Sorce**

Security Forces Squadron

Staff Sgt. **Michelle Przybyl**
Master Sgt. **Mark Hajduk**

Services Flight

Chief Master Sgt. **Robert Leiser**
Master Sgt. **Peter Voit**

Support Group

Congratulations

Tech Sgt. **Andrew Rodgers**, Staff Sgt. **Adam Bigelow**, Staff Sgt. **Cody Boillot**, Staff Sgt. **Justin Cecchini**, Staff Sgt. **Derek Miller** and Staff Sgt. **John Neglia** on being selected for navigator positions. Tech Sgt. **Timothy Griffin**, Staff Sgt. **Michael Dieter**, Senior Airman **Suzanne Kingsbury**, Senior Airman **Laura Kruse**, Staff Sgt. **Gregory Sliwa**, and Senior Airman **Nichols Tim** for being selected to cross train into loadmaster positions. Master Sgt. **Patrick Martin**, Staff Sgt. **Michael Bajer** and Staff Sgt. **Dave Carr** for being selected to cross train into flight engineer positions.

Newcomers

Staff Sgt. Stephen Mower, CES, Senior Airman **Kurtis Downey**, Senior Airman **Seth Higley**, CES, Senior Airman **Ryan White**, CES, Airman First Class **Heather Grimm**, Airman First Class **George A. Rublev**, Airman Basic **Steven Cassidy**,



Air Force photo / Senior Master Sgt. Ray Lloyd

Tech Sgt. **Jennifer Weerheim** is tacked with new tech stripes by Lt. Col. **Douglas Hartley** and Col. **Timothy Vaughan**.

Promotions

Adkins, William J., MDG, **Dodge, Roger P.**, SFS, **Varos, Juan B.**, MXS, **Weerheim, Jennifer**, CF, to Tech. Sgt.
Blamowski, Jennifer, ARW, **Curcione, Arthur T.**, CES, **Faron, Marshall J.**, MXS, **Fitzpatrick, Maureen**, CES, **Hurtley, Dolina J.**, CES, **King, Nicholas T.**, CES, **Swanick, Katie M.**, ARW, **Webster, Eric J.**, OPS to Staff Sgt.



Staff Sgt. Angelina Fischer and her husband **Dean** welcomed **Bella** into the world on Dec. 6. She weighed in at 8lbs 15 oz.



Tech. Sgt. **Catherine Perretta** and her husband **Patrick** welcomed **Olivia** into the world Nov. 21.

Information for deployed / deploying military members and their families:

Family members can get a pass to escort an outbound or meet an inbound military passenger at the gate. The family member must go to the airline gate that the military member is flying on. Photo identification will also be needed. Reference Directive 1544-01-10w



Remember when...



Lt. Col. Dave Doyle, Lt. Col. (Then captain) Doug Hartly, Lt. Col. Diane Koren and Senior Master Sgt. (then master sergeant) Theresa Weber prepare for a plunge into Lake Ontario for water survival training, (1991).



The leader of the pack, (the R.A.T pack that is) Carl Brown takes a break from the family day festivities to pose for a breath taking photo, (1991).



Col. Robert J. Kirsch prepares for flight in an F-86H , an all weather fighter interceptor. Air Force Photo/ 1959





Members of the 107th ARW honor guard were asked to help hold the flag during the American and Canadian anthems before the kick off of the 2008 Winter Classic Jan. 1 at Ralph Wilson Stadium in Buffalo. On the left, Tech. Sgt. Joy Holland, CF, on the right, Staff Sgt. Amy Golata, MDG. In the middle, Amy's brother, Cadet Master Sgt. Ben Golata is a student at the United States Air Force Academy.

Mission Support Flight Customer Service Section UTA weekend hours of operation

Saturday

8:00 to 11:00 a.m., 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Sunday

12:30 to 4:00 p.m.

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