Thunder Bird
107th Airlift Wing, New York Air National Guard, Niagara Falls, NY

October 2009

The Vigilant Guard and you

Rescuers will use training aids like this to fine-tune their search and rescue techniques.

On Oct. 30 a simulated earthquake, registering a 5.9 on the Richter scale will devastate the Niagara and Erie counties. This real life exercise is designed to bring together both military and civilian responders from many Eastern states. Teams from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Vermont and others will work alongside New York State military and civilian agencies to coordinate and facilitate all aspects of the weeklong operation.

These exercises will be held around the clock, both on and off base throughout the surrounding communities. One such exercise is that of a simulated structure collapse of a hospital and a parking garage. In the Town of Tonawanda construction crews have been systematically placing a combination of rubble, vehicles and mannequins to create a variety of training scenarios. **Continued Page 2**

CE will be erected tents for sleeping

Vigilant Guard from Page 1

This realistic site with talking mannequins is designed to provide rescuers the ability to perform both search and rescue and search and recovery exercises.

The 107th Airlift Wing will act as the lead unit, and anticipates accommodating up to 5,000 military personnel throughout the exercise. The daily influx of guests will range from 800 to 1200 per day that will need to be fed and housed.

Many 107th squadrons will play a vital role in both the on base and off base operations. For example, security forces will provide 24-hour security on base and at locations throughout the exercise arena. Services are providing two hot meals a day for military participants and CE is helping to construct a tent city that will house 300 of the soldiers each night. The remaining military members will be divided up between billeting, two hangars and the old fire station. Cadillacs will be brought in for showers and toilet facilities.

Driving by the base that week onlookers will see a wide array of military vehicles and aircraft. The general public in the surrounding communities may encounter a convoy that is on their way to or from an exercise. They may see one of the many choppers that will be responding to the scenario to EVAC the casualties.

Public affairs is spreading the word via civilian media outlets but if your neighbor has a look like it's the end of the world, give them the heads up, it's just an exercise.

The Naval Militia be patrolling the waterways

107th Airlift Wing

Niagara Falls, N.Y

Commander

Col. Patrick Ginavan

Vice Commander

Col. James McCready

Executive Officer

Lt. Col. Deanna Miller

THUNDERBIRD

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The eagle has landed

Col. Patrick Ginavan gives Cooper Mack a boost. Cooper along with his mother, Susan, were on hand to help promote his dad and her husband Lt. Col. Mike Mack to the 136th's newest full bird colonel.

Key to association: successful relationships

By Lt. Col. Doug Eoute

Now that we are in full swing with the association, it's apparent that the success of a particular area, whether at the Wing, Group, Squadron, or even shop level, is heavily dependent on the building of healthy relationships. Certainly having a common focus on a unified goal and clear, concise communication channels would have aided the development of these relationships. However as we struggle to form the ambiguously defined "ARC Association," it is often difficult to determine what the goal or desired end state is and how each piece fits into the association puzzle. Add to these difficulties of overcoming cultural differences and differing communication channels (two LANS etc.), it can be a frustratingly slow uphill battle.

In the Maintenance Group there are several areas that found success overcoming these obstacles where others have struggled. Take for example Quality Assurance and the ISO DOCS. At the heart of each success story lays one common theme: the individuals concerned concentrated much of their efforts on building healthy relationships with their counterparts. In order to foster an atmosphere where these relationships could grow, a few harsh realities had to be embraced and some old school thinking tossed out. Phrases like "this is the way we've always done it" and "it's my way or the highway" were replaced with "let's try it" and "why do you do it that way?" Compromise and a willingness to embrace change became the way forward resulting in a sum greater than the parts. In those instances where compromise couldn't be reached, individuals often agreed to disagree and up channeled for guidance, then moved forward without a sense of loss if the decision didn't go their way. Trust and mutual respect grew, enabling a healthy, productive relationship between the two shops, benefitting the association as a whole.

I am sure that each of you can think of an example of a successful partnership in this association. Those who have succeeded should be applauded an emulated. I know that their example has helped me as I struggle with my own stubborn, prideful ways when dealing with my counterparts. Perhaps if we as individuals are more mindful of the importance of building these relationships, we too can become examples of the way ahead as we continue down the road to building a successful and historic ARC association.

Your Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station Base Honor Guard presented the Colors for an Enlistment / Re-enlistment Ceremony that took place at the Ralph on Oct 11th. On that same date, prior the start of the Bills/Browns game the Honor Guard presented the Colors during the singing of the National Anthem as Niagara Falls C-130's performed a flyby.

The Honor Guard's primary focus is Military Funeral Details but is also called upon to perform at civic events. If you are interested in honoring those who served before you with dignity while earning extra retirement points and pay, then the Honor Guard might suite you. Currently we are in need of 107th members who are in good standings with their units to attend a 5-day training course Nov. 17 through Nov. 21. We only ask that you be able to perform a minimum of 2 days per month.

If you would like to learn more about the Honor Guard or would like to become a member contact us at 716-236-3182 or our work cell phone at 716-622-0494.

Antiterrorism & Force Protection

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MS-13 Smuggles Muslim Terrorists into U.S.

Paul Williams, PhD

Al Qaeda and the Latino Gang-Bangers

The situation at the border now poses a grave threat to national security. Agent Mike Scioli of the U.S. Border Patrol confirms that the Tucson sector of the Border Patrol is facing a worsening problem with Mara Salvatrucha, a Salvadoran street gang that now controls the flow of arms, drugs, and illegal aliens into the U.S. Two members of the violent gang were collared last week in Tucson and Nogales. Twenty have been brought into custody since President Barack Obama assumed the oath of office on January 20, 2009. But the Salvadoran gang is bringing more than guns, dope, and Mexican peasant workers over the border.

In the wake of 9/11, Mara Salvatrucha attracted the attention of top al Qaeda officials, who realized that the gang could be used to smuggle operatives and weapons into the United States. An agreement was forged between the terrorists and the gang-bangers. In exchange for safe passage across the border, al Qaeda – through its cells in South America – agreed to pay the Maras from $30,000 to $50,000 for each sleeper agent they managed to smuggle into the country with bogus matricula consulars.

Matricula consulars are official identification cards that are issued by the Mexican government through its consular offices. The cards verify that the bearers are Mexican citizens who are living outside of Mexico with the government's permission.

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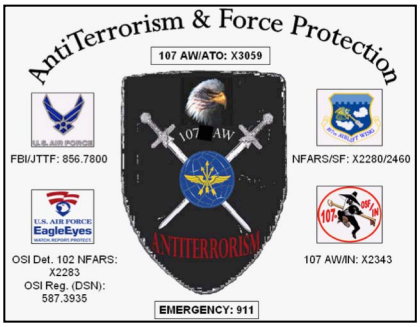
Antiterrorism & Force Protection



According to U.S. officials, these cards pose a grave threat to national security. Steven McCraw, assistant director of the FBI's Office of Intelligence, told a House Judiciary Subcommittee: "The ability of foreign nationals to use the matricula consular provides an opportunity for terrorists to move freely within the United States without triggering name-based watch lists that are disseminated to local police officers."

Counterfeit matricula consulars are easy to obtain. In Los Angeles, the going rate is $90; in New York City, $150.

News of the alliance between al Qaeda and Mara Salvatrucha prompted Honduran officials, including Security Minister Oscar Alvarez, to adopt a zero-tolerance law that makes membership in the street gang punishable by 12 years in prison. Mara members responded to this legislation by beheading scores of victims and leaving notes on the bodies for the Honduran government. One note read: "Idiots, the end of the world is approaching."

According to border patrol officials, including Sheriff D'Wayne Jenigan of Del Rio, Texas, thousands of Special Interest Aliens (SIAs), with the help of Mara Salvatrucha "coyotes," have made their way across the Mexican border and into the land of the free and the home of the brave.
Such SIAs come from countries that pose national security concerns: Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, Somalia, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, and even Iraq.

The routes used by illegal aliens to enter the U.S. have become littered with discarded Muslim prayer blankets, pages from Islamic texts, and Arabic newspapers. Law enforcement officials have named such passageways "terrorists' alleys" and a street leading north from the city of Douglas, Arizona, as "Arab Road."

On the path to success

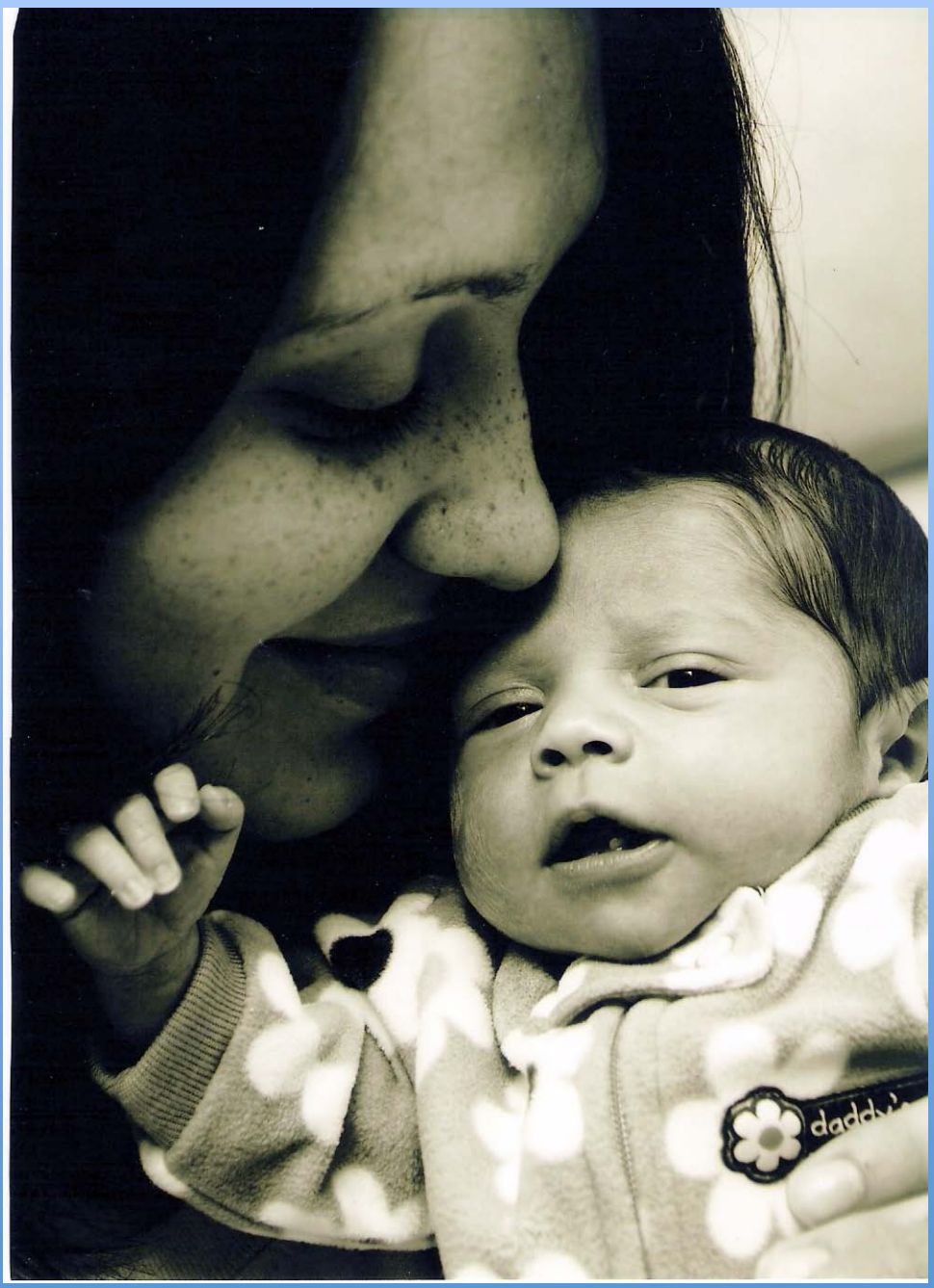
Chief Master Sgt. Gary N Ruminski,

When I last wrote an article for the Thunderbird, we were in the midst of a conversion, scheduling FTT schools and trying to figure out what an Air Reserve Component Association should look like. The article I wrote was about setting priorities and scheduling your time to attend Field Training Team Schools for our conversion to the C-130 here at Niagara. One year later, we are light years ahead of where we were, having overcome significant challenges along the way. We'll take a moment to reflect on the success of the past year as we prepare for our next challenge.

The Maintenance Group has spent the last year fundamentally transforming the way we do business. To name a few challenges we have had to overcome we; completed FTT schools, completed core task training, implemented Training Business Area, shifted to a new tool and equipment control program TAS, all while trying to maintain aircraft availability above the AFRC mandated 75 percent FMC rate. Several maintenance shops performed physical co-locations and merged operations. We maintained an ever increasingly aggressive flying schedule and last but not least, as the first ever ARC association, we completed a Maintenance Standardization and Evaluation Program Inspection where we received the second highest grade given by the MSEP team in the last 4 years.

Now it's time to shift gears from preparation to implementation. We are deploying to Puerto Rico during the month of October taking the hand off from our associate unit, the 914th AW. This will be the first deployment with the C-130 for many Maintenance Squadron personnel. There has been a lot of preparation leading up to this deployment. To name a few things, we have been busy ensuring proper test equipment is available and ready to deploy, identifying and packing bench stock items and having technical data on hand. This is the time to put your skills to the test and demonstrate how all the hard work, preparation and training pays off. The accomplishments that have been made during the past 12 months are unbelievable. Thank you everyone for pulling it all together and performing in the traditional way of the 107th which is at your very best, so that we can continue to contribute to the Air Force mission to Fly, Fight and Win.

Isn't she cute



Kaitlyn Marie daughter of our very own Staff Sgt. Lydia Hernandez SFS, entered the world Aug 31, weighing in at 4 pounds 4 ounces. Let's not forget to congratulate the grandmother, Master Sgt. Lydia Bovenzi, MXM.

Catholic Mass

Saturday 4 p.m., Base Chapel

Protestant Worship

Saturday 4 p.m.,
Wing Conference Room, Building 901

The Rosary

Fridays prior to UTA at noon,
Wing Conference Room, Building 901
For service schedules of **Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim,** and **Orthodox** communities, call extension 2395.

If you need to see a chaplain, please call Chaplain Services at extension 2395, or at the numbers listed below. Chaplains are always on call.

Catholic Chaplain

Lt. Col. James P. Jaeger
St. Mary's Church
32 E. Morris St.
Bath, NY 14810
Phone: (315) 597-4571

Protestant Chaplain

Maj. Jackie Ann Rose Kraft
Asbury United Methodist Church
3750 Millesport Highway
Getzville NY 14068
Office: (716) 688-8677
Home: (716) 625-6266

1st Lt. Keith A. Manry
Akron First United Methodist
7 Church St.
Akron, NY 14001
Office: (716) 542-2060
Home: (716) 542-9567

Keep your eyes up

Chaplain, 1Lt, Keith A. Manry

In September, General Stanley McChrystal, our top commander in Afghanistan, warned that unless more troops are sent that the 8-year-old war "will likely result in failure." With 62,000 US troops and 6,000 more promised by the end of the year, a war that has ramped up sharply in the past year, and a resurgence of the Taliban, the war in Afghanistan is not only becoming an unpopular war, but it's a mission that is also becoming discouraging. As those in command struggle with decisions about the future of our forces in Afghanistan some might view this war as mission impossible or at the very least, mission discouraging. But we as those who have sworn an oath to protect our nation from her adversaries are called upon to keep our chins up and be prepared to serve wherever we are sent even when the cost is potentially great, and even when the outcome is uncertain. We must remain encouraged. We must find a place from whence we can draw strength. Because a mission we believe to be impossible becomes a mission that is discouraging.

This was the dilemma of King David, an ancient commander spoken highly of in the Hebrew Scriptures known to Christians as the Old Testament. King David, a brilliant military commander, was also a gifted musician and poet. In many of his poems and songs that have been recorded in the book of Psalms the King shares his own frustrations. He frequently laments his situation and the situation of his subjects. On one occasion he says, *for without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my life.* Time and again the King laments that he and his subjects endeavor to do what's right yet they are persecuted and treated unfairly. Many times that persecution leads him to wonder whether victory is in fact possible. And frequently unwarranted persecution leaves him discouraged. In Psalm 35:12 he laments that his *soul is forlorn.* All because a mission believed to be impossible is a mission that is discouraging.

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107th AW awards

Col. Patrick Ginavan presents First Sgt. Vincent Kalota with a plaque for First Sergeant of the Year 2008.

Col. Patrick Ginavan presents Tech. Sgt. Matthew Cascarino a certificate of completion on a two-year degree in criminal justice through the Community College of the Air Force.

The 107th welcomes

Capt. Jennifer Mills swears in the 107th Medical Group's newest officer, 1st Lt. Michael Gray.

Lt. Col. Deanna Miller swears in CE's newest member Staff Sgt. Michael Payne.

Cookies and juice; anyone

Tech. Sgt. Elijah Williams screeches like a little girl, as blood is drained from his body. The sergeant along with many other 107th members took time out of their busy drill schedule to make a difference in a stranger's life. Septembers UTA blood drive sponsored by Upstate New York Transplant Services, yielded pints in the double digits. The need for blood around the holiday time increases substantially; more people are traveling, resulting in more automobile accidents. On average, an accident victim that suffers severe blood loss will require 50 or more units. This is on top of the weekly demand of a 1000 plus units for the Western New York region. Healthy adults can donate every 56 days, but on average, donating adults only donate once a year. Keep a vein out, the 107th routinely invites both the Red Cross and UNYTS out to the base for blood drives.

A little about how I became First Sergeant

By First Sgt. Dean Morris

When someone asked me am I going to be applying for the first sergeant job opening I said, "I don't really know what they do." I've had some interaction with First Sergeants but mostly just to say hi or read their article in the T-bird. I see them run the formations and give the Family Care briefing. I asked myself "Can I do that?" "Would I be able to answer the questions that would help Airmen solve their problems?" "Do I have the ability to write an article in the Thunderbird once a year?" My biggest fear was that I didn't want to get in over my head and in the process give someone the wrong information. But I enjoy helping people and the job looked to me that it was the best route to do that.

I went to a few interviews and was given the Maintenance First Sergeant Position. The first thing I needed to do was go to First Sergeant School in Maxwell, Ala. for 3 weeks. Before I even started school I knew I was over my head. I was sewing chevrons on my dress uniform at 0130 in the morning because I had the wrong size chevron on my blues. Then when class started I was really sinking fast when they started throwing all the acronyms around. I kept raising my hand and asking "What does that stand for? What do you mean by that?" Luckily, I had a good class around me and we all helped each other through it and I was able to learn a lot and graduate.

The Thursday before my first drill as a First Sergeant I attended the First Sergeant Council meeting. That's where I found my support group, my fellow First Shirts. They answered all my questions, gave me advice, e-mailed information I would need and most importantly, gave me their cell phone numbers. At that meeting we collect drug testing letters, pay rosters and other information we need to get out to all the shops. Then I had to prepare a First Sergeant Meeting notes for all the supervisors and officers, which I learned quickly that my note taking was seriously lacking. I made a mental note to write down more information so I can get better information to the squadron.

Saturday of the UTA I have found 0600 is a good time to start the day. Drug letters need to be signed and handed out, pay rosters need to be copied and dispersed, and about 100 e-mails need to be attended to. Next comes the commanders meeting were I learned to put my cell phone on vibrate (why would anyone call me at 0800 in the morning?). When that meeting is over, the rest of the drill is a free-for-all. I'm expected to handle whatever comes my way and I'll tell you all- more than enough stuff comes to occupy my day.

Probably my most important task is to make sure the pay rosters are collected, correct, copied, signed and turned into to finance. That task usually completes my drill weekend.

Now I know what the job consists of and I am glad I was given the opportunity to be the Maintenance First Sergeant. I look forward to my first deployment so I can see that aspect of the job. Everyday I've worked this job I've meet someone new, sometimes to help them other times they're helping me, and I feel thankful to have done that. This job allowed me to meet people I never would have met and see a different side of how the unit works. **Continued on Page 15**

First shirt continued from Page 14

I've been asked "Do I regret taking this job?" 100 percent no. I would do it again in a heartbeat. Are there parts of it I don't like? Of course there are, I get very nervous talking in front of groups but hopefully I will overcome that and I'm definitely not the best writer around. One thing I think should be said is if you apply for the First Sergeant position it should be because you want the job and not because you want the stripe (don't get me wrong the stripe is nice to have).

Chaplain continued from Page 10

Somehow David managed to snap out of that discouragement, not once, but repeatedly. There were low moments in his life as evidenced in his writing, but this great leader was only successful and remembered in Scriptures because he found a place of encouragement. He found a place from whence he could draw strength. In Psalm 37 he counsels others: *Do not fret because of the wicked…for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb. Trust in the* Lord *and do good.* David's source of encouragement when the mission seemed impossible was his faith in the God who was bigger than his adversaries. And his confidence was based in the belief that God was just and would one day avenge his enemies.

As we continue to face this formidable foe in Afghanistan there will undoubtedly be more controversy in the months to come between politicians and military commanders over how to best handle this difficult war. Yet we must continue to serve. And we must not allow what some will call an impossible mission to become a discouraging mission. Some of our unit is deployed to Afghanistan and some will soon deploy. As we serve let us rely on our faith. May your faith be like that of David who when faced with a seemingly impossible mission found encouragement in knowing that the wicked will fade like the grass. In the mean time let's keep our chins up, and more importantly our *eyes up* relying on the one whose strength and power are greater than any foe we will ever encounter.