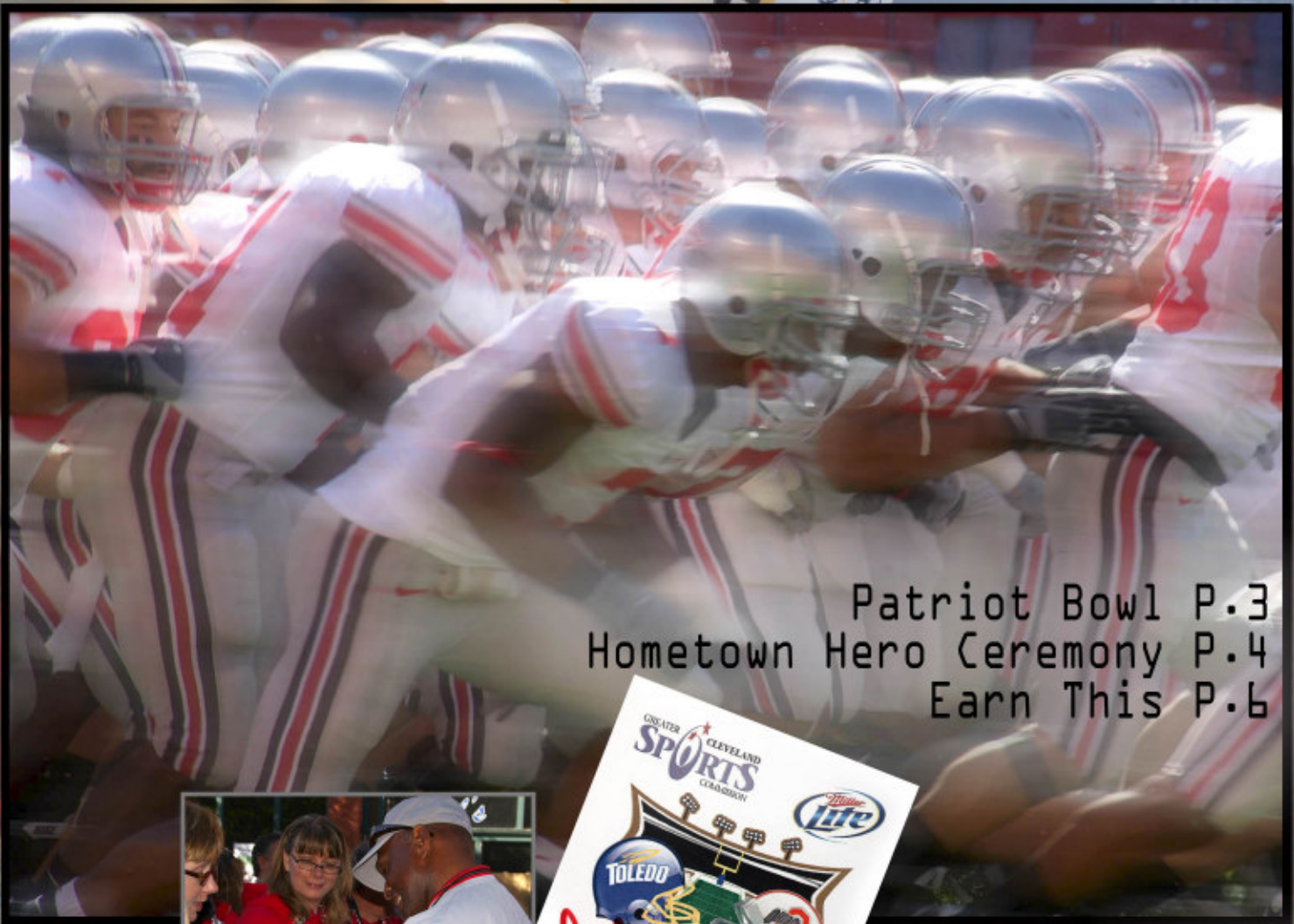


BUCKEYE AIRLIFTER

OCTOBER 2009

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OFFICIAL GAME BALL

Reflection from the Chaplain Section



By Chaplain, Troy A. Diersing
179th Chaplains Office

We have all heard the old expression, a penny for your thought, but the problem with such a request is that some thoughts are not worth hearing, no matter how much money is involved. The human brain never stops working and new thoughts and ideas are constantly flooding our minds. For example, whenever I awake in the middle of the night it usually takes me a long time to fall back to sleep because of all the things that come to mind about the day ahead. We may not be able to stop our minds from thinking of new things, but we do have the ability to control what we are thinking about. We read these words in Philippians 4:8, "...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things." We need to fill our minds with the good things of life not with things that we would be ashamed to share with someone else. As a closing thought, what we think about is a true reflection of who we are as a person.



Local firefighter lends a hand in theater

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Q. Hill
179th Public Affairs Journalist

Even while deployed halfway across the world, members of the 179th Airlift Wing are representing the unit and representing it well. A letter recently made its way back to the 179th from Major Gary Farley who is the Iraqi Ground Forces Command Advisor. In the letter he described the selfless acts of Senior Master Sgt. Judson Shull from the 179th Fire Department and one of Shull's troops, Airman First Class Bissett, whose home base was not given.

According to the letter, black smoke was seen coming from the Iraqi family housing area while the troops were on a scouting event. Shull and Bissett immediately responded to the scene of the fire.

Iraqi fire fighters also responded but only a limited number of firemen were engaged inside the structure. Farley reported seeing only three Iraqi fire fighters in protective gear and oxygen masks fighting within the burning structure.

Upon seeing how quickly the Iraqis were becoming fatigued, Shull and Bissett "provided the direction and relief required to put out the fire," Farley said.

After checking on the families and clearing the surrounding area, Shull and Bissett

entered the burning structure and led efforts to isolate and control the fire, "without concern for themselves or oxygen masks," Farley continued.

They helped the Iraqis pull the hoses, braced the fireman on the hose and even manned the hose at one point.

When the fire was eventually put out, two homes were destroyed. However, as a result of Shull and Bissett's efforts the row of ten homes attached to the rear of the fire were not harmed.

Farley stated, "Without them, the Iraqi firemen would have become too disoriented and overcome with exhaustion to fight the fire. Shull's experience and calmness under pressure provided the leadership to extinguish the blaze. Bissett's courage and endurance provided the strength to break through walls and doors and allowed the firefighters to access critical areas."

Farley ended his letter with this great remark about Shull and his troop, "Perhaps what I described is all part their duty as firefighters, but as I reflect on the selfless actions of these two Air-



men, I feel a sense of pride in serving in Iraq with them."

As the 179th continues their support of the current AEF rotation, letters like this are wonderful in showing that despite the hardships that come with deployment overseas, members of the 179th will continue to provide the excellence in service for which this base is known.



179th Recruiters sponsor Patriot Bowl

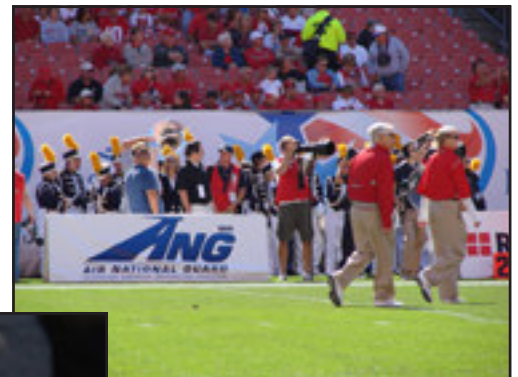
By 1st Lt. Nicole L. Ashcroft
179th Chief of Public Affairs



While 30,000+ fans cheered during the tailgate party on W. 6th Street in Cleveland, Ohio on Saturday September 19, 2009, members of the 179th Airlift Wing provided recruitment services for the Ohio Air National Guard (ANG) that lead to 336 leads.

During this year's FirstMerit Patriot Bowl, the Toledo Rockets took on the OSU Buckeyes. This match-up led to the stadium being filled with 92,650 screaming fans ~ the perfect venue to market the Ohio National Guard. The day began with 179th recruiters and members marketing at the Tailgate party...a tailgate party where attendees entered through a large inflatable ANG football helmet. After entering, fans came upon the Ohio ANG booth where they could select from a number of give-aways like necklaces, megaphones, tee shirts, cups, frisbees and much more in both teams' colors. While visiting the booth, guests could complete lead cards; throughout the day, recruiters collected a record number of lead cards. Near the end of the pre-game tailgate party, Archie Griffin, Brutus Buckeye, OSU Band, OSU Cheerleaders and SMSgt Mark Wolfenden, Ohio ANG Recruitment and Retention Manager, took time to speak for the crowd of 30,000+ roaring fans.

The game kicked off with TSgt Josh Blakley and Wolfenden joining in the huddle as "co-captains" for the coin toss; right after the F-16 flyover by the 180th Fighter Wing. During the game, the jumbotron was filled with ANG commercials, ANG text scrolled throughout the stadium, ANG signs sat upon the field, members tossed tee-shirts into the crowd, and a variety of other ANG marketing took place.



Photos by Master Sgt. Lisa Haun

179th Airlift Wing holds first Hometown Heroes Ceremony

By 1st Lt. Nicole Ashcroft
179th Chief of Public Affairs

Many 179th members are unsure of what the Hometown Heroes Salute program is and why they must attend the ceremony on Saturday. What they don't realize is what a tremendous honor this is and how proud their families and loved ones will be to attend.

On Saturday, October 3, 2009, the 179th Airlift Wing will honor approximately 500 of their Airmen in the first ever Hometown Heroes Salute Award Ceremony at Mansfield Senior High School at 1:00 p.m.

The ANG Hometown Heroes Salute recognition program was sanctioned by Gen. Craig R. McKinley, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, in August 2008. The purpose of this program is to celebrate and honor Airmen, families, communities and those special supporters who have significantly contributed to supporting our Airmen and the ANG's mission.

Recognized in this ceremony will be guardsmen that have deployed over 30 consecutive days in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Noble

Eagle and other peacekeeping operations across the globe since 9/11 through December 31, 2008.

The 179th members being recognized will receive a framed letter from the director that contains the Hometown Heroes Salute Coin. Senior Airman Joseph D. Harwood was instrumental in helping the National Guard Bureau in designing this nationally recognized coin.

During this ceremony, not only will the member be recognized, but their spouse or significant other, children and center of influence. The honored Airmen's spouse or significant other will receive engraved pen/pencil set with the ANG Hometown Heroes Salute Logo. The Airman's children will receive unique Hometown Heroes Salute dog tags. Lastly, each honored Airman will receive one Hometown Heroes Salute Logo Medallion to recognize their Center of Influence for outstanding support during their deployment.

The experience you will have during this ceremony will help you fully understand how proud your community, family, military leaders, fellow guardsmen and nation are of you and your service. You will see how deeply your service to our country is appreciated...an event that every member of the 179th Airlift Wing will be proud and honored to attend.



Welcome to the Family

NAME: Enola Grace Bunker
BIRTHDAY: August 7, 2009
WEIGHT: 9lb 10oz
LENGTH: 21.5 inches
PARENTS: Keith & Lisa Bunker



National Disability Employment Awareness

I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion...

And so, these words are uttered by every Department of Defense (DOD) Service member, active, reserve, enlisted, officer, and civilian when accepting the awesome responsibility of defending freedom.

Since the beginning of the Global War of Terrorism (GWOT), soldiers, sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guard personnel, and civilians have made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom, while thousands of others have been wounded serving our nation against terrorism.

This year's **2009 National Disability Employment Awareness Month** theme, "Americans with Disabilities: Ready for the Global Workforce," is most fitting, as some individuals who were wounded in the GWOT are allowed to continue their service, while others are released from service, thus entering the civilian labor force.

The DOD, along with other Federal agencies and profit and nonprofit organizations, are diligently working together, ensuring our wounded heroes and their families receive the highest caliber of care and compassion through their respective recovery periods and beyond.

Earn this...

By Master Sgt. Robert Jones
179th Public Affairs Broadcaster

As a member of the 179th Airlift Wing in Mansfield, Ohio I accept the possibilities of being called to duty especially in these times. While I have served in this unit for more than 25 years I have never received that activation call. I have done many short term deployments of several weeks but nothing in direct support of the war.

Last spring I decided to make the call to the National Guard Bureau after I became aware of a need for service. So began my first activation, my duty assignment, the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations Center in Dover, Delaware. Not dangerous duty certainly but it had more of a punch than I anticipated.

AFMAO

AFMAO, is a new organization; it came into being December of 2008. AFMAO is charged with Air Force wide mortuary responsibility and operation of the Department of Defense's sole Port Mortuary at Dover Air Force Base. All war related deaths of all services come through this facility.

The Mortuary receives the fallen, positively identifies each individual, performs autopsies, and prepares the service member for burial and sends the service member to their home and family. If you saw the film "Taking Chance" you saw a brief but accurate indication of the work done at AFMAO. The core tenant of the organization is to provide, "Dignity, Honor and Respect" for the fallen while giving "Care, Service and Support" to the families. There is a permanent staff of Air Force and civilian workers who form the framework that operates the facility. In addition, another 70 or so Guard, Reserve and Active Duty Air Force members fill out the ranks that provide services needed to complete this sacred mission. AFMAO is an excellent example of the Total Force in action. My experience is that this integration of service types at the facility was seamless.

In addition, in April a new policy began where news media, when approved by the family, could be present as our fallen service members come home to America. This new procedure involves full notification to all approved press, which is a very long list. Almost always the only press at any transfer was an Associated Press photographer. On those occasions where other media did attend they were always respectful and understood the solemn nature of the process. The first timers were generally unable to speak afterwards and many cried.

Duties

My job was in the newly formed AFMAO Public Affairs office. Specifically, I was charged with videotaping the fallen service members as they were moved from the transport aircraft to a vehicle for movement to the Mortuary in what is called a "Dignified Transfer".

While this is not by definition a "ceremony", this sequence of events is important because it is the first time our fallen come to American soil. It is a time for a payment of respect here at home to a fellow service member.

Each branch of service provides their own specially trained carry team that lifts the transfer case from the aircraft and carries it to the vehicle. They carry their fallen brother or sister in front of the family, if they have chosen to come, and most do. During my tour, more than 75 percent of the time family members were present.

My job was clear and the task seemed easy enough, but then you see your first flag draped transfer case. You are immediately struck that this case has the body of an American who died half way around the world usually about 30 hours ago. The reality of it all gives you pause. You naturally reflect on yourself and what you have done as a service member and citizen to earn the sacrifice this person has made. It is very much like one of the final scenes in the movie "Saving Private Ryan" where the captain, played by Tom Hanks, lies dying. He knows he will soon be dead and that he has lost most of his men saving this one man. He looks at Ryan and says, "Earn this."

The grief of the family lies heavy on the flight line. This is a solemn occasion many times filled with tears and anguish and always with a sense of great loss. More than once I and other members, even carry team individuals, were deeply affected by the emotion expressed by family members.

For the family, the Dignified Transfer is the first tangible evidence of their loss in a whirlwind of events that began usually about a day before the transfer. They were notified of the loss and the list of decisions they must quickly make is long and daunting. It is a time filled with exhaustion that will not end until their loved one is finally home.

There are Chaplains and fellow service liaison team members of the fallen surrounding the family to console them as best they can. The question is, how do you help the mother, spouse, child or sibling the very first time they see the evidence of their great loss? These service specific liaison team members become an extension of the family and are with them the brief but entire time they are in Delaware.

After a particular difficult Dignified Transfer the lead Chaplain, David Sparks, a veteran of many hundreds of these occasions told me he was nearly speechless. No one is immune from the loss and all feel the pain of the family. Every time a family authorized media I was on the flight line with my fellow videographer TSgt Anita Tallant from Moody AFB, a 22 year veteran in the regular Air Force. The aircraft, on normal supply rotation flights, came in at all hours of the day and night. More than once I watched the sun go down one day with a transfer and saw dawn the following day as yet another aircraft arrived. The video team recorded the action on the flight line with two cameras. We worked next to DoD photographers who also captured the event with still images. In all, more than 30 individuals were involved in every single transfer. Carry team members, chap-

lains, chaplain assistants, service liaison team members, mental health professionals, funeral directors, drivers, the Dignified Transfer commander and his team, USO workers, security police, protocol personnel and command specific representatives all are on hand in the Dignified Transfer process.

After each Dignified Transfer I would edit the video and produce a DVD of the transfer and would place the DoD still images on the disc for the family. For me the hardest time was during the editing process. While working several hours editing each transfer I had to listen over and over to the cries of the family and see the effect of the transfer in the eyes and on the faces of carry team members. More than once I had to take a walk and clear my head during one of these sessions.

I videotaped these Dignified Transfers nearly 100 times during my summer deployment of 90 plus days. The work was clearly the most meaningful I have ever done. While my part in the Dignified Transfer process was small I know the family will treasure the DVD I produced and will play it often. The average age of those coming through Dover was about 22. Because of this I know that in many cases a young man or woman will watch the DVD as their parent tells them about their Dad or Mother who died in the war.

The lack of schedule and the relentless nature of these returning flights was the hardest part physically. Add the emotional aspects of this job to the lack of sleep and you have a potential for human failure.

In this regard AFMAO was well equipped with their Resiliency Team. This team is made up of personnel like Reservist MSgt Robin Raine, a Psychological Health Advocate Technician trained to recognize and handle individuals under stress. The program had daily activities to keep you connected as they addressed your mental health. The program was designed to serve the four quadrants of wellness: mental, spiritual, social/emotional, and physical. The program is unique in the Air Force and will serve as a benchmark for others to follow.

On occasion while doing my duties I would see our fallen service members as they lay in their coffins being readied for their final trip home. At times I saw members wrapped much like mummies to cover burns. At other times all I saw were the empty uniforms laying over what was left of war torn bodies.

On one particular occasion I was present when a young man we had videotaped the night before was carefully taken from his transfer case. The receiving crew was cataloging his personal effects so that they could be sent home. He was still dressed in his battle uniform.

I first noticed his hands. You could tell that this young man had been in the dirt as the grime was packed under his finger nails. His face and hair were dirty as well and you could smell the soil from thousands of miles away. He looked - calm. I know that may sound strange but that is the only word I can think of to describe him.

Judging from the dust and dirt this soldier had clearly been having a hot, hard day on the other side of the world just hours before. I remember thinking as bad as his day was it got tragically worse the moment before he died. And now his family and a nation weep for his loss.

The Debt

While I was working in AFMAO I met the Secretary of the Air Force, The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. These men didn't have to come to Dover. They came out of respect and to see and feel first-hand the sacrifice that is being asked of the military. I will never forget the look in the eyes of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates as he shook my hand and spoke to me. It seemed to me that he felt the loss and the weight of the decisions he had to make to defend our nation.

The solemn nature of the work done at AFAMO is reflected by the people who do it. From the AFMAO Commander, Colonel Robert Edmondson, to the two stripe airman doing the most common task; all preformed their jobs with the highest professionalism. Some individuals have come back for tours of duty 6 times and more. It is clearly more than just a job to them.

The head of the Army liaison team at the mortuary was, Master Sergeant Walter R. Ritzannio from Cleveland, Ohio. He is known affectionately as "Top" and is the father figure of the Army team at Dover. He is the definition of a soldier's, soldier.

One day Top came over and asked that I record a message he had collected on his cell phone. It was from a father whose son had recently come through Dover. In his message the father related that he had been an, "Angry guilt ridden man" when he arrived to see his son's Dignified Transfer. After his treatment by the Army and the treatment of his son by AFMAO he was proud again of his son and the job he had done. The recording sent shivers down my spine. This is why we were at Dover.

I would encourage everyone to deploy if the opportunity arises. It forces you to grow and gain new respect for the military and the job we do even after many years in the service. Remember that somewhere in the world American men and women are standing on the front lines defending us against an enemy that has vowed to kill us.

As you enjoy your video games, time with family and friends or a dinner out on the town remember the debt you owe. Live your life in a way that justifies the sacrifice being made for you. Be a good and honorable American, whatever that means to you.

And remember, for the great American opportunity we have been given, we all must be thankful every day. Earn the sacrifice made for you that gives you this treasure and pass it on. "Earn This."

179th members return home Sept 11th & 12th

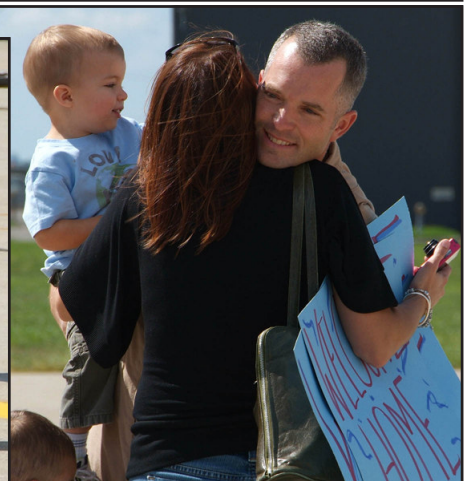


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 SSgt Joshua Anton
 SSgt Jacob Ash
 LtCol Wil Baulkmom
 LtCol Steve Bean
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 TSgt Brandon Burnworth
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MSgt Virginia Westover
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TSgt Aaron Zieber



Command Post Airmen key to operational success

By Staff Sgt. Daniel Martinez
506th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

KIRKUK REGIONAL AIR BASE, Iraq – Command post Airmen have a demanding job where their expertise, quick actions and the information they control are depended on for mission success.

Working a number of operational tasks, they disseminate alarm conditions, weather, and emergency response notifications, while also having a role in flight operations and maintaining accountability of Air Force assets.

“Basically, we’re the eyes and ears of the commander and the nerve center of the base,” said Master Sgt. Vanessa Trujillo, 506th Air Expeditionary Group, command post superintendent, deployed here from Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley Air Force Base, Va.

Sergeant Trujillo elaborated about the important role command post plays in Air Force operations.

“We’re responsible for flight following (mission execution information) the aircraft that come in and out (of Kirkuk Air Base) ... if the aircraft experiences maintenance problems, and the crew has to remain overnight we coordinate with higher headquarters and provide the logistical support needed,” she said. “We do the initial notifications for all the response teams, such as the fire department, security forces and the explosive ordnance disposal team, we also posture the base populace in the appropriate alarm conditions during base attacks. Whenever there is something sig-

nificant on the base, we’re the focal point for that, the nerve center.”

Working behind the scenes, the Airmen compile information from various base agencies and relay it to the commander, helping him make informed decisions.

“The most important aspect of our job I would say is to keep the commander informed,” said Senior Airman Allyson Youngman, 506th AEG, command post controller, deployed here from the 179th Airlift Wing, Mansfield, Ohio. “Anything that happens with flight operations, or any personnel, we make sure he knows what’s going on.”

Command post most notably takes center stage when an urgent message needs to be communicated to the base immediately. They accomplish this by using a network of loudspeakers around the base, known as the giant voice.

“When the base is threatened, we get on the giant voice to let people know they are in danger and to take appropriate actions,” said Staff Sgt. Todd Leach, 506th AEG, command post controller, deployed here from the 15th Airlift Wing, Hickam AFB, Hawaii. “When I get on the giant voice it’s validating my purpose here.”

Thinking back, Sergeant Leach recalled one particular incident that epitomizes the purpose of command post.

“We had a C-130 fly in and when it got into its parking spot it had hot brakes – when the brakes get really hot and start

smoking, they can seize together,” he said. “So the aircraft smelled of smoke and they called us on the radio. We called the fire department and shortly afterward, the airfield goes to alarm red because of indirect fire and the aircrew evacuated the airplane.”

Multitasking, command post alerted base personnel of the threat, summoned emergency response units and accounted for the aircrew to make sure they were safe.

“When it rains, it pours,” Sergeant Leach said with a smile. “It wasn’t anything unusual but it all happened at once with this C-130.”

Through alarm conditions, accountability, and notifications, the command post is taking in stride the responsibilities that often go unnoticed by those outside their career field.

Airman Youngman added, “Our job is important because we have everything to do with what goes on. If something happens, we know who to notify and call and who to get out there to respond to the situation.”



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Stories or story ideas may be submitted to the Public Affairs Office for publication consideration in the Buckeye Airlifter. Information should be emailed to nicole.ashcroft@ohmans.ang.af.mil. The Buckeye Airlifter is a monthly publication.

NOVEMBER 09 DEADLINE: Sunday 4 Oct 09

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