

NEW YORK

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The **AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

# Skibird



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

Fall 2011

## AFTER IRENE



# Air Force leaders issue 9/11 message

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Roy issued the following message to the Airmen of the U.S. Air Force:

September 11, 2011, marks the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks that claimed the lives of nearly 3,000 innocent people -- at the World Trade Center; at Shanksville, Pa.; and at the Pentagon -- and affected the lives of countless others across our great country and beyond. In all, 90 countries lost citizens, and people the world over would condemn these acts of terrorism.

This tragic event altered our view of the world and sparked a global effort to combat terrorism and the conditions that give rise to extremism. We are proud of the international efforts that have led to the capture or killing of many of the terrorist leaders, but our success has not come without significant cost. As we reflect on the horrific day that marked the beginning of our struggle to better secure the world from these threats, we honor the tremendous selfless service that today still distinguishes American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen, comprising the most dedicated, professional and powerful military force in the world. We also recognize that the need for

sacrifice is not over.

We sincerely thank you and your families for what you have done for your country to date, and thank you in advance for bravely facing our future challenges. Please take a moment this day to reflect on the tragic losses of September 11, 2001, as well as the losses and wounds that we have suffered in our campaign to maintain security for our Nation since that fateful day. Today, we also remember the families and friends of the lost and wounded, who bear the heaviest burden, whose loneliness we seek to ease, and whose sacrifice we hold in the highest regard.

## Commander's Call

# Thanks for all your hard work, dedication

By Col. Gary James  
Outgoing 109th Operations Group commander

While it's hard to believe summer is almost over, it's also hard to believe we are finally done with more than a year's worth of major inspections! I know many of you sacrificed a great deal of your time, especially your spring and summer getting ready for the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). Col. Timothy LaBarge (109th Airlift Wing commander), Col. John Russo (109th AW vice commander), Col. Mary Burrus (109th Mission Support Group commander), Col. Mary Brandt (109th Medical Group commander), Col. Shawn Clouthier (109th Maintenance Group commander) and I thank each and every one of you who made the personal sacrifices to step up and ensure we were ready. We are very proud of your accomplishments showcasing our collective talent to those who inspect. The Headquarters Air Mobility Command Inspector General only validated what your leadership knew -- that you are true professionals in a unique and premier airlift wing in the New York Air National Guard and the U.S. Air Force.

In early August, Colonel LaBarge and I attended the C-17 rollout at the 105th Airlift

Wing in Newburgh, where we represented the 109th. It was a great moment for the NYANG.

The ceremony, titled "New Wings for New York," culminated a decades-long process to keep Stewart relevant within our state and within our nation's Air Force. Your hard work and outstanding performance over the last 18 months, culminating in the ORI, has validated our professional competency and sets the stage for our future relevance. You can rest assured, your inspection performance gives your leadership what they need to fight that battle.

As summer winds down and the days and nights get shorter and cooler, it is a seasonal indicator that we must prepare to head south. Like the autumn migration of waterfowl that heads for warmer temperatures, we too must ready ourselves to deploy to Operation Deep Freeze and the land of 24-hour daylight. As we prepare for our southernmost mission, please remember to plan ahead. Take care of things at home and prepare yourself and family for the time that you will be gone. Like any deployment, prior planning will make your deployment go a lot smoother than "winging it". While you're deployed, please be a good wingman and look out for each other. Deployments are stressful, but if we



U.S. Air Force photo

look out for and take care of each other, the time can pass a lot faster. For those of you heading south, enjoy the camaraderie that is Deep Freeze.

As many of you know, there are some changes under way in the Operations and Maintenance Groups. I've been selected as the next Deputy Commander for the Joint Task Force (DCJTF) -- Support Forces

See JAMES, Page 5

# 109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing



Commander  
Col. Timothy LaBarge  
Vice Commander  
Col. John Russo

## The Skibird

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## The Skibird

FALL 2011  
VOLUME 49, No. 2

## Inside

<b>ODF season begins</b>	<b>4</b>
Air Force News	
<b>Remembering 9/11</b>	<b>4</b>
American Forces Press Service	
<b>Youth take part in CAP encampment</b>	<b>5</b>
Public Affairs	
<b>Skibird featured as 'Mighty Plane'</b>	<b>6-7</b>
By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt & Master Sgt. Willie Gizara	
<b>Hometown Heroes recognized</b>	<b>8</b>
Public Affairs	
<b>Wellness Center continues to expand</b>	<b>9</b>
Wellness Center Staff	
<b>Static Display cleanup</b>	<b>13</b>
Photos by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara	
<b>Stratton Sports Camp</b>	<b>14-15</b>
By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt	

### **Plus:**

MPF online appointments	<b>9</b>
Dangers of laser pointers	<b>16</b>
Who We Are	<b>18</b>
Promotions & Awards	<b>19</b>

### **On the cover:**

*Airmen with the 109th Airlift Wing helped in recovery efforts throughout the state after Tropical Storm Irene dumped enough rain to cause major flooding in surrounding areas. (Photo illustration by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara) Full coverage on Page 10-11*

# Operation Deep Freeze 2011-2012 begins

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii (AFNS) -- Late winter flights, known as WINFLY, for Operation Deep Freeze 2011-2012 began August 20.

Deep Freeze is a joint service, interagency activity that supports the National Science Foundation, which manages the U.S. Antarctic Program.

Lt. Gen. Stanley T. Kresge, the commander of 13th Air Force, is dual-hatted as the commander of Joint Task Force-Support Forces Antarctica, based at Joint Base Pearl-Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. The joint task force's main summer season in Antarctica is slated to begin Sept. 28.

A C-17 Globemaster III from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wa., began delivering passengers and cargo to the NSF McMurdo Station, Antarctica, in support of the United States Antarctic Program. Scientists and support personnel at the station will start pre-summer projects, augment maintenance

personnel, and prepare skiways, ice runways and an ice pier.

The airlift part of Operation Deep Freeze operates from two primary locations with C-17s situated at Christchurch, New Zealand and LC-130 Hercules forward based at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, beginning in late October.

The operation year is divided into three main phases: WINFLY, which is currently ongoing, followed by the main summer season and the winter phase. WINFLY is the preparation phase between winter and summer when additional support personnel arrive to prepare the station for the upcoming science field season.

NSF manages the U.S. Antarctic Program through which it coordinates all U.S. scientific research on the southernmost continent and aboard ships in the Southern Ocean as well as related logistics support.

"WINFLY missions are important for total force C-17 crews," said Lt. Col. Edward

Vaughan, the Deep Freeze interim director of joint operations. "Aside from hauling support passengers and cargo, the National Science Foundation also permits a night-vision goggle training mission. This annual training mission ensures that C-17 crews are prepared to execute their mission in Antarctica year round."

U.S. military support for Operation Deep Freeze is a Pacific Command responsibility organized as Joint Task Force -Support Forces Antarctica. The Joint Task Force includes cargo and fuel tanker ships provided by Military Sealift Command, active-duty and Reserve C-17 support from the 62nd and 446th Airlift Wings at JB Lewis-McChord, ski-equipped LC-130 Hercules flown by the 109th AW of the New York Air National Guard, as well as Coast Guard icebreakers and the Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One to provide critical port services at McMurdo Station.

## Remembering 9/11

# Mullen: World changed forever as jet hit Pentagon

By Cheryl Pellerin  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Adm. Mike Mullen was on the fourth floor of the Pentagon on the "spectacularly clear" morning of Sept. 11, 2001, when hijackers flew a Boeing 757 into the side of the building, changing the world forever, he said.

"I remember it literally as if it were yesterday, as I'm sure all Americans do," Mullen said during an interview with the Pentagon Channel.

On that morning, as hijackers flew Boeing 767s into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan, Mullen was sitting in the Pentagon office of Navy Adm. Vernon E. Clark, who was then chief of naval operations.

Clark, Mullen said, "picked up the phone after the second plane hit (the twin towers) to talk to the chairman of the (JCS) ... to query what we were doing, in that it appeared that we were under attack."

They had some notification, the chairman said, that a plane was headed for Washington.

"Within minutes of the phone call," Mullen said, "the plane hit the Pentagon."

The southern California native said the impact felt like an earthquake.

Fifty yards away in his own office, Mullen said, "two of my aides looked out the window and saw a 757 fly in under their feet."

Afterward, the chairman said, "most of all I remember the chaos that it generated, certainly here (at the Pentagon), and the need to find out what had happened. Were any more (planes) coming? How do we protect ourselves? How are our families doing?"

Mullen said a fireball of flames and smoke poured from the west side of the Pentagon, and at that moment his wife Deborah was driving across the 14th Street Bridge. She'd been redirected there by police who were trying to control traffic in Washington, D.C.

She and Mullen had recently moved back to the area, and that morning she had been

on her way from the Washington Navy Yard to a meeting six miles away at the Naval Observatory.

"I had not listened to the news because I was hurrying to get to my meeting," Mrs. Mullen said. "... As I came across the 14th St. Bridge I could see the Pentagon."

She didn't know yet about the planes hitting the towers in New York, she said.

"I knew that something very bad had happened at the Pentagon," Mrs. Mullen said. "It did not occur to me that we were under attack."

She turned the car around and headed back to the Navy Yard while listening to news reports about the attacks.

"I of course was worried, she said. "I knew my husband's office was on that side of the building and all the other folks who were over there. When I got back to the house there was a message from him that he was okay and that we needed to get in touch with our children.

"I knew at that

See 9/11, Page 8

# Youth take part in CAP encampment

About 250 youth from across New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Virginia attended the weeklong Civil Air Patrol Leadership Encampment and Flight Academy here July 16-23.

The cadets spent the week learning about leadership, aerospace, physical fitness, the Air Force as well as how to work as a team. They shared tents, pavilions and bunk houses, and also had meals together at the Dining Hall.

Cadets, ages 12 to 20, ended the week with a graduation ceremony, which included guest speaker Congressman Paul Tonko.

CAP was founded in December 1941, one week before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, by more than 150,000 citizens concerned about the defense of the U.S. coastline. Today, the nonprofit corporation operates as the volunteer civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force when performing services for the federal government, and includes about 1,600 units nationwide with more than 56,000 members.

According to its Web site, the cadet program allows young people to progress at their own pace through a 16-step program including aerospace



Courtesy photo  
Civil Air Patrol members look out the window of a 109th Airlift Wing C-130 during an orientation flight

education, leadership training, physical fitness and moral leadership. Cadets compete for academic scholarships to further their studies in fields such as engineering, science, aircraft mechanics, aerospace medicine, meteorology and many others.

## Commander's Call

JAMES, from Page 2

Antarctica. Colonel Clouthier will be moving out of the Maintenance Group to take over the Operations Group. By the time you read this, I will already be working at my new job in Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. I'm pretty sure I won't have to break out the leaf rake or the snow shovel this year! Also, Lt. Col. Mike Steindl is leaving after the September Unit Training Assembly for a one-year tour at the Pentagon, supporting the Director of the Air National Guard, Lt. Gen. Harry Wyatt. I speak for both of us when I say we are leaving a job, organization and people that we love. It is with mixed feelings that I leave an organization that I have put my heart and soul into for almost 13 years, but I also know that the Operations Group is in great hands -- Colonel Clouthier is a tremendous leader! I also know there are talented individuals ready and prepared to take the helm of the Airlift Squadron and the Maintenance Group. I will continue to serve the 109th AW, NYANG and National Science

Foundation (NSF) by using the knowledge and experience gained here at the 109th to provide solid advice to the Joint Task Force. Colonel Steindl will be taking his 20 years of 109th experience with him as he has the awesome opportunity to spend a year learning the inner workings of the Pentagon while serving on the Director's Action Team. This experience will be invaluable for Colonel Steindl and will benefit us all in the future.

For me personally, I want each and every one of you to know that these last 12-plus years have been by far, the best experience in my 24-year military career. My great personal experience here is not because I was afforded the opportunity to command -- don't misunderstand me, command is in itself one of the most rewarding experiences a military

professional can have -- but the most rewarding thing for me was the camaraderie gained over the last decade: The day-to-day opportunity to work with and among the best professional Airmen and aviators in the world. Believe me when I say it, because you prove it *every day*.

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*"... the most rewarding thing for me was the camaraderie gained over the last decade: The day-to-day opportunity to work with and among the best professional Airmen and aviators in the world."*

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From Colonel Steindl and me both, it has been an honor to have had the opportunity to serve as commanders within this great organization. Though I am moving on, I take great comfort in knowing that I will continue my relationship with the 109th through the JTF and Operation Deep Freeze. Farewell to you all and thank you for more than 12 wonderful years. For those of you preparing to migrate south this season, enjoy the camaraderie: Safe travels and I look forward to seeing you all "on the ice"!



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

# Skibird featured as ‘Mighty Plane’

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt and Master Sgt. Willie Gizara  
Public Affairs

A film production crew working for the Discovery Channel recently had the chance to see the 109th Airlift Wing at its best as they joined the unit for a trip to Greenland to film scenes for an episode of an upcoming series, titled “Mighty Planes”.

The production team of “Mighty Planes” films an LC-130 taking off from Stratton Air National Guard Base, N.Y. on Aug. 8

“As an aviation nut, I was thrilled to be able to see this unique operation first-hand,” said Herrie ten Cate, director/writer. “We were given unlimited access to the aircraft, the flight crews and the maintainers.”

The four-person production team with Exploration Production, Inc., out of Toronto, began their shoot at Stratton on Aug. 6, as the aircrew prepared for their mission.

“We were able to spend time with the maintenance crews before leaving,” Mr. ten Cate said. “I knew our very warm welcome at the base was a great indication of things to come.”

The team filmed everything they could from members rolling the tires over to the plane to attaching its skis, as well as loading the plane and flight planning. They even mounted tiny cameras inside the flight deck to capture takeoffs and landings.

“While in Greenland and in Schenectady, we were able to film jaw-dropping low angle takeoff and landing shots, cockpit POV

shots, ATO bottles firing, air-to-air shots and the spectacular scenery that comes with Greenland,” Mr. ten Cate said. “Flying over the icecap, over icebergs and down fjords with the mountain tops off our wings -- it just doesn’t get better. The fabulous ‘in-the-moment’ interviews with everyone from pilots to maintainers is what will make the show. With more than 30 hours of just main camera HD footage – it will be a challenge to leave scenes on the cutting room floor.”

Not only was the production team able to get the story, they were also able to experience first-hand what it was like to be part of the 109th.

“After spending a night at NEEM, our ‘ride’ back to Kanger was on the taxiway with engines running and cargo loaded,” Mr. ten Cate said. “We strapped ourselves into the back of the skibird with cargo and other passengers for our first ski-way takeoff. We started the takeoff run. Sliding and bumping along the ski-way, I kept waiting for the aircraft to rotate and get

## Local



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Director of Photography Mike Ellis and camera assistant Colin Hall film an LC-130 coming back from its mission on the Greenland icecap Aug. 15. A production team was filming the 109th Airlift Wing's Greenland mission for an upcoming Discovery Channel series titled, "Mighty Planes."

(Left center) The production crew films Airmen of the 109th Maintenance Group putting skis on an LC-130 on Aug. 6 to prepare for a mission to Greenland. A production team was filming the 109th Airlift Wing's Greenland mission for an upcoming Discovery Channel series titled, "Mighty Planes."



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

airborne. More waiting, sliding and the sound of flaps changing. Finally I can feel the nose come up and a few seconds later we're airborne and on our way South to Kanger. These are the moments when I think as a documentary crew – we've got the greatest jobs in world, able to experience things that my cubicle dwelling colleagues and friends at home can only dream of."

As exciting as the trip was for the production team, having the Discovery Channel document what the unit does each season was just as exciting for the Airmen.

"It was a real honor getting to represent the Wing working with the Discovery Channel production team," said Lt. Col. George Alston. "It didn't take long to figure out that these guys are the tops in their field. They were all exceptionally professional and clearly committed to getting the story right. They had done their homework learning about the LC-130 and the 109th's ski mission before they arrived and then they did a great job capturing just about every aspect of our mission. One night, the

aircrew and maintainers got to see some of the unedited footage and everybody cheered more than once. It was exhilarating getting to see the mission I've been flying for 13 years from totally new perspectives. The Discovery Channel footage is absolutely spectacular and I can't wait to see the finished product."

Some even found similarities between the crews.

"It turns out aircrew and film crews have a lot in common," said Lt. Col. Samantha East. "You travel a lot, you have to be ready for anything at any time, and you spend a lot of time waiting for something to happen. These guys are top-notch professionals and it was a really great experience to work with them."

"Mighty Planes" is a new series that will premier in Canada in April 2012. The U.S. Discovery Channel will pick up the series soon after. The 109th-centric episode is scheduled to air sometime in 2012. Public Affairs will announce the air date as soon as the information is available.



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Director of Photography Mike Ellis films an LC-130 in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, on Aug. 10. A production team was filming the 109th Airlift Wing's Greenland mission for an upcoming Discovery Channel series titled, "Mighty Planes."

# Stratton's 'Hometown Heroes' recognized



Photo by Senior Airman Ben German

Master Sgt. Ed Holub presents Lt. Col. Melanie Howard, 109th Medical Group, with a framed letter thanking her for her service during a Hometown Heroes Salute ceremony at Proctors Theater on Aug. 7.

The New York Air National Guard honored more than 200 Airmen of the 109th Airlift Wing who have deployed in support of contingency and combat operations during a Hometown Heroes salute at Proctors Theater on Aug. 7.

The Airmen recognized included those who deployed for more than 30 consecutive days in support of operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Noble Eagle or other overseas contingency operations worldwide from Sept. 11, 2001 through Dec. 31, 2010.

The Airmen received a framed letter from the Director of the National Guard Bureau, Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, containing a Hometown Heroes salute challenge coin. Children of the deployed Airmen also received unique Hometown Heroes Salute dog tags, and spouses received a pen and pencil set.

Members like Capt. William Furmanski, of the 109th Security Forces Squadron, who have deployed for more than 179 days, received a cased American Flag.



Photo by Senior Airman Ben German

More than 200 Airmen with the 109th Airlift Wing were recognized for their service during a Hometown Heroes Salute ceremony at Proctors Theater on Aug. 7.

## Remembering 9/11

9/11, from Page 4

point that our lives had changed forever," Mrs. Mullen said. "I didn't know how they were going to change. I didn't know the extent, the enormity of what had happened. I just knew that we were under attack and (experienced) all those feelings you get of the uncertainty of life at that moment."

It's been an uncertain world ever since, she said.

Ten years after the attacks, the chairman says he is most inspired by the response of young people to the country's fight against terrorism.

Mullen said she was "really struck" after the bin Laden raid in May at the number of young people -- some who must have been 9 or 10 years old at

the time of the attacks -- who were visible in the media, celebrating the success at Abbottabad.

The message he got as he listened to them "was that they knew something really bad had happened (on 9/11) and it was a big event in our country and in their lives," Mullen said. "To see them and hear them speak to that almost 10 years later was pretty extraordinary in terms of understanding the impact it had. Everyone is aware that we're at war, everyone is aware of the threat and yet they do sign up, they do raise their right hand and they come to serve because of (the attacks)."

The United States has an extraordinary military, he said, because service members

recognize the need, have a strong desire to make a difference and are wired to serve and to make that difference.

"I certainly have seen that in the extraordinary young men and women who have made the sacrifices -- too many of them the ultimate sacrifice -- as a result of the decision they made at a pretty young age to join the military," the chairman said.

"We're blessed as a country to have them," Mullen said. "We're blessed to have the families who raise young men and women to come and do this and it makes me very proud, not just to be in the military or to be the chairman but, quite frankly, to be an American."



# Wellness Center continues expansion

### Wellness Center staff

The Wellness Center, located on the second floor of the Headquarters building, continues to expand and develop more programming to support servicemembers and their families. Established in June, the Center was developed to support members and their families by offering an array of social, emotional, physical and spiritual information, resources and programs.

In continuing this expansion, the Center is announcing the addition of new professional staff. Jolene Kent-Stanley, the New York National Guard state Director of Psychological Health, will be returning and providing counseling consultations every

Wednesday and is available to speak to members and families about family matters, stress, and deployment/reintegration issues. Ms. Kent-Stanley can be contacted at (518) 396-8993 or [Jolene.Kent-Stanley@ceridian.com](mailto:Jolene.Kent-Stanley@ceridian.com).

Beginning Oct. 1, the Center will also have a full-time health and fitness expert, Tech. Sgt. Colette Martin, who is a registered dietitian and personal trainer. Sergeant Martin will be available for appointments as well as offering programs on topics such as sports nutrition, healthy eating habits, cooking classes, fitness and athletic training. All programs aim to educate members and their families on the connection between food, fitness and health. Sergeant Martin can

be contacted at (518) 701-4312 or [109aw.wellnesscenter@ang.af.mil](mailto:109aw.wellnesscenter@ang.af.mil).

As always, your chaplains are ready and available to speak to you about counseling and spiritual guidance. Located in the Center and in new locations in Buildings 19 and 25, your Chaplaincy can be reached on UTA weekends or anytime at (518) 344-2355.

Additionally, Alicia Russo, the New York State Military OneSource consultant, continues to work at the Center every Thursday and can be reached at (518) 265-2901 or [Alicia.Russo@MilitaryOneSource.com](mailto:Alicia.Russo@MilitaryOneSource.com). In addition to answering your questions about Military OneSource's programs, Ms. Russo offers information regarding a wide array of benefit

programs available to military members and their families from no-cost tutoring, to family summer camps, to spouse education and employment programs.

Finally, look for e-mails announcing additional support professionals at the Wellness Center including the New York National Guard transition assistance adviser, Guard Child and Youth Program coordinator, Martin's Point consultant, Tricare representative and more. All support staff are available by appointment or walk-in.

The 109th Wellness Center is a retreat; a place to relax, receive information, support and assistance. If you haven't yet had the opportunity, stop by the Center and see what we can offer to you and your family.

# Online appointments only for military IDs

### Force Support Squadron

The 109th ID Card section has transitioned to an online only appointment scheduling site. Online users will be able to search available appointments and choose what best suits their schedule as well as cancel and/or reschedule appointments. Customers seeking same-day services, emergency walk-in requests, or new enrollment in DEERS for medical care will be accommodated.

#### CAC and Dependant ID Card Appointments

All Common Access Card (CAC) and Dependant ID cards are issued by appointment. Please follow the instructions below to make your appointment.

- Log on to <http://appointments.cac.navy.mil>
- Click on the Make Appointment button from the top navigation bar
- Select NY and click the Go button.
- Select Scotia and click the Go button.
- Click on the date you wish to make an appointment
- Click on one of the available time slots.
- Complete the form with all your information and click Submit

For more information, contact Staff Sgt. Yamayra Corrado at 344-2436.



# After the storm

## 109th Airmen answer call to aid in Irene recovery efforts

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt  
Public Affairs

**W**eeks after Hurricane Irene blasted through the East Coast, and left the surrounding areas flooded, the 109th Airlift Wing continues to help the local communities pick up the pieces.

Days before the tropical storm came through New York, the 109th was already preparing. Planes were evacuated and Airmen were pre-positioned around New York City to provide support as soon as the storm passed.

The Crisis Action Team was up and running at the base on Oct. 26, and two task forces of 30 Airmen with the unit were set up on Oct. 27, the day before Irene would affect New York. One group was sent to Farmingdale, Long Island, and the other to Camp Smith near Poughkeepsie.

Master Sgt. Greg Mihalko, Communications Flight, was a squad leader on Task Force-Long Island, and said they hit the ground running.

"The low point of our deployment should have come on Saturday night when we all just got bedded down for the night around 8:30 p.m. after traveling since 4 a.m. that morning," he said. "Chief (Master Sgt. Mark) Schiabile called the squad leaders together and explained we had 30 minutes to be on the

road heading to Long Island before the bridges closed. Not one complaint came from the team and we immediately went into action."

The group was moving in just 26 minutes. The following day they put together their own recon missions and provided situational reports (SITREPS) and eventually assumed the role of S2 – the Army's version of Intelligence, Security and Information Operations.

"We were a group of Airmen representing various facets across the base coming together with a common desire to succeed in the mission," he said. "The morale among the team was always very high, and regardless of the situation, everyone gave 100 percent."

Morale was high among the second task force as well, even as they waited to respond.

"With all of the uncertainty, nerves were on edge and anxiety levels were rising," said Tech. Sgt. Terra Martin, Services Flight. "But morale remained high at all times. I never heard one complaint during the five days we were gone."

Back at home, it became clear on Oct. 28 that the mission would be shifting.

"We were postured to bring the airplanes back here and start running people into New York City," said Col. Timothy LaBarge, 109th AW commander. "The city and Long Island didn't get as much damage as they thought they

were going to get, and with the rain and flooding up here it became apparent that this was where the damage was.

"At 2 p.m. on Sunday, the first call came in to send 70 people down to the Gilboa dam which was potentially in imminent danger. Within five minutes, another call came in saying not to send any more people to the city, but for the unit to set up a JRSOI (Joint Reception Staging Onward movement and Integration). Headquarters told us to expect up to 240 people from the Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, and the New York Naval Militia. They would stage out of here for whatever area needed their support."

Soon after, members of the Naval Militia arrived at the base, where they were set up in Hangar 1. That evening, they received their first tasking to fill sandbags in Schenectady.

Taskings continued to come in, and 109th AW members continued to answer the call.

"Every single time we would send out a recall for volunteers, it would take us less than 20 minutes to get more than the number of volunteers that we needed," Colonel LaBarge said. He said the most challenging part was having to tell volunteers to go home, whether it was because it was too dangerous, or areas no longer needed any more aid.

"When the counties surrounding me were flooding, the desire to go help them was empowering," said Master Sgt. Misty Straus, 109th AW. "I was blessed to be activated to Schoharie County. There were five PODs (Points of Distribution) set up throughout

Schoharie County -- I was POD No. 1 manager, which was located in the parking lot at the Middleburgh Elementary school. Three were manned by the 109th and two by the Army. We handed out truckloads of water, MREs and FEMA information. When the people would pull up to us, they would have tears in their eyes, and looked so lost and exhausted, their stories unbelievable. This experience will stay with me forever."

On Sept. 6, the 109th AW was tasked to clean up flood damage at Middleburgh High School. More than 50 Airmen traveled to the school and got to work on the two-day project.

The Airmen cleaned the school's track, outside basketball court, gym, parking lots, bus garage, the school's sewage treatment plant, and boiler room, on the first day of a two-day operation, said Lt. Col. Walter Wintsch, the officer in charge of the team.

"Several of them are from Schoharie County, so it is in their own backyard, but we are all citizens of New York so it is gratifying to be down here to help (Middleburgh)," Colonel Wintsch said.

"The amount of volunteers we got was incredible," Colonel LaBarge said. "Nobody questioned their pay status, nobody questioned a day off, nobody questioned any of that... they just came in and said, 'We're ready.'"

**(Background photo by Maj. David LaFrance)** Areas throughout the area endured massive flooding from the rain Tropical Storm Irene brought with it. Pictured is an aerial shot of Erie Boulevard in Schenectady.

# Local



Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Muller, 109th Logistics Readiness Squadron, works in the Middleburgh High School gymnasium on Sept. 6. Sergeant Muller was asked to get the floor cleaned down to the cement. The 109th deployed 58 Airmen to the flood-stricken city as part of a joint effort throughout Schoharie County.



Photo by Master Sgt. Misty Straus

Col. Timothy LaBarge, 109th AW commander, signs state activation orders for 60 Airmen to go to Camp Smith and Long Island for Operation Irene.



Photo by Master Sgt. Misty Straus

(Right) Airmen with the 109th AW unload water and MREs to hand out to the Schoharie community that was affected by Tropical Storm Irene.



Photo by Lt. Col. Water Wintsch

Tropical Storm Irene left local communities, like Schoharie County, in devastation after severe flooding. Homes, businesses and schools throughout the area were destroyed. The 109th Airlift Wing has been out in the communities helping to clean up the devastation.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Terra Martin

The task force sent to Camp Smith eventually provided aid near Windham, N.Y., which was hit hard by flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene. Multiple checkpoints, like this one, were set up around the area.

# FALL FEST 2011

Saturday, Oct. 22 at 4 p.m.  
Stratton ANG Base

**CHILI COOKOFF**

**PIE BAKING CONTEST**

**HAY RIDES**

**KIDS' ACTIVITES**

**COSTUME PARADE/CONTEST**

**AND MUCH MORE!!!**

Please RSVP to  
TSgt Catharine Schmidt

*Donations of canned goods and winter coats are greatly appreciated. Items will go to the local community.*

# Airmen clean up static display

Airmen spent four and a half days and about 600 hours washing, painting and waxing the LC-130 static display. The Airmen who helped with this project were:

**139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron**  
Staff Sgt. Diane Solmo

**139th Airlift Squadron**  
Airman 1st Class Logan Brennan  
1st Lt. Jesse Enders  
Master Sgt. Michael Goldman  
Senior Airman Christopher Nations  
Airman 1st Class Nicholas Oneil  
Master Sgt. Glen Preece

**Communications Flight**  
Senior Airman Brianna Tator

**Logistics Readiness Squadron**  
Airman 1st Class Estacamille Covey  
Capt. Gary Dick  
Manual Gonzalez  
Airman 1st Class Angela Harrington  
Staff Sgt. Gregory McMullin  
Staff Sgt. Matthew Plank  
Airman 1st Class Andrew Smith

**Maintenance Group**  
Staff Sgt. Joseph Corra  
Staff Sgt. Joseph Dugan  
Tech. Sgt. Eugene Kaufman  
Tech. Sgt. Jared Nardi

**105th Civil Engineer Squadron**  
Staff Sgt. Scott Everson



*More than 20 Airmen from around the base helped to clean up the LC-130 static display in August. (Photos by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara)*

# Kids spend week at Stratton Sports Camp

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt  
Public Affairs

About 50 children ages 8 to 17 were able to participate in the base's first Stratton Sports Camp from Aug. 8-12. The camp was the brainchild of the Force Support Squadron, who wanted to give children the opportunity to have fun while at the same time learn the fundamentals of sports.

The week was broken up into five different sessions, each focusing on a different sport – basketball, martial arts, volleyball, baseball and soccer. Some children came out for the entire week, while others just came out to play their favorite sport.

With the many Airmen among the base who already coach sports outside of work, it was an easy task finding appropriate instructors for each session. Along with the coaches, Counterdrug personnel stepped up to the plate as counselors throughout the week.



Courtesy photo

Mikayla VanWormer, 8, climbs the rock wall during Stratton Sports Camp on Aug. 11. About 50 children from the 109th Airlift Wing, along with a few from Yates Elementary School, participated in the first sports camp here.

The camp was in addition to the long-running Galaxy Camp also held over the summer. This gave more children from the 109th a chance to come out to the base for a week of fun. Along with 109th children, three Yates students were also chosen to come out and participate in Stratton Sports

Camp. This was yet another opportunity to strengthen the relationship the base already has with the elementary school in Schenectady.

The week was a success, and Stratton Sports Camp is sure to stick around for years to come.



Courtesy photo

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Schiabe looks out to a group of campers during the Soccer session of sports camp. About 50 children participated in the first sports camp here.



Courtesy photo

The campers went to nearby Collins Park during the Baseball session. Here, they play kickball, to learn the basics of baseball. About 50 children from the 109th Airlift Wing, along with a few from Yates Elementary School, participated in the first sports camp here.

# Local



Courtesy photo

About 50 children from the 109th Airlift Wing, along with a few from Yates Elementary School, participated in the first Stratton Sports Camp here Aug. 8-12.



Courtesy photo

Callie Lundin (left) and Gabie Bucci pose for the camera during the Basketball session of Stratton Sports Camp on Aug. 8. About 50 children from the 109th Airlift Wing, along with a few from Yates Elementary School, participated in the weeklong camp.



Courtesy photo

Tech. Sgt. Mark Messare, 109th Security Forces Squadron, talks to campers about martial arts during Stratton Sports Camp on Aug. 9. About 50 kids participated in the weeklong camp.



Courtesy photo

Sarah Morton, professional volleyball player, autographs a volleyball for one of the campers at Stratton Sports Camp on Aug. 10. About 50 kids participated in the weeklong camp.

# Laser pointer misuse can be dangerous

By Master Sgt. Scott Bailey  
109th Medical Group Bioenvironmental Engineering Technician

While this is one of the more dramatic laser light

**L**aser Pointer Availability  
Laser pointers are widely available through a variety of sources such as electronic stores, novelty shops, or mail-order catalogs. Because of their commercial and consumer use, they can be purchased for as little as \$20. Even the more powerful devices (1000mW) can be purchased for as little as \$60. Because of their relative low price, it is possible these laser pointers are being treated as electronic “toys”.

### Laser Pointer Power and Effects

The following table illustrates the capabilities of hand-held lasers at various output powers:

Power Output Range (mW)	Effects
10-30	“Dot” is visible at over 150 feet
50-80*	Beam can pierce a black or dark colored balloon
100-200	Enough heat to light a match
200-1,000	Enough heat to light a cigar

\* Enough energy to cause eye damage

Laser pointers are NOT toys. Because the light beam is highly focused, monochromatic, coherent energy, the damage it can cause to the eye is many times greater than staring directly into the sun.

### Laser Pointer Misuse stories

This lesson was brought home to a small school district in Wisconsin in the fall of 1996. A 16-year-old girl was illuminated in the eye from the beams of laser pointers used as pranks. She experienced two momentary exposures, one while performing a pom pom routine and again while walking down a hallway. She reported the incidents to her parents, adding that after the first exposure, everything looked green; after the second, she could temporarily not see out of her right eye.

exposures, there are numerous reports of similar, momentary exposures across the United States and the United Kingdom. The Laser Institute of America and the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) have also received reports of people exposed for longer amounts of time, including two verified retinal injuries caused by intentionally staring into pointers. There were 1,973 laser illuminations involving 1,988 aircraft in the United States from Jan. 1 to Aug. 11. (This is an average of 8.8 incidents each night.) For more information about these incidents, please consult the AAO’s Web sites, [www.eyenet.org](http://www.eyenet.org) or [www.laserpointersafety.com](http://www.laserpointersafety.com).

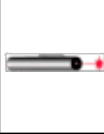




### Government Action

These types of incidents have started to spur government action. In November 1997, the United Kingdom banned a certain class of higher-powered pointer from sale. In December 1997, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a warning against allowing juveniles to use them.

The FDA requires manufacturers to place a warning on pointers, telling users not to look into the beam. These warnings are small and easy to ignore, however, as evidenced in widespread misuse of the devices. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the “Securing Aircraft Cockpits Against Lasers Act of 2011” in February, which makes it a crime to aim or illuminate an aircraft with a laser pointer. Please refer to the following Web site for further information: <http://laserpointersafety.com/index.html>

### Secondary Effects

Safety professionals are especially concerned about secondary effects, those experienced during critical activities such as driving on a busy highway. A driver may lose control due to either a split second visual effect or a psychological effect (startle or panic). There are reports of pilots who have had to look away or hand control of a landing airplane over to a copilot after similar incidents from powerful light show lasers.

Laser Pointer Safety Tips:	
	Never shine a laser pointer at anyone. Laser pointers are designed to illustrate inanimate objects.
	Do not allow minors to use a pointer unsupervised. Laser pointers are not toys.
	Do not point a laser pointer at mirror-like surfaces. A reflected beam can act like a direct beam on the eye.
	Be aware of irresponsible uses of pointers so the psychological effect will be minimized if you are illuminated by one.
	Do not purchase a laser pointer if it does not have a caution or danger sticker on it identifying its class. Report suspicious devices to the FDA.

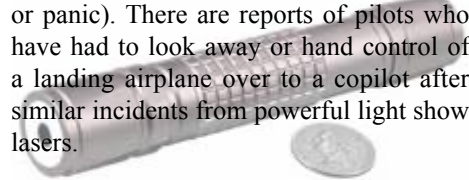
Laser experts agree that transient visual effects are possible and should be addressed. These effects are called glare, flash blindness, and afterimage. The Laser Institute of America has received one report where exposure to a laser pointer startled a bus driver resulting in a traffic accident.

People often have strong psychological reactions to being illuminated with a laser beam. One researcher found that at times people receive eye injuries, not from the beam itself, but by a strong response that includes vigorously rubbing or sticking their fingers in their eye.

### Final thought

Education is key. By informing parents, teachers and the public about the potential hazards laser pointers present, risks posed by them can be minimized and the devices can continue to be used properly and safely, as primarily intended.

*(Editor’s Note: Portions of this article are reprinted [with permission] from a bulletin produced by the Laser Institute of America, [www.lia.org](http://www.lia.org).)*





# WINGMAN PROJECT



Chaplain James Bridgham

*"The Guard is family."  
"I am your Wingman."*

## ASK

Ask directly:  
"Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

## CARE

Intervene. Control the situation.  
Use active listening. Remove the means to do self-injury.

## ESCORT

Get them to a primary care provider,  
chaplain or other healthcare professional.



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

**800.273.8255** Option 1



[www.wingmanproject.org](http://www.wingmanproject.org)

# Who We Are

## Tech. Sgt. Allen Moon

### 109th Security Forces Squadron/Base Honor Guard Team

For the past five years, Tech. Sgt. Allen Moon has been NCOIC of the 109th Base Honor Guard Team. He recently left this position, but not before doing his part in making the program even better than before.

Sergeant Moon has been in the Air Force



U.S. Air Force photo

for 16 years, and joined the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing in early 2001 as a combat arms training and maintenance specialist with the 109th Security Forces Squadron.

"Shortly after joining the unit, I found the Base Honor Guard Team," Sergeant Moon said. "I was on teams during my active duty time, mostly filling the role of Bugler, playing 'Taps' for military funeral honors. With the team here, however, they trained me to perform in all aspects of the military funeral."

After 9/11, Sergeant Moon deployed several times with SFS. He then took a full-time position with the Base Honor Guard Team and took over as NCOIC in 2006. He's been instrumental in coordinating high-profile events, including promotion ceremonies, change of command ceremonies and military funeral honors, to include honors for Master Sgt. Joe Longobardo.

"Arranging these important (military funeral) honors involves careful coordination among the family, the Wing, Division of Military and Naval Affairs and other law enforcement/community organizations," he said. "Dates, times, locations all have to be communicated to the various components in compliance with the family's wishes and protocol."

Sergeant Moon said he looks at being part of the Honor Guard as a way to "give back to those who came before us.

"As members of an Honor Guard team you literally get to touch a veteran's life for a moment," he said. "Most of the time, these men and women are strangers, who served long ago. Sometimes they are people you

know. To have a veteran's family and friends include us in such a private moment is such an honor for us that when they thank us for performing honors, it's really us who should be thanking them."

"Sergeant Moon was the pulse of the Honor Guard," said Chief Master Sgt. Denny Richardson, Base Honor Guard Team manager. "He provided leadership by example and the rigid flexibility required to be an Honor Guard team member. His attention to detail, positive image and military pride are second to none.

"During his tenure as NCOIC, he made drastic improvements to equipment, training programs and recruitment of new members," Chief Richardson said. "He was a major contributor to the development of a military funeral honors pamphlet that was presented to every funeral home in New York State. This pamphlet clearly explained the military funeral honors process with contact information. This simplified the process for funeral directors. His main goal as NCOIC was to leave the program better than he received it."

"I hope that I continued the team's long history of excellence in performing military funeral honors, supplied all of the team members with the tools they needed to perform their duties, built lasting relationships with Wing leadership as well as community organizations," Sergeant Moon said. "I hope that I brought a real sense of pride and passion to the program. The Base Honor Guard Team will always need members who are proud to serve and who are passionate about paying tribute to those who have served."

If you are interested in joining the Base Honor Guard, call their office at 344-2586 for more information.



## Deadline Notice

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

# Promotions & Awards

May 15, 2011 - Aug. 21, 2011

## Officer Promotions

**Colonel**  
Shawn Clouthier – MXG



**Captain**  
Paul Benintende – AS  
Kathryn Burnell – AES  
Brandon Caldwell – AS  
William Furmanski – SFS  
James McCauley – AES

**First Lieutenant**  
Ashley Calabrese – AW  
Thomas Feeley – FSS

**Senior Master Sergeant**  
Peter Latniak – FSS

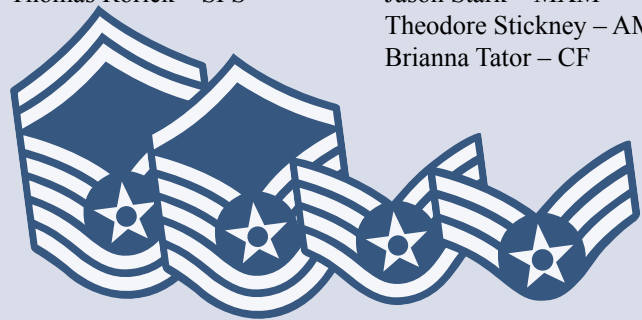
**Master Sergeant**  
William Bednarowski – MXS  
Lynette Bucci – CF  
Michael Byerwalters – LRS  
Michael Howe – MXS  
Derrick Irish – MXS  
Pedro Negron – CF  
Shawn Wells – AMXS

**Technical Sergeant**  
Jason Babiarez – LRS  
Dylan Hassis – AS  
Jeremiah Henderson – AW  
Jessica Mattingley – FSS  
Michael Peckham – SFS  
Mark Swiderski – MOF  
Scott Todd – MXM  
April Veeder – AES  
Brad Villnave – LRS  
Jeremy Westervelt – MXM

## Enlisted Promotions

**Staff Sergeant**  
Justin Beyer – MXM  
Catlin Boyle – SFS  
Gregory Durrant – SFS  
Caleb Farrell – STUF  
Robert Harrington – CF  
Salem Jacobsen – LRS  
Daniel Keegan – LRS  
Anastasios Mantzouris – LRS  
Erin McDonough – LRS  
Jamie Mehm – MXM  
Nichole Pease – CES  
Thomas Rorick – SFS

**Senior Airman**  
Brian Alexander – CF  
Tyler Briscoe – MDG  
Robert Buehler – LRS  
David Ciraulo – OSF  
James Comstock – MXM  
James Murphy – AS  
Adam Myers – CES  
Tiernan Nolan – MXM  
Vincent Pricolo – MXM  
Brittany Rankin – FSS  
Andrew Smith – LRS  
Jason Stark – MXM  
Theodore Stickney – AMXS  
Brianna Tator – CF



## Awards

May to August

**Aerial Achievement**  
Lt. Col. Debra Dannunzio – AES  
1st Lt. Stephen Hallenbeck – AES

**Air Force Commendation Medal**  
Staff Sgt. Christopher DelVecchio – MXG  
Master Sgt. Derrick Irish – MXG

**Air Force Achievement Medal**  
Staff Sgt. Michael Bernardi – MXG  
Tech. Sgt. Jay Wilson – FSS

## Are you pregnant?



If pregnant, you must notify Flight Medicine (344-2408) and Public Health (344-2503) to be profiled at confirmation of pregnancy. Once you have delivered the baby (or pregnancy has been terminated) you must report back to Flight Medicine and Public Health.

Services sells movie tickets at the Dining Facility for \$7.75 to all area Regal Cinemas. The tickets are unrestricted and are valid for all movies and showtimes.

**ADMIT ONE**

**109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing**  
1 Air National Guard Road  
Scotia, NY 12302-9752

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Schenectady, NY



Photo illustration by Staff Sgt. Brett Bouchard

### *Mission statement*

*Provide the most professional theatre combat forces, ready to rapidly deploy statewide, worldwide and pole to pole.*

### *Vision statement*

*A united military organization of empowered individuals building on our proud tradition of serving country, state and community; leaning forward, ready to meet combat and peacetime challenges throughout the world.*