



President visits 171st for the first time

Tech. Sgt. Stacy Gault
Public Affairs

Air Force One and The President of the United States landed at the 171st for the first time in the base's 59-year history. President Barack Obama was in Pittsburgh for a speaking engagement at Carnegie Mellon University June 24.

171st Commander Brig. Gen. Roy Uptegraff greeted President Obama on the flightline early Friday morning upon his arrival.

Departing the same day, President Obama did make time to shake the hands of approximately 50 unit members gathered on the flightline.

"President Obama always enjoys the opportunity to visit America's Air Force bases and meet some of the men and women who are selflessly serving their nation," said White House spokesman Matt Leirich.



U.S. Air Force photos by Master Sgt. Ann Young

Back in action

by Brig. Gen. Roy Uptegraff, Wing Commander

I am back! After three months in western Europe, it is good to be home. I left just as Spring began and returned just as summer began. I never imagined “Arab Spring” would end up being my Spring. What happened? Our nation rushed the Air Force into action in the second half of March by an executive order. The Air Force, already consumed by employment in Afghanistan, Iraq and other areas such as the magnitude 9.0 Tohoku earthquake in Japan that occurred on March 11th needed a new expeditionary tanker Wing to support Libyan air operations. Air Mobility Command (AMC) turned to the air reserve components and then turned to the 171st. Why us? I think there are several good reasons. First, we have a superb record of Air Force inspections which certainly demonstrate our readiness. Second, we were in garrison this year having fulfilled our AEF commitments last year. Third, we have an engaged leadership team who actively chairs various councils and conferences on the national scene. Finally, we have cultivated a relationship with the AMC Air National Guard assistants and advisors which has opened the door to AMC’s command staff.



COMMANDER'S
CORNER

I could not be more proud of the volunteerism I saw when our nation called. At one time, nearly a third of the 313th Air Expeditionary Wing was from Pittsburgh. Volunteers came from every group in the wing. Nearly 200 immediately deployed. No one ever thought that kind of participation in such a blink of an eye would have been possible. The result was we saved many many lives in Libya. After nearly two months of Libyan operations, we were able to bring more volunteers to the fight from around the National Guard and Air Force Reserve. This gave us the ability to reduce the Pittsburgh numbers. As our own team rotated back, I stayed in order to assure the success of the 313th by establishing a steady battle rhythm in close association with the 18th Air Force staff (AMC), 3rd Air Force staff (USAFE) as well as the Guard and AFRC planners. By the time I departed Europe, I had the pleasure of working with three different Squadron Commanders, Operations Group Commanders, and Maintenance Group Commanders, two Mission Support Group Commanders and a cast of others from all three components of the Air Force. All did an outstanding job!

What a surprise and honor to be selected to stand up the 313th. The leadership at AMC - notably Gen. Johns, Lt. Gen. Allardice, and Lt. Gen. Findley put tremendous trust, faith and hope in all of us and we delivered. Our State leadership, notably Maj. Gen. Sischo and Maj. Gen. Craig provided tremendous support in spite of numerous events requiring our participation at home. Our Wing leadership, notably Vice Wing Commander Painter and his staff who remained at Pittsburgh did double duty to keep us all on track and focused in the right direction.

In closing, the 313th flew over 11,000 hours, more than 1,500 sorties and off loaded nearly 70 million pounds of fuel into NATO strike attack aircraft while I was there. We did it with volunteers committed to our core values and the future of our Air Force. The 171st continues to support the 313th with crews, planes and a few others now that Col. Ted Metzgar, 128th Air Refueling Wing Commander, Milwaukee ANG, and his team have taken command. I wish them success!

“Editorial Staff”



Brigadier General Roy E. Uptegraff, III, Commander

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Creating a wing

Chief Master Sgt. Ben Shinsky

I take this opportunity to talk a little bit about our recent deployment and thank our hard working Airmen. I had the pleasure, maybe not totally by choice, to deploy to Western Europe on short notice. I was notified around 2 p.m. Saturday afternoon and by 10 p.m. that same evening I was airborne on the first jet supporting Operation Odyssey Dawn.

When we arrived we literally had nothing. No work area, no MOC, no command post, we didn't even know how many aircraft we were going to have and from where. Fortunately for me, and our unit, we had the "Energizer Bunny," Capt. James Weber, now a major. Immediately we starting piecemealing our maintenance operation center together by taking whatever space and furniture we could acquire, or I should say what Maj. Weber could acquire. One of our biggest challenges was having Lt. Col. Hyland stealing from us what we had stolen from someone else. Of course he was busy trying to get the Operations' side of the fence up and running. As the hours ticked by we were able to establish a functional, not perfect, operation.

On day two the main body of jets started to roll in, bringing troops and much needed equipment. As the personnel arrived everything started coming together and we were well on the road to having our first jet ready to support the mission. I was quite impressed to see personnel step up to the plate and take on supervisory roles. We had personnel working billeting, transportation, communication, and dining issues that were not in their normal duty description. It was nice to see the "take charge" attitude and watch the whole plan come together.

In May's Tanker Times, Chief Thomas wrote an article about the Air National Guard diversity policy. In the article he stated "The success of the National Guard federal, State, and community missions are directly associated to the contributions of the men and women who have volunteered to join our force. Our community basing architecture is fundamental to the success, because it affords the diverse opinions, abilities, beliefs, ideologies, and experience of our greater American society. The training our members conduct during unit training assemblies does not solely prepare them; it is the melding of those individuals into the organization that diversifies the team."

At one point during our deployment we had up to 16 different units, active, guard, and reserve from North Carolina to California, and Maine to Florida. In the beginning, everyone had a different opinion on how to run the show and we worked seven days a week, 12-14 hours per day; the pace was intense to say the least. By the time I left two months later we had a solid operation, working five days on and one off with a balanced mix of experience and work ethics. The credit needs to go to the "Total Force" team effort not the actions of one. It was interesting talking to some of our troops to find out it was their first deployment, what an experience they must have had! At the other end of the spectrum working with Chief Kitt from McConnell AFB this was his last deployment; I just got an invitation to his retirement ceremony. All in all everyone needs to take pride in themselves. From what we started with to where we are today and knowing we had flown our 800th mission by the end of the second month; we are a part of history.

I think this operation was a prime example of diversity at its best and my hat is off to the men and women who supported this operation in a volunteer role. To our younger Airmen, take advantage of your training during UTAs; your time will come if it already hasn't. Once you get there, the demands will be great, but rewards will be long-lived including the camaraderie and friendships you will establish. For those who have returned, enjoy the summer with your family and for those still there God Speed and be safe!



Briefs FYI

Events

Day at the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium

Families are invited to spend the day at the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium August 13 at 9:30 a.m. with the PANG Child and Youth Program. Admission is free but space is limited and participants must register.

To register, visit <http://www.jointservicessupport.org/Events/KioskRegistration.aspx?Mode=AddNew&Id=315518cb-08e9-464f-af8f-9724a275b0a4>



Sunglasses worn with the uniform should be conservative, and frames may be black or brown material or gold or silver wire. Brand name glasses may be worn with a small logo on the frames or lenses, but the logo must be same color as frames or lenses. Conservative wrap around sunglasses may be worn.

Conservative lenses and frames, faddish styles and mirrored lenses prohibited. No sunglasses to include darkened photosensitive lenses in formation. Not worn around the neck or on top/back of head or exposed hanging on the uniform.

Estimated pay date for the
July UTA:
July 18

Estimated pay date for the
July SUTA:
July 27

Retiree Office
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Coraopolis, PA 15108-4210
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The next 171st /112th luncheon will be on Monday, July 18 at Hoss's. Note to regular attendees, the lapel pins should be in by the luncheon.

Congratulations to our most recent retirees, Master Sgts. Stephen S. Grenesko and Dennis M. Wade. Welcome to the ranks of retirement. If we can be of any assistance to you, please give us a call.

Wings Over Pittsburgh is scheduled at the 911th Airlift Wing Sept. 10-11. There will be static displays, Harrier Jets, the Heavy Metal Jet Team, and much more. Admission and parking are free. If you would like more information, you can go to www.wingsoverpittsburgh.com.

Last month, I talked about casualty assistance. But do you know what's going on today?

Congress and our military leaders are looking at making adjustments to our retired benefits so the government can balance the national budget. Have you ever thought of joining one or more national organizations, which fight for us to maintain our benefits? These organizations include the National Association of Uniformed Services (NAUS), Air Force Sergeants Assc., or the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). These organizations lobby for us in the Congress, and give us easy access to our Congressional leaders so we can let them know how we feel about proposed legislation. I have written my representatives through NAUS, and the congressional offices have written back to me. It works.

On this subject, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that COLA has gone up by 3.4% and if there are no other downward movements in the next 4 months, we should expect a pay raise in FY2012. The bad news, if you are of working age, and retired, TRICARE Prime Family will increase to \$520 per year. Further increases would be based on the same COLA calculations that our retired pay is based on.

That's it for right now. So for the Retirees Office, we hope you continue to have a great retirement year. Hope to see you in July.

Volunteers needed for Pittsburgh wheelchair games

The 2011 National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be in Pittsburgh and volunteers are needed with a supervisor's permission to transport participants and equipment August 7 for the following shifts:

2:00-6:00 a.m./ 30 volunteers

6:00-10:00 a.m./ 30 volunteers

8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m./ 30 volunteers

12:00-4:00 p.m./ 30 volunteers

Volunteers are required to complete mandatory lift training August 6 at 2:30 p.m. in the dining hall and it will last approximately one hour. The earlier shifts may be more conducive for Airmen that live outside the commuting distance and would like to head home earlier in the day on Sunday, after performing the fourth and final drill period for August.

There will be free parking at the airport and volunteers will receive a t-shirt and \$10 for a meal at the airport. Volunteers must sign up by July 14 through the link on the Steelweb.

National Veterans Wheelchair Games **PITTSBURGH**



COMPETE | VOLUNTEER | DONATE
August 1-6, 2011

Please contact the 171st Public Affairs Office for more information or to volunteer
171.ARW.PA@ang.af.mil 412-776-7350

www.pittsburgh.va.gov/NVWG



You have just entered the ...

RECRUITER ZONE



Our Recruiting Team -- (412) 776-7495

Master Sgts. Sue Smith and Skip Powell, Tech. Sgt. John Frazier, Staff Sgts. Shayla Pollard and Lindsey Duncan

Contact us toll free at 1-877-249-5193 or through the web www.171arw.af.mil

Retention Corner

Master Sgt. Don Schauer

Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Simoneau

Student Loan Repayment Changes

In a memo from the National Guard Bureau, DFAS Limestone, in accordance with IRS guidance, will now be deducting a flat rate tax of 25% from all student loan payments. The payment that is applied to the member's loan will still be calculated as 15% or \$500 (whichever is more) of the balance of each loan LESS the 25% tax. For example, if your payment is calculated to be \$1,500, \$1,125 will be applied to your loans and \$375 will be withheld for taxes. The flat rate tax deduction will be reflected on the member's SLRP W-2, which should be available through myPay at the end of the calendar year. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Retention Office.



- Display the U.S. flag from sunrise to sunset on buildings and stationary flagstuffs in the open. When a patriotic effect is desired the flag may be displayed 24-hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.
- On special days, the flag may be flown at half-staff. On Memorial Day it is flown at half-staff until noon and then raised.
- When saluting the flag DO the following:
- All persons present in uniform (military, police, fire, etc.) should render the military salute. Members of the armed forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute.
- All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart.
- Don't dip the U.S. Flag for any person, flag, or vessel.
- Don't let the flag touch the ground.
- Don't fly flag upside down unless there is an emergency.
- Don't carry the flag flat, or carry things in it.
- Don't use the flag as clothing.
- Don't fasten it or tie it back. Always allow it to fall free.

Welcome New Recruits

Dylan Brown

Vincent Berrettini

Kevin Carey

Michael Mesinere

Congratulations on your promotion!

Promotion to Airman 1st Class

Rachel G. Powell

Lauren A. Gothe

Seth D. Ellison

Erin E. McBane

Benjamin P. Elder

Garett E. Lynch

Promotion to Senior Airman

Lisa A. Weiss

Brittany L. Fowler

Promotion to Staff Sgt.

David E. Kepple

Brigitta M. Horton

Timothy D. Ernst

Abbie L. Salka

Brian M. Doucet

Ryan D. Curley

Promotion to Master Sgt.

Jason P. Montgomery

HIGH Flyer

Aircraft: 58-0054
Hours Flown: 248.4
Sorties Flown: 26



Crew chiefs: Tech. Sgts. Ricky Perza and Master Sgt. Dan Oyster, Staff Sgts. Russell Huffmyer and Randy Reese, Senior Airmen Jon Hough and John Breitenbach

Father, new son united despite miles apart

By Staff Sgt. Sara M. Kaufman
Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. John “Travis” Ray deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan from the 171st Air Refueling Wing in October last year. Shortly before his deployment, Sgt. Travis was able to experience a huge life event, the marriage to his wife, Heather Ray. Quite aware that he would be coming home to a whole new world of his own, Travis confidently left Heather home with their two daughters, Sky-Lynn and Zaylea, who will soon be adopted Sgt. Ray, knowing that she was also awaiting the arrival of their son, Seth David Ray.

Knowing that Sgt. Ray would not be home for this amazing event, a friend of the family worked with Jodi Herman, educational specialist at UPMC Hamot Women’s Hospital in Erie, PA to help Travis celebrate the birth of his son with Heather. With a few laptop computers, a web camera, and the use of Skype over the internet, Sgt. Ray was able to join Heather in the hospital just a few short minutes after their son, Seth, entered the world. The plan had been for Sgt. Ray to join Heather before her scheduled cesarean section at 6 a.m. that morning, but little Seth had other plans as Heather went into labor at 1 a.m. on the date of his scheduled birth, March 7. Sgt. Ray, being in a different time zone, was asleep while Heather desperately tried to contact him and finally did just in time for their son to be presented by Heather’s sister.

Heather, when asked how she would have felt if this would not have been possible, responded, “I think it would be upsetting for both of us. It was a lot more meaningful and more of a relief that he was able to be there. I didn’t feel like I was doing it alone.”

“When you’re over there, you feel so detached,” Sgt. Ray said, as he explained how he had missed all the main events of the pregnancy as well as every doctor’s appointment. “To be a part of that, it gave me something to look forward to and made it easier knowing that I wouldn’t be there.”

The Rays look forward to enjoying the time they now have together, because they truly know the importance of family.



Staff Sgt. John “Travis” Ray shares a laugh with his four-month old son Seth and wife Heather. Sgt. Ray was deployed during his son’s birth but through technology such as Skype and a webcam, he was able to welcome his child to the world. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Sara Kaufman)

Communications squadron commander retires

By Staff Sgt. Ivyann Castillo
Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Gordon Richards, the 171st Communications Squadron Commander, is scheduled to retire from the 171st after 28 years of military service.

“It has been an unbelievable gift to be the commander after 13 years,” said Colonel Richards. “I am going to miss it terribly.”

Colonel Richards didn’t start his career in communications, he actually began in the enlisted core on active duty in March 1984 as combat arms training and maintenance specialist with the 321st Combat Support Group in Grand Forks AFB, N.D. He transferred to be a technical training instructor for the Air Force Security Police Academy at Lackland AFB, TX.

After 10 years, he separated from active duty and became a traditional guardsman, cross training into the communications field and served with 271st Combat Communications Squadron, Fort Indiantown Gap, PA in 1994. During this time, he also obtained his bachelor’s degree in computer information systems.

The following year, as staff sergeant he was commissioned as second lieutenant and became the logistics officer with the 271st CBCS until August 1998 when he accepted the position as the 171st CS commander.

“While it was endless fun to get paid to blow things up, you can’t pass up an opportunity for a commission in our great



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Stacey Barkey

SEE RETIRE ON PAGE 8



U.S. Air Force photos by Master Sgt. Ann Young

Burghers' Beat... "How will you be celebrating the 4th of July?"



**Airman 1st Class
Keith Clark**

*Maintenance Group
"Cookout with friends
and then head down
to the Regetta to see
the fireworks for the
evening."*



Col. Steven Painter

*Vice Wing Commander
"The Five F's- Family,
friends, franks, fire-
works and fun,"*



**Senior Airman
Lindsey Pucel**

*Medical Group
"On the beach in North
Carolina spending
quality time with my
loved ones."*



**Staff Sgt.
Brandon Maree**

*Emergency Maintenance
"Hopefully I'm not work-
ing at my civilian job
that day and if not I'll be
hanging out with some
friends."*

*(U.S. Air Force photos by
Staff Sgt. Sara Kaufman)*

FROM RETIRE ON PAGE 6

armed forces," stated Colonel Richards. "Besides, I had spent all that time and effort getting my IT degrees that I thought it was time to put them to work."

"I am glad the 171 ARW took a chance on me and gave me the opportunity to be the commander since I didn't start my Guard years here," continued Colonel Richards.

Throughout his career, Richards has been deployed overseas in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom as well as state natural disaster missions.

Colonel Richards will be teaching business and information systems and will also be the business department chair at Geneva College after his official retirement date on November 1.

Though he was very busy as a commander, he will still be working hard on the civilian side.

"I will at least be working closer to home," said Colonel Richards. "It gives me time to focus on working on my doctor of science degree in systems and communication," continued Colonel Richards.

In addition to teaching, Colonel Richards said he will be busy taking care of his farm. Though he may be very occupied after leaving the military he will truly miss the work, but more importantly the people.

"I couldn't ask for better people to work with in my squadron," said Colonel Richards proudly, adding, "they are intelligent individuals, who are experts in their field and are very hardworking."

He said there are not enough positive adjectives to describe his squadron members, but for him serving as the communications squadron commander was more than a job.

"You come here for the job but you gain another family."

Line of sight



*Staff Sgt. Robert Buterbaugh completes an active shooter scenario in the aircraft hanger on base as part of the 171st Security Forces Squadron mini-camp. Members were instructed by squadron members as well as members of the U.S. Air Marshals Service on handling potential threats. Approximately 130 security forces Airmen participating in a week-long training exercise in June covering combat tasks, weapon qualification, active shooter scenarios and TASER training.
(U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Stacy Gault)*