



Air Traffic System Evaluation

Capt. Dicie Hritz
Public Affairs

The 258 ATCS went through an intense three day ATSE August 16-18 2011 at the unit, receiving the official out-brief at 9:00 a.m. August 19th. The squadron was evaluated on 807 checklist items, which is the second highest amount of items on any Air National Guard unit to date.

The evaluation assesses standards on Air Force, National Guard Bureau and Federal Aviation regulations all at the same time. Specifically, it is measuring to see if an ATC unit is performing at a safe level. The evaluation is measured in observations and problems. An observation is defined as a system deficiency that clearly indicates an actual or potential flying mission impact or an adverse affect on flying safety. A problem is considered minor and is defined as an unsatisfactory checklist item, indicating non-compliance with an established standard. This evaluation was the first time since the inception of the 258th that the unit went through an evaluation with no observations. The trend analysis has successfully declined at the 258th since evaluations started in 1998.

The leadership, experience, maintenance and superb air traffic controlling was highlighted during the out-brief by Mr. Scott Duke, NGB/A3A Chief of Airfield Services Division. The words professional, gutsy, mentorship, leadership, CRM and remarkable were used while describing the unit by members of the NGB evaluation team. The unit was commended from the leadership at the top down to the lowest ranking Airmen in the squadron.

Two individuals were singled out for their performances during the inspection in the form of an ATSE coin. To be coined by an ATSE inspection team is a rare distinction indicating excellence well above standards. Since 1998, The NGB evaluation team has only presented three coins (total). Master Sgt. Kristy Long, Maintenance Quality Assurance NCOIC and Chief Master Sgt. Steven Anslinger, Chief of Maintenance were both presented an ATSE coin by Duke for their outstanding leadership, experience and guidance they provided to their team of Airmen. Anslinger will be retiring in April after 34 years of military service.

Lt. Col. Joseph Hensley, 258 ATCS Commander, was ex-

tremely pleased with the out-brief and commented on the talent, experience and enthusiasm of the members in his squadron.

“Before the inspection, I felt the unit was performing at an extremely high level but, I am a little biased. This inspection validated my faith in the professionalism and abilities of the squadron,” said Hensley.

Brig. Gen. Roy Uptegraff, 171 Air Refueling Wing Commander, Col. Mark Van Kooten, Mission Support Group Commander, his wife Kim, and Lt. Col. Michele Papakie, Wing Inspector General attended the out-brief and were very proud of the 258th unit members for the laudatory comments they received from the evaluation team.

General Uptegraff addressed the squadron after the out-brief was complete and summed up the 258th in two words: fortunate and grateful. Fortunate because of the Airmen, experience and expertise in the area of air traffic and grateful because of our resources and infrastructure the 258th operates with and out of.

“I was absolutely thrilled and delighted at the out-brief,” said Uptegraff.

“Well done! From the bottom to the top, I was extremely proud of all the men and women of the 258th. They have just set a new level of excellence in the ATSE world,” said Van Kooten.



Senior Airman Katie Mulvihill demonstrates equipment in the 258th ATCS tower to the 171st Air Refueling Wing group commanders (U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Dicie Hritz)

Where were you 10 years ago?

Brig. Gen. Roy Uptegraff, Wing Commander

What a terrific summer. As always, it seems to go by too fast, and before I realize it, we are into the fall. I applaud all of our Airmen who assisted with the National Wheelchair Veterans Games last month in Pittsburgh. You will read more about the event in this issue but I do want to express the tremendous feeling of support and care I felt when we assisted these outstanding veterans. These veterans have met their personal challenges with cheer and enthusiasm and we sure appreciated getting to know them.

Also this past month our 258th Air Traffic Control Squadron achieved outstanding success during its inspection. Folks, this is a highly professional, can-do organization under the command of Lt. Col. Joe Hensley that knows no bounds to further horizons. My hat is off to the team of Airmen and their spotless installation who deliver an atmosphere of pride as soon as one crosses the gated entrance. Congratulations!

Finally, I have to mention how busy we are in the background of flying aircraft worldwide. Lt. Col. Charles Perrott in our Mission Support Group has been focused on our unprecedented training operations with the Army National Guard in support of domestic

operations. We even have an office on the base for our Army brothers to ensure we are plugged in and ready for the upcoming certification of our state's Homeland Response Force.

Although we dodged Hurricane Irene, Lt. Col. Steve Scheller in Operations found himself on duty that weekend as the on-scene base commander preparing to receive and bed down 498 Army Guardsmen from Indiana, Pa. who would be ready to move out. It never happened, but like our response to the air operations over Libya, we were prepared for action.

I hope each of you take a moment to reflect on the 10-year anniversary of 9/11. I won't forget that day. I was in Washington, D.C. at a meeting with my fellow operations group commanders when the airliner hit the Pentagon. I will not forget the plume of angry black smoke blowing over the top of us and the acrid smell only a disaster can produce. I drove home that afternoon – dodging the congested and closed highways with several of my peers hoping to find a way home to Pittsburgh. We did.

Our KC-135s went into action that day crisscrossing the nation to refuel fighter aircraft so that national security could be preserved. It was

Commander's CORNER



a fast decade. The term “homeland” was borne and it is second nature to use it now. We stood up the alert lines which continue today. We mobilized in 2003 and went to war. We joined an Air Expeditionary Force that rotates mobilizations and deployments on a frequent basis. Will there ever be light at the end of the contingency operations? Perhaps the “Arab Spring” as this past Spring was coined, is a sign of hope for a better world with more freedom. In any case, we continue to wish the best for our Airmen at home and on the job overseas. Some of them are in a hostile environment and I pray they will return safe.

Our Wing is blessed to be in Western Pennsylvania where the call to arms is met with incredible speed and commitment. Be safe and I look forward to seeing you at our next drill.

Help Wanted

Human Resource Advisor

The wing resource advisor is responsible for providing input to senior leadership on force development, force management, and current issues and trends throughout the 171st Air Refueling Wing. Interested applicants should submit a letter of recommendation from their commander and military resume to Col. Steve Painter by close of business Sunday, Sept. 18.

HIGH Flyer

Aircraft: 58-0077
Hours Flown: 183.4
Sorties Flown: 21



Crew chiefs: Master Sgt. Karl Vickroy, Staff Sgts. Thomas Gilray, Nicholas Metro, Don Baker and Mark Kotch

“Editorial Staff”



Brigadier General Roy E. Uptegraff, III, Commander

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Changing of the Guard

Chief Master Sgt. Vic Guerra, Pennsylvania Command Chief

During the upcoming change of authority ceremony on September 10, Chief Master Sgt. Ralph Braden will relinquish authority and I will accept the authority (and responsibility) of the position of Command Chief Master Sergeant for the State of Pennsylvania.

It's both an honor and a privilege to have been selected as your eighth State Command Chief. I appreciate the confidence that Maj. Gen. Craig and Maj. Gen. Sischo have shown in selecting me, and the support shown to me by my fellow Airmen, both enlisted and officer. I would also like to say thanks to my family, as this wouldn't be possible without their continued support. I'm sure most of you (if not all) can say the same, no matter what position you hold or where you are in your military career. So take the time to thank your family for their support and make sure you make time for them as well.

Thanks to Brig. Gen. Uptegraff and the entire 171st family for all of your support throughout the years and in this new endeavor as well. It's been very gratifying; a pleasure and an honor to serve as your Wing Command Chief, and I'll continue to serve you and the state in my new position as well.

Chief Braden is leaving us in good shape with programs and processes he has helped groom over his tenure, and I thank him for that, we all should. We will continue to groom those programs and processes as changes come our way and/or circumstances dictate.

I have an open door policy. Please feel free to drop me a note, stop by or stop me in my travels to discuss what might be on your mind, or just to say hi. I would urge you though, to try to work any issues you may have through your chain of command. Work with your supervisors, senior NCOs, First Sergeants and Chiefs. Most likely



they've been involved in similar issues before and hopefully can help you resolve yours quickly. I know I have and will continue to rely on my fellow Chiefs, First Sergeants and other senior NCOs to work through issues. One person can't do it alone.

To my fellow enlisted Airmen, be ready and be prepared. I can tell you that when I started my career, I never dreamt I would make it as far as I have. Some opportunities you can foresee and plan for some of the time; however, they sneak up and surprise you. You can't always predict when opportunity is going to knock and you need to be prepared to open the door when it does. Have your professional military education courses completed. Be prepared; get it done.

In closing, I want to thank Chief Braden for his 38 years of service to our nation, and thank him for his camaraderie, friendship and mentorship. He will be missed. And to the Enlisted Core, I pledge to you to do my best to continue to promote the Enlisted Core, for you are the true core of the Pennsylvania National Guard. Through this "Changing of the Guard," I look forward to the opportunity to further serve such a great organization.

Briefs FYI

Discounted PA Hunting Licenses

Discounted hunting licenses for \$2.70 can be purchased by qualified military members at any Pennsylvania Game Commission issuing agents.

To qualify for the discount, military members must be a resident of Pennsylvania serving on active duty in any of the armed services at a facility outside of Pennsylvania.

All applicants must provide documentation of: Pennsylvania being their home of record; their military status; their official orders showing that they are stationed outside of Pennsylvania and their leave papers.



Nov. 1 Uniform Changes

Black combat boots and black or brown t-shirts will no longer be authorized with the flight suit.

The battle dress uniform is no longer authorized. Also, Airmen are permitted to wear the tan boots only with the Airmen battle uniform only while deployed.

Estimated pay date for the September UTA:
Sept. 27

Estimated pay date for the September SUTA:
Sept. 19

Veterans helping veterans

Tech. Sgt. Todd McFeeley

Public Affairs

More than 130 members of the 171st Air Refueling Wing volunteered to assist with the 31st Annual Veteran Wheelchair Games which were held in Pittsburgh July 31- Aug. 6. Our unit provided support for veteran athletes with boarding their departing flights and transporting luggage.

Many unit members spent part of Sunday of their August drill, Aug. 7, at the Pittsburgh International Airport. They were able to help the athletes with boarding their respective flights. Some Guardsmen helped by lifting the veterans from their wheelchairs into aisle chairs prior to boarding the plane. The aisle chair is a narrow seat on wheels used to usher passengers down the aircraft aisle to their seats.

Unit members worked in teams of three to ensure the safest lifting practices were met. Once the athlete was lifted from his or her wheelchair and secured onto the aisle chair, the lifting team then escorted the veteran to his or her seat on the airplane and assisted with lifting and securing that vet into the seat on the aircraft. Lift team members also would assist with transporting any carry-on luggage or other personal items that the veterans or their companions needed aid with.

Airmen worked in varying shifts beginning at 2 a.m. until about 6 p.m. that day.

As with anything else the unit is involved in, there were some planning and training items that needed taken care of prior to transferring the athletes. Rich Ward, 171st chaplain's office, handled much of the coordination for our unit.

Ward works for the VA as an office automation assistant. He was also tasked as the Airport Committee Chairman for the Veteran Wheelchair Games.

Those who wanted to do their part to help were required to submit their names in advance. The Airport Authority and Transportation Security Administration verified the names on the list then awarded clearance to our individuals.

All volunteers participated in a wheelchair lifting safety class prior to aiding the vets. The lifting class was required of all volunteers. This training took place Aug. 6 in the wing's dining hall.

"The folks from the 171st are what made departure day run as smoothly as it did. They worked their tails off and the vets loved having uniformed personnel assisting them.

It was a nice way to close out the games," said Ward.

This is the second time the games have been held in Pittsburgh. The first was 1998.



"We've had a lot of great military volunteers from Pittsburgh to help us down here...we've been treated like gold here. I think that's why you guys are **black and gold** in the first place."

Rene Peterson, Kansas City, Mo.

"I know that all of you have other jobs to do, but when you see all the service members... we really appreciate it... we feel the camaraderie with you... You know where we've been and we hope you don't go through some of the stuff we went through."

Fredrick Garraway
Killeen, Texas

Welcome New Recruits

Brian Bogats Jr.
Jack Haney
Randy Micholas Jr.
Joshua Price

Darren Rogers Jr.
Ashley Throne
Chad Tokarski
David Youtz

Contact the 171st Recruiting Office

412-776-7495

Toll free 1-877-249-5193

www.171arw.ang.af.mil



Congratulations on your promotion!

Promotion to Senior Airman

Justin Hixon
Thomas Viau
Joshua Aloia

Daniel Neely
Rachael Hough
Aaron Snyder

Promotion to Staff Sgt.

James White
Shannon Pietrasiewicz

Ethan McCloskey
Edward Stengel Jr.

Promotion to Tech. Sgt.

Matthew Grabski
Jerry Hilderbrand
William Peterson

Thomas Smith
Daniel Moretti
Amanda Hilliard

Promotion to Master Sgt.

Michele Mersing
Gary Shannon

Christine Schiefer

Strong Bonds weekend

Staff. Sgt. Michaela Ponder
Public Affairs

As we drove toward Seven Springs Mountain Resort, my husband and I were looking forward to what a nice weekend we were going to have. How great it is to have a chance to slow down for a weekend, get away and reconnect with your loved one, your spouse.

As a participant with my husband in the Strong Bonds weekend, I found the experience enjoyable and valuable. Taking place in the Laurel Highlands, an hour from Pittsburgh, it was easy to get to and a beautiful setting. The mountains and lush woods provided a nice view as we pulled up to the lodging at Seven Springs. After checking in Friday, all the participants from the 171st met in the conference room reserved for us and were greeted by the warmth and smiling faces of the 171st Chaplain's Office. Chaplain Lee started the weekend by sharing information about how to effectively communicate during conflict. This tool of effective communication and disagreement resolution could be useful not only for couples relating to one another, but also in work relationships.

Saturday, we spent a nice portion of the day with the other couples from our unit and the chaplains office learning and watching the Mark Gungor series, "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage," which had valuable information that was also mixed in with humor. It was also nice to connect and mingle with the other couples that were there, to see people more relaxed in civilian clothes with their spouses set a nice tone for the weekend. After learning some successful tools for marriage and communication we also had the opportunity to check out some things at the resort on our own. We took the chairlift up to the top, checked out the lake and even stopped by the mountain I've skied on before. The weekend was a worthwhile getaway for us and would recommend it to anyone interested in attending future Strong Bonds events.

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Our July luncheon was a big success with 50 people in attendance. The next 171st/112th luncheon is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 17, at Hoss's. The lapel pins were well received, please let me know if you didn't receive one and would like one. There are a few left, so if you missed getting one at the July lunch, you still may have a chance in October.

We extend our sympathies to the friends and family of Col. Richard L. Prave, who passed on June 14 and Senior Master Sgt. Stanley P. Skiba, who passed on Aug. 14.

There is a special open house on Sept. 9 for members of the 911th and 171st to visit. It's Wings Over Pittsburgh, which you can view a day ahead of time. The main event will be held on Sept. 10-11. You will need your DD Form 2 and your ID card to get on base. The hours are 1:30-3:00 p.m. for the viewing area to watch the air show practice, and 3:00-6:00 p.m. to view the static displays.

From the 171st Retirees Office, we hope you continue to have a great retirement year. We hope to see you in October.

171st Crew Chiefs

By Tech. Sgt. Stacy Gault
Public Affairs

No matter what day of the year it is or the weather forecast, the 171st crew chiefs are on the flightline maintaining the wing's fleet of KC-135 Stratotankers. The aircraft maintenance shop is comprised of more than 100 crew chiefs that work 24/7, 365 days a year.

"We're out here working every day, including Christmas morning, which many people may not realize," said Senior Master Sgt. Brian Schaub, one of four flight chiefs in the shop. Schaub is responsible for ensuring the mechanics have the proper equipment and training to complete jobs as well as assign jobs for the workday and follow up.

Compared to the maintenance specialists who concentrate on one area of the aircraft, the crew chiefs oversee the general maintenance of the entire plane which creates more challenges.

"It's a faster pace working on the flight line than in the back shops," said Schaub, "that's what I like most about it; there is never a boring day."

Schaub also knows the specialist side of maintenance

because he served as the supervisor of the fuel cell for many years. Serving in many roles, he is well versed in the entire maintenance process and said, as crew chiefs, it's gratifying to see how every shop works together to get a plane off the ground.

"And that's where the rubber hits the road. You get to witness the end result of everyone's maintenance efforts firsthand," Schaub said. But there are also many other benefits to working as a crew chief.

Staff Sgt. Seth Bradley said like many other flights in the 171st, the crew chiefs are a very tight-knit group, looking out for one another both at work and at home.

"We all take care of each other; You get that camaraderie from 12 or 14 hours on the flight line together."

Bradley stressed the hazards of working on the flightline and the responsibility associated with it.

"There are a lot of things out there [flightline] that could kill you," Bradley said. "I put my trust in them and they put their trust in me. You're putting three lives on an airplane every time you go out there, so we take that very seriously."

Between deployments, stateside duty and training, crew chiefs have a lot of travel opportunities which is one reason Bradley was attracted to the career.

"We maintain the aircraft and any problems, we fly with them," he said, adding, "when an airplane goes somewhere, it needs a mechanic."



U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. Stacy Gault