

VIKING FLYER



934th Airlift Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minn.

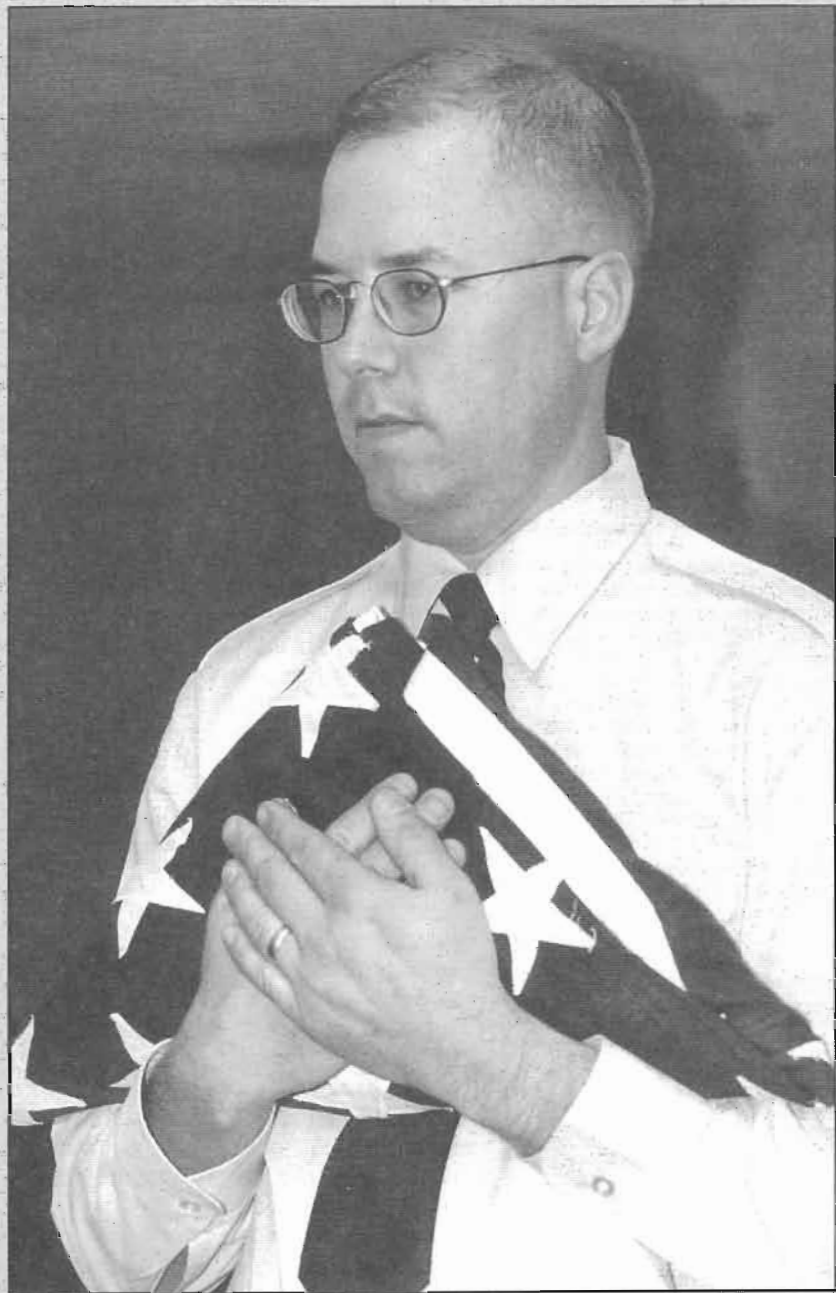
Honor guard

Newly-formed team
faces growing demand
for military honors

• Page 9

Inside the VF

- 5** A-76 ends with good, bad news
- 6** Day care listing helps parents
- 7** Lodging project moves ahead
- Services members return to renovated dining hall
- 8** Wing roundup
- 9** Alaska tour deemed success
- 10** Anthrax shots remain mandatory
- 12** Power packs aid battery jumping



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Airlift Wing
financial
management and
services
craftsman,
practices flag
presentation with
the wing honor
guard last month.
For the story, see
Page 9.



Staff Sgt. Suzanne Runtsch

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UTA schedule

Jan. 8-9	• UTA meal
Feb. 5-6	entrees:
March 4-5	information not
April 1-2	available at press
May 6-7	time.
June 3-4	• UTA pay date:
July 8-9	Dec. 15.

Commentary

Reflections on a great year

Weathering change, wing continues tradition of excellence

Col. Dean Despinoy
Wing Commander

As the holidays approach, I always take time to reflect back upon the past year.

Much has happened in the way of change in my life, but change has been no stranger to the 934th, either. You have seen a commander move after a short 15 months in command; Col. Curt Breeding will retire after an outstanding career and association with the wing (*see next page*); we finally have two more aircraft; and we seem to be getting a constant flow of new faces in the wing.

During this season, when your thoughts turn more to the family, you and your family can take great pride in your association with the Reserve. Too often we take each other for granted. We must never forget the sacrifices each of us make to allow the Reserve to function.

With less than 6 percent of the population under the age of 60 having ever served in the military, you and your family are among a rare group of Americans. It is because of you and some 80,000 others like you that we have been able to do things never dreamed possible coupled with a drastically reduced active-duty force.

Recently, the 934th proved once again that it is a unique organization. We received the information that a tentative decision on the A-76 study was to retain the base operating support function "in-house" (*story, Pages 5-6*). We are the first base since the privatization initiative started to be awarded the contract in-house.

For those of you who may not be familiar with the A-76 process, this means that instead of having a private contractor performing the functions in supply, transportation and base operations, we will perform those functions using the civilians who are already members of our organization. As one might expect, this news was

received with big smiles and applause. It is a great way to start the new year.

We are also involved in several holiday events. Once again, we will help the Franklin Graham Foundation with "Operation Christmas Child," Dec. 1-3.

This is a great program of children giving to children. Shoe boxes filled with gifts will arrive from an eight-state region via 15 tractor-trailers. We will pack and load the boxes on a Russian cargo plane to be taken for distribution in Europe. The ceremony will take place on the Friday prior to the December UTA.

Also, during the same time frame, we will fly one of our aircraft to Wisconsin. Mentally- and physically-challenged youths will board the aircraft. The aircraft will taxi around the airport, simulating a flight, finally stopping at a hangar where Santa will be waiting. The kids will feel like they have flown to the North Pole. After visiting Santa, they will board the aircraft for the return "flight" home.

These are but two examples of the way you give to the community. The thing that has impressed me the most in the short time I have been your commander is your spirit of giving. Giving to each other in the spirit of family — that is one of the defining traits of the 934th.

I will get around to as many of the holiday gatherings as possible this weekend. I hope to have the opportunity to talk to each and every one of you.

If I should miss you, I want to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a happy, safe holiday from **Judy, Jennifer, Natalie** and me. I look forward to getting back together after the new year to continue our excellent tradition of service. □



Despinoy

Air Force

Money issues discussed

• **Thrift Savings Plan stalls:** Service members may get the chance in 2001 to build retirement nest eggs in the federal Thrift Savings Plan, but only if serious obstacles are overcome.

The fiscal 2000 National Defense Authorization Act contained a provision that would allow members of the uniformed services to join the investment plan. TSP contributions come off the top of the participants' income, thus lowering their taxable income, withholding and income taxes. The program would allow service members to invest up to 5 percent of their annual income, up to \$10,500, but with no government matching for contributions.

While the authorization act would allow TSP enrollment, it also requires that legislation be proposed and enacted that would offset tax revenue losses through 2009 caused by members sheltering income in the plan. Department of Defense officials estimate more than \$480 million in offsetting legislation must be enacted to make service members' TSP participation a reality.

Another hurdle, TSP officials said, is the sheer size of the uniformed services, as DOD alone could potentially double the rolls with 2.6 million active-duty and reserve forces members in uniform.

Additionally, TSP officials have advised DOD the plan would need about \$10 million to allow reserve forces members to participate.

• **Web site offers pay info:** The Department of Defense has a new Web site focused on military pay changes taking effect Jan. 1, including the 4.8 percent pay raise. "Pay 2000" also offers an e-mail feedback service.

☐ See the site at:

<http://pay2000.dtic.mil>

For pay tables, including monthly drill pay, see the Defense Finance and Accounting Service site at:

<http://www.dfas.mil>

• **Surcharges take fire:** Amidst growing opposition to automatic teller machine surcharges, the Department of Defense is weighing in with a proposal to ban the charge on military installations worldwide.

"Why should we take money out of the pockets of our troops, when we've required them to have their paychecks go to their banks via electronic funds transfer?" asked **Michael Weber**, Air Force Financial Management Office.

A final decision on the proposal is expected within the next 60 days. (*Air Force Print News*)

'Smart cards' to replace IDs

The Department of Defense wants "smart cards" to replace active and reserve component military identification cards. These cards would be issued to civilians and certain contractors with access to DOD facilities as well.

Smart cards are equipped with an electronic chip, a

(NEWS BRIEFS, continued on next page)

Thirty years of service

Challenges, difficulties, rewards — Reserve career encompasses all

Col. Curt Breeding
Operations Group Commander

There are very few people who

have been as privileged as I am. I have been afforded the opportunity to serve my country in the Air Force and Air Force Reserve the past 30+ years. These years have been filled with challenges, difficulties and rewards.

But two common themes have always been present: the mission and the people. They have motivated me and kept me coming back for more.



Breeding

Our mission is to maintain a combat-ready force for our nation's defense. It is also to provide assistance to people and other countries throughout the world.

From drug enforcement support in South America to hurricane relief in Central America to humanitarian airlift in Sarajevo, to assisting invaded countries in numerous parts of the world, you and I have made a difference to thousands of people who will never be able to thank us. Our unit has been, and will continue to be, vitally important to our nation's success as the leader of the free world. Please don't ever lose sight of how important you are — and what good you're capable of.

The people, all of you, are the finest I've ever worked with. Our mission has increased dramatically over the past

decade, and I see no end in sight. Despite the increased pressure on your families and civilian jobs, you've stood up to the challenges. I marvel at your professionalism, can-do attitude and dedication.

The 934th Airlift Wing has a tremendous reputation throughout the Air Force Reserve and, indeed, the active duty. That reputation is maintained because of your contributions and sacrifices. It does not go unnoticed or unappreciated. I commend all of you for your efforts.

As I retire, I challenge each of you to continue the tradition of those who have come before, instill the unit's pride in those who will join the future and remain the professionals you are. I am honored to have been part of this organization and will miss you all.

Fly safe, and Godspeed! ☐

News briefs ...

(Continued from previous page)

magnetic strip and a bar code. They've proven to be efficient time savers that can be programmed for use everywhere from dining facilities to weapons armories.

The card can hold information about service members' inoculations, medical and dental records, finance allotments and other data.

The \$145 million program would be implemented from fiscal 2000 to 2005. The first year would be devoted to developing software and obtaining card stock and hardware. During the second year, hardware would be installed in more than 800 sites worldwide where the military currently issues ID cards and at about 75 new sites. As the equipment is installed, local officials would then begin issuing smart cards.

"We do not plan to convert dependent or retiree ID cards, because no requirement has been identified that would justify the expense," said **Ken Schefflen**, director of the Defense Manpower Data Center in Washington, D.C. The cards will cost about \$6 each, he estimated. (AFPN)

Chemical warfare masks tested

Air Mobility Command is testing more than 45,000 nuclear, biological and chemical protective masks to see if they fit each owner's face properly. The test is aimed at people assigned to mobility positions and must be completed by Dec. 31.

The program determines how well the mask fits the wearer and trains the individual in the wear of the mask. (AMC News Service)

Air Force issues 'must runs'

• **Legal assistance offered:** Active-duty base legal offices offer legal services to active-duty members, including reservists and guardsmen in active service, civilian employees stationed overseas and their respective dependents. Attorneys may be able to help retirees and others as resources and expertise permit.

Services include wills, powers of attorney, notary service, advice on Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act, landlord-tenant issues and tax assistance. Another significant benefit available is the personnel claims program, reimbursing eligible claimants for loss or damage to personal property caused by military service or by the fact that one's personal property was on a military installation.

• **Squadron Officer School changes:** As SOS approaches its 50th year of operation, several changes are scheduled to take effect.

The fundamental focus will remain on leadership and dedication to the profession of arms, but course length will be shortened from seven weeks to five beginning in January. Also, the curriculum will be modified to reflect a more tightly-focused, contemporary curriculum.

Reserve

Reservists gain right to use special fares for drill travel

Landmark legislation has been passed permitting military reservists to use government "City Pair" fares when traveling by air to perform weekend training.

Normally, with training dates known far in advance, reservists traveling by plane typically can book fares that meet or better the City Pair rate, said officials. The legislation becomes beneficial when short-notice training opportunities arise.

To use the special rates for nonreimbursable travel, reservists must get written permission from their commander; use the government travel card; and use contracted City Pair airlines, routes and schedules. Air Force transportation officials said most commercial travel offices accept the government travel card, but if it does not, reservists can call Omega Travel toll-free at (800) 285-6342 to arrange inactive duty training travel.

Reserve forces members traveling to and from weekend drills are required to pay for their own transportation. The City Pair travel contract previously excluded members of the Reserve and Guard from using the government fares, even though they were in an official duty status. (Air Mobility Command News Service, Air Force Reserve Command News Service)

Flag gifts granted for reservists

Air Force reservists who are eligible to retire with pay from the Selected Reserve may opt to receive a U.S. flag at no cost, thanks to an authorization included in the fiscal 2000 National Defense Authorization Act.

They can request a flag when they complete Air Force Form 131, Application for Transfer to the Retired Reserve. At the same time, reservists can indicate if they want a flag that has flown over the U.S. Capitol in their honor. (AFRCNS)

Local

Briefings move to club

Starting Dec. 4, the wing newcomer's program will be starting at 8 a.m. at the NCO Club.

☎For more information, call **Master Sgt. Fay Dudley**, 934th Mission Support Flight, Ext. 1502.

AFSA meeting set

The quarterly meeting for Air Force Sergeants Association Chapter 858 is set for Dec. 16 at 4:30 p.m. at the NCO Club. AFSA members and nonmembers are invited to attend.

The chapter's 1999 membership campaign runs July 1-Dec. 31, and it is close to reaching its 1,000 member goal.

☎For more information or applications, check in unit orderly rooms or call **Master Sgt. Lin Davidson**, 934th Operations Support Flight member and chapter president, (612) 884-6077. □

A-76: 'happy news tinged with bad'

Wing avoids contracting out but faces small reduction in force

Cherie Huntington
Public Affairs

Cheers and applause rocked the NCO Club Nov. 9 as the base became the first of 13 in Air Force Reserve Command to retain its federal civilian work force and avoid contracting out.

The base has been scrutinized since 1996 under the A-76 cost comparison process, but "retain in-house" were the magic words announced by **Col. Dean Despinoy**, wing commander, at his second commander's call since he assumed command Oct. 25.

"It's not a total win," he said. "We'll go through a reduction in force, and it's not going to be easy."

Fewer than 50 affected

Officials give the following stats on affected positions:

- 83 jobs were under study for contracting out.
- 48 jobs were established in the base's "bid package," or Most Efficient Organization.
- 35 jobs were adversely impacted.

In terms of positions lost from current standings, supply will be hardest hit, losing 17 positions; civil engineering, 13; motor vehicles, four; and traffic management, one. Buy-out offers are expected no later than 30 days prior to RIF notices, which must be distributed no later than Feb. 7 to provide the required 90 days' notice. That deadline is based on an MEO implementation date of May 8.

"We'll be needing to eliminate these positions during this process," Despinoy said. "In effect, we'll be tearing down one organization and rebuilding another."

Officials said efforts have been made to soften the blow, however, by stockpiling vacancies under a self-imposed hiring limitation. There are now 33 vacancies here — 11 civilian and 24 air reserve technician positions.

"We have some work ahead of us," said Despinoy, "but I assure you ... I will track you by name. My intention is not to send anyone out the gate, if it's not their desire."

Close win

Despinoy said the winning margin was less than \$844,000 spread over a five-year period. He credited the wing's MEO process success to "great partnership between management and the union."

Jerry LaLonde, president of Local 1997 of the American Federation of Government Employees and electrician with Base Civil Engineering, agreed.

"No one, single person was responsible for this," LaLonde said. "It's the work of every person on the base." He noted the contributions of many base members, former commanders, elected political officials and state union leaders.

"We will have to continue to work hard to be sure we stay competitive," Despinoy added.

Next steps

"This is happy news tinged with bad news," said **Ann Cordes**, chief of civilian personnel. She said approximately 22 people on the base are considered "excess," but it will be a "long, slow process, and the numbers will keep evolving."

Not everyone will be happy with their options resulting from that evolution, she said.

"Some people who want a buy-out may be disappointed," Cordes said, "because our first priority is to 'stand up the MEO.' If an employee is in a skill we need in the MEO, that person will be offered a job, not a buy-out."

Anyone unhappy with their job offer, however, need not feel trapped. "After the RIF is over May 8, we'll go back to filling jobs," she said. "We will offer buy-outs by series. For example, if we had three plumbers

and only one job, we would look at all the plumbers to see if anyone indicated in the survey they would be interested in a buy-out. Let's say two of the three plumbers accepted the buy-out.

"Their names are then removed from the actual RIF that will occur a month later," she continued. "Let's say that the remaining plumber is offered the job, and he doesn't want it. He quits or retires without a buy-out. As you can see, we just paid two plumbers to go out the door, and we don't have a plumber to fill that job."

Cordes said it's tough to determine what people will decide.

"There's always a calculated risk involved," she said. "The goal is to offer buy-outs to the right people, but we could still end up short."

'Auto RIF'

A series of mock RIFs will determine how many people are excess and in which series/job specialty, she explained. Those RIFs are done by a computer program called "Auto RIF" at the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

Auto RIF determines who is eligible and qualified for specific job offers and who needs to be separated.

"Some people who want a buy-out may be disappointed, because our first priority is to 'stand up the MEO.' If an employee is in a skill we need in the MEO, that person will be offered a job, not a buy-out."

— Cordes

(A-76, continued on next page)

A-76 ...

(Continued from previous page)

The computer automatically "places" people into available jobs determined by their highest retention standing. That standing is based on four factors: type of appointment/tenure, veterans preference, total length of civilian and creditable military service, and performance ratings.

Local officials will be "juggling the results" to help place as many people as possible. However, Cordes said they do not have the authority to offer other vacancies if the employee doesn't like the job offered.

When asked if new job descriptions would have to be written, Cordes said that work has been completed. "Managers who worked on the MEO already have organizational charts and job descriptions — and AFPC already classified them," she said. "So they only need a cursory review."

No end yet for AFRC

Other bases facing cost comparisons include Willow Grove Air Reserve Station and Pittsburgh ARS, Pa.; Youngstown ARS, Ohio; Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind.; Homestead ARB, Fla.; March ARB, Calif.; Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La.; and JRB Fort Worth, Texas.

The studies in Louisiana and Texas are on hold pending Air Force approval of a cancellation and re-announcement package for the Air Force Reserve Command/U.S. Navy cost comparison, said **Chuck Frans**, chairman of the 934th Cost Comparison Management Steering Group for A-76 and management analyst with 934th Financial Management.

Bases completing the process with a contracting-out decision include Dobbins ARB, Ga.; Westover ARB, Mass.; General Mitchell International Airport ARS, Wis.; and Niagara Falls ARS, N.Y.

The A-76 process determines whether it is more cost effective to perform some base support functions in-house or through private contract. □



Tech. Sgt. Janet Byerly

Daycare dreams

Leadership group devises useful resource for base military parents

Tech. Sgt. Janet Byerly
Public Affairs

Any parent knows finding quality day care can be difficult. If you happen to work nontraditional hours, such as weekends, finding day care can be next to impossible.

A new resource, a brochure listing licensed day care providers located within 20 miles of the base, may help alleviate the day care crunch some reservists find themselves in each drill weekend. All the care providers listed work nontraditional hours.

The brochure was compiled by five Leadership Development Program members: **Staff Sgt. Holly Thiede**, 934th Logistics Support Squadron; **Staff Sgt. Jodi Eversman**, 934th Airlift Wing;

Staff Sgt. Stefania Strowder, 934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron; and **Staff Sgt. James Erickson** and **Tech. Sgt. Wade Priest**, 934th Maintenance Squadron.

Although many LDP groups have looked into day care solutions in the past, most have failed because of the high cost involved.

"Our leadership group wanted to come up with a way to meet the child care needs of our fellow reservists and do it in a very cost-effective way," said Thiede. "We wanted to put together a project that would be hard for the commander to say 'no' to."

The group contacted day care referral services and obtained lists of providers, both private home care and commercial facilities, that provide licensed care on weekends and evenings.

After the base legal office drafted a disclaimer statement, the brochure was complete.

The brochure will be distributed at newcomers briefings and will be available in the family readiness center.

"We feel our brochure is an excellent tool for reservists looking for quality, convenient child care both for regular unit training assembly weekends and to cover last-minute cancellations from regular providers," said Thiede. □

Lodging project wins more funding

Cherie Huntington
Public Affairs

The wing's \$14 million lodging facility project progressed with an \$8.14 million congressional add-on to the fiscal 2000 Military Construction Appropriations Act, which took effect Oct. 1.

"**Dodd**" **Sadeghi**, project manager and base chief engineer, expects an April ground breaking for the 277-room, three-phase facility. It will be located directly across from the wing headquarters building, Bldg. 760.

"This will be phase one of the project," he said, "which includes the lobby and 21 rooms."

Original plans called for 307 rooms, but Air Force standards in minimum room size increased from

Congress adds money for project not contained in authorization bill

250 square feet to 350. This meant last-minute design changes were required. "So we've reduced the scope to fit within the budget, as the dollars are fixed," Sadeghi said.

He explained that the first-phase redesign involved losing 18 rooms, or one of three floors originally planned for the lobby. Each of the wings will be four-story. Of the 21 rooms in the first phase, six are suites of 450 square feet each.

Phase two of the project, funded by the recent add-on, adds one of two wings, with another 104 rooms. This phase may be advertised for bids this

winter, Sadeghi said. Phase three, a wing with 152 rooms, is programmed for fiscal 2003.

"We're trying to get that moved to fiscal year 2002," he said.

The new lodging facility will replace quarters built in 1943. Another congressional add-on for aging quarters was approved for Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, N.Y. This two-story, 60-room lodging facility will replace the existing visiting officers quarters built in 1952. The new 32,000-square-foot building will cost \$6.3 million.

Sadeghi said excavation will begin approximately where the parking lot is currently located, so it will remain in use through the winter. *(Some information courtesy Air Force Reserve News Service)* □

'Home cooking'

Services members return to renovated dining hall in time for holiday meal

Tech. Sgt. Larry Dean
Public Affairs

Members of the 934th Services Squadron may be singing "I'll Be Home For Christmas" as they move back into their newly renovated dining hall in time for base people to enjoy their holiday meal in December.

Additional work delayed the planned November opening as the base acquired end of year fallout funding to complete an additional \$200,000 of work, including purchase and installation of new serving equipment. This brought the final price tag of the project to around \$400,000.

"The initial project included kitchen-area painting, roof repairs and replacement of damaged sheet rock," said **Master Sgt. Ron Knutson**, SVS air reserve technician. "That work started back in June. But we were

fortunate to receive additional money at the end of the year to complete more work and purchase new equipment that will further improve the facilities our people dine in."

He said a larger foyer area will allow room for more people inside the building when lining up for meals during busy periods. Another improvement is the salad and dessert section, where positioning the serving area away from the wall allows services people to restock the line without stopping the flow of people choosing food items.

"There will be new interior decorations, tables and chairs, a renovated front entrance area, an improved flow for getting your food which brings you to the entrée serving area first and beverage area last, and more," Knutson said. "We're really looking forward to celebrating the holidays with a holiday meal served from our redesigned dining hall." □



Senior Airman Clifford Larson

Services members, such as Airman 1st Class Rachel Curilli, prepared and served meals at the Air Guard dining facility for the past four months.

27th Aerial Port Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Mark Pierson
A C-5 special operations group was supported for a second time doing nighttime air drops at Camp Ripley, Minn. Two unit members, **Staff Sgts. Michael Kuntze** and **Richard Rowcliff**, assisted NASA's Operation SOLVE – Space Ozone Loss and Validation Experiment – in transporting their cargo bound for Sweden. Also, 12 pallets of humanitarian cargo destined for Tanzania were

Wing roundup



Tech. Sgt. Janet Byerly



Tech. Sgt. Robert Walz



Wing around the world:

December

- 27th APS:** Georgia, Sweden, Texas
- 934th AES:** No report
- 96th AS:** California, Hawaii, Sweden
- 934th ASTS:** California, Texas
- 934th AW HQ/MSF:** Georgia, Puerto Rico, Texas
- 934th CES:** No report
- 934th CF:** Georgia
- 934th LSS:** No travel
- 934th MXS:** California, Texas
- 934th OSF:** No travel
- 934th SFS:** Kuwait, Texas
- 934th SVS:** No travel

This list shows official travel destinations for wing members, via commercial or military transportation. For space-available travel information, call the 96th Airlift Squadron, Ext. 1741, or the local Air National Guard wing, Ext. 2450. □

built and processed for later airlift. The squadron is preparing for the third year of supporting Operation Christmas Child, Dec. 1-3.

934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

Staff Sgt. Shana Strozewski
No report.

934th Aeromedical Staging Squadron

Staff Sgt. Michael Sanford
The immunization clinic gave the first round of flu vaccinations in November – 504 flu shots were given during the drill and 187, during the week. Anyone who hasn't received the shot should get one in December.

96th Airlift Squadron

Senior Airman Jess Lind
The unit supported NASA by flying equipment to Sweden, and another trip is forthcoming. Soon we will be supporting more Coronet Oak taskings in Puerto Rico and Operation Joint Forge missions based in Germany.

934th Civil Engineer Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Randy Matthews
No report.

934th Communications Flight

Tech. Sgt. Robert Walz
Four members went to combat skills training at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., Oct. 18-26. Five members have volunteered to serve on

the wing honor guard, supporting Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D. (*story, next page*). **Maj. Kirby Bauer**, CF commander, also commands the honor guard. Other CF volunteers are: **Senior Airman John Herrick**, **Master Sgt. Edward Johnson**, **Senior Airman Blake Robertson** and **Airman 1st Class Sara Webb**.

934th Logistics Support Squadron

Airman 1st Class Keisha Marshall
The unit is finalizing lodging arrangements for the annual tour to Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., set for February.

934th Maintenance Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Steven Lerbakken
Members prepared several aircraft for station-keeping equipment missions, called "SKE." Aircraft 1806 required a double engine change for a recent time change technical order. Several new members attended initial chemical warfare training; also, many of the annual ancillary training requirements were completed.

934th Operations Support Flight

Master Sgt. Cara Utecht
We have a member heading to Australia for an

annual tour assignment in January. A change of command is planned during December drill, as **Lt. Col. Mark Arnold** has been selected as the new 934th Operations Group commander. The new OSF commander had not been announced at press time.

934th Security Forces Squadron

Staff Sgt. Barry Haukoos
In November, the unit had ancillary training with the global positioning system, map/compass, and Scope Shield II tactical radios. Members also completed quality control evaluations for air base defense.

934th Services Squadron

Airman 1st Class Melissa Putnam
The dining facility will be ready for operation on the December drill.

Wing Headquarters/ 934th Mission Support Flight

Staff Sgt. Linda Jiminez/ Senior Master Sgt. Patricia Boettner
Sections completed annual fire extinguisher training. Disaster preparedness representatives are streamlining maintenance and issue procedures for chemical warfare equipment. □

Honor guard

Newly-formed team faces growing demand for military honors

Staff Sgt. Suzzanne Runtsch
Public Affairs

The vibrant red, white and blue of the American flag are draped majestically across the coffin of a military veteran.

The ceremonial flag-folding, flag presentation and playing of taps provide a memorable and honorable tribute to retirees or veterans upon their death.

The honor guard team and flag are poignant reminders of the patriotism, honor, courage and sacrifice military people give in the name of freedom.

To support increasing demand for funeral honors, the Air Force has turned to the Reserve and Guard for help.

"Fort Snelling averages 20 funerals a day," said **Master Sgt. Ron Knutson**, 934th Services Squadron air reserve technician, who recently attended an honor guard symposium in Arlington, Va.

Air Force Services officials say the demand for military funeral honors continues to increase as military personnel strength decreases. Between 1989-1997, veteran deaths increased 18 percent.

Maj. Kirby Bauer, 934th Communications Flight commander, also commands the base's new honor guard team, with Knutson and **Master Sgt. Sally Poindexter**, 934th Airlift Wing, providing additional leadership. "Almost every unit is represented on our honor guard team," Knutson said.

Initially, 50 volunteers signed up for the team; about 15 attended a training session after drill last Saturday, Nov. 6.

After viewing an informative video, volunteers begin practicing flag-folding and "hang-step" marching. Within 10 minutes, the honor guard volunteers synchronized their hang-step march, and the flag was folded with precision into a tight, triangular field of blue.

"What better way to send off someone who has served their country," said **Senior Airman Blake Robertson**, 934th CF.

Each volunteer member of the honor guard team echoed this sentiment. "I volunteer out of respect for the uniform," said **Master Sgt. Tim McGuire**, AW.

"Volunteers are paid when performing funeral honor guard duty," said Knutson. But volunteering for the honor guard team requires personal dedication and commitment — flag-folding and hang-step only look easy because teams members practice, he said.

Congress recently passed a new law requiring the Department of Defense to provide military funeral honors for each eligible retiree or veteran beginning Jan. 1, 2000. Reserve forces support will be necessary to meet that tasking.

☎Contact Bauer, Poindexter or Knutson for information on joining.☐

Annual tour, Alaskan style

Tech. Sgt. Larry Dean
Public Affairs

Their reputation preceded them when 21 members of the 27th Aerial Port Squadron traveled north to Alaska for their August annual tour.

"Our unit has deployed many times to Elmendorf Air Force Base, so they knew they could expect a high-caliber effort from our people, and that's exactly what we gave them," said **Tech Sgt. Mark Pierson**, A-Flight cargo/ramp services supervisor.

He said the tour provided members the opportunities to keep skill levels up while serving the daily active-duty mission.

"With their aerial port, our people got a taste of each of the work areas

Aerial port returns to familiar location for diverse training

involved in port activities rather than specializing in just one area," he said. "It's nice to work that way, because it gives you an appreciation for what other areas of port operations are responsible for."

Aerial port functions consist of ramp services, special handling, cargo processing, load planning, passenger services and the air transportation operations center.

"Having the chance to work in all functions keeps up our proficiency in the more diverse areas of our career field," he said, "and

keeps us prepared to meet any mission requirements."

He said crews worked with C-130s based at Elmendorf, as well various types of transient aircraft carrying items into Asian-theater bases. Those aircraft included C-17s, KC-10s, C-5s and civilian aircraft with many different configurations for loads.

"Although it's noticeable that the base isn't quite as busy since the closing of some satellite sites they used to fly loads to, it's still a steady pace," he said.

"Their reception to us and respect for our abilities is very apparent when we deploy to Elmendorf," said Pierson. "The active-duty people have a real appreciation for us and the role we play in the total force."☐

No options

Defense leaders insist safety of military members demands anthrax shots

Linda Kozaryn
American Forces Press Service

They offered no options. The lives of their soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen are not negotiable. Their message was clear:

Anything less than the Department of Defense's mandatory anthrax vaccination program is unacceptable.

Senior military leaders recently delivered that firm message to Congress. Late September hearings were held because of congressional concerns about the impact on military readiness of service members refusing vaccinations. These concerns were fueled by controversial reports, many of them sprouting up on small Internet sites, that claim DOD's vaccine is untested and dangerous.

Vital to force protection strategy

John Hamre, deputy defense secretary, testified on the issue Sept. 30 before the Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. He was followed by **Gen. Anthony Zinni**, U.S. Marine Corps commander of U.S. Central Command and **Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Ronald Blanck**, surgeon general of the Army. The Army is the immunization program executive agent.

Hamre stressed that DOD's immunization program, implemented in March 1998, is a vital part of the military's force protection strategy. Over the next seven years, the department plans to immunize 2.4 million active-duty and reserve-component members against the threat posed by at least 10 nations suspected of having weaponized anthrax.

DOD received unequivocal evidence in 1997 that Iraq had weaponized anthrax, Hamre said. Anyone in the U.S. Central Command's theater of operations is especially at risk, and the anthrax vaccine is as necessary for force protection as a flak jacket or a helmet, he said.

"If you don't get inoculated, you're going to die," he said. Weapons-grade anthrax is as deadly as the ebola virus and virtually always fatal if inhaled. Anthrax normally is a livestock disease transmitted to humans by skin contact and, though dangerous, is not usually fatal if treated in time.

Proven track record

The DOD vaccine is the same one licensed in 1970 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and used ever since by the U.S. livestock industry. Internet misinformation and rumormongering about the vaccine has alarmed some service members, Hamre said.

The deputy noted that the Pentagon's top leaders, including himself; **William Cohen**, secretary of defense;

and other top Pentagon leaders including every service chief, service secretary and commander in chief have all taken the shots.

"I'm not going to ask a soldier to put something in his arm if I'm not prepared to take it first," Hamre said.

Zinni acknowledged that anthrax vaccinations are voluntary among allied and coalition forces, but he rejected a voluntary program for the United States.

"On battlefields, we overwhelm our medical capability," he said. "If we accept voluntary inoculation, I accept additional casualties."

As a commander, Zinni said, he would not place U.S. forces in a position where they would be reliant on unvaccinated coalition forces.

"I think I would make that promise to any American, mother, father or leader of this country," he said.

Blanck reported that the vaccination program as of Sept. 30 had immunized more than 340,000 members, including 27,000 guardsmen and reservists. Very few have experienced significant and serious side effects, he said, and the numbers are consistent with the results of extensive safety studies done over the years in humans.

Normal, mild effects

The anthrax vaccine is a biological product — as are the vaccines used for the seven other required immunizations troops receive, Blanck said.

"That means when they're injected, there are often local side effects that include tenderness, soreness, redness, a lump at the site, fever, muscle aches and pains," he explained. The effects are mild and go away on their own, he said.

Blanck said 72 cases of serious side effects have been reported that required hospitalization or missed duty for more than a day. Of those cases, FDA and Department of Health and Human Services officials could attribute only 55 to the anthrax vaccine, he said, and all 55 service members involved have returned to full duty.

Counters 30 anthrax strains

The surgeon general noted that there are no known long-term health consequences to the vaccine, which can counter more than 30 anthrax strains. About 500 employees at the Army's Medical Research and Materiel Command, Fort Detrick, Md., have received the vaccine since the 1970s and have evidenced no signs of illness related to the vaccine, he said.

As a physician, Blanck concluded, the bottom line is clear. "If we're attacked with this agent and we have a force that's vaccinated and protected, our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines will largely survive. If they're not vaccinated, they will inevitably die." □

Fun & leisure

NCO Club

• **A New Year's Eve "Millennium 2000" party** will be held at the club, which will open at 5 p.m. Cost per person is \$6.95, which includes a buffet. Reservations are not needed.

• **The club will close** for the holidays, Dec. 24-26.

☎Call Ext. 1655 for details.

Officers Club

• **New Year's Eve fun** at the club will include a great evening of dinner and entertainment starting at 6 p.m. Price is just \$30 per person and includes a prime rib or lobster dinner, bottle of champagne, party favors, "Swing Train" band, 12:30 a.m. breakfast and gratuity. Call for reservations.

• **The Army vs. Navy game**, Saturday, Dec. 4, will be televised starting at 11 a.m. Snacks will be available at halftime, and the lunch line will be open.

☎Call Ext. 3678 or FORT.

Fitness center

• **New fitness equipment** is heading for the fitness center, replacing some of the current items. New equipment will include a treadmill, a stationary bike and a recumbent bike.

• **The "Pig Out Cardio Challenge"** has started. Start your workouts today and pig out this holiday season.

• **The fitness center will be closed** Dec. 24-26, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1-2.

• **Colorado ski tickets** are available. The staff can help you plan your travel, including travel arrangements and lift tickets.

☎For information, call Ext. 1496 or 1GYM.

934th hockey schedule

The 934th Airlift Wing base hockey team announced their 1999-2000 schedule.

The team plays in the Twin City Commercial Hockey Association league. All games are played on Sunday evenings at Highland Arena, 800 Snelling Ave. South, St. Paul, Minn., in the north or south arenas.

Dec. 5, 9:10 p.m., north
Dec. 12, 10 p.m., south
Dec. 19, 10:20 p.m., north
Dec. 26, 8:50 p.m., south

Jan. 2, 8:50 p.m., south
Jan. 9, 10:20 p.m., north
Jan. 16, 10 p.m., south
Jan. 23, 9:10 p.m., north
Jan. 30, 10 p.m., south

Feb. 6, 10:20 p.m., north
Feb. 13, 8:50 p.m., south
Feb. 20, 9:10 p.m., north
Feb. 27, 8:50 p.m., south

March 5, 10 p.m., south ☐



COLD VS. CAR

Security forces offer 'one-shop stopping' for winter jumping, parking

You've worked later than expected on the drill weekend or perhaps taken in a late workout session at the base fitness center. Now you find yourself alone in a snowy parking lot with a car that won't start.

The wing now offers a "do-it-yourself" portable power pack jump start unit, said **Roger Hanson**, wing transportation officer.

"It is the car owner's responsibility to jump start their own vehicles," he said. The unit carries directions for use.

People needing the jump unit can call the security desk sergeant at Ext. 1102, located in Bldg. 750. That is the location as well to register a vehicle for overnight parking, Nov. 1-April 15.

"The need to register is for us and for you," said **Capt. Chris Simpson**, chief of security forces. "For us, because if a situation arises that involves your vehicle, we will know who the car belongs to plus any special instructions, such as who can drive it while you're gone. For you, because if an incident occurs requiring legal action, we have documented proof that your vehicle was logged in."

Simpson said the desk sergeant will tell you where to park after registration. ☐

People ...

(Continued from previous page)

of the Month" in October for her efforts in planning the readiness exercise.

• **Master Sgt. Ruth Duffy**, SVS, received a certificate of recognition for her outstanding support to the 100th Services Squadron, Royal Air Force Mildenhall, United Kingdom.

• **Chief Master Sgt. Robert Hanley**, SFS, was honored at a chief master sergeant induction ceremony held recently at Robins Air Force Base, Ga. The ceremony was featured at a chiefs of security forces workshop.

• **Staff Sgt. Mike Morth**, SVS, was selected as the new lodging supervisor in October. ☐