

Gulf Wing

403rd Wing, Keesler AFB, Miss.
Air Force Reserve Command

Home of the Flying Jennies & the Hurricane Hunters
Volume 26, Issue 3, March 2005

A woman in a military uniform is smiling and holding a clipboard with a pen. She is surrounded by white flight gear, including helmets and jackets. The background is filled with more of this gear, creating a sense of a busy, organized environment.

A Matter of Logistics

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Colorado ESGR visits Hurricane Hunters

By J. Justin Pearce
Staff Writer

Reservists and Guardsmen play an important role in the conflict in Southwest Asia, providing an ever-increasing percentage of the total military forces overseas.

But when these troops return home, will their full-time employers greet them as warmly as their families, or will they find themselves penalized, or even jobless?

The U.S. government has enacted several laws to protect Reservists and Guardsmen who volunteer to serve their country. To provide guidance to both employers and employees an organization called Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve was established.

One program that helps employers better understand what their citizen Airmen do is called a "Bosslift." The ESGR sends employers on an exclusive tour of various bases around the country to gain a better understanding of the life of their military employees, so they will continue to receive fair treatment in the workforce and have jobs when they return from duty.

The 403rd Wing had a chance to support ESGR, when groups of employers journeyed from Colorado to the Gulf Coast Feb. 17 on a three-day trip into the world of their military employees.

After their first stop at the Mississippi Air National Guard's Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center, they dropped by Keesler, where they toured the 81st Training Wing and the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron. At the 53rd WRS, they got a crash course on hurricane hunting and toured a WC-130.

"I believe it's vital we understand what these guys are doing when they're not working for us," said David Morrison, owner of Capitol Consulting, a financial advisory firm in Denver. "The magnitude of their responsibility as a military member has really opened my eyes."

Colorado ESGR's Chairman, Fred Fletemeyer, said it's imperative that employers continue to understand the important role they play in the lives of Guardsmen and Reservists.

"I want these employers to leave here with an understanding of the vital mission they play within the total military force. I want them not only to comply with ESGR, but to go beyond the call of duty and take an actual part in seeing that these guys are truly taken care of," said Fletemeyer. "When these people walk away, I hope they understand what Reservists and Guardsmen do and why they are so important to our nation."



A group of employers journeyed from Colorado to the Gulf Coast to support ESGR. During their trip, they dropped by Keesler for a crash course on hurricane hunting from the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, as well as a tour of a C-130J.

Cover Page



Photo by SSgt. J. Justin Pearce

A Matter of Logistics

When Master Sergeant Ronald Childres joined the 403rd Logistics Readiness Squadron in 1993, there was talk about the possibility for reservists to operate supply without support from the 81st Training Wing. It has remained a wish until recently. **Read more on Pages 8-9.**

What's Happening?

Know of an upcoming exercise or unit deployment? Are there special events planned at your unit? Contact your UPAR or call Public Affairs at 7-2056.

A Shot and a Smile

Side-by-side, they aid patients in a brightly lit immunizations room at the Keesler Medical Center. Small talk and steady laughs occupy patients awaiting their ever-so-torturous needle prick as the pair of medics keep the Saturday morning UTA's vaccination rush moving like bottles in a Coca Cola factory. **Read more on Page 6.**

Around the World in 22 Days

Crossing 33 time zones, and stopping in nine locations and seven countries, a crew of reservists from the 403rd Wing circumnavigated the planet in a C-130J Hercules. This marks the first time the Air Force's newest airlifter has accomplished this feat. **Read more on Pages 10-13.**



'MOPping' UP

Getting ready for the wing's Operational Readiness Inspection in 2007 has led to a lot of "MOPping" up lately. Forget about sticks with stringy yarn and swabbing decks. MOPP is Mission Oriented Protective Posture and refers to the equipment Airmen must know how to use to survive and operate in an environment contaminated by chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. **Read more on Page 14.**

Winter Weather Wrapup

A frequently asked question about the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron's Hurricane Hunters is "What do they do when hurricane season is over?" When the tropics settle down these dedicated reservists put on their cold-weather gear and track winter storms for the National Weather Service. **Read more on Page 16.**

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PROMOTIONS

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SSgt. James R. Riddick, 403rd SFS
Amn. Donald R. Silkwood, 403rd OSF

Gulf Wing Salutes

SrA Kerry B. Strickland, 403rd ASTS
Capt. Kaitlyn M. Torbett, 53rd WRS
AB Dale Wheat, 403rd AMXS
SSgt. Caroline K. Zaversnik, 403rd ASTS

JANUARY CDC COMPLETION

MSgt. Vivian G. Bosworth, 3A071
SrA Matthew J. Collins, 2T350B
SSgt. Marty L. Conn, 3P071
TSgt. Robin L. Decker, 1C052
SrA Jordan N. Dole, 2A551
SrA Candie Mae Ellison, 2T350B
SSgt. Vernon J. Forde, 3C051
SrA Charlotte J. Harris, 3A051
SSgt. Larry W. Howard, II, 2AX7X
SSgt. Kara K. Jaramillo, 2AX7X
A1C Donnie V. J. Jefferies, 2G051
A1C Camille A. Lindsey, 3S051A
TSgt. Timothy L. Long, 1W051B

TSgt. Huey R. Norris, 2S071
SSgt. Joe J. Pearce, 3N071
TSgt. Byron A. Reagan, 3E351B
SSgt. Terry C. Wiggins, Jr., 3E351B

Pay Date
March 15
Next UTA
April 2-3



Photo by Lt. Col. Michael Odum

(Top) Col. Michael Underkoffler, commander, 403rd Operations Group, pins bars on newly promoted Capt. Darryl McClean, Accounting and finance officer, as they cross into Indian airspace on a C-130J. The captain traveled with the crew to Aero India to provide support. See more on pages 10-13.
(Right) Col. Paul Waters, commander, 403rd Maintenance Group, presents Senior Master Sgt. Warren G. Rodkey with his decoration on the occasion of his retirement during the February UTA.



Photo by TSgt. Kerry Geroux, UTPAR, 403rd MOF



Photo by SSgt. J. Justin Pearce



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo

(Left) It was a red, white and blue christmas for 815th troops deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Students at Nativity BVM elementary school received a special gift from the troops in February, a U.S. flag flown over Southwest Asia sent by Senior Master Sgt. Todd Patterson. Sergeant Patterson's two children, Megan, 8, and Jordan, 4, attend the school. According to school officials students who pass by the display pictured with students (from left) Sydnee Harbison, 7, Blaise Buttrich, 6, Megan Patterson, 8, and Blair Dyle, 7, stop to admire it each day. Megan is holding a picture of her dad with the flag.
(Top Right) SSgt. Peltier, loadmaster, in the scanner seat on a mission.
(Above) Master Sgt. Steve Schaff, wave to the folks back home. One rotation of crews have already returned home the second rotation returns soon.

A SHOT AND A Smile

By SSgt. J. Justin Pearce
Staff Writer

Side-by-side, they aid patients in a brightly lit immunizations room at the Keesler Medical Center. Small talk and steady laughs occupy patients awaiting their ever-so-torturous needle prick as the pair of medics keep the Saturday morning UTA's vaccination rush moving like bottles in a Coca Cola factory.

At morning's end, however, comes an end to their prickly partnership. Senior Airman Christine Budin and Senior Airman Shari Belcher, with enthusiasm like they had known each other for longer than a few spins of the clock, share goodbyes.

The two medics share the same career field and receive the same training, but serve in different squadrons tailored to different missions. Airman Budin is assigned to the 403rd Aeromedical Staging Squadron, and Airman Belcher is assigned to the 815th Airlift Squadron's "Flying Jennies."

"It's always nice working next to someone who follows in the same

footsteps as you," said Airman Budin, a recent addition to ASTS, equipped with four years of active duty medical experience, piercing brown eyes and a contagious smile.

Although their missions are tailored to the roles of their squadrons, medics with the Flying Jennies and ASTS occasionally find themselves teaming up for On-the-Job-Training at the hospital during UTAs. They work in the lab tackling tasks associated with physicals — taking blood samples, EKGs and urine samples — or in the immunizations lab injecting patients with an assortment of vaccines or could be called on to work in other areas.

Airman Budin and medics from ASTS are primarily tasked to perform physicals for 403rd Wing

(Below) Senior Airman Shari Belcher (left) and Senior Airman Christine Budin are two medics who serve in different squadrons tailored to different missions within the 403rd Wing. Airman Belcher is assigned to the 815th Airlift Squadron's "Flying Jennies," and Airman Budin is assigned to the 403rd Aeromedical Staging Squadron. During UTAs, they find themselves teaming up for OJT at the hospital - although if deployed, things would be much different.



troops; however, if deployed, the squadron would serve as a Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility — a temporary medical facility for injured patients.

While on duty at Keesler, it's hard to tell a difference between Airman Budin and Airman Belcher's. But in real-world contingencies, flight medics deploy with the Flying Jennies as a mobile medical unit, where they support the flight surgeon and provide medical care — casualty and wound management, litter carrying — on C-130 aircraft and at remote locations.

"If pilots don't have any medical support where they're going, they take us," said Airman Belcher, strapped with a medical vest full of basic medical supplies, including a stethoscope, sling, gauze, needles, alcohol pads, IV tubing, gloves and even a blanket.

Captain Todd Humphries, a pilot with the Flying Jennies, said he and his crew depend on their medical team.

"Our flight doc and medics put in pilot's terms what we need to keep flying," said Captain Humphries.

"They take trips with us to get a better understanding of what we do and that's very important to us. If someone were to have a medical problem while flying, they would know how to respond with first-hand experience rather than from what they might have read in a book," he said.

Airman Belcher hasn't yet deployed, but says she can't wait to fly into some action and put her training to use. Until then, she will keep enjoying her duties here.

"I just think it's great to fit somewhere in the big scheme of the Air Force, and I love the patient interaction on duty weekends.

Airman Belcher also agreed the additional training she has received as a

medic is invaluable. Her most recent venture included an Emergency Medical Technician refresher.

It's important that medics from both squadrons work together at Keesler, according to Maj. Christopher Alexander, ASTS medical readiness officer.

"We need to understand the needs of the flying squadron so they can continue to share the skill level of their hospital counterparts, and this is gained through training in the hospital."

Airman Belcher said she enjoys the interaction with ASTS because she stays current on her skills, and is always meeting new medics.

On the first morning of February UTA, Airman Belcher met Airman Budin. They shared a quick hello and went to work.

Soon, the immunization lab was filled with Reservists and, as if it were Christmas, Airman Belcher and Airman Budin had a present for each of them — a shot and a smile.



(Top) "If pilots don't have any medical support where they're going, they take us," said Airman Shari Belcher, a medic with the Flying Jennies, strapped with a medical vest full of basic medical supplies. **(Bottom)** Medics from the Flying Jennies and 403rd ASTS team up for On-the-Job-Training at the hospital. During February's UTA, Airman Belcher gives a shot and a smile to Maj. Patricia Beyer, 403rd JAG.

A matter of Logistics

By SrA Michael Eaton
Staff Writer

When Master Sergeant Ronald Childres joined the 403rd Logistics Readiness Squadron in 1993, there was talk about the possibility for reservists to operate supply without support from the 81st Training Wing. It has remained a wish until recently.

The LRS is within months of taking charge of supply during UTAs, which before was operated by active duty Airmen.

This transition will help to alleviate any problems reservists might face with getting equipment they need for training in time for drill.

"It's about better job proficiency and training for 403rd reservists, and building a great relationship with a supportive active duty counterpart," said Lt. Colonel James Shore, commander, 403rd LRS. "What we are attempting to accomplish is giving our Airmen the best training possible. Our 403rd personnel should be doing the work on the weekend."

Traditionally, reservists and active duty have worked together in supply. Each UTA, 403rd supply specialists rotate throughout various sections of supply, where they receive adequate training, but are limited when it comes to doing the job on their own.

In the near future, reservists who visit base supply during UTA will probably be greeted by one of 18 reservists who are authorized to work in supply. Getting things to this point has been a long time coming, said Colonel Shore.

Sergeant Childres, now the cus-

tomor service NCOIC at the 403rd LRS, said troops from LRS will rotate on UTAs through customer service and individual equipment issue. To serve as a smooth transition for UTAs, reservists will work Friday's and Monday's in addition to the weekend.

Supply, located in the Taylor Logistics building at Keesler, stocks and issues everything from chemical gear, mobility bags, cold-weather equipment, and serves as a liaison for basic aircraft parts.

"All the parts that support C-130s down to the light bulbs are ordered through base supply," said Sergeant Childres.

Chief Master Sergeant Michael

Stanley, 403rd LRS supervisor, praised the 81st supply for their support.

"I've been to several bases, and have seen the difficult time reservists have had in getting in and working supply, but the active duty here have been great."

Chief Stanley said Airmen working in supply get an excellent opportunity to do things that are required by the LRS Career Field Educational Training Program.

Colonel Shore is enthusiastic about the future of the squadron and its bid to fully operate supply.

"In the end both parties get something. We get training, they get the weekend off."



At mobility supply, troops are fitted for their gear before it's issued to assure a comfortable fit. (Right) Senior Airman Diedra Hargress, 81st Supply, helps Staff Sgt. Valerie Magee try on a helmet. When Airman Hargress isn't on the clock, she enjoys exercising.



Airman 1st Class Lori Ellis (foreground), (behind left to right) Staff Sgt. Valerie Magee, Master Sgt. Ronald Childres and Tech. Sgt. Mark Thompson are among the troops from the 403rd Logistics Readiness Squadron who rotate throughout various sections of supply, such as customer service, property movement, individual equipment, mobility and work storage. Within months, reservists from Logistics will officially operate supply during UTAs - this change helps make more accessible chemical gear and other equipment needed by reservists for training.

Photos by SSgt. J. Justin Pearce

Around the world in 22 days

By Lt. Col. Michael Odom
Director, Public Affairs

Crossing 33 time zones, and stopping in nine locations and seven countries, a crew of reservists from the 403rd Wing circumnavigated the planet in a C-130J Hercules. This marks the first time the Air Force's newest airlifter has accomplished this feat.

The global trek was the culmination of a series of events that included the Aero India International Air Show in Bangalore, a showcase of military personnel and equipment that promoted strong United States ties with its Asian-Pacific allies and friends.

Prior to the air show, the crew displayed the state-of-the-art C-130J to media and government officials at Kbely-Prague Air Transport Base in the Czech Republic. The new heads-up display and computer systems were eagerly toured by Czech pilots and their counterparts in India, Brunei, and Japan as the crew steered the aircraft from continents to islands throughout the world.

The reservists traveled for 22 days as they chased time zones, then crossed the International Dateline on their way to Hawaii and the continental United States. They met three United States Ambassadors, dozens of business executives, flag officers from allied nations, over one hundred media representatives, and royalty.

One of the biggest moments of the trip included the Deputy Sultan

and Crown Prince of Brunei, His Royal Highness, Pg Muda Hj Al-Muhtadee Billah, who spent nearly an hour in the aircraft as crew members demonstrated many features of the new aircraft.

"The visit to Brunei provided an opportunity to showcase the aircraft as one of the finest assets in rapid, global mobility," said Col. Michael Underkofler, 403rd Operations Group commander and team leader for the trip. "We were very proud to have played a small part in building relationships in all of the nations we visited."

U.S. Ambassador to India, David Mulford and his wife, Jeanne, met the U.S. aircrews during the airshow, followed by Vice Air Marshall Rajesh Lal, Technical Manager (Air) of India's Defence Procurement Board in New Delhi. Both of the leaders sat in the cockpit of the new C-130J Hercules and received briefings by reservists on the aircraft's heads-up display.

Ambassador Mulford remarked that the significant presence of the U.S. government, military and private sectors at the expo sends a clear message that the United States is

committed to increasing cooperation with India.

Throngs of Indian aviation enthusiasts, contractors, tourists and military from several nations, filled the Aero India grounds as demonstration teams and fighter aircraft blazed above.

The C-130J was a huge hit in a cadre of United States military equipment including F-15s, a KC-135 Stratotanker and a Navy P-3 Orion.

Indian and international press were fascinated by the Hercules's curved propellers and elaborate electronic screens.

In Bangalore, Agra, and New Delhi India, the Czech Republic and Brunei, the C-130J was viewed by



(Right) Deputy Sultan and Crown Prince of Brunei, His Royal Highness, Pg Muda Hj Al-Muhtadee Billah, spent nearly an hour in the aircraft as crew members demonstrated many features of the new aircraft.

(Facing Page, Top) More than 100,000 people filed past U.S. aircraft and those of other nations during a 9-day airshow in Bangalore, India. A crew of reservists from the 403rd Wing traveled more than 22,000 miles on their trip around the globe.

(Facing Page, Bottom) Col. Michael Underkofler, commander, 403rd Operations Group, gets to know a Sikh Indian Air Force officer on a hot afternoon at Aero India.

Photos by Lt. Col. Michael Odom

numerous government officials.

While the Department of Defense does not participate in air and trade exhibitions to directly promote sales of weapons systems, as a matter of policy it does support the sale of systems overseas when those sales promote the national security interests of the United States.

"Our involvement was about improving relationships with our allies," said Underkofler. "By participating, our reservists were able to show our allies, and potential coalition partners our commitment to their security."

According to Brig. Gen. Ron Yaggi, Director of Regional Affairs in the Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs, "The 403rd was a big hit everywhere they visited.

This is about laying the foundation for interoperability and Air Force Reserve Command should be proud of these reservists for what they've accomplished."

The C-130J performed brilliantly and proved that it flies higher, faster and farther as it hopped from landmass to landmass, in harsh Icelandic winter storms and sweltering Malaysian tropical humidity.

The reservists experienced sights, sounds, food, billeting and transportation of every type and extreme. Traffic in some areas included oxen, camels, scooters, bicycles, motorcycles, three-wheeled taxis called "tut-tuts," automobiles and buses, all sharing the same roadways.

During the visit to Agra, India, the crew was allowed a few hours to see the Taj Mahal, one of the seven won-

ders of the world. Encrusted in semi-precious stones and framed by elaborate landscaping and ornate gateways the Taj lived up to its reputation of regal majesty and breathtaking beauty.

Overall, the support and hospitality at each stop were seamless, making the job much easier for the reservists to showcase the Hercules.

"We were delighted with the support we received from our hosts in every place we visited," said Colonel Underkofler.

Mission commander Maj. Keith Gibson, chief, 403rd Wing Standards and Evaluation, who meticulously planned and coordinated the trip remained enthusiastic until the very end.

"I've traveled extensively," Gibson said. "But this trip takes the cake."



Photos by Lt. Col. Michael Odom



(Above) Southern Indian families and international aviation enthusiasts, strain the gates just outside of the U.S. static displays at the Aero India International Air Show.

(Left) Staff Sgt. Larry Hyde, a loadmaster with the 815th Airlift Squadron, demonstrates how pallets and other cargo are loaded onto the C-130J for media representatives in New Delhi, India.

(Facing Page) U.S. Ambassador to India, David Mulford, familiarizes himself with the controls of the C-130J.

Ambassadors to the Czech Republic and Brunei, Minister of Defense for the Czech Republic and Lt. Gen. Gene Renuart, vice commander, Pacific Air Forces, also visited the flightdeck on other legs of the journey.



Photo by SSgt. J. Justin Pearce

Senior Airman Sam Curry, 403rd SFS, and TSgt. Mark Thompson, 403rd LRS, inspect M8 paper for simulated contamination at a Liquid Detection Point during ATSO training. More than 300 members of the wing participated in the training.

'MOPPing' up: Wing prepares for 2007 ORI, trains for real-world possibilities

By TSgt. Michael Duhe
Senior Staff Writer

Getting ready for the wing's Operational Readiness Inspection in 2007 has led to a lot of "MOPPing" up lately.

Forget about sticks with stringy yarn and swabbing decks. MOPP is Mission Oriented Protective Posture and refers to the equipment Airmen must know how to use to survive and operate in an environment contaminated by chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

Starting last August, wing readiness officials began stepping up their warfare training to prepare for the ORI and to meet Air Force requirements. Several exercises are scheduled for the coming months that will evaluate as many people as possible as the wing gets into pre-ORI mode.

Over two days during the February

UTA, more than 300 people traversed through five stations designed to familiarize them with the equipment that could one day save their lives.

"Everybody had a great attitude," commented Senior Master Sgt. John Huffman, Readiness Program manager for the wing, who oversaw the training.

As a dozen Airmen stood in a grassy field already wearing MOPP Level 2 protective gear the cry went out: "Gas!" They scrambled to remove helmets, rip open mask carriers and don masks, with some members having a harder time than others. Fifteen seconds seemed to fly by before a second call was made: "Time!"

The MOPP 4/buddy check drill was one of the classes included in Ability To Survive and Operate, or ATSO, training. As class instructor, Senior Master Sgt. Scott Saucier, put trainees through their paces with donning gas

masks and gloves. Four other groups were drilled in similar areas: self aid/buddy care; hydration at MOPP 4 and personal decontamination; liquid detection points and transitioning control points; and UXO detection and reporting procedures.

Overall, the training provided much needed familiarization with the equipment and processes Airmen need to know for the ORI and, more importantly, to protect themselves if deployed to a combat zone. The training revealed some areas in need of improvement, according to Huffman. Some members attending on short notice arrived without some equipment, such as helmets and hoods. Others had a tough time getting some of their gear on.

Additional training will help overcome these challenges and give people a chance to become more proficient at quickly donning gear and performing

their jobs in various MOPP levels, according to Huffman.

"My advice would be: don't treat it as an exercise — treat it as real-world ATSO survival skills," he said.

In the self aid/buddy care class, trainees paired off to simulate administering atropine injections to a nerve agent victim.

"This is practical, hands-on training they haven't received in the classroom," said class instructor Senior Master Sgt. Iris Linder. "It helps them remember it, plus they can get their questions answered on the spot." Her advice for self aid and buddy care: "Remember that speed is of the essence."

During the hydration at MOPP 4

and personal decontamination class, trainees donned their masks and helped their buddies drink from a canteen — no easy feat when attempted alone. Class instructor Staff Sgt. Ryan Gibney also offered pointers on decontaminating a buddy in MOPP 4.

In Huffman's class, orange cones representing liquid detection points were set up in rows, with M8 paper placed on top of each cone. Using a chart, teams dressed in MOPP 4 observed and recorded the level of simulated VX nerve agent contamination — light, moderate or heavy — based on the amount of green speckles on the paper. Later, they simulated the decontamination process and transi-

tioned between control points.

In UXO, or un-exploded ordnance, training, instructor Staff Sgt. Adrian Woods went over the contents of a UXO identification bag. A laminated reference sheet in the bag included photos of various types of ordnance, from small landmines to large projectiles. Also in the bag were wooden stakes and brightly colored plastic tape. Woods explained that in a real-world situation, a 75-foot area around UXO would be cordoned off because ground vibrations could set it off. However, for training purposes, Airmen only ringed a 10-foot area with the bright tape. Teams canvassed the vicinity for simulated UXO and came across a landmine, grenade and artillery shell. They dutifully cordoned them off.

An ATSO exercise in April will be more intense than February's training. "We'll be in an exercise situation, with colored smoke and simulated explosions," Huffman said. "We'll have to put all of that training into practical use and exercise it."

The training is crucial in sharpening skills that will be scrutinized during the ORI in 2007. "It's important because we're preparing for an ORI," Huffman pointed out. "We'll have to get beyond any mistakes by then."

In addition to local training set up by wing readiness, many people from throughout the wing have already been to Inspector General Exercises recently and another training opportunity at the end of March and first part of April will take about 100 people to Volk Field, Wis.

They will train at the Combat Readiness Training Center there during Readiness Safeguard, primarily used by Air Mobility Command units to get an unbiased assessment and additional training. Cadre there watch, evaluate and train participants in a non-inspection environment. It is a chance to learn and check the percentage of people who are ready for war. In addition to ATSO training, most AFSCs also get job training in a field environment.

(Top Left) SrA. Michael Martin, 403rd MOF cordons off an area in which UXO has been identified. This training is especially important due to the amount of UXO that combat troops are seeing in Southwest Asia.

(Left) Guest instructor SMSgt. Scott Saucier, 209th AFSOC, who donated his own time to instruct during the training, gives a few pointers on proper wear of the gas mask to a group of ATSO trainees.



Photo by SSgt. J. Justin Pearce



Photo by SSgt. J. Justin Pearce

Hunters track down winter storms

Last year's hurricane season has come and gone. The Gulf Coast can rest, but not the Hurricane Hunters. When hurricane season ends each year, they pack their bags and fly westward to battle winter storms in the Pacific.

This year, the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron's journey to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, marked the first time they deployed with the new WC-130J to fly frosty winter storms.

Elements from the 403rd Maintenance Group, 41st

Aerial Port Squadron and other support troops also deployed with the flight crews to help sustain the mission.

The J-model is slated to replace the WC-130H for hurricane hunting and winter weather missions. In fact, the aircraft just missed its chance to fly through last year's hurricane season, one of the most damaging and costly hurricane seasons in history. Plans are to fly the WC-130J on hurricane missions later this year.

Winter weather reconnaissance missions have a

much different flavor than the Hurricane Hunters' better known missions. They fly synoptic patterns, huge ovals sometimes more than 3,000 miles round-trip, releasing dropsondes from 30,000 feet. Since 1998, they have been flying these missions in support of the

National Centers for Environmental Prediction. The information gathered during these missions is used by the NCEP to create forecast models that help forecasters predict the path and intensity of these storms.

From Staff Reports



(Above) A view of Alaskan mountains through a heads-up display of a WC-130J at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

(Right) The all new "glass cockpit" of the WC-130J was designed to make all the information needed to fly the aircraft available at the fingertips of pilots and crew.

(Below) A WC-130J from the 53rd WRS on the flightline at McCord AFB, Wash. on the way to Alaska to fly winter storm missions.



Photos Courtesy 53rd WRS

MyPay Mandatory

By now, most of you are aware of the financial self-service system known as "myPay." MyPay enables military members and Department of Defense employees to take care of routine pay issues without involving their military or civilian pay offices. The financial implementation phase has been completed for the military and became effective Feb. 1; hardcopies are no longer available.

Civilians are encouraged to utilize myPay as well. The civilian LES are expected to go electronic March 31. As new information becomes available it will be disseminated to all members.

Spouse Pins

In November the Air Force launched the Spouse Pin program to recognize the hardships and sacrifices made by military and civilian families as the nation continues to wage war on terrorism. Through a Web-based program, service members and Air Force civilians can log on to www.yourguardiansoffreedom.com and register their spouses for a personalized letter signed by the secretary of the Air Force and the chief of staff with an accompanying one-inch silver lapel pin.

Recruiting Project

The 403rd Wing Recruiting Office is requesting support from reservists in placing recruiting literature at area businesses. If you own or work at a business that would like to show support for the Air Force Reserve, please contact the Recruiting office at 377-5236, or stop by Bldg. 904 Rm. 136. If you frequently visit a business that you feel may support this program, please

provide its name and location to the Recruiting Office. This is an exciting way for Reservists to become involved in the recruiting process and to show the public that the Air Force Reserve is composed of members in their own community.

MPF Hours

Military Personnel Flight customer service hours are 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Friday, and 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on UTA weekends.

This section serves as the initial point of contact between the customer and other MPF work centers. It also administers the casualty assistance program, family member dental plan, identification card benefits and privileges and assists personnel with immigration and naturalization services. This section is also point of contact for the Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan, Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, establishing and maintaining the unit personnel record group, and awards and decorations.

Chapel Service

To better serve the needs of members of the 403rd, the chapel service previously held in Larcher Chapel has moved to the 815th AS auditorium. The time remains at 7:15 a.m. but the location has changed. The chapel staff is always looking for ways to better serve our members and welcomes your input. The chaplains can be reached at 377-0400.

Medical Jobs

A new Air Force Reserve Health Professions Recruiter, Tech. Sgt. George Adams, is now based at Keesler in the Sablich Center.

The Air Force Reserve is in search of qualified health professionals to join its highly

skilled teams. Unit members are encouraged to use the Get One Program www.afreserve.com/getone to submit potential applicants and receive recognition. The following critical AFSCs are available in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida units: 44M3, 44Y3, 46F3, 46P3, 47G3, and 48R3. Applicants may even be eligible for a signing bonus or loan repayment. For information and eligibility criteria, contact Sergeant Adams at 228-377-8332 or e-mail george.adams@keesler.af.mil

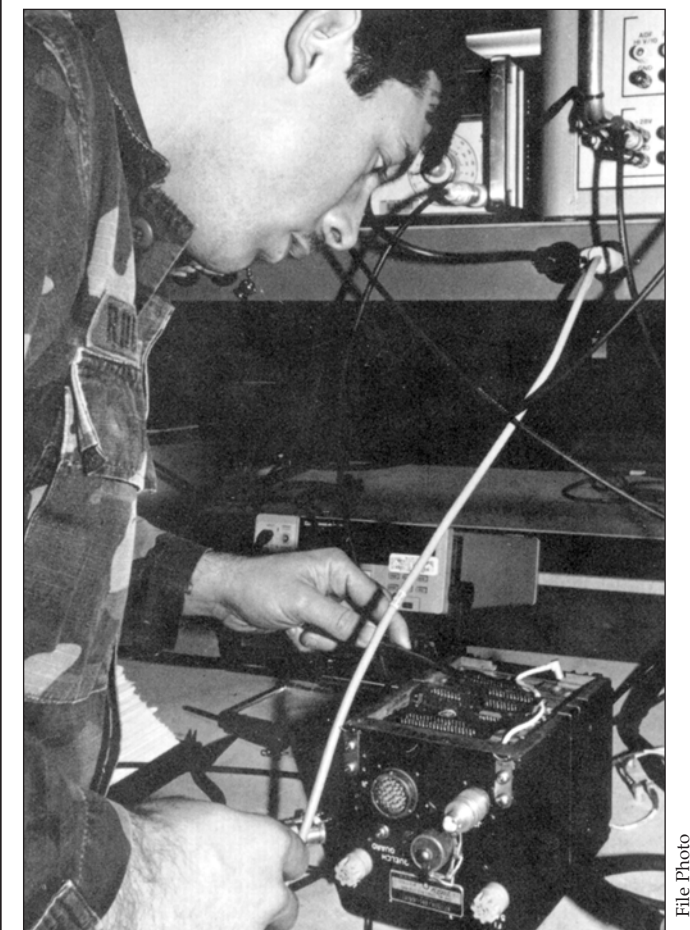
College Money

Reservists activated to fight the war on terror can get more money for college through the Selected Reserve Montgomery G.I. Bill.

Full-time students normally draw a max of \$288 a month. Full-time students activated for 90 days to a year can draw a max of \$402 a month. Those who serve 1-2 years can get up to \$602 for 1-2 years. The amount goes to a max of \$803 for more than 2 years.

Gulf Wing Reflections

Originally printed in the wing magazine, February 1991



File Photo

Communication station

Sgt. Scott Rountree carefully adjusts communications/navigation equipment. The avionics branch of the 403rd CAMS takes care of radar, autopilot and computerized weather analysis equipment.

What's Happening?

Know of an upcoming exercise or unit deployment? Are there special events planned at your unit? Contact your Unit Public Affairs Rep or call Public Affairs at 377-2056.

Officials clear C-130J container delivery system

By 1st Lt. Brooke Davis

Air Force Flight Test Center Public Affairs

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif.—Eight back-to-back flights flown in five days on a stretch C-130J Hercules tested it for the container delivery system's ability to carry about 40,000 pounds of bundled equipment.

The stretch C-130J is 15 feet longer than the C-130J and can drop more equipment.

The system is used in combat to deliver the "bacon and bullets" to warfighters in the field. Of the 24 bundles released during the recent test, none were damaged and testers attained a 100 percent survivability rate.

The testers' objective was to assess the damage rate to the released bundles to calculate how much extra equipment must be dropped so that warfighters on the ground receive the serviceable amount needed, said Michael Berard, the 418th Flight Test Squadron C-130J program manager.

The 100-percent survivability rate during this test means the stretch C-130J does not have to carry extra equipment and supplies for the Army,

he said.

Testers rigged together 55-gallon drums of water to create the pallets weighing as much as 2,300 pounds. The pallets -- including the rigging and parachutes -- were evaluated for structural survivability after the drop, Mr. Berard said.

In previous tests four years ago, the aircraft's center of gravity changed during drops, said Maj. Scott Dickson, a 418th FLTS project pilot.

"During the drop, the pilot has to

maintain the aircraft's pitch since (the system) uses gravity to extract the bundles from the aircraft," Major Dickson said. "It's critical to maintain a tight tolerance so the bundles don't bunch up and damage each other while the extraction occurs."

The pilot is now aware of the problem and can anticipate this movement, he said. The recent bundle drops evaluated the pilot's technique when overcoming the aircraft's pitch and how much variation can be allowed.



Photo by Sgt. J. Justin Pearce

Crews from the 815th Airlift Squadron are also conducting training with the container delivery system. Here a loadmaster secures training bundles on a stretch C-130 for a drop mission. The 815th have conducted drop operations under daytime and nighttime conditions.

New civilian personnel rules published Feb. 14

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—Officials from the Department of Defense and the Office of Personnel Management will publish the regulations that will govern how the new National Security Personnel System will operate, DoD officials said Feb. 10.

The proposed regulations appeared in the Federal Register Feb. 14, and officials invite comment.

Navy Secretary Gordon England said once the public comment period ends March 16, the officials will confer with the various federal employee unions and then give all comments "fair and full consideration." Secretary England serves as the DoD senior executive overseeing the system.

"Our plan, then, is to begin the implementation this summer," he said. "We'll learn through doing, we'll do this in phases, and we will progressively add more and more employees

(and) learn as we go until completion at the end of 2008."

The publication marks the end of the first phase of implementing the new personnel system. The system, enacted by Congress in 2003, will allow DOD officials to better manage civilian personnel, they said. Once in place, DOD officials will be able to shift people among jobs, hire faster and reward good workers.

"Now NSPS is going to replace a 50-year-old system," Secretary England said. "We're going to replace (the current system) with a very modern system that we need to attract, recruit, retain, compensate fairly and manage our employees."

The system will focus on performance, flexibility and accountability, the secretary said.

"It will be much more responsive to the national security environment, and ... it will fully preserve our employee protections, our veterans preference and employee benefits," he said.

The first 60,000 people under the NSPS are scheduled to transfer to the system in July, at their current salaries. General-schedule workers will stop being GS-designated employees and will transfer to pay bands. It will be a year before the first decisions are made on performance-based pay raises.

Dan Blair, the OPM's acting director, said the new rules will not change merit-system protections, whistleblower protections, veterans preference, benefits, rules against prohibited practices or leave and work schedules.

The system will change the general-schedule system and job-classification standards. It will give managers more flexibility in reassigning employees to fulfill critical needs and more flexibility in where employees will work.

"We have encouraged our unions to work constructively with us, and also with the federal mediation and conciliations services so we can find common ground and make this an even better system," Secretary England said.

Staying healthy requires honest dialogue

*Aeromedical Staging Squadron revamps physical examination process to better serve Reservists
New schedule gives doctors more complete overview of patient health*

By Col. Maria de los A. Pons

Commander, 403rd ASTS

A member of Air Force Reserve Command, whom I respect and admire, recently confided to me an intense frustration about the high number of medical waivers.

That comment reminded me of a question heard on the television game show "Family Feud," which asked "Where do you go to pay to be scolded?" The first response from the contestant was "at the doctor's office!"

As a Reservist, I sometimes agree with the above. As a physician though, I have another perspective that I would like to share with you. As members of the Air Force, we have the opportunity and privilege to get an annual medical check-up without having to incur extremely costly medical bills.

Don't misunderstand me. While we might not be able to receive treatment at Keesler, you do have the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss your medical concerns with us. Not everybody in the civilian world has a physician who can sit down with you and have a good talk with you about all of your current medical concerns.

Of course, a negative of expressing all of your concerns with a physician here is that if you open your mouth you might be medically profiled. But I can guarantee that this is the last thing any of our providers would want to do, as they genuinely care about each and every one of you; we simply need to be certain all of our people are medically qualified for the possibility of deployment.

This is our "mission," and our concern as health care profession-



Col. Maria de los A. Pons

als is that every patient is healthy and ready to fight.

As healthcare professionals, we don't like illness, so we ask ourselves "How can we keep our members healthy?"

The answer is simple - by practicing preventative medicine. This is the rule of medical success.

Allow me to explain. Some years ago, during a regular physical of an Air Force member, I performed an examination and found induration and hypertrophic of the prostate gland.

Upon questioning, he explained that for approximately six months he had experienced problems when urinating but never went to see his primary physician.

Yes it was a friendly conversation and, yes, I probably did scold him a bit while I explained all of my concerns for him.

The good news is that after going to a urologist and being

diagnosed and treated for grade III carcinoma of the prostate, he is alive and in remission.

That was more than 10 years ago. Nearly all cancer is curable and early detection is the key. This is one of many examples that I have experienced in my 15-year military career.

The 403rd ASTS is re-organizing the physical exam section. As part of this reorganization, we are dividing the physical examination into two parts that would span a two or three-month period prior to your birthday-physical exam due date.

The first part of the examination during the first month will include an evaluation of height and weight, blood pressure check-up, blood testing and EKG if it is required, and optometry and dental evaluations.

The second part of the examination during the second or third month would require that the patient be seen by the medical provider. At this time, the provider will perform the physical examination armed with current, pertinent information gathered during the first part of the process, and will discuss all of that gathered data with the Reservist.

As part of the medical community and as members of the Air Force Reserve, it is our mission to keep you medically fit.

No matter how many times we feel that it is necessary to issue waivers, profiles and to even sometimes scold you, we will do so because the value of your life is beyond measure — it is a priceless treasure.

Let's keep it healthy.



Photo By SSgt. J. Justin Pearce

Feeding the Birds

The 41st Aerial Port Squadron is always ready to feed their birds (C-130s) with whatever cargo the mission requires. The 41st APS can configure and secure loads on both the C-130H and C-130J model aircraft to help support a variety of missions including aerial drops, humanitarian and general transport missions.

Gulf Wing Go-Getter



Each month Gulf Wing is printed for people of the 403rd Wing, like SrA Trakeila Autman of the 815th Airlift Squadron.

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