

# ***GULF WING***

*Spring 2008*

*Home of the Hurricane Hunters and Flying Jennies  
403rd Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, Keesler AFB, Miss.*



## ***On Target Jennies Support Army***

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Citizen Airmen from the 815th Airlift Squadron gear up for another rotation to Southwest Asia in support of the Global War on Terror. For months, the team has been preparing by flying training missions to test their tactical acumen. Several heavy drop and personnel drop missions in support of the Army and Marine Corps have kept their skills honed and ready. In 2004, the unit deployed with Rhode Island Air National Guardsmen to combat-prove the J-model.



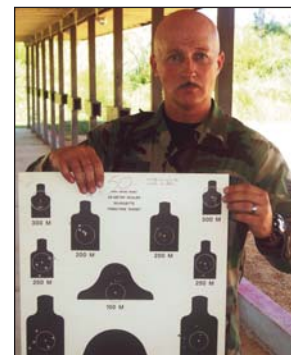
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In the cover story, Joint Airborne Airlift Transportation Training over the past several months has prepared Citizen Airmen headed to the AOR for the mission to come. This photo taken during heavy drops at Pope AFB, N.C.

## EDITORIAL STAFF

403rd Wing, AFRC, Keesler AFB, Miss.  
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### Gulf Wing Awards

1st Place, Best Magazine, Air Force Media Contest, 2003, 2004  
1st Place, Best Command Publication, AFRC Media Contest, 2004, 2005  
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Airman 1st Class Danelle A. Woods, 403rd CES  
Staff Sgt. Lamance T. Woods, 41st APS  
Senior Airman Harold D. Young Sr., 403rd MXS



Airmen salute the fallen during a simulated repatriation of remains ceremony at the Operational Readiness Inspection. Led by Chap. (Maj.) Ray Thompson and supported by Senior Airman Shanika Frontz, chaplain assistant. The exercise was conducted with exceptional realism. Observers, including the photographer who captured this moment, Master Sgt. Steve Martin, 41st Aerial Port Squadron, said that when Frontz began to sing the tone became very serious and somber. "There were several who were choked up," he said. "The sound of her voice set the stage for everyone involved." Frontz received praise from the IG for her performance.

Photo by Master Sgt. Steve Martin, 41st APS, UPAR





Photo by Tech. Sgt. James B. Pritchett

(Above) Recruits recite the oath of enlistment on the soon to be opened Biloxi/Ocean Springs bridge as Maj. Chad Gibson, 403rd Wing, administers the oath. These recruits participated in the 403rd Wing Recruiting Squadron's annual Mass Enlistment Ceremony. The bridge, which connects the communities of Biloxi and Ocean Springs, Miss. partially opened in November. It was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina Aug. 29, 2005.



Courtesy Photo

(Above) First Lt. Noel Roldan completed a volunteer deployment last year with the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Bagram, Afghanistan, where he served as Executive Officer for the Maintenance Group Commander. Among the highlights of his tour was meeting Lt. Gen. John Bradley, commander, AFRC.



Photo by Senior Airman Tabitha Spinks

(Above) Cutting the cake, Master Sgt. Joseph Walker and wife Kimberly Walker, celebrate his retirement ceremony with family and friends. Sergeant Walker was a recruiter with the 403rd Wing for a little more than a year. (Left) Senior Master Sgt. Joseph Landry, an Air Reserve Technician, retires after 26 years of service. Sergeant Landry joined the Air Force in 1981. He came to the 403rd Wing in 1991 and finished out his career as chief of the Education and Training Office.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. James B. Pritchett



Photo by Tech. Sgt. James B. Pritchett

(Above) Watching the computer, Staff Sgt. Brandon Parish, a loadmaster with the 815th Airlift Squadron, ensures the palletized equipment is released on time. The loadmaster computer is one of the elements that has greatly improved the accuracy of air-drops in the J-model. At the designated moment, the computer releases the locks that hold the loads in place, allowing them to exit the aircraft with precision timing over the drop zone. (Right) Swiping out for the last time, Master Sergeant Glen Picard plans to enjoy retirement. He has 33 years of service at Keesler Air Force Base and for seven of those years, he was the historian for the 403rd. "I've been counting down for a year and reality set in letting me know that it was actually time to move on," he said.

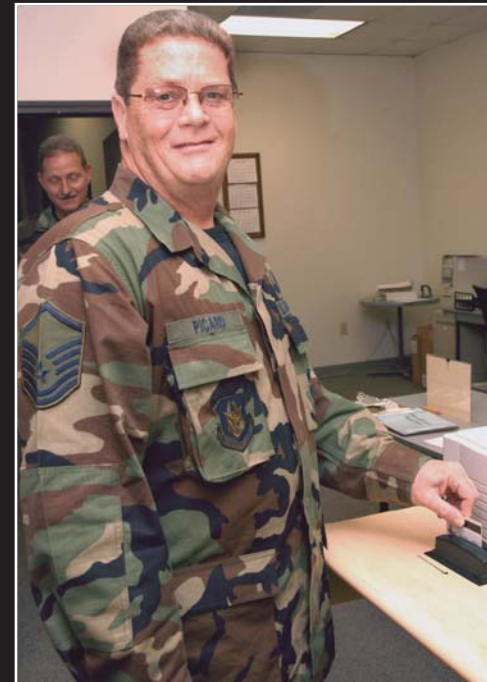


Photo by Senior Airman Tabitha Spinks



Photo by Tech. Sgt. James B. Pritchett

(Above) Decorated with the Meritorious Service Medal, Senior Master Sgt. Donald Cardin, senior recruiter, 403rd Recruiting Squadron, retired in ceremonies attended by many family, friends and co-workers in January. Sergeant Cardin was hand-picked to take over Reserve recruiting at Keesler after Katrina, turning it into a successful year for the squadron and exceeding goals.



Photo Courtesy 403rd Communications Flight

(Above) Proud to retire, Master Sgt. Frank Richmond stands next to his wife Linda Richmond as Maj. Brian Bell presents her with a Certificate of Appreciation. Sergeant Richmond served 21 years with the 403rd Communications Flight and four years active duty.





Carefully stoking the sparks to build a fire, Capt. Kevin Olson, a pilot with the 815th Airlift Squadron, takes part in an aircrew survival training refresher course. Among the skills aircrew practiced were identifying edible plants, using the gear in their survival vests, first aid and building fires with flint and steel.  
photo by Senior Airman Lindsay Boggan



# Turbo Core

story and photos by Senior Airman Tabitha Spinks

## Turbo! Turbo! Turbo!

This is what you hear when you join Tech. Sgt. Tony Eckwood, a fitness specialist at the Dragon Fitness Center, for his intense Turbo Core class.

Sergeant Eckwood is with medical logistics in the 403rd aeromedical staging squadron. He has always been into fitness whether it was a body building, self-defense or becoming a certified personal trainer. He has designed a work out to build up muscles throughout the entire body.

“During this conditioning, not only do we work out the larger, more common muscles, but we also work out and try to build the smaller ones that support those bigger ones,” said Sgt. Eckwood. “The routine helps you gain strength that is equivalent to a workout utilizing weights; however, it helps you become well-rounded.” ▶

Tech. Sgt. Tony Eckwood demonstrates moves to help build the core of the body. This particular move is executed as a push-up with one leg up to get the body working a broad range of muscles from the arms, abs, and legs. Sergeant Eckwood developed this workout routine for a year before introducing it to a class. The goal of the workout is to build smaller, less used muscles so that they can support the larger ones that we use more often.



Members of Turbo Core hold a position that stresses the back and abs. In the first 18 months, the class became popular at Keesler with about 80 people in the evening classes. Due to such high interest in the class, Sergeant Eckwood plans to produce a video for those who can't make the scheduled classes.





A common testimony from members in the class is that the routine helps build stamina and it defines and tones muscles.

"After 2 months of taking the class, I noticed drastic changes, and am continuing to lose weight," said Captain Shari Crenshaw, 403rd MSG. "It is a fun upbeat class and he is very motivating."

The workout is developed to help anyone, but this personal trainer designed the class to target common physical weaknesses among military members.

"I started to notice that quite a few people in the military all had the same type of injuries in either their lower back or knees and other various places," said TSgt. Eckwood. "I also realized that I too, was weak in those same areas."

This dedicated fitness specialist worked on the class for nearly a year before introducing it to a class.

"With the war going on, we are more mobile," said TSgt. Eckwood. "Being as we are prone to these types of injuries, the class is designed to prepare for deployment. We are on our hands and knees and down low for the majority of the class. This allows the body to move in positions it is not already use to."

The class has been offered at the gym for about 18 months and has an average attendance of about 80 people in the evening classes.

With a high interest in the class, the former body builder hopes to make a DVD featuring the Turbo Core conditioning exercise so that people who have benefited from the class can take this intense workout wherever they go and also to make it accessible to anyone who is interested.

In the meantime, Sergeant Eckwood offers his classes to anyone on Monday and Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. or Tuesday and Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at Dragon Fitness Center.

"Fitness is super important in my book," he said. "It sustains life, makes you less prone to injuries, and allows you to feel healthier. I like to have a hand in helping others. If someone can give me 50 percent, I'll give them 150 percent in return." rw



Sergeant Eckwood, a Reservist with the Aeromedical Staging Squadron demonstrates a modified sit-up for members of his Turbo Core class. "When you build your core muscles, it helps out with the rest of your body," he said. "You can run better, increase your overall strength, and just makes you feel better about yourself."



# Reunited

story and photos by Master Sgt. Steve Martin

Past and present recently came together for the 20th Anniversary celebration of the 41st Aerial Port Squadron.

Some of the new aerial porters learned their unit has not always been a part of the 403rd Wing.

In October 1987 the 41st Mobile Aerial Port stood up as a squadron under the 403rd. The "mobile" was dropped about six years later and now it's the 41st APS. The Air Force Specialty Codes changed as well from 605s to 2T2s.

The celebration brought former members and their families back to visit. Among the guests were the first commander, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Jefferson Rhodes; the first first sergeant, Master Sgt. (Ret.) Ray Peragoy, who also performed duties as the first chief; and the first and only Vehicle Maintenance NCOIC Master Sgt. (Ret.) Henry Polk. Some former enlisted Airmen of the 41st went on to become officers, for example, Capt. Tammy Guthmiller, the unit's second Air Reserve Technician; Capt. Angela (Berry) Sanders, and 1st

Lt. Mike Rhues. The first ART, Master Sgt. Jim Liston and the first Chief Johnny Cahoon were unable to attend. Former commander, Maj. (Ret.) Michael Norwood and former Chief Michael Denny called and wished the best for the unit.

MAPS or APS all war stories were worth telling by Airmen and families. Everyone eagerly listened to the stories told by former commander Maj. (Ret.) Michael Aden, Ret. SMSgt Isidor Pastrano, Master Sgt. (Ret.) Carrol Calhoun, and Master Sgt. (Ret.) Floyd Fountain.

The unit has participated in contingencies from Desert Shield/Storm to Provide Hope/Comfort to the Northern/Southern no fly zone enforcement.

This unit also supported America on 911 by marshalling and loading two C-17s with pallets of medical supplies and 81st medical personnel bound for New York and New Jersey.

More recently, the unit deployed personnel for one year to the desert in support of the Iraqi Freedom campaign. The 41st participated and gave years of support to the Panama Rotation (Volant Oak) and to Coronet Oak. The unit deployed personnel to countries in Europe, for example, Turkey, Spain, Italy, England, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Germany and also helped to train Argentine special forces

in airdrop rigging procedures.

Airmen from APS played a major role while serving in Honduras on a multi-service training mission. Citizen Airmen of the 41st served with the active duty performing Joint Inspections for the Operational Readiness Inspection helping them to receive an Outstanding rating.

Members of the unit have marched in the Desert Storm Victory Parade in New York. The 41st is proud of members, Senior Master Sgt. Aaron Legier and Tech. Sgt. Troy Bickham, who were photographed for Airman magazine loading and unloading the new Striker Tank in its initial test on a C-130J.

Currently the aerial porters support the Hurricane Hunters and the Flying Jennies for weekly aerial delivery rigging and drop zone recovery. The 41st has come a long way from that handful of cross-trainees who stood up the unit in October 1987 to now having members such as Master Sgt. Brian Jackson and Master Sgt. Brian Johnston, who will retire in February 2008 with 20 years of dedicated service.

The team of individuals who worked to make the celebration a memorable event included Senior Master Sgt. Edrick Haynes, Senior Master Sgt. Sherita Johnson, Senior Master Sgt. James Childs, Master Sgt. Alce Martin, Tech. Sgt. Nathaniel James, and Master Sgt. Steve Martin. RW

(Right) Past and present 41st APS leadership, (from left) Master Sgt. Byron Hayes, current first sergeant; Master Sgt. (Ret.) Ray Peragoy, the unit's first first sergeant; the first commander, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Jefferson Rhodes and current commander, Maj. Michael Grubb.



Among the aerial porters enjoying the reunion were (from left) Master Sgt. (Ret.) Ray Peragoy, Master Sgt. Byron Hayes, Senior Master Sgt. Sherita Johnson, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Jefferson Rhodes, Maj. Michael Grubb and Master Sgt. (Ret.) Henry Polk who served as a vehicle mechanic assigned to the unit up until the time the slot was eliminated and he retired.



Telling and listening to war stories filled the day for aerial porters like Master Sgt. (Ret.) Floyd Fountain, who retired five years ago.



Connecting a firehose to a pumper truck, Senior Airman Todd Hines, a fireman with the 403rd Civil Engineering Squadron, supplies water to Airmen on the other end of the hose. Leading up to the ORI, even the firemen practiced doing their jobs in Mission Oriented Protective Posture gear. photo by Senior Airman Tabitha Spinks





# At Home on the Range

story and photos by Master Sgt. Steve Martin

(Top) Taking careful aim at the silhouette, Master Sgt. Rogee Clark, 41st Aerial Port Squadron, successfully qualifies with the M16. Sergeant Clark has served as the disaster preparedness representative for the 41st for more than 10 years. Through the past two Operational Readiness Inspections and a major Inspector General Exercise the processes, he has developed have garnered praise from inspectors. He also serves as a Post Attack Recovery team leader and instructor. The unit's PAR team earned high marks during the last ORI.

(Right) Keeping the range safe, Tech. Sgt. Lee Foley, combat arms training and maintenance instructor, 403rd Security Forces Squadron, provided classroom firearms training and assisted Airmen on the range the day Staff Sgt. Victor Myrick scored the first perfect score for the 41st APS. Combat arms training and maintenance, or CATM, instructors are required to fire 500 rounds a year on each small arms weapon they teach in order to stay proficient. Instructors teach citizen Airmen how to maintain and safely operate firearms.

(Facing Page) Showing off his target, Staff Sgt. Victor Myrick, a ramp supervisor with the 41st APS, became the first aerial porter to fire a perfect score on the range. He has been with the unit more than six years and was once a Marine Corps sniper. Sergeant Myrick said that sniping and shooting on the range are two completely different forms of marksmanship. While he has had high scores on the range before and since this remains his only perfect score to date on the range with the M16.



50  
 M16A1 SERIES TARGET  
 25-METER SCALED  
 SILHOUETTE  
 TIMED-FIRE TARGET

300 M

200 M

250 M

100 M

150 M

50 M

300 M

200 M

250 M

150 M

THE WHITE DOT ON EACH TARGET SHOWS THE BEST AIMING POINT FOR TARGETS AT ACTUAL DISTANCE. IF AN ADJUSTED AIMING POINT IS USED, 25 METERS BULLETS SHOULD HIT WITHIN THE CIRCLES, BUT ARE SCORED AS HITS IF THEY HIT ANYWHERE IN THE SILHOUETTE.

USE LONG RANGE SIGHT



Checking for leaks, Senior Airman Johnnie Sims, life support/survival equipment technician, fills life preserve units with air. These are the same LPUs found on the Wing's C-130J aircraft for use in case of emergency. They are designed for one-time use only and are checked every 365 days.  
photo by Senior Airman Tabitha Spinks





# Customer Service Jennies Support Army, Others

story and photos by Senior Airman Tabitha Spinks

Many months of training and several missions in support of other services honed the skills of 815th Airlift Squadron aircrews before their deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism this year.

Seeking the most realistic training possible, the Flying Jennies have supported Joint Airborne Airlift Transportation Training missions in support of the Army, Marine Corps and Special Forces units.

Some of the missions the Jennies have supported include rapid off-loading, heavy drops, troops drops and High-Altitude Low Opening drops. While supporting these missions the unit also completes needed aircrew proficiency and upgrade training.

"With exercises like these going on, our pilots are able to become mission qualified," said Lt. Col. Keith Gibson, assistant director of operations and a pilot with the Jennies.

Customer service and safety are important to the Citizen Airmen of the 815th. "The most important thing to consider is safety. If we don't deliver cargo whether it is passengers or supplies the mission was unsuccessful," said Capt. Darren Ray, pilot. "With paratroopers, for example, we make sure that we put them on intended target, if they are not where they need to be, the mission is ineffective." 815th



While completing a pre-flight checklist, Capt. Todd Humphries absorbs training from Lt. Col. Brian Freeman. Captain Humphries was in training to earn qualification as an aircraft commander.



Dust flies as the Jennies conduct a rapid off-load operation with this Army Humvee and trailer. Joint Airborne Airlift Transportation Training provides realistic hands-on training for 815th aircrews and for Army troops. Aircrews gain experience in operating with the Army and practice their procedures. The aircrew also provides training to the Army to help the soldiers understand what is expected of them.



Among the types of missions the 815th Airlift Squadron supports are personnel drops. Whether called on to drop Army or Marine Corps troops at low level or High Altitude Low Opening deliveries, aircrew take every step to ensure they deliver the personnel on target.



# Flying Jennies Return to Desert

story by Senior Airman Tabitha Spinks photo courtesy U.S. Air Force

Citizen Airmen from the 815th Airlift Squadron are preparing for deployment to Southwest Asia in March.

For some, including 1st Lt. Brandon Cowell, a pilot with the Flying Jennies, it will be their first combat deployment.

Lieutenant Cowell has been with the Flying Jennies for nearly four years training for missions like this. He comes from a long line of war veterans. With his grandfather served in WWII and his dad in Vietnam, he says it's a

family tradition to serve when duty calls.

"I was just waiting on my turn," said the Lieutenant. "Now that it is here, I will admit that I'm a little nervous, but excited to put all the training we have been doing to use."

The Flying Jennies will re-supply troops on the ground, perform humanitarian missions, deliver medical supplies and also conduct any medical evacuations that may be necessary.

"We will be directly supporting Central Command in airlifts/airdrops of personnel and supplies supporting the War on Terror," said Capt. Darren Ray, also a pilot with the unit who is gearing up for his second deployment with the J-model.

"The more stuff we can deliver with our planes to those troops, the less fewer lives the Army has to risk driving it in by convoy trying to avoid IEDs and other things that may be out there,"

said Lieutenant Cowell.

The 815th trains constantly to maintain their readiness. That training allows aircrew to become mission qualified in different areas necessary for the upcoming deployment.


"It's hard to tie in the unknown during training, so they are always throwing in scenarios to help us prepare," said Lieutenant Cowell. "Sometimes, we may conduct a training mission as if we are in a combat environment. We

also try flying different terrains to get familiar with the aircraft's performance."

"Everyone deploying is more than qualified to go," said Captain Ray. "There will not be anyone in training during the deployment. Here at Keesler, we are trained to execute war time missions and there we will do the actual mission."

In addition to routine training and the Operational Readiness Inspection

in December, the unit has also been engaging in Joint Airborne/Air Transportation Training in which they practice formations, airdrops, personnel drops and landing approaches.

"The Wing has provided us with the tools, training and assets required to deploy in support the Global War on Terror," said Captain Ray. "Now it is time to use that training, experience, and skill to complete the mission safely and to once again prove that the C-130J is a great asset to the Air Force." 



# Wing Ready for Operations

story by Tech. Sgt. Michael Duhe, photos courtesy IG Inspection Team

After more than a year of hard work and preparation, the 403rd Wing put their warfighting skills to use during the Operational Readiness Inspection in December.

Several hundred members of the 403rd and 433rd Airlift Wing from Lackland AFB, Texas, deployed to the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, operating as the 801st Air Expeditionary Wing. Upon arrival, the Airmen in-processed through PERSCO, attended a Right Start briefing and checked into their workcenters. The

action started shortly after that, as the first missile attack sent Airmen scrambling to don their chemical gear and take cover.

That unfolding scenario set the pace for the remainder of the inspection. Under the watchful eyes of the inspectors, the 801st was tested with various kinds of attack scenarios, from snipers to missiles, both day and night. Following each attack, Post Attack Reconnaissance teams performed their all-important duties of checking for contamination, unexploded ordnance

and casualties in their areas. Some Airmen evacuated to bunkers near their workcenters, while some units "bugged out" to their alternate locations to continue their mission.

Some of the scenarios also involved cooperation with the host nation.

"I think we had pretty good cooperation among all our team members, as well as with the host nation that we called for support," said Lt. Col. Kathryn Karr, dayshift director of the Emergency Operations Center, which serves as the nerve center for com- ▶



Sporting the soon-to-be fashionable "birth control" mask insert glasses, Senior Master Sgt. Sue Ford, chief, 815th Life Support, listens closely as inspectors give her scenario injects.



Checking over inventory, Senior Master Sgt. Marquis Westry, NCOIC of Food Services for the 403rd Services Flight, ensures there is enough grub on hand for the hungry troops of the 403rd and 433rd Wings.



It's time for dinner as Master Sgt. Terry Conner, Staff Sgt. Phyllis Jones and Tech. Sgt. Tara Lewis, members of the 403rd Services Flight, rapidly serve meals moving troops through the Single Pallet Expeditionary Kitchen. Services Flight was able to serve two meals, breakfast and dinner, out of the SPEK with enough food to feed both the 403rd and 433rd Wings during the ORI.



Call in to the Unit Control Center, Master Sgt. Omar Gibson, 403rd Services, reports a simulated incident. Standing by are the two troops involved in the incident, Tech. Sgt. Tara Lewis and Senior Airman Tockneea Day, both of the 403rd SVF.



With his "suspect" captured and under control, Tech. Sgt. Shane Hogan, 403rd Security Forces, performs a search for weapons and contraband while Tech. Sgt. Alton Hannah, also of 403rd SFS, provides security over-watch. A member of the Inspector General team played the insurgent.



mand and control. “With the attacks occurring, there were so many scenarios going on all at one time. It was certainly a challenge to keep up with all the details and keep them straight and react to multiple things at multiple times. That’s what we did to keep this going at a fast pace.”

Overall, the Wing performed better than expected, according to Col. Dave Konneker, vice commander, 403rd Wing, and dayshift ICC commander during the ORI.

“We didn’t have the chance to practice as much as we wanted,” he said, referring to an Operational Readiness Exercise in November that was called off soon after it began because of a tropical storm. The wing practiced processing line loading cargo and deploying, but plans to practice redeploying were

washed out.

“For a unit that hadn’t been practicing putting on MOPP gear, listening to alarm signals and learning about the rules of engagement for the last 10 years, we did very well,” he commented.

Members of the 403rd Wing worked closely with their active duty counterparts from the 81st Training Wing in carrying out the deployment.

“That went pretty well,” Colonel Konneker said. “We also worked with a unit with a dissimilar aircraft, the C-5, from a different location – Lackland AFB. It’s pretty impressive that we could get so many diverse organizations to come together. Everybody operates differently. We had a tactical airlift wing, a strategic airlift wing and a training wing and they all came together and

moved 500-600 people to a different location, set up shop, operated under stress conditions like it was war, then we came home.

“It was pretty impressive in my book, to get three completely different units together and cooperate to get the mission done. We all operated well, communicated well and played to the same standards. We’re ready to take our planes wherever they want us to go with them. That’s what the ORI proved.”

Several members of the 403rd were recognized for their ORI performance at commander’s call in January.

“We couldn’t have asked for more from our folks. We had a few problem areas, but that’s why you do an ORI, so you can identify where you need to do some work. The bottom line is we are combat ready.” gw



This group of engineers performed dart damage assessments which are temporary, quick repairs on buildings that simulated damage during combat. Preparing to go on shift, they are (Right to Left) Tech. Sgt. Kevin Shows, Senior Airman Zach Henley, Master Sgt. David Holden, Master Sgt. Isaac Wells, and Senior Airman Donald Spratley, all assigned to the 403rd Civil Engineer Flight.



Preparation for the ORI was truly a 403rd team effort. Ten people from the 96th Aerial Port Squadron, Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., deployed to Keesler to assist with transporting cargo and equipment.



With M16 at the ready, Senior Airman Donald Spratley, a 403rd Civil Engineer power productions craftsman, pulls security forces augmented duty during airfield damage repair during the ORI.



Engaging an enemy target, Master Sgt. Darrell Devenny, 403rd Security Forces, protects the base perimeter from an insurgent attack. Sergeant Devenny was the Quick Reaction Force leader for airfield security.



(Above) Staff Sgt. Anthony Stewart, 403rd Maintenance Squadron, reads over his Airman’s Manual before performing a post-attack sweep. Sergeant Stewart was the lead man for the flight line PAR teams. The team earned an excellent rating for its performance. (Right) Splicing and terminating a Category 5e cable, Tech. Sgt. Vernon Forde, 403rd Communications Flight, supports his team while setting up vital communication links.

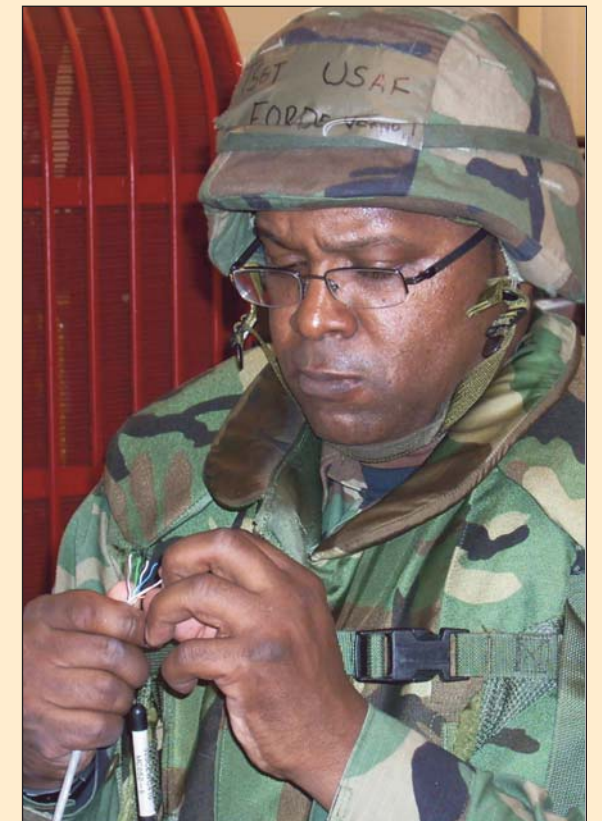






Photo by 2nd Lt. J. Justin Pearce

A WC-130J, flown by the Hurricane Hunters of the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, flies over the Biloxi-Ocean Springs Bridge as members of the community celebrate the reopening of structure which was damaged by Hurricane Katrina more than two years ago. The bridge which linked Jackson and Harrison counties on the Mississippi Gulf Coast was traveled by more than 30,000 commuters each day prior to the storm. Two lanes were opened Nov. 1 with the rest of the span to be completed by April 2008.

Dignitaries from across the Coast including Mayor Brett Warr, of Gulfport, Mayor A.J. Holloway, of Biloxi, and Mayor Connie Moran, of Ocean Springs, help tie the ribbon linking their communities after more than two years of geographical separation following Hurricane Katrina. Since opening Nov. 1 the bridge has allowed thousands of commuters to cut many miles off their daily drives. Now with the second span partially open, traffic delays have been considerably reduced in the area. Construction along Highway 90 continues for several more months with road resurfacing, curb and median repair and replacement. With much of the work between Keesler and the bridge completed, traffic snarls at rush hour should be alleviated east of the base within the next few months.



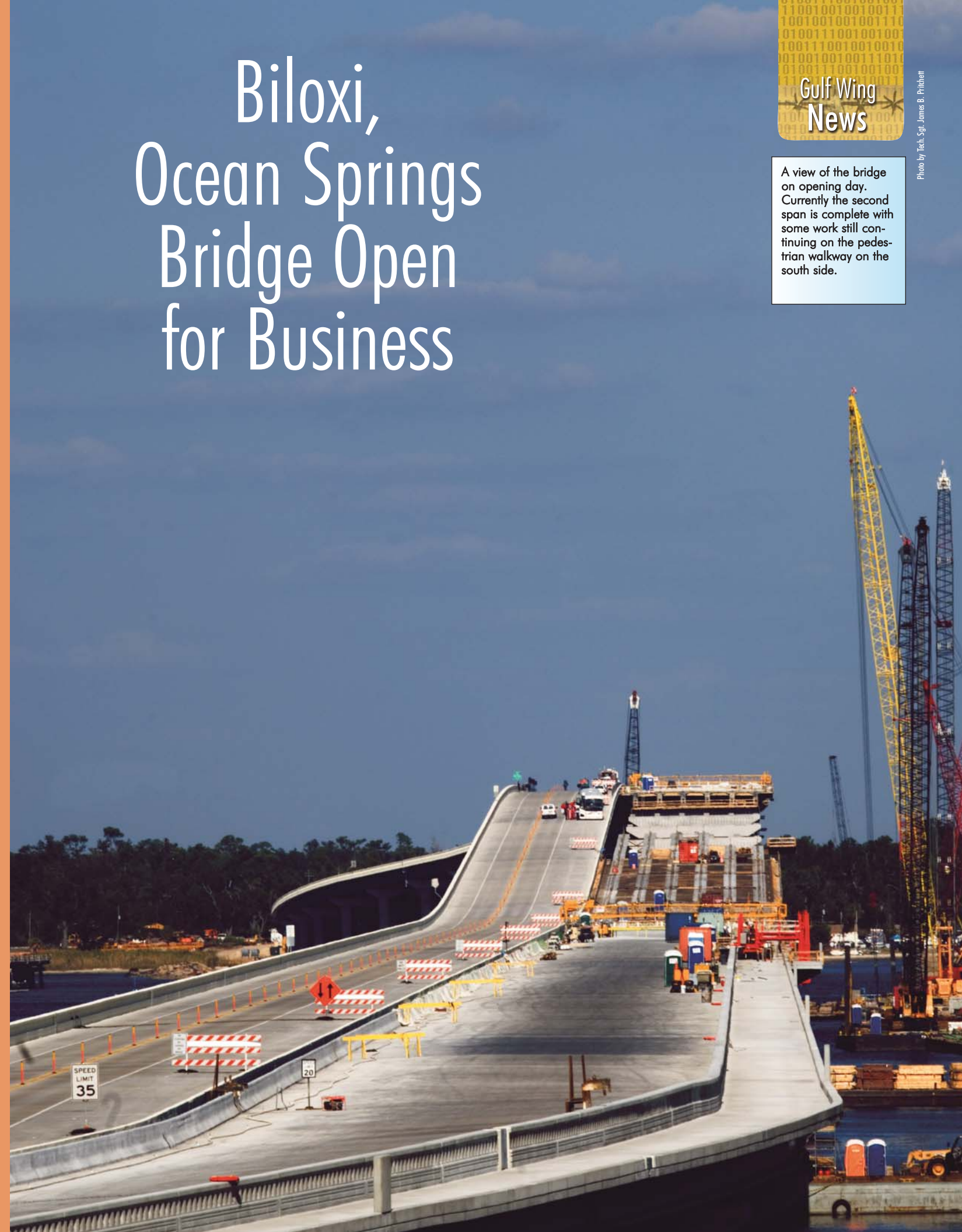
Photo by 2nd Lt. J. Justin Pearce

# Biloxi, Ocean Springs Bridge Open for Business



A view of the bridge on opening day. Currently the second span is complete with some work still continuing on the pedestrian walkway on the south side.

Photo by Tech Sgt. James B. Pritchett





# Chiefs

## Taking Care of Business

story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Ryan Labadens

A haze of heat rolls off all four engines as they warm up for takeoff. First one propeller, then another whirs to life. The C-130J taxis across the flight line, then crawls to a stop and spins around to aim its nose down the runway. The engines rev faster and louder as the pilot throttles up, and then the massive bird plows forward until it finally, gracefully lifts into the air.

Before that plane ever lifts off, it needs to be given a good once over (and sometimes a twice over) while it's parked on the ground to make sure it's safe to fly. That's where the crew chiefs step in.

"The main responsibility for a crew chief is the total airplane," said Master Sgt. Kevy Green, a crew chief with the 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. He rattled off a few tasks the crew chiefs handle. "We do power up, we check the flight controls, ensure all the lights work, and make sure all the tires are serviceable."

According to Sergeant Green, the crew chiefs make up just one part of the whole package of people responsible for getting those birds off the ground. Wing members from the engine shop, hydraulics, electrics and avionics all play roles in making sure the planes are fit to fly.

The people in these shops all have their own areas of expertise, and each person is trained to tackle shop-specific problems that may arise with the aircraft.

Master Sgt. Brett Keely, another crew chief for the 403rd AMXS, said part of the crew chief's job is to keep

these subject-matter experts in the loop.

"We help coordinate the flow of information with them so that everything goes as smooth as possible," said Sergeant Keely.

Sergeant Green said that crew chiefs track down any problems the plane may have, and trouble shoot them to a certain degree before passing the ball to the specialists in that particular area.

Before heading out to the plane to do their inspections, Sergeant Keely said the crew chiefs check their "Go 81," a computer program that stores information detailing previous problems with the aircraft.

Once on the flight line, the crew chiefs look over the plane before referring to their set of Pre-flight/Basic Post Flight cards, or BPO cards, for a more detailed inspection. These documents point out specific regions of the aircraft known to be problem areas.

One particular tool that helps the crew chiefs track down trouble spots is the Portable Maintenance Aid. This device interfaces with the computers on the aircraft and provides the crew chiefs with more in-depth troubleshooting capabilities.

The PMAs are new to the J-models and, according to Sergeant Green, have made the problem-finding portion of the job much easier.

"It's really a 180-degree turn for the better," said Sergeant Green. "Mostly with the E and H models, you relied on experience and time with the aircraft to aid you in locating problem areas. The PMAs on the J model allow you to find out about those problems sooner, so

you're able to do more preventive maintenance."

Even with all the high-tech equipment that help the crew chiefs find these problems, Sergeant Green still believes that relying on technology alone is no substitute for experience.

"The more you look at the aircraft, the more it becomes like your car or your house. Just at a glance, you can tell when something is not normal," said Sergeant Green.

Even though the 815th Airlift Squadron and the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron fly two separate missions, Senior Master Sgt. Marshall Harris, 403rd AMXS aerospace maintenance superintendent, said the inspections the crew chiefs perform for both aircraft are relatively the same.

"There's really not much difference from the crew chief's perspective as far as the tactical and the weather birds are concerned," said Sergeant Harris. "If you're qualified for (inspecting) one, you're qualified for the other."

As is the case with any job, witnessing the fruits of your labor is one of the most rewarding aspects of being a crew chief, according to Sergeant Green. Seeing the planes he works on lift off in support of the Air Force mission gives this veteran crew chief a profound sense of accomplishment.

"I think there's a personal pride in working on an aircraft, even if you may have had some problems or setbacks," said Sergeant Green. "When you finally see it take off, and the wheels are up, you can look at it and say, 'Yeah, I had a hand in that.'" **BW**

There is more to fueling a J-model than "fill 'er up." Crew chiefs, like Tech. Sgt. Jerry Wilson, 403rd AMXS, have to make sure the aircraft is loaded with a very specific amount of fuel depending on the mission.







Among the many jobs of a crew chief, such as Senior Airman Jason Carpenter, 403rd AMXS is running pre-flight checks on the flight deck.





Staff Sgt. Callie Jones pounds a nail into plywood on a Habitat for Humanity home underconstruction in Gulfport.

# Home Sweat Home

story and photos by Tech. Sgt. James B. Pritchett

Scents of sawdust and the reverberation of hammers banging away filled the air as a sweltering late-summer sun beat down on volunteer construction workers last August in Gulfport. Temperatures soared above 90 degrees by 10 a.m. but the team was not about to let that stop them.

Mostly from the Air Force Reserve's 403rd Wing at Keesler, the volunteers were providing "sweat equity" to help one of their own. After Hurricane Katrina demolished much of the affordable housing on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2005, many in the unit found themselves in substandard housing or in trailers provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Staff Sgt. Callie Jones, an Air Reserve Technician with the 403rd Mission Support Group, was able to stay in her damaged apartment after the storm, however, it soon became all too clear that this was not a long-term solution. Living with her as her five-year-old daughter Zharia, and baby daughter Aniya. It wasn't long after Aniya arrived, that Sergeant Jones realized something in the apartment

was making the baby very sick. Inspections revealed a significant amount of mold in the home, particularly in the carpet, due to water damage caused by the hurricane.

Not sure what to do or where to turn, Sergeant Jones heard about Habitat for Humanity. She wasn't sure she would qualify, but applied anyway.

Within days after Katrina, Habitat for Humanity had swarms of volunteers in the area and had plans to help the Coast rebuild. Today, Habitat for Humanity Mississippi Gulf Coast is Habitat International's largest production affiliate in the nation already completing construction of more than 190 homes. It is also the second largest builder (for profit included) in the entire State of Mississippi.

Habitat for Humanity's work is accomplished at the community level by affiliates — independent, locally run, nonprofit organizations. Each affiliate coordinates all aspects of Habitat home building in its local area — fund raising, building site selection, partner family selection and support, house construction, and mortgage servicing.

Habitat is not a giveaway program. In addition to a down payment and the monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor, "sweat equity," into building their Habitat house and the houses of others.

Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of the homeowner (partner) families. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit and financed with affordable loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build still more Habitat houses.

After applying, Sergeant Jones case was reviewed by the selection committee and she was chosen to continue on in the process and become a partner family. Before construction could begin on her own home, she had to build up that sweat equity. By performing many hours of volunteer work herself and also getting a little help from her friends who provided their time and sweat to help out in the construction of other Habitat homes in the area, she is finally near the goal. Construction on her home in Biloxi is expected to begin in March. In addition to working on other homes, the friendly personnel support specialist, also had to complete an educational requirement Habitat offers through a series of classes designed to help homeowners prepare for the costs and responsibilities of their new home. She also had to participate in community service work and become a full partner ▶





Reaching above his head, Rupert Bradshaw, functional systems administrator, 403rd Communications Flight, spent much of his time on a ladder in boiling heat.



Volunteers from the 403rd Wing joined with a professional construction team and other individual volunteers to do some of the work on this Habitat for Humanity Mississippi Gulf Coast home. Volunteers from the wing helped fellow Citizen Airman, Staff Sgt. Callie Jones, meet the requirement for 150 donated construction hours. Sergeant Jones also had to give more than 150 hours of her own time in construction projects.



(Left) Capt. Shari Crenshaw, executive officer, 403rd Mission Support Group, picks up stray nails with a magnet to keep the site clean. (Above) Sergeant Jones and one of the groups who volunteered to help out over the past several months. Friends and family helped Sergeant Jones qualify to buy a home through Habitat.

in the efforts to continue building affordable decent housing in the community.

"I didn't have any trouble getting people to help out," said Sergeant Jones. "I work with a lot of great people at the Mission Support Flight and throughout the wing who were willing to come and bring family members to pound nails, paint, install doorknobs, whatever they were asked to do."

"It was really hot out here today, but I wouldn't pass this up for anything," said Master Sgt. Dale Bass, 403rd MSF, back on that hot day in August. "It's a great cause, and I get to help out Callie in the process. We all really want to see her move into a new house. A place she and her babies can call home." **gw**





Chief Master Sgt. James Fields, command chief, 22nd Air Force, pushes the bolt forward on an M-16 attached to the Fire Arms Training Simulator. Security Forces use the FATS to qualify Citizen Airmen on the M-16 rifle and the M-9 sidearm.

# Chief: People Give Me Strength

story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Ryan Labadens

The Air Force could have all the latest, high-tech equipment, and all of funding and resources it could ever want, but the most vital component behind the bells and whistles of today's Air Force is the human component – the people who serve. This is something Chief Master Sgt. James Fields, command chief, 22nd Air Force, firmly believes.

“The part I like most about my job, and what I think is one of the most important aspects of what I do, is getting out there to meet and talk with people. That's where I get my energy. They're the source of my strength and the reason behind why I do what I do,” said Chief Fields.

The command chief visited the 403rd Wing from July 13-15, visiting as many shops and talking with as many Airmen as he could during the Unit Training Assembly. He tries to do this for every wing he visits so he can get as much input and feedback from the

enlisted troops as possible.

“I like to get out and meet as many people as I can, find out what's on their minds and what their needs are,” said Chief Fields. “I would rather be out talking with folks, asking them what's going on and how they feel. These are the people we work for, the people we support.”

Chief Fields began his Air Force career in April 1974. He served for four years on active duty as a munitions maintenance specialist before separating in 1978 to work in the steel mills near his native home of Pittsburg, Penn.

Later, he returned to the Air Force in 1982, serving in the Reserve as loadmaster with the 911th Airlift Wing at the Pittsburg Air Reserve Station.

During his 20 years there, he worked his way up to becoming the NCOIC of the loadmaster section, and then became the command chief of the 911th AW in January 2003.

When the 22nd command chief position came open, he decided to throw his hat in the ring for that position as well, and officially assumed command in October 2006.

The primary goals Chief Fields wants to accomplish as 22nd AF command chief are to continue promoting the good aspects within the Air Force Reserve already in place, and to work on finding resolutions for any problem areas that may exist.

One way of doing this is by finding out what improvements enlisted Airmen would like to see take place in their individual units and in the wing as a whole.

“It's important to find out what's on their minds and see what ideas they have so we can support them better,” said Chief Fields.

One improvement the chief noted is the introduction of the new ABU, the Airman Battle Uniform.

“This uniform will be much easier to

maintain and much more cost effective for our Airmen,” said Chief Fields.

“They can simply wash the uniforms and put them on right out the dryer, and they won't have to put out the money to have them starched at the dry cleaners,” he said.

Another main improvement the chief sees being implemented is the reduction of time allowed for ancillary training – it's now set at an hour an a half.

“This will free up more time for Airmen to perform their regular jobs, and this shortened time-frame will also be good for providing Airmen with ‘just-in-time’ training before a deployment. You can get the specific training you need when you need it,” said Chief Fields.

Chief Fields noted that this ancillary training, coupled with the regular job training Air Force Reservists receive every drill weekend, are key components of readiness which impacts exercises, inspections and real-world deployments.

“People need to remember that if you practice right – practice meaning you do your job the way it should be done – then there won't be many problems for the simple reason that you will perform the way you practice,” said Chief Fields.

The chief also emphasized the necessity of keeping a positive attitude.

“As long as you have the right attitude, a sense of urgency, and just do your job the way you do it every day, you'll be fine.”

In performing his own Air Force Reserve job, Chief Fields said one of the biggest challenges he encounters is the same one all Reservists face – juggling the time between family, civilian job, and

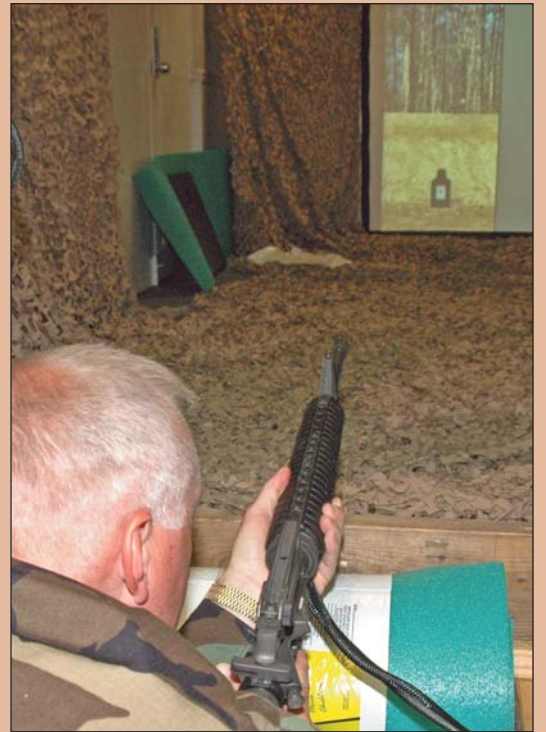
Reserve career.

He said he believes that in maintaining this balance, it's vital to spend time with your family.

To this day, he tries to devote as much time as he can to his wife and two grown sons. The Chief and his wife, Linda, were high-school sweethearts, and they have been married now for more than 33 years. His oldest son Matthew recently separated from the active-duty Air Force to pursue a career in the civilian world, and his son Jeff is a Staff Sergeant in the Air Force working in avionics.

Finally, the chief stressed how impressed he was with the recovery made by Keesler Air Force Base and the 403rd Wing since Hurricane Katrina.

“My hat is off to everyone for their resiliency and resolve in getting this wing back on its feet,” said Chief Fields. “I just want to thank everyone for the fine job they are doing. It is recognized, and it is appreciated.” gw



Chief Fields lines up his weapon and takes aim at an electronic target using an M-16 hooked up to the Firearms Training Simulator.



Master Sgt. Klint Krieger, 403rd Security Forces Squadron, briefs Chief Fields on the use of the Fire Arms Training Simulator. The command chief toured various shops within the 403rd during his visit.



## Think Before You Drink: Avoid DUI by Calling for Ride

If you're thinking of drinking before getting behind the wheel, think again. Lt. Col. Patricia Beyer, 403rd Wing judge advocate, said that there were a substantial number of DUI incidents involving Keesler Air Force Base and 403rd Wing personnel during 2007.

Anyone caught driving under the influence (with a blood alcohol content of 0.08 or higher) off base could be placed in jail, and would be subject to the state's legal procedures. A person caught on base for a DUI is subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and could possibly receive an Article 15. Also, anyone refusing to take a breathalyzer on base could lose DoD driving privileges for a year.

Colonel Beyer stressed that while dealing with the legal ramifications of a DUI is bad enough, people driving under the influence are, at worst, putting themselves and the lives of others in danger.

The colonel offered several options for those who want to go out drinking: assign a designated driver, take a taxi, or call one of the on-base organizations, such as Airmen Against Drunk Driving (228-377-SAVE), to have someone pick you up. Also, the 403rd Mission Support Flight sells Home Safe cards for \$10. Simply show your military ID and give the card to the cab driver (you would only need to pay the difference if cab fare exceeds \$20).

Contact the 403rd Wing judge advocate office at 228-377-2401 for more information.



403rd JAG

## Reservists to Receive Retroactive Pay

WASHINGTON—Air Force reservists on extended active duty will receive retroactive earnings in mid-February, according to a Pentagon announcement Jan. 29. All other reservists will get their back pay "a couple of weeks later."

The National Defense Authorization Act signed into law Jan. 28 by President Bush stipulates a 3.5 percent military pay raise. This hike is 0.5 percent higher than an executive order the president signed Dec. 28 to increase pay by 3 percent, which took effect Jan 1.

In mid-February, Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials will pay people on active duty the extra 0.5 percent raise earned since the start of 2008. Reservists drawing reserve pay will receive their supplement at the end of February, said Bill Carr, deputy undersecretary for military personnel policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

AFRC News Service

### Web Link:

[www.afrc.af.mil/newsreleases/story.asp?id=123084907](http://www.afrc.af.mil/newsreleases/story.asp?id=123084907)

## TRICARE Reserve Select

### Reservists Eligible for TRICARE Coverage Explained Online

WASHINGTON—Selected Reserve members may now be eligible to purchase health care coverage under the restructured TRICARE Reserve Select program. Meeting the healthcare needs of Selected Reserve members and their families is a top priority of AFRC leadership.

TRS offers coverage comparable to TRICARE Standard and Extra and features open enrollment, increased availability to survivors, and no activation requirements. Tiers, service agreements, and differing premium levels are no longer elements of the program. There is one restriction, Selected Reserve members who are eligible for the Federal Employee Health Benefits program, or currently covered under FEHB, may not participate in TRS.

Monthly premiums are \$81 for the Service member and \$253 for member-and-family coverage. Reserve members can find out more about TRS and download the enclosed flyer through the "My Benefits" portal at [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil).

Airmen participating in TRS are reminded to update DEERS information whenever you are activated or deactivated, have changes in your family composition (e.g., marriage, divorce, or birth), travel for more than 30 days, or move.

TRICARE Management Activity



## Airmen Against Drunk Driving

Airman Against Drunk Driving is in need of volunteers. The purpose of this organization is two-fold. First, reduce alcohol related incidents in our military and surrounding community by providing a variety of services. Second, save the Armed Forces money (cost of disciplining, retraining, and replacing military personnel) by reducing the loss of lives. Airmen Against Drunk Driving membership is strictly voluntary. It is open to enlisted, commissioned officers, retired, civilian, dependents and all other DoD identification card holders who are at least 18 years of age. For information, call 228-377-SAVE (7283).

Airmen Against Drunk Driving

# Above All



Brig. Gen. Richard Moss

By Brig. Gen. Richard Moss  
Commander, 403rd Wing

Satisfactory. That is the official evaluation for the 403rd Wing from the Inspector General for our recent Operational Readiness Inspection. I would definitely have given us a higher rating, but I guess I am a little bit biased. It is a grade we can be proud of because it means we are a combat ready unit, proven during the rigors of a tough ORI.

Considering the efforts of the Wing in recovery from Hurricane Katrina, leading and setting the benchmark for the J-model success and then not having an exercise to prepare for the inspection, we proved we can, and will be, capable of performing our mission whenever and wherever we are needed. I am very proud of it and so should you be. Sure, there are areas which need more work and attention – there always are.

We will meet those challenges as we have in the past and with success. The key in fighting in the Global War on Terrorism is to remain ready. Now we have proven we are ready to fight, we need to continue to train and always be ready to deploy.

Even though we will not have another ORI until 2013, early in 2009 we will have the Unit Compliance Inspection.

We cannot take the UCI for granted. Our minds and efforts have been on the J-model conversion and the ORI for the past few years and it's now time to work on our documentation and practices. Take the inputs from Staff Assistance Visits and use it wisely. Those inputs will help us succeed in the UCI.

### 815th Returns to War

There was not much time for the wing to rest after the Operational Readiness Inspection. The 815th Airlift Squadron is heading back to the desert, where four years ago, they proved the J-model aircraft was combat capable. We led the way, and will continue to lead the way, in proving the capabilities of the J-model. This deployment not only helps integrate the 'J' further in the active duty operations plan, but it is also critical to the success of winning the war against terrorism.

### Winter Storm Mission

The 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron is finishing up a deployment flying winter storms and will return just in time to get ready for the hurricane season. The winter storm deployment was extended to two months this year because the data collected by the

Hurricane Hunters has been invaluable to the forecast models of the National Weather Service. The hurricane season will be busy as usual and, additionally, we will be assisting in research flying into Pacific typhoons.

In April, we will have an event to celebrate surpassing 35,000 hours in the C-130J, more hours than any other unit in the Air Force. During that ceremony, we will also dedicate a WC-130J as the "Spirit of Keesler" in recognition of the tremendous partnership we have here with Team Keesler - not only with our active duty counterparts, but also with the communities surrounding Keesler AFB.

It is obvious the flying squadrons are busy, but they cannot complete their mission without outstanding support from all units in the Wing. We are a team who, when we work together and with the same purpose in mind, can accomplish anything. I thank all members of the 403rd, military and civilian alike, for their tremendous efforts in meeting our mission.


Due to your efforts, this Wing truly demonstrates every day the new slogan of the Air Force - "Above All." No matter what happens, no matter what obstacles we may face, we will "Above All" succeed. Thanks. 





Photo By Senior Airman Tabitha Spinks

## Rub-a-Dub-Dub

Aircrew listen to an instructor during water survival training. Citizen Airmen with certain jobs are required to attend this training every three years. Part of the training includes inflating and boarding a 46-man raft. In the event of an emergency landing in water, aircrew are trained to deploy the raft and assist any passengers. Training also includes use of the LPU, life-preserver unit, which the wearer inflates after leaving the aircraft. "It's important that they don't inflate the LPU until they are out of the hatch, because that would make it hard to get out," said Lt. Col. Dave Palmer, a pilot with the 815th Airlift Squadron.



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