

ALAMO WING

Volume 54, Number 10, October 2005

U.S. Air Force Reserve Command

433rd Airlift Wing, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas

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Alamo Wing leads Katrina med-evacs

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Tudor
— AFRC News Service

Nerves of steel, patience of a saint and the ability to forego regular meals and sleep for days at a time. Anyone seeking a job coordinating the aeromedical evacuation of thousands after a major disaster need not apply unless they have those traits. Some dry-erase markers, a telephone, and three white boards wouldn't hurt either.

Fortunately for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Defense Department and the evacuees, 9,788 people to Lackland alone, members of the Air Force Reserve's 433rd Airlift Wing used these tools and abilities to run aeromedical evacuation efforts during the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Reservists commanded and controlled all aeromedical evacuation out of New Orleans and other affected areas. With 125 airplanes at their disposal, Citizen Airmen here ensured victims of Hurricane Katrina were ferried to care at points across the United States.

When did those nerves of steel come into place? Quickly, according to Capt. James Baugh. He served as one of a handful of people inside the AE coordination cell. He said he worked on evacuation efforts in other situations, but never with an impact this close to home.



Photo by Maj. Anne Knabe, 440th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Melissa Gamez, a medical technician with the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, made her way, one patient at a time, through the busy New Orleans International Airport recording patient information for the evacuation teams. Medical teams coordinated through the 433rd AES moved over 1200 patients out of New Orleans on 192 medical evacuation flights in five days.

"The term 'refugee from New Orleans' sends chills up your spine," he said. "It certainly added more depth to what we were doing in here."

During a "typical" two hour and 15 minute period, Captain Baugh said they were prepping one airplane, launching another and alerting the next aeromedical evacuation crew. Crews readied tons of medical equipment, gallons of IV fluid and miles of gauze for the missions.

"It was busy," he added.

The aeromedical evacuation effort

took place in several locations, with a "total force" effort between active duty, Guardsmen and Reservists moving people away from danger. However, the bulk of the command and control work was done by Reservists out of two Kelly hangars.

One hangar served as a staging area where medical technicians organized piles of medical equipment for flight. Another served as a patient treatment area for incoming evacuees.

(See Out of Orleans, Page 5)



Winds, wings Post Katrina mission

1,950 medical evacuations out of New Orleans in just 96 hours.

433rd Airlift Wing. You held their hands, calmed their fears, soothed their minds and provided hope in a desperate situation.

Last month I wrote about how proud I am to lead an organization that adds volunteerism to the list of its core values.

Little did I know your spirit would be needed so quickly and so close to home.

You didn't wait to be ordered. You didn't wait to be told what needed to be done. You saw the need, knew your skills and you were ready to go even before the call went out.

You carried emergency vehicles and supplies in and flew out fellow Americans in need.

Your voluntary dedication, echoed by many other Guard and Reserve units, resulted in the airlift of about

Nearly 11,000 other evacuees were also brought to Kelly Field.


That immediate need is gone now and the rebuilding begins. It will be a slow process as the Gulf Coast rebuilds but progress is already evident.

Students are returning to Air Force technical schools at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., New Orleans residents are returning to their homes and some evacuees are starting over as new Texans.

Evacuees at the shelters, where many of you worked as volunteers, found a level of warmth and caring they've seldom seen before.

Their first exposure to that was through the men and women of the

In all the care you've shown to those devastated in Katrina's wake, don't forget to keep each other close and under that network of support. You've worked hard and the mission will continue.

Be good Wingmen. Help each other. Above all, know you have done the near impossible extremely well. 



The CFC campaign began Sept. 20 and runs through Nov. 30.

Chaplain's Corner

Communicating Like a Friend

Chaplain Lyle Von Seggern
Alamo Wing Chaplain Section

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from their earnest counsel. Proverbs 27: 9

One reason a friend is a friend, is because they listen. They listen to more than words. A real friend will listen to what is meant by our words instead of just the words themselves.

When a friend responds it will usually be done with kindness and without overreacting. Their counsel is given to truly help us. There are no hidden, self-centered agendas in their advice.

Alamo Country will be a better

place to live and serve if we continue communicating with our family as real friends.

When the atmosphere is better at home, the atmosphere is better everywhere.

Please call your chaplain section at 925-3556 if we can help you improve your communication skills.

The chapel staff is here to listen and help you find any resources you might need.

This funded Air Force Reserve Command newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of the Alamo Wing are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

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Civilian employers invited to tour Lackland

Dear Alamo Wing troops,

This year's 13th annual Bosses' Day provides a wonderful opportunity for your civilian employer to become acquainted with the Alamo Wing and the vital airlift mission we perform for our national defense.

If your civilian employer now provides you with the support and encouragement so necessary to perform your Reserve duties, this event is your way of saying "thank you" for their efforts. And if not, Bosses' Day is a prime opportunity to enlighten and educate them about the Air Force Reserve and the key roles you and all Reservists play in your jobs as citizen-airmen.

I strongly encourage you to nominate your boss for this very worthwhile event.

*Sincerely,
Ms. Elsa Martinez
Chief of Community Relations*

13th Annual Bosses' Day at the Alamo Wing November 5, 2005



(Please print or type information legibly)

Reservist's Rank/Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

Squadron: _____ Civilian Work Phone: _____

Employer/Supervisor Name: _____ Phone: _____

Title: _____ Company Name: _____

Complete Business Mailing Address w/Zip Code

(please "X" your choice) I will _____ I will not _____ join my boss for the BBQ cookout.

Office rules: Each reservist may submit ONE civilian employer or supervisor; due to flight regulations, ART supervisors are not qualified. Completed forms must be received by Public Affairs no later than **Oct. 14th**. Forms may be mailed to: 433 AW/PA, 203 Galaxy Rd, Suite 103, Lackland AFB, Texas 78236-0112 or FAXed to (210) 925-0317. Due to limited seating aboard the aircraft, nominated bosses will go through a selection process and approval by the wing commander for the orientation flight. Those bosses selected for the flight will receive a letter of invitation from the commander informing them of their selection – please do not promise your boss a seat aboard the aircraft. Besides the flight, bosses will receive aerial port, aeromedical evacuation and maintenance shop tours. Reservists may join their boss for the BBQ cookout, immediately following the flight. Your \$9 payment is due in cash or check **NLT 14 Oct**. For more information, please contact Ms. Elsa Martinez at (210) 925-5343 or e-mail elsa.martinez@lackland.af.mil.

Hispanic heritage

By Staff Sgt. Bethaney Trapp

Wing Public Affairs

The Alamo Wing Hispanic Heritage Committee, going on its sixth year, is open to all members of the 433rd Airlift Wing, military and civilian, and their dependents of any ethnic background, said Ms. Herlinda Fernandez, an AWHHC member for the past five years.

"I would encourage and invite all members of the 433rd, including management and leadership, to be involved in the AWHHC," said Ms. Fernandez.

"We're all about sharing our culture with our community, and we do this through our fund raisers held throughout the year," she said.

The AWHHC sponsors booths in the Lackland Mini Folk Life Festival, participates in the Cowboy Breakfast, Family Day, holds taco sales, a membership drive and September 10th they participated in the 24th Annual Avenida Guadalupe Parade on the West side of San Antonio, Ms. Fernandez said.

The fund raisers help provide scholarships.

If interested in becoming a member, volunteering, or for more information about the committee, contact Ms. Herlinda Fernandez, chairman, at 925-6658, Chief Master Sgt. Gilbert T. Cuellar, co-chairman, at 925-6128, Senior Master Sgt. Felix Lara, secretary, at 925-7866, or Mrs. Rose Marie Morales, treasurer, at 925-3800.

Information on AWHHC's upcoming events is also sent through e-mail and flyers placed throughout the Wing.



Activities, Air Force issues, ways to...

Get Involved

Volleyball tryouts

Lackland Air Force Base's Women's Varsity Volleyball team will begin practicing October 2nd.

Anyone interested in trying out for the team should contact Tony Medlin, 673-1157 or Jerry Tiger, the sports director at 671-2725.

Seeking drivers

The Red Cross is seeking volunteer drivers willing to transport donated items using Red Cross vans from Bldg 1536 to Bldg 171.

Volunteers need to report to Bldg. 171, Rm. 500 to sign-up.

For more information contact the Lackland Red Cross office at 671-3384 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The need will continue as long as the shelters are occupied.

Self defense seminar

The Women's Sexual Assault Self Defense Seminar will be held at Bldg. 7346, Chaparral Fitness Center, Saturday, October 8th, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Krav Maga is the official self-defense and fighting system used by the Israeli Defense Forces, Israeli Police and Security Services and numerous U.S. law enforcement agencies.

This seminar will teach people to defend themselves against rape, home invasion, domestic violence and parking lot attacks.

The cost for the seminar is \$20.00 for active duty military and \$30.00 for non active duty.

For more information contact Steve Reichert at 671-2632.

Climate survey

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – Air Force Reserve Command leaders want everyone – military and civilian – to participate in the 2005 Air Force Climate Survey.

The survey runs from Oct. 1 to Nov. 23.

"Last year was the first time AFRC participated in the survey, and the results were tremendous," said Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, AFRC commander. "The 33-percent participation rate sent a clear message that our people are committed to improving the Air Force.

"This year our goal is 100-percent participation across the command," he said.

The purpose of the survey is improvement. It measures how people feel about leadership, supervision, training, recognition and other aspects of the Air Force. This year's survey also covers enduring competencies such as effective communication, teamwork, judgment and adaptation under pressure.

"Since the survey software protects one's identity, I encourage everyone to be honest and straightforward in their responses," said Chief Master Sgt. Jackson A. Winsett, AFRC command chief master sergeant. "The survey data will be as good as the respondents make it. It's our opportunity to stand up and be counted."

The survey can be done online at <https://afclimatesurvey.af.mil/> anytime during the survey period from any computer.

Results of the survey will be released in February to unit leaders. (AFRC News Service)

Out of Orleans..... continued from Page 1

From New Orleans to Kelly Field, the Air Force Reserve managed the operation. On the ground, Airmen from Lackland AFB, Texas and volunteers took over, busing people to one of 31 area hospitals.

Surrounded by dozens of ambulances, charter buses and news-media satellite trucks, the hangars were ground zero for evacuation efforts. Much of the heavy lifting took place from Sept. 1-3 in about 51 hours.

Inside a small office in the staging hangar, coordinators kept track of military and civilian aircraft. The C-130s did the bulk of aeromedical evacuation work, bringing patients into San Antonio. Commercial aircraft, other military aircraft as well as C-5s from the Alamo Wing helped move evacuees away from danger.

Inside a 10 by 12-foot office, nine people crammed onto three desks. Between putting critical-care air-transport teams on airplanes, finding buses to move them and getting patients to hospitals, the office buzzed with activity around the clock.

That's when "the patience of a saint" came in handy. Master Sgt. Julianna Simmons deployed from March Air Reserve Base, Calif., working in the aeromedical evacuation coordination cell, finished an exercise called Lifesaver '05 on the Gulf Coast dealing with similar circumstances to Katrina earlier this year. She said the stress level is definitely higher for the real thing.

"We had one phone line, everyone calling in (with us) needing to call out. We were getting a delay in information getting missions. New Orleans was getting backed up," the Reservist said. "It was stressful, but we eventually started to get into a groove. I learned I could juggle about 100 things at once."

One of those 100 things included planes backing up at New Orleans airport. At one time, C-130s were being sent from Kelly to New Orleans

but ended up circling overhead for hours. Some eventually came home. They couldn't land because of the number of airplanes on the ground parked on the runway.

At the same time, the Kelly flight line burgeoned with many different airframes – C-5s, C-17s, C-130s, civilian DC-10s, 757s and more.

Meanwhile, Reservists were cycling Reserve, Guard and active-duty critical care air transport teams from Minnesota, Mississippi and Texas onto flights. Made up of medical technicians and nurses, CCATTs are flying ambulances providing care to patients while in the air.

Senior Airman Winter Shaler, a flight medic and Reservist from the 934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, worked on one mission. She said the work was overwhelming.

"I think, 'Hey that could be me.' You empathize with them and you come together as Americans and get it done," she said.

Fellow medical technician, squadron mate and Reservist Staff Sgt. Bill Lohse agreed. The Minnesotan said he just returned from a deployment in Afghanistan. He saw similarities to that country and his New Orleans experience.

"We landed in New Orleans, looked around and it kind of looked like Afghanistan – helicopters flying around and rapid deployments. It's different though because we're in America. You wouldn't think this kind of situation would happen here, but when it does, it's nice to know we have these kind of people we can count on."

In addition to the aeromedical evacuation effort, other evacuees were brought in from the Crescent City. Master Sgt. Rob Kusterer, a C-5 flight engineer with the 433rd AW and coordinator for incoming evacuees to San Antonio, said some of the issues he faced were all new.



Photo by Maj. Elena Milford


Many patients were flying for the first time and needed reassurance Capt. Felix Alicea, a flight nurse with the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron comforts one such patient on the second evacuation mission.

"At one point, the dogs that sniff for drugs were tiring. We had three dogs, but at one point, we were down to one," he said. There was also the challenge of moving people who were mentally challenged and those with post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Some of these folks would get off the plane and just shut down. We couldn't move them," he said.

At one point, Reservists accounted for 98 percent of all aeromedical evacuations. As of Sept. 7, that number waned to 80 percent. In addition, FEMA, the lead agency for relief efforts, said patients would be treated in place, limiting the need for flights.

The Alamo Wing championed the aeromedical evacuation efforts, nerves of steel and patience paid off. Better than 2,900 people were moved to hospitals from Seattle to San Antonio. Sergeant Lohse summed up the feelings of all the Reservists involved.

"It's the greatest thing we can do – to help others like this. It's like sitting around the fire hall. You hear the bell and you go," Sergeant Kusterer said. "This is the greatest job in the Air Force. I'm glad I'm able to help people." 

Pay rules change for general schedule employees

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — The Office of Personnel Management recently amended the rules governing pay setting for employees covered by the General Schedule. The rules implement section 301 of the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004.

The act's primary purpose is to correct various pay anomalies relating to the administration of special rates, locality rates and retained rates.

The new rules now treat locality rates and special rates in a consistent way, resulting in pay rules that are more rational and fair,

according to OPM officials. Also, because the act became effective May 1, the new pay administration rules must be made effective retroactive to that date.

A few of the key changes made by the act and OPM's regulations, and some of their resulting impact to the workforce include:


◆Locality rate (basic pay plus locality pay), instead of just basic pay, is now considered in applying various pay-setting rules such as maximum payable rate, promotion and pay retention. As a result, non-GS employees moving to GS positions may be set in a lower step and fewer

actions will result in pay retention since locality rate is higher than basic pay.

◆Locality rates will be taken into account when applying pay retention rules. Locality pay will no longer be paid on top of a retained rate. Retained rates will be compared to the highest applicable rate range (as adjusted to include any locality or special rate supplement).

◆Entitlement to a special salary rate ceases if the employee is entitled to a higher locality rate. As a result, even though an employee receives the same total salary, the base rate is less and full locality is paid.

Since retention allowances approved prior to May 1 were computed as a percentage of an underlying special salary rate rather than the underlying basic rate, the amount of any retention allowance will also be reduced when the special rate entitlement ceases. The reduction of retention allowances is not subject to appeal.

More information on pay administration rules is available at www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2005/2005-10.asp. Employees with questions should contact the local civilian personnel office. (*Air Force Personnel News*) 

Hot breakfast



U.S. Air Force photo by Alan Boedeker

Ed Wenger of the Forest Service from Florence, Wis., receives a hot breakfast from Mexican army soldier Cabo Toledo here Sept. 9. The unit is the first Mexican military unit to operate on U.S. soil since 1846 and the first Mexican disaster aid mission to America. They were here to help provide support to Hurricane Katrina evacuees. Evacuees were housed, initially, in an aircraft hangar and then five buildings in the San Antonio area were opened and utilized as temporary shelters. Children evacuated from hurricane ravedged areas are already enrolled in local area schools.

Permanent ID Cards

Permanent United States Uniformed Services Identification (ID) cards are now available for all eligible Uniformed Services family members and surviving spouses, age 75 and older.

Currently, Uniformed Services retirees are the only persons who are eligible to receive a permanent ID card. Beneficiaries with a valid ID card should obtain the new permanent ID card within 90 days of expiration.

For more information about the permanent retiree ID card or DEERS enrollment, beneficiaries may visit the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil/deers or call the TRICARE Regional Office (TRO) North (1-877-874-2273), the TRO South (1-800-444-5445), or TRO West (1-888-874-9378).

Overseas beneficiaries can call 1-888-777-8343. Beneficiaries can also find the nearest ID card issuing facility at www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home.

New tech school Airmen evacuate too

Strapped to the floor, about 200 airmen escape Keesler on a C-17.

By Senior Airman Jonathan Simmons
Wing Public Affairs

When Hurricane Katrina struck areas of the Gulf Coast in Louisiana and Mississippi, military members were not exempt from its effects.

Fifty Air Force civil engineering apprentice trainees, including two assigned to the 307th REDHORSE here, were evacuated from Gulf Port Naval Air Station, Miss.

“When we realized the storm was coming, we started setting up cots in the shelters,” said Airman 1st Class Michael Garrison, an 18-year-old evacuee with the 307th REDHORSE. “After that, we packed and waited for the hurricane to hit.”

Airmen from the 366th Training Squadron’s civil engineering tech school, prepared shelters in warehouses at Gulf Port for civilians and military.

“The shelters were in warehouses with Navy Humvees and boats,” Airman Garrison said. “The military shelter was divided by service so that we could maintain accountability. We did accountability checks every couple hours.”

Then it started. The rain came down and the wind began to blow.

“It was calm inside the military shelter,” Airman Garrison said. “We watched the rain through an open door, until it got bad. After we closed the doors, we could still hear the wind hissing through the vents.”

When the storm passed, they opened the doors and looked around. Shortly thereafter they received the word that the base was non-mission-capable and they would not be going back to school immediately.

“We were disappointed because, once we knew we were safe, we

were mostly thinking about getting back to school, graduating and going home and to our bases,” Airman Garrison said. “In the shelter we slept, watched a movie and studied.”

After the all-clear was given, the students worked cleaning up the area, doing kitchen duty and helped evacuate elderly veterans from their homes.

Within hours, the students became evacuees themselves. They climbed aboard buses with one duffle bag of belongings each, and headed for Keesler Air Force Base, Miss.

“We didn’t realize the full extent of the damage until the bus ride to Biloxi (Keesler),” said Airman Garrison, a highway billboard with a metal base, was bent at a 45-degree angle.

Trees snapped off three feet above the ground...trees more than 1 ½ feet in diameter.

From Keesler, the students floor-loaded on a C-17 and headed to Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. They sat in rows and used cargo straps as seat belts.

Airman Garrison recalls the reception at Sheppard as very warm. A number of Sheppard’s Airmen, officers and enlisted, were there to greet them and welcome them to a safe haven. The student evacuees stepped off the bus singing their notorious “Stop, look and listen!” squadron cadence. After




Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mike Buytas

Students with the 366th and other Training Squadrons were evacuated to Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, aboard a C-17 Globemaster III, Sept. 1. More than 2400 students and non essential personnel were evacuated from Keesler and the surrounding area because of Hurricane Katrina’s aftermath.

a night there, it was off to their hometowns via commercial air.

“I was one of the first to leave (from Sheppard),” Airman Garrison said. “It was hard to leave the guys from the Det. They’re my buddies, we’re a team. Through the whole thing we all had a sense of stress, but there were volunteers for every request.”

While awaiting word as to whether his tech school will be postponed, relocated or if he will be reclassified, Airman Garrison now reports for duty at his unit here and is looking forward to his Air Force future. 



Note Worthy



Kenneth Burton, LRS
 Russell Brashars, 307th RHS
 Peter Garcia, CES
 Nicolette Palmer, 74th APS
 *Diana T., MXG
 *Valdez, Alberto, LRS



Julie R. Begley, TRS
 Rodolfo A. Canales, 74th APS
 Joe Cavazos, III, MXS
 Kevin A. Holt, 74th APS
 Michael Irizarry, 307th RHS
 Raymond Najera, AES
 Betty A. Oglesby, OSF
 Vicente R. Palacios, 307th RHS
 James R. Segrist, AES
 Alfredo Trejo, JR. 307th RHS
 *Lena Smith-Denham, 74th APS



*Leroy Beck III, AMXS
 Oscar L. Boddin, MOS
 Sam H. Brander, 68th AS
 Matthew Buckley, AMXS
 Corey Y. Davison, AES
 Timothy M. Dziak, LRS

Thomas R. Garcia, MOS
 Frank V. Jimenez, AES
 Mary Killingsworth, AES
 Freddie J. Kondoff, 74th APS
 Richard R. Lujan, CES
 Carlos Medrano, AMXS
 Nkenge Pruden, 68th AS
 *Eric Solis, Eric, MXS
 Shane Swenson, LRS
 *Montalvo, Rolando, MXS



Arnold Villarreal, AMXS
 Marisela Ayala, SFS
 Chad Battreal, 307th RHS
 Alejandro Castillo, MXS
 Rolando Garcia, 307th RHS
 Francisco Grijalva I, CES
 Layoya Huff, 307th RHS
 Sophia Licon, AES
 Edmundo Macias II, OSF
 John Martinez, Jr., AES
 Nicola Marler, TRS
 Deandra Mathews, TRS
 Amanda McDonald, SVF
 Joseph Pettit, 68th AS
 Robyn Reynolds, MXS
 Michael Shedrock, CES
 Jennifer Stevenson, MDS
 Jason Strack, 74th APS
 Bethaney Trapp, AW
 Joe Valdez, 68th AS
 Danny Wagaman, AMXS
 Douglas Warden, AES

Latasha Williams, 74th APS
 Aileen Ybarra I, MDS
 Mario Aguilar, AES



Pedro Alvarez, 307th RHS
 Belinda Barrera, SVF
 Floyd Black, 74th APS
 Roland Castro, CES
 Nathan Davis, 26th APS
 David Fink, 68th AS
 Jessica Gonzalez, AES
 Steven Haddad, 74th APS
 Jerra Hoke, MDS
 Raul Jacobo, CES
 Winston Jones, AES
 Michael Marotta, 68th AS
 E. Montemayor, 74th APS
 Coby Motsenbocker, 307th RHS
 William Opoku, AW
 E. Ortiz-Torres, 74th APS
 Christopher Pierson, CES
 Corin Reyes-Hunley, MDS
 Alberto Rivero, 26th APS
 Davi Jo Todd, AMDS
 James Turnbow, 307th RHS
 Laura Stutheit, SVF
 Jennifer Cerda, 26th APS



Roberto Flores, CES
 LeJuan Littleton, CES
 Satavia Hopkins, OSF



Pricilla Moreno, OSF

Col. John C. Fobian, 433rd Airlift Wing commander, would like to congratulate the following Airman, NCO and Senior NCO award winners for the 3rd Quarter. The competition was keen and all personnel are to be commended for a job well done. The winners in the respective categories are:

Airman Category: Senior Airman
 Rolando Valdez, 433rd MXS

NCO Category: Tech. Sgt. Charles R.
 Garcia, 433rd MOS

SNCO Category: Senior Master Sgt. Diane C.
 Dean, 433rd MOS



Fifth Annual Hispanic Heritage Committee Scholarship recipients:

Angela Maldonado - Daughter of Tech. Sgt. Benito Maldonado 433rd MXS
 Senior Airman Vianca Cantu – 433rd MDS, Information Management

**Current PEP Promotions*

Reservists reveal heroic traits

Med-evac crews all heart in flight, on ground

By Maj. Ann Peru Knabe

440th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Forty-eight hours after Hurricane Katrina slammed the Gulf Coast, Capt. Frances Robertson was ready to go save lives. She reported for duty at 6 a.m., realized the gravity of the situation. Captain Robertson called her mother and asked her to watch her kids, warning her it might be several days before she came home.

During the next two days, Captain Robertson flew several aeromedical evacuation missions out of Louis Armstrong International Airport, New Orleans, rescuing critically ill patients.

A flight nurse with the 433rd Aero-medical Evacuation Squadron, Captain Robertson is one of hundreds of reserve and guard members who volunteered to serve during the aftermath of the hurricane.

“These are amazing citizen soldiers,” said Col. Delbert Lewis, 433rd Operations Group Commander, referring to the 433rd AES. “Ninety-eight percent of these volunteers were activated for Iraq or Afghanistan, and here they are volunteering again.”

Most of these “double-volunteers” are professional healthcare workers or emergency responders in their civilian jobs. Their civilian employers also feel the pinch, because San Antonio area hospitals are experiencing a high intake volume with hurricane victims.

But these citizen soldiers with multiple skills are essential amid crisis.

“One of our med techs works for the San Antonio Police Department,” said Captain Robertson. “He was a terrific resource in evaluating security risks at the airport in New Orleans. He quickly assessed the security risks, and we were better able to focus on the mission of saving lives.”

A short time later the C-130 took off from New Orleans with 44 acute care patients stacked five litters high.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Tudor AFRC News Service

Senior Airman Portia Payton, a medical technician from Wilford Hall Medical Center helped prepare patients for evacuation from New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Many had never flown before and the stress induced by fear complicated their health issues.

On the first medical evacuation flight out of New Orleans, Captain Robertson also took a “shopping list” from medical workers on the ground at the airport. The list included fresh water, IV fluids, litters and narcotics.

Assessing the workers’ needs was easier than diagnosing patients. Captain Robertson knew they had to think smart and act quickly. Lives were at stake.

“Because people were responding with great urgency in a crisis situation, most of the patients lacked accurate medical documentation,” said Captain Robertson. “We tried to create some facsimile of a manifest, and diagnosed needs on the spot as best we could.”

Acute care patients included quadriplegics, people with organ transplants, respiratory failure and patients on kidney dialysis. They ranged from small children to the elderly.

Because of the tight space on the aircraft, the aeromed team needed to

remain flexible and agile. When one patient’s oxygen level plummeted to 79 percent (ideally it should be close to 100 percent), Captain Robertson climbed on top of the litters to retrieve an oxygen mask. The reservist quickly earned the nickname “Spider Woman.”

Another patient, a young boy with Cerebral Palsy, was terrified when the plane engines started. Captain Robertson tried everything to calm the boy, fearing he would hurt himself by sitting up and hitting his head on the litter above him. When all else failed, she took an unconventional approach, and asked the boy’s mother if she would hold him instead of having him lie on the litter. The child settled down on his mother’s lap and was peaceful throughout the rest of the flight.

Later, as patients deplaned, Captain Robertson talked to her key contacts at Lackland about the shopping list.

“Amazingly, all the bureaucratic red tape was removed from the process,

(See Heroic hearts, Page 12)



News Bites...

LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE

Active-duty Airmen, some reservists, appropriated-fund civilian employees, retirees and qualified family members can still apply for the Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program. The program can help federal employees defray the costs of in-home care, nursing-home care, or assisted-living facilities for people no longer able to perform normal daily activities because of chronic-health conditions.

Call (800) 582-3337 weekdays 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. EDT for more information or visit the program's Web site online at www.ltcfeds.com.

HEALTH, FAMILY READINESS LIBRARY

Service members, their families and health-care providers have a new online Defense Department resource for deployment health issues.

The DOD's Deployment Health Risk Communication Working Group and the Joint Task Force for Family Readiness Education on

Deployments have joined together to create the Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library.

The online library includes fact sheets, guides and other products on a wide variety of health topics.

The topic listing was based on feedback from service members, their families and health-care providers. Information is added to the site as new topics and areas of concern emerge.

The Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library is located at: <http://deploymenthealthlibrary.fhp.osd.mil/home.jsp>

ONLINE RECORDS

The National Personnel Records Center has the following website for veterans to access their records of military service, documented on their DD Form 214: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>

This is helpful when a veteran needs a copy of the DD-214 for employment purposes, VA home loan, government security clearance or for a spouse to

apply for burial benefits.

Military veterans and next of kin may now use the new online system to request documents. Others must still complete the Standard Form 180 which can be downloaded from the web site.

HURRICANE TRAVEL CASH ADVANCE

Finance provides cash TDY travel advances to active duty DoD military members, civilian employees and dependents, who came to Lackland AFB, for safe haven from Hurricane Katrina.

Please direct affected personnel to Lackland's Finance Customer Service on the second floor of Building 5616, Room 223, across from Arnold Hall. Customer service hours are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

TSP ACTIONS DELAYED

Due to Hurricane Katrina, TSP operations at the National Finance Center in New Orleans are suspended. The backup site is operational but, they

cannot process paper forms or requests (or confirmation of recent requests).

www.tsp.gov is updated as information is available.

The Thrift Board strongly encourages members to use the website and TSP-assigned PIN to process transactions.

The call center number is (877) 968-3778 and can be used to gain information not currently available on the web. Continue to mail loan payments to the St. Louis, Mo. address on the Loan Payment Coupon form, also available on the website.

KATRINA AFFECTED RETIREE UPDATE

Military retirees or annuitants who have relocated or changed their banking information after Hurricane Katrina must contact the Defense Finance and Accounting Service as soon as possible, DFAS officials said.

To find out more, call (800) 321-1080 Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Eastern time. Have your current address, banking data and beneficiary information available.

REMEMBER the ALAMO WING

DID - you - KNOW

The Alamo Wing's Combat Logistics Support Squadron, was originally commissioned in 1966 and became the 433rd CLSS in 1992. The Squadron was decommissioned October 1st 2005.

“Things do not change; we change.”
- Henry David Thoreau

Who's Who in the...



Alamo Wing



Photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Staedler 440th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Can you hear me now? -- Lt. Col. Christine Hassen, a nurse with the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, finds a cell phone signal in the New Orleans International Airport. Cell phone service was the only service and was spotty after the Hurricane



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott Mathews 916th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Load-up! -- Tech Sgt. Art Reyes is a loadmaster with the 68th Airlift Squadron. Sergeant Reyes was preparing to load a C-5 Galaxy with relief supplies bound for hurricane ravaged New Orleans.



Photo by Senior Airman Jesse Hernandez

Reflections in time -- Senior Airman Rafael De La Rosa is cutting a piece of aluminum sheet metal on a Band Saw to fabricate a C-5A part. (With all PPE safety equipment on)

Heroic hearts..... continued from Page 9

and I walked out with everything on the wish-list for the New Orleans (crew),” said the nurse. “People came together and we were able to deliver critical supplies to the airport on our next flight in.”

Other aeromedics report stories of heroes and hope on every flight. “Certain things touched my heart,” said Capt. Jennifer Clar, a nurse with the 146th Airlift Wing, and Air National Guard unit based in California’s Channel Islands. “Normally I am always composed and professional, but for some reason I was completely touched by an old man who clung to his little dog. It just hit me, this is all he has left ... only his dog. The man had lost everything else in life,” she explained. “I had never cried before on a mission,” said the nurse who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On another flight, a patient with mental illness screamed in fear at every little noise and bump. Medication didn’t help, and she started to scare other passengers with her fearful shrieking. When all else failed, Tech. Sgt. Raymond Caldwell, a medical technician with the 146th Airlift Wing, laid next to her on the floor of the C-130, and held her hand the rest of the flight.


His compassion had a ripple effect, and as the woman’s screams silenced, the rest of the passengers sighed in relief.

Captain Robertson said there was the heart of a hero on every mission. “We were dealing with people who have lost everything, but we had professional medical crews that



Photo by Major Elena Milford

Staff Sergeant Heather Gleason, right, a medical technician, and Capt. Felix Alicea, a flight nurse, both with the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation, flew to the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Air Port as part of the rescue operation, Joint Task Force Katrina. The entire aeromedical evacuation operation took five days and incorporated active-duty, Guard and Reserve members from units across the Air Force. The medical evacuation command and control functions were located at Kelly Field and headed by the 433rd AES.

cared more than anything. This is the face of the Reserve, and this is the face of the total force. 

Editor’s note: In the first week, the 433rd AES evacuated more than 1,000 people on 125 aircraft. During the same week, the 433rd Airlift Control Flight delivered 317,337 pounds of humanitarian supplies.

UTA SCHEDULE

October

A UTA Oct. 1-2

B UTA Oct. 15-16

November

A UTA Nov. 5-6

B UTA Nov. 19-20

December

A UTA Dec. 3-4

B UTA Dec. 10-11

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