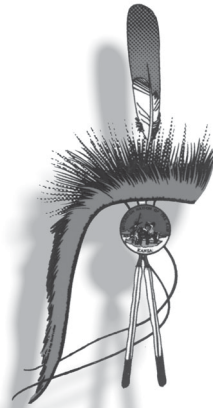


# KANZA



# SPIRIT

## 931ST AIR REFUELING GROUP

### Inside

- IMA returns from fighting in Afghanistan **Page 3**
- Spirit Spotlight **Page 6**
- Base movies for UTA **Page 8**

December, 2002

McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas

Vol. 7, No. 12

## Holiday Happenings

### Operation SANTA

Nominations for 4-, 6- and 7-year-old boys and 4-,5-,6-,9- and 13-year-old girls have been submitted for this year's holiday donation campaign. Members are encouraged to donate new toys for the above ages by the end of the December UTA. For more information, call Cody Smith at (316) 759-3683.

### Children's Holiday Party

All children of 931st ARG airmen are invited to a holiday party Dec. 8 at the 18th ARS conference room (in lower level of Bldg. 850) from 1 to 3 p.m. The party will feature an appearance by Santa Claus, crafts and treats.



# Fueling the Fight



Tech. Sgt. Marlin G. Zimmerman

## 18th ARS supporting OEF day and night

The sun sets behind a KC-135 Stratotanker at an operating location in support of the U.S. Central Command execution of Operation Enduring Freedom.

**Staff Sgt. Jason Schaap**  
*931st Public Affairs*

While the bombs land and the bullets fly, members of the 18th Air Refueling Squadron continue to do their part by providing fuel in support of the many missions of Enduring Freedom.

Working in tandem with active duty and guard crews as part of the 384th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron, the

18th is supporting the mission for at least 12 months. "I'm proud to be doing this. It's the wave of the future,"

said Command Pilot Maj. Glenn "GP" Powers. "Reserve crews train for this. This is one of the ways we employ what we train for."

"It's a real live breathing example of the total force in action," said Lt. Col. Ray Kozak, 18th ARS operations officer. "It feels good

See **18th ARS**, Page 4



# KANZA SPIRIT

931ST AIR REFUELING GROUP

Vol. 7, No. 12

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931st Air Refueling  
Group

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## Deadlines

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## Legal info

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Contents of the *Kanza Spirit* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of the Air Force.

Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 931st Public Affairs Office. All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.

# Spend holiday time with family, track readiness during work hours

Col. Jeffery Glass  
*Group Commander*

Hopefully everyone had a safe and Happy Thanksgiving. With the onset of winter and colder temperatures and the possibility of snow and ice everyone needs to remember now more than ever safety is critical. Give yourself some extra time to get to work or other appointments you may have.

Our deployments are continuing and once again I would like to thank the dedication of the men and women of the 931st. My thanks also go out to all of those that are at the aircraft when our warriors return.

Many of our boom operators have given up extra time to download the aircraft. Last month we had a crew delayed a day and the return was on a Saturday. Once again the 931st amazed

me with their support.

About fifteen members of our organization showed up on their day off to welcome home and help our returning heroes.

I ask each and every member of the 931st to personally track your readiness items. We have all been in this business a long time and each of us knows what we need to accomplish to remain deployable.

All of our unit deployment monitors are working hard to make sure each of us have up to date shots, appropriate chemical training and other additional training. Please help them, so they can help you.

My holiday reception is scheduled for 3 p.m. the Saturday of the December UTA. All group members are invited to stop by for some food and holiday cheer.

With the upcoming holiday season, everyone needs to take some time off and spend it with your loved ones.

Family support is the foundation that keeps our unit strong. My hope is that everyone has an enjoyable and safe holiday season.



## March UTA dates changed

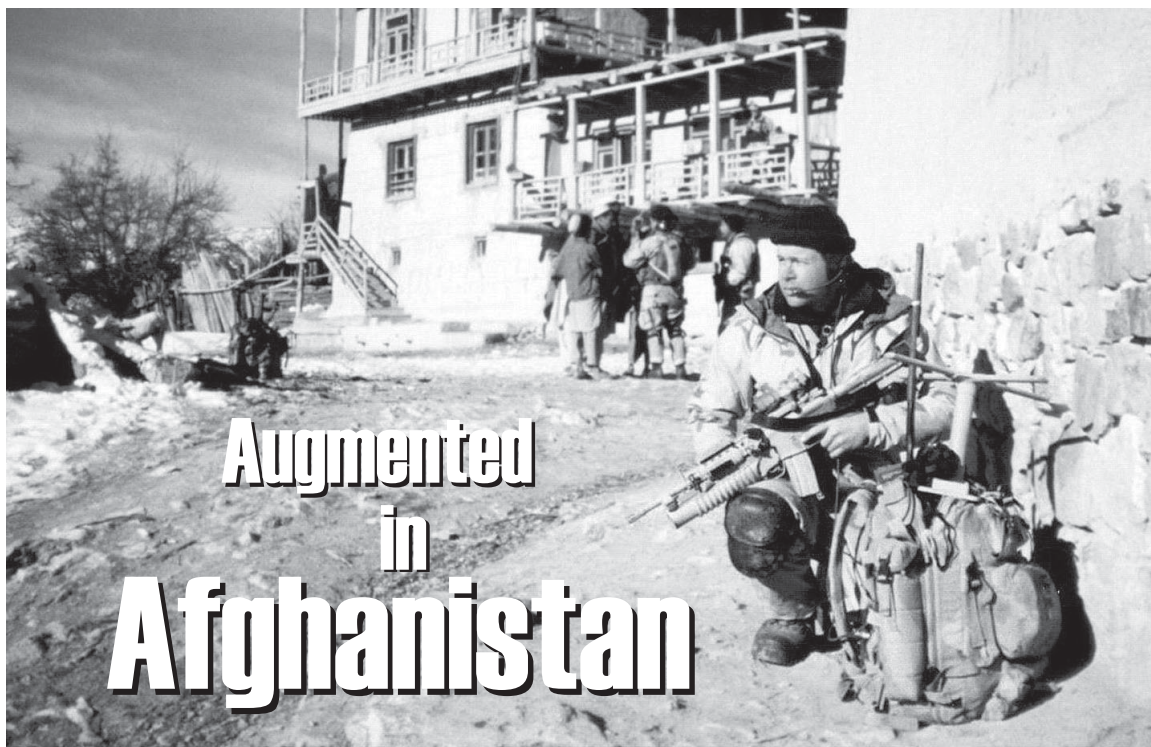
The March unit training assembly has been rescheduled from the 8-9 to 29-30.

## UTA SCHEDULE

Next UTA: Dec. 7-8  
Jan. 11-12  
Feb. 8-9

The *Kanza Spirit* is mailed each month to all 931st Air Refueling Group members on file with Personnel Systems. If you are not receiving your copy each month, check with your orderly room or administration section to ensure your address on file is correct.





Tech. Sgt. Jim Hotaling, an Air Force Reserve combat controller, crouches against a building in an undisclosed Afghanistan village. The individual mobilization augmentee spent five months in the war-torn country tracking down Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters.

## *IMA returns with stories from front lines of war*

**Mike Molina**

*Air Reserve Personnel Center Public Affairs*

An agonizing pain tears through Tech. Sgt. Jim Hotaling's body. His legs and feet strain from the 140-pound pack, which digs into his shoulders and back.

His mind tells him to stop, but the pride that goes with being the only American in his five-man team won't allow him to quit. Knowing that the others want to test their strength against the "American" motivates his every step. He trudges on as the other members of the team, who are also lugging 140-pound packs, continue their way up the 2,300-foot, near-vertical ascent.

When one of the others finally says, "Let's rest," Hotaling lets out a sigh of relief, as he plops on the cold, rocky mountainside somewhere in Afghanistan.

Hotaling is a combat controller in the Air Force

Reserve. He's a long way from his home in Tacoma, Wash., and a world away from his life as a Washington State trooper, husband and father.

Six months before Sept. 11, 2001, he was asked to be part of the Reserve's individual mobilization augmentee program for CCTs.

"They called and asked me if I would like to jump, dive and blow things up on the weekends," Hotaling said. "Sure, why not go back and be with the fellas again?"

**"One thing I wish I could make people understand is that there are people over there who would kill every single person in this room only for the simple fact that you're Americans."** --Tech Sgt. Jim Hotaling to a 200-plus audience as a guest speaker at the Air Reserve Personnel Center

What a great job."

By accepting the job, Hotaling became the first and only CCT in the IMA program.

What was once a weekend job became all too real

*See IMA, Page 7*





## 18th ARS, from page 1

to be doing something for Enduring Freedom.”

They are also working the same tempo and types of missions as everyone else regardless of service type. “We aren’t just seen as part time help, but as equal members of the operation,” said Lt. Col. Clayton Childs, 18th ARS commander. “They are going to great lengths to make the schedules fair and equitable.”

So far, the 18th has been able to support the rotations entirely with volunteers, something they hope to continue through the entire period they are forward deployed.

18th ARS Pilot Maj. Scott Dickmeyer deployed in August for a month and was very supportive of the

approach the 18th took in filling volunteer slots. “I’m very happy we were able to fill the schedule with volunteers,” said Dickmeyer. “I let them know when I wouldn’t be available. I was told around May or June when I would be going and so I was able to go to my employer and family and plan on my departure and return.”

The 18th ARS did their best to maximize the volunteerism of their folks by letting the reservists submit dates that they would be available so that traditional reservists could plan deployments with their employers and their families.

“I felt it was a great part of the assignment. They asked for people to volunteer for two different periods that they could go,” said Master Sgt. Troy Lawson 18th ARS boom operator. “Seven months later they held their word. This allowed me to plan with

my family and my employer when I was going and when I was returning.”

Unsure of what type of facilities they would be deploying to, several crewmembers were surprised at how much the camp had to offer. “The camp was excellent. The people who setup the camp have taken nothing, and made something out of it,” said Lawson.

“We walked into a base that was already running smoothly,” said Kozak.

The camp was also set up with many activities to help fight the boredom while they weren’t supporting the mission. “They have a really nice gym, including a nice weight lifting area. There were several big screen TV’s, and a big movie list to choose from,” said Staff Sgt. Amber Ernst, 18th ARS boom operator.

Ernst, who flew on the 384th’s 2500th sortie and is a veteran of sev-

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(Left) A Norwegian F-16 is refueled by an 18th ARS KC-135 crew during an Operation Enduring Freedom mission. (Below) Like many deployed service members, 18th ARS crews call tent city their new home while supporting OEF at a Central Command location. Some crew members said they were pleasantly surprised to find amenities like a gym, good food, and large screen TVs at the site.

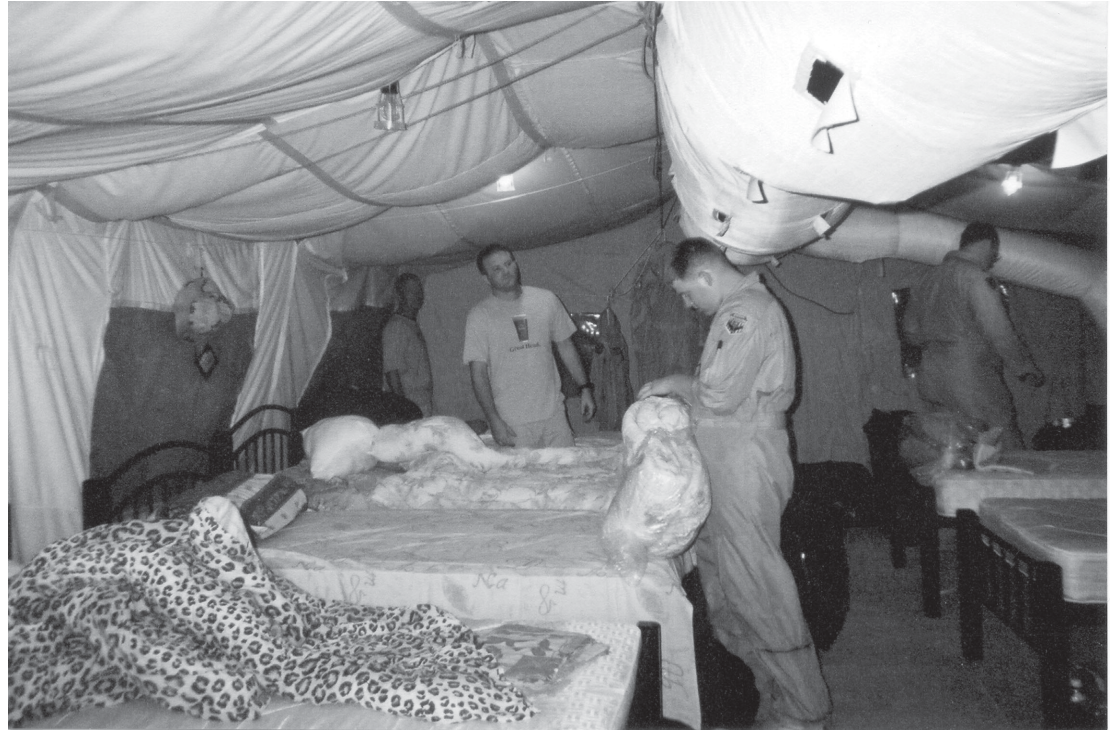


rotations, is getting ready to deploy on another 30-day rotation.

"I went on the first rotation and what I liked the least. The food was OK. We had steak at least once a week. They work really hard and we have at least four meals a day," said Norris. "The 30-day rotation was just about the right amount of time."

Most importantly, said Childs, the biggest benefit for members of the 18th ARS sent to deployment, is the relief given to the home-duty. "When I was there it made me feel that my 30 days bought an additional person a couple weeks back home," said Childs.

As of Nov. 16, approximately 75 crew members from the 18th flew 2,500 sorties, totaling 1193 hours while refueling 8,270,000 pounds of fuel. The 18th is expected to continue its support through July 2003.



(Above) Senior Airman Chris Norris, 18th ARS boom operator, unpacks some liner inside his temporary home while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Talking to Norris is 2nd. Lt. Josh Thompson, 18th ARS pilot. (Below) 18th ARS members commemorate flying the 2,500th refueling sortie for the 384th Air Expeditionary Group, a Central Command unit comprised of airmen from throughout the Air Force.





### ***NCO/SNCO Ceremony scheduled for Dec UTA***

A non-commissioned and staff non-commissioned officer induction ceremony is scheduled for the Sunday of the December Unit Training Assembly at 11 a.m. The ceremony will be held in the auditorium of building 1185.

### ***Send holiday messages to troops online***

An online version of the Operation Dear Abby holiday letter-writing campaign has been established. Anyone wishing to send a message to members of all service branches may log on to the site.

Troops can read any of the messages online, and then sort them by branch of military service and by the state from which they were sent. To ensure members with limited Internet access are able to read the

messages, a system has been established to hand out hard copies. To send a message, log on to: [www.operationdearabby.net](http://www.operationdearabby.net)

### ***NCO/SNCO Packages Due***

Nominations for non-commissioned and staff non-commissioned officer of the first quarter of fiscal year 2003 are due to Tech. Sgt. Pat Johnson in the Military Support Flight no later than the close of business of the December Unit Training Assembly.

### ***Lodging opens for holidays***

Military identification card holders are eligible through Jan. 31 to make Space Available reservations at the Air Capital Inn for up to two weeks. Reservations must be made two weeks prior to the date needed. Call (316) 759 6999 or 1-888-AFLODGE to make reservations.

### ***Group feedback program to be implemented***

A new Suggestion and Feedback program is being implemented at the group to give all members an opportunity to be heard and understood. Suggestions and/or recommendations for improvement, as well as comments about what makes the unit successful are welcome.

Forms and boxes to put them in will be placed on each floor of building 850 and near the Civil Engineering and Aero Medicine Flight orderly rooms.

Any and all ideas are welcome, especially suggestions to fix recognized problems.

One of these concerns and the outcome will be featured monthly in the Commanders Corner of the *Kanza Spirit*.

All other concerns will be addressed by phone and/or e-mail.

## **SPRIT SPOTLIGHT**



### **Senior Airman Benny Acosta**

*931st Operations Support  
Flight*

**This month's selectee is a New York City native who has been in the Air Force for nearly four years.**

**Job title:** Computer Technician

**Civilian job:** Computer Technician

**Favorite way to relax:** Tinkering with my computer

**Easiest way to annoy me:** Lie

**Most influential person in my life:** Randy Ford (My teacher)

**What I'm reading now:** The Tao of Gung Fu

**What I'm listening to now:** Ambient Jazz

**If I won \$1 million, I would:** never work again

## CONGRATULATIONS

**Senior Airman Mindy Whiting-18th ARS**  
Completed Airman Leadership School

**Tech Sgt. Art Shamburger-18th ARS**  
Completed NCO Academy  
via correspondence

**Staff Sgt. Darin Elliott-931st AGS**  
Completed NCO Academy

**Airman Basic Nabil Abdulkader-931st CES**  
Completed Engineering 3-level school

**Master Sgt. Barbara West-931st CES**  
Completed Staff NCO Academy  
via correspondence

**Staff Sgt. Ben Ashment-931st AGS**  
Completed Crew Chief 7-level school

**IMA, from page 2**

after 9/11. Hotaling was activated days after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. He was assigned to the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron at McChord Air Force Base, Wash., where he spent eight weeks training.

By November 2001, he was in Afghanistan on the front lines of the war on terrorism. He went days without food or a shower and made snow cones out of flavored drink mix and snow to ease hunger pangs.

Hotaling's team nicknamed the mission of climbing the 2,300-foot cliff "the walk of death." The objective was to locate and observe a terrorist training facility. With such high stakes, the team could not afford being spotted by any villagers who might have wandered along. So, the safest way to avoid detection was to climb the cliff where few people dare to travel.

"It's not the X Games or anything like that, where you've got safeties and ropes and little helmets and things like that," Hotaling said.

"It's do or die. It's a tough thing to do, but in a war it has to be done."

In another situation, Hotaling and his "mates" drove all-terrain vehicles while being chased by a group of enemy four-wheel-drive trucks mounted with 50-caliber machine guns.

"I was able to get a Navy P-3 sub hunter that just happened to be in the area to help me out," Hotaling said. "He has some eyeballs up there, and he was literally able to tell me to turn left, turn right, go down this creek bed, stop here. It allowed us to break contact with the enemy and allowed me to get the close-air support role going. We were able to bring two of my friends from the USS Stennis aboard – two F-18s – to take care of that problem for us."

Hotaling also went on stealth missions gathering evidence, investigating caves, capturing one of the top 10 most wanted Taliban leaders, being surrounded by 300 to 400 "screaming, angry Afghans," and storming Al Qaeda safehouses with as few as five men. He called in several air strikes, including the one that

destroyed the second largest Al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan, a result of the reconnaissance mission that took him on "the walk of death."

During Operation Anaconda when the CH-47 helicopter crashed, his team was positioned atop a mountain some 3 kilometers from the fierce fighting.

"As that was happening, I could see the enemy forces in the valley and on the backside of the south side of the mountain moving their way up toward the crash site to reinforce the bunkers that they had on the high ground," Hotaling said. "I got with Sgt. (Gabe) Brown, and we coordinated the appropriate air support.

"Me and Gabe fought that day with close-air support and actually started to take a pretty good toll on the enemy, to the point where they were not reinforcing at all. The surviving Rangers on top took the bunker and were successful at the top."

After sharing his combat experiences, Hotaling said, "That feeling we had on 9/11 – keep it burning because we are not done."

### **Aerosmith Concert**

Dec. 6 – Aerosmith is scheduled to perform 7:30 p.m. at the Kansas Coliseum. Tickets range \$34.50 to \$64.50 at Select-A-Seat locations.

### **Illuminations**

Dec. 6 and 7 – A holiday lights event from 6-9 p.m. with accompaniment by the Music Theatre for Young People at Botanica, 701 N. Amidon. Cost is \$5 for adults, \$2.50 for children 12 and under. Call 264-0448 for more information.

### **Thunder Hockey**

Dec. 7 – Wichita Thunder is scheduled against the Oklahoma City Blazers at 7:30 p.m. at the Kansas Coliseum. Tickets range \$5-15 at Select-A-Seat locations.

### **Placido Domingo in concert**

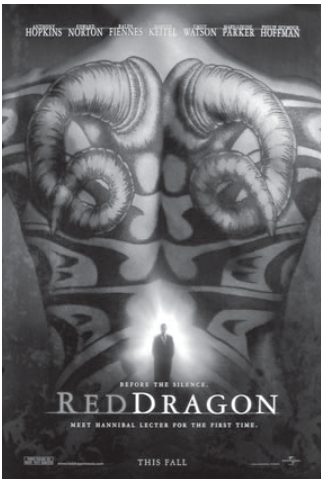
Dec. 7 – Placido Domingo is scheduled to appear with soprano Veronica Villarroel 6 p.m at Century II Convention Hall. Tickets are \$50, \$100, \$150, \$200 and \$300 and are

available at the box office, by calling 262-8054, or online at [www.ticketweb.com](http://www.ticketweb.com). Black-tie dinner and dance with Domingo follows. Tickets \$600 (premier concert seating included), by calling Wichita Grand Opera at 683-3444.

### **Twisted Christmas**

Dec. 6 and 7 – Holiday musical-comedy at 8 p.m. at Cabaret Old Town, 412 ½ E. Douglas. Show is \$18, add \$10 for dinner. Call 265-4400 for reservations.

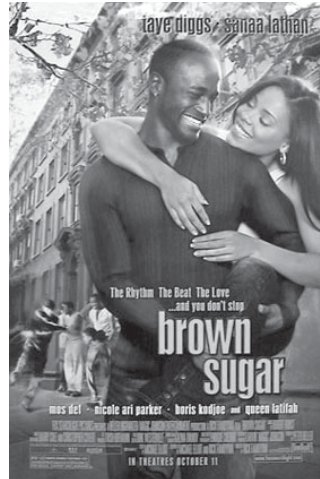
## At The Movies



### **RED DRAGON**

**FRIDAY, DEC 6 7pm**  
**2 hrs. 6 min.** Edward Norton is an FBI agent looking for help from cannibalistic Anthony Hopkins in the original story of the Hannibal Lecter series. Ralph Fiennes is a serial killer who likens himself to the subject of a William Blake painting.

**MPAA Rating:** R for violence, grisly images, language, some nudity and sexuality



### **BROWN SUGAR**

**SATURDAY, DEC 7 7pm**  
**1 hr. 48 min.** Taye Diggs and Sanaa Laathan are best friends exploring careers inside the world of hip-hop music. Meanwhile they rediscover each other 15 years after discovering hip-hop together as children.

**MPAA Rating:** PG-13 for sexual content and language

Movies are shown at the **McConnell Air Force Base Theater** and are subject to change. Admission is **\$2.25** for adults, **\$1.50** for children 12 and under.

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