

GULFWING

March 2006

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



Farewell Engineers, H-Models Fly Away

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General Emphasizes Importance of People

By Tech. Sgt. Michael Duhe
Senior Staff Writer

Brig. Gen. Harold Mitchell reinforced the importance of positive influence and mentoring to the 403rd Wing's Human Resources Development Council during a recent visit to the wing.

"A lot of us are in the Air Force today because someone influenced us," said General Mitchell, mobilization assistant to the commander of 18th Air Force. "Once we get good folks, we have to mentor them and have them recruit as well."

HRDC plays a key role in both, he told the group.

The general regularly speaks about the Air Force to a variety of groups – military, civilian, and "anybody who will listen," he said. He keeps an ear tuned for young people who show an interest in joining the Air Force, who will often wait around to ask him questions after he speaks.

He said it's not uncommon for him to recognize a "nugget" – a young per-

son who has what it takes to become an outstanding Airman. However, it takes more than just answering a young person's questions to help them determine whether or not the Air Force is the right choice for them.

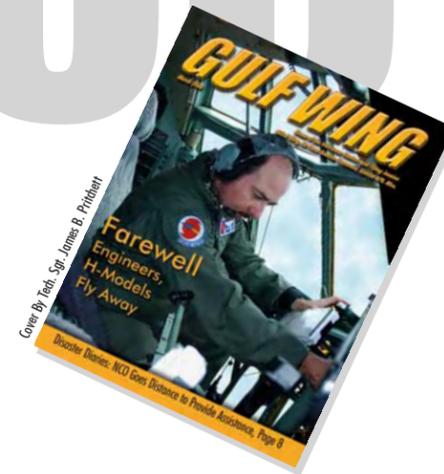
"In order to recruit folks, you have to go to where they are and gain their trust," he said. For example, churches are a good place to form relationships with members of the community. Annual conferences such as Women in Aviation and the Tuskegee Airmen Conference also offer opportunities to reach out to those interested in the Air Force.

"Go to conferences, get out in the community, ask a high schooler or a younger kid to job shadow you during a UTA," he advised. "The impression you make will go a long way."

General Mitchell said he especially enjoys speaking to young people, who are for the most part attentive and receptive to what he tells them. "Something I say might make a difference for them."



Brig. Gen. Harold Mitchell



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Tech. Sgt. Jim "Pepe" LaChute, a flight engineer with the Hurricane Hunters, conducts pre-flight checks before a training mission in 2003. Sergeant LaChute is among the group that heralded out the era of the flight engineer at Keesler.

Safety Note

Railroad tracks just outside Keesler and passing through surrounding communities have been repaired. Expect trains to begin using the rails again shortly. Heed signals and never park or stop on the the rails.

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Businessman Bring Opportunity to Gulf Coast

World War II veteran and businessman, Mr. Alex Parker, was in New York when he learned of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Knowing there were Airman stationed in the disaster area, he started thinking about ways to help. Recently, he visited the Coast and the wing to talk about ideas.

Disaster Diaries: NCO Goes Distance to Provide Assistance

His commander calls him a "quiet hero." Tech. Sgt. Sonny Parker, a network infrastructure technician with the 403rd Communications Flight, has earned the gratitude of many for his actions in the chaotic days following Hurricane Katrina.

Final H-Model Leaves for Willow Grove

Despite the devastating blows from Hurricane Katrina, Reservists of the 41st Aerial Port Squadron, including those who lost everything, continued their mission without a snag.

Maintainer Impresses Senior Leaders

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403rd Wing, AFRC, Keesler AFB, Miss. Volume 27, Issue 3

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One common question he gets from young people is, "How much money do you make?" The general offers them another perspective in answering that question – finding a job they'll enjoy doing.

"Let that drive you professionally," he tells them. "Let your profession be a labor of love."

Recruiting is a challenge today because of the war and misconceptions about the military, he said. Many parents are skeptical. Some people know nothing more about the military than what they've seen on TV and in the movies. Retention is also a challenge for Reserve units.

He offered words of advice for the wing's HRDC: "Set realistic goals and know what you're dealing with. Do the best you can and move forward." He also praised the efforts of the 403rd HRDC, saying, "I'm encouraged by what I see here. I know that Gen. Moss supports it."

In light of the hardships on wing members still recovering from Hurricane Katrina, he also had this advice: "Keep an eye on each other. Not everybody cries, but we all have pain."

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Master Sgt. Joseph F. Wozniak, 2AX7X
Senior Airman Angela D. Wuest, 2A651B
Senior Airman Michael M. Young, 2T251

Pay Date
March 17

(Right) Mr. Robert Goodwin, Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force, recently toured a C-130J with Brig. Gen. Rich Moss and a group of Hurricane Hunters from the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron. Mr. Goodwin, who traveled here to discuss Force Manning issues, personally thanked the Hurricane Hunters and the rest of the 403rd Wing for their hard work this hurricane season. "I appreciate what you're doing, and with all you're dealing with right now with your homes and family, I imagine it must be hard," he said.



Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce



Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce



Courtesy Photo

(Left) Six reservists from the 96th Aerial Port Squadron, Little Rock AFB, Ark. recently returned home after two years activation in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. In January 2005, 68 squadron members were deactivated after one year of duty--these six volunteered for a second year of active Air Force service. The six aerial port members served in North Carolina, Germany, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. Pictured from left to right are: Tech. Sgt. Randall Branch, Staff Sgt. Raymond Jauch, Tech. Sgt. Margaret Kopchick, Tech. Sgt. Thomas Gregory, Tech. Sgt. Dung Truong and Master Sgt. Hugh Holloway. (Below) A practical joker adorned the lawn of the Headquarters temporary trailers with some of the implements one might find near a less well-kept abode of similar construction. The culprit is still unknown, though several suspects have been identified.



Photo by Jessica Brady, 403rd Public Affairs



Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce

(Above) Bird Bath: Aircraft assigned to the 403rd Wing's two flying squadrons now have a new purpose-built wash system designed specifically for the unit and its missions. In both airlift and weather reconnaissance missions, the 815th Airlift Squadron and 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, fly many hours over the Gulf of Mexico. Salt and moisture could lead to corrosion without a system for keeping the aircraft clean. The new wash blasts each J-model with 2,000 gallons of water per minute, emitting 150 pounds of pressure from each of its 40 nozzles.

(Left) Tech. Sgt. Sonny Parker and other Airmen from the 403rd Communications Squadron took advantage of an unscheduled training opportunity when they all suited up in their MOPP gear and installed network equipment in the trailers being used by the 403rd Wing headquarters. Sergeant Parker drills a hole in the floor of a trailer in order to bring voice and data cabling into temporary work space. The trailer was not pre-wired for communications services.

(Below) A group of Air Force and Army cadets from several colleges throughout Louisiana visited the 403rd Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., before heading to the Reserve Officer Association Winter Convention in Washington D.C. Brig. Gen. Rich Moss, Commander, 403rd Wing, personally took the group of 10 cadets, all officer selects, to the flightline for a tour of a C-130J aircraft.



Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce





Businessman Brings Opportunity to Gulf Coast

By Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce
Staff Writer

Alex Parker, a WWII veteran and multimillionaire New Yorker, was busy negotiating the final details of contributing his second WWII memorial to Arlington National Cemetery when Hurricane Katrina swept through and devastated the Gulf Coast. Mr. Parker's focus immediately

shifted from building memorials to finding ways to create job opportunities for the Gulf Coast. He shared possibilities of building clinics, clothing mills, a NASCAR track, and ideas like home and health insurance or services that give insurance advice to troops for free.

While meeting with civic leaders in

Mississippi, Mr. Parker was invited to spend a few days with the 403rd Wing at Keesler and visit with the troops he was trying so hard to help.

"I've reached a point in my life where I've done everything - now I want to help my soldiers," he said.

During his visit, he toured various squadrons and several of Keesler's

newest training simulators.

He also hopped aboard a C-130J aircraft for a low-level flight along the Gulf Coast, catching a glimpse of the devastation caused by Katrina.

He sees himself as an ordinary man who has been given an opportunity to make changes in the world.

"I have something that many people don't have . . . I make money, and I have a choice, and I want to help the soldiers," he said.

Although his investors told him he was crazy about taking a business expedition to Mississippi, he'd made up his mind.

"I represent hope and opportunity, and it's a wonderful feeling to be able to do that."

Behind the Man

While most of today's Air Force troops were still in diapers or weren't even born yet, Mr. Parker was capitalizing on business ventures.

After surviving 233 combat missions in WWII, the gung-ho New Yorker ended his military service and used his entrepreneurial skills to become a key player in the rejuvenation of Times Square in New York.

He once owned the skyscraper at One Times Square, famous for the New Year's Eve ball drop.

He used the building as a vehicle to drive the city block out of the slums by inviting famous people to stay there for free, which exploded into a media frenzy and over the years provided fuel for the enormous growth and fame of Times Square.

Before Katrina, Mr. Parker had just finished donating his first WWII memorial; an angel sculp-

ture entitled "Price of Freedom," to Arlington. It stands next to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

He had personally recruited a world renowned sculptor from St. Divine Church to create his angel statue.

John Metzler, superintendent of Arlington, in expressing appreciation to Mr. Parker said that it was his spirit that became the heart and soul of this magnificent work of art, and thanked him for helping remind the nation of the contributions to the world made by World War II veterans and their families.

After hearing that 5,000 people would view the statue each day Mr. Parker wasn't entirely pleased.

"Now you have to understand me and Times Square," he said. "Five thousand people - are what I eat for breakfast." So, he wanted to build more statues - specifically, 233, one for each combat mission he flew.

The "Flying Machine"

While visiting Keesler, Mr. Parker toured the Air Traffic Control School, including two new training simulators, as well as the C-130J flight simulator.

At the last stop of the tour, the flight simulator, Mr. Parker got his chance to fulfill a personal dream.

Before Katrina, he had pleaded to fly another combat mission with troops overseas. He knew they would come home safely because he had angels on his side.

"I always came back with everyone," he said. "We may have come back with one wing, but we always came back."

He wrote the President and Secretary of State, pleading to fly a combat mission with Airmen in Iraq. After dodging bullets and missiles for 233 missions, he was sure he would keep them safe.

"I said I wanted to fly so we'd all return safe, and I'd take Charlotte with me, in a helmet and a pair of shoes," he said. "So they think I'm crazy."

His request for flying another combat mission was rejected, but from that rejection also came the opportunity to come visit the 403rd Wing, which would eventually land him inside this flight simulator where he could finally fulfill this dream of landing safely.

Inside the simulator, Mr. Parker gripped the stick and eased the C-130J aircraft down to the runway for a successful landing.

After landing safely, Mr. Parker got up and said, "I can't wait to tell the boys back home."



(Left) Mr. Alex Parker flying his "234th mission" with the 815th Airlift Squadron.

(Facing Page) Parker gets behind the stick in the C-130J simulator.

Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce

Disaster Diaries

NCO Goes the Distance to Provide Assistance

By Tech. Sgt. Michael Duhe
Senior Staff Writer



Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce

Tech. Sgt. Sonny Parker and his trusty pickup truck made several trips to Keesler and the local area after Hurricane Katrina to check on co-workers, provide supplies and help with clean-up and recovery efforts.

His commander calls him a “quiet hero.” Tech. Sgt. Sonny Parker, a network infrastructure technician with the 403rd Communications Flight, has earned the gratitude of many for his actions in the chaotic days following Hurricane Katrina.

It all began the day after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Biloxi area. As Sergeant Parker sat in traffic on a bridge near his Crestview, Fla. home, he began to wonder about his friends and co-workers with the 403rd. His wonder quickly turned to worry.

“I had dealt with Hurricane Ivan and saw the destruction,” he said. “I just knew that all of my friends here would be in bad shape.”

Sergeant Parker decided to take action. He turned around and headed home, where he loaded his truck with food, water, more than a dozen five-gallon gasoline containers, an air conditioning unit, a generator and other supplies he thought would be needed. He said goodbye to his pregnant wife and left home, bound for Biloxi.

Along the way, he tried calling co-workers, with no success. Finally, he was able to get through to co-worker Senior Airman Brian Mitchell, whose Gulfport home had been flooded by seven feet of storm surge. Airman Mitchell had traveled to Mobile, Ala., and was waiting in a long line to get gasoline. Together, they got as much gasoline as possible and headed west on I-10.

Sergeant Parker was shocked by what he saw as he arrived in the local area – houses ruined, cars flipped and debris everywhere.

“I didn’t really know what I was getting myself into,” he said. “None of this had been moved by man – it was all nature.”

Their first stop was Airman Mitchell’s severely damaged neighborhood. Residents were cutting trees and branches, waiting in line to get bottled water and removing ruined items from their homes. Some were even washing themselves in standing water.

The two Airmen drove around and did what they could; passing out the supplies as they found people in need.

Airman Mitchell’s diesel generator flooded, but Sergeant Parker, who runs a pressure washing business, was able to take it apart, clean the fuel lines and get it back running. They gave it to a local family who had a freezer full of seafood that hadn’t yet spoiled.

Another neighbor spelled out “Water” in the front yard using sections of their home’s ruined gutters. Sergeant Parker and Airman Mitchell provided them with bottled water and juice drink packs for the family’s children.

Meanwhile, communications on base were rendered virtually useless by Katrina. Maj. Brian Bell, commander of the 403rd Comm Flight, was on temporary duty in Washington, D.C., and was very concerned about the well being of

his troops. However, he was unable to get through to any of them. Finally, he reached Sergeant Parker through the walkie-talkie feature of their cell phones and learned he had returned to the Biloxi area.

Sergeant Parker then went to work, tracking down information on his co-workers and serving as a critical communications link for commander and co-workers alike.

“Sergeant Parker was able to tell me about the status of many of the people in comm whom I had no contact with, or didn’t know their whereabouts or how they were affected by the storm,” Maj. Bell said.

But Sergeant Parker didn’t stop there. After contacting a co-worker, he would then check on the co-worker’s home and relay the information back to them. That was a challenge in itself, he said, because many street signs had been swept away and streetlights were not working.

Tech. Sgt. Boyd Huff, information knowledge manager, had evacuated to Little Rock AFB, Ark., and wondered about his home and the status of his girlfriend’s family, who had stayed behind in D’Iberville. His girlfriend’s mother is diabetic, causing them additional concern.

Sergeant Parker checked in on them and found them to be okay. Sergeant Huff’s home took in about an inch of water, but otherwise seemed to be okay as well. He relayed the information back to Sergeant Huff.

“He went out of his way to check on my girlfriend’s family,” Sergeant Huff said. “It

“I didn’t really know what I was getting myself into. None of this had been moved by man – it was all nature”

–Tech. Sgt. Sonny Parker

relieved a lot of stress knowing that they were okay and my house was okay.”

Sergeant Parker also helped several comm members get their homes back in order following the storm, including pulling up wet carpet in Sergeant Huff’s home to help prevent the growth of mold.

Others were relieved to hear



Sergeant Parker was commended by his commander for taking the initiative and providing him with updates on unit members through the use of a walkie-talkie feature on his cell phone when mobile and commercial communications were wiped out after Katrina.

Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce

from Sergeant Parker as well. “It was nice getting the ‘ground truth,’” said co-worker Tech. Sgt. Gregory Garcia, whose home had been checked on by Sergeant Parker. “There were a lot of conflicting reports in the media about the damage.”

Sergeant Parker temporarily moved in with Airman Mitchell. Together, they continued to track down the whereabouts of co-workers and distribute supplies to those in need.

Soon, the supplies disappeared into the hands of those who needed them. Sergeant Parker made the three-and-a-half hour drive back to Florida for another load of supplies, and returned with a pressure washer as well. He continued to distribute supplies and chemically pressure washed the homes of several members of the Wing to prevent mold growth. In the coming weeks, he would make about four more trips, loaded with other much-needed supplies, such as sheetrock.

Airman Mitchell said Sergeant Parker was happy to be here to help, despite being shocked by the devastation.

For his part, Sgt. Parker doesn’t believe that what he did was heroic.

“It was tough, but it was something I felt I had to do,” he said. “I was glad to be able to help out.”

Farewell

Final H-Model Leaves for Duty At Willow Grove

The last of a generation of aircraft lifted gently off the runway here on its way to a new home.

"This is the end of an era. For years the H-model performed magnificently meeting the needs of the weather mission; however, it is time to move on," said Brig. Gen. Rich Moss, commander, 403rd Wing. "The increased performance and the advanced avionics of the new J-mod-

els will only enhance the ability of the 403rd to perform the vital weather mission."

Aircraft #980 was the last WC-130H aircraft to depart the home of the Hurricane Hunters, the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron.

The unit completed conversion to the WC-130J two months ahead of schedule last year. All of the unit's H-model aircraft have been reallocated to other squadrons.

A crew from the 913th Airlift Wing arrived here to make final inspections on the aircraft before flying it home to Willow Grove Air Reserve Station, Pa.

Ronnie Klipp, crew chief, buttons up the crew entrance door on Aircraft #980 before departure.

Photo by Tech Sgt. James B. Prichett



Gulf Wing Features

The H-models, many of them built in the 1960s, still remain the backbone of the Air Force's intratheater airlift fleet. With hundreds of these aircraft, the Air Force is able to get supplies and troops to the frontlines, quickly and efficiently. For decades, the Hurricane Hunters have flown this tough aircraft through the most violent weather systems known to man. Aircraft 980 flew into many unnamed tropical systems as well as named hurricanes over the years. It also had a distinguished past. It was once dedicated as the "Spirit of

Mississippi."

"It was a great aircraft," said Lt. Col. Jon Talbot, an aerial reconnaissance weather officer with the squadron. "Any units that get one will get many more years of workhorse service out of them."

Among the Airmen who watched the last Hercules depart was Master Sgt. Steve Campanella, a flightline supervisor and former H-model crew chief, who was responsible for a similar aircraft.

"It's always hard to see an airframe

leave. Especially one that you put so much of your time and effort into maintaining," said Sergeant Campanella, an air reserve technician who has served 18 years with the 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

"I've been doing this for so long it doesn't bother me," said Master Sgt. Ronnie Klipp, the crew chief who serviced the 980 before departure. He has served 30 years as an aircraft maintainer and serviced three generations of C-130s.

Besides the aircraft, the 403rd Wing

will also lose several crewmembers. The new WC-130Js fly with a smaller crew. Flight engineers who were essential on all previous versions of the venerable "Herk," have had to look for new assignments or retrain into a new job skill.

Engineers conduct preflight checks and perform takeoff and landing data calculations. During flight they also check all systems for performance and ensure the aircraft has sufficient fuel to continue the mission.

"I'm going to miss flying into storms

the most," said Chief Master Sgt. Steve Riley, flight engineer. "I think the H-model will continue to be a part of the Air Force's airlift fleet for some time into the future. While many of the ones we had were built in the '60s the Air Force has some that were built in the '90s. Those aircraft still have at least 20-30 or more good years in them."

As the wing says farewell to the H-model, it also welcomes the chance to focus on one airframe. The unit has been flying two completely different aircraft since the first C-130J arrived in

1998. While they have similar names, the aircraft couldn't be more different. Maintainers had to keep spare parts on hand for both aircraft and crewmembers could only fly one or the other.

"The airframe is the same, but all the electronics and computers make it easier to maintain," said Sergeant Klipp. He said he can service a J-model 60 percent faster than an H-model, allowing him and the other crew chiefs to accomplish more duties in a workday.

From Staff Reports



Aircraft #980 taxis pull out of its spot on the ramp at Keesler before taking off for Willow Grove ARS, Pa.

The End of an Era

By Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce
Staff Writer

Even before the last WC-130H left the runway, a row of empty lockers was already forming at the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron.

These lockers held crew equipment for the Hurricane Hunters' flight engineers, who are all moving on as this legacy era closes out for the 403rd Wing.

During the 2005 hurricane season the wing finalized transition to the WC-130J with integrated computer technology. The new aircraft, which reduced the number of crew positions necessary to perform missions replaced the venerable H-models which had served the unit for decades and also brought an end to the respected career field of flight engineers at Keesler.

According to Air Force historical documents, the earliest flight engineers date back to the employment of long-range aircraft like the B-29 Superfortress and C-69 Constellation.

Originally a specialty assigned to officers it was soon converted to an enlisted career field which proved invaluable in WWII.

Even in the age of technology, the flight engineer will be needed for many years to come on the force's legacy aircraft. They are an essential part of the team that "gets 'em there and

brings 'em back."

Duties of flight engineers primarily deal with mathematics, used for aircraft inspections, routine systems checks before, during and after missions, troubleshooting, and a swarm of other mathematical duties used to supply pilots with information they need to fly safely. They wouldn't be caught without their handy book of equations carried along on every flight.



"We were the ones who were always there, and as long as you didn't notice us, everything was good," said Staff Sgt. Anthony Barganier, a flight engineer with less than two years on the job. He is one of 13 troops left in the ever-shrinking group of engineers at the 53rd WRS.

Most of the engineers are transferring to other units still flying the H-model – the rest have either retired, are waiting to retire or have separated from the Reserve in other ways.

"All things considered, I can't complain about anything . . . we knew it was going to happen, we just weren't sure when," said Sergeant Barganier. "I don't hate the 'J.' The Air Force has

evolved a long way in flying and this is part of our technological progression."

Master Sgt. Kim Wolfersperger, a veteran engineer, said he is staying.

"I think they're going to make me a dropsonde operator here, but it's not going to be the same," he said. "I'm used to being right in the middle of things and you're counted on to keep the crew safe and for so much – it just won't be the same."

Sergeant Wolfersperger, however, said he is keeping a positive attitude about the change.

Conversion from H-models to J-models began when the first J-model arrived here in 1999.

The flight engineers at the 53rd WRS remain understanding about their unit's conversion to the J-model and its value to the Hurricane Hunters' mission. Even so, they said they'll still miss the people and flying with the unit.

"It was worth getting to ride into the eye of a hurricane – it's the most amazing thing to see," said Sergeant Barganier. "I thought it would be cool to fly for a change instead of always watching them come and go, so I got the chance and took it."

"I volunteered for the job because it is something I really enjoyed doing," said Chief Master Sgt. Steve Riley, who began his military career in 1970, the same year his friend and fellow engineer, Master Sgt. Bob Sharp, joined.

"This unit was flying older H-models, some of which were built in the 1960's," said Sergeant Sharp. "But the manufacturer was still building them and the Air Force was still buying them through the 90s. With that many aircraft still in the force, C-130 flight engineers could still be around for another 20 to 30 years."



These photos depict some of the engineers in training or gearing up for flights, on the facing page is some of the equipment used by engineers in performing their duties.



Maintainer Impresses Senior Leaders

By Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce
Staff Writer

Almost as soon as they got off the aircraft, top U.S. military leaders were shaking the hand of a tall Reservist from Keesler who made an even bigger impression during his deployment to the Middle East.

About the same time most Reservists here were facing the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, 1st Lt. Bo Shelton, an officer with the 403rd Maintenance Group, was reporting in to the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing, Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates.

This was his first deployment as an officer, having served many years as an enlisted maintainer before trading in his stripes for bars. At the 380th he was charged with a slew of duties critical in keeping the base's flight-line and aircraft operations running.

His efforts weren't unnoticed.

He was given a coin by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Gen. Peter Pace, the U.S. military's top-ranking officer, during his visit to Southwest Asia to personally thank troops for their contributions to the war on terror.

In addition, he also received a coin from Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, Gen. T. Michael Moseley, who also invited the lieutenant to attend one of his focus groups.

General Moseley remembered the lieutenant's name because of his insightful comments at the focus group during a discussion on multigenerational leadership.

Lieutenant Shelton said he heard that an article on his topic is planned for the Aerospace Journal.

At the end of his tour, all the shops he supervised were awarded "Team of the Month" at least once.

"That means I was doing my job... I was taking care of my people, and I was able to see the fruits of my labor," he said. "I saw attitudes change and people motivated."

Lieutenant Shelton earned further recognition when he was named Company Grade Officer of the Month in December.

"I became an officer to become a leader," he said. "Awards don't mean anything to me, it's about my troops."

Lieutenant Shelton said the tour helped him gain knowledge about his career field and leadership

that he couldn't get back home.

He was responsible for maintenance operations, in charge of line and refueling operations, as well as intelligence and surveillance in support of aircraft maintenance.

Also tasked with transportation alert, he was responsible for coordinating standard protocol for the arrival of distinguished visitors on the base.

During his three-month deployment, he changed the attitudes of active duty troops toward the Reserve through his hard work, influence and ability to motivate his troops, causing "a chain reaction of motivation."

Chief Master Sgt. Billy Evans, maintenance superintendent during the deployment, said the lieutenant's work ethic was incredible.

"He wasn't afraid to go in there and do the job, getting right beside them and rolling up his sleeves," said "He showed the kind of care and concern for people that made them want to better themselves, and I was blessed to have served with him."

At the end of his deployment, Col. William Pombey, vice commander, told him he made a lasting impression and a huge difference in his short time there.

"That means I'm taking care of my people," said Lieutenant Shelton.

"We had to fight the 'Reservist' stereotype when we arrived, but when we left, they knew who Reservists are," he said. "It's nice to know we can make a difference."

After his return from deployment, the lieutenant pinned on Captain's bars and started looking for another deployment opportunity that will allow him to lead and learn and continue to make a big difference.



Lieutenant Bo Shelton next to a Humvee while deployed to Al Dhafra Air Base.

Gourney Photo

New Orleans A-10s Arrive at Whiteman

WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo. – The eighth A-10 aircraft from the 926th Fighter Wing, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, La., arrived here March 16.

In addition to the aircraft, Whiteman's 442nd FW must assimilate an estimated 185 to 200 new jobs as it prepares to increase from 15 to 24 A-10s under base realignment and closure. Other challenges facing the Air Force Reserve Command wing are preparations to deploy this summer to Southwest Asia, modifications to its aircraft and upcoming inspections.

"We're cramming three years of work into the next eight months," said Col. Patrick Cord, 442nd FW commander. "I'm confident the wing is up to the challenge. We're professional, we're experienced and we've proven ourselves in combat."

"The task we face now is deciding how we're going to manage the integration of nine more aircraft and the additional people into our existing facilities and organization," he said.

Realignment of the 926th FW is coming earlier than expected due to Hurricane Katrina's damage to the New Orleans base.

"The timeline for moving aircraft and closing the 926th Fighter Wing is



U.S. Air Force photo by Patrick Nugent

A-10s like those pictured here recently moved from Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, La. to Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

based on two key factors - the need to transform the military and the way we do business, and taking care of our personnel," said Maj. Gen. Charles Stenner, director of plans and programs at Headquarters AFRC. "Mission demands dictate that timeline."

After assessing the hurricane's damage, it was determined that the 926th FW would not be able to maintain wartime readiness past a certain point.

To help the 442nd FW with manpower issues related to the BRAC decision, a site activation task force team from AFRC headquarters visited Whiteman AFB March 7-9 to assess the

needs of the agencies and units in the wing impacted most by the addition of nine aircraft. An environmental impact assessment must also be made before the transfer is complete.

In addition to caring for more aircraft, the 442nd Maintenance Group is likely to gain most of the new people with the transfer.

"In the short term, it's going to be extremely busy, accepting airplanes and accomplishing the flying mission short-handed," said Chief Master Sgt. Donald Shoop, 442nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron superintendent. "Our goal is to have all of our (full-time) air reserve technician positions filled by October."

The 442nd Operations Group will gain the rest of the new positions and face an increase in its flying-hour budget to match the additional aircraft.

"(The flying-hour budget) is going to go up proportionally to what it is now," said Lt. Col. Stephen Chappel, 303rd Fighter Squadron director of operations. "We will be flying a lot more jets on a day-to-day basis."

The last A-10 from New Orleans is expected to arrive at Whiteman in June when it will be released from the depot maintenance facility at Hill AFB, Utah.

AFRC News Service

Reservists Benefit from 2006 Defense Authorization Act

WASHINGTON – People serving in the Air Force Reserve Command and other reserve components could receive new or enhanced benefits this year.

The 2006 National Defense Authorization Act lets the Department of Defense offer reservists a variety of benefits more on par with their active-duty counterparts, said Chuck Witschonke, DOD's deputy director for compensation. President George W. Bush signed the defense bill Jan. 6.

One big change is a provision that shortens the duty time before reservists qualify for the full housing allowance. People called to active duty for non-contingency operations for more than 30 days will now get the full allowance, just as active-duty troops do. In the past, reservists serving in non-contingencies had to be called to active duty for at least 140 days.

For reservists who experience pay

cuts when called to active duty, a new provision for income replacement will help reduce the strain military service places on the family, Mr. Witschonke said.

"It can be difficult for a family that has been living on a certain income to now have less money, particularly at a time when they're stressed by a change in their lifestyle" due to a military deployment, he said.

The income-replacement program won't be instituted for six months, in accordance with the law. At that time, specific guidelines and qualifications will be issued, he said. This authority will end in December 2008.

The 2006 authorization act also permits increases in recruiting bonuses for reservists. People could get accession and affiliation bonuses of up to

\$20,000 to enlist in the Selected Reserve. Officers could see an increase from \$6,000 to \$10,000 for initial service in the Selected Reserve.

People who possess a designated critical skill could earn a bonus of up to \$100,000.

Another provision of the defense bill extends the eli-

gibility for a prior-service enlistment bonus to include Selected Reserve members who previously received one.

Mr. Witschonke emphasized the new law does not guarantee that all service members will qualify for these pays and benefits or that those who do will receive the highest amounts authorized. Rather, the law gives defense and service leaders the flexibility they need to meet operational, recruiting and retention goals.

AFRC News Service

Web Link: www.defenselink.mil/militarypay/



New Uniforms Include Airman Ideas

WASHINGTON – The new Airman Battle Uniform is ready for production and will be available in fiscal 2007, said the Air Force deputy chief of staff of personnel.

Many factors were considered in developing the final uniform selection, with the concern for Airmen being at the top of the list, said Brig. Gen Robert R. Allardice.

"We were looking for a uniform that would be easier to maintain," he said. "We wanted to provide a uniform that the Airman wouldn't need to spend a lot of out-of-pocket expenses to maintain."

Also, Airmen's feedback throughout the process was beneficial in adding pockets. "We listened to the Airmen's request where they wanted pockets to hold small tools and when they wear body armor the existing shirt pockets are not accessible or usable," General Allardice said. "It will have the four pockets on the front of the shirt, and also a small pencil pocket on the left forearm and two pockets on the lower legs. In addition, inside the side pockets and inside of the breast pockets there will be smaller sewn-in pockets to hold small tools, flashlights or cell phones."

The new uniform design is a pixilated tiger stripe with four soft earth tones consisting of tan, grey, green and blue. The ABU will have a permanent crease and will be offered in 50-50 nylon-cotton blend permanent press fabric eliminating the need for winter and summer weight uniforms.

Will the new ABU need to be starched and pressed?

"Absolutely not," he said. "Our uniform requirement is we want a uniform that you wash, pull it out of the dryer, and wear it. This requirement meets the ease and cost effectiveness needs in maintaining a uniform."



Air Force Print News

New Orleans First to Close

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – Air Force Reserve Command's 926th Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans will be the command's first wing affected by the most recent Base Realignment and Closure.

Moved up a year, resources from the 926th will begin realigning to four bases – Buckley Air Force Base, Colo.; Nellis AFB, Nev.; Whiteman AFB, Mo.; and Barksdale AFB, La. – with the first A-10s moving to Whiteman and Barksdale March 15. The A-10 moves will remain temporary until environmental impact assessments are completed.

Headquarters AFRC officials here announced the realignments Jan. 20.

While the timeline for realigning the 926th is earlier than many expected, the officials stress that an early move is necessary because Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage to the New Orleans base.

"The timeline for moving aircraft and closing the 926th Fighter Wing is based on two key factors – the need to transform the military and the way we do business, and taking care of our personnel," said Maj. Gen. Charles Stenner, director of plans and programs at Headquarters AFRC.

In addition to the aircraft and equipment moves, the realignment is scheduled to move about 840 people from New Orleans by Sept. 30.

The 926th is just one unit of many military units that will be affected by BRAC. In AFRC alone, BRAC will affect more than half the command in the next five years.

AFRC News Service

Air Force Implements New Cell Phone Restrictions for Drivers

SAN ANTONIO—The Air Force recently implemented a cell phone restriction for drivers.

Beginning Feb. 27, drivers are not allowed to talk on their cell phones while driving on Air Force installations without a hands-free device.

This restriction also applies to all government owned vehicles, or GOVs, at all times. No GOV drivers are permitted to talk on a cell phone while driving without a hands-free device on or off base.

The wearing of any other portable headphones, earphones or other listening devices (except for hand-free cellular phones) while operating a motor vehicle is prohibited. Using a cell phone while driving without a hands-free device will be considered a "primary offense." This means violators will be able to be stopped solely for this offense. Drivers who violate this cell phone driving restriction will be given three assessment points against their driving records or an appropriate fine. Drivers should be aware that if two or more violations are committed, even on a single occasion, the driver may be ticketed for each violation.

Air Force Print News



Web Link: <https://wwwmil.afrc.af.mil/hq/dp/brac>

Selfless Service Helps 403rd Wing Recover, Rebuild

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



Brig. Gen. Richard Moss

Aug. 29, 2005 is a day that will forever be remembered. It was on that date the most devastating natural disaster in U. S. history, Hurricane Katrina, ravaged Keesler Air Force Base and the Gulf Coast.

Homes and entire communities were destroyed. The economic base of the Gulf Coast was devastated. The community infrastructure was severely disrupted. Damage to Keesler AFB was estimated at over \$1.3 billion.

It was in times such as this, the spirit of the Wing shined brightly.

Our aircraft had been evacuated to Houston so we could continue flying missions into Katrina. After the storm passed, extensive damage to Wing facilities necessitated we move our flying operations to Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga.

Within 48 hours, we had relocated and were up and running and resumed flying humanitarian and hurricane reconnaissance missions.

It was truly an outstanding accom-

plishment – an accomplishment that amazed others in the Air Force.

The Air Force Chief of Staff in a speech to the Airlift Tanker Association commended the personnel of the 403d Wing as an example of truly putting "service before self" as personnel who had lost everything put aside their personal lives to continue their vital service to the nation.

It will be a long time before things get back to "normal." Our facilities are slowly being repaired. The major obstacle has been ensuring the roof structures are completely repaired before we begin refurbishment of the interiors.

An entire newly designed pitched roof is required for the Wing Headquarters before we can begin reconstruction.

The Wing staff will probably be located in trailers until December when the Headquarters is expected to be finished. Hangar Five may be torn down and a new maintenance complex constructed if proposed supplemental

funding is received (a two year project).

Functions in other buildings will have to be displaced when we finally get approval to start their building's renovation. The billeting situation will also not improve for the near future. Personnel will continue to be billeted at Gulfport or anywhere else we can find lodging.

We have made great progress but it will still take time to rebuild the infrastructure of the Wing and Keesler.

I ask that everybody continue to be patient and keep up the "can-do" attitude we have demonstrated for the past few months. We have demonstrated we are the Wing that can do anything, achieve positive results, and continue to improve no matter what happens to us, no matter what adversities we face.

We will recover and be stronger and better than we were before Katrina. We will be able to do this because we have talented and dedicated personnel such as each of you. Thanks.



Photo By Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce

Cloudy Day

Only a few rays broke through the clouds covering South Mississippi in late February as the Hurricane Hunters were out chasing winter storm systems and getting ready for the upcoming hurricane season.

Gulf Wing Go-Getter



The Gulf Wing is printed for people of the 403rd Wing, like SrA Kelli Rabideau of the 403rd Wing Financial Management Office.

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