

GULF WING *Lite*

February 2007

Home of the Hurricane Hunters and Flying Jennies

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



Personnel Moves to Web

By Master Sgt. William Huntington
442nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

"The times, they are a-changing" may say it best for the Air Reserve Personnel Center, based in Denver, as it attempts its biggest change in personnel services yet through its Personnel Services Delivery transformation.

Department of Defense and Air Force leadership mandated the change to centralize personnel functions through Web-based applications. Their bottom line was to have the Web replace most in-person contacts with a Military Personnel Flight and thereby realize the advantages of accuracy, expanded capability and cost savings.

According to ARPC figures, 10 percent of personnel transactions now occur online with five percent of transactions handled by phone and 85 percent handled face-to-face at unit MPF customer service desks. The goal is to nearly reverse those figures with 85 percent service online, 10 percent by phone and five percent face-to-face.

The most visible and utilitarian means to accomplish the PSD quest, the virtual Personnel Center-Guard and Reserve portal, known as vPC-GR, is slowly but surely taking on a life of its own.

First brought to life in March 2006, vPC-GR is being rolled out in phases with each successive phase adding more capability to the system.

Access to the vPC-GR can be made through the 403rd Wing's public Web site at www.403wg.afrc.af.mil. The link is under the Reserve resources tab on the right side of the page. Upon reaching the site, establish a new account by clicking on the "New account" link under the "Account tools" tab.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. James B. Pritchett

A WC-130J taxis onto the apron at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska in 2003. The J-model allows aircrews to fly higher improving the winter storm forecast models.

North to Alaska

By Tech. Sgt. James B. Pritchett
Editor, Gulf Wing

Hurricane Hunter aircraft deploy to Anchorage, Alaska Feb. 12 for a month-long mission in support of the 2007 Winter Storm Reconnaissance program.

In addition to two WC-130J aircraft, the 403rd Wing put together a team of Air Force Reservists including aircrews, operations, maintenance, aerial porters, and others who will don their parkas and snow boots in their efforts to improve winter storm forecast models.

Operations are directed by the

National Centers for Environmental Prediction, a part of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. Like their tropical reconnaissance missions, winter storm routes can keep crews in the air more than 12 hours at a time.

When a tasking for a flight comes in to the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron's deployed operations center, at Elmendorf Air Force Base, a crew is alerted and maintenance ensures there is an aircraft ready to fly.

Showtime and pre-flight are similar to the Hunters' normal missions except, depending on weather, main-

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tenance teams de-ice the aircraft. Then it's off into the sky.

Winter missions require crews to fly at higher altitudes than they normally fly in tropical weather systems, above 30,000 feet. The new J-model is an improvement over the previous WC-130H in that it can fly much higher, allowing for collection of more data and thereby improving the forecast models even more than in the past.

"On average, the data we provide along with the NOAA aircraft lead to a 10-20% reduction in error in the targeted forecasts," said Lt. Col. Roy Deatherage, mission commander for the 53rd WRS and an aerial reconnaissance weather officer since 1988. "As a result, numerical forecast guidance issued 48 hours prior to the events become as accurate as 36-hour lead time forecasts."

Use of weather reconnaissance aircraft have improved the forecast models more since 1999 than the previous 25 years of satellite data, according to the NCEP.

Unlike in tropical storms, on a winter mission the crew is not trying to pinpoint the center of the storm, in fact, there may not even be a "storm."

"Often, the crews are flying from one to four days in advance of a potential storm system in the Pacific that appears headed for either Alaska or the continental U.S.," said Colonel Deatherage.

On board the aircraft, the aerial reconnaissance weather officer and weather reconnaissance loadmaster take atmospheric observations at predetermined points along a flight track where the measurements are expected to have the greatest chance of improving the forecasts.

The weather reconnaissance loadmaster drops highly sensitive devices called dropsondes, which fall at about 2,500 feet per second, in areas of the atmosphere as requested by NCEP. As they fall toward the ocean, the dropsondes measure temperature, wind speed, humidity and pressure. Aircraft follow what are called synoptic patterns, huge ovals sometimes more than 3,000 miles round-trip.

Colonel Deatherage explained that during a typical tropical mission, dropsondes are released at certain points defined by the National Hurricane Center. This is usually four drops every time the aircraft passes through the eye with an additional four to eight per mission in the most significant wind bands. In contrast, Pacific winter missions average 16-22 sondes dropped. For impending Atlantic winter missions the average is lower, closer to five.

The information collected is checked onboard and then relayed by satellite to the NOAA Weather Service supercomputer which incorporates it into the agency's numerical prediction models. This information helps "fill-in-the-blanks" or bolster the data in computer climate models that forecast storms and precipitation for the entire U.S.

"The goal is to make a good forecast so that cities can be prepared with snow plows, and other snow removal and mitigation equipment to diminish the impact of a winter storm on a city," said Colonel Deatherage. "If they are better prepared, like we've seen with several cities already this year, they can recover more quickly. That can be crucial for residents living in harm's way. These forecasts provide people in the path of the storms with warnings that can save

lives."

While the Hurricane Hunters are patrolling the north Pacific, NOAA is using its Gulfstream G-IV aircraft to fly missions from Honolulu, Hawaii. Between the two units, they are able to cover the parts of the Pacific that directly affect the U.S.

Each year, the 53rd WRS and NOAA rotate deployed locations to better improve the forecasting models. The G-IV flies higher and collects a slightly different data set than that of the WC-130J Hurricane Hunter.

Since 1996, the two organizations have been flying these frosty missions in support of the NCEP.

Those taking part in the first half of the deployment, about 57 people, leave for Anchorage Feb. 12 for two weeks. Another rotation departs about halfway through with all expected to return by March 13.

This project does not encompass the entirety of the 53rd's winter taskings. Due to an unusually warm winter so far this year, the unit has only received minimal taskings for the east coast of the U.S. to assist forecasters with pending Nor'easters.

The Hurricane Hunters normally fly several of these missions in support of the National Weather Service each season beginning Dec. 1 and ending April 30.

In seasons past, the tropical storm season, beginning June first and officially ending Nov. 30, has crossed over into the winter storm season. In 2005, the Hurricane Hunters flew winter storm missions and tropical missions at the same time. That year, the final storm of the hurricane season was recorded in early January.

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FY2007 UTA DATES

3-4	March
14-15	April
5-6	May
9-10	June
14-15	July
4-5	August
8-9	September





Photo by Maj. Chad Gibson

Students from local schools listen attentively to Capt. Kaitlyn Torbett, Aerial Reconnaissance Weather Officer for the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, describing how the Hurricane Hunters collect data in storms. The Biloxi Chamber of Commerce Junior Leadership Tour visited the Air Force Reserve WC-130J aircraft, toured active duty dorms, air traffic control simulator and watched a drill team performance. The annual tour gives local students who excel in school an opportunity to better understand the mission and impact of the Air Force.

Vice Commander Departs Wing for AFSOC Assignment

By Col. Richard Haddad

In my short time here I've quickly recognized the incredible degree of professionalism, loyalty, dedication and pride of the men and women of the 403rd Wing. With this great core of people, the upcoming inspections, exercises and deployments will be a breeze. However, as I depart the fix, I'd like to leave you with a few thoughts.

When you signed the dotted line and took the oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic you formed a bond with our nation to answer the call. The call came on 9/11 — which should always be forefront in your thoughts as a clear reminder.

We are at war and it is the leadership's responsibility to train and equip you. It is your responsibility to embrace the training and be prepared to do our nation's business.

I would like to thank the Commander, Brig. Gen. (Richard) Moss, for allowing me the opportunity to serve this wing as vice. I would also like to thank you for allowing me to be a part of an outstanding wing and this great family.

I leave at a very challenging time, but I'm confident you will provide my successor the support you afforded me. As I report to Air Force Special Operations Command, I look forward to hearing great reports from my new friends at the 403rd. I will be proud to say I was a member.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. James B. Pritchett



10 Ways to Dazzle the IG During an Inspection

By Brigadier General Mark R. Zamzow
Inspector General, Air Mobility Command

What you consider as your worst nightmare is coming to fruition: The Inspector General is coming to your unit to conduct a periodic readiness inspection.

Apprehension, worry, fear, anxiety, and tension float through the wing like a thick fog as questions arise in everyone's minds. What will the IG expect of me? What will they focus on? Are those "black hat" inspectors going to intentionally intimidate me? Is there enough time to prepare? What happens if we bust? What do we need to do to succeed? Help.

Wait a second, rewind the tape and let's take another look at this. Is the IG's visit really a nightmare, or is it a blessing in disguise?

Everyone in today's Air Force needs to realize that a routine inspection of any type is in fact a "good thing." It is in reality an **opportunity** — a chance to:

- ◆ Conduct a detailed scrub of your regulatory compliance and mission capabilities
- ◆ Identify and fix discrepancies, problems, and weaknesses
- ◆ Improve morale and teamwork by rallying your folks behind a common near term objective
- ◆ Demonstrate your unit's ability to support the warfighter
- ◆ Validate just how good your unit really is

In the months prior to the big inspection, units should educate their folks on the rationale and positive reasons behind the inspection, motivate them to dig deep into their processes and procedures, train extensively to ensure everyone is up to standards, and fix all the things that are weak or broken.

As part of this process, it is critical that a thorough self-inspection (beyond routinely scheduled self-inspections) be conducted. This will sometimes illuminate more flaws in the armor than you ever imagined.

Another good preparation technique for leadership: use the IG as an excuse to buckle down and get folks re-energized about ensuring compliance and improving readiness. The "aura" of the IG coming to town can be used to your advantage.

tage.

You should never forget that all the answers about the way things should be done are already out there in the form of laws, Air Force Instructions, policy letters, operating instructions, tech orders, self-inspection checklists and more. Consequently, the inspections really are "open book tests" right up to the time the inspector sets foot on your installation.

Additionally, don't forget that up to the time the IG arrives on base, they really act as a "white hat" organization. In case you've forgotten, the IG is com-

Useful websites

<https://private.amc.af.mil/ig/html/index.cfm>

<https://wwwmil.22af.afrc.af.mil/mcp/403aw/403msg/403LRS/IGX/igxhomepage.asp>

prised of top tier functional experts who want to help you prepare for and pass your inspection with flying colors.

The IG also wants units to know their expectations about the inspections, so there shouldn't be any surprises. Therefore, folks should still always feel free to call the IG office, find the functional inspector who has the expertise on the subject you'd like to discuss, and ask those questions.

The IG wants you to succeed because it helps our Air Force sustain the highest readiness levels possible — that's the business we're all in. *Note: it also makes our job easier when units are on top of their game.*

Now, with that "inspection preparation time warp" complete, it is finally time for the real thing: the chance to show those IG toads just how "**outstanding**" you really are. All those preparations were certainly successful and all you need to do now is establish the right mindset.

Here's what I call the 10 best ways for inspection participants to dazzle the IG:

1. Competence — know your job inside and out, and perform those duties to the best of your ability despite the inspection or the inspector's glare.
2. Responsiveness — show that "sense of urgency" during every waking moment; lean forward in those starting blocks and then realistically propel yourself into every activity
3. Attitude — display a positive attitude, recognize enthusiasm is conta-

gious, and that problems always arise in the "fog of war" and they can be overcome.

4. Readiness — ensure your personal bags are packed, mobility requirements are current, the paperwork/processes in your work section are in perfect order, and you have trained effectively so you can infallibly perform your duties in peace and war.

5. Aggressiveness — react authoritatively with Ability to Survive and Operation skills in attack scenarios and with Self-Aid and Buddy Care in medical emergencies. Effectively continue mission essential activities in all FPCON levels and treat inspections and exercises as the real thing.

6. Appearance — look people in the eye, pop that sharp salute, and exceed those standards for uniform, boots and hair.

7. Safety — approach duties with a safety-oriented mindset, know when not to press forward on actions because they're unsafe, and apply operational risk management techniques to accomplish the mission.

8. Leadership — lead by words and actions, formally and informally by motivating, communicating and setting a positive example.

9. Followership — follow taskings and orders quickly and effectively, employ teambuilding skills, and always keep the "objective" in sight.

10. Pride — visibly exude pride in yourself, your unit, your mission, and your base: Looking Good, Feeling Good, Being a Winner.

If you scan through those 10 items again, you'll notice those attributes should not only shine through for the IG's visit, but are integral to the fabric of our Air Force culture as well. Clearly, they apply far beyond inspections as the foundation of "normal ops" every day of the year.

So in the future, when your unit is under the IG's inspection microscope, channel that apprehension and fear toward productivity, positive thinking, and action. And, when the inspection starts, grab that inspector by the collar and say, "Follow me — I want to show off exactly why my unit and our people are **OUTSTANDING!**"

