The MIGHTY EIGHTH VOICE

Published for the members of Eighth Air Force

Vol. III
Issue 8

8th Air Force
Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana

September 2003

Staff sergeant selects

Congratulations to the Headquarters' newest staff sergeant selects:

608th Air Intelligence Squadron

- Senior Airman Jessica Clutz
- Senior Airman Talia Galindo (Headquarters Airman of the Month for August)
- Senior Airman Timothy Roznos

608th Combat Operations Squadron

- Senior Airman Christopher Bell

608th Air Communications Squadron

- Senior Airman Robert Blades
- Senior Airman Daeron Lockett
- Senior Airman Kathryn Lynch
- Senior Airman Gary Memolo
- Senior Airman Jeremy Schlake
- Senior Airman Ryan Sweeney
- Senior Airman Daphne Taylor
- Senior Airman Tina Vincent

26th Operational Weather Squadron

- Senior Airman Carlos Austin
- Senior Airman Gretchen Craine
- Senior Airman Celena Jones
- Senior Airman Michelle Lucas

Air "show stopper!"

photo by Master Sgt. Kenneth Fidler

ZHUKOVSKY, Russia — Russian air force Col. Magomed Tolboev looks out from the cockpit of the U.S. B-52 Stratofortress bomber that landed here Aug. 20 for the 6th Moscow Space and Aviation Show. In Russia, Tolboev is revered much like test pilot Chuck Yeager is in the United States. He is a former Soviet Union pilot and cosmonaut who tested military aircraft at this once secret air base. The B-52 is assigned to the 5th Bomb Wing at Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

Army meets Minot security needs

By Rebecca Anne Fritz
5th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. –For more than six months, the 5th Security Forces Squadron installation entry controllers have been working with augmentees to help protect Minot Air Force Base.

Instead of recruiting airmen from various squadrons across the base, the 5th SFS has been working hand in hand with Army National Guardsmen from Wishek, N.D., to ensure the base's people and resources continue to have a well-staffed force.

Members of the battalion were ready to join Team Minot and do their part to provide homeland security, said 1st Lt. Richard Mielke, the Detachment 1, Company A, 141st Engineering Combat Battalion platoon leader.

The Guardsmen are helping to fill the gap caused by security forces deployments

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Motorcycles don't kill people - people kill people

By Master Sgt. Ty Foster
21st Space Wing Public Affairs

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Last year, I wrote an article about motorcycle safety titled, "What were they thinking?" I should have called it, "Why weren't they thinking?"

For as many years as I have been a rider, even longer, I have been concerned about motorcycle safety.

Two months before I bought my first bike, a motorcycle passed me on the right as I was turning right. As his bike crashed into the side of my parents' 1970 Chevy pickup, everything began moving in slow motion. He flew 30 feet through the air right over the hood of the truck. Two other motorcyclists waiting to turn at the intersection watched in dismay as this human projectile hurled toward them and his mangled bike careened their way.

He landed face-up and unconscious underneath the nearest bike and his right leg had a gash so severe I thought it had been severed. Pulling the bike off of him, I looked at his helmetless head. His face, cut by my rearview mirror, was lacerated from the top of his forehead to the tip of his nose. Blood pooled over his closed eyes.

His motorcycle ended up in the ditch 10 feet away. The Hamms beer that had been between his legs as he began his impatient pass was in the grass near my parents' truck. His name, I had learned, was Ricky Hicks, and he was alive.

I met him, under better circumstances, about a year later. It had taken about 300 stitches to fix his wounds and he almost did lose his leg. He told me it wasn't my fault. He was drunk and had done a stupid thing. Why wasn't he thinking?

I was 18 years old. I am 42 now, and I can remember that wreck like it happened yesterday.

Between then and now, I have logged tens of thousands of miles on motorcycles. I have taught motorcycle safety at eight sites in two states to more than 650 people. I have written countless articles, conducted workshops, inspections, and demonstrations in an effort to stem the red tide of Air Force motorcycle deaths and injuries.

But it hasn't worked.

On April 10, two riders were on a divided highway with a posted speed limit of 50 kilometers per hour — that is about 31 mph. Rider No. 1 zipped between two cars at a high rate of speed. As he entered a gradual curve, his motorcycle began to lose control. He skidded for 198 feet, hit the median, was ejected from the bike and collided with an on-coming vehicle. He was dragged 30 feet and tumbled another 103 feet. Rider No. 2 watched his friend die.

Rider No. 1 had just picked his bike up from the shop where it had been in for brake problems resulting from a result of a previous mishap. He had attended motorcycle safety training about 18 months earlier.

Why wasn't he thinking?

Another Air Force rider and his buddy were out for a ride May 24 on a new road. There were no street lights, minimal street markings and neither rider had driven it before. At a speed in excess of 60 mph — posted 45 mph — an unannounced curve sneaked up on them. Rider No. 1 applied his brakes hard. Rider No. 2 swerved around rider No. 1 who then struck the curb and went airborne. Two hundred twenty two feet later the dust began to settle on the mangled bike. This rider No. 2 also watched his friend die. Neither rider was wearing the required protective gear.

Why weren't they thinking?

On June 1, an Air Force motorcyclist with a passenger was doing about 120 mph in a 60-mph zone down a divided four-lane highway. Approaching a curve, the front tire left the pavement edge. They crashed in the grass median and were launched about 500 feet. The operator lived but the passenger suffered traumatic head injuries and later died. They had been at a party, then went on a beer run while the designated drivers were taking people home. Neither wore the required protective gear.

Why didn't they think?

I would recount more of these tragic losses, but it makes me sick to read them, to envision their final realities. Last year, we lost 16 airmen in fatal motorcycle crashes — Class A mishaps — Air Force wide. This year, we have already lost 19.

photo by Tech. Sgt. Marilyn C. Holliday

Technical Sgt. Dan Agisotelis from the 70th Intelligence Wing, suits up with all of his mandatory safety gear before riding.

Unfortunately, more will die.

I have realized there is no panacea, no cure-all to eliminate the deaths of Air Force motorcyclists. As involved in their rider's lives as supervisors and commanders can be, they can't make the decisions. It is on the rider. For when riders decide to straddle their bikes, start them, shift into gear and roll onto the road, they have accepted the risk and the responsibility for whatever may occur. Their split-second decision to speed up, slow down, swerve or not to ride after a drink of alcohol is in their hands.

Some people think we motorcyclists have an attitude. I think they are right. I just wish the attitude every one of us had was the same as that of Gen. Lance Lord, commander of Air Force Space Command, "Safety is an attitude — get one!"

If they did, they would probably live to ride a lot longer.

photo by Airman Alicia Sarkkinen

Army Spc. Justin Jenner, Detachment 1, Company A, 141st Engineering Combat Battalion heavy equipment operator, checks underneath a vehicle for explosives at a gate at Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

● ***GUARD, from page 1***

and people leaving active duty, he said.

"These troops realize they are very lucky to be stationed here in North Dakota," Lieutenant Mielke said. "We could have been sent over to Iraq.We were more than happy when we realized we were going to serve as Air Force-augmentees and be stationed in our home state."

When called to perform their normal duties for the Army as combat engineers, they are the first in and last out of any situation, he said. Their tasks include overcoming obstacles placed by the opposing forces, planting minefields, digging tank ditches, explosive ordinance disposal, route reconnaissance, and constructing survivability positions. Engineers are used in either the offense or defense depending on how the fighting is going.

Augmentees have taken on a new role with the 5th SFS as installation entry controllers. A far cry from their previous training, the Guardsmen learned their new trades in a matter of days.

The Army augmentees were put through a condensed security forces course established by the Air Force, said Master Sgt. Paul Sullivan, the 5th SFS police services non-commissioned officer in charge.

"(They) were trained in apprehension techniques, Air Force standards for use of force, identification card recognition and local-area training," Sergeant Sullivan said. "Once they completed the classroom training, they had 30 days of on-the-job training before they went through a position-qualification evaluation."

"When we arrived February 10, we went directly into security forces classroom training," Lieutenant Mielke said. "There was some confusion over differences in Army and Air Force standards, but a lot of Air Force guys came forward to assist our men in their training."

The 5th SFS troops made the 141st ECB feel welcome and helped them get settled into their new duty assignments, Lieutenant Mielke said. Augmentees enjoyed the Air Force accommodations provided to them during their temporary-duty assignments. While assigned at Minot, augmentees live in temporary lodging facilities. Augmentees were given meal cards so they could use the dining facility, and other on-base facilities.

"We were just surprised by what we found here at Minot," Lieutenant Mielke said. "With everything offered here, we would never have to leave the base."

Guardsmen could continue to serve as security forces augmentees for a second year if needed, said Sergeant Sullivan.

"We're here to help (the security forces) reach their mission requirements for overseas missions, keep up their manning strength and help keep their current level of security where it needs to be," Lieutenant Mielke said. "And we'll be here until we're no longer needed."

The "Mighty Eighth" Voice

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Public Affairs IMA
Maj. Robert Thompson

8AF commander sends birthday greetings

By Lt. Gen. Bruce Carlson
Commander, 8th Air Force

With the single stroke of a pen 56 years ago, President Harry S. Truman created the United States Air Force as a separate armed service.

Since then—in war and peace—the "Mighty Eighth" has been part of an organization that has maintained a worldwide vigil, responding rapidly with unparalleled reach and power.

As we prepare to celebrate another anniversary September 18, I want to thank you, the men and women of Eighth Air Force for your selfless contributions to our nation's defense.

We have some of America's finest citizens serving in the military, and the airmen of today's Air Force epitomize the excellence that reflects all of the qualities that make our country great.

Since the birth of our service, members of Eighth Air Force, past and present, have paved the way and served the Air Force with honor, courage and distinction, both at home and in far-off lands.

Lt. Gen. Bruce Carlson

The Air Force already had a foundation built in the Army Air Corps by aviation pioneers such as Brig. Gen. Billy Mitchell and Gen. "Hap" Arnold. Exploits of Eighth Air Force over Germany are still recounted as the "stuff of legends."

Since that time, the men and women of America's Air Force have ceaselessly and selflessly mastered the challenges of a changing world. America's wars have been fought on many fronts far from home—in the jungles of the south Pacific, the bloody beaches of Normandy, the icy slopes of the Korean Peninsula, the rice paddies of Vietnam, the mountains and caves of Afghanistan and just recently, in the deserts of Iraq. And each time when called upon, our Air Force has enabled aerospace power to serve the cause of peace and freedom.

Today we have more than five decades of remarkable accomplishment in air power to draw upon. You are part of the transformation that is bringing the Air Force into the 21st century. Taking advantage of technological innovations and developments over the past few years, our Air Force has truly become an air and space force second to none.

Revel in the accomplishments of our past while you seek out the challenges of the future. You are part of the proud tradition and heritage of our Air Force and the "Mighty Eighth," and you will ensure that we translate the victories of the past into greater successes in the future. Happy Birthday!

Senate confirms vice commander's second star

From Staff reports

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La.— The vice commander of the "Mighty Eighth" found out he will soon rise in rank when it was announced Aug. 1 that the U.S. Senate had confirmed his promotion to major general.

Brigadier Gen. Gregory Power has been awarded his second star, and is one of 20 Air Force brigadier generals to receive confirmation. He assumed his current position at Eighth Air Force August 2002.

General Power was commissioned in 1975 after completing the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University ROTC program. During his more than 27 years of service, the general has held various assignments in flying units including tours as an aircraft maintenance officer, B-52G aircraft commander and instructor pilot, and B-52 standardization and evaluation co-pilot.

Brig. Gen. Greg Power

His staff experience includes an Air Staff Training Program tour at the Pentagon, a tour on the Air Staff as the B-52 Program Element Monitor, and then serving on the secretary of the Air Force staff as an executive officer to the director of strategic, special operations forces and airlift programs.

Additionally, Brig. Gen. Power has commanded a B-52 squadron at Loring AFB, Maine, and a B-2 Operations Group at Whiteman AFB, Mo. He also commanded the 5th Bomb Wing at Minot AFB, N.D., and prior to assuming his current position, commanded the 55th Wing at Offutt AFB, Neb.

The general is a command pilot with more than 3,900 flying hours

He is experienced in multiple aircraft weapon systems and has flown the T-37, T-38, B-52, B-2 and RC-135.

General Power is a recipient of the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

Air Force unveils new utility uniform plan

By Tech. Sgt. David A. Jablonski
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — Air Force officials announced Aug. 6 plans for the wear test of a new utility uniform to possibly replace the current battle dress uniform.

The blue, gray and green tiger-stripe camouflage ensemble is a departure from the current woodland pattern uniform and includes many new features that are intended to increase functionality and provide a distinctive look for airmen of the 21st century, officials said.

Three-hundred uniforms will undergo wear testing from January to July at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska; Hurlburt Field, Fla.; Langley AFB, Va.; Luke AFB, Ariz.; McChord AFB, Wash.; Ramstein Air Base, Germany; Robins AFB, Ga.; Vandenberg AFB, Calif.; and Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. The test will generate feedback about fit, durability and functionality.

"Our intent is to create a uniform that will be distinctive, practical, easy to maintain, comfortable and, most important, a uniform you will be proud to wear," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper.

"We have become a more expeditionary force, with less time at home to spend caring for the uniform," Jumper said. "In the last 20 years, material technology has improved greatly. As a result, we have designed one uniform that can satisfy our various climates and utility needs, while eliminating the need for professional ironing to provide a polished appearance."

Jumper said the distinctive Air Force uniform is designed to fit well, look sharp and require much less maintenance than the current uniform.

"We (also) need to ensure our airmen have a uniform that fulfills our unique air and space missions," he added.

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald R. Murray, explains that great care is being taken to ensure the best possible uniform is created to meet future needs.

"I believe that one of the great strengths of our Air Force and its airmen is the ability to adapt to new missions, new technologies and an ever-changing world landscape," he said. "This new utility uniform is another example of seeing a need for improvement and moving forward."

A key step in bringing any new uniform item into service is feedback from airmen in the field, Murray said.

"I believe it's a uniform fitting of the world's greatest expeditionary Air Force and one that we will be proud to wear," he said. "We want your feedback as well — not shoot-from-the-hip feedback, but feedback that comes from seeing the uniform in action and thinking about how it will meet your needs based on your work environment.

"It's important to remember that this is a wear test, and the decision about whether or not to adopt some, all or none

● See UNIFORM, page 7

photos by Master Sgt. Jim Varhegyi

Left: Tech. Sgt. Thomas Stone (left) and Capt. Rachel Sullivan, both with the 89th Maintenance Group at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., give the optional Henley-style T-shirt a try while putting the test utility uniform through its paces on the flightline. **Above:** Second Lt. Arcelia Miller, from the Air Force's special security office, puts the Air Force test utility uniform through its paces at an entry control point. The blue, gray and green tiger-stripe camouflage ensemble includes many new features intended to increase functionality while providing a distinctive look for the 21st century airmen. The uniforms will undergo wear-testing beginning in January 4.

Aerospace Warrior Attitude

Staff Sgt. David Wooddell
694th Support Squadron
Fort Meade, Md.

Years of service: 7 years, 8 months

Hometown: Tyler, Texas

Family: Wife, Michelle

Job title: NCOIC, Civil Engineering

Primary duties and responsibilities: Management and maintenance programs for 13 facilities and 14 acres supporting the 694th Intelligence Group, 70th Intelligence Wing, and National Security Agency missions.

Most rewarding job aspect: Taking care of my airmen, command and other service members.

Goals: I am working to complete the last few requirements to submit a package to the Airmen Education and Commissioning Program board. If selected, I will work for two more years to complete an Aerospace Engineering Degree at Texas A&M University.

I'm most proud of: My success in the accomplishment of seemingly impossible tasks since working outside of my AFSC. I was selected as the squadron NCO of the Quarter for second quarter 2003 and I received the squadron's "Can-Do" award for February 2003.

My best asset: Adaptability!

What motivates your winning attitude: Support, recognition and the satisfaction of seeing a finished product's direct impact on our people

Favorite aspects of Fort Meade: People who work below, above and alongside me. Fort Meade is a challenging duty location. However, knowing that I have the support of my peers, squadron, group and wing make it very easy for a staff sergeant to accomplish here what they could not elsewhere.

Eighth Air Force Salutes!

Certificate of Service

Brigadier Gen. Greg Power, 8th Air Force vice commander, presents his secretary, Pat Thomas with her 30-year Certificate of Service award Aug. 7. Ella Burt, 608th Air Operations Group, received her 20-year certificate during the same ceremony.

photo by Capt. Denise Kerr

Headquarters' Pin-ons

Congratulations to the Headquarters' newest promotees

Captain Lisa Holmes gets pinned to her new rank by her husband Tech. Sgt. James Holmes (left) and her sister, Mary Thompson (right) during a recent ceremony. Holmes is the personnel officer for senior officer matters at Headquarters Eighth Air Force.

photo by Capt. Denise Kerr

photo by Master Sgt. Rick DelaHaya

Brigadier Gen. Greg Power, 8th Air Force vice commander (left) and husband, Doug Rupp (right) pin first lieutenant rank on Karen Rupp during a recent ceremony. Rupp is the executive officer for General Power.

Airmen get peek at new wash-and-wear uniform

By Tech. Sgt. David A. Jablonski
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — A prototype of the new Air Force utility uniform was unveiled July 9 in various duty sections at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., and Bolling AFB, D.C.

Senior Master Sgt. Jacqueline Dean, from the Air Force uniform board, enlisted the aid of eight airmen to demonstrate both the men's and women's version of the blue, gray and green tiger-stripe camouflage uniform for photographers.

Opinions varied, but were largely positive.

Second Lt. Arcelia Miller, from the Air Force's special security office, tested the uniform in an entry control point environment at Andrews.

"I like (the blouse) tucked in," she said. "It looks super."

Miller said she also liked the uniform's look and fit.

"The color is different," she said. "I like it; it's comfortable and it's low-maintenance. It has a bunch of Air Force logos, and I like the rigger belt, and I love the black T-shirt — it's very professional looking."

Senior Master Sgt. Vicky Jones, from the Bolling AFB's 11th Security Forces Squadron, observed other security forces members in the uniform.

"I like it; the material reminds me of the old fatigues," Jones said. "It's lightweight (and) it looks like it conforms better to the body. And it's Air Force blue, ooh-rah! It's good to be back in the Air Force."

Capt. Rachel Sullivan, from the 89th Maintenance Group at Andrews was surprised.

"They're … blue!" she exclaimed.

Sullivan and Tech. Sgt. Thomas Stone, also from the 89th MXG, wore the uniform while reviewing maintenance checklists for a C-9 Nightingale.

Sullivan also noted that, while many maintainers use the lower shirt pockets, the new uniform has only breast pockets on the blouse.

"I don't care for the (Navy) Seabee-style hat or the embroidered T-shirt," Sullivan added, but she said she was otherwise pleased with the women's cut.

Performance-wise, Stone felt that "the cuffs got in the way a bit" while he was going through his maintenance routine. Contrary to Sullivan, he did not like the belt.

In another flightline environment, Staff Sgt. Crystal Cardinale tried out the uniform while working on a District of Columbia Air National Guard F-16 Fighting Falcon.

"I like the T-shirt," the 113th Fighter Wing crew chief said. The T-shirt is a black, three-button Henley style shirt with the Air Force logo on left breast and the wearer's name embroidered on the right.

Inside Bolling's 11th Communication Squadron server room, Senior Airman Brandi Wyatt recognized the new uniform's low-maintenance appeal.

photo by Master Sgt. Jim Varhegyi

The Air Force logo is interspersed throughout the new Air Force test utility uniform. The blue, gray and green tiger-stripe camouflage ensemble includes many new features intended to increase functionality while providing a distinctive look for the 21st century airmen.

"It's wash and wear, and that's my kind of uniform," Wyatt said.

The wear test period officially begins in January, when 300 uniforms will endure the rigors of Air Force life, indoor and out.

● ***UNIFORM, from page 3***

of this uniform will be made after considering the results of the test and feedback about how it meets airmen's needs," Murray said.

According to officials, the wash-and-wear uniform will be easier to maintain and will not require professional laundering or starching. Officials estimate that home laundering will potentially save between $180 and $240 in laundry costs over the course of a year.

Unlike the current BDU, the new version comes in men's and women's cuts. The separate women's uniform reflects the growth in the number of women in the service. In the late 1980s women comprised less than 13 percent of the total force; today nearly one in five airmen are women.

Officials said that preliminary study shows other possible advantages to the uniform include:

— Using the same fabric identified by the Marines as the optimum material for wash-and-wear characteristics;

— A camouflage pattern that corresponds to the jobs airmen do in most situations that require a utility uniform,

— Recalling the "tiger-stripe" camouflage pattern used during the Vietnam War, but with the distinctive Air Force logo embedded into a color scheme that preliminary testing indicates may provide better camouflage.

Officials are also considering maintenance-free boots and alternative T-shirts.

The uniform patterns are being cut, with production to begin in November. Data collection and analysis, and any potential adjustments, will occur from August through October 2004. A final decision on the uniform is expected in December 2004. If approved, production could begin as soon as 2005, with a phase-in date to be determined.

B-2 *Spirit* drops 80 JDAM test bombs

courtesy photo

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — A B-2 Spirit drops Joint Direct Attack Munitions separation test vehicles over Edwards in an earlier test. On Aug. 6, a B-2 dropped 80 inert JDAMs during a test to increase the B-2's operational capability.

By 2nd Lt. Brooke Davis
Air Force Flight Test Center Public Affairs

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — In an effort to increase the B-2 Spirit's operational capability, a test force here conducted an airborne release of 80 Joint Direct Attack Munitions separation test vehicles. The separation test vehicles are inert weapons used to collect data.

The Aug. 6 test was one of more than nine sorties flown as a build-up toward equipping the aircraft to carry and release up to 80 JDAMs on a single missions, according to Mark Burke, 419th Flight Test Squadron project manager. The purpose of the build-up approach is to reduce the risk of aircraft collision with the weapons, explained Burke.

"The overall objective of this program is to integrate the Smart Bomb Release Assembly and JDAM-82 into the B-2," said Burke. "This improved capability will allow the B-2 to carry 80 JDAMs."

The brains of the SBRA are the Smart Bomb Rack Controller and the Stores Management Operational Flight Program. This allows the weapons to be released at specific intervals, according to Burke. The JDAM-82, a 500-pound smart bomb, is able to communicate with the aircraft through a cable, instructing the weapon to strike a specific target.

The vehicles used during the drop are not considered smart weapons because target data will not be passed to the weapon, said Burke. Data collected from each sortie will be analyzed by the Air Force Seek Eagle Office at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. Officials use this data to certify the safety of new weapons on aircraft, and the B-2 test program is required to have AFSEO clearance before progressing to the next release sortie.

"Once all of the data collected from the STV release is analyzed by AFSEO, the program will progress into the demo phase," said Burke. "The demo phase will be an end-to-end test that proves the capabilities of the SBRA and JDAM-82 weapons load."

The demo phase is a two-part mission that will be flown from Edwards to the Utah Testing and Training Range at Hill AFB, Utah, Burke explained.

The demo phase will mark the first demonstration of an airborne platform with the maximum amount of mass-precision capability achieved by the B-2 test program, according to Maj. William Power, 419th FLTS project pilot.

The first demo test, scheduled for late August, will be the released 32 inert JDAMs onto the JDAM complex, which is set up to represent an operational airfield. The final demo test, scheduled for September, will release 80 inert JDAM-82 weapons at once with the potential of striking 80 different targets on the JDAM complex.

Welcome to the "Mighty Eighth"

The following people joined the Headquarters 8th Air Force team in August:

- **Airman 1st Class Joshua McKinney**
608th Air Intelligence Squadron
- **Airman 1st Class Therese Schmidt**
26th Operational Weather Squadron
- **Staff Sgt. Courtney Brown**
608th Air Communications Squadron
- **Master Sgt. Cornell Singleton**
608th Air Support Squadron
- **Lt. Col. Jerald Mallernee**
608th Air Communications Squadron
- **Col. Patrick Larkin**
Chief, 8th Air Force Safety
- **Brig. Gen. John Bordelon, Jr.**
Mobilization Assistant to the 8AF commander

New commander rides into town

MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE, Mont. — Lieutenant General Bruce Carlson, 8th Air Force commander (left), passes the guidon to the new 819th RED HORSE Squadron commander, Lt. Col. Bob Staib during a ceremony August 7. Prior to becoming the new commander, Staib was the chief, program management branch for the Office of the Air Force, Civil Engineering. He replaces Col. Terry Crummett who departed for Andersen AFB, Guam.

photo by Staff. Sgt. Shad Eidson

Operations Center changes name to reflect evolving mission

By Tech. Sgt. Amanda Holland
Misawa Securty Operations Center

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan—The Misawa Cryptologic Operations Center became the Misawa Security Operations Center during an official christening ceremony July 21.

The renaming more accurately reflects the MSOC's evolving mission.

Wayne Riegel, Defense Special Representative, Japan, was guest speaker for the event.

In honor of their contributions to Security Hill, planks were presented to all those who have contributed to the MSOC.

The presenting of planks is a Naval tradition in which those involved in commissioning a ship are given planks from that ship.

Col. Fred W. Gortler III, MSOC commander, presented plankowner certificates to Riegel, Col. Donald Weckhorst, Misawa AB's vice wing commander, Captain Radloff, Misawa Naval Air Facility commanding officer and several guests from Fort Meade.

Misawa's Security Hill has a proud heritage and has undergone significant changes during the past 50 years, but none as dramatic as the transformation that began in 2002.

"One year ago, the joint workforce of the then Misawa Cryptologic Operations Center was faced with a choice." Gortler said.

"We could keep looking in the rearview mirror...or we could look at the road that lay ahead. That decision was easy."

"This ceremony marked a rebirth during the 50th anniversary year of our presence on Security Hill."

The MSOC provides critical assistance to the 35th Fighter Wing and others who may need help during search and rescue efforts and supports theater and national commanders with secure command and control communications.

In recent years, the MSOC's mission has evolved to maintain pace with the rapidly changing geo-political environment, military threats, and, of course, communications technology.

courtesy photo

Members of the Misawa Security Operations Center cut the first slices of cake during the christening ceremony that officially changed the name of the center. From left, are: From left, are: Chief Warrant Officer Gary Carmean, 403rd MI Det. commander; Joseph Davis, MSOC chief of staff; Col. Fred Gortler, MSOC and 373rd Intelligence Group commander; and Cmdr. Jim Brokaw, NSGA commander and MSOC vice commander.

Sleepless in Romania

Deployed to war, Offutt NCO returns in love

By 1st Lt. Erin Kingsley-Smith
55th Wing Public Affairs

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb.—There were many speculations on what Tech. Sgt. James Fisher would come back with from his deployment: souvenirs, a suntan, maybe even some stomach problems from eating different food. No one ever expected he would return with a wife.

In February, Fisher, 55th Wing Public Affairs NCOIC, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom to RAF Fairford, England. After two months, he forward-deployed from the 457th Air Expeditionary Group to the 458th AEG in Constanta, Romania where he was assigned to the American Forces Press Information Center. It was there that he met Gabriela Curt who was employed by the Air Force and Army contingent as a translator/interpreter.

The two worked closely together. "We were working 12-hour shifts and had the opportunity to talk quite a bit," said Fisher. "We realized we had a lot in common with what we were looking for in life."

One of the biggest connections between them was their religion. They attended the Orthodox Church together and Curt helped translate for Fisher. "It was surprising to find out that he was Orthodox," said Curt. "I started talking to him about God and we had some very interesting conversations."

Because they were working so closely together, there was concern about taking their relationship further than friendship. But Fisher couldn't let the opportunity pass him by. "I realized I was falling in love with her and told her a few days later."

Curt did not want to jeopardize her job by dating someone within the workplace. "I told him 'I'm sorry, we're working together, I can't do this,'" she said.

Fisher respected Curt's decision and was happy being friends. But a couple days later, as the two were driving to the base, Fisher asked, "Something's happening between us, isn't it?" Curt said, "Yes."

When Fisher was transferred to a different department a week later, it made pursing the relationship more comfortable as they were no longer dealing with a workplace romance.

When his deployed unit found out they would probably be leaving two months early from their originally scheduled six-month rotation, most people were thrilled; Fisher, for obvious reasons, was disappointed. "I had to make a decision," he said.

courtesy photo

Tech. Sgt. James Fisher and his bride, Gabriela, exchange their vows June 29 at the "House of Marriage" in Constanta, Romania.

He decided to ask for permission from Curt's father to marry her. The only problem was that he didn't speak Romanian, and Curt's father didn't speak English. Curt had to translate the request for him. With the language barrier overcome and the family happy for their union, Fisher officially proposed to Curt by a church overlooking the Black Sea May 20.

The next challenge was to plan a wedding and acquire the necessary documents so Curt could move to America after their wedding, all while Fisher was redeploying. "We decided I'd come back in July for the wedding." After a quick stop back home to complete his redeployment checklist and weed through approximately 1,615 e-mails, Fisher was back on a plane to Romania.

The ceremony was a joyous occasion, "like my 'Big Fat Greek Wedding' x 3," grinned Fisher. There was still tension about whether the couple would return together or the now Mrs. Fisher would have to wait another few months for a visa. They traveled to the Embassy in Bucharest to provide proof of their relationship. Their love and dedication to each other was apparent to the Embassy officials, and they were granted the visa. "We walked out of the Embassy and just held each other," said Mrs. Fisher.

For someone who has never even been outside of Romania, traveling to the United States was quite an adventure for Mrs. Fisher. "We took a cab from one airport to another in New York. When I saw the glass between us and the driver, I thought it was just like what you see in the movies," she said. The large cars, the wide freeways, the brilliant city lights and the enormous shopping centers impressed her. What impressed her most, though, was American courtesy. "Everyone is so nice here," she said.

It took her awhile to get used to everyday conveniences that most Americans take for granted, like the dishwasher and washing machine. She was intimidated at first, "I'm not going to fit in, I'm not going to adjust," she thought. But then she decided that she had to settle down and learn. "I'm feeling much better now," Mrs. Fisher said.

While she still misses her family and her country, she's excited to be here starting a new adventure with her husband. "He's totally different than any other man I have ever met," she said. "He's wonderful."

One-to-one

Members experience firsts, make lasting memories

Photos and story by 2nd Lt. Jennifer Taylor
552nd Air Control Wing Public Affairs

Airman 1st Class Sara Fournier, 552nd Training Squadron, talks to a camp-goer.

Imagine a child confined to a wheel chair their entire life and the look on their face as they go swimming for the first time.

Volunteers from the 552nd Air Control Wing experienced this at Camp One to One, an annual weeklong day camp for handicapped children, at Rockcreek Children's Camp in Norman, Okla.

It all started nine years ago when the 507th Air Reserve Wing called the Belle Isle Lions Club of Oklahoma City because one of their member's homes had burned down. The club jumped at the chance to help out this family by providing them with money, food and hotel vouchers. The 507th ARW extended their appreciation to the Lions Club and offered help any time they needed it. Mr. Jack Watson, founder of Camp One to One, has called on the 552nd ACW every year for help with Camp One to One.

Camp One to One focuses on giving handicapped children and their parents a break from their day-to-day lives by providing them with a relaxed camp atmosphere. Mr. Watson said the costs for handicapped camps are incredibly high and many people cannot afford to send their children to them. The Belle Isle Lions club picks up the cost to operate the camp. Mr. Watson said the cost is less than other handicapped camps for children because there are no hired counselors, and volunteers from the Lions club and the 552nd give their time. While the club can't provide a complete vacation, it offers a parent who attends the camp with their child a break. Parents or guardians attend the camp with their child and take care of them, but in a camp-like setting of swimming, nature walks, crafts, relaxation and fun. One parent to one child, hence the name Camp One to One.

Mr. Watson said his vision for this camp started when he was 12 years old. He spent his summer indoors with Rose Marie, an eight-year-old confined to her house because she had a degenerative brittle bone disease. He said the last thing he would do during his visits with her was carefully walk her to a chair by a window so she could see other children playing outside. When he left, he would wait until he crossed the street to turn and wave good-bye. Mr. Watson said watching her from the outside has stayed with him for years, and it became his driving force to start this camp.

"I wanted the kids who were always inside looking out, to be the ones on the outside playing," said Mr. Watson. The Belle Isle Lions club has made this dream a reality, and every year AWACS volunteers have been there to help.

Volunteers help prepare, serve and clean up after meals; but it isn't just about flipping burgers and serving ice cream. The volunteers enjoyed interacting with the campers and had fun, as well.

"Interaction with the children is important because they see the same people everyday. When someone new comes into their life, it is very special gift," said Mr. Watson.

Camp One to One's primary purpose is to serve and love the children. Airman 1st Class Sean Hall, 552nd Training Squadron, said, "Though we may be busy, talking a little time out of our days means a lot more to people than we know."

Airman 1st Class Sharon Knight, 552nd TRS, was one volunteer who plans on going back to the camp next year. "My favorite part of the camp was working with the campers. Although they were born with disabilities that hinder their lives physically, it hasn't held them back from becoming truly amazing, sweet people," she said. "It was also fun stuffing them with food and playing with them in the pool."

Camp One to One is only one week out of the year, but the experiences last much longer.

"To be able to make a difference for at least one day makes all the difference in the world," said Airman 1st Class Ryan Schnepf, 552nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "It makes everything that we did that day worthwhile. The smiles on their faces will make me smile for a lifetime."