

# Southern Flyer



908th Airlift Wing (Air Force Reserve Command), Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Ala., Vol. 42, Issue 1, January 2005

## Help for Darfur

Two unit reservists participate in Sudan airlift mission

By Jeff Melvin  
908AW Public Affairs

While it seems much of the wing's people and resources are engaged assisting the nation's fight against terror, two unit members got a chance to do their 'day job' – providing humanitarian aid and helping prevent war.

Maintainers Master Sgt. Larry Laird and Tech. Sgt. Craig Sims were part of a contingent of 120 U.S. Air Forces in Europe Airmen and two USAFE C-130 Hercules transport aircraft dispatched to Kigali, Rwanda. They deployed there to support a two-week airlift mission of African peacekeepers as part of the African Union expanded mission in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Team members represented various specialties such as logistics, contracting, airfield management, security forces, communications and other functions necessary to facilitate the airlift operation. The majority of team members deployed from RAF Mildenhall, England, and from Ramstein AB, Germany.

The arrival of the USAFE advance team coincided with an Oct. 20 decision by the African Union Peace and Security Council to expand the security force for monitors by sending additional African peacekeepers to the Darfur region.

"This is an extremely important mission, and as members of the U.S. Air Force and U.S. military, we're looking forward to supporting the AU in its effort to mitigate the humanitarian



Photo by 1st Lt. John Beach

Approximately 40 Nigerian troops march toward an Air Force Reserve Command C-130. The aircraft flew them to the Sudan Oct. 28. President Bush sent two C-130s to the African Union to help reduce the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region where nearly 50,000

people have been killed and more than 1.5 million have lost their homes, officials said. Reserve cargo aircraft airlifted around 300 troops and 60 tons of cargo into the region during a two-week period.

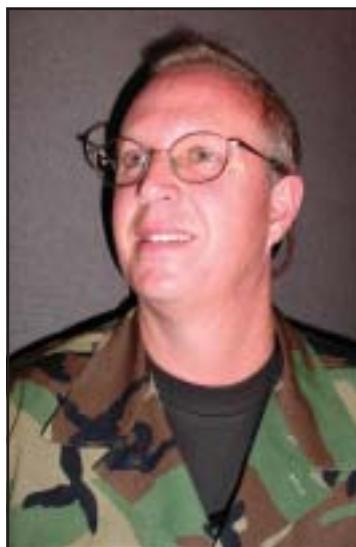
crisis that's taking place in the Darfur region," said Col. Robert Baine, the deployed U.S. commander for the mission. "My advance team and I will put together a platform of operations so that when the C-130s arrive, we're ready to hit the ground running."

During the mission that ran from Oct. 22 to Nov. 3, the Airmen moved 47 Nigerian and 238 Rwandan soldiers, and more than 118,000 pounds of cargo.

On Oct. 18, the president directed the secretary of defense to make the two U.S. military aircraft available for two weeks to support a portion of the deployment of the expanded AU mission in Sudan. According to a statement from the White House, the United States is working with other international partners -- including Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the European Union -- to support the AU expansion of the mission to about 3,500 personnel.

Sergeant Laird, a C-130 crew chief, expressed pride and joy about his role in the humanitarian mission.

According to Laird, he and



Master Sgt. Larry Laird

Sims were "handpicked" to participate in the mission that came down just two days after a 908th contingent arrived for Joint Forge rotation.

To increase probability of mission success, only the most qualified, most versatile and most experienced personnel were selected, Sergeant Laird said.

The 17 maintenance personnel originally chosen consisted of one active duty maintainer joined by 16 reservists drawn from five reserve units.

The group was told not to

expect any support. "We had to be completely self-contained," Sergeant Laird said.

He said he experienced some slight misgivings, but none strong enough to deter him.

"I was eager, anxious, and a little apprehensive but I wanted to go. We knew what had happened in Rwanda about 10 years ago and we were aware of the reports about the killings going on in the Darfur region so we knew exactly what we were getting into and what was at stake. I was glad to be a part of that and possibly stopped some lives from being shed."

The people were nice, he said, and the group never felt threatened.

"Of course being fair-skinned people in a sea of dark faces, we got some looks and people pointed. But we were welcomed warmly. Service and gratitude are held in high regard and crime rates are very low," the sergeant said.

He was particularly impressed with the cohesiveness of the maintenance contingent.

"We meshed together like we had been working together for years. We had a

100 percent mission rating while there and all the cargo was loaded and off-loaded by hand."

He said he takes great pride in telling people he was a part of the effort to reduce the humanitarian crisis in the region.

"Hopefully we had a positive impact. I've been watching the news and it seems the violence has slowed. I feel if we contributed to even one life being saved it was all worthwhile." (This article is based on several U.S. Air Forces in Europe news releases.)

Go to Page 3 to see when Bronze is better than gold





By Col. Heath J. Nuckolls  
908th Airlift Wing commander

## Hang on -- 2005 promises to be a wild ride

January 2005 has arrived. Can you believe it? I hope you enjoyed the holidays and Santa left some great "toys" under your tree.

Thanks to the APS folks who helped assemble the "shoe box Christmas" pallet and loaded it onboard the aircraft. Maxwell's Air Force Sergeant's Association put the gifts together and one of our rotating aircraft delivered

them to a postal detachment in theater. The gift boxes were addressed to deployed members from Air University, 42nd Air Base Wing and the 908th.

This month begins our turn in the "bucket" in the Aerospace Expeditionary Force cycle. For the next four months the deployment line will be running even more regularly than it has in the past year. Nearly every

squadron in the wing will deploy at least a few members during our rotation. In addition to the deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, we currently have people deployed to Germany for Joint Forge and a rotation to Coronet Oak will follow in February.

2005 promises to be a wild ride...so hang on and here we go!

## "He heard me when I hollered"

Most of you know that I recently moved from Montgomery down to Highland Home. That's right Highland Home, Ala. It is out in the country. I've run across some of the same challenges that others have met right after a move such as "Where is this or where did I put that." Well, I have a safe in which I keep most of my important documents. Whenever I need one of them, bam, there it is in the safe.

Well, we are preparing for a trip, which will require the use of our passports, so I went to the safe to get everything together, only to find that I had removed the green portfolio folder in which I keep many of those important papers. I began to get a little alarmed that I couldn't lay my hands on the items that I needed. I looked everywhere I could imagine that I may have put it.

My wife began to look a little worried. You see I needed her passport so that she could go with me on the cruise that I had booked. While reading some of the tour information, I discovered that if she had her birth certificate and a picture ID that would suffice. I assured her that she would be able to go on the trip with those documents. She still wanted her passport, but was greatly relieved that she wouldn't have to stay at home while I

enjoyed the sands on the beaches of Mexico.

Some of you know that I recently celebrated a birthday, and as a gift my wife wanted to get me a new pickup. We found the one that we thought would work well for us. On the way home from the dealership, I remembered that the title to the truck that I was going to trade was in that green portfolio folder -- you know, the one that I can't find. Well, when we got home, I looked some more. Panic began to set in. My birthday present was about to slip through my fingers. I came to the conclusion that I would have to go through every single box that hadn't been unpacked yet. Quite a formidable task.

I decided that before I began to tear the house completely apart, I would go to the quiet of the guest bedroom and pray. I got down on my knees and told the Lord how dumb it was for me to take the green portfolio

out of the safe, and assume that I could keep it safer. I sincerely asked that he help me find the folder so that I could have the truck title as well as my wife's passport. As I prayed, I began to feel the tension melt away. The panic eased, and a sense of well-being began to come over me. I got up off my knees with a new determination to tear into some boxes.

As I came out of the bedroom, my wife emerged from my office, holding in her lovely hands the green portfolio ... and ... her passport.

When I hollered, the lord answered my prayer.

So now we both get to go on the cruise, and oh yes, my new pickup is very nice.

Take your needs to your knees, and he will meet you there. He was certainly there for me.

Trust him with the New Year that is before you, and then just watch to see what miracles he will work for you.



By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bob Anders  
908th Airlift Wing senior chaplain

## Top brass serve holiday meal

A River Front Dining Hall patron gets some heaping helpings from some high-powered helpers, 908AW senior staff members (from left) Command Chief Master Sgt. Amos Moore, senior Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bob Anders and Col. Heath Nuckolls.



Photo by Jeff Melvin



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### Editorial policy

Editorial content of the "Southern Flyer" is edited, prepared and provided by the 908th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office.

All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.

We solicit articles, drawings and photographs and reserve the right to edit materials to conform to "Southern Flyer" editorial policies.

Because of the printing and mail-out schedule the newspaper goes to press on Friday, two weeks prior to the UTA. The submission deadline for articles or information is the Wednesday two weeks prior to the UTA.

For information about this schedule, call Jeff Melvin at (334) 953-7874.

## This winner gets the bronze

C-130 navigator gets Bronze Star for OEF support

By Jeff Melvin  
908AW Public Affairs

A second unit reservist has received one of the nation's highest military decorations resulting from the 908th's support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

357th Airlift Squadron C-130 navigator Maj. Craig Maiorana was presented the Bronze Star at December's wing-wide commander's call. The Bronze Star is awarded for heroic or meritorious achievement of service, not involving aerial flight in connection with operations against an opposing armed force. Major Maiorana joins former 357th AS commander (now 908AW vice commander) Col. Norm Ham as recent recipients of this prestigious award.

The Airmen were recognized for meritorious achievement during the 908th's deployment to Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, early last year to support combat operations in Afghanistan.

Major Maiorana served as the tactics and current operations officer for the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron Dec. 7, 2003 to March 10, 2004. The citation accompanying the award of the Bronze Star noted his conduct of "all aspects of mission planning for over 300 combat missions."

His experience, the citation read, was "invaluable in providing around the clock response to the Combined Forces Air Component Commander's intra-theater airlift directorates ensuring instantaneous reaction to short-notice mission changes, weather diversions, mission reschedules, and cancellations."

The tactics and current operations officer's efforts provided crucial flexibility to satisfy mission needs. Not content to merely plan and oversee, Major Maiorana also pitched in to augment incomplete crews, flying 14 combat missions to austere landing zones.

His expertise contributed to more than 300 successful missions and 2,400 flying hours, transporting over 5,000 passengers, including detainees and medevac patients, and more than 3,750 tons of cargo.

The navigator refused to take credit for the unit's accomplishments, repeatedly pointing out that success stemmed from teamwork. He praised other unit members who participated in the 357th's first combat deployment.

"We did an outstanding job," the navigator said. Using the active duty that were in place the year prior as a measuring stick, the unit made remarkable improvements, he said.

"We improved 300 percent over what the active duty did as far as airlift efficiency, cargo tonnage, personnel airlifted into the combat zone and the amount of sorties flown," Maiorana said with obvious pride.

The improvement began almost immediately when shortly after arrival the planning cell that he led, with senior leader approval, began to reorganize the whole shop.

He received all the support he needed from unit leadership as well as higher headquarters backing. He used experience and expertise culled from four years at Headquarters Central



Maj. Craig Maiorana looks over charts inside the cockpit of a 908AW C-130

Photo by Jeff Melvin

Command to "make the right phone calls, make the correct decisions and relay them through the squadron commander (then-Lt. Col. Ham, who as noted earlier also received the Bronze Star.

Major Maiorana cited several factors as key contributors to the unit's success. First of all, many of the issues such as "mission cancellations, aircraft getting stuck down range, maintenance problems, weather diversions, etc., were anticipated so we were able to get on top of them immediately."

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, personnel or lack of personnel issues.

"We collaborated to successfully accomplish our first deployment in a combat zone and to understand what it takes to come together as a flying squadron to accomplish those objectives," Maiorana continued.

People pulling together and exceeding mission requirements didn't surprise him. It was a continuation of what happens daily here

at home station, he said.

"Our leadership is taking us in the right direction and I think we're carrying forward the philosophy that's instilled here at home station to the AOR. Anytime our folks (our management) is in place to run things overseas we do an excellent job. It's a team effort: leadership, unit members and support from family, friends and co-workers."

The expeditionary airlift squadron received many accolades, perhaps none as appreciated as the "attaboy" Major Maiorana received from a former boss at CENTCOM (Maiorana served as the general's aide and also was in charge of the coalition airlift desk), U.S. Army Maj. Gen. James Comstock, who showed up in theater on a Reserve director's visit to see how the troops were doing.

"He said we were doing an outstanding job and that we were the benchmark for the AOR."

The navigator views the deployment, not the awards

and accolades, as "the highlight of my life, not only on a personal basis but also as far as pulling together as a team and understanding that it takes more than yourself to get through that situation.

"I dearly miss a few folks who've retired since. They were very close friends of mine. They contributed immensely to the overall mission success."

Looking back on 24 years of service, the deployment was tops, he said.

Ever humble, he once again took pains to deflect or share the credit.

"Many people made sacrifices. We got notified the day before Thanksgiving. We processed, got everyone situated and got to the AOR with minimal fuss. Once we were in place and took over the mission we straightened it out. The numbers tell the story. I'm extremely proud of that and I'm extremely proud of our team – commanders, operators, maintainers, support people, family members, everyone."

## General Tanzi leaves 10th Air Force to serve as AFRC second in command

ROBINS AFB, Ga. – Maj. Gen. David E. Tanzi will return here in January to serve as vice commander of Air Force Reserve Command.

He will replace Maj. Gen. John J. Batbie Jr., who will retire after he relinquishes his post to General Tanzi Jan. 21.

General Tanzi currently commands 10th

Air Force, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas.



Maj. Gen. David Tanzi

Before that assignment, he was director of plans and programs at Headquarters AFRC, Robins AFB, from February 1999 to March 2002.

Other assignments include:

Commander of the 419th Fighter Wing, Hill AFB, Utah, from July 1993 to February 1999.

Commander of the 906th Fighter Group, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, from July 1987 to July 1993.

Deputy commander for operations and later commander of the 917th Tactical Fighter Group, Barksdale

AFB, La., from December 1985 to July 1987.

As the vice commander of the Air Force Reserve, General Tanzi will oversee AFRC daily operations.

General Tanzi is a native of Hanover, N.H. He entered the Air Force through the Ohio Air National Guard in 1968 and earned his wings in 1970. A fighter weapons school graduate, he has held several supervisory and com-

mand positions, including squadron commander.

General Tanzi is a command pilot with more than 4,500 flying hours in several fighter aircraft. He flew combat missions over northern Iraq in support of Operation Provide Comfort II. The general retired from civil service Dec. 3. He is now a full-time reservist in the Active Guard and Reserve program. (AFRC News Service

# Joint Chiefs chairman leads USO troupe to visit troops in Southwest Asia

By Jim Garamone  
American Forces Press Service  
CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait  
— The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff today thanked the men and women here who are readying to go to Iraq by bringing a world-class United Service Organizations tour to entertain them.

Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers thanked servicemembers here and at nearby Ali Al Salem Air Base for their service in the region. The chairman is touring the region speaking with troops and introducing actor-comedians Robin Williams and Blake Clark, football hall-of-famer John Elway and model-sportscaster Leeann Tweeden.

The celebrities donate their time and talents, and the military handles the logistics of getting the performers to the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.

Myers began the program by thanking the men and women and their families for the sacrifices they make to take on terrorism. He also thanked the Kuwaiti government and military for the support they have provided and continue to provide American troops. "We couldn't do what we have done in the region without our friends and allies, the Kuwaitis," Myers said.

Also at the USO event were soldiers and airmen from Korea and Japan. Myers welcomed them and thanked them for their help in rebuilding Iraq and making the country a safer place.

Any worries that the Japanese and Korean servicemembers would not understand the show were immediately dispelled when Tweeden took the stage to thunderous cheers that knew no language barrier. She introduced Clark, who served as a platoon leader during the Vietnam War. Clark, perhaps best known

as Harry the Hardware Guy on "Home Improvement," soon had the troops eating out of his hand as he regaled them with stories of his life growing up in Georgia.

Following Clark, former Denver Broncos quarterback Elway took the stage. He told the servicemembers that he wasn't pretty or funny, "but I can still chuck a football," and then proceeded to fire souvenir footballs to the troops.

Williams then took the stage. Williams, on his third USO tour to the region, excels in improvisational comedy and rified on unit numbers, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Saddam Hussein, armor plates and many other subjects.

Following the show, Myers and the celebrities spoke with the troops, signed autographs and posed for pictures.

The show is the culmination of a year's worth of work, said Edward A. Powell, USO's president and chief executive officer. Coordinating talent and getting the logistics in place is the major challenge for both the USO and the military. But the payoff is worth it, he said.

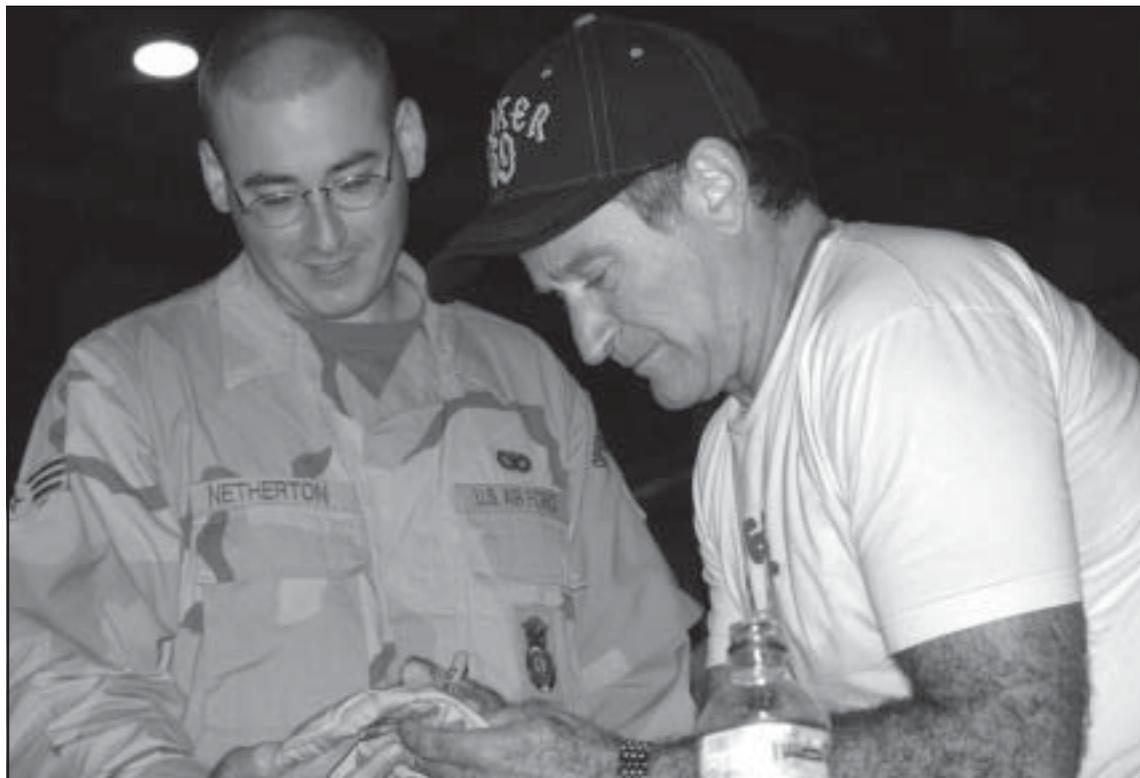
"Look at the faces and you know this is worth it," Powell said. "Getting the response from the servicemembers and letting them know that Americans think of them constantly is important.

"We connect America's heart to its men and women in the service," he continued. "If we ever let that very important connection break, fray or otherwise be damaged, then we'll have a serious problem. It's important for the people out here to understand the people back home support them and there is an absolute connection."

**Right, deployed 357AS loadmaster Senior Airman John Metcalf 'goes solo' with CJCS Gen. Richard B. Myers during the general visit along with a USO troupe showing their support for the U.S. forces abroad.**



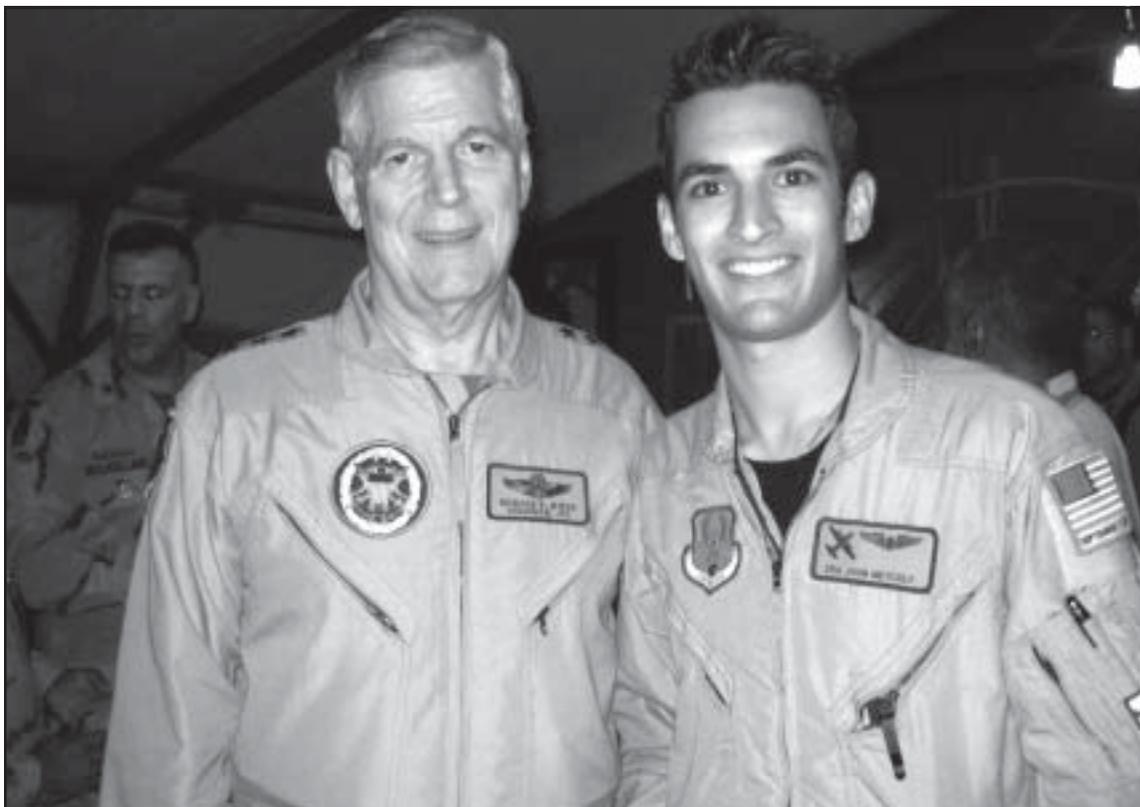
NFL great John Elway



Comedian and actor Robin Williams visits with Senior Airman Curtis Netherton at a forward-deployed location. Airman Netherton is assigned to the 386th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron.



Deployed 357AS members, Maj. Steve Catchings and Master Sgt. Kevin (front L-R) and (back L-R) Capt. John Miller, Senior Master Sgt. Donald Tarrance and Tech. Sgt. Steve Wells pose for snapshot with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Richard B. Myers at a forward-deployed location.



Courtesy photo

# Air Force officials announce future total force issues

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

WASHINGTON -- Air Force officials plan to tap into the inherent strength and experience of all three Air Force components to increase overall combat capability.

They announced six test initiatives Dec. 1 that fall under the Future Total Force plan that puts Airmen from active-duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units together for specific missions. Each component has unique strengths that together, produce a more effective combat force and efficient peacetime force, officials said.

"For nearly two years, we've been working future total force initiatives that will enable us to meet the challenges of the 21st Century with a smaller, but more capable Air Force," said Air Force Secretary Dr. James G. Roche.

Secretary Roche also said through the initiatives, officials hope to meet the challenges of a shrinking budget, aging aircraft fleet, and new and emerging missions by

improved use of people throughout the total force.

The six test initiatives involve Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units in Arizona, Virginia, Vermont, Utah, Texas, New York and Nevada:

-- The Virginia Air National Guard will partner with Langley Air Force Base, Va., in the transition to the newest fighter aircraft, the F/A-22 Raptor. The Guard unit will provide one aircrew to attend initial training.

-- Community basing places 10 active-duty maintainers in the Vermont Air National Guard's 158th Fighter Wing. The purpose of this move is to capture the experience of the ANG senior maintainers and help train less-experienced active-duty crewmen.

-- At Hill AFB, Utah, the Air Force Reserve Command's 419th Fighter Wing will integrate into the active-duty 388th Fighter Wing. Both units are at the base and fly the F-16 Fighting Falcon. The wings will combine operations to give the Air Force an opportunity to evaluate the Reserve and active-duty partnership in

the fighter community.

-- Texas and Arizona will incorporate the RQ/MQ-1 Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle into the Guard and Reserve to support global operations. Guard Airmen can take advantage of the reach-back capabilities associated the Predator and operate the UAVs. Officials anticipate a low turnover rate of people with the Guard and Reserve forces to significantly reduce UAV training costs.

-- The establishment of a distributive ground station in western New York to process global intelligence information, which will further test the Reserve role in reach-back missions. The mission is a partnership with the Army and the New York Army National Guard at a location to be determined.

-- The Air Force will integrate Guard and Reserve Airmen into all mission areas of the Air Warfare Center and Predator operations. The center, at Nellis AFB, Nev., manages advanced fighter training and integrates many of the Air Force's test and evaluation requirements.

The deputy chief of staff for plans and programs, Lt. Gen. Stephen G. Wood, said he views the three components of the Air Force as equal partners.

"We have taken great pride in our seamless integration of expeditionary operations and feel the time is right to try this integration at home. The test cases will confirm the effectiveness of our future integration activities as we respond to the challenges of modernization and recapitalization and execute the decisions resulting from the (base realignment and closure) process," General Wood said.

These test initiatives will also improve the total force, said Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau.

"As an Army customer ... I am extremely excited and energized by the fact that these are bold, transformational steps that the Air Force is taking," General Blum said. "These are big, bold steps that will enable the Air Force to truly be a future total force and a more capable member of the joint

team. We are better together, than separate."

An important goal of the initiatives is to reduce the family and community separations caused by long reserve mobilizations.

"What this really does is to reduce some of the stress and allows us to access the capabilities that reside within the human resources in the reserve component without putting them through the mobilization process," General Blum said.

"It's good for American employers, that these citizen Soldiers and Airmen can continue to work for them day-to-day; it's good for their families and good for the Department of Defense, because we're able to better access the special skill sets or military expertise of these individuals. And, it allows us to leverage those capabilities on the servicemember's terms so they can balance their family life, civilian jobs and military careers," General Blum said.

Air Force officials said they expect major commands to begin some of the test initiatives as early as January.

## Leaders urge Reserve troops to keep civilian employers in the loop

By Army Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan -- Behind nearly every deployed National Guardsman or reservist, there is a civilian employer who is waiting for that employee to return.

Most civilian employers support their servicemembers by holding positions for them, while some even maintain insurance benefits. The better the relationship these deployed citizen-Soldiers maintain with their employer, the better their reintegration is likely to be upon

returning to their civilian jobs.

"Troops need to take the time to involve their employers in what they are doing," said Maj. Gen. Steve Read, U.S. Army Reserve readiness commander. "If soldiers keep their employers informed and abreast of what's going on, the employers will tend to be more receptive."

The first step in keeping employers informed is ensuring they know the initial timeframe for a deployment, when the deployment is expected to start and about how long it will last.

All National Guardsmen and reservists fall under the guidelines of the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act. This act provides strict guidance for both servicemembers and employers. Some employers choose to go above and beyond what the act requires.

"There have been some employers who have continued health insurance during deployments, or at least until the servicemembers are able

to pick up their Tricare benefits," said Master Sgt. Gregory Jacobs, Army Reserve Affairs retention noncommissioned officer for Afghanistan. These benefits help the families who are left behind, and they help the servicemembers by easing the stress a deployment can induce.

There are various awards at both the state and federal level to recognize those employers who go out of their way to support Guard and Reserve troops.

"To many employers, it is a big deal to get these awards," said Lt. Col. Charles Kirchen, Army Reserve Affairs officer in charge for Afghanistan.

It is up to the individual servicemembers to recommend their employers for awards. This can be done through the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Web site. But there are other ways to show appreciation.

"(Servicemembers) can show their appreciation very

easily," said Capt. James Carmichael, an Army Reserve officer based out of Fort Wayne, Ind. "Something as simple as having a flag flown in their honor and presenting it with a certificate can mean a lot to an employer."

Besides small tokens of appreciation, servicemembers should continue to communicate with their employers throughout their deployment, officials said.

"Stay in touch with them, let them know you're all right," said Sgt. Maj. Scott White, Reserve Affairs senior enlisted adviser for Afghanistan. "Employers are just as concerned about the well-being of their (employees) as anyone else -- they want to know you're being taken care of."

In the end, it all goes back to communication, Sergeant Major White said. "If you're up front and honest with your employer, (he or she) will be able to support you better." (Courtesy of American Forces Press Service)

## Airman trades stripes for bars

Former AES med tech Darrell Bogan is the latest unit member to advance to the officer ranks through the Deserving Airman Commissioning Program. Lieutenant Bogan came to the unit eight years ago as part of the Chicago area contingent. He now lives in Atlanta.



Photo by Jeff Melvin



Photo by Maj. Jerry Lobb

## Unit members show generosity

From left, Chaplain (Capt.) Jamie Danford, Capt. David Lionberger and 1st Lt. Colby Leathers prepare boxes of canned goods and other items donated by unit members for delivery to the Salvation Army. The Company Grade Officers Council sponsored the collection effort.

## Pentagon, 8 bases test new civilian personnel system

WASHINGTON -- Defense Department officials announced Dec. 15 that elements of the Air Force headquarters and eight bases will be in the initial implementation of the National Security Personnel System.

The eight bases are: Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.; Ellsworth AFB, S.D.; Lackland AFB, Texas; March Air Reserve Base, Calif.; McConnell AFB, Kan.; Moody AFB, Ga.; Patrick AFB, Fla.; and Tinker AFB, Okla.

The DOD employees slated for conversion from the traditional civil service system will be included in groupings called spirals. Spiral 1 rolls out incrementally, with the first group of employees scheduled for implementation as early as July.

The labor relations portion of NSPS is targeted for implementation DOD-wide by summer.

Navy Secretary Gordon England announced the units selected to take part in the initial implementation. Secretary England, who serves as the DOD senior executive overseeing the system, indicated that Spiral 1 includes about 300,000 general schedule, general manager and acquisition demonstration civilian employees from the Army, Navy, Air Force and other Department of Defense agencies based in the United States.

Congress authorized the new personnel system as part of the fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act.

Spiral 1 will be phased-in over 18 months.

By law, the NSPS human resources system may not apply to organizations with more than 300,000 employees until the secretary of defense determines and certifies that the department has a performance management system in place that meets NSPS criteria. Spiral 1 will provide the basis for this certification before the start of Spiral 2.

Spiral 3 will comprise the DOD laboratories if current legislative restrictions are eliminated.

Officials said the system is expected to be fully implemented between July 2007 and January 2008. (Air Force Print News)

## Defense finance officials announce distribution dates for 2004 tax statements

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFPN) -- As the end of the year approaches, Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials announced the schedule for distributing 2004 tax statements.

The schedule lists when servicemembers, military retirees and annuitants and defense civilian employees can access their statements through myPay and when they can anticipate receiving a paper copy in the mail.

Customers once again can view, save and print their tax statements from myPay at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>.

Tax statements will be available as follows:

-- Retired Annual Statement: available online Dec. 4 and mailed between Dec. 17 and 29.

-- Retired 1099R: available online Dec. 13 and mailed between Dec. 17 and 29.

-- Annuitant Annual Statements: available online Dec. 13 and mailed between Dec. 28 and 29.

-- Annuitant 1099R: available online Dec. 14 and mailed between Dec. 27 and 29.

-- Reserve W2s: available online Dec. 27 and mailed between Jan. 4 and 5.

-- Civilian W2s: available online Jan. 6 and mailed between Jan. 10 and 14.

-- Active Duty W2s: available online Jan. 14 and mailed between Jan. 18 and 24.

The following statements are available only by mail:

-- Special Compensation for Severely Disabled 1099Rs: mailed Dec. 17.

-- VSI/SSB W2s: mailed between Jan. 4 and 5.

-- Travel W2s: mailed between Jan. 10 and 11.

-- Savings Deposit 1099INTs: mailed between Jan. 10 and 11.

"During the months of January, February and March 2004, an average of 1.4 million myPay users viewed their tax statements each month, and we continue to encourage users to view and print their statements online," said Jim Pitt, director of electronic commerce at DFAS' military and civilian pay services. "Earlier access to W-2s and other tax statements is another way myPay gives users control of their pay information."

## 'Newslink' provides news from across Iraq

by Staff Sgt. Marc Barnes  
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq (AFPN) -- Airmen deployed to Iraq, and their family and friends back home, now have an updated resource to help them stay current on Air Force news throughout the country.

Iraq Newslink is a Web site built specifically to tell stories of deployed Airmen.

The site, located at [www.afnews.af.mil/iraq/index.htm](http://www.afnews.af.mil/iraq/index.htm), is run by the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing's public affairs staff here. It combines stories and photos from here with three other air bases in Iraq -- Kirkuk, Tallil and Baghdad International Airport -- to give readers "one-stop shopping" to get their fill of daily Air Force news reports from the country, officials said.

## Deployed airmen get online holiday voice greetings

WASHINGTON -- Deployed Airmen can now receive holiday-season voice greetings from family and friends via the Internet.

Offered through the Air Force Crossroads Web site and the Air Force's GIMail service, the program allows friends and family members of deployed Airmen to pick up a telephone, dial a toll-free number and send a voice recording via e-mail.

This service is available through Jan. 5.

"This allows many (Airmen) who may not otherwise be able to hear the voices of their loved ones to actually listen to their spouse, children, relatives and friends express their holiday ... wishes," said Barbara Murray, Air Force force sustainment chief.

To receive the messages, deployed Airmen must have, or sign up for a GIMail account. They enroll for voice mail by clicking on Air Force Holiday Voice Mail links within Air Force Crossroads and entering their GIMail password. At that point, a special code is generated for each enrolling Airman, and an e-mail notice containing the toll-free telephone numbers and the code is sent to the family members and friends they have specified.

To send the messages, people use the code for the specific deployed Airman. After they dial the

The site was recently updated for various reasons, but primarily with readers in mind, said Maj. Adriane Craig, the wing's public affairs chief.

"We redesigned the site to give it a deployed Air Force look, but kept in mind ease of navigation for people who rely on it for daily news reports," she said. "The site is also a good resource for stateside bases and family members of deployed (Airmen)."

Officials said they plan to expand the site to include base-specific welcome packages for deploying Airmen, and information on units at each base.

The 332nd AEW is the command unit for the following Iraq-based organizations: the 506th Air Expeditionary Group at Kirkuk Air Base, the 407th AEG at Tallil AB and the 447th AEG in Baghdad.

toll-free number, they provide the code and begin their message.

Toll-free access is available throughout the United States. It is also available in Australia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Korea, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and France.

Once a recording is made, it is sent via GIMail as an attached file. The file can be downloaded for later playback, allowing recipients to hear the messages as many times as they desire.

GIMail, [www.afcrossroads.com/communications/index.cfm](http://www.afcrossroads.com/communications/index.cfm), is an Air Force e-mail service specially designed to provide reasonable security and light bandwidth impact. It is provided to all Airmen and has been extended to all the Department of Defense. This includes all servicemembers, civil service employees, reservists and guardsmen, retirees and authorized family members. There are currently more than 80,000 registered users.

Air Force Crossroads, [www.afcrossroads.com](http://www.afcrossroads.com), is the U.S. Air Force's official community Web site. It features a wide range of military lifestyle information to the entire Air Force family as well as all the component services in the DOD, officials said. (Air Force Print News)

# Take Note

## Hoop dream

Bolstered by fresh faces to complement seasoned veterans, the 908AW men's intramural basketball team heads

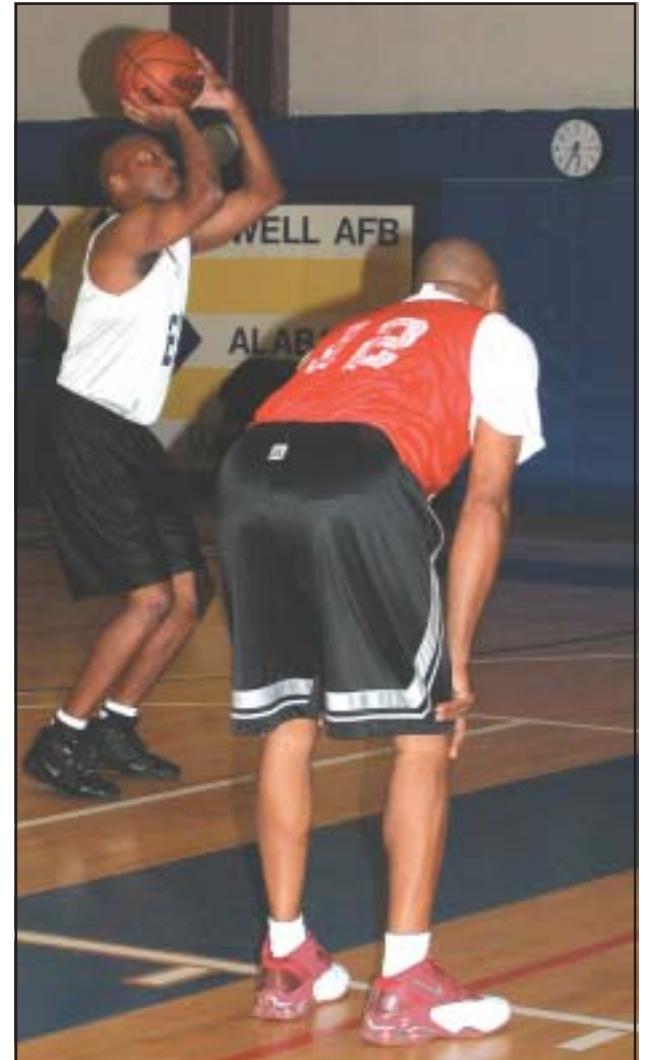
into second half of the 2005 season with a 3-1 mark and a 58-52 win against defending champion, SOC. The hoopsters hope to bring home a title after finishing as runners up three times in a row.



Prentice Tucker takes advantage of a pick set by Joseph Stone during the win over SOC.



Nick Townsend gets ready to take an SOC defender off the dribble while Clarence Thomas sets up down low.



Stone sinks one at the charity stripe.

Photos by Jeff Melvin

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