

Southern Flyer

908th Airlift Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, Maxwell AFB, Ala., Vol. 45, Issue 4, April 2008

Small shop, big task

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AF Reserve turns 60th this April

By Col. Michael J. Underkofler
Commander, 908th Airlift Wing

I was living in England in 1972 when the Air Force celebrated its silver anniversary. As I recall there were many events leading up to the actual 25th birthday. Most bases had an airshow or



Colonel Underkofler

open house. The Base Exchange sold everything from sweatshirts, cake plates, to coffee mugs emblazoned with airplanes and 25th anniversary slogans. I think every military household purchased a commemorative item.

Even the Brits, who are big airplane and memorabilia enthusiasts, bought everything they could find. The anniversary was a big event.

Making the 25th anniversary even more memorable were the first-person stories told by those who had served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and those who had made the transition to the Air Force in 1947. Some of these Airmen were still serving in uniform. With clarity they recounted events that occurred over the years and how and when we developed our own Air Force procedures and culture.

Military anniversaries and celebrations are great for honoring those who came before us and listening to histories of organizational events and challenges. These histories don't have to come exclusively from retirees, but also from those serving now. Sadly we don't often pass along our funny anecdotes, horror stories, or corporate knowledge to our youngest members. What a pity since these frequently sustain us during tough times and make us better.

This month we will celebrate the 60th anniversary—our diamond anniversary—

of the Air Force Reserve. While Citizen Airmen served the nation much earlier, the AF Reserve was formally established by President Harry Truman on April 14, 1948. Thousands of Airmen who had served in the Army Air Corps during WW II and returned to their communities were thrilled to have the opportunity to serve the nation in this new organization.

Shortly after I joined the AF Reserve outside Philadelphia, Pa., in 1992 I had the opportunity to meet some of those first reservists. These Citizen Airmen defeated tyranny in Europe and Asia, re-entered the civilian work force, were busy with their families, but still wanted to spend their precious free time preparing for the next war. In those early years after WW II, these reservists studied military procedures and drilled at night and on the weekends, often without pay or the luxury of equipment. Few would have ever expected to receive the entitlements we receive today.

I made the mistake once of asking one of those early reservists why he and his compatriots did it. Why didn't they put their military service behind them after all they had seen and done during the war? The pregnant pause after I posed the question was embarrassingly long and reinforced why Tom Brokaw aptly named them the "greatest generation." Slowly my mentor reminded me about the Great Depression, the real threat to the nation during the war, and the fate of his family in Europe during the Nazi pogrom. He offered that the opportunities afforded here could be found no where else and were worth sacrificing some time away from the family on the weekends, evenings, or a couple weeks a year during reserve "summer camp".

The story of those Philadelphia reservists was common throughout the nation: patriotism and a desire to continue to serve as Citizen Airmen had no geographic limitations. Slowly,

hand-me-down airplanes and equipment flowed to Air Force reservists. Three years after our founding, our nation was at war again and needed the combat-ready skills of reservists. During the Korean War, 147,000 were mobilized for one to three years—about one-third of all the drilling and non-drilling force.

Challenge after challenge since the Korean War, the nation has relied on AF reservists. Today we provide a huge part of the day-to-day operations of the Air Force. We've transitioned from a strategic force, one held for contingencies, to an operational force. It isn't braggadocio to say that every command in the Air Force benefits from (and needs) the services of AF reservists daily.

I don't think our early reservists could have envisioned the Total Force and the success of it. Despite all the changes, there has been one constant during our 60-year history—a culture of selfless service by Airmen.

So while we may not have sweatshirts, cake plates, and coffee mugs heralding our diamond jubilee, recognizing those who have come before us, sharing and celebrating our accomplishments are no less important. Take time to talk to each other about our model of service.

Similarly, the sacrifices of today's Air Force reservists are equally as humbling as those who started our program. No longer do most drill in their neighborhoods and hometowns. To serve, most travel greater distances, more frequently, and for longer duration. Other challenges also exist which are potential barriers to participation.

When looking at today's Airmen—regular and reserve component—I am extremely optimistic and proud. Quite possibly historians will call them the second greatest generation as they too recognize the seriousness of the threat and demonstrate an unflinching willingness to serve.

Col. Michael J. Underkofler Commander, 908th Airlift Wing

Lt. Col. Jerry W. Lobb Chief, Public Affairs

Jeffery Melvin Deputy Chief/Editor

Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder Public Affairs Specialist

Cover photo:

Ground radio specialists Senior Airmen Oscar Huff and Daniel Gregory, 908th Communications Flight, work on a VHF antenna. See Pages 8 and 9 for more about the small shop with the big task of keeping the wing's lines of communication open and the work flowing.



Photo by Jeff Melvin

Southern Flyer

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Healthy Airmen *You can predict your medical future*

By Lt. Col. Carol Anders,
Nurse Practitioner, 908th Aeromedical Staging
Squadron

Last month I gave the 18-34 year old group help on predicting their medical future. This month we are going to focus on the 35-49 year old population. Remember you can not change your age, your DNA or your culture, but you can predict your health by knowing what to assess at what age and to detect early on those risks that can affect your health as you age.

This is the second of three articles will break down by age what you should be screening for at what age. The screenings will alert you as to the risks factors that you face in the years ahead and provide tips how to improve your health now.

35-49 years

This is the time of life that your lifestyle choices start to catch up with you. Serious acute and chronic conditions may begin to surface. Fortunately, there are screening tests that can identify these conditions early so treatment and often cures can happen.

Everyone in this age group needs to be aware of seven areas to screen:

1. Blood Pressure – becomes even more important in this age group. Increase the screening from every two years to yearly. Those in high risk groups (obese, black, or males over 40) should check more frequently. Normal blood pressure is now 120/60. High blood pressure (hypertension) can lead to increased risk of heart disease, kidney disease and stroke. In the black population it is epidemic and the leading cause of stroke. The military considers high blood pressure needing medical care as 140/90.

2. Body-mass index – Height and weight checks on a regular basis help to monitor this. Not sure what your body-mass index is? Go to the AF portal and log on to the fitness site. Put in your height and weight and it will compute it for you. Normal body mass index is between 18.5 and 25 percent while obesity is 30 percent or greater. Example: If you are six feet tall and weigh 182 pounds your BMI is approximately 25 percent. Most authorities will agree greater than 30 percent is obesity and these charts will help you with an estimate of your BMI.

3. Abdominal girth – Increase in waist circumference is seen as a predictor of potential cardiac problem. The military stopped all other measurements but this one because of its significance in determining one's health.

4. Non fasting total blood cholesterol – This is one of the three important risk factors for coronary disease that you can do something about. (The other two are

smoking and high blood pressure.) It is a lab test called complete lipid panel. It will tell you your total cholesterol and then break it down in to HDLs (high-density lipoproteins) that contain a higher proportion of protein to fat and are often dubbed 'good' cholesterol, LDLs (low-density lipoproteins) that contain a higher proportion of fat and are often dubbed 'bad' cholesterol, and triglycerides. Total values of less than 200 were the gold standard for a number of years. Studies are now looking at lowering this number substantially and taking in to consideration what type of cholesterol you have. Some health care advocates believe that people with risk factors for heart disease should be checking lipid panels as early as age 20. Check with your health care provider for details.

5. Fasting and 2 hour post meal blood-glucose test: These tests determine the amount of sugar in the blood after a 14 hour fast or 2 hours after having a meal. Fasting blood sugars should be 60-110 mgm/dl and 2 hour post meal blood sugars should be 150 mgm/dl or lower. Elevation in these is often seen as the first indicators for diabetes. While not everyone needs these tests people over 40 or with a history of heart disease, obesity or family members with diabetes should consider being tested. People with fasting blood sugar lab results from 100-120 mgm/dl are seen as pre-diabetic. These people may find it easy to prevent the full blown disease with weight loss and exercise.

6. Eye exam for vision – In this age group the eyesight begins to deteriorate. You should be examined if you feel your vision is declining, but also between the ages of 30-39 for a baseline then every 2-4 years thereafter.

7. Eye exam for glaucoma – This usually is a part of your routine eye exam. The disease usually does not appear until after the age of 45 but people at high risk should be tested earlier. Those falling in the high risk category are black people, people who have diabetes, and people who have a family history of glaucoma.

Women need to add three more tests and consider their health when trying to get pregnant.

1. Mammogram /Breast exams – you should be in the habit of doing monthly breast exams now. You are your breast's best friend when it comes to knowing what your breast tissue feels like. Monthly breast self exams and similar breasts exams by a provider at least every three years help to establish a baseline for later. Women at low risk for developing breast cancer should start annual or biennial mammograms when they reach 40. Most health-insurances cover all or

part of the cost. Those at higher risk for breast cancer (family history, weight, use of cigarettes or alcohol, early puberty or exposure to radiation) should start earlier. Everyone should have a baseline mammogram by the age of 35.

2. Pelvic exam and Pap smear – continue yearly exams and testing.

3. Blood tests: Thyroid screening should be done every 5 years in women over the age of 35. Hypothyroidism (low thyroid) is most common in mid life. The earlier it is diagnosed the better. C-125 is a new blood test used to help in early detection of ovarian cancer. It may not be covered by all insurances but is worth considering.

4. Peri and menopausal – signs and symptoms may begin to appear. Talk to your health care provider about new treatments available to see you through this time of your life.

5. Infertility – this may be a concern to some during this time. Working with your partner and your health care provider is a must. New advances are being made daily in this field.

Men during this time no specific tests are recommended. However under specific circumstance you may want to consider the following:

1. If you have a family history of high blood pressure, smoke, consume alcohol or have an increasing waist size you will need to pay close attention to your blood pressure.

2. If you have a family history of prostate cancer you need to start PSA (PROSTATE-specific antigen) screening now. It is a simple blood test. While it is not perfect, it remains the gold standard for predicting the risk of prostate cancer.

3. At the age 40 is a time to consider digital rectal exams for an enlarged prostate gland. This is especially true if you have noticed a change in the force or strength of your flow of urine or an increase in the number of trips to the bathroom throughout the day or if you find you are waking up in the middle of the night to urinate. Contact your help care provider for a work up.

4. Erectile dysfunction may also begin to occur at this time in life. It may be related to other health issues or treatment in conjunction with other health care conditions. Contact your health care provider for a work up.

What test should be done for those of you over 49? Next month we will explore the tests and monitoring for those over age the age of 49. (Material for this article came from "A Guide to Predicting Your Medical Future", Newsweek: 21 January 2008 by Roxana Popescu and Mary Carmichael)

My meeting with history (Mrs. Johnnie R. Carr)

By Capt. Deanna Goudeau
908th Airlift Wing Education and Training
Branch

January 29, 2008 was a day I will never forget. On that day, I had the distinct honor of meeting and spending a few hours with civil rights pioneer and activist Mrs. Johnnie R. Carr.

Mrs. Carr had happily accepted our invitation to be a guest speaker at the Maxwell Junior Officer Leadership Development Seminar in March 2008. We had spoken on the phone several times about the subject of her planned talk. During our last phone conversation, she invited me to be her guest at the weekly "One Montgomery" supper club breakfast held

every Tuesday at Jackson Hospital.

When we met for breakfast, I quickly realized that being the special guest of Mrs. Johnnie Carr was a great honor. She was truly the mother of the group. Everyone at the meeting knew her, and they each made a point of personally getting over to greet her.

During the introductions, she stood and said, "I would like everyone to meet my special guest, Capt. Deanna Goudeau from the Junior Officer Leadership Development at Maxwell Air Force Base." Some of the others in the room teased her for not using the microphone. She teased them right back as she took the microphone and introduced me for the

second time.

After breakfast we briefly discussed the details of the JOLD seminar. I was clearly fascinated by the stories she began to share with me about her life.

She talked about how the One Montgomery breakfast meetings began as a result of the racially divisive Todd Road court case in the 1980s. The breakfast began as an effort to unite the community by coming together to talk about Montgomery's race and class issues.

She also talked about her family,

especially her son Arlam Carr Jr. and his historic court case successfully desegregating the Montgomery Public School System.

I drove her home after the breakfast and she gave me a short tour of her home. I noticed several honors and accolades that will probably be part of an exhibit someday. After taking a few pictures in her front yard, I told her how much I admired her for what she did, and that we looked forward to her speaking at the JOLD seminar. I also told her that I would keep in touch with her.

About a week later, I sent her a thank you card with a personal note and copies of the pictures we took. Unfortunately, that was only a couple of days before she fell ill from the stroke. I respected her family's privacy and did not try to contact them during that stressful time. A few days later, the nation got the sad news of her passing.

I knew right away I wanted to attend her funeral. The date happened to coincide with the March UTA. When I arrived at the unit on Saturday morning, I was very happy to see that several other members of the 908th were attending the service to pay their respects to a woman who leaves behind a rich legacy in Montgomery and, in the eyes of many, around the nation.

Many people attended the services held at Alabama State University's Acadome. Several high profile persons spoke at the service including famed actress Ms. Cicely Tyson, Montgomery Mayor Bobby Bright, who described Mrs. Carr as a woman of courage, strength and faith and called her a bridge-builder and a voice of reason who continued speaking out until her last days, and Congressman Artur Davis who remembered her as a "good and virtuous woman with vision

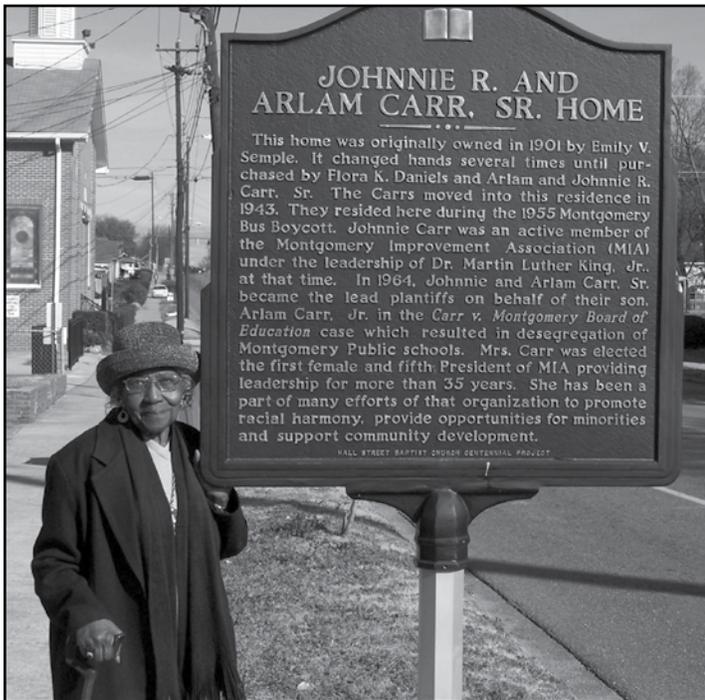


Photo by Capt. Deanna Goudeau

The late Mrs. Johnnie R. Carr stands beside a historical marker outside her Hall Street home Jan. 29, just a few weeks before her death.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April

- 5 — Hank Call Sign Dedication. 3:30 p.m. Bldg. 1455, Maintenance Half Bay Hangar. 908th AW C-130 call sign changes to "Hank" to honor country music legend and former Montgomery resident Hank Williams Jr. Montgomery native Jett Williams, Hank Williams' daughter and a singer and songwriter in her own right, is the invited guest.
- 5 — Air Force Reserve 60th Anniversary Celebration, 4 p.m. Bldg. 1455, Maintenance Half Bay Hangar. Open to all, including families & civilians. Entertainment by Air Force Reserve Command Band and Jett Williams. A la carte food and beverage sales by squadrons as fundraisers.
- 6 — Wing-wide Runway Run/Walk (1.5- and 2.9-mile options), 6:45 a.m. behind the 357th AS Building

May

- 2 — Clergy Day (See Jan and Feb "Southern Flyer" for nomination forms or call PA at (334) 953-6804)
- 2 — Holocaust Memorial Service, 3 p.m., Chapel No. 2 (near O'Club), holocaust survivor Max Steinmetz is the guest of honor
- 3 — Enlisted Call, 4 p.m., Maxwell Events Center (formerly Enlisted Club)
- 3 — Officers' Call, 4 p.m., Officers' club

June

- 1 — Wing Commander's Call, 3:30 p.m., Polifka Auditorium, Bldg. 1403
- 6 — Employer Day



Photo by Lt. Col Jerry Lobb

A contingent of unit members led by 908th AW vice commander Col. Jon Andre attend the March 1 funeral of civil rights pioneer, Mrs. Johnnie R. Carr, who passed away Feb. 22 at age 97, led the Montgomery Improvement Association, an organization formed in 1955 when the arrest of her childhood

friend, Rosa Parks, sparked the Montgomery bus boycott and drew national attention to one of the boycott's leaders, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Colonel Andre is flanked by (from left) Capt. Tonia Stephens, Dreidra Randolph and Deanna Goudeau, Master Sgt. Gloria Derico and Maj. Erica Parks.

and imagination." Mayor Johnny Ford of Tuskegee reflected on the impact that Mrs. Carr and many other civil rights pioneers have had on the number of African Americans serving nationwide as elected officials, government employees at all levels, lawyers, judges, school board member, etc.

Representatives from many of the organizations that Mrs. Carr was affiliated with such as the Rosa Parks Institute, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Montgomery Improvement

Association spoke fondly of her life as well.

As the services came to an end 2 ½ hours later, Dr. Frank R. Johnson of the Hall Street Baptist Church remembered Mrs. Carr as "One who could bring the best out of all of us." He closed the service by reflecting on two Bible verses that seemed to aptly describe Mrs. Johnnie Carr's life.

1 Corinthians 15:58 reads, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

2 Timothy 4:7 reads, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

I believe, as do many others, that these scriptures accurately reflect the life and legacy of Mrs. Johnnie R. Carr.

Her passing was truly a loss for us. My time with her is something I will cherish all my life. We only spent a few hours together, but as I listened to each person speak at her funeral, I felt what so many other people she touched were feeling – I felt a connection to history. She will be sorely missed.

Spiritual strength carries us through difficult times

By Chaplain (Capt. David Dersch)
908th AW Chaplain's Office

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Air Force Reserve this UTA, it is good to reflect back on our proud heritage. As our Airman's Creed reminds us, we have a "Tradition of Honor and a Legacy of Valor."

Donald Miller reminds us in "Masters of the Air," his outstanding book on America's bomber Airmen who fought in World War II, the Eighth Air Force had more fatal casualties (over 26,000) than the entire Marine Corps. The casualty rate prior to D-Day for those flying against Germany was more than 77

percent, nearly 3 out of 4! And these were citizen-airmen, most of them volunteering to fight a determined and fanatical enemy. Truly, as American Airmen, we have a warrior heritage.

During World War II and the Korean Conflict, a little devotional guide called "Strength for Today" was distributed to more than 1 million of our fighting forces. Recently after finding his grandfather's copy, a teenager had it updated and reprinted for our military today for his Eagle Scout project.

The chapel team is happy to make these inter-denominational devotionals freely available to our deploying forces,

as well as any Airman who would like one. You can find them in our chapel literature racks throughout the 908th AW.

Just as our forefathers needed strong character to be victorious in the struggle their generation faced, so do we today! Spiritual strength enables us to persevere through long and difficult times, both personally and professionally. Take time to renew your spirit each day, using any of the various inspirational writings the chaplain service provides. As the prophet of old promised, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles!" (Isaiah 40:31)

Slingloads offer varied training, hone joint combat capabilities

By Lt. Col. Kjäll Gopaul
Air Force Doctrine Development and Education Center

For second time in as many weeks, the 25th Aerial Port Squadron conducted slingload training with the Army – using helicopters for the aerial delivery of external loads.

The first time was Feb. 19 with an Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from Flight Company, 197th Infantry Brigade at Fort Benning, Ga.; the second was March 1 with two Army CH-47 Chinook helicopters from B Company, 1-169 Aviation Regiment of the Alabama Army National Guard in Birmingham.

The Feb. 19 ground crew comprised Airmen from the 25th Aerial Port Squadron, the 187th Fighter Wing, the Air Force Doctrine Development and Education Center, and Headquarters Air University Communications and Information Directorate. The ground crew successfully completed 10 slingloads – guiding the helicopter with hand and arm signals, hooking up a 4,000-pound Type V pallet platform, and ferrying it along a 15-minute route. Additionally, 22 Airmen were trained to tactically on-load, off-load, and fly in the Black Hawks.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason Russell, Flight Company, 197th Infantry Brigade, served as the air mission commander for the Feb. 19 training. He remarked about how well organized the ground piece was.

“The ground crew did a terrific job – from our initial talk-on to the landing zone as soon as we showed up, having the fuel on-site, having the slingloads and hook-up teams ready so we weren’t waiting, and being flexible with the orientation of the landing zone as the winds shifted. It was great training for us as well. My crew was able to get more experience with heavier slingloads, which is always beneficial. From an aviator’s perspective, you couldn’t ask for anything more,” Chief Russell said.



Photo by Lt Col. Jerry Lobb

From left, Senior Airman Gerald Scribner (25th APS), Lt. Col. Kjäll Gopaul (AFDDEC), Airman 1st Class Aaron Knox (25th APS) and Chief Master Sgt. Lynn Whited (25th APS) inspect a 4,000-pound Type V platform pallet before conducting slingload operations with a UH-60A Black Hawk helicopter Flight Company, 197th Infantry Brigade Feb. 19.



Photo by Lt Col. Jerry Lobb

Airman 1st Class Aaron Knox (25th APS) prepares to hook up a 4,000-pound Type V platform pallet to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from Flight Company, 197 Infantry Brigade, while Capt. William Cambardella, public affairs officer, 187th FW, provides hand-and-arm signals to guide the aircraft over the load as part of a slingload exercise Feb. 19. Lt. Col. Kjäll Gopaul, pathfinder, supervises the slingload.

Chief Master Sgt. Lynn Whited, aerial port superintendent, 25th APS, served as NCOIC of the helicopter landing zone. He highlighted the importance of the day, saying “The training gave us a hands-on feel for using helicopters to get cargo back from a drop zone in a better and faster way. Rather than having Airmen drive flat-bed trucks and fork-lifts, we now have more flexibility in running

multiple helicopter landing zones to recover our equipment – this benefits the aircrew’s training and our training. It allows our Airmen to work with different types of loads, equipment, and aerial delivery systems other than our usual parachutes. And this training was a great preparation for our helicopter mission as part of the 908th Airlift Wing’s air drop on our March 1 drill weekend.”

Airmen from the 25th Aerial Port Squadron teamed with Alabama Army National Guard Soldiers from Birmingham for the most ambitious, joint aerial delivery exercise this year March 1. That day two 908th AW C-130s conducted an air-drop, two CH-47 Chinook helicopters from B Company, 1-169 Aviation Regiment slingloaded the air-dropped items, and ground crews from Maxwell operated two landing zones and a drop zone in the flawless execution of the mission. The ground crew consisted of Airmen from the 25th APS, the Air Force Doctrine Development and Education Center, 42nd Security Forces Squadron, and AU communications and information directorate. Additionally 20 Airmen were trained to tactically on-load, off-load, and fly in the Chinooks.

Specially trained Airmen were positioned at Landing Zone Alpha on Maxwell AFB and LZ Buzz in Autaugaville 12 miles west of the base. The Airmen were organized into ground crews that received the equipment attached to the cargo hooks of the helicopter, and attached a new sling load to the aircraft to be flown to the next landing zone. By day's end, 20 slingload lifts had moved the equivalent of 120,000

pounds of material between Maxwell AFB and Autaugaville.

Senior Airman Bryant Culpepper, 25th APS air transportation journeyman, said, "It's pretty exciting being the signal man – guiding the helicopter into the LZ. It's a lot of responsibility to make sure the aircraft goes to the correct spot and holds the right position above the load and the hook-up man. We receive a lot of training and rehearsed this morning before the helicopter arrived, to make sure we're ready."

Chief Whited served as the pick-up zone control NCOIC at LZ Buzz. "The mission ran really smoothly – we had the hook-up teams in place and the loads ready for each lift. Recovering the air-dropped items back to Maxwell AFB by helicopter is a lot easier for us. We don't have to bring out the materiel handling equipment (MHE) – the fork lifts and low-boy trucks – to pick-up the heavy items off the drop zone and transport them back. We save money on diesel, it's much faster, and

the Airmen train on something different," the aerial port superintendent said.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 John M. Raybon, training officer, B Company, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, served as the air mission commander for the March 1 exercise and offered the aviator's perspective of the day's events.

Regarding the detailed coordination of the cross-country slingloads, CW4

Raybon commented, "Moving the loads from LZ Buzz to LZ Alpha went like clockwork... and made arrival times at both LZ's sync up." He added, "The ground crew did a great job of hooking up the loads to aircraft and directing the aircraft over the loads. Overall, the training was very beneficial for all involved, and went very well from the ground side

(USAF) and the aviation (AL ARNG) side."

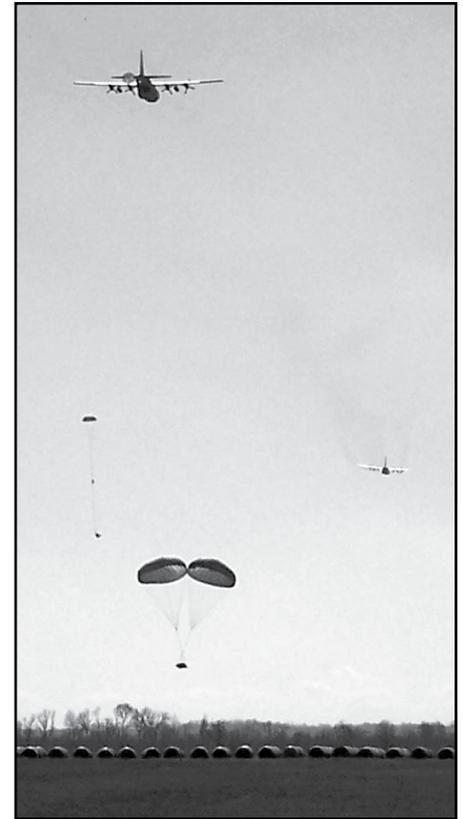
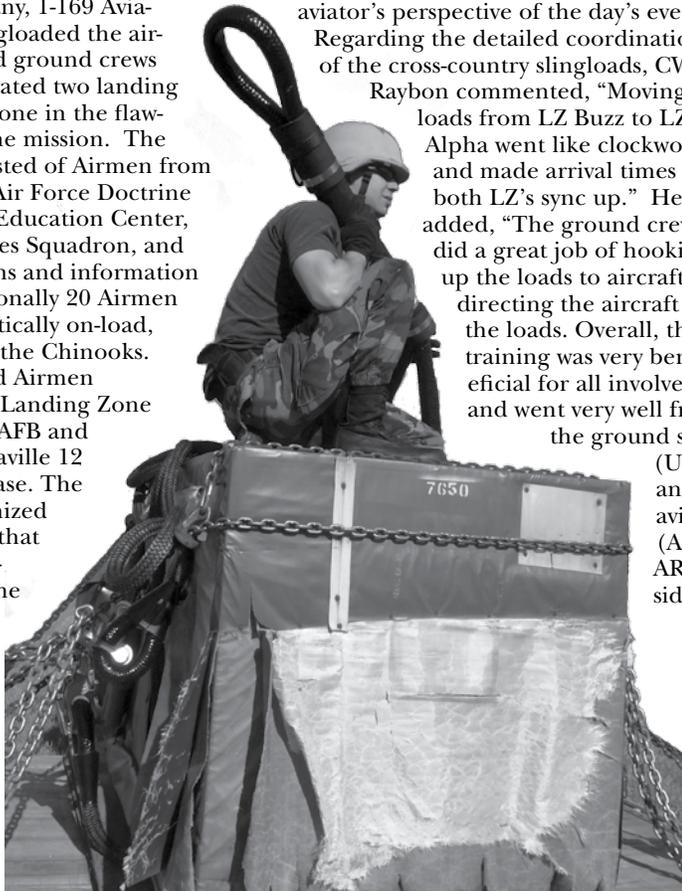


Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Lynn Whited

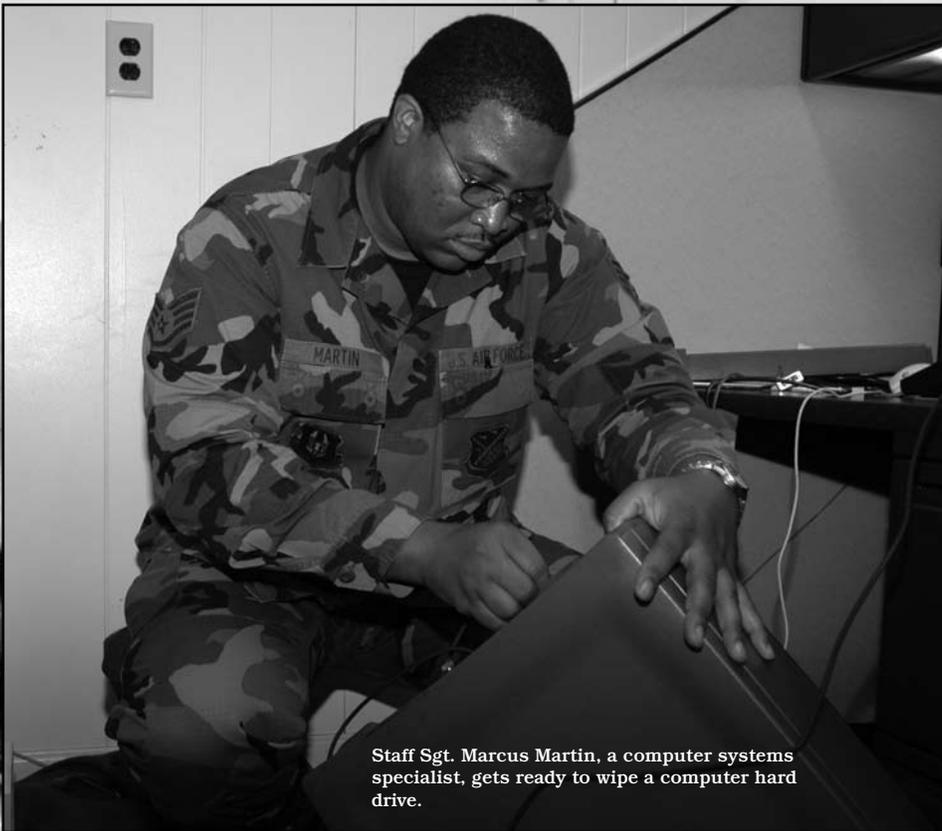
Above, two 908th AW C-130s conduct an air-drop of containerized delivery systems on Drop Zone Buzz March 1

Left, Senior Airman Bryant Culpepper, 25th APS, prepares to hook up a 8,000-pound Type V platform slingload to a CH-47 Chinook helicopter from B Company, 1-169 Aviation Regiment March 1. (Photo by Lt. Col. Kjall Gopaul)



Photo by Lt. Col. Kjall Gopaul

A CH-47 Chinook helicopter from B Company, 1-169 Aviation Regiment of the Alabama Army National Guard conducts the sling load of a Type V platform pallet in support of the 908th Airlift Wing's multi-service aerial delivery exercise on 1 March 2008.



Staff Sgt. Marcus Martin, a computer systems specialist, gets ready to wipe a computer hard drive.

Photo by Jeff Melvin



Photo by Jeff Melvin

Above, Tech. Sgt. Stephen LeGrady, a ground radio specialist, works on a laptop.



Information manager Staff Sgt. Tamar Hall does helpdesk support, a procedure that helps newcomers complete the appropriate paperwork to obtain network access.

Small shop, big task

Comm Flight keeps lines of communication open and the work flowing



Photo by Jeff Melvin

...ss consisting of helping
accounts.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder

Maintenance chief Master Sgt. Gaston Cannon puts up an antenna mast at the Blue Thunder Training complex during a field training exercise.

No phones, no computers, and no e-mails – for some that might sound like paradise but during a normal day around the wing or a hectic UTA, that's a recipe for disaster. Communication stoppage is work stoppage. Fortunately for wing personnel such a catastrophe is more exercise scenario than reality thanks to the dedicated efforts of the men and women of the 908th Communications Flight who keep the lines of communication open and the work flowing.

The 24-person flight provides communication mission systems, information, and publications support for the 908th Airlift Wing. Furthermore, the flight "carries out activities to promote maximum utilization of information technology principles in all aspects of wing operations and maintains an environment designed to ensure personnel are properly organized, trained, and equipped to carry out peacetime and contingency operations," said Capt. Dredra "Dee" Randolph. The captain wears two hats these days. Normally the unit's operations officer, she's also filling in as acting commander since last month's departure on deployment of Maj. Bruce Coole.

Communication mission systems includes planning and scheduling ground radio communications and related equipment installations and maintenance actions as well as, initiating and conducting system verification tests to assess the capability and effectiveness of ground radio communications. It also includes operating fixed and deployed communications-computer systems.

Information systems personnel performs activities such as configuring and monitoring hardware and software for system operation, processing, and control of flow data, and client-server multi-user system support including network management and administration. Faults are isolated, identified, and malfunctions due to hardware, software, and communications failures are corrected.

Information systems include providing electronic coordination, staffing, and task management of documents and files. Managing user accounts to include resetting passwords and unlocking accounts setting up client computers and printers. Unit members create and configure e-mail mailboxes and distribution lists. They act as a liaison between client and base helpdesk for trouble calls and assist clients with Air Force Information Assurance, Air Portal use, and manage Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act requests to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

So if your phones are ringing, and your e-mail inbox is full, you can thank, or curse, the 908th Communications Flight for keeping the lines of communication open and the work flowing.

Wing snapshots

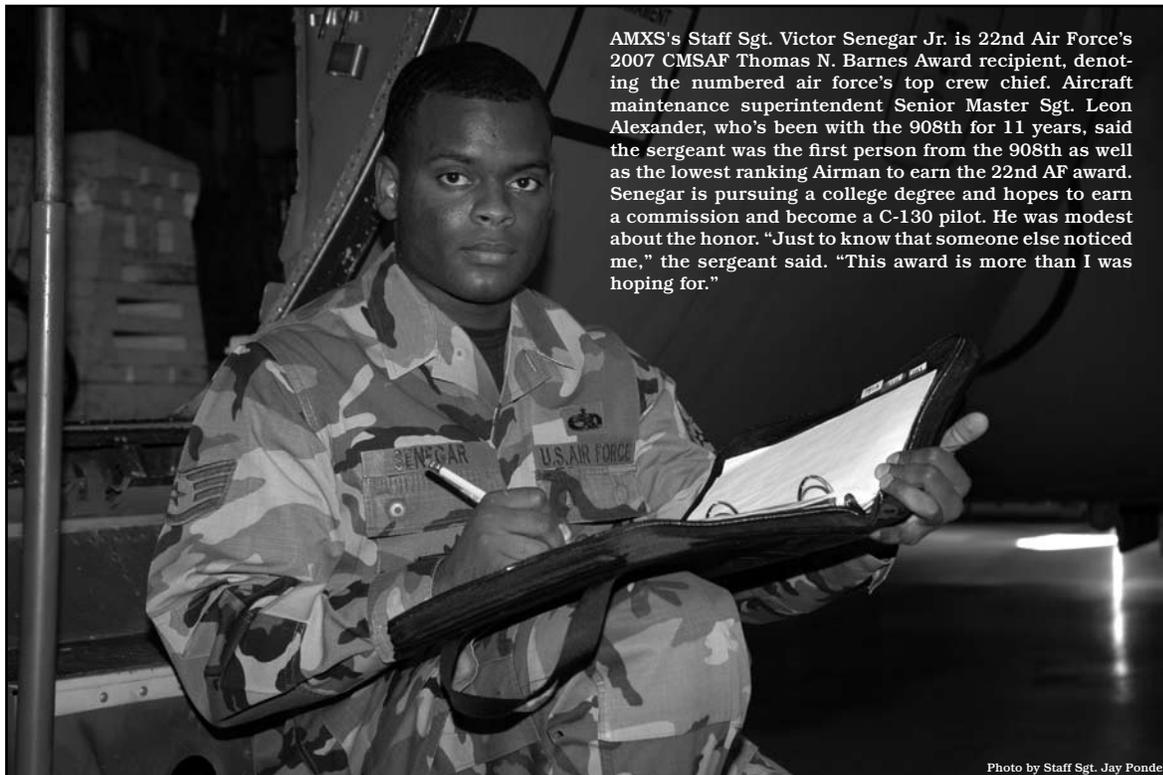


Lt. Col. Allison Marshall, left, accepts the 908th Mission Support Group guidon from 908th AW Commander Col. Michael J. Underkofler, symbolizing his acceptance of command responsibility for the unit. Colonel Marshall, a traditional reservists, has been serving as commander since January when he moved up from the deputy position to replace Col. William "Bill" Forshey. A lifelong New Orleans native who still lives there, Colonel Marshall came to the 908th in July 2006 from NAS Joint Reserve Base New Orleans where he served as deputy commander of the 926th MSG. In civilian life, the colonel is a small business owner as well as a program controls manager for an aviation firm.



MSG commander Lt. Col. Allison Marshall and his wife, Lauren, pose for a photograph following his assumption of command ceremony March 1.

Photos by Jeff Melvin



AMXS's Staff Sgt. Victor Senegar Jr. is 22nd Air Force's 2007 CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes Award recipient, denoting the numbered air force's top crew chief. Aircraft maintenance superintendent Senior Master Sgt. Leon Alexander, who's been with the 908th for 11 years, said the sergeant was the first person from the 908th as well as the lowest ranking Airman to earn the 22nd AF award. Senegar is pursuing a college degree and hopes to earn a commission and become a C-130 pilot. He was modest about the honor. "Just to know that someone else noticed me," the sergeant said. "This award is more than I was hoping for."

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder



Col. Lisa Naftzger-Kan listen intently during March 1. For more info nancy.stephenson@m



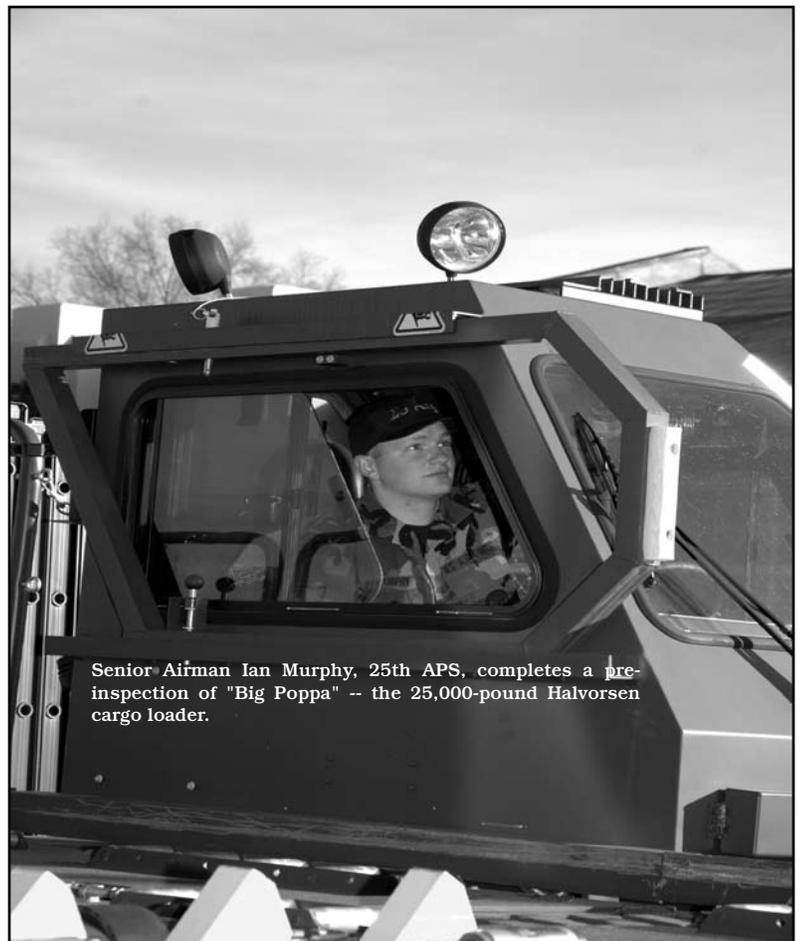
Photo by Jeff Melvin

Above, Master Sgt. Deborah Webb, MSG, and Chief Master Sgt. Ricky Spencer, CES, join unit members, family and friends in recognizing the contributions of their respective spouses, Kelvin Webb and Barbara Spencer, to the reservists' successful careers culminating in retirement March 1. Sergeant Webb, a longtime 908th AW member spent more than 15 years in CE before moving to MSG in 2000. She retired with more than 22 years of service. Chief Spencer, a Vietnam veteran, joined the Air Force Reserve in 1982. He spent the bulk of his 25-year Air Force career with the 926th CES in New Orleans before joining the 908th following Hurricane Katrina.



Photo by Jeff Melvin

g, ASTS commander, and Capt. Dreindra "Dee" Randolph, 908th Comm Flight, a "Women Mentoring Women" session held at the Riverfront Dining Facility o about the group, call or e-mail Lt. Col. Nancy Stephenson at 953-2719 or axwell.af.mil.



Senior Aifman Ian Murphy, 25th APS, completes a pre-inspection of "Big Poppa" -- the 25,000-pound Halvorsen cargo loader.

Photo by Jeff Melvin

HRDC lends hand

Capt. Tonia Stephens (background), LRS, observes one of the competing teams at Sidney Lanier High School's annual JROTC Drill Team competition Feb. 16. This marks the second straight year that the wing's Human Resource Development Council's outreach committee provided volunteers for the event featuring about 20 high school teams from the Montgomery area and as far away as Birmingham. The 908th volunteers were: Captain Stephens, Chaplain (Capt.) David Dersch, 908th AW Command Chief Master Sgt. Rick Fanning, Tech. Sgts. Michael Lamb, T-Dera Jarman, and John Metcalf, and Senior Airman Crystal Bickerstaff.



Courtesy photo

2007 AFRC Performance Planner of the Year Profile

Name/Rank: Lt. Col. Troy Vonada

Duty title: Chief, Performance Planning

Current Residence: Prattville, Ala.

Duties and responsibilities: Responsible for development of wing annual plan. Knowledgeable of continuous improvement methodology, philosophy and practicum. Facilitates continuous improvement projects. Chief of wing exercise evaluation team and responsible for wartime readiness. Leads wing in preparation efforts for major inspections.

Work philosophy: Always do what it takes no matter what it is (as long as legal, ethical and appropriate). There is no such thing as a 40-hour work week in today's Air Force Reserve. Having a good attitude is what it's all about.

Reserve Status: Air Reserve Technician

Personal philosophy or motto: Excellence is a habit.

Your thoughts on the honor: I'm very humbled to receive this prestigious award. (It's great to be recognized as Performance Manager of the Year for both 22 AF and AFRC.)

Sends thanks: A special thanks goes to Chief Master Sgt. Thrasher Jones, my superintendent. Without his dedication, hard work and fortitude this wouldn't have been possible. No doubt we make a great team!



Lt. Col. Troy Vonada, 2007 AFRC Performance Planner of the Year

Photo and graphic illustration by Jeff Melvin

Take Note

WELCOME HOME



You have been away, now you need a family vacation.

The AETC Welcome Home Program is awarding vacation prizes to warriors returning.

See your Airmen and Family Readiness Center for details and to register for the next drawing.

A Services program done in cooperation with the Airmen & Family Readiness Center.

No Federal Endorsement of Sponsors Intended

Promotions

Congratulations to the following people promoted to the grades indicated:

-to Master Sgt.
Joseph Smith, ASTS
-to Tech. Sgt.
Brian Abrams, CES
- Clarence Armour Jr., 25th APS**
- Everett Jones Jr., OSF**
- John Traum III, SVF**
-to Staff Sgt.
Melissa Bayer, ASTS
- Edwin Davis, AMXS**
- Charles Huys, CES**
- William Kent, CES**
- Kristy McGrue, 25th APS**
- James McKenzie, 25th APS**
- Debbie Walker, 25th APS**
-to Senior Airman
Joshua Civelli, MXS
-to Airman 1st Class
Sean Coe, ASTS
- Robby Jackson, ASTS**
- Chemetaya McMillian, MSS**
-to Airman
Melissa Hamilton, MSS

Retirements

According to wing personnel officials, the following people have approved retirements in the Military Personnel Data System for the months indicated.

- April – Senior Master Sgt. Steven Muller, 25th APS and Master Sgt. Aaran Weinzirl, MXG
- May – Lt. Col. Carl Poteat, 908th AW; Lt. Col. James Reid, ASTS; and Master Sgts. Charles Britt, 908th OG, Charles Johnson, MXG, and Danny Wesson, 25th APS
- June – Tech. Sgts. Jo Kaestner, ASTS, Emory Morgan Jr., OSF, and Jimmy Rogers, MXG



Photo by Jeff Melvin

Operations, maintenance deployers return from Iraq

Above, April Brackin holds her sister, Lexa, as their mother, Theresa, right, and sister, Kayleigh, left, wait among the crowd of well-wishers waiting to greet their father and husband, Master Sgt. Jon Brackin, and the nearly 20 908th AW reservists returning March 18 from a six-week voluntary rotation supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Airmen and 40 others who returned March 16 helped the 908th AW fly about 320 flying hours and 135 sorties in theater transporting people and cargo.

908th Airlift Wing
401 W. Maxwell Blvd.
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