

KANZA SPIRIT

931ST AIR REFUELING GROUP



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September 2007

McConnell AFB, Kansas

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Employer Support Crucial for Reservists

BY STAFF SGT. K.L. KIMBRELL
931ST ARG PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Air Force Reservists serve their country in the same capacity as their active duty brethren without the benefit of being at their unit on a daily basis. A lot is required to make this effort happen and it doesn't lie solely on the shoulders of the Reservist but on those of their family and civilian employers as well.

When Senior Master Sgt. David Lofton of the 931st Civil Engineer Squadron isn't working here at McConnell he's putting in his hours as a testing technician for The Bradbury Group, located in Moundridge, Kan.

"I test and install metal forming machinery all over the world," said Sergeant Lofton.

According to their website, Sergeant Lofton's company is a union of manufacturing companies dedicated to producing high-quality, productivity-enhancing metal processing equipment for customers around the world.

The company has been quite supportive of Sergeant Lofton, especially his boss, Mr. Terry January, a product test manager with the company.



Sergeant Lofton measures a recently formed sheet of metal roofing.

"David has worked for BCO (Bradbury Company) since Aug. 2, 2004," said Mr. January.

Due to schools and temporary duty assignments, Sergeant Lofton was away from work for an extended amount of time this past year, but still they stuck by their guy and even had him get his temporary replacement up to speed.

"Before David (Sergeant Lofton) left, we had him train another technician to do his job," said Mr. January. "We only had David fulfilling the position at the time."

Currently, Sergeant Lofton is back and getting back into the swing of things.

When asked how supportive his company was to him and the Air Force Reserve, Sergeant Lofton replied, "Absolutely 100% supportive."

Employers like The Bradbury Group and bosses like Mr. Terry January play a key role in our Nation's defense by supporting Reservists.

"I think it's great that we have a program (Reserve) for people to serve our country and still be able to work in the public," said Mr. January.



Senior Master Sgt. David Lofton and his civilian supervisor, Mr. Terry January, talk about quality control over a stack of formed metal. Sergeant Lofton has worked for The Bradbury Company for more than three years.

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR BOSS TODAY?

President Bush proclaimed Sept. 9-15 as National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week. According to the President the purpose of the week is to recognize the sacrifice of employers across our country that support the important mission of our National Guard and Reserve personnel. His proclamation also states that employers across America demonstrate their patriotism by providing time off, pay, healthcare benefits and job security to their Guard and Reserve employees and that the commitment of our Nation's employers is a vital and integral part of the success of our Armed Forces.

It is important that all of your many employers continue to support your Reserve duty. I ask you to thank your employers for their support. Admittedly, there is probably a wide spectrum of support across our many different employers, but they support you none-the-less. A sincere thank you can go a long way toward strengthening your relationship with your employer, or guaranteeing continued strong support if it already exists. Acknowledging to them that your Reserve duty not only requires sacrifice on your part, but theirs as well can also enhance your relationship.

Those employers that go well beyond the minimum support requirements deserve your special praise. As many of you know we are conducting our own employer appreciation day during the September UTA. We will be hosting more than 30 employers, sharing our mission with them, and taking them on an orientation air refueling mission. We will continue to host additional employer appreciation days, and hope to host them more often if enough interest is shown. I know I will be thanking each of them and asking for their continued support.



We are beginning to tell the stories of many outstanding employers that you have brought to our attention in this issue of the Kanza Spirit. We will soon have available to all of you "931st ARG employer certificates of appreciation" that you can present to your employers; hopefully they will proudly display these attractive certificates in their place of business.

Lastly, you can do a lot to maintain good relations with your employer by keeping them informed of your Reserve duty requirements and schedule. We have published our annual UTA and Annual Tour schedule well in advance in an effort to allow you, your family and your employer to better plan for the upcoming year. Please give your employers as much advance notice as possible if your Reserve duty will take you away during your normal civilian work days. We will make every effort to ensure you have the proper documentation in a timely manner if your employer needs it to support your absence. Explain to them what you will be doing, whether it is regular training, ORI preparation or real-world commitments. It is my hope that if they better understand what you do and the importance of that work they will be even more understanding of your Reserve commitments.

It takes a team to succeed, and your employers are part of that team. Say thanks to your boss and give him a hug!

William T. Cahoon

William T. Cahoon, Colonel
931st Air Refueling Group Commander

Integrity



Service



Excellence

THIS UTA < SEPTEMBER 2007 >

Saturday:
HRDC Meeting
Southwind Conf. Room 3 p.m.

Sunday:
Chapel Service
Southwind Conf. Room 7:45 a.m.

Training bags will be constructed in the parking lot of bldg. 850 on both Sat. and Sun. from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. All group members who are required to have a training bag should make time to attend the event.



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Deadlines

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The *Kanza Spirit* is emailed each month to all 931st ARG members. Members not receiving their copy should check with their workgroup manager. The publication is also posted monthly on the unit website: www.931arg.afrc.af.mil

Photos from group events and happenings are now available for all members to access on the Kanza-05 share drive stored in the "PA Photos" folder.

GROUP FITNESS TESTING IS NEXT MONTH. ARE YOU READY ?

UTA Schedule

Next UTA: October 13 - 14

Nov. 3-4 (Nov. 5-7 Mandatory Annual Tour)

Dec. 8 - 9

Jan. 12 - 13

DATES IN RED DENOTE MANDATORY UTAs

WHO'S THE BOSS?

HAS YOUR EMPLOYER BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE AIR FORCE RESERVE? WOULD YOU LIKE TO NOMINATE THEM FOR RECOGNITION IN THE KANZA SPIRIT?

STARTING IN OCTOBER THIS SECTION WILL CONTAIN A MINI-PHOTO STORY OF A 931ST ARG MEMBER AND THEIR EMPLOYER. NOMINATIONS ARE NEEDED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND CAN BE SUBMITTED TO THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE BY EMAILING KENNY.KIMBRELL-02@MCCONNELL.AF.MIL OR BY CALLING EXTENSION 3686.

PLEASE ASSIST US IN HONORING THOSE EMPLOYERS WHO SUPPORT THE U.S. AIR FORCE RESERVE AND THEIR FAMILIES. PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED, BUT VOLUNTARY.



Flight of the Clergy

Local religious leaders take to the skies with 931st ARG

BY STAFF SGT. K.L. KIMBRELL
931ST ARG PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Local religious leaders visited the 931st Air Refueling Group Aug. 10 to participate in the group's annual clergy lift.

The event educates clergy on the mission of the Group and thanks the individuals for their support of servicemen in their congregations.

The day began bright and early at 7 a.m. with refreshments and briefings from the 931st Commander, Col. Tim Cahoon, the Group chaplain, Lt. Col. David Fulton and members of the aircrew.

After the briefings were complete the clergy boarded the bus to the flightline where a KC-135 Stratotanker was waiting.

After the clergy were boarded, pilot and aircraft commander Lt. Col. Randy Brink led the clergy and crew in a preflight prayer before departure.

"The USAF without question has the best trained crew force in the world. And the

18th (ARS) arguably has the best tanker crews in the Air Force. We all like to think that we can handle anything. Having said that, I think it's important to remember that it is still His sky we're flying around in. Offering every mission up to Him helps to remind me of this critical fact, and it helps keep my focus on the wonder of His creation," said Lt. Col. Randy Brink, 18th Air Refueling Squadron pilot.

Afterward, the aircraft began to taxi, took off and began to head south where A-10 Thunderbolt II's were scheduled to rendezvous with the KC-135 for air-to-air refueling over the skies of Arkansas.

"It was purely enjoyable and exciting watching the complicated task of refueling," said the Rev. Greg Brandvold of Cross of Glory Lutheran Church in Derby, Kan.

The clergy were even treated to a tradi-

tional flightcrew meal.

"The in-flight meal is considerably better (than that of commercial airlines)," said Pastor Benjamin Hanne of Wichita Calvary United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kan.

After the mission, the clergy and crew touched down safely.

"The clergy were thrilled to participate," said Chap. (Lt. Col.) Dave Fulton, the group's chaplain. "Most have never had an experience such as this and were impressed by the professionalism of all involved in the day."

The clergy event seemed to have left a lasting impression on those who attended.

"It gives us a sense of pride to have men and women serving God and our country," said Minister Jeff Isaacs of Countryside Christian Church in Wichita, Kan. "Those are the two greatest things we as Americans can serve."



Tech. Sgt. Clay Dotson, a boom operator prepares the aircraft for departure.



931st Commander, Col. Tim Cahoon speaks to Clergy during the annual Clergy Lift.



A view of an A-10 Thunderbolt II from the boompod of a KC-135 Stratotanker.



Minister Jeff Isaacs of Countryside Christian Church in Wichita, Kan. prepares to take a photo of an A-10 being refueled.

CLERGY

Caldwell Assembly of God
Pastor Alan Albright
Tammy Albright

Riverside Baptist Church
Pastor Richard Haley

Calvary United Methodist Church
Pastor Ben Hanne

Countryside Christian Church
Pastor Thomas Scott
Minister Mike Willich
Minister Jeff Isaacs

Pleasantview Baptist Church
Pastor Donald Mayberry

Liberty Baptist Church
Pastor Peter Ostrander

Derby Church of Christ
Minister Larry Scarth

Benton United Methodist Church
Pastor Robert Schmutz

Crosswinds Community Church
Pastor Jeff Wisner

931st ARG Chaplain's Office
Chap. (Lt. Col.) Dave Fulton
Staff Sgt. Schavonne Wilson
Senior Airman Michael Abbey

CREW

Pilots

Lt. Col. Randy Brink
Lt. Col. Luis Cortez

Boom Operators

Senior Master Sgt. John Wallman
Tech. Sgt. Clay Dotson



Clergy and crew members partake in a pre-flight prayer before departing on a refueling mission.



Chap. (Lt. Col.) Dave Fulton speaks with clergy about the faith life of military members who are deployed.



Senior Master Sgt. John Wallman refuels A-10 Thunderbolt II's as the clergy look on from both sides of the boompod.



Clergy take time before the refueling to check out the view from the boompod and examine the controls.



An A-10 Thunderbolt II receives fuel as Wichita, Kan. area clergy look on.

Down a Different Road

Story and Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jason Schaap



Shelby Gobel stands on a country road a few miles north of his home in Sedgwick, Kan. His life was forever changed when he had a motorcycle accident at the same location one year prior.

Note: The following story includes reconstructed events based on the testimony of those mentioned. Direct quotes are only used when they were recorded first hand by the writer.

The blinds are closed, but the white-hot light of the Kansas sun still forces its way into the living room. In front of the blinds



Shelby searches for hidden words in order to exercise his damaged brain.

sits Shelby Gobel, looking for an “insect.” Slumbering in teenage fashion on the couch opposite him is his son, Alex. The boxed glow of the window blinds glare from Alex’s glasses.

Shelby doesn’t find the “insect,” he finds its “antenna.”

“Dad, let’s go golfing,” Alex asks between yawns, not really expecting a response.

Alex is 15 and has caught the golf bug. Shelby loves to golf too, especially with his prized Ping clubs. But golfing is not what it once was for Shelby. Nothing is.

“Dad, let’s go golfing,” drums out again a few minutes later from Alex’s direction. The request is more of a silence filler than

the previous, like the repeated plea of a boy in a department store asking for a toy he knows he won’t get. Shelby never answers but remains head down, focused on the bee-themed word search in front of him.

Miscellaneous kitchen noise can be heard. Rebecca, Shelby’s wife, is picking up after lunch. Rebecca is a teach-

“ “I knocked on Death’s door,” he says to the group. “He didn’t answer, but I knocked.” ”



Shelby weighs in on a topic of discussion at a planning commission meeting in his hometown of Sedgwick, Kan. He joined the commission because he was looking for something to do and a vacant position was advertised on a public access station.

er. She, like Alex, waits for summer to melt into another school year. But this summer they have company. Shelby waits too. This summer, they wait together

They waited until a week prior to see if Shelby would be allowed back to work. His doctor said yes. His employer's doctor said no. Then they waited to see if that meant he qualified for disability. The answer was no.

Now, they wait to see who will hire a man who just learned to walk again. And they wait to see what becomes of Shelby's career in the Air Force Reserve. He is a master sergeant six days short of retirement. He had hoped to serve five more years with his Civil Engineer Squadron at the 931st Air Refueling Group. Now he waits on the fate of six days.

Shelby closes the prescribed book of word searches. His head is tired.

Alex turns the TV on and rapidly flips through channels. The flame of a candle flickers above the TV. The metal sheath that wraps the candle reads "BELIEVE IN MIRACLES." It was given to Shelby's family after the accident.

June 30, 2006

It is not quite 6 a.m. yet when Rebecca hears the front door open again. She wonders what Shelby forgot and gets out of bed. It's kind of chilly outside, he tells her. He takes a jacket from the closet, kisses Rebecca at the entry way and goes back out the door.

Rebecca's mind turns to hours ahead. Alex and his older sister, Megan, have dental appointments later in the morning. She decides there is still time to lay down and be up in time to shower before 18-year-old Megan commandeers the bathroom. Rebecca goes back to bed.

Miles north, Robert Walker is driving his newspaper route along Kansas country roads. Open farmland stretches in every direction toward lines of trees that guard its boundaries. The rising sun transforms the color of the surrounding rural vast-

ness.

Emerging from the horizon of the road ahead is a car and a man. Something is wrong. The car is stopped and the man is still. As Walker gets closer, he can make out two other things in the road. A smashed motorcycle and a dead deer. There are no skid marks leading to the motorcycle.

In the ditch, lies the battered body of the motorcycle's rider. Walker stops. He goes to the ditch and hears a sickening, gurgling noise coming inside the rider's helmet. Familiar carnage, Walker can not help thinking. The scene sends Walker back more than three decades to combat in Vietnam.

The man who was first on the scene is obviously shaken and keeps a distance from the ditch. Walker asks the man to go down and be with the rider while Walker gets more help. The man does not move.

To the south, in the sleepy town of Sedgwick, Rebecca is in bed. Blocks away, Karen Mosiman is preparing for her day at the town's hardware store when her beeper goes off. "Motorcycle vs deer," the beeper reads. Mosiman, a volunteer emergency medical technician, rushes out the door.

Sirens screaming by the house wake Rebecca up around 6:25 a.m. But it is not until she hears the second set, the fire and rescue sirens, when Rebecca gets an uneasy feeling. She knows there has been a wreck and the timing is too right. Shelby's cell phone sits forgotten on the love seat in the living room. Rebecca will have to wait until he gets to his office to talk him. There is time, she decides, for that shower now.

The patient is breathing but not alert, Mosiman learns while driving Sedgwick's ambulance to the accident scene. The patient has a brain injury, Mosiman assumes. A rescue chopper is already on standby.

The first thing Mosiman sees when she gets to the scene is a large dead deer with antlers. A pair of torn up sneakers are also in the road. That's weird, she wonders, how did the sneakers get there?

The patient is lying face down in the ditch. Mosiman does not recognize Shelby until he is rolled over. Mosiman says his name. No response. His jaw is clenched so tight the paramedics can't open his airway. Keep breathing, Mosiman tells Shelby.

By the time the chopper lifts Shelby away, Mosiman and her crew do not think he will pull through. Oh my gosh, Mosiman says to herself, it is going to be hard on the family. Megan, Shelby's daughter, just graduated high school. His son, Alex is in the same class as Mosiman's son, Tanner. Mosiman goes home.



Flames from a candle given to Shelby's family after his accident flicker with hope from above the TV in the Gobel home.

Continued On Next Page

Down a Different Road *(from previous page)*

You may need to be there for Alex, Mosiman tells Tanner. A few blocks away, the phone rings at the Gobel residence.

Either Way

Rebecca did not know much as her parents drove her to the hospital. The sheriff that called her said Shelby was in an accident, had difficulty breathing and was airlifted to a hospital. The sheriff also insisted Rebecca not drive herself to the hospital.

Shelby's sister, Tammy, meets Rebecca at the hospital door. Soon, Shelby's many family members are crammed together in a small doctor's consultation room. Rebecca wants to see Shelby but is told to wait. Time keeps ticking and the family is taken to a second, and then a third waiting room.

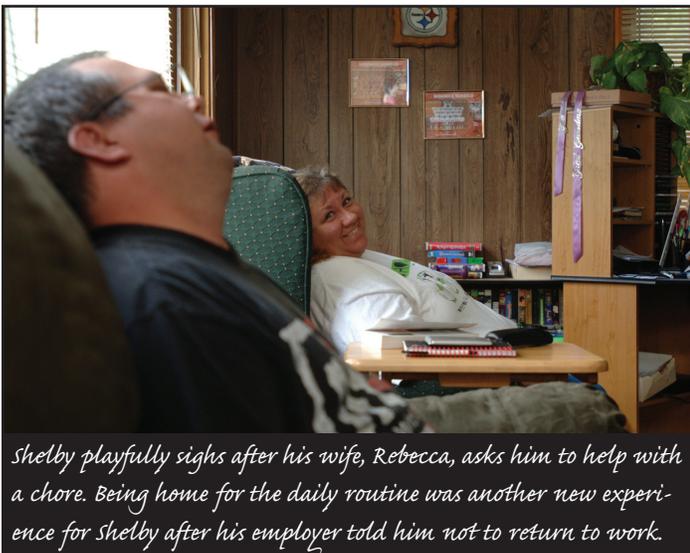
Rebecca starts pacing the nearby hallways and can not help getting angry at not knowing. Close to where she paces, an elevator door opens and Shelby is unexpectedly pulled from it. He lies motionless while a nurse squeezes a bag-like device to force oxygen into his lungs. His head locked in place with a neck brace, Rebecca leans over him, kisses his forehead and tells Shelby she loves him. And then he is gone again. It is still not real yet for Rebecca. Disbelief continues to drown her. She has not cried; not yet.

Later, in the waiting room, frustration mounts as other families are allowed to see their loved ones and Shelby's status remains unknown. A doctor finally comes in. Shelby is in a coma.

It's partially drug-induced, the doctor says. Also, his clavicle and several ribs are broken. Shelby's feet are mangled. The next 48 hours will be critical. It could go either way. Shelby could live. He could die.

If Shelby does wake up, the doctor adds before leaving, he will be different.

Tiny Threads



Shelby playfully sighs after his wife, Rebecca, asks him to help with a chore. Being home for the daily routine was another new experience for Shelby after his employer told him not to return to work.



Shelby shares a laugh with Kim Uerkvitz following a haircut at her shop, Hair Capital Barber Shop, in Sedgwick, Kan. Uerkvitz refused payment when she visited Shelby in the hospital and cut his hair.

The day after the accident, a blood clot travels through Shelby's heart to his lung, causing the lung to collapse. Shelby is rushed into surgery so that a metal mesh can be placed in his heart to prevent the same thing from happening again. If it did, it would likely kill him.

The following night, Alex works on a puzzle in a waiting room at the hospital with his uncle Warren, Tammy's husband. Warren makes a comment about having faith that God will take care of Shelby.

Rebecca, like Shelby, grew up in a Christian household. But her brother-in-law's comment becomes the unexpected push to a button in waiting. Rebecca questions whether she has enough faith to cope with what has happened. Surreal fades to real and tears fall. Rebecca cries for her husband. She cries for her family.

The next day, Rebecca writes in a spiritual journal her sister gave her for coping. "In the trauma ward, my hubby struggles with personal pain," she writes. "What if I don't believe enough? What if God says 'no'?"

Waiting turns from days to weeks. Shelby is now stable but remains in a coma. During one visit, Shelby's father tells his son to raise his arm if he can hear his father's voice. Shelby raises his left arm. His right arm is in a sling.

Rebecca tries to will her husband awake. She gently opens his eyes and moves his arms. She asks him to wake up. Shelby's brother, Daniel, tries a different approach. Daniel playfully warns Shelby that his beloved PING golf driver will be gone if he does not go home to protect it.

Three weeks after the accident, Shelby is still in a coma but his body has healed some. Doctors tell Rebecca that Shelby's lungs have cleared and Rebecca finally believes her husband will live. She writes in her journal: "Tiny threads of possibility begin to wind into our days!"

A month after Shelby Gobel's motorcycle hit a deer at 60 miles per hour, he awakens. Another month in a hospital and a month at a rehabilitation center later, he goes home.

A Different Road

Vending machines hum from the back of the room while mem-

bers of the group take turns telling their story. They sit in a circle around tables pulled together. A tray of cookies and pictures of water pass up and down the table. Everything is hospital neutral. Fluorescent lighting dominates the varying shades of grey and white. Shelby and Rebecca are part of the group. It is Shelby's turn.

"My name is Shelby Gobel," he begins. "I had an accident. I hit a deer with a motorcycle. My brain will heal. It will just take time."

Those listening are survivors of a traumatic brain injury, what they commonly call a TBI. This is their support group. Shelby speaks to them with an edge more of confidence. The stuttering that has plagued his speech since the accident is less evident.

"I knocked on Death's door," he says to the group. "He didn't answer, but I knocked."

Those with a TBI look at Shelby and can picture what that door looks like. The older man sitting across from Shelby had his brain crushed when a car struck him in 1980. The boyish looking 23-year-old next to Shelby was in a car accident that he should not have survived. "He won't remember this meeting tomorrow," the young man's mother told the group a little while earlier. Another man with a long grey beard and tattoo-covered arms sits at the end opposite Shelby. His TBI was a result of multiple somersaults with a motorcycle down Kansas' I-70 at 100 mph.

Like Shelby, the future is not certain for this group. They know how life will never be again. They come together to give each other hope.

"My brain injury was 12 years ago," says a woman whose turn follows Shelby's. "I never sang before my accident. I have since copywritten 35 songs." The woman concludes the meeting by singing a song she wrote. "I'm amazed by you," she sings in praise to the same God that let her brain be damaged.

Shelby and Rebecca continue to talk about the song and the meeting during the drive home. Shelby is able to drive a car now, but as he leaves his meeting of hope he speeds back to his life of uncertainty.

"You think because Shelby is out of the hospital, out of the coma—it's all over," Rebecca says. "But it's not. God took us down a different road."

Another good day

Shelby is early today. Actually, he's early every day. Being ahead of schedule is a habit of his. He was early the morning a deer decided to cross a road at exactly the wrong moment.

But now, a year and a few months since the crash, Shelby's penchant for punctuality has become more of necessity. He has a new job and his stamina and coordination are still far from what they once were. He needs to hit the ground running the moment his shift starts.

A month ago, Shelby was hired to be an evening janitor at an elementary school a few blocks from his home. The teacher's lounge is where he "hides out" while waiting for the 3:30 p.m. bell.

Outside the lounge, most of the students are gone and the pulse of the school day slows. The classrooms that makeup the school shoot off a single long hallway like a tree. Shelby is responsible for getting each room ready for the next day. It's harder work than his last job inspecting machinery. "That's okay," he says. "God opened a door for me here. So it's time to move on."



Shelby chose to visit his fellow members at the 931st Civil Engineer Squadron the first time he was allowed to spend time away from a rehabilitation center.

Inside the classrooms, teachers prepare for tomorrow. Many will still be working after it's time to go home. Shelby will come in to their rooms to work and bring his smile with him. He's already a part of their lives. "You get your strobe light working yet?" he'll ask one teacher as he comes in the door. "Boys have cooties," he'll joke with a teacher's young daughter waiting for her mother to finish working in another room. Another teacher will ask him if he has heard anything about his status with the Air Force. Nothing yet, he will tell her.

But the bell has not rung yet. Shelby still waits in a teacher's version of the American break room. "You're mother doesn't work here... clean up after yourself," it reads on a sign above the lounge's sink. Shelby sits at a round, very-fake wood table with coffee-stained chairs that don't match it or each other. The perused remains of a newspaper lie on the table. He grabs the paper for his daily over-the-break-table prescription of mental medicine for his healing mind.

"Another good day," Shelby says, opening the paper. "I'm not in the obituaries."

It's what he says everyday.



Shelby vacuums a classroom at an elementary school a few blocks from his home. His new job as a janitor involves harder work than the job he was not allowed to return to because of his injury, he said.

UTA schedule simplified

BY STAFF SGT. K.L. KIMBRELL
931ST ARG PUBLIC AFFAIRS

During the Aug. Unit Training Assembly a mandatory UTA and Annual Tour schedule for the remainder of 2007 and 2008 was approved and released to the group by the 931st Air Refueling Group Commander, Col. Tim Cahoon.

The plan was created in the interest of more effective, efficient training, readiness requirements accomplishment and to strengthen unit camaraderie and esprit de corps.

The plan will also assist the 931st ARG in preparing for next summer's Operational Readiness Inspection.

"The ORI is a high priority event," said Col. Cahoon. "We must ensure that we are able to make the best use of our UTA time to prepare for it."

The first mandatory UTA is this month with preparatory and readiness training stated as the priority, which is also the same for October, another mandatory UTA.

There's also an exercise on the horizon for group members.

November's UTA (third and fourth) is immediately followed by three mandatory AT

days due to an Initial Response/Ability to Survive and Operate exercise.

"The plan helps build camaraderie within the group," said the commander.

December and January UTAs aren't mandatory as a group and unit commanders may allow reschedules or mandate the UTA for their squadron or flight if necessary.

February marks a return to mandatory status for the UTA and preparatory and readiness training is again scheduled for group members.

With March comes another IR/ATSO exercise, which begins with two mandatory AT days (six and seventh) before the scheduled UTA (eighth and ninth).

A deployed Operation Readiness Exercise (IR/ATSO) at Volk Field, Wisc. from March 31 to April 6 (five AT days) will be mandatory for all ORI primary participants, spares and direct supporters of the exercise. For those not required to participate, the traditional UTA is on the fifth and sixth of April.

"We must make the best use of our UTA and annual tour time in order to meet our exercise requirements by June," said the colonel.

May isn't a mandated UTA, but permission must be received to reschedule from individual commanders.

June will mark the busiest month of them all for members of the 931st.

The month begins with two UTA days (21 and 22) followed by five AT days (23-27) and completed with a rescheduled July UTA (June 28 and 29) to cover redeployment from the deployed ORI location, which is yet to be determined.

The August UTA isn't mandated, but absences and reschedules must be approved by commanders.

The September UTA will be mandated and this is the tentative date for the Family Day Picnic.

"With this mandated schedule, we will be afforded the opportunity to work, train and play together," said Col. Cahoon.

O-R-(WHY)

On August 06, 2007 a seismic event occurred at the Crandall Canyon Mine in Utah. The shifting of the mountain compromised the integrity of the mine walls and subsequently caused a catastrophic cave in. A specialized team of rescue workers was deployed to the site in hopes to recover six trapped miners, 1,500 feet below the surface. Eleven days passed, as the rescue teams relentlessly bore holes in the mountain searching for signs of life. Meanwhile teams were reinforcing the accessible portion of the mine and tunneling in hopes to reach the victims. On August 16, the mountain suffered another seismic shift and again the mine collapsed. Three rescue workers were killed and six suffered injuries.

As I watched this story unfold, a few questions came to mind. Who rescues the rescuers? Are they trained, proficient, and prepared at the same level as the original team? If you were a trapped rescuer would you want a fumbling inexperienced team trying to save your life? The fact is, specialized recovery teams have teams of equal capability standing at the ready in case they are needed. Unlike sports, replacements for the injured participants are not second string, second best, or last resort.

Soon the 931 ARG will undergo a certification process. The guys and gals with grey hair

BY CHIEF MASTER SGT. TINA LONG
COMMAND CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT

are very aware of what lies ahead. Our unit will endure a series of tests. Individually these tests are isolated to the quality of performance in specific areas. Many of these isolated tests will go unnoticed by the majority. Collectively these tests will expose our capability to operate in a combat environment. As many of you know this process is known as an ORI.

Why do we need to have an ORI? Hasn't anyone told the IG that we have been at war for several years? Isn't the fact that we are currently at an operations and personnel tempo never before seen carry any weight with anyone? I can assure you it does. The command is very concerned as we continue to poke at the ice to see where the breaking point might be. Why then is this necessary?

The ORI is a scenario that tests our survivability and war fighting skills at the very extreme. The scenarios are developed to push the limitations of individuals and operations well beyond the taskings we execute in the real world theater. It conveys confidence to combatant commanders that replacements are as trained, proficient, and prepared as the teams they currently have under their charge.

This is our opportunity to showcase our skill sets. We know how good we are. We know we



are more experienced than other components of the Air Force. We know how to do more with less better than anyone else in the game. We are not 'weekend warriors', we are enablers. We are always at the ready and we are the core element that deters others from compromising the safety and freedom of our homeland. So get out there, smile, maintain that positive attitude and dazzle those inspectors!

Don't Forget Your Passport



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is reminding air carriers and the traveling public that the temporary Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) accommodation allowing U.S. citizens to travel by air within the Western Hemisphere using a Department of State official proof of passport application receipt will end as scheduled at midnight on Sept. 30. U.S. citizens who departed the country under this travel accommodation prior to Oct. 1 with a Department of State official proof of passport application receipt and government-issued identification will be re-admitted with these same documents if returning to the United States after Sept. 30.

As a reminder, Through Sept. 30, U.S. citizens traveling to Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda who have applied for, but not yet received, passports can temporarily enter and depart from the United States by air with a government issued photo identification and official proof of application for a passport.

Effective Oct. 1, U.S. Citizens traveling by air to Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda must present a passport or other WHTI-compliant documentation to enter or depart from the United States. It is always strongly recommended that U.S. Citizens verify the specific documentary requirements for their destination country.

TriWest Supports Reserve

TriWest Healthcare Alliance has announced the launch of an online resource center designed specifically for members of the National Guard and Reserve. TriWest's Guard and Reserve Resource Center was developed with a virtual library of information for West Region TRICARE beneficiaries serving in the National Guard and Reserve, their families and leadership.

WWW.TRIWEST.COM

REAP the benefits

Have you been on Active Duty for 90 days or more since 2001? If so, you might qualify for the new Montgomery G.I. Bill benefit referred to as REAP. REAP is a new benefit providing educational assistance to members of the Reserve component who are called up to active duty in response to war. You could earn between \$430 and \$860 a month as a full time student for serving. Contact Staff Sgt. Shanman Hughes at 743-6082 to check eligibility.

MAFB Airman's Council

A new Airman's Council has been established for McConnell Air Force Base. The council leadership would like to include Reservists in their meetings and activities. To join or for questions contact Senior Airman Jamie Train at 759-4567.

Submissions?

Have something such as an announcement, request or photograph you would like to see in this or another section of the Kanza Spirit? All submissions are subject to editorial review. Please email submissions to:

kenny.kimbrell-02@mcconnell.af.mil

Air Force

BALL 2007

TICKET PRICES:

- \$7: E1-E4
- \$15: E5, E6, GS9 AND BELOW, NON-EXECUTIVE CIVILIANS
- \$30 E7-O3, GS11, GS12
- \$40 O4 AND UP, GS13 AND UP, EXECUTIVE CIVILIANS

1800-2300

Saturday, September 15, 2007

Century II Convention Center
Exhibition Hall

MCCONNELL AFB

CONTACT YOUR FIRST SERGEANT FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.931arg.afrc.af.mil

WICHITA WEEKEND

State Fair

Sept. 15 & 16 — The Kansas State Fair is taking place in Hutchinson, Kan. with traditional events such as rides and games plus a diverse musical line up featuring stars such as Loverboy, Night Ranger, Sara Evans and Josh Turner. Tickets can be purchased at:

WWW.KANSASSTATEFAIR.COM

Marcia Ball

Sept. 14 — Blues singer Marcia Ball brings her talents to the Cotillion on Friday, Sept. 14. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets can be purchased for \$20 in advance or \$23 at the door. For tickets or more information, visit:

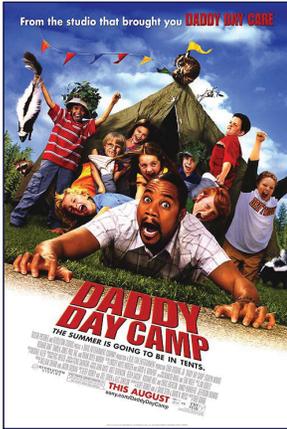
WWW.THECOTILLION.COM

1964: The Tribute

Sept. 15 — 1964: The Tribute, a show that pays homage to The Beatles and their influence on the world music scene. The critically acclaimed show comes to The Cotillion on Saturday, Sept. 15. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the door or in advance.

WWW.1964THETRIBUTE.COM

At the Movies

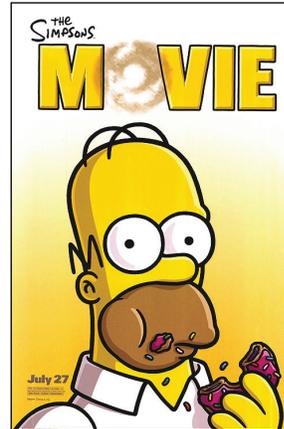


DADDY DAY CAMP

FRIDAY, Sept. 14, 7pm

1 hr. 39 min. Dads Charlie Hinton and Phil Ryerson take over running a summer day camp. Armed with no knowledge of the great outdoors, a dilapidated facility, and a motley group of campers, it doesn't take long before things get out of control.

MPAA Rating: PG, language, rude humor



THE SIMPSONS MOVIE

SATURDAY, Sept. 15, 7pm

1 hr. 27 min. After 18 years on the air, Springfield's favorite family finally makes it to the big screen. Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie Simpson will be there, along with regulars like Moe the bartender and Mr. Burns. Homer Simpson must save the world from a catastrophe he himself created.

MPAA Rating: PG -13, sexual content, language

Movies are shown at the McConnell Air Force Base Theater and are subject to change. Admission is \$3.50 for adults, \$1.75 for children 11 and under. Doors open 30 minutes prior to showtime.

McConnell Movie Line - (316) 759-4181

**931st ARG/PA
53280 Topeka Street
Suite 221
McConnell AFB, KS
67221-3767**