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# Kanza

# SPIRIT

Air Force Reserve's first Associate KC-135 Unit

## 931st members prepare for one week exercise

By Staff Sgt. David Brumley  
Kanza Spirit Staff Writer

The 931<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling group will be conducting an Ability To Survive and Operate (ATSO) exercise March 2-8 to prepare for the Operational Readiness Exercise scheduled for March 1999.

"The ATSO is a way to bring our people up to a level playing field so we can be ready for the ORI," said Col. Dean Despinoy, 931<sup>st</sup> ARG commander.

"My hope is this will be a fun event for our unit, while still being educational," Despinoy said. "This exercise will give us a chance to walk through some of our problem areas, and speed through the areas that we are consistent on. With this exercise we will be in control, independent of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Air Refueling Wing and the time constraints we would normally be under."

"The plan for the ATSO," said Maj. Rick Sage, 931<sup>st</sup> chief of plans, "is to begin training on March 2.

"I've broken the exercise in to five phases: training, deployment, ATSO, dining-in, and the clean-up phase," Sage said.

"When the members come in on Mon-



Photos by Staff Sgt. Barbara Davis

**Staff Sgt. Anna Kasl tries on a flack vest at the Mobility Center.**

day they will begin various training courses that will run through Wednesday. Some examples are tent and bunker building, unexploded ordinance, and Law of Armed Conflict.

The ATSO will begin on Thursday and run through Saturday. A mobility processing line will be set up Thursday for personnel to obtain shots and other mobility requirements.



**Tech. Sgt. Allison Abbenettes and Staff Sgt. Anna Kasl fill up their mobility bags.**

A combat dining-in is scheduled for Saturday evening. "I'm really looking forward to the dining-in," Despinoy said. "We have some fun and games planned, along with some extra heavy dinner rolls to make it a true combat dining-in."

**ATTENTION!!** Commuters be prepared to pay for your lodging expenses for the March Ability to Survive and Operate Exercise (ATSO) March 2-6. Your expenses will be reimbursed when you file your travel voucher.

# Let's get together

By Col. Dean Despinoy  
931st ARG Commander

January's UTA was busy and productive but the highlight occurred Saturday night. Captain R.H. Powers worked hard to put together an evening with the Thunder. About 100 members of our unit went to the hockey game at the Kansas Coliseum. I was delighted to see a large cross section of the unit there, not just the fliers. My girls enjoyed the event but were disappointed not to see some blood on the ice. (They must get it from their Mother.) I highly encourage these types of events, it helps pull the unit together and keeps people from having a myopic view that the group consists of only their squadron or section. Great job R.H.!

On Saturday of the February UTA starting at 4:30 p.m., we will dedicate the 931<sup>st</sup> table at the Emerald City Lounge. This will be a Group event so everyone is invited, officer, enlisted, and dependants. Capt. Joe Wible (now the oldest Captain in the Air Force) will also mark his promotion with some freebies. Later the same evening, the club is having the Sweetheart Ball. I know that several of our folks plan to attend. There will be a sign-up list for those who wish to go in the Group office (see Stefanie Rogers). Don't forget your mess dress, it is a formal affair.

If you don't wish to go to the ball, make sure that you still come to the table dedication and Wible's promotion party.

Since the theme of this article appears to be social events, I will continue with the game plan for the rest of the year.

As everyone knows, we will have a Combat Dining-In on the Saturday night of the March UTA. The Family Day picnic is planned for Sunday of the July UTA. The Group Dining-Out will be held on the Saturday evening of the October UTA. I hope to get Maj. Gen. John Batbie as the guest speaker.

The year will conclude with a Group Christmas Party, Saturday night of the December UTA. In addition, on Sunday of the December UTA we are planning a special event for the spouses and dependant children to include brunch, movies with Santa for the kids, and some information from family services. We are looking to start the event about 11 a.m., which coincides with hotel check out time.

This way the family members who came with you for the Christmas party can do something other than roam the mall waiting for the end of the UTA on Sunday. They can have some fun, eat, and pick up some good information.

Each UTA Friday night about 7:30 p.m., after the Pre-UTA meetings, my family joins me for dinner at the Club. Most of the commanders and Chiefs attend, but I want to make sure you know that anyone and everyone are invited.

Additionally, I will have alternating events at the Emerald City lounge on UTA Saturday nights. Once each quarter, on alternating UTAs, I will have an Officer's call,



Col. Dean J. Despinoy

an all hands "Information Sharing" session, and an informal "Bend the Commander's Ear" session.

We work hard, are extremely professional, and are recognized as one of the premiere AFRC units.

One of the things that can hinder the health and reputation of an organization is a lack of communication. It is extremely important that you know what is on my mind and I know what is on your mind. Through events like the formal quarterly commander's calls and the very informal "Bend the Commander's Ear" sessions, I hope to dramatically improve communication. See you at our table.

Visit our webpage at [www.mcconnell.af.mil/931/931.htm](http://www.mcconnell.af.mil/931/931.htm)

## Kanza Spirit

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**Chief, Public Affairs**  
Capt. Dave Fruck

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Barbara Davis

### Breaking Ground

Col. Dean Despinoy, 931<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Group commander and Capt. Kimberly Thompson, 931<sup>st</sup> Civil Engineers Squadron breaks ground on the site of the new 931<sup>st</sup> CES Mobility Storage Facility on January 10, 1998. The building is scheduled to be completed by fall of this year.

## 931<sup>st</sup> celebrates 35 years of history

By Tech. Sgt. Randy Brown  
931<sup>st</sup> Historian

At an age known better as "time for a mid-life crisis," the 931<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Group is maturing into a reliable associate tanker group.

Thirty-five years ago, on January 15, 1963, the 931<sup>st</sup> constituted as the 931<sup>st</sup> Troop Carrier Group, Medium. A month later, on 11 February, the unit activated and organized, as a reserve component and operated the C-119 "Flying Boxcar". The 931<sup>st</sup> operated as a troop carrier unit for three years, during the buildup of the Vietnam conflict.

In the first decade of operation the 931<sup>st</sup> experienced designation, aircraft, location, commander, and assigned unit

changes in accordance with mission requirements. The Continental Command and the 434<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, Medium were the original higher headquarters for the 931<sup>st</sup>. The first units assigned included: 72<sup>nd</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium; 931<sup>st</sup> Tactical Dispensary; 931<sup>st</sup> Aerial Port Flight; 931<sup>st</sup> Combat Support Squadron; and 931<sup>st</sup> Material Squadron. Only two of the original five units are currently assigned to the 931<sup>st</sup>: the 931<sup>st</sup> Combat Support Squadron (931<sup>st</sup> Mission Support Flight) and the 931<sup>st</sup> Material Squadron (931<sup>st</sup> Aircraft Generation Squadron). One other unit currently assigned to the 931 ARG also activated in the 60's. In late 1969 the 931<sup>st</sup> Civil Engineering Flight (931<sup>st</sup> See 931, Page 6

## Selected Reserve Dental Program enrollment open

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – Members of the Selected Reserve and National Guard can now apply for low-cost dental insurance sponsored by the federal government.

Serious dental problems prevented many reservists from deploying during the Persian Gulf War. As a result, in the 1996 Defense Authorization Act, Congress directed the Department of Defense to create a dental plan for reservists.

Under the government-sponsored

program, DOD will pay 60 percent of the monthly premium or \$6.53 per month for each enrollee, who is responsible for the balance of \$4.36 per month. A four-month premium prepayment is required upon enrollment.

Program participants will not cost-share for covered diagnostic, preventive and emergency services. For covered restorative services, E-4s and below will pay a 10 percent cost-share. E-5s and above will pay a 20 percent cost-share. For covered oral surgery, E-4s and below will pay a 30 percent

cost-share, while E-5s and above will shell out a 40 percent cost-share. There is no deductible for the program but the maximum benefit is \$1,000 per enrollment year for covered services.

Humana has established a network of dentists who have agreed to accept the program's payment for covered dental services as payment in full.

1-800-211-3614, has been set up to provide info on enrollment, address changes and locating a participating dentist. (AFRC News Service)

## Air Force Reserve February History.....

**Feb. 22, 1962:** Nearly 100 Air Force Reserve aircraft participated in an airdrop exercise in support of joint exercise Banyan Tree III in Panama.

**Feb. 21, 1973:** Chief Master Sgt. Robert I. Boyle was named the first senior enlisted advisor to the commander of the Air Force Reserve.

**Feb. 7, 1991:** Capt. Robert Swain, a Reserve A-10 pilot assigned to the 926th Tactical Fighter Group's 706th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Naval Air Station New Orleans, La., scored the first-ever A-10 air-to-air kill when he shot down an Iraqi

helicopter over central Kuwait.

**Feb. 27, 1991:** After a lightning 100-hour campaign, allied forces liberated Kuwait City and completed their encirclement of Iraqi forces in northern Kuwait and southern Iraq. At 9 p.m. Eastern time, President Bush announced that allied forces would cease all offensive combat operations throughout the theater at midnight Feb. 27 (8 a.m. Feb. 28 in the theater of operations).

**Feb. 17, 1997:** Headquarters Air Force Reserve was redesignated Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, reflecting the change from a field operating agency to a major command.

# SPiRiT Spotlight

NAME: Barbara West  
 RANK: Tech. Sgt.  
 FROM: Palmer, Massachusetts  
 UNIT: Civil Engineer Squadron  
 DUTY TITLE: Utilities Technician  
 CIVILIAN POSITION: Work Mandays for CES  
 FAVORITE FOOD: Anything with Pasta  
 FAVORITE MUSIC: Pop  
 FAVORITE MOVIE: "The Fugitive"  
 HOBBIES: Collecting Princess Diana Memorabilia and  
 Outdoor activities i.e fishing, boating and sports  
 IDEAL VACATION: Going to Europe  
 BEST WAY TO RELAX: Spending time with Family  
 PET PEEVE: People with Attitudes  
 WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH A \$1 MILLION? Buy a  
 house in New England and donate to various charities.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Barbara Davis

## Personnel News....

### Military Personnel Flight Hours

The core hours of operation for the MPF are as follows:

Monday - Friday 0730 - 1600  
 Saturday - UTA 1030 - 1600  
 Sunday - UTA 1000 - 1600

### Ancillary Training for Newcomers

Now that we are in our new building, this training will be held in the same room (218) as in-processing. Time will still be from 1230 - 1615.

### DEERS Program

No that other DEERS - Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. DEERS is a computer-based system that identifies personnel entitled to military medical care benefits. You must pre-enroll your family to receive medical care at a military medical facility while you are mobilized or on active duty 31 consecutive days or more. The family members are enrolled when they receive an ID card. Call Customer Service at X3593 for documents you need to bring.

### DANTES Testing now available

DANTES testing is now available during the UTA. Reservists, their spouses, and AFRC civilians are encouraged to take advantage of this command sponsored benefit! Testing will be on a "by appointment only" basis. Individuals need to schedule the UTA prior to when they want to test. Stop by Training and pick up a list of available exams, a sample test and a schedule of your exam.

### Outprocessing

All personnel scheduled for TDY for 30 days or more, retirement, TDY to school tour, Assignment or Separation from the unit MUST outprocess through Personnel Relocations - contact Master Sgt. Alise Talley at X3637 for more information.

## REFER A FRIEND !!

There are positions available within the 931st ARG. Help your unit recruit by providing them a name of a friend or have them contact one their area recruiters listed below:

**MCCONNELL AFB, KS**  
 MSgt Terry Gosh (316) 652-4350  
 MSgt Lester Shaw, Jr. (316) 652-3766

**TINKER & VANCE AFB, OK**  
 MSgt Al Garza (405) 734-5331

**ALTUS AFB, OK & LAWTON, OK**  
 MSgt Larry Giles (405) 357-2784

**SHEPPARD AFB, TX**  
 MSgt Bob Wright (817) 676-3382

**MIDWEST CITY, OK**  
 MSgt Linda Smith  
 TSgt Erick Blick  
 (405) 733-9493

## UTA Schedule for FY 98

Feb.	7-8
March	7-8
April	4-5
June	6-7
May	2-3
July	18-19
Aug.	22-23
Sept.	12-13

**Record of Emergency Data (DD Form 93)**

The information on this form (DD Form 93) is used to notify your next of kin in the event of your injury, death, or other emergency. Review this form in your mobility folder or personnel record (UPRG). This will prevent undue delays or cancellation of orders. If your status changes, i.e. married, divorce, widowed, or have a new member added to the family, make sure you contact Customer Service to update this information.

**Computer classes now available**

The 931<sup>st</sup> has purchased a block of pre-paid computer classes through Executrain in Wichita. Members will attend regular "public" classes, each one being a day in length. Classes are available in three different experience levels on Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access. For a schedule of available training courses and enrollment procedures, contact Training.

**Civilian Supervisor Training**

Supervisors of civilian employees have a new avenue for training. ECI now offers Course OC2000, A Supervisor's Introduction to Civilian Personnel Management. This course consists of 2 "volumes" on disc that are downloaded to a computer. Students have a 6 month time limit for completion and take a "paper" closed book course exam. See Training to request this course.

**HRDC**

H-R-D-C.....tell me what it means to me! Did you know that the 931<sup>st</sup> has a Human Resource Development Council? The purpose of this council is "to advise and make recommendations to the commander on any and all matters pertaining to human resources within the group." Areas of interest include, but are not limited to work force diversity, career development and assignment/promotion opportunities. The council meets Friday (before the UTA) at 1500. All units have representatives who are listed on the HRDC flyers located in each squadron. Commanders and first sergeants are also invited to attend meetings. If you'd bring an issue forward to the council, contact your unit representative, squadron commander or first sergeant.

**Decal**

Just a friendly reminder - Have you checked your decal on your vehicle(s)? Driving your car on McConell AFB is a privilege. You and yours are subject to military discipline for traffic violations. To receive a base decal for a newly acquired vehicle you need the following documents: valid car registration with your name on it, proof of current insurance, valid driver's license and ID Card. Just to update your expired date sticker all you will need is the decal number. The Customer Service Office can assist you with either request.

**An UAC meeting is scheduled for Sunday March 8 at 1430 at the old T-Net room across from the AGS Orderly Room. Everyone in the enlisted ranks is invited to join.**

**Looking Ahead**

- March 2-8**  
Unit Readiness Training Exercise "Phoenix Buddy" 98 .
- March**  
Southwest Asia Support (Desert Storm)
- April/May**  
Joint Exercise with 22 ARW
- May**  
Silver Flag
- June**  
Unit Compliance Inspection
- August**  
Pacer Crag conversion begins
- Summer**  
Major Accident Response Exercise
- Nov**  
Operational Readiness Exercise
- Mar 99**  
Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI)

**Professional Military Education**

**Airman Leadership School:**

We have one ALS quota left for class dates, Jul 28 - Aug 28. Interested Senior Airman may obtain an application from Training.

**NCO Leadership Development Program:**

Carswell (Ft. Worth JRB) had offered our members space in their classes. Dates are: Aug 11-19; June 13-21; or Aug 8-16. Interested Staff Sgts. and Tech. Sgts. should contact Training for further information.

**Command NCO Academy (in-residence):**

Classes will be held at Goodfellow AFB, Texas. Our dates are: June 1 - Jul 9 or Aug 3 - Sep 10. Interested Tech. Sgts. (and Staff Sgts. With 8 years time in service) should complete an AFRC Form 129 (available at Training). Applications for June dates must be turned in NLT April UTA.

**ID Cards**

Did you know spouses and unmarried children, 10-21 years of age can have a reserve dependent ID card? Handicapped children over 21 years of age and college students under 23 are also eligible. Dependents need ID cards to obtain medical care and to use other base facilities such as the commissary and Base Exchange. Contact Customer Service at X3593 for the documents required to obtain an ID card. This will also ensure that your family is enrolled in DEERS when they receive an ID card.

**Space A Travel**

- Feb. 2 - Feb. 6 Davis Monthan AFB, AZ
- Feb. 10 - Feb. 15 Mildenhall, UK
- Feb. 12 - Feb. 19 Roosevelt Roads, PR
- Feb. 21 - Feb. 26 Travis AFB, CA
- Feb. 27-March 2 Travis AFB, CA

**931<sup>st</sup> Airman / NCO of the Quarter**

The Board will be held on Saturday, March 7 at 1400. Members should report to the Group Conference room at 1345.

**The Airman / NCO of the Quarter Schedule:**

Nomination Quarter	Board Date	Due to DPMSC
Jan - Mar 98	April UTA	March UTA
Apr - Jun 98	July UTA	June UTA

# Headquarters AFRC welcomes new vice commander

By Master Sgt. M. Gail Floyd  
HQ AFRC Public Affairs

Retention, employer support, readiness and quality of life and workforce diversity are high on the priority emphasis list for Air Force Reserve Command's new vice commander, Maj. Gen. David R. Smith.

A reservist since 1971, Smith has first-hand knowledge of the unit program and an appreciation of the jobs reservists do. He considers these assets he brings to the command, from

his previous assignment as commander, 10<sup>th</sup> Air Force, NAS Joint Reserve Base, Fort Worth, Texas.

Taking over as vice commander Jan. 1, Smith doesn't envision any major changes in the direction the Reserve is headed. In fact, he's more than ready to tackle challenges already on the horizon. "Obviously, the biggest concern of all is going to be trying to sustain our high level of readiness and quality of life issues within a reduced budget," he said. "Mainly, I'm going to come in and listen."

He considers himself more engrained in "field" methodology as opposed to the inner workings of a headquarters. Smith is a fast study and has definite ideas on ways the command can streamline operations.

One issue to receive serious consideration is enlisted progression through the ranks. "I'm interested in what we can do within our command to focus on issues that pertain to our enlisted force. That's a special concern of mine," he said. "Now that we have helped the progression to technical ser-

geant, the next step is to look for ways to help technical sergeants get to the grade of master.

"I also want to exercise our new found option as a major command to mirror some of the things being done in Air Combat Command," Smith said. An example he uses is the action work-out where a process is analyzed and then streamlined to make it better. The general will target some command-sponsored initiatives in that arena.

## Active, Guard And Reserve ID Cards to go total green force

In another step toward achieving full integration of the active and reserve military components, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen has announced that identification (ID) cards for all active component and Reserve active status U.S. military personnel will now be the same color - green.

This initiative, which will be phased in over a two to five year period that could begin as early as June 1998, calls for changing the color of the Reserve active status forces identification card (DD Form 2 (Reserve)) from red to green. Reserve active status forces include members of the Selected Reserve, the Individual Ready Reserve, and the active Standby Reserve. Only the color of the card held by these members of the Reserve components will change; there will be no associated changes to current service benefits, privileges and entitlements, unless a change in status occurs.

The change responds to a pledge made by Cohen in a recent policy memorandum, calling on the civilian and military leadership of the Department of Defense to eliminate "all residual barriers - structural and

cultural" to effective integration of the Reserve and active components into a "seamless Total Force."

The only ID card being affected is the DD Form 2 (Reserve). The color of all other Uniformed Services Identification Cards will remain as they currently are.

The red identification card has been the primary card used by members of the Reserve who are not on active duty or full-time National Guard duty. Red identification cards (DD Form 2 reserve retired) will continue to be issued to 'gray-area retirees' - members of the Retired Reserve who have not reached age 60. Family members of Reservists will also continue to receive the red (DD Form 1173-1) ID card.

All active status Reserve component personnel will now be eligible to carry a green ID card, which will identify the member's Reserve component service in the upper right-hand corner of the card. The seven Reserve components are the: Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve.

Among the many considerations taken into account by DoD officials when authorizing the change were medical benefits and commissary privileges-two primary areas in which active and Reserve personnel have different entitlements. An ID card alone does not automatically authorize access to medical benefits or commissary privileges, both of which will continue to require additional documentation to allow members of the Reserve components to receive them.

Eligibility checks for medical benefits are now performed by electronic validation prior to each inpatient and outpatient visit to Military Health Services System facilities. With both active and Reserve component personnel soon to be carrying green ID cards, commissary personnel will be reviewing identification cards more closely. The commissary access card, used for validating Reservists' 12 authorized visits, will remain in place.

For more information, news media representatives are encouraged to contact the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Lt. Col. Terry Jones at (703) 695-3620.

### 937Cont. from Page 3

Civil Engineer Squadron) activated.

Members of the 931<sup>st</sup> and assigned units called Bakalar AFB, Indiana, home for seven years under the command of Colonel Arthur W. Howard, Jr. Col. Howard served as commander until December 1967. During this time he oversaw the first mission change to tactical airlift support. He promoted and accepted a change of assignment in late 1967.

Subsequent issues of the Kanza Spirit will contain a chronological account of six missions, three locations, 13 commanders, six aircraft, and a host of unit changes. Anyone wanting to research or write history, or cross train into the history career field, please contact the history office at x6935 or e-mail Tech. Sgt. Randolph Brown. The recruiter, Master Sgt. Terry Gosh, can also answer questions concern retraining.

## Answers about Anthrax

Major Gail Fancher  
Flight Surgeons Office

Anthrax is at the top of the priority list of biological warfare agent threats, according to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. It has been there for some time. The threat is proliferating.

The agent is the easiest to manufacture, weaponize, and deliver. Based upon different regions of the world it has been confirmed that Anthrax stocks are in hand, and in some areas they have been weaponized, because of this real threat to the United States military force vaccinations are scheduled to begin in the summer of 1998.

The 931<sup>st</sup> Flight Surgeons Office has developed a list of frequently asked questions about the Anthrax vaccine.

1. **What is Anthrax?** Anthrax is a severe disease of sheep, cattle, horses, goats and pigs occasionally transmitted to man by contact with these animals or their products.

2. **What are the different types of Anthrax?** *Cutaneous Anthrax* – Usual form of the disease. Results from direct infection of a cut, abrasion or intact skin, *Pulmonary Anthrax* – Results of inhaling the infectious spores. Begins as flu-like infection with fever, general tiredness, headaches, shortness of breath, cough and upper respiratory congestion and *Gastrointestinal* – means you swallow it.

3. **What are the results if exposed to Anthrax?** If the Anthrax disease is rendered into an aerosol and is inhaled by humans, the particles will cause severe pneumonia and death within one week. It is 99% lethal to all exposed and unprotected personnel.

4. **Who has Anthrax capabilities?** At least ten countries

have or are suspected of developing the Anthrax into a weapon. This includes our friendly neighborhood bully in Iraq.

5. **Is it a live or dead bacteria?** The Anthrax vaccine uses a dead bacteria NOT a live one. The preparation of the vaccine is similar to the DPT vaccine that all children must have before they're enrolled in school.

6. **Who gets vaccinated?** Beginning in the summer of 1998 those personnel who serve or are deployed to "HIGH RISK" areas such as Southwest Asia, Northeast Asia and parts of the Middle East will receive the first vaccinations.

ALL active duty and reserve personnel will be receiving the Anthrax vaccine.

The vaccine will NOT be administered to pregnant females or those who think they may be.

Once the pregnancy is completed and the person has returned to duty after their postpartum leave they will then be required to start the vaccination series.

7. **What are possible side effects of Anthrax?** The Anthrax vaccine has been licensed by the FDA since 1970. Every year 400 – 500 people are given the vaccine. Of those 97% have NO reactions at all. Those that do experience reactions have minor limited topical reactions, minor swelling or redness.

I know a lot of you are skeptical about receiving this vaccine, but since there are NO early warning detection devices for biological weapons, making sure you're vaccinated is the only way to protect yourselves against this weapon.

We will try to get more information to you about possible side effects and possible alternatives to the vaccine as we receive it.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Barbara Davis

### Number 1 Resource

Senior Master Sgt. Diane Hiebert, Operations Resource Management Superintendent, received the Outstanding AFRC Operational Resource Management Senior NCO of the year.

## Reservist receives Silver Star for Vietnam service

WASHINGTON – The pen is mightier than the sword when it comes to recognition for Col. Paul A. Curs. The Vietnam War veteran received the Silver Star, the nation's third highest award for valor in combat, in a Pentagon ceremony Dec. 15.

Rodney A. Coleman, assistant secretary of the Air Force for manpower, reserve affairs, installations and environment, presented the award. Curs is mobilization assistant to Coleman.

Curs received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions in the rescue of a U.S. Special Forces reconnaissance team during the Vietnam War. The award was upgraded to the Silver Star after the incident was brought to light in a book, "SOG," by John Plaster, a retired Green Beret major who was with the rescue party.

While flying an O-2A over Vietnam's Ia Drang Valley near the Cambodian border on Oct. 11, 1971, Curs was contacted by

the recon team under attack by North Vietnam Army regulars.

Despite forbidding terrain and marginal weather conditions, he located the team and coordinated an emergency evacuation for them. With fighter support not available, he used his target marking rockets to strafe the enemy positions. Under constant enemy small arms fire, he continued to make low passes, even after expending his rockets, to keep the NVA away from the American soldiers. Curs stayed overhead and vectored the helicopters to the site, departing only when a critical lack of fuel required his return to Pleiku Air Base. His actions were critical to the safe extraction of the entire recon team.

Today Curs continues to serve his country as a member of Air Force Reserve Command. In civilian life, Curs is a Boeing 737 captain and check airman with Continental Airlines. (AFRC News Service)

## From the Safety Office.....

A few items from the news on safety and common sense:

**FALL PROTECTION, WHAT'S THAT?** - In North Carolina, a worker fell 30 feet from a school roof. When he hit the ground he found himself impaled on a 2x4 board. Fortunately for him, the board missed all major arteries, vital organs and his spine. The doctors expect a full recovery. Oh, and the experts say it was the 2x4 that saved his life. If the board hadn't absorbed the energy of the impact, he would have died from hitting the ground! Paul Harvey News

**OPEN MANHOLES, NO PROBLEMO!** - A couple parked their car over an open manhole (The news story didn't say why or how they managed that). When they started the car, a spark from the exhaust ignited

accumulated gases in the sewer. The couple managed to get out with minor injuries but the car was totaled. Paul Harvey News

**FRESH VEGGIES!** - An 8-year-old girl, her mother and a family friend were hospitalized in serious condition Wednesday after eating poisonous mushrooms they picked and put in soup. Authorities said emergency room doctors believed the three had eaten a mushroom known as Amanita pantherina, or the Panther. That species contains toxins that can cause coma-like sleep, delirium and severe liver damage. Almost 9,500 cases of mushroom ingestion are reported to the American Association of Poison Control Centers each year. There is no antidote for mushroom poisoning.

### Automobile jump starting hazards

- Consult the owner's manual before jumping your car's battery!!!!!!
- Read the battery label for further instructions and warnings.
- Keep open flames and smoking material away from the battery.
- Make sure the two vehicles are not touching.
- Inspect the jumper cables for damaged insulation along the cord.
- Inspect the jumper clamp handles to ensure no bare metal surfaces are present
- Check battery for defects such as leaks.
- Do not lean over the battery while jump-starting



Photo by Staff Sgt. Barbara Davis

### The winner among us

Master Sgt. Cody Smith, 931<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Group Safety Superintendent won an all expense paid trip for two to Washington D.C. and a \$2,500 honorarium from Government Employees Insurance Company (GEICO) for creating the Fitting Education Awareness Training (FEAT) program, where children were fitted with helmets (free of charge). He is one of the five winners of the 1996 (GEICO) Public Service Award in Traffic Safety and Mishap Prevention. Each year GEICO recognizes four employees and one retiree that have made significant contributions in the area of traffic safety and mishap prevention, and drug and alcohol abuse prevention.

### VEHICLE TALK by Master Sgt. Alejandro Clemeña, VCO

TDY personnel may use government transportation to obtain suitable meals, go to the drugstores, barber shops, places of worship, cleaning establishments, and similar places for sustenance, comfort, or health of the member fostering the continued efficient performance of Government business. Restrict the use of these vehicles to reputable off-base eating establishments in reasonable proximity to the installation. Direct your questions or ideas to improve our service to your Unit VCO. Thank you and drive safely!!!

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