

## More Rodeo coverage

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July 1998  
Vol. 3, No. 7

Kanza

SPIRIT

Air Force Reserve's first Associate KC-135 Unit

# 931st competitive in Rodeo debut

## Unit places fifth of 14 teams in Best KC-135 wing category

By Cpt. David Fruck  
931st Public Affairs

MCCHORD AFB, Wash. — Another chapter in the 931<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Group's history was written June 20-27 when a 16-member team competed in the Air Mobility Rodeo competition.

The 931<sup>st</sup> — competing for the first time in its first year of eligibility — didn't win any trophies, but gained valuable experience.

"I'm proud of all of you," said Col. Dean Despinoy, 931<sup>st</sup> ARG commander, who accompanied the team to McChord for the competition. "While this is a competition, it's also a great way to learn. The true test is to now take what you've learned and pass it on to the rest of the unit."

The team arrived at McChord June 20, gaining the maximum 200 points for touching down within one minute of the scheduled 7:40 a.m. landing time. Unfortunately, the maintenance team had to replace a rudder control unit, a task that had them working late into the evening.

"Our maintenance guys did a great job fixing the rudder control problem, which was completely unexpected," said Senior Master Sgt. Lloyd Campbell, maintenance chief for the team. "I'd especially like to recognize Tech. Sgt. Marty Curry for his work under difficult circumstances."

Day Two brought the pre-flight inspection, the first of two major tests for the maintenance team. The evaluators found a few minor discrepancies resulting in a score of 520 out of 600 possible points.

The aircrew of Cpts. Shawn McDonald, Evan Fischer, Will Eaton and Tech. Sgt. John Wallman faced their first aerial refueling test on Rodeo's third day. Faced with some weather problems, the crew made the most of it, scoring 965 points out of a



Cpt. David Fruck/Spirit

**Col. Dean Despinoy leads the 931st in a salute during opening ceremonies. Also pictured are Maj. Bill Hansel and Cpts. Evan Fischer, Shawn McDonald and Tech. Sgt. John Wallman.**

possible 1,300. Upon landing, the team, with Staff Sgt. Al Ryder assisting as the refueling supervisor, performed a wartime single integrated operations plan (SIOP), scoring 872 of a maximum 900 points.

Day Four was huge for both aircrew and maintenance. The aircrew rebounded with an almost perfect score of 1,290 on the refueling mission and 837 of 900 for aircraft navigation. After the refueling mission, the maintenance team of Campbell, Curry, Ryder, Master Sgt. Eric Smith, Tech. Sgt. Mark Allen, Tech. Sgt. Jeff Schier, Tech. Sgt. John Boulett, Staff Sgt. Mark McClard, Staff Sgt. Gil Romero, and Senior Airman Jeff Hicks had three hours to prepare for a post-flight inspection. They scored 534 out of a possible 600 points.

Day Five's only competition was cargo loading. The team of Staff Sgt. Tonya Halenka and Wallman on-loaded and off-loaded seven pallets under the inspectors watchful eyes. Their score of 744 was third

See **RODEO**, page 8

# Why Rodeo matters

By Col. Dean J. Despinoy  
931st ARG commander

Congratulations to the 931 ARW 1998 Rodeo Team. The team that was assembled could not have been more energetic or ready to win. Unfortunately we didn't come back with any trophies but we were close. Much closer than most thought possible.

Rodeo is hard work and it takes people away from their normal duties and often places increased responsibilities on others while they are gone. I have heard the question asked several times, "Why do we do this, anyway?" The simple answer is we do it for the unit. We can break our backs doing deployments and fly every local mission on time, but that is not talked about. We don't get the same recognition as when we are in this type of competition.

After Rodeo ended, as we were getting ready to come back home, an unmarked car with two people in civilian clothes approached the aircraft. As it got closer I saw that it was General Kross and his wife. He made a special effort prior to departing base to come by to see the 931<sup>st</sup> team. He said, "I was surprised but delighted that the 931<sup>st</sup> participated in its first year of eligibility. Several other new units send observers first and then participate the next time. You guys did

great, I am really impressed by your standings." This is the type of recognition the 931<sup>st</sup> needs and deserves and this answers the question as to why we do it.

There are many differences in the way that the reserves and active duty put together a rodeo team. Active units pick their top of the line instructors and evaluators and then give them lots of opportunity to practice. The 22 ARW crew flew more than 40 missions in preparation. The 931<sup>st</sup>, like all reserve units, look for volunteers who can give the needed time. Availability takes priority over credentials, but what reservists can do with availability.

An example was our cargo loading team. TSgt John Wallman and SSgt Tonya Halenka are basic boom operators with only four years of experience between them. They posted the third best score in this world competition with no safety write-ups.

Our maintenance team only had two members who had ever participated in this type of competition before. It was clear they were up against tough competition when two teams turned in perfect scores in the timed preflight challenge. 931<sup>st</sup> maintenance worked extremely well together and received respectable scores in all areas, with a highlight of a perfect score for the ground refueling phase. The 22<sup>nd</sup> maintenance was



Col. Dean J. Despinoy

able to hold it together to bring home McConnell's only trophy for Best KC-135 Maintenance.

The aircrew had their techniques down, but an unfortunate technical foul caused the crew to lose 25% of their first mission score. The second flight they only lost 7 points out of 1,000 possible, and even with the disappointing technical, when it was all over, ranked number four in the world for Best KC-135 Crew. Overall, the 931<sup>st</sup> ranked 5<sup>th</sup> as Best KC-135 Wing, placing ahead of the 22<sup>nd</sup> in many areas. I am proud of all who participated and delight when I hear the words, "I can't wait until next time", as opposed to "don't ever do this to me again." Good job all and I can't wait until next time either.

## Items still wanted for 50th anniversary reserve enlisted table

In honor of the Year of the Enlisted Force and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Air Force Reserve, enlisted members of the 931<sup>st</sup> ARG are collecting items to display on a special table. The table will be permanently displayed at the Emerald City enlisted club.

The table, which is currently being stored at the 931<sup>st</sup> CES building, will display historical memorabilia from the past 50 years of the Air Force.

Your ideas and memorabilia are needed to complete this special project. For input,

questions or to donate memorabilia, contact one of the following: Master Sgt. Lloyd Thompson or Noah Ordyne (CES), Dianne Hiebert (18<sup>th</sup> ARS), Randy Brown, Brian Bowman or Chief Billy Mead (ARG).

## Kanza Spirit

Volume 3, No. 7

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**931st Commander**  
Col. Dean Despinoy

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

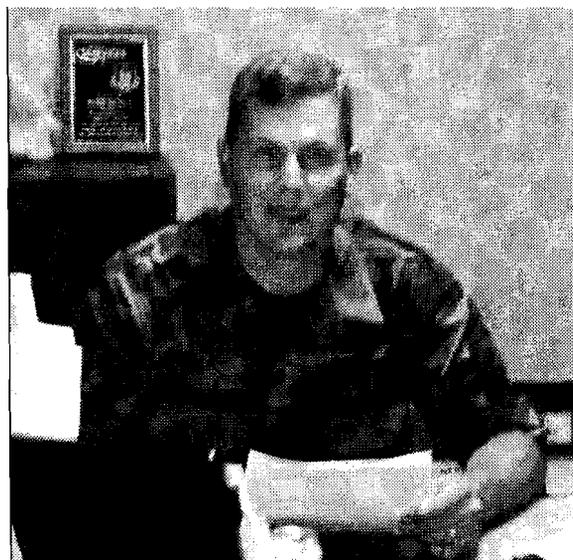
**NCOIC, Public Affairs**  
Tech. Sgt. Brian Bowman

**Editor**  
Staff Sgt. Barbara Davis

**Staff Writer**  
Staff Sgt. David Brumley

# SPIRIT Spotlight

**Name:** Greg Bourgeois  
**Rank:** Master Sgt. (First Sergeant)  
**From:** Tucson, Ariz.  
**Unit:** 931<sup>st</sup> AGS  
**Duty Title:** First Sergeant  
**Civilian Position:** Safety Manager  
**Favorite Food:** Barbeque  
**Favorite Music:** Country  
**Favorite Movie:** Any John Wayne  
**Hobbies:** Motor cycling, farming, raising animals  
**Ideal vacation:** 3,500-mile plus motorcycle trip (back roads and small towns)  
**Best Way to Relax:** Fixing up the farm  
**Pet Peeve:** Inconsiderate drivers and drivers using cell phones  
**What would you do with \$1 million?:** Buy 400 acres, a new tractor and go into farming full-time. Take my wife on a two-week cruise.



Staff Sgt. Barbara Davis/Spirit

**Master Sgt. Bourgeois**

## Personnel News....

### Military Personnel Flight Hours

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

**Monday – Friday** 0730 – 1600  
**Saturday – UTA** 0800 – 1600  
**Sunday – UTA** 1000 – 1600

The following individuals were promoted to grade shown:

**Effective 1 May:**

SSgt Gary Carlson AGS  
 TSgt David Harris AGS  
 SSgt Wesley Matsel 18<sup>th</sup>

MSgt Eric Osen CES  
 TSgt John Wallman 18<sup>th</sup>

**Effective 1 Jul 98:**

TSgt Harold Jones OSF  
 SSgt William Durand OSF  
 SSgt Kurt Smith CES  
 TSgt Delbert Lumpkins CES  
 TSgt Joe Powell CES  
 SSgt Anthony Fancher AGS  
 SSgt Thomas Helmers AGS  
 SSgt Steven Tucker AGS  
 TSgt John Sanchez AGS  
 MSgt Bill Baker 18<sup>th</sup>  
 TSgt Kenneth Girty 18<sup>th</sup>  
 TSgt Mark McIntosh 18<sup>th</sup>

TSgt Tonya Halenka 18<sup>th</sup>  
 TSgt Debra Lee 18<sup>th</sup>  
 MSgt Troy Lawson 18<sup>th</sup>

### Amn/NCO of the Quarter Board

Individuals meeting this board on 18 Jul will meet at the group conference room, bldg 850, NLT 1345. POC is MSgt Adkins, 5443.

### Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT)

Packages for the Sep 98 UPT board at HQ AFRC are due to the MPF, Career Enhancement office NLT 15 Aug 98. Age cut-

See Personnel, page 7

## 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 Gillis (405) 357-2784

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

**MIDWEST CITY, OK**  
 MSgt Linda Smith  
 TSgt Erick Glick  
 (405) 733-8403

## UTA Schedule for

Aug.	22-23
Sept.	12-13
Oct.	17-18
Nov.	14-15
Dec.	5-6
Jan.	5-6
Feb.	6-7
March	13-14

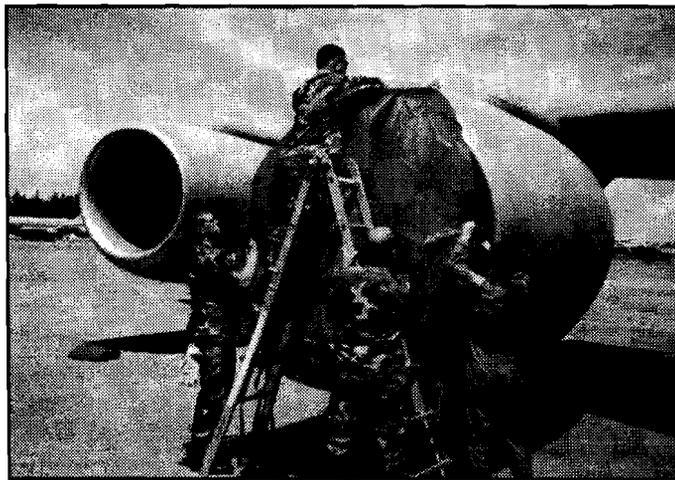
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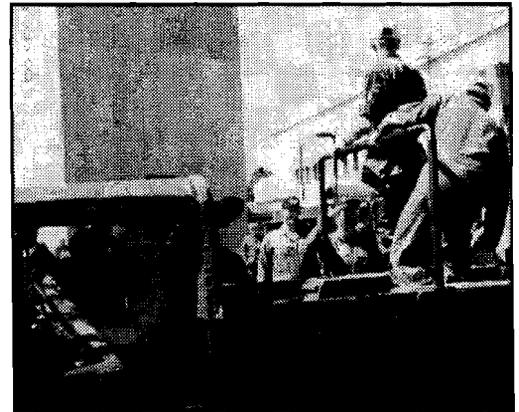
Say what? Staff Sgt. Gil Romero, Master Sgt. Eric Smith and Staff Sgt. Al Ryder share a word.



Opening ceremonies.



Senior Airman Jeff Hicks, Tech. Sgt. Martin Curry, Smith and Staff. Sgt. Tonya Halenka cover an engine.



Always ready -- that's why he's a 4-star: Col. Dean Despinoy laughs as Gen. Walter Kross, AMC commander, deftly shows his coin in response to the 931st's challenge.



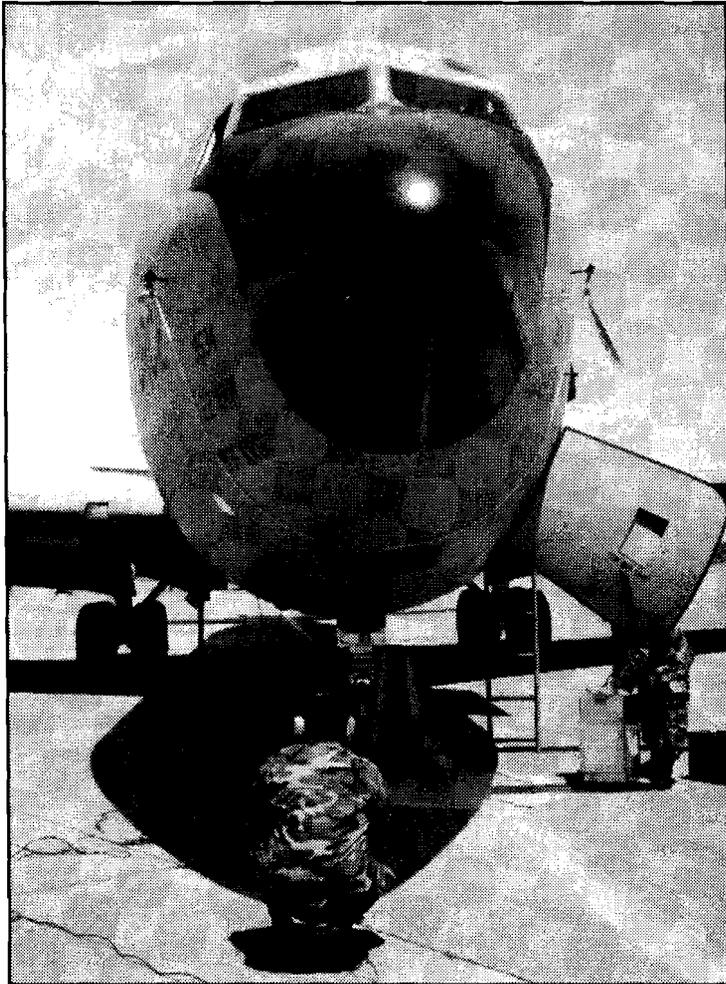
Wichita business leaders attended the Rodeo with McConnell's active duty and reserve teams.



Rodeo evaluators check Ryder's skills.

Photos by

# DEO '98



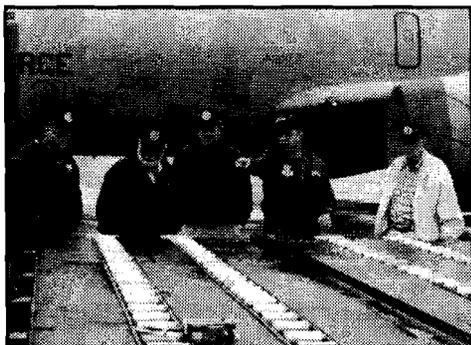
Getting ready.



The unit took third place in loading.

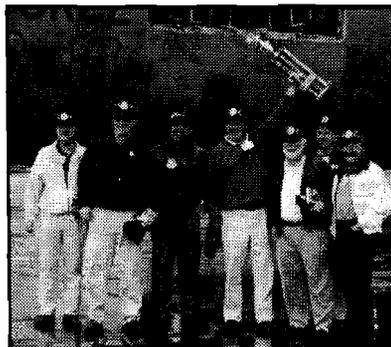


Cpt. Shawn McDonald mans the grill at a team barbeque.



Despinoy shows the civic leaders a loading device.

Cpt. David Fruck



The Wichita community was honored as the top supporting community. Several civic leaders who made the trip to Rodeo pose with the trophy and Col. Despinoy.



Our team.

# Meek, dog aid in rescue attempt

Reservist responded to scene hours after worst elevator blast in recent U.S. history

By Tech. Sgt. Brian Bowman  
931st Public Affairs

Soon after Dave Meek and his trained search dog Thunder were lowered 25 feet underground into the darkness of a grain elevator tunnel, he realized the odds of successfully completing his mission were against him and other rescue workers.

A massive explosion the morning of June 8 at the DeBruce Grain Elevator a few miles southwest of Wichita had already claimed two lives by the time Meek — a navigator with the 931<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Group — arrived six hours later. Four men, all believed to be in the tunnels below the world's second-largest grain elevator, were missing. Meek and others with trained search dogs were assisting the frantic — and ultimately futile — attempt to find the men alive.

"There was jagged metal and grain everywhere (in the tunnel)," said Meek, a captain with the 931<sup>st</sup>. "It was difficult to sift through all the debris. Grain filled your boots and pockets. I would try to push it away and more just filled in."

Meek, who works as a registered nurse at a Topeka hospital, formed the Kansas Search and Rescue Dog Association in 1994. He and others trained dogs to find people — living or dead — in wilderness, water and in disasters. But Meek said no training could have fully prepared him or his dog for the conditions in the DeBruce tunnel-turned-tomb. It is believed that some type of spark ignited the grain dust, which is eight times more volatile than gasoline. Grain elevators store harvested grain until it can be sold and distributed.

Meek drove 2 ½ hours from Topeka with his dog when he heard news of the explosion. The conditions they found there were unlike any Meek had ever experienced.

"It was more like a confinement space type of rescue," Meek said. "It was tight, hot and dusty ... the dust just stuck to your skin."

"It's probably impossible to simulate those conditions in training. There's nothing that equates ... for what we came up against."

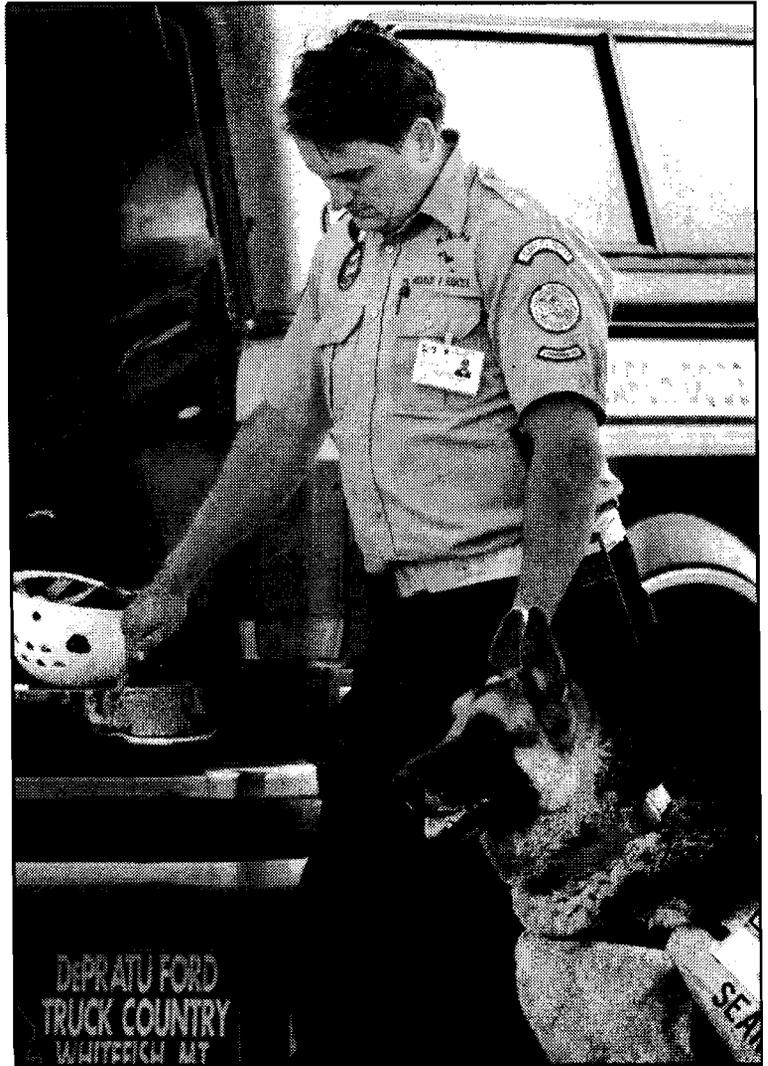
Meek's first time down in the tunnel tempered his hopes of finding the men alive.

"I was hopeful because you never say never," he said. "But the jagged metal that was spread throughout the tunnel, well, my heart just sank when I saw that debris."

The debris was so treacherous that Meek's dog Thunder was fitted with special boots to avoid injury.

Thunder was given a live human scent to track, but an initial 20 minutes underground yielded little.

"He only had one change of behavior," Meek said. "He sat



Fernando Salazar/The Wichita Eagle

**Meek with his search dog Thunder at the scene of the DeBruce Grain Elevator explosion. (Photo reprinted with permission from The Wichita Eagle)**

down ... by a pile of grain ... but that was it."

Eventually, representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency arrived at the scene and relieved Meek and other volunteers. Meek spent almost seven hours at the site on the day of the blast and was asked back a few days later to help in the recovery phase of the operation.

Three of the four bodies were eventually found in the days following the explosion. It was determined that all died instantly. The fourth has not been found and is presumed dead.

Despite the disappointment of not finding survivors, Meek said the experience he and Thunder gained may help someone else in the future.

"I thought Thunder performed well in those conditions (underground)," Meek said. "You never know ... when that experience may help us."

## Personnel *cont. from pg. 3*

off is 27½ by Aug 99. Those interested can call Major Randy Foster, ext 3432, for a position and contact MSgt Corinna Seitz, ext 3665, for application procedures.

### Reenlistment Incentive Bonus

The following AFSCs are authorized as bonus AFSCs from 1 Jun - 30 Dec 98: K1A0X1, 2A4X2, 2A6X5, 2A6X6, 3E0X2, 3E4X1, 3E4X2.

Any questions can be directed to your unit career advisor or the retention manager at ext 3665.

### PEP TIME

PEP (Promotion Enhancement Program) is just around the corner. Packages are due to the MPF, Career Enhancement office **NLT 19 Jul 98**. Guidelines and submission requirements can be found in Career Enhancement.

### Outprocessing Hours

If you, or any unit member you know, needs to outprocess for TDY, reassignment, or retirement, please keep in mind that on UTA weekends the Military Pay section (Ms Sharon Thayer) is only open for business on Saturdays from 0730 to 1300 hours. Thinking ahead can insure that you do not have to come out during the week to finish your outprocessing. For further information contact TSgt Thelma Herrera in Relocations at X-3637.

### DD Form 93, Record of Emergency Data Card (AFI 36-3002)

The primary purpose of the DD Form 93 is to list the next of kin to be notified in the event of a casualty situation. It is imperative the form be reviewed and / or updated immediately anytime information changes (i.e. new child, divorced, married, name change, etc.) See your orderly room or Customer Service for assistance.

### HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (HRDC)

The HRDC meets every Friday before the UTA at 1530 in the Southwind Conference

Room. Anyone wishing to have an issue addressed to the council may forward it to their unit representative. Commanders and First Sergeants are always welcome to attend.

### OFFICER / ENLISTED PME OPPORTUNITIES

It's that time of year again for in-residence PME applications. Senior and Intermediate Service Schools (SSS / ISS) and Junior Officer Development Seminars II (JOLDS) are all accepting applications. In addition, Air War College (AWC) and Air Command and Staff (ACSC) seminars will be starting in August in conjunction with the active duty. Specific eligibility and application procedures are available in the Training Office. SSS and ISS packages include a full length 8 X 10 color photo. The suspense to 4<sup>th</sup> AF is 12 August 98, so interested members need to act quickly! JOLDS II applications must be to HQ NLT 14 Aug 98. Please assure packages arrive to DMPT in a timely manner to allow processing from our end. The suspense for the AWC and ACSC seminars is ASAP as classes begin the first week in August.

**Senior NCO Academy** (in-residence) packages are due to HQ NLT 12 AUG 98. These packages also include a full length 8 X 10 color photo so interested members need to act quickly to ensure they will be able to meet the suspense. Specific class dates, eligibility and application requirements are available in the Training office. As with the officer packages, please assure that they arrive to DPMT in enough time for us to process them to AFRC.

**NCO Academy** (in-residence) dates are also available. Though we've not received our specific quotas, ours are usually at Goodfellow AFB, TX. Training has applications and will be accepting them on a "first come, first serve" basis. If we end up with more applicants than quotas, we will request "out of cycle" quotas for those members.



Master Sgt. Larry Shippy/Spirit

## Kaw Pride

At a June unveiling ceremony in Council Grove, a statue -- named "The Guardian of the Grove" -- dedicated to the legacy of the Kaw Nation. The Kaw, which includes the original Kansa Indian tribe for which the state of Kansas is named for and the inspiration of the 931st ARG roach, has a long legacy in Council Grove. The 10-foot bronze statue stands at a park near downtown Council Grove. The Kaw were represented by, among others, Luther Pepper, the nation's vice chairman who worked with the 931st to establish the roach concept. Other notables at the ceremony were millionaire Bill Koch and former Kansas Governor Joan Finney.

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

## Rodeo *cont. from pg. 1*

among the 14 competing teams.

The final competition for the team was on Day Six, with a maintenance ground refueling check. The team scored a perfect 100 from the evaluators, with Boulett receiving special recognition for his outstanding safety briefing.

It all tallied up to a fine showing for the unit in its initial foray into Rodeo. The 931<sup>st</sup> placed 5<sup>th</sup> overall of 14 teams in the Best KC-135 Wing category. In addition to the third place in cargo loading, the unit took fourth place in Best KC-135 aircrew category, sixth of 21 teams in Best Aerial Refueling Team and seventh in Best KC-135 Refueling Crew category.

In maintenance, the 931<sup>st</sup> placed seventh in the Best KC-135 Maintenance Team category, including perfect marks in daily observation and refueling checks.

All in all, unit participants said the competition was a positive learning experience.

"I came out here for the experience," Allen summed up, "and it was well worth it."

## VEHICLE TALK

by *MSgt Alejandro Clemeña, VCO*

*1) Vehicle operators must pull their vehicles to the extreme right side of the roadway and come to a complete stop when approached from any direction by an authorized emergency response vehicle using emergency lights and sirens. 2)*

*Driving over unprotected fire department hoses without consent of fire department personnel is prohibited. 3) A spotter or guide is required for all vehicular backing movements involving rear view obstructions or a GOV rated over one and a half ton. 4) Passing moving vehicles marked "EXPLOSIVES" or a*

*convoy transporting explosives is prohibited. Direct your questions, ideas or comments to your Unit VCO.*

Thank you and drive safely!!!
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## Air Force Reserve July History.....

**July 10, 1966** -- In response to an airline strike, President Johnson instituted Operation Combat Leave, an effort to provide transportation to military personnel stranded by the strike. Air Force Reserve C-124s, along with active-duty and Air National Guard aircraft, flew transcontinental routes, while Reserve C-119s flew feeder routes to the major hubs. The operation continued for two months.

**July 4, 1973** -- An HU-16 of the 301st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron established a new altitude record of 32,833 feet for amphibious aircraft. The aircraft is currently on display at the Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

**July 15, 1976** -- Second Lt. Kathleen A. Rambo of the 514th Military Airlift Wing (Associate) became the first female Air

Force reservist to undergo military pilot training as she entered the undergraduate pilot training program. She completed training Sept. 2, 1977.

**July 15, 1992** -- A Reserve C-130 and two aircrews from the 934th Airlift Group, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, Minn., joined active-duty and Air National Guard aircraft and aircrews at Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, to support Operation Provide Promise, airlifting supplies and food into Sarajevo, Bosnia, and Zagreb, Croatia.

**July 10, 1993** -- Air Force Reserve units and personnel began supporting flood relief efforts in the Midwest. Reserve C-5s moved water purification equipment to Des Moines, Iowa, while other units moved sandbags and other relief supplies to communities along the Mississippi and its tributaries.

**931st Air Refueling Group  
Public Affairs Office  
McConnell AFB, Kan. 67221**