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VIKING FLYER

For members of the 334th AG, Air Force Reserve, Minneapolis-St. Paul IAP ARS, Minn.

VIKING FLYER

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On the cover



Lt. Col. Larry Snider holds the Best C-130 Airdrop trophy. He's flanked by the wing commander, Col. Walter Hatcher III (left) and Col. Michael Gjede, 934th commander (right). See stories, pages 6-8.

(Photo by MSgt. Tim Turner)



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Commentary

Everyone owns the win

Rodeo '94 reflects the best from all of us

by Col. Michael Gjede
group commander

Let me begin by saying congratulations to the 934th's first-ever winners of the airdrop competition at this year's Rodeo at McChord AFB, Wash.

The competition was certainly stiff, and the victory was a close one -- you can't get much closer than one foot! There were 29 crews, comprised of not only active duty and Guard/Reserve crews, but international crews as well. So our crew's performance was certainly not only a positive reflection on the Air Reserve Component, but also of the 934th Airlift Group.

I extend the congratulations to all members of the 934th, however. Although the crews were there dropping a heavy equipment pallet, a Container Delivery System pallet and an Army paratrooper, every member of the 934th played a part in bringing the first-place airdrop trophy to Minneapolis.

Every flying unit's success depends not only on the performance of its aircrews, but the people who support them. This means the personnel clerk who processes awards and decorations, the finance clerk who figures travel vouchers, the civil engineer who repairs the runway, the medical specialist who schedules flying physicals, and certainly the maintenance people,



Gjede

without whose help no aircraft would get off the ground.

There are many others -- countless others -- whose contribution cannot be overlooked. I consider each of them to be equally important in accomplishing our successes.

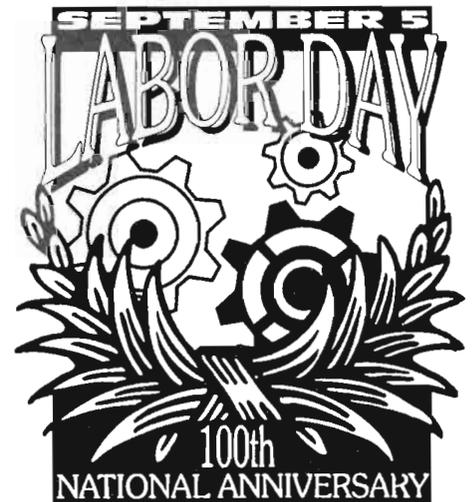
So, my thanks to each member of our first-rate, first-place organization. I hope the pride of our victory in Washington is felt by each and every one of you.

Keep up the good work! □



UTA schedule

Sept. 10-11 (Employers' Day, Family Day)
Oct. 1-2
Nov. 5-6
Dec. 3-4
Jan. 7-8



Briefs in blue . . .

Reservists finish fighting fires

Thirty Air Force reservists from the 934th's parent wing, the 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson AFB, Colo., have returned home after fighting fires in three states over a three-week period.

The reservists and two specially-equipped C-130s were among the first deployed to southern California, Arizona and Colorado in late June to help battle the early season blazes. (AFRNS)

Guidelines protect enlisted reservists

Enlisted Air Force reservists now have the same retirement protection as officers. Air Force Reserve personnel officials set forth guidelines in June for carrying out a law establishing an "18-year enlisted sanctuary." The law prohibits AFRES from involuntarily separating enlisted people, except for physical disability or for cause, if they have completed at least 18 but less than 20 years' satisfactory service. Reserve officers have had the same protection for several years. (AFNS)

AFRES looks at exit incentives

AFRES officials have asked for command-wide authority to offer early retirement and separation incentives to civilian employees, including air reserve technicians. They want to avoid involuntary separations associated with the elimination of up to 1,400 civilian positions throughout the command.

Also, some Reserve officers who are involuntarily separated with 15 but less than 20 years of satisfactory service may qualify for early retirement. Qualification depends on the officer being involuntarily separated after June 1 due to unit inactivation, conversion or relocation, or base closure. They are also eligible if an authority outside of their unit deletes their position; however, the Reserve must first try to find another position for reservists identified for involuntary separation. The 934th Military Personnel Flight will contact affected officers. (AFRESNS)

Travel, lodging services announced

Passengers traveling space available now retain their initial sign-up dates and times when flying through en route terminals to their destination. This applies to military and military-contracted aircraft. The change allows passengers boarding priority over those originating their flight at an en route terminal. Passengers must still sign up at each stop, and stopping for leave establishes a new sign-up time and date. (AFIS)

The U.S. Army now handles lodging reservations for almost any Army installation in the world through a central reservation center. The new 800-Go-Army-1 (800-462-7691) service connects callers to the center, which can book rooms and provide travel information. The service is available to all active duty and reserve forces members and their families traveling for recreation or personal business, civilian and military people on temporary duty, and retirees and their families. (AFNS)

Brief briefs ...

Lowry AFB, Colo., held farewell ceremonies recently as base functions begin closing down, focusing on the Sept. 30 base closure ... **Operation Provide Promise** was noted upon its two-year anniversary July 3. It is the longest running humanitarian relief effort in U.S. history, though the Berlin Airlift far surpassed it in current tonnage delivered ... **The only large telescope** in the United States with laser-adaptive optics, eliminating "atmospheric distortion," is being used by Air Force scientists to view the Jupiter-comet collision. The Phillips Laboratory at Kirtland AFB, N.M., has the world's largest telescope capable of tracking low Earth-orbiting satellites, protected by a unique retracting cylindrical enclosure allowing the telescope to operate in the open air. (AFNS) □

Taking a peek at personality

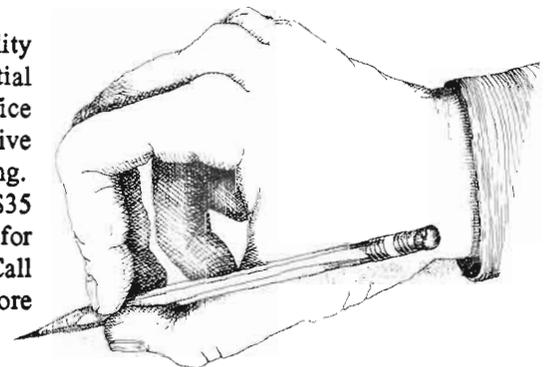
This test could pay off in the office – and at home

The 934th Quality Office now offers the Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator to anyone who did not receive it in earlier Quality training.

The self-administered, multiple-choice test determines personality preferences, which can be valuable in both career decisions and understanding differences among fellow workers or loved ones.

Those who have completed Quality training and wish to receive confidential results of the MBPI, call the Quality office to pick up the test. All others will receive the test as part of future Quality training.

Although this test can cost around \$35 in the community, there is no charge for 934th members and immediate family. Call the Quality office, Ext. 8112, for more information. □



New uniform

Questions arise as more people make the purchase

The new Air Force dress uniform is making its way to military clothing sales stores — slowly but surely.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service began stocking the uniform earlier this year as a service to people who want it now, said Air Force officials. The mandatory wear date for the uniform is Oct. 1, 1999.

Here are answers to some questions about the uniform:

Q: Can I wear the new service dress coat with my old uniform slacks?

A: No. Only wear the coat with matching, newly-designed trousers, skirts, slacks and rank insignia. Wear the herringbone tie/tie tab and flight cap if available. Do not wear a name tag or U.S. insignia on the new service dress coat.

Q: Where does the officer rank insignia go on the new service dress coat?

A: Ensure there is a 1/4-inch space between the aluminum color style sleeve braids. The braids are available in 1/2- and 1/4-inch widths. The first braid begins two inches from the end of the sleeve.

Q: Where do the enlisted sleeve chevrons go on the new service dress coat?

A: Center the sleeve chevron halfway between the shoulder seam and elbow when the elbow is bent at a 90-degree angle. Men must wear the 4-inch sleeve chevron. Women can wear the 3 1/2- or 4-inch sleeve chevron. Sergeants will wear senior airman chevrons. Only wear the old stripes on the old service dress coat.

Q: Where do I place ribbons on the service dress coat?

A: Centered immediately above the edge of the welt pocket in multiples of three or four. General officers may wear all, the top three or four by precedence, or none of their ribbons.

Q: How do I wear badges on the service dress coat?

A: Wear a maximum of three badges. Wear only one Air Force occupational specialty badge, centered 1/2 inch above the top row of ribbons. Center the missile specialty qualification badge (missile combat crew and missile maintenance badges) 1 1/2 inches below the top of the welt pocket. Wear only one aeronautical badge, by precedence, placed 1/2 inch above the occupational specialty badge. Only wear duty badges while assigned to the issuing organization. Only wear one duty badge, centered 1 1/2 inches below the top of welt pocket. Wear only highly-polished badges. Aeronautical and chaplain badges are mandatory, but all others are optional.

Q: Should officers purchase the new uniform for official photographs to help promotion chances?

A: It is not a requirement for promotion. There have been rumors that officers have to, or should have, their official photograph taken in the new uniform if they want to be competitive for promotion. No one is required to wear the new uniform until the mandatory wear date. Officer selection board members are advised that they will see a mixture of both old and new uniforms in selection records.

Q: Which tie tac/clasp and cuff links do I wear?

A: Either the old shiny finish or new wing and star design. If wearing the tie tac/clasp and cuff links at the same time, the accouterments will be of the same design — all old or all new.

Q: What is the configuration of the new semi-formal service dress uniform?

A: It is the same as the new service dress uniform. It must be worn, however, with a plain white shirt or blouse without design. Wear only the new herringbone material tie or tie tab.

Q: What about the mess dress?

A: Enlisted members wear the current aluminum color sleeve chevrons or the new sleeve chevrons. The brushed finish, ball and clutch-style stud, and wing and star cuff links may also be worn on the shirt. The current style buttons on the coat may be removed and replaced with the newly designed wing and star buttons.

Q: Where do I place the new sleeve chevrons on my battle dress uniform?

A: Halfway between the shoulder seam and the elbow when the elbow is bent at a 90-degree angle. You can still wear the current rank insignia. Sergeants may wear the current sergeant stripes or new senior airman stripes.

Q: What about stripes on my lightweight blue jacket?

A: Place current or new chevrons halfway between the shoulder seam and elbow when the elbow is bent at a 90-degree angle. Instead of chevrons, you can wear the current or new metal rank insignia on the collar. Officers wear the regular-size metal grade insignia on their epaulets.

Q: Can I mix and match some items?

A: When you're not wearing a service dress coat, you may mix and match the various new- and old-style component items. For example, you can wear the current shirt/blouse and new tie/tie tab, plus the new chevrons with the old trousers, skirt or slacks.

Q: What stripes should sergeants wear on shirts or blouses?

A: Either the current sergeant chevrons or the new senior airman chevrons on light blue long or short sleeve shirts and blouses. (AFNS) □



(Photo by Cherie Huntington)

1st Lts. Daniel Anderson and Barbara Sullivan, 47th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, have their new uniforms ready.

Mobility bag blues

by Cherie Huntington

public affairs

Quality processes played a critical role in the 934th's attack on a long-standing problem: mobility bags.

"There had been concern for the condition of 934th mobility bags expressed by several organizations on base," said Maj. Wade Farris, operations officer and leader of the group formed to study the project. "It was decided to use the Quality process and form a working group."

Sticky problems

Farris explained that there were several underlying problems hidden underneath mountains of bags. "This goes back six or seven years ago," he said. "The Air Force was trying to contract out everything it could. When it came to a contract for mobility bag maintenance, supply had to bid against civilian contractors."



(Photo by Cherie Huntington)

SSgt. Tom Reinardy, 934th Maintenance Squadron, is one of many spending long, hot days organizing mobility bags.

After years of searching for a permanent fix, it took Quality processes to help produce solutions for a messy situation

Supply won the contract, but some base organizations needed services not included in the original bids. Several units opted to pull out their bags and maintain their own. As time went on, base leadership decided that all units should maintain their own bags.

"Other problems include the fact that mobility bags are governed by several different regulations — and several different agencies," said Farris. "Without a central point of contact to interpret the regs and clear up confusion on what's supposed to be in the bags and how to order it, there's a big problem."

He said there were also security problems adding to the messy situation. "Something had to be done to make sure our bags were ready for us to go to war," he said.

Quality wheels in motion

In mid-February, the group began to meet. Other members included Capt. Barbara Dock, personnel, who served as facilitator; Darcy Copus-Sabart, contracting; Maj. Rich Huntington, safety; SrA. John Kline Jr., civil engineers; the late Steve Norby, supply; MSgt. Pat Olson, logistics support/maintenance; MSgt. Larry Schyma, plans; and TSgt. Chuck Super, civil engineers.

"After the initial gelling and getting comfortable with each other, everyone contributed," said Farris. "The group worked extremely well together."

For more than four months, the group normally met twice a week for one or two hours, according to Farris. "It was a long process," he said. "Since we were so new to Quality, it took more time, but without the processes, we probably wouldn't have considered some of the things we did — and we wouldn't have come up with the comprehensive recommendations we have."

Though he said only time will tell if the solution works, he's confident the group did its best. "We looked at the problem, not just the causes," he said. "We talked to five or six bases extensively and accumulated a lot of information. We used a questionnaire and talked to a lot of people here, a lot of units."

Permanent fix

The solution in progress now is to consolidate all bags in Bldg. 803. Maj. Michael Johnson, 96th Airlift Squadron, heads the massive project, organizing the work force required to go through each bag for inventory and storage.

"The first effort is to get all the bags in order," said Farris, "then get a system in place." That system includes bulk storage of many items for the bags, with some types of bags packed and ready to go if the contents don't change much. Once reorganized, maintenance of all bags will remain with supply.

"In the last few years, there had been a number of temporary fixes," said Farris. "Then with Desert Storm, there was a massive struggle to get the bags ready. We wanted a permanent fix, so in the future there would be no mad scramble before an inspection or deployment."

He said there will be plenty of opportunities to test the new system on normal deployments, allowing for fine-tuning or changes.

"We felt pretty good when we finished with the working group," Farris said. "We were glad something was finally going to happen with the mobility bags. It will help take a lot of pressure off the mobility officers and take a load off unit commanders. Instead of using valuable training time to take care of the bags, people will be able to focus on their primary jobs." □



Rodeo '94

by MSgt. Tim Turner
public affairs

If you thought close only counted in horseshoes and hand grenades, then you haven't been to a Rodeo competition.

The 934th Airlift Group took home the first-place trophy for Best C-130 Airdrop at Rodeo '94, held June 25-July 2 at McChord AFB, Wash. The six-person aircrew topped its next closest competitor -- Pittsburgh's 911th AG -- by a footstep.

Making history

"We made history at this year's competition because it was the first time the 934th has won a trophy in the seven years we've been coming to the Rodeo," said Capt. Jim Carlen, a pilot with the 96th Airlift Squadron and co-pilot for the 934th Rodeo '94 team. "What's amazing is that we had the oldest aircraft at the Rodeo and still won." The C-130 the 934th took to McChord first tested its wings during the Kennedy administration.

During the airlift portion of the Rodeo, C-130 aircrews were scored on their accuracy for releasing three different loads of equipment and U.S. Army paratroopers over a drop zone at heights between 500 and 800 feet.

"Our first drop was a heavy equipment pallet, and we ended up getting to within only 38 feet of the target," explained Maj. Grelon Williams, 96th AS navigator for all three airdrops. "The second drop was a Container Delivery System pallet, and we were 420 feet from the marker. The third drop was an Army paratrooper who landed just 50 feet from the target. After averaging all three drops, we beat out the Pittsburgh team by one foot. You can't get much closer than that and still take a trophy home."

"For a mobility aircrew, airdrop is the name of the game," said MSgt. Mike Gilbert, one of two 96th AS loadmasters during the airdrops. "During a war, it's our job to drop supplies, food, weapons and whatever to allied ground troops and get it to them as close as we can. The airdrop skills we demonstrated at Rodeo '94 were the same ones we used to deliver humanitarian supplies into Bosnia for Operation Provide Promise and to get troops to the front lines during Operation Desert Storm."

Proud team

"Even though our team didn't win the top prize, we can hold our heads high for capturing our first-ever Rodeo trophy," said Lt. Col. Ross DeKraay, 96th AS



MSgt. Roy Shives (MXS) helps button up the aircraft at the end of the day.



(Photos by MSgt. Tim Turner)

From left, Lt. Col. Ross DeKraay, pilot; Maj. Grelon Williams, navigator; and Capt. Jim Carlen, co-pilot, take a look at the day's routes.



Aerial port members demonstrate their skills in airdrop. From left, Gary Constans, SSgt. Michael Kuntze and MSgt. Mike Gilbert.

pilot and aircraft commander during the competition. "Rodeo is literally the international olympics of military airlift competitions. These are the best mobility teams in the world, and to beat them is quite an accomplishment for our base and the 302nd."

In fact, the 934th team competing at McChord turned in its best-ever Rodeo competition, according to Lt. Col. Larry Snider, 96th AS navigator and team chief for the 934th team. "Of the 29 C-130 teams that took part in Rodeo '94, the 934th finished in the top 10. That speaks well of not only our aircrew for winning Best C-130 Airdrop, but also our maintenance and aerial port teams, which each had tough competitions of their own."

Maintenance successes

The maintenance events during the competition were in four basic areas: aircraft preflight and postflight inspections, aircraft refueling and daily observations. "We did well in all four categories, receiving only a few write-ups from the judges," said CMSgt. Mike Zurn, maintenance team chief.

The maintenance team also performed admirably during the refueling portion of the competition, according to SSgt. Tom Reinardy, 934th maintenance specialist,



Engine Running Offload. From the left is TSgt. Gerald Torseth.



The Rodeo '94 team: Standing, from left, is TSgt. Gerald Schuster (MXS), SSgt. David Fisher (AS), SSgt. Joshua Pangier (MXS), SSgt. Thomas Reinardy (AS), TSgt. Michael Gilbert (AS), MSgt. Roy Shives (MXS), SSgt. Thomas Martin (AS), SrA. Lorne Eshelman (MXS), SSgt. Michael Kuntze (APS), MSgt. Gerald Torseth (APS), SSgt. Todd Erickson (MXS), TSgt. Gary Constans (APS), SSgt. Jesse White (MXS), CMSgt. Michael Zurn (MXS), SSgt. George Erler (APS), TSgt. Bruce Moin (AS) and Lt. Col. Larry Snider (AS, team chief). Kneeling, from left, is Col. Michael Gjede (group commander), Lt. Col. Ross DeKraay (AS), Maj. Grelon Williams (AS), MSgt. John Skarhus (AS), SSgt. Paul Korkowski (AS), Capt. James Carlen (AS), and the 302nd Joint Airdrop Inspection members, MSgt. Mike Kelly and TSgt. Bob Mitchell.

who refueled the base C-130 during judging. "The only thing we lost points for was failing to recheck the lock on the hose used to refuel the plane," he explained. "If we hadn't had that, we would have received a pretty good score."

Despite some tough scoring from the Rodeo '94 judges, the 934th maintenance crew was well prepared for the competition. "We spent a lot of UTAs training for our week at McChord," noted MSgt. Bruce Moin, 934th maintenance specialist. "From an aircraft maintenance standpoint, Rodeo competitions help us prepare a plane for real mobility missions. They also go a long way to enhance pride in our maintenance people."

Aerial port cohesiveness

That same feeling of esprit de corps can also be applied to the 934th aerial port team, which competed in two events: the Engine Running On- and Off-load exercise and the grueling combat endurance course.

"During the ERO competition, we were judged on how safely and rapidly we loaded and unloaded a pickup and trailer on and off our C-130 with the engines

running," said SSgt. Mike Kuntze, 934th aerial port specialist. "The ERO competition simulates a combat environment, where our objective is to get the plane loaded or unloaded fast and in the air again -- out of danger from an enemy ground attack."

The 934th performed well in the ERO, according to MSgt. Gerald Torseth, aerial port team chief for Rodeo '94. "Although we didn't have the best time of the competing Rodeo teams, we were one of the few aerial port units that didn't lose points for safety violations," he said. "That's something we can be proud of."

The 934th aerial porters can also be proud of their performance on the combat endurance course. "Some of the obstacles were very challenging and included scaling multi-level walls, crawling under barbed wire and climbing rope ladders," recalled TSgt. George Erler, 934th aerial port specialist. Teams were judged on how fast they finished the 23-obstacle course and the number of obstacles they completed as a unit.

(Continued on next page)

Rodeo ...

(Continued from previous page)

"Throughout the course, our aerial port team was a cohesive unit, helping each other both physically and mentally," said TSgt. Mike Kelly, obstacle course competitor and one of two aerial port specialists from the 302nd who joined the 934th team at Rodeo '94. "What really helped us finish was the moral support we received from the other 934th/302nd team members who showed up to cheer us on."

Time out

Not all the action at Rodeo '94 was serious, however. Shortly after arriving at McChord, the 934th team customized its own home away from home at Tent City -- the dozens of Rodeo team tents staked along the McChord runway. The 934th tent included the familiar "wacky hat," the giant, horned Viking hat that sits atop the C-130; and the 934th and Minnesota state flags.

When not working, the 934th team could be found at Tent City, comparing notes with competitors and participating in the popular souvenir swap -- bartering for hats, pins, unit patches and T-shirts from other teams that has become a tradition at Rodeo competitions.

It's a wrap

But when the swapping and competing were over, it was time for the 82 Rodeo teams to head home, whether home was somewhere in the United States or halfway across the world in Japan, Portugal or Australia. It was also a time to reflect on how well teams performed at Rodeo '94.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of the entire 934th team for the great job they did representing the 302nd and winning the wing's first Rodeo trophy," said Col. Walter Hatcher, 302nd AW commander, who observed the competition with Col. Michael Gjede, 934th AG commander. "When you consider the quality of the other teams that the Minnesota group was up against, it just proves how mission-capable the 934th is." □



(Photo by MSgt. Tim Turner)

SSgt. George Erler, aerial port, ended up on the injured list after surviving the obstacle course.

Rodeo primer

It's 'back to basics' in a contest that rides 'em hard, puts 'em away wet

by MSgt. Tim Turner
public affairs

Rodeo is U.S. Transportation Command's annual world-wide showcase of airdrop, cargo delivery, transport and refueling operations. It also features combat control, security police, maintenance and aerial port events.

After 12 years at Pope AFB, N.C., the competition moved last year to Little Rock AFB, Ark., and this year, to McChord. Hosted by Air Mobility Command, Rodeo is the largest international military competition in the world, bringing scores of C-130, C-141, C-5, KC-10 and other aircraft teams together for one week of head-to-head combat.

This year, 70 teams from AMC, Air Combat Command, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard plus 12 international teams gathered in the shadow of Mt. Rainier on the McChord flightline to kick off the 14th competition. Over 2,400 military members from around the globe took part in Rodeo '94, which included visits from Secretary of Defense William Perry, Secretary of the Air Force Sheila Widnall

and Gen. Ronald Fogleman, AMC commander and commander in chief, U.S. Transportation Command.

Nicknamed the "Flying Vikings," the 25-member 934th aircrew, maintenance and aerial port team taking part in this year's Rodeo represented the 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson AFB, Colo.

Besides the 934th, other Reserve units winning trophies at Rodeo '94 were the 446th Airlift Wing at McChord, Best C-141 Aircrew, Airdrop, Preflight Inspection and Wing; 512th Airlift Wing, Dover AFB, Del., Best C-5 Maintenance Team; 514th Airlift Wing, McGuire AFB, N.J., Best KC-10 Maintenance Team and Best C-141 Postflight and Maintenance Teams; and the 349th Airlift Wing, Travis AFB, Calif., Best C-5 Preflight and Postflight Inspection Teams.

All teams entered Rodeo '94 hoping to win the Gen. William G. Moore Award as Best Air Mobility Wing. This year, the 19th Air Refueling Wing, Robins AFB, Ga., won that "best of the best" award, which last year was won by the Air Force Reserve's 440th Airlift Wing at Milwaukee.

Judging during Rodeo competition is based on a point system. All teams begin the competition with a certain number of points. Points are then deducted for rules or safety violations, speed or accuracy, depending on the competition. □

Playing it safe

From base drinking water to unit picnics, this team helps ensure your health, safety

by SSgt. Larry Dean
public affairs

When it comes to dealing with chemical compounds, hazardous substances, noise or even deciding whether or not to say, "Hold the mayo," the three-person team from the 934th Bioenvironmental Engineer/Military Public Health section is there with the answers.

Led by section chief Tom Crable and industrial hygienists Kayla Slovick and Chad Kent, the team monitors the pulse of the environmental and personal health concerns of the 934th.

"Our programs deal with keeping the base a safe and healthy place to work," Slovick said, "be it checking that the water is safe to drink, the air quality is safe, the amount of noise in a work area doesn't reach dangerous decibel levels unless workers have ear protection, or that any chemical compound used on base is approved for use."

That includes ensuring the proper safety precautions are taken when using chemical compounds, paint, cleaning solvents or even JP-4 fuel. "We have 30 shops to conduct annual industrial hygiene surveys for occupational and environmental health conditions," Slovick added.

"Our programs deal with keeping the base a safe and healthy place to work."

— Kayla Slovick, industrial hygienist

Kent noted he is currently surveying the Base Exchange. "Facilities that serve or sell foods are checked for a variety of things," he said. "Products must be purchased from approved sources for resale in these facilities, and people need to adhere to the hygiene standards when selling prepared foods. When inspecting food places, we check their sanitation practices and whether or not food items are removed if not sold before the 'pull by' dates."

He said they also survey the clubs, base dining hall and could even extend to base cookouts. "It's not something we do to police every step the base takes," Kent explained. "It's something we do because it's important for our people's health and from a base liability standpoint."

Crable said the team also tests, selects and checks the condition of equipment such as respirators, ear plugs or muffs, and identifies when and where these safety pieces should be used. "We monitor the Occupational Health Program in a peacetime function," he said. "We coordinate this work with other shops, such as safety and disaster preparedness. We're all links in the chain."

"We monitor hazardous wastes and conduct environmental sampling to make sure what we're doing here not only keeps the environment safe for base people," Crable continued, "but that it meets or exceeds federal standards of environmental protection."

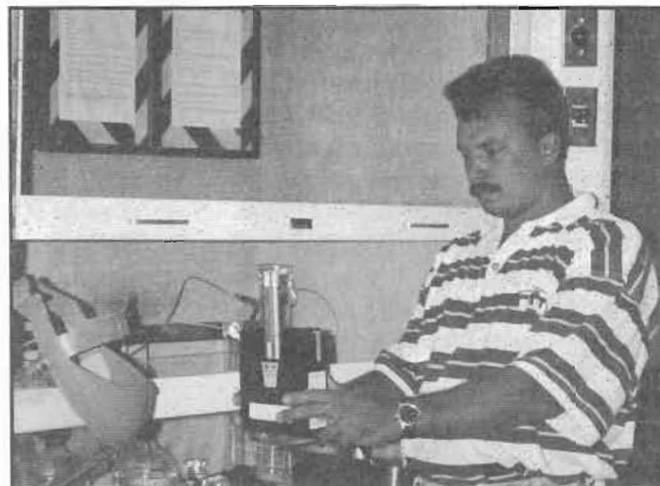
"We also handle the little fires of day-to-day operations," said Slovick. "We may get a call, for example, about a new

chemical that came in. We then verify that it's included on the Air Force Reserve's approved list of chemicals, identify its health hazard code, and if it's not approved for use, we look for a suitable substitute."

The team is also involved in reviewing proposed structural changes to facilities, checking to see if renovations might stir up hazardous materials like asbestos. "We've always looked at environmental impacts of what we do here," Crable said.

Education is another important job of the team. "We go out to the base shops periodically to discuss environmental health standards with supervisors to make sure they are educated on what things to look out for and their role in keeping the workplace safe," Kent said.

"Even administrative offices have occupational hazards which are evaluated, such as indoor air quality or ergonomic factors," he concluded. "With 30 shops to survey, it takes a considerable amount of time." □



(Photos by Cherie Huntington)



Top, Chad Kent performs an inspection at the base fuels facility. Left, Kayla Slovick tests disaster preparedness equipment. Above, Tom Crable heads the section.

Casualty assistance

Experienced staff offers advice, information, guidance -- and sometimes just a sympathetic ear

by SSgt. Shannon Armitage
934th MSF/Group UPAR

New to their present positions but experienced in the field, the 934th Casualty Assistance representative and assistant have over 20 years combined experience in helping family members collect survivor benefits.

Steve Maytan started in the 934th Casualty Assistance Office as the assistant in August 1992 and became the chief last summer. "Basically what I do is assist the next of kin of deceased Air Force members in applying for their benefits," he said.

The office services survivors of all Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard people in most of Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota and Wisconsin, and will soon be picking up Michigan.

"There is no typical day," he said. "No two calls are exactly alike." He said working in the office isn't as morbid as it might sound; he doesn't do death notifications or go to funerals. Normally, survivors have to call him in order to get the paperwork started.

Eric Baumer, Maytan's assistant, moved from military personnel to casualty assistance in January. He has over eight



Baumer (left) and Maytan

(Photo by Cherie Huntington)

years of casualty experience while at Andrews AFB, Washington D.C.

Baumer said he assists the casualty representative by preparing benefit and casualty reports, updating casualty information into a central computer, and preparing ID cards for survivors. "What I like best about the job is talking to a variety of people and knowing that I'm helping somebody," he said.

"Some people are afraid to talk about death," he continued. "They don't want to think about it or even know about it, but they should or they might leave their dependents in dire circumstances."

With all their years of experience, both he and Maytan stressed keeping current records with the military personnel office and staying up-to-date on the current survivor benefits. As Maytan says, "You never know when your time is up." □

Government travel: going plastic

The 934th Airlift Group has been selected as one of three Air Force Reserve units to serve as test bases for purchasing airline tickets with government-issued credit cards.

Reservists and civilian employees here started the test July 1, which will continue until Sept. 30. The other participating bases are Pittsburgh IAPARS, Pa.; and Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport ARS, Ohio.

AFRES officials say the process mirrors getting a rental car. Travelers pay for their tickets with the American Express credit card and file for reimbursement on their travel voucher.

If the test proves successful, credit card travels from AFRES bases and perhaps bases Air Force-wide will use this process.

Officials say the government saves a small amount of money by obtaining group travel rates from air carriers. The new process would

eliminate the group rates, but save more time and money by cutting several financial management and traffic management office procedures, according to officials.

At most Air Force locations, a commercial ticket office -- such as the 934th's Omega Travel -- charges tickets to the base's central American Express account. Bases would continue to issue tickets in this method to people who don't possess a government-issued credit card.

According to the 934th's comptroller, Mike Burgess, guidelines are that anyone in the rank of master sergeant and above who are likely to travel twice a year or more must get the card. "But I encourage everybody to get one who will be traveling," Burgess said. "Remember that the government charge card is for official use only, however." (AFRESNS) □

'Thank you'

The following letter of thanks was received by the group commander from the family of the late Steve Norby. Norby had been a long-time civilian employee of the base and last worked in base supply.

"I would like to express our thanks and appreciation for all of the kindness, compassion and sympathy that was extended to our family after Steve's accident and untimely death. I also want to thank you for giving Morey Henjum leave time to assist me

during my stay in Minneapolis. Morey was Steve's closest and dearest friend and surrogate brother and was my knight in shining armor. He was my representative in consulting with the doctors before I got there and my constant chauffeur, moral supporter and dear friend, assisting me with details that I was faced with in handling Steve's affairs, medical treatment and then his funeral. You have a wonderful person in your Air Force family -- even though he is an ex-Marine!

-- Joanne and Duke Colorosa on behalf of the family of Steve Norby □

Kudos

Awards

Meritorious Service Medal

TSgt. George Bannigan (Ret.) AES
 SMSgt. Robert Cripe (Ret.) MXS
 Lt. Col. Shum-Mei Hwang CES

Air Medal

Capt. Michael Johnson AS
 SSgt. Bradley Lalim AS

Air Force Commendation Medals

MSgt. Ruth Duffy SVF
 MSgt. Paul Kappes CF
 MSgt. Gerald Lenorud (Ret.) MDS
 MSgt. Rosemary O'Neal OSF

Air Force Achievement Medals

SrA. Anthony Eggert AS

MSgt. Bradley Erickson
 SSgt. David Fisher
 MSgt. Luis Garrodigodoy Jr.
 SSgt. Connie Henke
 SSgt. Richard Kraus Jr.
 MSgt. Scott Larsen
 SSgt. Kevin Ley
 SSgt. Matthew Lokensgard
 SSgt. Alan McCann
 TSgt. Gene Olsen
 TSgt. Dan Pekel
 TSgt. Gerald Schuster

Promotions

SSgt. Brian Bluhm

MXS	SSgt. Michael Cleveland	CES
AS	MSgt. David Corrow	AS
MXS	MSgt. Charles Cunningham	LSS
MXS	SSgt. Tracy Elbers	AES
AS	SSgt. Anthony Gramse	SPS
APS	SMSgt. Robert Hanley	SPS
MXS	SSgt. James Hoffman	AG
AS	TSgt. Orin Johnson	MXS
AS	TSgt. Roger Olek	AES
MXS	SSgt. Michael Placzek	OSF
MXS	MSgt. David Provo	SPS
MXS	A1C Greg Thaemert	CES
	A1C Mark Serstock	AS
	SSgt. Ronald Waller	LSS
LSS	SSgt. Jeanette Weber	AS □



(Photo by TSgt. Chuck Meyer)

Desert Storm warrior

An F-117A Stealth Fighter, designated the "Nighthawk" as of June 24, landed here June 11 after an in-flight emergency. Housed overnight in Bldg. 821, its maintenance was completed the next morning by a home-station team from Holloman AFB, N.M. Briefly, base employees were able to view the plane, a veteran of combat missions in Operation Desert Storm. □

Quality suggestion program

Got an idea to make things easier, save money? You might have some time off coming your way

by Cherie Huntington
public affairs

Ideas for improvement at the 934th will soon be worth more than a pat on the back, letters of appreciation or even cash awards from the thriving Air Force Suggestion Program.

Reservists could also earn two-hour "time off awards" for adopted suggestions.

"We were looking for ways to integrate the Quality process into the base in a day-to-day manner," said Lt. Col. Michael Waage, 934th Civil Engineer Squadron, who heads a study on starting a Quality suggestion program. "We did some brainstorming and touched on this idea."

The idea, according to Waage, benchmarks off the neighboring Air National Guard wing's suggestion program run by their 133rd Maintenance Squadron. However, that unit is benchmarking off another Reserve unit, the 89th Airlift Wing, Andrews AFB, Md.

"The enthusiasm for the program in the 133rd seems to be very high, and it's working very well," said Waage. "The program uses a simple form, and

motivation of receiving a little time off is nice."

Augments Air Force program

Waage stressed that this program augments rather than replaces the Air Force Suggestion Program. "An idea could work both ways," he explained. "It could be accepted by the unit and still earn recognition or cash through the Air Force program."

Waage and 934th Quality Office members have done basic research for the program and will soon be presenting the information to a unit-level working group, which will nail down details for a local program. Waage estimates that some units may be "up and running" with the program as early as October.

"The 133rd is seeing a 50 percent approval rate of submitted suggestions," said Waage. "And it's a fair statement to say that any idea implemented probably has a dollar value attached, though sometimes the exact amount is hard to determine. The 133rd estimates that for 1993, the ideas implemented saved the unit more than \$40,000."

He said that in true brainstorming fashion, the program goes for quantity as well as quality. "No idea is stupid," he said. "We'll want little ideas as well as quite grandiose ideas -- and everything in between." In looking at the 133rd program, some ideas were as simple as placing wing stickers on the unit's airstairs for transient aircraft, or as

technical as designing a C-130 "tent" to enable changing aircraft windshields outdoors rather than eating up hangar space.

Grass roots program

From what Waage has seen of programs such as this, they are run primarily by NCOs and even airmen. "This is a grass roots level effort," he said. "Also, when we implement this program, selecting the unit manager and unit Quality Improvement Board will be left up to each unit." He added that these people would receive training and guidance from the Quality office, which will serve as the focal point for the program.

"All we've done at this point is studied the options," Waage said. "We've greased the skids. Now we'll take it one step at a time." □

SERVICES BRIEFS

September UTA activities

Saturday, Sept. 10: The 1994 Hangar Dance will feature music by the Air Force band, "Night Wings." Admission will be \$3 per person. The social hour starts at 6 p.m.; dinner, 7 p.m.; and dancing, 8 p.m. to midnight, all in the fuel cell hangar.

Sunday, Sept. 11: Family Day will offer games, displays, music, collector car display and a living history program at the Air Guard Museum.

For more information, call 934th Recreation Services, Ext. 5316.

Discount passes

Recreation services offers information and discount cards for family entertainment in Orlando, Fla. Call Ext. 5316 for information. □

