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VIKING FLYER

934th Airlift Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minn.



Mark Davidson

Making history in Bolivia

Reserve crews fly largest air drop ever for paratroops in Bolivian Army

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On the cover

1st Lt. Mark
VonBerge, 96th
Airlift Squadron
pilot, participated in
a unique air drop in
Bolivia, March 21-
31. For the stories,
see Pages 7-8.



Mark Davidson

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UTA schedule

June 6-7	▶ UTA pay
July 11-12	should be
August 1-2*	deposited by:
Sept. 12-13	May 13.

*Unit Compliance Inspection

Commentary

Reflecting a diverse society

Wing, command councils focus on equal opportunity

Col. Ronald Weight
Vice Commander and
Chairman, HRDC

Managing cultural diversity is a readiness issue for the Air Force Reserve Command.

In 1992, the chief of the Reserve established the Human Resources Development Council, and in 1993, he directed all wing commanders to establish local HRDCs. The council was chartered to recommend cultural diversity initiatives to the chief and advise senior leadership on how to best assure fair and equal opportunity for all Air Force Reserve people.

The council is empowered to make recommendations to the wing commander on matters pertaining to human resources within the wing. The challenge facing local HRDCs is to assist wing commanders in managing diversity in the work place and to review human resource matters such as career life cycle issues, recruiting, retention and personnel/career development or mentoring.

The Reserve's HRDC does not set quotas nor does it recommend arbitrary targets or goals for the command. Specific command

guidance on direction and expectations has been somewhat vague but left up to individual wings to develop to best meet their needs. The HRDCs, at the command and local level, attempt to:

▶ Address human resource development with the ultimate goal of achieving a work force composition that represents the diverse society we serve, and

▶ Ensure that every person is given fair and equal training and opportunity to maximize their potential and career aspirations.

So where are we? What does this mean to a member of the 934th Airlift Wing? So far, our attention has been in the three primary areas of recruiting, retention and mentoring. Our council membership has been primarily senior command level and functional office representatives as directed by the command.

We would like to expand our council membership to include a broader representation of a cross section of our wing. Anyone interested in participating in our wing HRDC — or the command HRDC, which meets twice a year for three days — is encouraged to call me at Ext. 1204. □

Beware credit abuse

Special benefit sees increasing irresponsibility

Maj. Gen. Robert McIntosh
Chief, Air Force Reserve Command,
Commander, Headquarters AFRC

Many of you are beneficiaries of the Base Exchange's Deferred Payment Plan. DPP allows

you to take advantage of the BX's prices and specials while saving the BX millions of dollars in outside credit card fees. The DPP can also aid members in establishing a good credit record.

Unfortunately, we have more

than 800 reservists, officer and enlisted alike, who are more than 60 days late in making their DPP payments. The BX is taking action to collect from reservists with overdue accounts, including using commercial debt collectors.

Lack of financial responsibility can carry serious civilian and military penalties and may irreparably damage your credit rating. We have worked long and hard to earn this benefit; don't abuse it. □

World

American Express loses bid

NationsBank of Delaware will provide the new Department of Defense travel card starting Dec. 1.

NationsBank is offering the DOD the choice of a Visa or MasterCard, but no decision has been made on which card will be used. The two-year agreement has three additional one-year options available at the convenience of the government.

The award was based on best value to the DOD.

Travelers will continue to use their American Express cards until midnight Nov. 30. Meanwhile, the Air Force will continue to work delinquency issues with the major commands and American Express. *(Air Force News Service)*

Reserve waits for anthrax vaccine

Reserve forces stateside will be waiting at least until late summer for anthrax immunizations, according to Air Force Reserve Command officials.

"When the vaccinations are ordered for reservists," said **Brig. Gen. (Dr.) John Baldwin**, the Reserve's command surgeon, "it's up to each wing commander to adjust unit training assembly, annual tour and special manday schedules to administer the doses."

The vaccination presents a unique problem for the reserve forces because of the timing of the doses. The primary series consists of an initial dose and five additional doses given at two and four weeks, then at six, 12 and 18 months. Protection levels increase as shots are given, and the entire six-shot series is required for full protection. *(Air Force Reserve Command News Service)*

Summer safety campaign begins

The Air Force Reserve Command's annual "101 Critical Days of Summer" campaign includes a list of safety suggestions:

▶ **Alcohol consumption:** Don't drink and operate vehicles, including boats and jet skis. If drinking, always appoint a designated driver.

▶ **Traveling:** Be sober, vigilant and well-rested.

▶ **Boating:** Know your craft, and use personal flotation devices.

▶ **Swimming:** Swim with a buddy in known waters, and don't drink.

▶ **Jet skiing:** Operate with caution, staying away from boaters, swimmers and other jet skiers.

▶ **Seatbelts:** Use them and ensure passengers do, too.

▶ **Outdoor activities:** Stretch muscles before athletic activity. Don't overdo it. Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun, and use sunscreens. Drink plenty of water.

▶ **Risk management:** Use common sense, plan ahead and be prepared. *(AFRCNS)*

Brief briefs ...

▶ **Base closures:** **Secretary of Defense William Cohen** stressed the need for two more Base Realignment and Closure

rounds by releasing a report proving substantial savings gained in previous closings. According to the report, the first four BRAC rounds will have saved \$25 billion by 2003, with \$5.6 billion in recurring savings each year thereafter.

Two more rounds of BRAC in the next decade, said the report, will save more than \$20 billion between 2008 to 2015 and \$3 billion every year thereafter. *(AFNS)*

▶ **Happy birthday:** Air Force Reserve Command celebrated its 50th anniversary April 14, recognized by presidential message and written into the Congressional Record. *(AFRCNS)*

▶ **Women's flight suit:** A new flight suit designed especially for women has entered the development stage at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Studies started in 1993, and fit tests were completed recently. A final pattern design is expected in the next few months, followed by limited production and field testing. *(AFNS)*

▶ **Retiring airlifter:** **Gen. Walter Kross**, commander-in-chief, U.S. Transportation Command and commander, Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Ill., will retire Sept. 1. His replacement has not been named. *(AMC News Service)*

▶ **Lodging update:** There is now a toll-free number for Air Force stateside lodging reservations: 1-888-AF LODGE, or 1-888-235-6343. After dialing, the caller will hear a recorded prompt asking for the first three digits of the base.

For reservations at the Hale Koa Hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii, call 1-800-367-6027. Located along Waikiki Beach, this all-ranks hotel is available to all service members, active and reserve. *(AFNS)*

Local

Family readiness plans events

The 934th Family Readiness Program has special programs planned on **Saturday, May 2:**

▶ Volunteer/Spouse Appreciation Day, noon at the NCO Club.

▶ Veterans Affairs home loan benefits workshop, 4:45 p.m., NCO Club. The workshop will be held again on Monday, May 4; Saturday, July 11; and Saturday, Aug. 1, same time and place.

▶ Fundamentals of investing workshop, 6 p.m., NCO Club.

Emergency data needed from members

The 934th Military Personnel Flight's customer service section has sent out numerous letters requesting members' assistance in updating their Defense Enrollment Eligibility Report System files. Items needed include signatures on Emergency Data Forms or insurance forms, or submission of source documents.

"These forms are the member's responsibility and are very important," said **Tech. Sgt. Steven Robinson**, section chief. "They are used for emergency notification and benefits. In the event of your death, the family members you leave behind will have fewer problems if you ensure all your forms are up to date and signed."

For those who fail to accomplish these items, Robinson said a list will be sent to unit commanders. □

News bytes

Integrated mobility system automates paperwork

April's mobility exercise ushered in a new era of computer communications, thanks to the Integrated Deployment System.

Thirty people, at least two from each unit, received training in the new program from an Air Force Reserve Command team, March 16-22. Most were traditional reservists serving as unit deployment managers.

According to **Master Sgts. Larry Schyma and Anthony "Zack" Zacheretti**, plans technicians, five base computer systems used in the mobility process can now communicate with each other via the IDS "party line."

"The emphasis is on 'integrated,'" said Zacheretti. "This is now an Air Force-wide program."

"Automated" could share that emphasis, however, as an array of critical paperwork tasks in a deployment is now created automatically, such as shortfall listings and letters, travel/temporary duty orders, passenger and cargo manifests, pallet placards, load lists, packing lists and even after-action reports.

The wing is considered "initial operational capable" in IDS now, with a desktop practice likely in May, followed by use for the Southwest Asia deployment in June.

"If we're fully operational capable in June," said Schyma, "the 934th could be the first in the Reserve to do so."

Wing parade float ready to roll

Tech. Sgt. Janet Byerly

Public Affairs

The wing float should be spruced up and ready for the 1998 parade season, according to **Master Sgt. Rosie O'Neal**, parade coordinator. O'Neal works full-time in base operations.

"We're in the process of refurbishing it," she said. "We just had the generator overhauled, and it needs new decorations and sideboards. This year, we're putting the phone number for recruiting on the side of the float, too."

O'Neal said the parade season runs from June to October. "We've received 14 invitations so far," she said. "The number of parades we do each year varies. Two years ago, we did 12; last year, we did three."

Historical records reveal the float dates back at least 32 years, with some years busier than others. Last year, a lack of funds to pay parade volunteers resulted in a curtailed season, according

to O'Neal. She is reviewing parade invitations, checking command availability and deciding which parades the 934th will participate in this summer.

"We seem to always do a parade on the Fourth of July," she said. "We've done parades at the University of Minnesota and in Richfield, Eagan, St. Paul, Anoka and Lakeville, as well as many other cities."

She said the normal staffing includes a driver and two or three riders on the float. "That's how I started out 10 years ago," she said. "Someone just asked if I wanted to ride on the float."

When the parade coordinator job opened up last November, O'Neal assumed those duties. Returning float assistants include **Master Sgt. Paul Burnett**, 934th Financial Management; **Master Sgt. David Hammer**, 934th Airlift Wing; **Tech. Sgt. Don MacElroy**, 934th Maintenance Squadron; and **Senior Master Sgt. Karen Wilson**, 934th Communications Flight. **Master Sgt. Leon Gilder**, 934th Mission Support Flight, has joined the staff, too.

"We can always use volunteers for the float," she said. "The parades are usually held in the evening or on weekends."

To volunteer or get more information, call O'Neal at Ext. 1719.

Coin sales support wing programs

Minting money to solve a budget crisis may sound like risky business, but it provided the perfect solution for the Reserve Officers Association Viking Chapter's shrinking bank account.

The money won't buy much, as it's not legal tender, but has the chapter's president and vice president rejoicing as they plan future charitable donations and wing functions.

The new 934th Airlift Wing coin, selling for \$10, made its debut last month, with the first shipment nearly sold out. The bronze coin, typical of military collector coins, has the wing emblem on one side and a C-130 over a world map on the reverse. What makes it unique, however, is the use of color enameling on the emblem.

"In the past, we supported the military ball, the dining in, Confederate Air Force on Family Day and the Family Readiness Program," said **Capt. Dan Anderson**, chapter president and full-time technician with the 934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. "We realized that if we're going to keep doing this, we needed money in the coffers."

Capt. Doug Kveene, chapter vice president and wing executive officer, came up with the idea of a wing coin last fall. He and Anderson immediately started brainstorming over design. Since Anderson's squadron had designed their own coin last year, he had the contacts to embark on such a project once the wing commander approved the design.

The first shipment, however, had an error in color placement, with a blue field instead of white used in the center portion of the emblem. "So now we have a collector error coin," said Kveene, adding that the next shipment, expected in late May, will have the red, white and blue enamel in the right locations.

"We look forward to being able to fund more 934th projects with this money," Kveene said.

Each unit has a representative selling the coins. Check with unit first sergeants for more information.

New colonel makes history

Tech. Sgt. Janet Byerly

Public Affairs

When **Mary Jo Mazick** pinned on eagles during the April drill, she became the first colonel in the 39-year history of the unit she commands, the 934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

She is also believed to be the first female colonel in the history of the base. But the historical firsts couldn't change the fact that this was a bittersweet change for Mazick, because as a result of the promotion, she must leave the 934th by Oct. 1.

"You know, I don't want to leave," she said, "but you have to go on. I've looked at the Individual Mobilization Augmentee program, but I don't really want to go IMA, because I love being in a Category A position."

Whatever position she fills, Mazick would like to continue in the aeromedical field.

"One IMA position I would thoroughly enjoy is at Brooks [Air Force Base] School of Aerospace Medicine," she said. "We fly the majority of aerovac missions in the Reserve, so I'd like to add the Reserve perspective to the training at the school. I could be really excited to get that."

Mazick credits her unit for their part in her promotion. "I



Mazick

know this promotion is due in large part to the hard work and enormous progress we've made together over the past three years," she told her squadron.

"I feel like I came in and gave the unit direction," she said. "The framework is there. I feel comfortable leaving; they will do fine."

Wing web page makes debut

Staff Sgt. Larry Dean

Public Affairs

The information age has reached the 934th Airlift Wing, bringing the unit international exposure via their new home page on the Worldwide Web. The address is:

<http://www.afrc.af.mil/units/934aw/default.htm>

Those accessing the page from a military address can enter the secure, password-protected version by typing **w3** instead of **www**.

Though still in the development phase, the page contains information such as biographies of key wing members, military job vacancies, base telephone directory, unit histories and emblems, C-130 facts and information on speakers and tours available.

Anyone interested in contributing ideas or information for the page, call the public affairs office staff, Ext. 1217. □

Viking Search:

Vehicle maintenance



Staff Sgt. Robert Walz

Senior Airman Christopher Woodhall works on a wing fire truck.

Clip this for a colleague or family member and assist recruiters in their search for new reservists.

Specialty code/unit: 2T332, special vehicle maintenance/fire trucks; and 2T334, general purpose vehicle maintenance; 934th Logistics Support Squadron.

Job description: 2T332 specializes in inspection/trouble-shooting/repair of firefighting vehicles. 2T334 handles maintenance on sedans, pickup trucks, vans, buses, cargo trucks, tractors and trailers.

Civilian job equivalent: Vehicle maintenance with city/county/state motor pools, car dealerships or commercial/private owned vehicle service centers.

Training:

▶ **Special vehicle:** 17 weeks and

three days, Port Hueneme, Calif.

▶ **General purpose vehicle:** 11 weeks and two days, same location.

What's great about the jobs:

▶ **Training plus experience** gained in a variety of equipment provides opportunities for civilian career options.

▶ **Stable, predictable workload** offers opportunities for students looking for a start in the Reserve.

▶ **Active-duty assignments** are available for those wishing to travel and contribute additional time.

▶ **Knowledgeable members** working as civilians in the local area on different kinds of vehicles provide training.

▶ **Excellent facility and equipment** are available. "The equipment at this base is superior to most active-duty bases," said **Master Sgt. Anthony Polisenio**, section supervisor.

Recent travel locations:

Alaska, Arizona, Panama, Virginia.

Contact: 934th Recruiting Office, 612-713-1456. □

Viking Victors:

Civil Servants of the Year 1997

Jim Kozak

Position/office: Accounting technician, commercial services, 934th Financial Management.

Education: National College of Business.

Hobbies: Fishing, golf, downhill skiing, working in the garden and cooking booya – 405 gallons once a year [a thick, Minnesota-specialty stew].

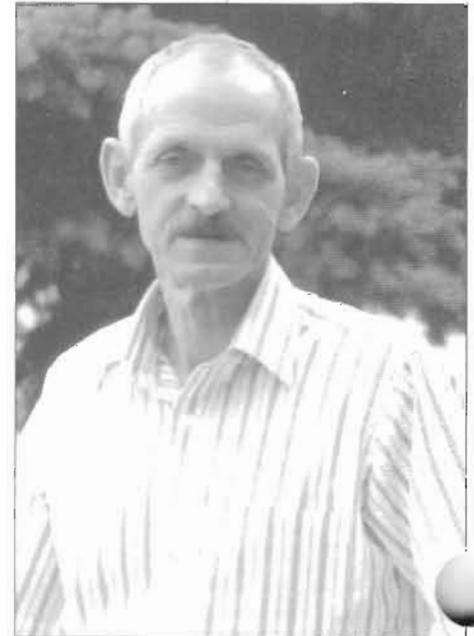
Past careers: Three years in the U.S. Army as a tactical and nuclear weapons specialist, serving with the 2nd Battalion, 13th Infantry in Germany.

Goals: "To keep up with the most changes in 50 years in the Department of Defense. Things keep changing! Also, trying to look into the future at the path we're on and keeping our

members informed. And to get my wife through law school, then retire."

Family: Wife, **Jackie**; adult daughter, **Kim Gillespie** and her husband, **Doug**; adult daughter **Amy**; adult stepsons **Kurt** and **Keven** – and **Kory**, "14 going on 21"; live in Roseville, Minn.

Comments: "I feel very fortunate to receive this award. My hand goes out to every member of our 934th Airlift Wing team, for without their support and cooperation, this award could not have been possible. My hat is off to all of you." □



Cherie Huntington

George Leppanen

Position/office: Travel pay specialist, 934th Financial Management.

Education: Attended business college and several government schools.

Hobbies: Bowling; golf; softball; watching grandsons bowl, snowboard and play baseball and hockey; published mystery author; Gopher basketball.

Past careers: Prior to government employment, was a public accountant. Served three years in the U.S. Army as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division, North Carolina; and the 11th Airborne Division, Germany.

Professional organizations: Disabled American Veterans Chapter 1; several Masonic affiliations, including past master of Minnehaha Lodge 165; Scottish Rite and Shriners;

Licensed Public Accountants Association.

Goals: "Beat the general's team in golf this year [Air Guard's Annual Commander's Cup Golf Tournament], trying to run faster than **Doug Wold** [avionics flight chief] in softball, and keep one step ahead of my travel co-workers – they're tops."

Family: Wife, **Rita**; live in Apple Valley, Minn.; adult daughter, **Cindy Fuller** and her husband, **Steve**; five grandsons: **Shay** (12), **Tim** (9), **Ray** (7), **Alex** (4) and **Chris** (3).

Comments: "My most personal achievement has been sponsoring a 5-year-old child into the Shriners' Hospital. He has developed into a fine, normal-walking boy of about 15. Of course, my five grandsons are a definite highlight." □



Cherie Huntington

Flying high — and low — in Bolivia



Lt. Col. Larry Snider

Wing crew supports country's largest peacetime air drop

Staff Sgt. R. Sherrill Beecher
Unit Public Affairs Representative,
96th Airlift Squadron

Crews from the 96th Airlift Squadron participated in the largest peacetime air drop in Bolivian Army history during a March 21-31 deployment.

The one-time request for support came while Bolivian C-130s were temporarily grounded. The mission required flights for Bolivian pilot proficiency training and special force jumpers making their first low-level dive for qualification.

Lack of oxygen, mountainous terrain, small aircraft and safety were the highlights of the briefings crews received before departing for their 10-day temporary duty in La Paz and Cochabamba, Bolivia. Ten people from the 934th joined members from the 815th Airlift Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Miss.

Flying both low, high

The missions included low-level flights and a training opportunity for the

Grupo Aereo 71, the Bolivian Special Forces. For many on the mission, it was their first chance to participate in low-level flights, and these would be at altitudes of merely 300 feet above ground through the Andes Mountains, flying at the height of a 20-story building at 250 knots through treacherous mountain terrain.

Flying into and around El Alto Air Base, La Paz, Bolivia, which is 12,500 feet above sea level, challenged crews with unfamiliar high terrain, altitude restrictions, and mountain interference with radio transmissions. Aircrews wore oxygen masks for takeoffs, landings and airdrops when flying from more than 10,000 feet above sea level, since aircraft are not pressurized.

Hypoxia, or lack of oxygen to the body, is the concern at these altitudes. Hypoxia can cause crews to get headaches, light-headedness or nausea. Even something as simple as walking across the flightline can be a labored task due to thin air.

Great learning experience

"The TDY [temporary duty] was a great learning experience on the maintenance side," said Tech Sgt. Conrad Kluck, 934th Maintenance Squadron, concerning his first low-level flight. "We encountered a few new things that we had to work through during our mission, and that's just part

of what made this training that I couldn't have received anywhere else."

Members of the Keesler squadron brought along valuable onboard navigation equipment and provided training. Keesler aircraft have used the computerized navigation system for a couple of years and were eager to bring Minneapolis aircraft up to speed with "Falcon View."

Falcon View allows the navigator a birds-eye view with its moving map connected to the Global Positioning System, giving them immediate access to data. The system also allowed aircrews to see how close they were to unauthorized South American air space.

Young paratroopers

Helping the Bolivian Special Forces trainees complete their first jump was also an adventure for the aircrews. Master Sgt. Jim Schmidt, loadmaster, said, "You can tell by their eyes, especially the young ones, the concentration and determination, and that they have fear."

These young special forces trainees, starting at ages 17-18, had previously completed four weeks in the Bolivian jump school in preparation for this day — their first jump. Aircraft malfunctions and funding difficulties prevented the students from flying, let alone making their first jump from an altitude of 1,000 to 1,500 feet at speeds of about 125 knots.

The two C-130's air dropped 1,051 members of the Grupo Aereo, who were cheered from the drop zone below by family members and friends on hand to celebrate the students earning their paratrooper wings.

"The entire exercise provided the experience of working in a different and demanding environment," said Lt. Col. Jeff Hamiel, former 96th commander who retired April 23, "and gave the Bolivians the chance to work with and get to know us as well. It was a very successful mission." □

(Related story on next page) ▶

High sun, thin air

Crew chief recounts struggle in atmosphere 'slightly better than that on the Moon'

Lt. Col. Larry Snider
96th Airlift Squadron

Taking trips in a transport aircraft like our C-130s is just part of the job. Sometimes they're exciting, with desirable destinations, while other times they are nothing but a lot of hard work and long hours.

In March, the 96th Airlift Squadron made an extensive trip which was a little bit of both.

Nine members of the 96th were sent to perform tactical training in Bolivia. As is usually the case, a couple of maintenance support personnel deployed with the aircrew. On this particular deployment, **Tech. Sgt. Conrad Kluck** and **Staff Sgt. David Fisher** were chosen to look after the aircraft.

Fisher, or "Fish," has seen many such deployments as a crew chief on the C-130. But what lay ahead for Fish, as well as the rest of us, was an extreme deviation from the norm.

Danger: thin air

La Paz, our destination, as well as the capital of our host country, Bolivia, is unlike any other major city in the world. While being much closer to the equator than Miami, La Paz happens to be about 12,500 feet above sea level.

The combination of altitude and proximity to the equator cancels out each other. As a result, you have the combination of extremely thin air, one and a half miles above Denver, and a very strong sun directly overhead. By the way, the airport sits on a plateau, another thousand feet above the city.

This creates many problems, not the least of which is just taking in enough oxygen to accomplish menial tasks. Everyone who experiences El Altoplano, or the high plains of Bolivia, has to handle this not-so-subtle transition.

Walking across the ramp becomes a challenge. Carrying your bags seems to magnify the task. "Mountain sickness" can occur, and the best step to take is to descend to a lower elevation. In its mild form, it is merely an annoyance. Extreme cases can call for immediate medical attention.

Fortunately, no one had to take such drastic steps. However, most everyone on the trip endured headaches, mild dizziness, sunburns or some combination of these inconveniences.

Aircraft concerns

Fish had to overcome the same obstacles in this environment as the rest of us, but he also had to concern himself with how all this would affect his airplane.

Fish, who serves full-time as an air reserve technician, is actually the assistant crew chief for tail number 62-1806. The primary, or senior, person in charge of this aircraft is **Tech. Sgt. Mark Sidla**. Together, they do everything possible to see that their airplane is ready for whatever the mission demands may be.

"Operating out of La Paz can create it's own list of demands," said Fisher. "This environment can be considered cruel and unusual punishment for some-thing as mechanically complicated as a C-130. And when things do go wrong, other problems surface that you can't be expected to fix, like

language barriers.

"Imagine you're a crew member or the crew chief," he continued, "and you are already faced with the stress of trying to resolve the problem in an atmosphere slightly better than that on the Moon, and being a typical American, you can't relay your frustration to any of the locals, who speak only Spanish."

Fish and the aircrew did manage to get the job done each and every day. It was also good that we had the help of some Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., members, who had also sent aircraft and crew on this mission.

"Keesler, home of our sister ship, was not only the lead unit in the deployment," said Fisher, "but they had a few personnel who had made this same trip a couple of years ago. They helped out a great deal, especially in the language department."

Special considerations

When Fisher was asked about what kind of problems were considered unique, he said, "You know you're not in the Twin Cities anymore when you have to let air out of the tires before going into La Paz, but replace that air as you head off for lower elevations."

Speaking of lower elevations, Fish added, "It was indeed strange to leave La Paz for Cochabamba, Bolivia [base of operations for three days] and experience much-easier breathing, only to realize that you're still at 8,500 feet above sea level."

Put another way, everyone had descended a long way, only to still be more than 3,000 feet above Denver.

Fisher, who has been a crew chief since 1993, was like most of us on his first flight to Bolivia. He loved it, but was ready to get back to the more-friendly confines of Minnesota.

When the question of returning on another mission to the same destination was put forth, Fish quickly replied, "You bet, only next time I'll wear a hat. My head has little protection, so it took on the color of a fire truck in La Paz. I was really burned!" □

Master Sgt. Tim Turner
Public Affairs

Senior Master Sgt. Dennis McLean watched for the tornado from the living room window of his home in Nicollet, Minn. Meanwhile, his wife and 16-year-old son were, in his words, "kissing the concrete" under the basement steps.

"You always hear people describe it as sounding like a freight train," he said. "This sounded like 10 freight trains."

Tech. Sgt. Lee Traxler Siehndel looked out the back window of her Le Center, Minn., home and saw her neighbor's fish house "dancing down the street."

Just as quickly as it began, it was over. Left behind in its wake was a mile-wide path of destruction.

"It looked like someone with a dump truck dumped a thousand loads of junk in the streets – cars, insulation, trees, telephone poles, wires, you name it," said McLean, 934th Services Squadron superintendent. "There were dead animals all over – raccoons, dogs, cats and every type of bird you could think of."

Killer storms slam southern Minnesota

On Sunday afternoon, March 29, a fast-moving storm cell packed with tornadoes and severe thunderstorms cut a 60-mile swath through five farming communities in southern Minnesota. Two people were killed and dozens others injured badly enough to require hospitalization.

Hundreds of houses, churches, schools, silos, factories and barns were reduced to rubble. According to coverage by local media, Comfrey lost 75 percent of its houses and buildings, and St. Peter suffered damage to more than 2,500 houses and 125 businesses.

McLean and his family fared better than many in his hometown. "We only lost our heat and electricity for a couple days," he said. "We were lucky; we still have a house to live in. A lot of people lost their entire homes."

McLean and Traxler Siehndel are just two of a handful of base members whose homes lay in the path of the storm's fury. While many material items were destroyed, one thing left intact was the spirit of the volunteers.

"It was unbelievable," McLean noted. "A lot of people donated food and clothing. Others opened their homes for total strangers to live in. I heard one woman in St. Peter let a family she'd never met live at her house while she went on vacation."

McLean, like other volunteers, pitched in wherever he could. He spent several days clearing Nicollet's debris-filled streets with a front-end loader donated by his civilian employer, Unimun Corporation. "I pushed junk onto the sidewalks so emergency vehicles could reach the storm damage," he said.

Volunteers help restore order to chaos

While McLean was giving aid, **Chief Master Sgt. James Rethwill** of Le Center found himself on the receiving end of

Reservists in southern Minnesota face death, destruction as March goes out like a lion

TORNADO!



volunteers' generosity. A large cedar tree has blown over in his back yard.

"I went to work the morning after the storm," explained Rethwill, a superintendent in the 27th Aerial Port Squadron. "When I got home, the tree was gone, just like that. Somebody came by with a front-end loader or something and hauled it away, no questions asked. That's the kind of attitude everyone had – helping total strangers and not expecting any thanks in return."

That attitude was also evident in the small town of Cleveland. "Cleveland normally has a population of 670," said **Tech. Sgt. Dave Ziesmer**, 934th Family Readiness technician and Cleveland resident. "After the storms, I'll bet it doubled. Just about everyone was housing storm victims until it was OK to return to their homes."

(Continued on next page) ▶

Tornado ...

(Continued from previous page)



Ziesmer is a firefighter with the Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department. He logged a lot of hours helping storm victims, particularly those from a trailer court in Le Center. "We got the call at 6 p.m. to evacuate residents and shut off any gas leaks," he said. "Just about every car had its windows blown out. It looked like someone tossed a bomb

into every one of them."

Ziesmer and his fellow firefighters worked until 2:30 a.m. then were at it again at 7:30 a.m., this time assigned the grisly task of looking for bodies. "From how bad that trailer court looked, I thought there'd be a lot of deaths," he admitted. "Fortunately, no one from there, at least, was killed."

Traxler Siehdnel, unit training manager in the services squadron, and her husband, **Master Sgt. Gerald Siehdnel Jr.**, disaster preparedness technician in the 934th Civil Engineer Squadron, put one displaced family up for several weeks, despite suffering heavy storm damage themselves.

"We lost a cottonwood tree that the DNR [Minnesota Department of Natural Resources] said was the biggest they'd ever seen," she said. "Our cedar tree fell on our house, and just about all the shingles were ripped off."

Although virtually everyone in the storm-damaged towns offered help, the outreach from area businesses was also impressive, according to **Senior Airman Jeremy Bethke**, a liquid fuels specialist with the civil engineers.

Bethke, who lives in Lonsdale, said many gas stations and grocery stores remained open all night for people needing food, fuel and supplies. "One gas station was giving out free donuts and coffee," he recalled. "It doesn't sound like much, but every little gesture helped boost spirits." Bethke did his share boosting spirits by setting up electrical generators and installing sump pumps to draw water from flooded basements.

Survivors look to future

While only two lives were lost, the physical loss will take years to mend.

"It'll never be the way it was," McLean said. "I heard it'll take two to five years to repair all the damage in St. Peter alone. And you'll never get back all the trees that blew down."

Like many others, Ziesmer mourned the loss of landmarks destroyed in his hometown of St. Peter. But he's grateful the human toll was minimal.

"Sure, it's tough to see buildings gone you grew up with as a kid," he said. "But at the same time, I'm thankful only two lives were lost. You can replace buildings; you can't replace people." □

White Tornado

Old-timer survives stormy flight

Cherie Huntington
Public Affairs

The story of Frosty, a 22-year-old dog who's blind, deaf and arthritic, summons a guilty chuckle from listeners as **Otto Homburg** relates how he earned his new nickname, "White Tornado."

The small "snowball" dog remains healthy though crochety in his golden years. He received no warning, however, of the twister that would slam into the quiet farm in Lonsdale, Minn., on March 29.

Homburg, aircraft documentation specialist for the 934th Logistics Squadron, said he and his wife were planning dinner when the lights went out. "We heard the sirens," he said. "Suddenly, I saw what looked like a roof fly by outside. We ran to the basement."

The last time they saw Frosty, he was walking along the fence he uses as a guide to reach the barn. That fence was gone — and so was Frosty.

The week following the tornado, Homburg and his family began to clean up the destruction around the farm, ever watchful for Frosty. Each night, Homburg searched with a flashlight and wondered where he'd gone.

Meanwhile, fortunate Frosty had been deposited by the twister at the Lonsdale Fire Department,

perhaps a half a mile away. Frosty's known as a fellow who struggles simply getting to the barn, a stone's toss from the house.

A would-be rescuer saw the wet, muddy creature and tried to pick him up — and was promptly bitten.

The next good samaritan spotted him in the middle of a busy highway nearby. The woman, mom to a menagerie of animals, stopped traffic and scooped up Frosty with nary a nip.

"She said she gave him a bath, fed him some cat food and put him in a kennel in her house," Homburg said.

Since Lonsdale's a small town, it didn't take long for word to get around about the missing pooch, and his savior soon returned him to the farm. Homburg said after the dog sniffed around a while and realized he was home, he started strutting around, tail wagging vigorously, more energized than anyone had seen him in a long time.

But Homburg said the miracle remains how Frosty must have become airborne to clear all obstacles and end up safe and sound.

"The corn crib he was walking near was wrapped around a tree trunk," he said. "There was farm machinery, trees, power lines, the barn and another farm in between. He had to have been 20 to 30 feet in the air! How he ever landed without a scratch, I'll never know. Now we just call him the White Tornado." □

Reserve's premier airmen

Reserve celebrates 50th, but local flying squadron claims seniority

Master Sgt. David Hammer

Wing Historian

This month matched January as a busy month for anniversaries. May is the month with "birthdays" for the two oldest units on the base — the 96th Airlift Squadron and the 27th Aerial Port Squadron — as well as two newer units: the 934th Communications Flight and 934th Security Forces Squadron.

96th AS

The 96th is by far the busiest of all wing units for activations, deactivations and duty stations. It was assigned to the Reserve March 6, 1947 — predating the Air Force Reserve, formed on April 14, 1948. It is believed the 96th is the oldest flying squadron in the Reserve.

The 96th also distinguishes itself by being the only wing unit to have had two different emblems. The original emblem was approved July 18, 1960, and the Flying Vikings emblem, approved June 18, 1997. For those who say that emblem has been around for years, that might be true; but it wasn't official until last year.

The squadron's many activations and "naps" included:

- ▶ Constituted as the 96th Troop Carrier Squadron, May 25, 1943, and activated July 1, 1943; inactivated Oct. 18, 1945.
- ▶ Activated in the Reserve, March 6, 1947.
- ▶ Redesignated the 96th TCS, Medium, June 27, 1949.
- ▶ Ordered to active service May 1, 1951; inactivated May 4, 1951.
- ▶ Redesignated 96th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, May 26 and activated in the Reserve, June 15, 1952.
- ▶ Redesignated the 96th TCS, Medium, Sept. 8, 1957.
- ▶ Ordered to active service, Oct. 28, and relieved, Nov. 28, 1962.
- ▶ Redesignated the 96th Tactical Airlift Squadron, July 1, 1976.
- ▶ Redesignated the 96th AS, Feb. 1, 1992.

Before being assigned to the 934th, the 96th was assigned to the 440th Troop Carrier Group and the 440th Troop Carrier Wing, now known as the 440th Airlift Wing, Milwaukee, Wis.

The squadron's duty stations included:

- ▶ Baer Field, Ind., July 1943.
- ▶ Sedalia Army Airfield, Mo., July 1943.
- ▶ Alliance AAF, Neb., September 1943.
- ▶ Pope Field, N.C., January 1944.
- ▶ Baer Field, February 1944.
- ▶ Bottesford, England, March 1944.
- ▶ Exeter, England, April 1944, operating from Ombrone field, Italy, July through August.
- ▶ Reims and Le Mans, France, both in September 1944.
- ▶ Bricy/Orleans, France, November 1944.
- ▶ Scott Field, Ill., March 1947.

- ▶ Wold-Chamberlain Municipal Airport, Minn., June 1949.
- ▶ Fort Snelling, Minn., June 1952.
- ▶ Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, January 1953.

The aircraft flown by the 96th include: C-47, 1943-1945; C-46, 1947-1951; F-51, 1952-1955; F-80, 1955-1957; C-119, 1957-1970; C-130, 1970 to the present.

Wing-unique honors awarded include campaign streamers for Rome-Arno, Southern France, Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe; armed forces expeditionary streamer for Panama, 1989-1990; Distinguished Unit Citation, France, June 6-7, 1944; and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, Feb. 14-March 11, 1968.

27th APS

The second-oldest unit in the 934th, the aerial port was constituted as the 2nd Air Cargo Control Squadron (Special), May 15, and activated May 20, 1944. The emblem for the squadron was approved Dec. 11, 1987.

The squadron's activation history includes:

- ▶ Inactivated March 25, 1946; disbanded Oct. 8, 1948.
- ▶ Reconstituted and redesignated 27th Mobile Aerial Port Squadron, March 17, 1983.
- ▶ Activated in the Reserve, Oct. 1, 1983.
- ▶ Redesignated 27th Aerial Port Squadron, Dec. 15, 1993.

Its duty stations included:

- ▶ San Bernardino AAF, Calif., May 1944.
- ▶ Camp Stoneman, Calif., June 1944.
- ▶ Milne Bay, New Guinea, July 1944.
- ▶ Cape Cretin, New Guinea, August 1944.
- ▶ Alamo, New Guinea, August 1944.
- ▶ Finschhafen, New Guinea, February 1945.
- ▶ Nielsen Field, Manila, Philippines, June 1945.
- ▶ McKinley, Philippines, February 1946.
- ▶ Minneapolis-St. Paul IAP, October 1983 to the present.

Its wing-unique honors include campaign streamers from World War II in the Asiatic-Pacific theater: New Guinea 1943-1944 and Luxon 1944-1945.

Two 'youngsters': communications, security

The 934th CF was constituted by that same name and activated on May 3, 1966. It was organized in the Reserve on June 1, 1966. The unit saw a few redesignations, first as the 934th Information Systems Squadron on April 10, 1985; then as the 934th Communications Squadron on Feb. 1, 1987; then as a flight, Aug. 1, 1992. Its emblem was approved Aug. 8, 1990.

The 934th SFS was constituted as the 934th Weapons System Security Flight on May 21 and activated in the Reserve June 29, 1971. It was redesignated as the 934th Security Police Flight, Aug. 15, 1988; as a squadron, Oct. 1, 1992; and its current designation, July 1, 1997. The unit's emblem was approved June 8, 1990. □

People

Medals

Meritorious Service Medal

Maj. Larry Pearson, ASTS
Tech. Sgt. George Trombley
(Retired), MXS

Promotions

The following promotions were inadvertently missed in the listing effective Jan. 1:

Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Adnaens, CES
Tech. Sgt. Martin Miller, APS

Newcomers

Senior Airman Matthew Barton, SFS
Capt. Kelly Collins, AW
Senior Airman Jennifer Frisbie, ASTS
Staff Sgt. Joel Givens, SFS
Staff Sgt. Randall Husser, MXS
Senior Airman Brian Iverson, LSS
Staff Sgt. Paul Kuffel, AW
Senior Airman Janet Manning, ASTS
Senior Airman Shawn Mason, CF
Amn. Sonny McKinney, ASTS
Master Sgt. Timothy McGuire, AW
Senior Airman Alicia Oja, LG
Senior Airman Denise Owens, ASTS
Senior Airman Mark Schmidt, CF
Tech. Sgt. Janet Stafford, APS
Senior Airman Jamie VanVleet, MXS

Staff Sgt. Janice Wills, AW
Air reserve technicians
Staff Sgt. Robert Jacobson, MSF
Col. Richard Moss, CC

Reenlistments

Master Sgt. Eric Baumer, MSF
Staff Sgt. Lawrence Dean, AW
Master Sgt. Theresa Diamond-Powers, ASTS
Master Sgt. Gregory Koury, MXS
Tech. Sgt. Thomas Politte, CES
Staff Sgt. Zane Ranum, APS
Chief Master Sgt. Gary Smith, MXS
Senior Airman Elizabeth Vandersnick, LSS
Staff Sgt. Melissa Wright, AES

Trainees

The following members completed formal training courses, **March 16-April 15**:
‡ **Staff Sgt. Robert Arkulary**, AS; basic loadmaster course; Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark.; Feb. 17-March 24.
‡ **Tech. Sgt. Thomas Arneson**, APS; Noncommissioned Officer Academy; Goodfellow AFB, Texas; Feb. 24-April 2.
‡ **Staff Sgt. Carl DeWaard**, APS; air transportation; Lackland AFB, Texas; March 16-27.
‡ **Maj. Dick Gabe**, OSF;

Advanced Airlift Tactics Training Course; Rosecrans Memorial Airport, Mo.; March 14-22.

‡ **Staff Sgt. Charles Hill**, CES; civil engineer management; Sheppard AFB, Texas; March 16-27.
‡ **Staff Sgt. James Hoffman**, AW; command and control; Keesler AFB, Miss.; March 16-27.
‡ **Tech. Sgt. Wendy Johnson**, AW; command and control; Keesler AFB; March 16-27.
‡ **Staff Sgt. John Krebsbach**, APS; air transportation; Lackland AFB; March 25-April 7.
‡ **Tech. Sgt. Tony Kubat**, APS; intermediate wartime contingency; Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga.; March 24-April 3.
‡ **Staff Sgt. Robert Mattern**, AS, AATTC, Rosecrans Memorial Airport, March 14-22.
‡ **Tech. Sgt. Larry O'Connell**, APS; intermediate wartime contingency; Dobbins ARB, March 24-April 3.
‡ **Capt. David Olafson**, OSF, Latin American orientation; Hurlburt Field, Fla.; March 16-20.
‡ **Capt. Thomas O'Reilly**, AS, AATTC, Rosecrans Memorial Airport; March 14-22.
‡ **Staff Sgt. Mark Pierson**, APS, intermediate wartime

contingency, Dobbins ARB, March 24-April 3.

‡ **Staff Sgt. Douglas Schaller**, APS, intermediate wartime contingency, Dobbins ARB, March 24-April 3.
‡ **Master Sgt. Adan Sylva**, APS, intermediate wartime contingency, Dobbins ARB, March 24-April 3.
‡ **Tech. Sgt. Tom Thomas**, AS, AATTC, Rosecrans Memorial Airport, March 14-22.
‡ **Staff Sgt. Scott Wheeler**, APS; cargo operations and systems; McGuire AFB/Fort Dix, N.J.; March 17-27.
‡ **Senior Airman Raymond Whitehead**, AES; medical apprentice phase II; Scott Air Force Base, Ill.; Feb. 10-April 6.
‡ **Capt. Timothy Wollmuth**, AW, AATTC, Rosecrans Memorial Airport, March 14-22.

Service certificates

10 years
Terry Hansen, SF
Debra Hayes, SF
Jeffrey Smith, SF

Retirees

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Hamiel, AS, 27 years
Senior Master Sgt. Martin Ignatowicz, CES, 20 years □

Viking Victors:

Lt. Col. John Rudin

New position: Commander, 96th Airlift Squadron.

Previous position: Commander, 934th Operations Support Flight.

Education: Bachelor's in education and psychology, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn.

Civilian job: Pilot, American Airlines.

Hobbies: Skiing, running, golf and reading Tom Clancy novels.

Professional organizations: Reserve Officers Association, Allied Pilot Association.

Goals: "Increase traditional reservists' ownership in the key

processes of the flying squadron, mentor unit members on career advancement opportunities and continue to challenge the increasing participation demands to protect our unit members' quality of life."

Family: Wife, **Lt. Col. Kristin Rudin**, director, 934th Public Affairs; children, **Christopher, Jennifer, Sean and Shannon**; lives in Woodbury, Minn.

Comments: "I am extremely proud to represent a unit with such dedicated and talented people committed to flying safe, mission accomplishment and doing the job right." □



Cherie Huntington