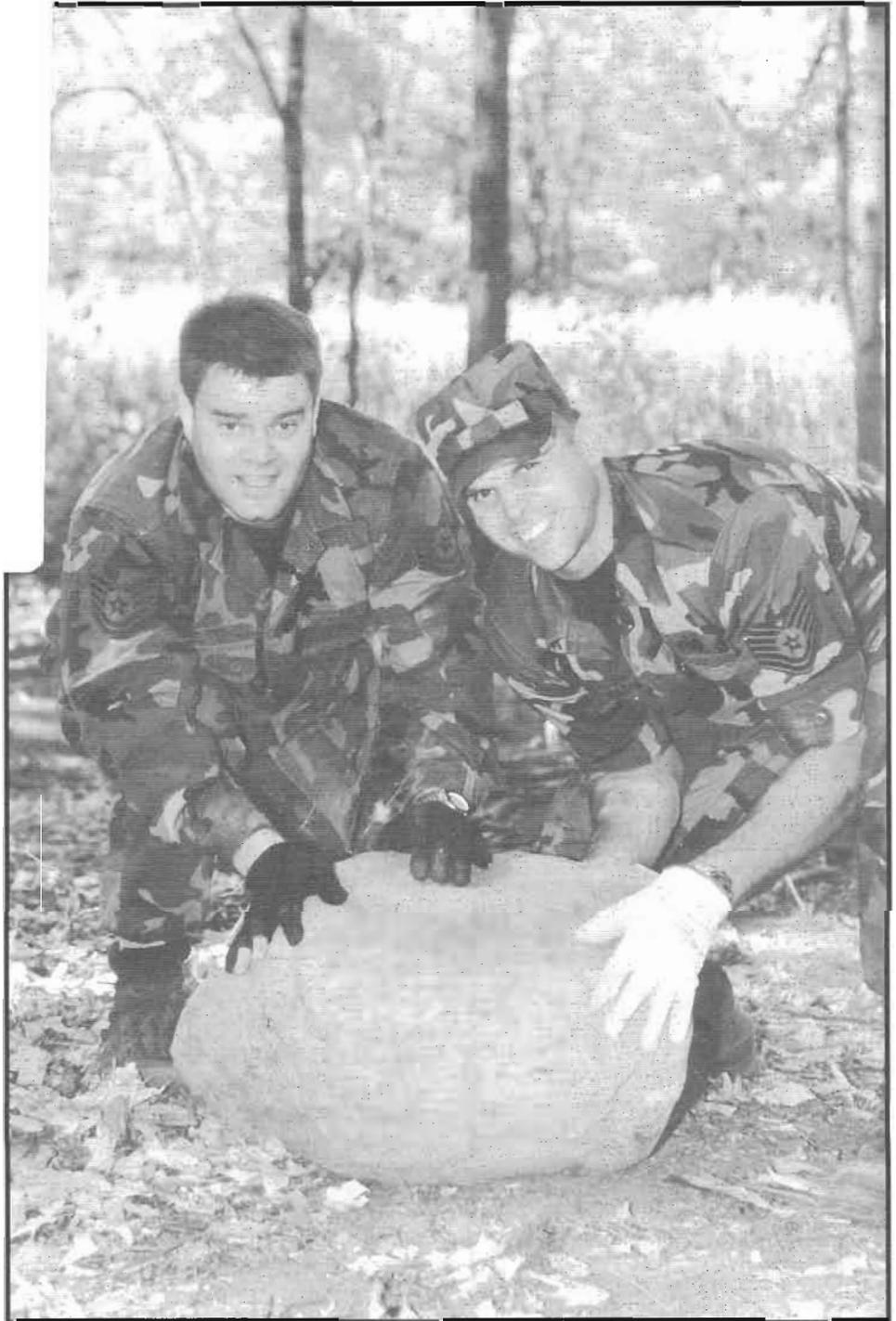


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934th Airlift Wing,
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VIKING FLYER



Staff Sgt. Stephanie Robinson

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Tech. Sgts
Kenneth Boelter
and Doug
Johnson move
rocks to create
new firepits at
Camp Katharine
Parsons. See
pages 4 & 5 for
full story.



Staff Sgt. Stephanie Robinson

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Commentary

Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) Cycle Two

Col. Dean Despinoy
Wing Commander

As a command, we have been through one full cycle of the AEF. The 934th Airlift Wing did an outstanding job in volunteering for backfill of other Wing's short falls. Many of cycle one's short falls were created by improper or last minute tasking of organizations. The tasking process is getting better but is still far from perfect. We are now entering into Cycle Two. Cycle Two is the cycle in which the 934th Airlift Wing has primary responsibility. We must make sure that we fill all of our taskings.

Each squadron is doing a good job in understanding what taskings they have and putting people's names against that tasking. I have said it many times before, but to reiterate, nothing takes priority over the AEF tasking when in our cycle of responsibility. Annual tour orders will only be cut if the individual is not tasked by AEF and has no possibility of being tasked. Commanders should be very skeptical of signing annual tour orders on someone prior to us completing Cycle Two. If a tasking goes unfilled or is sent back to the AEF cell as a reclama and we have a person with the required AFSC but does not have availability because they used it on an annual tour, the individual and their commander will be joining me in Brig Gen Bankers office explaining what happened. As you can tell this is serious business and our country needs us to perform our assigned tasking. I am confident that we will complete Cycle Two in the proud tradition long established by the 934th Airlift Wing.

The Wing is committed to making sure that no one departs base unprepared. You will be properly processed and have everything needed for the deployment before you take one step off the base. The

command has established a standard for orders for the AEF. You will have the actual orders or a letter stating the exact dates of your deployment no later than 30 days prior to departure. This will be the notification to your employer of the exact dates you will be performing duty. If a letter is issued at 30 days instead of the order you will have your orders in hand prior to departure. Please help me help the staff conform to these requirements by speaking up early if things are not going as advertised.



Despinoy

In any deployment the reserve member is only one half of the equation. The other half is the spouse and family left behind. I personally have been on many deployments and have been activated twice since 1987. I know how spouses can sometimes feel lost in this process. My wife has many personal experiences of how fate strikes as soon as I walk out the door for a deployment. Try as I do to make sure that everything is in good working order before I leave, something happens while I am gone. It is also the time that a child's tooth decides to come in, or a long lost relative appears on the doorstep with a problem, generally from my side of the family.

Unlike active duty, many of our families are not close to base. In some cases spouses and families have never been on base and are completely unaware of the help and services that exist. Because of this fact I will be sending out personal letters to all spouses of reserve members who will be deploying during our AEF cycle of responsibility. The

(Continued on next page)

Reserve

Reservists assist with USS Cole tragedy

In response to requests by the active force, Air Force Reserve Command units provided airlift and port mortuary support in the first few days after the USS Cole tragedy.

Members of a C-141 crew from the 452nd Air Mobility Wing, March Air Reserve Base, Calif., flew 33 survivors to waiting families and friends in Norfolk, Va., Oct. 15. Another six sailors more seriously injured in the suspected terrorist attack in the port of Aden, Yemen, Oct. 12 remained at the U.S. military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, for further observation.

The reservists had just airlifted a team of medical personnel to Tunisia when they were asked to fly the mission. An active-duty trauma unit from Germany cared for the injured on the 9th-hour transatlantic flight.

On Oct. 13, a Reserve C-17 aircrew from the 315th Airlift Wing, Charleston AFB, S.C., flew the bodies of five of the 17 sailors killed in the attack on the Navy destroyer from the Middle East to Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The aircrew was on temporary duty at Ramstein as part of the European Strategic Intra-theater Deployment operations when it got the request for assistance.

The next day another C-17 crew from the Charleston unit airlifted the remains of the five sailors to Dover AFB, Del., for port mortuary processing.

"The 315th Airlift Wing is always ready to support the needs of our country," said Brig. Gen. Jerry Black, 315th AW commander. "When something like this happens, we go that extra mile to provide support. Our hearts go out to the families of the USS Cole for their terrible loss."

The slain sailors were honored in a brief plane-side ceremony at Dover.

After a base chaplain blessed their caskets, sailors carried the bodies off the plane and quietly marched between two rows of a Navy honor guard team to waiting hearses.

Six members of Black's 315th Mission Support Squadron reported to Dover Oct. 14 as part of a 35-member, Reserve mortuary affairs team. The other volunteers came from Dover's 512th Memorial Affairs Squadron; 459th MSS, Andrews AFB, Md.; and 934th Services Squadron, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minn. Command officials do not know how long the reservists will remain at Dover, said Marilyn Sanders, chief of plans and force management for the directorate of service at Headquarters AFRC.

"Our reservists are doing an absolutely great job," said Sanders, who was on temporary duty at Dover from her office at Robins. "We are really proud of their contributions." More reservists from Travis AFB, Calif.; Beale AFB, Calif.; and McChord AFB, Wash., are on standby to provide further assistance.

Reserve aircraft and crews account for 25 percent of the Air Force's C-5 and C-141 capability, and AFRC provides 45 percent of the aircrews on active-duty C-5, C-17 and C-141 aircraft.

Some 290 Air Force reservists comprise 74 percent of the total force designated to provide port mortuary support. Most of the reservists are assigned to memorial affairs squadrons at Dover and Travis.

Another eight units have 20-member teams, and 20 individual mobilization augmentees support the Dover and Travis squadrons. (AFRC News Service)

Local

The Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) Chapter 858 winter membership drive starts on Dec. 1, 2000. All enlisted personnel from the 934th Airlift Wing are eligible to join. Annual dues for E-1 to E-4 personnel are \$15.00, E-5 to E-9 is \$21.00.

"AFSA has fought for many benefits for Air Force Reservists for the last three years," said Master Sgt. Lin Davidson, AFSA Chapter 858 president and a member of the 934th. "It has worked with other military support organizations to increase the size of the annual pay raise for reservists. It has also gotten the IDT points earned in one year raised from 75 to 90. And all AFTs should be AFSA members after AFSA fought to protect the paid military leave benefit."

AFSA members enjoy travel, insurance, shopping and health insurance discounts. There are educational programs available for members and their families. Each unit orderly room has AFSA applications or see your first sergeant. For more information, call AFSA Chapter 858 at 952-884-6077 or email:Ldavidson7@juno.com.

(Continued from previous page)

letter will include information and phone numbers of whom the spouses can call for any problem. For those families who live close enough to base, I will set up briefings to let you know where your spouse is going and what they and you can expect.

As with everything that we do, it is a team effort. The member, the family and the employer are all part of that team. The team is doing its part by making sacrifices so we can provide the necessary forces for the AEF. I will do my part by making sure the 934th Airlift Wing doesn't let any member of this team down.

News Briefs

Story by Staff Sgt. Jeff Williams
Photos by Staff Sgt. Stephanie Robinson

Yellow leaves were falling in the light lakeside breeze. Cattails were visible in the marsh near a bridge, a red barn and the white domes of two grain silos dotted the horizon. It was a calm and peaceful day at Camp Katharine Parsons, the site of a recent 934th Civil Engineer Squadron bivouac.

Enjoying the tranquil setting, electricians were busy rewiring and updating the camp's electrical system, plumbers were working on old pipes and septic systems, carpenters were finishing their expansion of a wooden bridge, and engineers were cutting trees and removing brush.

"This is the kind of work that our people would do in opening a base during a contingency situation," said Lt. Col. Randy Hoscheid, 934th CES commander. "We had a great training experience. It was an ideal facility in a beautiful area."

"We do a bivouac every year," he said. "If something provides a great



Master Sgt. Robert Senst upgrades the electrical wiring on the lodge.

training opportunity, we'll consider it. We have a lot of talent, a lot of equipment and a lot of requests. Unfortunately, we have to turn down requests sometimes."

Staff Sgt. Tara Venum, plumbing and utilities, was busy installing faucets in the crafts building and running copper pipe to the showers in the lodge building during the exercise.

"It was wonderful to get the opportunity to work with the plumbing and to solder copper pipe," she said. "It's totally different than what I do on a regular basis, and it's nice to do something that helps the community. We could literally spend weeks out here."

Staff Sgt. Cate Bethke spent the bulk of her weekend cutting wooden planks for burning and disposal.

"I got the chance to do things that I don't normally do in disaster preparedness," Bethke said. "This also helped build morale and camaraderie within the squadron."

She likes the fact that this was a community-related project.

"This is someplace that inner city kids can go to learn what life is like away from the streets," she said. "It would be ideal if we could come out and meet them, or teach them things like how to pitch a tent. It can't hurt. It would only help in building the future."

Tech. Sgt. Ken Boelter, firefighter, agrees with the idea of training with community projects.

"It's very rewarding to do something for the community," Boelter said. "Whenever this place is mentioned, we'll know that we did something there. We get that satisfaction instead of just passing time."

"It's also nice for employer-to-

Serene, tranquil



Viking Flyer

Site for CES Bivouac



show for what we do – and it helps the local area. They're also rewarded by it. We have a good mission," he said.

Boelter, who also serves as a firefighter with the Coon Rapids Fire Department, was among a crew of 14 firefighters that built four firepits throughout the complex, and burned debris for the camp's recreational area.

He said some of the rocks used in the firepits were 200-300 pounds, but it enhanced teamwork and made the time pass quickly.

While monitoring the burning debris pile, he said, "We're watching it closely. We built a good firebreak, kept the fire pretty low, picked a good location and are monitoring it closely. We also obtained the burn permit from the local fire marshal."

Maj. J.D. Larson, CES operations officer, said, "The goal is always to hone skills in training. In this case, the community also benefits. During our employment phase, our people got the skills training they needed – in this case, it was making the repairs to the camp." He said, "The people in our squadron were outstanding. They recognized that we were doing work in the community, morale was high, and there was a pride in their workmanship that really showed." In the words of Larson, "It was a very smooth operation."



Staff Sgt. Cate Bethke cuts debris for burning.



Master Sgt. Dennis Geyen grinds a griddle surface clean.

"The goal is always to hone skills in training."

Maj. J.D. Larson

News

Information just a click away for Reserve families

Family members of reservists say they would like more information about service-connected benefits and that Air Force Reserve Command units need to do a better job of communicating with them.

These were the top two concerns raised as a result of a command questionnaire sent to family members this past spring. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain some insight into the concerns of reserve families and to evaluate the level of awareness of reserve entitlements.

Of the 38,000 plus questionnaires sent out, 23 percent responded. More than half of the more than 8,000 respondents offered comments, from one-liners to multiple-page letters.

"As with any questionnaire, responses varied widely from those happy with the Reserve program to those displeased and frustrated with it," said Maj. Gen. David R. Smith, AFRC vice commander, in an October letter to family members. "The overwhelming majority, however, expressed a desire to improve problem areas and complimented parts they liked. If nothing else, the questionnaire reaffirmed what we already knew: (Reservists and their families) are great American patriots and don't receive enough recognition for the sacrifices (they) make to serve (their) country."

In the letter, the general addressed the more common concerns and divided them according to the ones the Reserve has some control over and those that it does not, which include pending legislation or policy changes.

To help alleviate the confusion over entitlements, the command is mailing 50,000 copies of the Department of Defense's "Guide to Reserve Family Member Benefits" along with other information about the Reserve to families. The guide is available electronically on the AFRC Public Web page – www.afrc.af.mil – by clicking on "Information for Reservists and Families." The guide helps families understand their benefits, which vary depending on the reservist's status and the number of consecutive days of duty performed.

For example, unit reservists, who satisfactorily participate in the Reserve accrue a minimum of 24 days of commissary shopping per year. They earn another 15 days of shopping for two weeks of annual tour, plus more days for any additional active duty performed.

Smith and other Reserve senior leaders recently met with wing commanders. To close the information gap, the commanders were asked to send periodic letters directly to families regarding changes to benefits, unit family activities and other useful information. Every wing also now has video-phone capability, so members of deploying units can maintain audio and video contact with the family at home station.

An important benefit going into effect Feb. 1 is the new TRICARE Dental Program, which grants low-cost dental coverage to reservists and their families. Costs vary depending on the reservist's status and enrollment options. A detailed news story, *Dental program expands to cover families of reservists*, Release No. 00119, is available on the AFRC Homepage by going to "News and Information" and clicking on "AFRC News."

In addition, the secretary of defense has directed a committee to explore the possibility of compensating reservists for expenses incurred traveling to and from unit training assemblies.

Questionnaire respondents offered other suggestions that would require changes to current law. These included immediate retirement pay after 20 years of service, space available travel for accompanied spouses, free accommodations with spouses on UTA weekends and use of military medical facilities anytime a spouse performs duty regardless of the tour length.

"Increases in reserve benefits are sometimes slow in coming, but the past few years have seen changes...that seemed impossible 10 years ago," Smith said.

In their comments, many respondents voiced concern about pay timeliness. "This is especially hard on those who experience a gap in take-home pay because payment for active-duty service sometimes lags," the general said. "Although we believe this is not a normal or frequent situation, we realize that it does happen and are working on ways to minimize any delay."

Another major concern was the perceived inability of reservists to receive promotions. During the past year, the Reserve boosted promotion opportunities by increasing the grades of more than 9,600 enlisted and 1,900 officer positions across the command. Command officials are also exploring the feasibility of giving enlisted personnel a chance to make master sergeant before they retire if they serve a specified time and meet certain requirements.

Attached to the letter was a recap of some of the more significant questions asked on the questionnaire.

Eighty-nine percent of the respondents said they know their spouse's unit of assignment, 67 percent knew the supervisor/commander, and 73 percent had a telephone number to contact the unit.

Eighty-four percent of the spouses knew they could use Army, Navy, etc., facilities, but only 43 percent were aware of the programs and services offered through the Reserve unit's Family Readiness.

Seventy-seven percent considered their spouse's participation in the Reserve as a positive influence.

Ranked in order of high importance to the families were military retirement, reserve income and desire to serve their country.

(Continued on next page)

Viking Victor

Major Douglas Kveene

Position: Deputy Commander, 934th Support Group

Education: Bachelor's in business and management, University of Maryland; Master of Arts in management, Webster University; Master of Science in information resource management; Air Force Institute of Technology.

Civilian Occupation: Investment representative for Edward Jones Investments, Willmar, Minn.

Hobbies: Softball and golf.

Professional Organizations: Reserve Officers Association; Air Force Association; Air Force Sergeants Association.

Goals: To enable the men and women throughout the 934th Support Group to accomplish their respective unit missions; to encourage innovation and creativity; and to have fun.

Family: Wife, Julie; children, Andrew, 15; Kristina, 18; Jeanne Ashburn (married to Mitch Ashburn), grandson Zachary.

Comments: I'm delighted to serve in this new capacity and look forward to the challenges.



Lieutenant General Eugene L. Tattini, Commander, Space and Missile Systems Center, is met on the flightline by Col. Dean J. Despinoy, Wing Commander, 934th Airlift Wing. Gen Tattini visited the twin cities to attend the 415th Air Force ROTC Dining Out on October 20. Included in the General's Minneapolis trip was a visit to the 342nd Recruiting Squadron Job Fair and an Industry Partner's Luncheon. The General also managed to fit in visits to Honeywell Technology Center and Lockheed Martin.



Commentary

(Continued from previous page)

When asked if they would be prepared if their spouse were activated, 32 percent said "no." Of those who weren't prepared, income was a major concern of 55 percent of them, family separation 34 percent, dependent issues 33 percent, other 18 percent, medical 8 percent, and employer issues 3 percent.

Most respondents commented on the increasing demands on their spouses' time. Operations and personnel

tempo are major concerns of the active and reserve forces because they affect the services' ability to retain people.

"Since the end of the Cold War, the active and reserve components have been significantly reduced in size," Smith said. "Unfortunately, world demands for military presence have not. We are hopeful that the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) for 2001 will address this issue and reevaluate the size and force mix of our military, in both the active and reserve components." (AFRC News Service)

News

Joint exercise has the right formula: Practice + Organization = Success

Story by Staff Sgt. Jeff Williams

Photos by Staff Sgt. Stephanie Robinson

As the eyes of the world watch with sadness the recent tragedy concerning the deaths of sailors on the USS Cole, and the hostilities erupting in the Middle East, local emergency management and medical personnel are confronted with an enormous task. How would they handle a local terrorist situation? Would the activation of the Federal Response Plan be effective in handling mass casualties?

After nearly two years of planning, the 934th Airlift Wing hosted a joint-service and civilian medical response exercise that focused on the medical management of people exposed to a bio-terrorist attack.

"We simulated activation of the Federal Response Plan as it pertains to the health and medical section," said Ed Lord, area emergency manager at the Department of Veteran's Affairs Office of Emergency Preparedness. "This plan calls for emptying the community hospitals as best we could. We had to move people out of Minnesota, that's where the 934th came into play."

Lord said the 934th provided two of the three planes and transported approximately 125 "patients" to six of eight midwestern cities. The scenario simulated the

evacuation of local hospitals to make space available for mass casualties exposed to botulinum toxin.

Lt. Col. Marilyn Chambers, a flight nurse with the 934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, was one of the coordinators for the exercise. "It gave us wonderful training in handling a large number of people in a short amount of time," she said. "We were working closely with many different agencies at once, and it flowed. That is highly unusual when you mix different services and different units."

While the exercises have occurred on a regular basis for the past 13 years, Chambers said they have become more complex and now involve more

agencies. "A good working relationship has developed between the agencies," Chambers said. "We all know what others do, and we know how to use and access their resources. It really went well."

Senior Master Sgt. Sharon Blalock, 934th AES supervisor of medical readiness, worked in the Operations Center during the exercise. "The communication between the agencies went exceptionally well," she said. "We all had a role in there. The interaction with the Military Affiliated Radio Service (MARS) and ham radio operators was the best part. It was wonderful to work with them."

Senior Airman Katy Carroll, 934th AES medical technician, was in charge of taking care of litter patients

on the left side of her aircraft. She was on the second aircraft that departed—headed for Cleveland and Detroit.

"I thought it was great!" she said. "There was confusion when people first came aboard, but that's typical. I made sure my patients stayed on-board until we had things organized."

"If we ever have a 'weapons of mass destruction' incident, these kinds of realistic exercises go a long way to better prepare the military to support local communities in a time of need."

Lord said exercises help simulate the activation of the National Disaster Medical System, a nationwide program of community hospitals that enter into agreement with the VA and U.S. Public Health Services to make beds available during times of national emergency.

"It was a great success," Lord said. "After canvassing local hospital and military key players, all have identified shortcomings that we hope will be mitigated in the months and years ahead. Minnesota has a rich history of joining hands to make these exercises a reality."

Chambers said some of the other participants in the 2000 exercise included the Army Reserve, Minnesota Air National Guard, Civil Air Patrol, Military Affiliated Radio Service, Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Regional Training Site, Medical—Fort McCoy, Wis., the VA, and Hennepin County Medical Center.

A first sergeant position (E-7) is open in Mission Support. Interested applicants should submit a one or two page resume to Lt. Col. Pam LeBlanc, MSF/CC by the close of business on Dec. 3, 2000. For more information contact Chief Grewe, Senior Master Sgt. Boettner or Lt. Col. LeBlanc.



Captains Sara Hormig and Donald Brock attend to the needs of a simulated patient.