

# ANGEL'S WINGS

920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base Florida

VOLUME 5, NO. 4



APRIL 2007

## Rescue Reservists March Forth to . . .



Germany

OF

MARCH

Afghanistan



Kuwait

HE

Iraq



ON THE WEB AT [WWW.920RQW.AFRC.AF.MIL](http://WWW.920RQW.AFRC.AF.MIL)





# Former vice bids farewell to 920th

By Col. Joseph Trippy

920th Rescue Wing

As some of you may know, I have accepted a position as the chief of operations at Central Command Headquarters, Macdill Air Force Base in Tampa. I look forward to the new challenges before me. Even as an old guy, I still have the fire inside to continue to serve. My hope is that this new opportunity will provide me with half as much satisfaction as I have experienced at Patrick.

As I prepare to leave the 920th, I want to take a moment to thank the many men and women of this organization who I have had the opportunity to serve with over the past four years.

When I first arrived here in December 2002, we were the 920th Rescue Group. The transition to a wing was well on its way even while many of our folks were deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. I knew being a vice commander was an awesome and challenging opportunity, so I peddled my legs as fast as I could trying to learn my job on the fly as we quickly saw the mobilization of many of our folks to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Coming here with almost thirty years of military time, and from the airlift community, I was used to the last minute changes, "hurry up and wait" and trying to put 10 pounds of stuff into a five pound bag. Joining this organization, I quickly saw how somehow there was room for an additional five pounds. Each and every challenge for this organization was met. As a team we made them happen.

Because of these difficult fast-paced events, some folks chose to call it a career, or move on. Those decisions do not come



Col. Joseph Trippy

easy for anyone who puts on a uniform. Attrition is a part of any organization but I am always in awe of the 15 to 25 new faces arriving every Unit Training Assembly during the newcomer's brief. From all walks of life and experience levels comes the future of the 920th RQW. The lifeline of an organization is new blood! First and foremost, our recruiters continue to do a great job, but "we are all recruiters!", and the accomplishments of this wing and the public awareness of what we do bring us valuable resources for today and tomorrow.

I leave with a memory bank full of events...enough to fill a lifetime and the richness of having made numerous friends along the way. I possess the feeling that I was a part of the history of the 920th Rescue Wing.

Perhaps our paths will cross in the future as we move through this thing called life... and a career... but for now it has been an honor to serve as your vice commander and I know you will continue to do great things in the future.

These things we do that others may live....



Col. Steven Kirkpatrick  
Wing Commander

Capt. Cathleen Snow  
Chief of Public Affairs

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Jaime Pinto  
Assistant Chief of Public Affairs

Master Sgt.  
Raymond Padgett  
NCOIC

Master Sgt. Chance Babin  
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Staff Writers

Staff Sgt. Heather Kelly  
Editor

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On the Cover:



Photo Illustration by Capt. Cathleen Snow

Rescue Airmen from the 920th Rescue Wing have deployed every month so far this year in support of the Global War on Terror as part of the air expeditionary force. The Airmen will be deployed for various lengths of time. See story, pg. 6

## UTA Schedule

Next UTA: May 5-6

June 2-3

July 7-8

August 4-5



# “Major” triumph

By Staff Sgt. Heather L. Kelly  
Rescue Wing Public Affairs

What started as a fun run for about 50 people assigned to the Air Force Theater hospital at Balad Air Base, Iraq, grew into 600 servicemembers registering to run a 5K at Balad AB March 31.

One 920th Rescue Wing member was on hand to participate in the race and offer opening remarks for the event.

“I am a breast cancer survivor and have been for six and a half years,” said Maj. Laurie Turner, 920th RQW Aeromedical Staging Squadron member.

Major Turner is currently assigned to the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group as the Officer in Charge of the Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility.

When the race coordinators found out she was the only cancer survivor running, they asked Major Turner to give opening remarks.

“I was so honored that they asked me and excited when I heard the Race for the Cure was here, it seems I always miss it when they held it in Bre-



Courtesy Photo

**Major Laurie Turner, 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, addresses racers before a breast cancer research run at Balad Air Base, Iraq. Major Turner is a breast cancer survivor.**

vard because drill weekends would fall on the same day,” said Major Turner.

After turning 40 in 1999, Major Turner was required by the Air Force to have a mammogram.

“I procrastinated until nearly a year later, then I was diagnosed. I’m not sure if I would have made an effort to have a mammogram on my own - even though my insurance paid for it.”

The day after her surgery, Major Turner said the 920th ASTS commander called to tell her she had made captain. “It was a dual triumph,” she said.

## This Month In History

On April 12, 1981, the U.S. Space Shuttle Columbia was launched into orbit and landed at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., two days later. This flawless mission marked the beginning of the U.S. Space Shuttle program. This long-awaited flight brought a feeling of pride to the American people and reminded the rest of the world that the U.S. is still committed to the exploration of space.



The 301st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, being tasked to provide rescue support in the launch area, performed its well-rehearsed duties.

Today, unrivaled wingmen from the 920th Rescue Wing continue to support NASA Space Shuttle launches as well as rocket launches from Cape Canaveral Air Station.



## Wing Military Ball set for June 2

In celebration of the Wing’s heritage all Rescue Wing members and their guests are invited to attend the Wing’s second annual Military Ball set for June 2. Civilian employers welcome.

When: June 2 at 6 p.m.

Where: Indian River Colony Club, Viera

Uniform: Officers - Mess Dress; Enlisted - Semi-formal or Mess Dress; Civilians - Formal

Prices vary. See the Wing Executive Officer, X3498 or Secretary, X2218, for more information or to purchase tickets.





# Bosses' Day is set for June 2

## Last chance to register !

Rescue Wing members are encouraged to invite their civilian bosses to the 2007 Bosses' Day. This is a great opportunity to strengthen your civilian employer's commitment to your Reserve duty or to help them understand what you do when you're on duty here. The event includes a flight and some face-to-face time with the Wing Commander, Col. Steve Kirkpatrick.

### Annual Bosses' Day nomination form

June 2, 2007

(Please print or type information legibly)

#### Reservist's Information

Reservist's Name/Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Reservist's Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Squadron: \_\_\_\_\_ Civilian Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Employer's Information

Employer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Bus Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Business Mailing Address w/ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Employer's complete email address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Guidelines:

1. You may nominate a civilian employer.
2. Return your nomination to the Public Affairs Office as soon as possible, but no later than May 6.
3. Fill out and mail this page to 920 RQW/PA, 740 O'Malley Rd.. Suite 101, Patrick AFB, FL 32925.

Bosses will receive a letter of invitation, including the day's itinerary. More details will follow. For more information please contact Public Affairs at (321-494-0535). Or submit information electronically to Cathleen.snow@rescue920.patrick.af.mil.

# The Last 100 - Portland PJs survive closure



U.S. Air Force Photo

**Pararescuemen with the 304th Rescue Squadron perform a mission that is critical to the Air Force Reserve and the region. Approximately 100 304th members will remain in Portland, Ore., while their host unit, the 939th Air Refueling Wing, is scheduled for closure.**

## By Master Sgt. Chance Babin

### Rescue Wing Public Affairs

For the last 50 years, the Air Force has maintained a rescue presence in Portland, Ore. That streak was in serious jeopardy for members of the 304th Rescue Squadron during the most recent Base Realignment and Closure actions.

The BRAC commission targeted the squadron's host unit, the 939th Air Refueling Wing, for closure. However, the 304th managed to survive. Over the next year or so, the Reserve's presence at Portland will dwindle from nearly 1,100 Airmen to about 100, all members of the rescue squadron.

It appears that the 304th is destined to remain in Portland. The BRAC closure marked the second time in three years that the rescue Airmen had managed to survive a drastic change. In 2003, the 939th, then a rescue wing, converted to KC-135 tanker aircraft and became an air refueling wing. Though the wing changed missions,

the 304th RQS remained in place, becoming a part of the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla.

While the BRAC commission decided Portland could do without a refueling mission, the rescue mission was deemed more essential. The decision to keep this mission in Portland was based, in large part, on the unit's level of experienced pararescuemen, also known as PJs. The unit has approximately 50 pararescuemen, 11 combat rescue officers and 48 support people.

"For the Air Force (as a whole) we provide the largest pool of seven-level trained PJs -- period," Chief Konopka said. "This is a very good recruiting area for the type of people who are motivated to be in rescue. Currently, we have the highest percentage of new recruits in pararescue in Air Force Reserve Command."

By the time a PJ gets through all the training to attain his three-level, Chief Konopka said, it takes an

average of 30 months.

In addition to a valuable pool of trained resources and a good recruiting base, another advantage of maintaining a rescue presence in Portland is the availability of various training environments within a few hours of the base.

"The area here is conducive to training," Captain Bernard said. "All major environments are represented here in Oregon. Within two hours you can be at the ocean, major rivers, forests, mountains, glaciers or the desert. You have any environment you want in which to train."

With the upcoming departure of the 939th ARW, finding a way to continue supporting the 304th is a priority.

"As the 939th goes away, our concern is that the Reservists who stay get the adequate support they need," said Lt. Col. Paul Dechirico, performance manager with the 920th RQW at Patrick AFB.

**(See Last 100, Page 10)**



# MARCHING FORTH TO WAR



**Capt. (Dr.) Karen Mackenzie, 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron stabilizes an injured Servicemember aboard an Air Force transport aircraft enroute to definitive care.**

Courtesy photo

**By Capt. Cathleen Snow**  
Rescue Wing Public Affairs

**A**nother month in 2007, another round of deployments overseas for Air Force Reservists from the 920th Rescue Wing.

Rescue Airmen have deployed every month so far this year in support of the Global War on Terror as part of the air expeditionary force.

On April 1, a force of 45 Airmen deployed to Afghanistan to team up with 70 Airmen who deployed there from the 920th in March.

The contingent consisted of pararescuemen, pilots, maintainers and support personnel. These professionals will continue providing combat search and rescue support for the region.

On April 4, an additional 7 Airmen from the 39th Rescue and 920th

Maintenance Squadrons deployed to the Horn of Africa to replace the 13 Airmen who deployed there in February. Those 13 returned Easter weekend.

In January, a contingent of a dozen of medical professionals from the 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron headed out to three different locations in Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The group consisted of nurses, aerospace medicine technicians, a physician, a life skills technician and a medical services corps officer.

These dedicated professionals have been nursing and healing the wounds of war. Their replacements will be joining them soon in theater.

The deploying Airmen are scheduled to be gone for various durations of time.

## *Deployment Poem*

*As Heroes they stood tall  
With shoulders wide  
They loaded the busses  
And sat side by side  
Leaving their loved ones  
To go fight in the East  
Every Airman was silent  
Thinking quietly in their seat  
Their thoughts on the mission  
Eyes glazed with tears  
They left without thinking  
Put aside all their fears  
These are Airman that rescue  
Those who are stranded  
These are the Airmen  
To which our lives  
have been handed  
The pride for our country  
Gives them strength to save  
Another lost comrade  
Moments from the grave  
The job, while necessary  
Is a dangerous one  
These Airman  
have stepped up  
To get the mission done  
While they fight overseas  
We support them at home  
Family, friends and loved ones  
These Airmen aren't alone  
When these rescuers return  
Sandy boots on their feet  
They can stand tall  
Their mission complete  
The loved ones are waiting  
As the busses come in  
These Airman are HEROES  
That others may live*

*- SrA Stephanie M. Monroe  
920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron*

# SAVING THE VICTIMS

By Capt. Cathleen Snow

Rescue Wing Public Affairs

(Editor's note: Information for this article was compiled using several sources: an ISAF news release, email perspective by 301st RQS members as well as 920th personnel interviews)

A flash flood that hit the Helmand River Valley in Afghanistan March 20 was met by a swift response of coalition air and ground forces, including deployed Airmen from the 920th Rescue Wing.

Over two days, nearly 600 villagers were rescued by the combined effort among the 920th Rescue Wing Airmen and the International Security Assistance Forces there.

A call came over the radio signifying that there was a flash flood in a nearby village from a torrential downpour and the support of 920th Rescue Forces might be needed.

Once the word was given to scramble, combat maintainers from the 920th Maintenance Squadron uncovered, untied and applied power to the HH-60G Pave hawk rotor wing aircraft.

Subsequently aircrews and pararescuemen from the 301st and 308th Rescue Squadrons came together to "do what they do," said Staff Sgt. Jacob Creel, 920th Maintenance Squadron Aircraft Electrical and Environmental Systems. "In no time, they were off the ground," he said.

A three-ship formation of Pave Hawks departed to rescue villagers 45 minutes away. According to reports, the area where they were headed had seen increased enemy activity the week prior.

When the rescue forces arrived at the river area, there were houses that were surrounded by swift moving



Deployed rescue crews responded swiftly to a call to save Afghan people of the Helmand River Valley whose villages were struck by flash floods March 20.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Randy Wells

muddy water. People were standing in the water on shallow islands, in makeshift rafts and holding on to trees in the water.

Rescue crew attempted to pick up many people but most of them waved the helicopters off, content to wait out the flood on their islands.

Poor weather initially hampered rescue attempts; however, helicopters landed where possible to rescue villagers.

The air operations were conducted while weather and light conditions allowed and were restarted at first light the next day.

The 920th Airmen found a couple of flood victims clinging to trees and were able to save them. They then found another victim clinging to a partially uprooted tree in the middle of fast moving water, noted deployed commander, Lt. Col. Chris Hannon.

Pilot Lt. Col. David Blackburn, 301st Rescue Squadron, and his crew performed a critical resupply of food, medical supplies and blankets to Afghani Coalition Forces who were working on the West side of the river.

"It was a busy but rewarding day," said Sergeant Creel. "We had a chance to show what we are made of."



# Funny Man paints colorful life canvas

By Master Sgt. Chance C. Babin  
Rescue Wing Public Affairs

To meet Master Sgt. Glenn Roberts is an intense experience, from his pride and patriotism toward his job and country, to his zany sense of humor and infectious laugh, Sergeant Roberts loves what he does and does it with zest.

“I have the best job in the United States military,” Sergeant Roberts said. “It feels outstanding. I get to save lives for a living, that’s what we do.”

For Sergeant Roberts, 920th Operations Group Standards and Evaluation, helicopter flight engineer and flight examiner, his job is to make sure squadrons are maintaining standards by testing and hands on evaluation, whether it’s the 39th, 301st or 308th, he’s there to make sure operations are kept in standard.

While standardization is his job, there’s nothing standard about Sergeant Roberts, whose hobbies range from playing paintball to lecturing on anti-terrorism.

Whether he’s teaching anti-terrorism at Florida Metropolitan University in Melbourne, the school he’s earned both his Associates and Bachelors in Criminal Justice, or taking classes toward his Masters’ Degree in Human Resources and Criminal Justice, FMU is a big part of his life, for that matter, his entire families’ lives.

Sergeant Roberts, his wife and daughter all attended and graduated from FMU. Sergeant Roberts even had a class with his daughter and two of her friends and a class with his wife.

Sergeant Roberts said one of the more special moments at FMU came during and after he deployed in 2003, when his FMU staff sent him and his unit care packages. Upon his return, he was asked to be a guest speaker at a Christmas function.

“I thanked them for supporting me,” he said. “I was overcome with emotion.”

It’s this emotional side of Sergeant Roberts that comes out and brings life to the classes he lectures to criminal justice students on anti-terrorism.



Camouflaged for the hunt, Master Sgt. Glenn Roberts enjoys a paintball match.

Although he has been teaching force protection for his squadron for the past seven years, he took some classes to prepare him to teach on the outside. It’s a subject he takes very seriously.

During his presentation he shows video clips that range from silly to strongly emotional, along with present day risks and threats.

He’s so fervent about teaching that his intentions are to become a professor once he retires.

“It is my passion for the subject that makes me want to teach,” he said. “I feel I have knowledge worth passing on.”

This in a way describes what he’s currently doing with one of his other passions, paintball, a sport he’s played for 10 years.

“Paintball is the only sport where you can shoot someone and get shot at and get away with it,” he said. “Some people have \$1,000 guns and still get popped by a kid with a Wal-Mart special. It levels the playing field and teaches you humility, as you lower your head and make that long walk off

(See Canvas, Page 10)



Keeping an eye on the mission, Master Sgt. Glenn Roberts monitors all systems aboard the Pavehawk helicopter during a flight.



# 920th MEO provides insight, council

By Master Sgt. Raymond Padgett  
Rescue Wing public affairs

Prejudice is defined as any preconceived opinion or feeling, either favorable or unfavorable. In the Air Force, we share common prejudices toward such things as sloppy uniforms and out-of-regulation sunglasses.

The goal of the Military Equal Opportunity office is to determine whether a particular prejudice is against the law.

The mission of the MEO office is to promote an environment free from personal, social or institutional barriers that prevent Air Force members from reaching their highest potential.

“Our office provides an avenue to voice concerns about equal opportunity,” said Major William Moore the MEO chief. Major Moore recently arrived at Patrick from Homestead Air Force Base, Fla., where he was the Assistant Chief of MEO.

Major Moore went on to explain that in order for a complaint to fall under MEO purview, it must be considered unlawful discrimination based on five protective categories which are: race, color, religion, sex and national origin. These are all addressed as MEO complaints.

Most of the time, working a complaint is spent trying to determine the root of the problem and resolve the issue at the lowest possible level. If the root of the problem is not based on discrimination of the five protected categories, then the individual will be referred to other staff agencies such as the Chaplain’s office, Judge Advocate General or Inspector General.

If the root problem does fall in one of the five areas then an informal complaint will be registered.

“We try to work at the lowest level possible,” Major Moore said. “Often

this means just sitting down with both parties and analyzing the perception each party has of that particular situation.”

If a resolution cannot be achieved through the informal complaint avenue, then a formal complaint can be made within 60 calendar days of the alleged offense occurred unless the installation commander grants a waiver.

Although communications to MEO staff are not confidential, they are only released in a “for official use only” basis to commanders and need to know staff.

The MEO office does not file charges against members. After the fact finding is complete, the MEO staff then makes their findings available to the unit commander for further action.

Investigation complaints are only a portion of the MEO office’s job however. It also entails getting out and educating supervisors about promoting equal opportunity.

According to Tech.

Sgt. Olga Medina, 920th Rescue Wing MEO advisor, “The more time we spend in the work sections, the fewer complaints we seem to have back at the office.”

Another part of the MEO office’s educational efforts is

explaining the difference between sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Sexual harassment is defined as discrimination that involves unwanted sexual advances or request for sexual favors. Sexual assault is defined as intentional sexual contact characterized by the use of force when the victim does not or can not consent.

When a complaint is brought to the MEO office, the complainant is explained the difference between the sexual harassment and sexual assault and then asked if they understand the difference. If the complainant thinks they are a victim of sexual assault they are then referred to the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator. MEO technicians are not allowed to work SARC issues.

Major Moore emphasizes that sexual assault is a crime. If the MEO staff determines sexual assault has occurred, they must then notify the security forces and the Office of Special Investigation.





# BRIEF and to the point...

## UTA CHILD CARE

Child care is available for 920th Rescue Wing reservists during UTAs and annual tour. Advance registration is encouraged. You will need to complete an Extended Duty Care parent statement for each child and an AF Form 1181, patron registration.

For more information, contact Patrick Air Force Base Family Child Care Coordinator, Tina Washington, at (321) 494-8381.

## MANDATORY SEPARATION AGE CHANGES FOR RESERVE OFFICERS

If otherwise eligible, Air Force Reserve officers can now stay in the service longer before reaching their mandatory separation age.

In the past, brigadier generals and below had to retire or separate when they reached age 60. Now they can stay until age 62. The age for major generals rose from 62 to 64.

These changes are a result of provisions in the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act.

With the approval from the secretary of the Air Force, chaplains and officers in some health professions may remain in an active status until age 67.

Eligible officers still have the option of voluntarily separating or retiring before their mandatory age.

More information and a list of frequently asked questions are available at: <http://arpc.afrc.af.mil/separations/msd.asp>

## AFRC RECRUITING SERVICE WANTS YOU

The Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service is always looking for enthusiastic, qualified people. If you are motivated to excel, perform above the status quo,

and are physically and morally fit this could be the career move you've been looking for.

As a recruiter you will represent the Air Force Reserve in the eyes of people in your community. You will represent the pride, honor and tradition of the Air Force Reserve to those who you come in contact with. Being a recruiter is not your ordinary 9-5 job. You are an Air Force Reserve representative 24 hours a day.

Recruiting duty involves working in your community. As an AFR recruiter you will help others make decisions that will affect them the rest of their lives.

An initial recruiting tour of extended active duty can last up to four years. Tour extensions are reserved for those who meet or exceed the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, appearance, integrity, production, and acceptance of responsibility.

If this sounds like a good fit for you, please see the senior recruiter in your area and pick up an application today. Please contact: **Senior Master Sgt Hiram R. Ortiz, Senior Recruiter at (321) 863-1439 or DSN 854-3002.**

## PHYSICALS

Members are required to get a physical each year in or before their birth month. It is the member's responsibility to notify the 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron through their unit health monitor that your birth month is coming up and to check on your physical. Normally you would get notification of an upcoming physical, but this may not always be so.

The members is required to complete the RCPHA survey up to six months before their date of birth. This can be accomplished at: [https://bock.afrc.af.mil/rcpha/rcpha\\_frontpage.htm](https://bock.afrc.af.mil/rcpha/rcpha_frontpage.htm)

(From Last 100, Page 5)

"The good news is that we have some breathing room because the 939th is not leaving right away."

Colonel Dechirico was part of a site activation task force that studied the future manpower needs required for the 304th RQS. He said AFRC is working closely with the host Air National Guard unit at Portland to provide many of the support requirements.

While current members of the squadron are going to have to adapt to being the Reserve's lone presence at Portland, this situation is really nothing new in the big scheme of things.

"We were a geographically separated unit from 1957 until 1985," Chief Konopka said. "So, in a sense, we are going back to our roots."

(From Canvas, Page 8)

the field."

After reading a paintball magazine, Sergeant Roberts decided he had a thing or two to contribute himself.

To this point, he's had eight articles published in Action Pursuit Games Magazine, on cheerful subjects like small unit tactics and sniper sustainment training.

With such intense off duty hobbies, Sergeant Roberts still finds time to joke around, and bellow his trademark laugh. He said it helps to keep him feeling like the same person he was years ago in high school, where he jokes that he was voted most likely to join the circus

Sergeant Roberts said laughter is something that's almost therapeutic, and has helped him following deployments.

"My laughter and joking is my safety net," he said. "It relieves my stress and helps me get through life. I'd rather be around people laughing and enjoying life, it helps keep me motivated. I don't drink or smoke, I just enjoy life."





# ALL IN A DAY'S WORK



Courtesy Photo

**Honoring women** - Staff Sgt. Jennifer Drake, recently deployed 39th Rescue Squadron radio operator, gives a stirring rendition of "God Bless America" during a special event honoring Women's History Month at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, Africa.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Robert Grande

**Drenched** - Colonel Joseph Trippy, former 920th Rescue Wing vice commander, receives a traditional 920th RQW send off after completing his "finny flight" in March. The colonel is joining Central Command at Macdill Air Force Base, Fla.



Photo by 1st Lt. Cathleen Snow

**Who's on first** - Colonel Steven Kirkpatrick, 920th Rescue Wing commander, prepares to throw the first pitch at a Washington Nationals baseball game held at Space Coast Stadium in March. Flanked by pararescueman Senior Master Sgt. Pete Callina and Combat Rescue Officer Capt. Greg Lowdermilk, the event heralded Military Appreciation Day.



# Operation NOW 2007

**F**or the second year in a row the 920th Rescue Wing hosted Operation Not on Our Watch March 20 - 22, a county-wide event that educates teenagers on the dangers of distracted driving. Led by Senior Master Sgt. Rene Rubiella, the program included a re-enactment of an auto accident including deployment of the local trauma center's First Flight helicopter, EMS response and a behind-the-scenes look at trauma center doctors working to save lives. More than 4,000 Brevard County high schools seniors attended the three-hour, in-your-face depiction of the tragic results of distracted driving.



Photos by 1st Lt. Cathleen Snow

**Crucial minutes** – Patrick Air Force Base and Brevard County Firefighters use the Jaws of Life to cut away parts of a previously wrecked car to free simulated accident victims during Operation NOW, which took place on the 920th RQW flightline.



**Lost** – Senior Master Sgt. Rene Rubiella, 39th Rescue Squadron, pauses over a body bag containing a mannequin as he retells the chilling account of his daughter's death from a tragic car accident. Sergeant Rubiella directed Operation NOW for the second year in a row after losing his only daughter, Allie, right before her High School graduation in 2005.



**Not on Our Watch** – Students and an Operation NOW volunteer embrace at the conclusion of the day's events March 20. The mission of Operation NOW is to prevent teen deaths due to distracted driving. The event is made possible through the partnering of the 920th Rescue Wing with countless county organizations.