

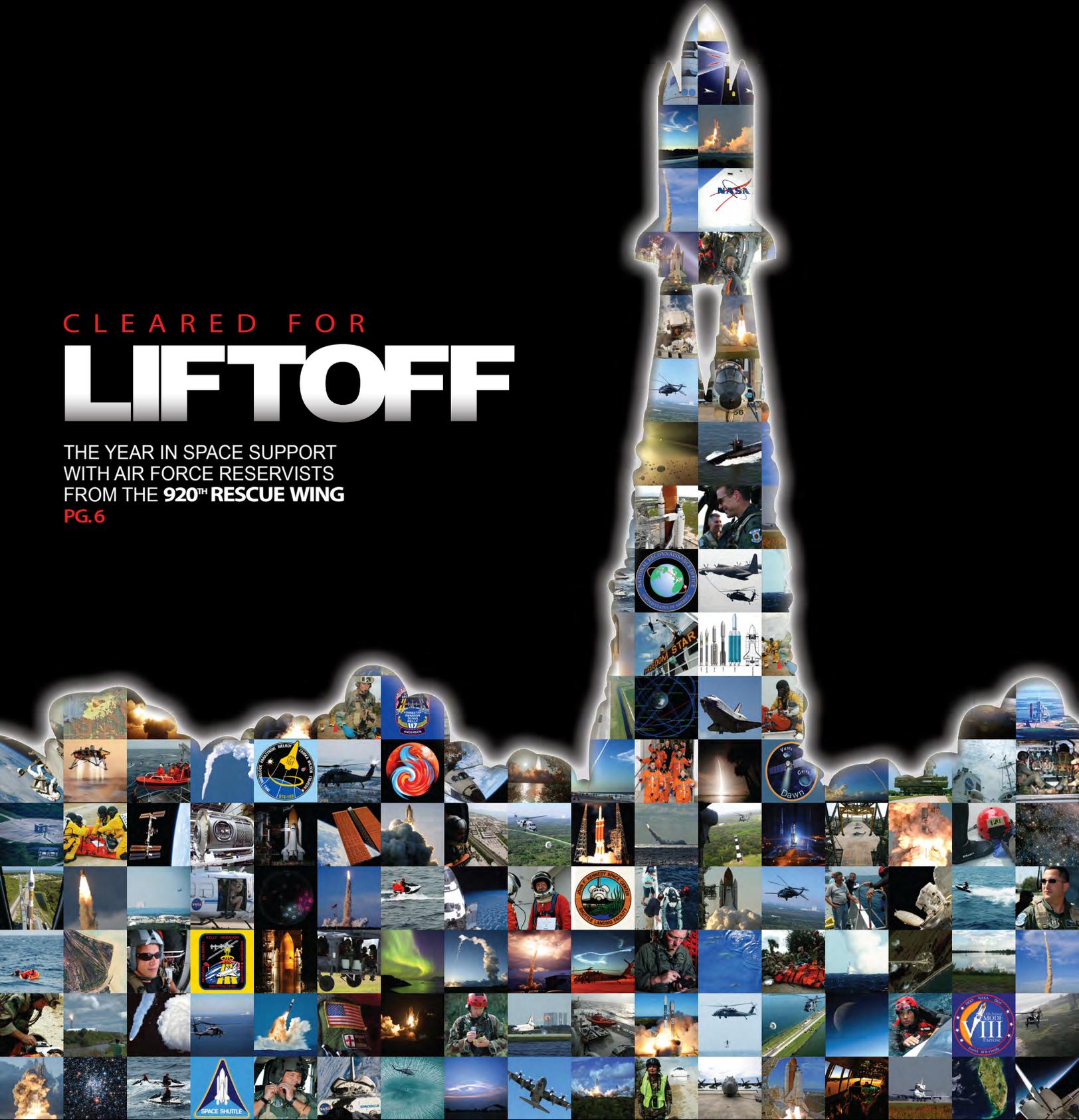
# ANGEL'S WINGS

VOL. 5 NO. 9

920<sup>TH</sup> RESCUE WING • PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, FLA. • AIR FORCE RESERVE COMMAND NOV. / DEC. 2007

## CLEARED FOR LIFTOFF

THE YEAR IN SPACE SUPPORT  
WITH AIR FORCE RESERVISTS  
FROM THE 920<sup>TH</sup> RESCUE WING  
PG. 6



# ANGEL'S WINGS

VOL.5 NO.9 NOV / DEC 2007

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cover graphic / STAFF SGT. PAUL FLIPSE



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Wing members had a busy year supporting space travel as they provided range-clearing & launch support for everything from space shuttles to rockets to ballistic missiles.



#### BLUE FORCE MULTIPLIER pp.10-12

The 920<sup>th</sup> has a stellar record of NASA support. Yet, they continue to find ways to improve on their perfection. In November, they added another piece to their search-and-rescue arsenal.



#### A FAMILY AFFAIR pg.13

Rescue wing Airmen and their families converged on Chevron Park during the December drill weekend for fun in the sun as part of the wing's annual Family Day.

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### timemanagement

#### UTA SCHEDULE

January 12-13

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March 1-2

April 5-6

May 3-4

June 7-8

July 12-13

August 2-3

#### DINING FACILITY

Br. 6 - 8 a.m. (weekdays)

Br. 7 - 9 a.m. (weekends)

Ln. 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Dn. 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

#### FITNESS CENTER

Mon/Fri 5 a.m. - 11 p.m.

Sat/Sun 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.

#### BARBER SHOP

Mon/Fri 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sat 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sun 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

#### CLASS VI / SHOPETTE / GAS STATION

Mon/Sat 6 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Sun 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.



**LT. COL. DENNIS SEYMOUR**

Commander, 920th Mission Support Squadron

## The spirit to overcome

Challenges...

Some accept them and some don't. Senior Airman Diane Lopes recently volunteered to deploy to Iraq with other members of the 920th Security Forces. On a nice August day, we sent them off in style. I rode with them to the Orlando Airport, incredibly proud of every one. I spoke with family members, and we all said our goodbyes.

On Sept. 21, we learned Diane had been wounded in a mortar attack. Early reports suggested she was only slightly injured. Thanks to our friends in the aeromedical staging squadron, we found out just how badly she was hurt.

We heard lots of medical terms, like "multiple shrapnel wounds to the extremities," "left pneumothorax," and "open fracture with a lacerated, hemorrhaging vessel." But the only words that really mattered were, "Diane is alive, and she's going to be OK."

After being routed through the deployed medical system, a number of us visited Diane at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. We went there to support her, but in the end it was Diane who cheered us up. She had a T-Shirt made that said: "I went to Iraq and all I got was blown up." Her body was damaged, but not her sense of humor.

Neither was her incredible spirit. Just a few days after she got to Walter Reed, Diane was pushing herself around in a wheelchair, visiting other wounded troops, encouraging them through their recovery and trying to help them overcome their challenges.

In addition to Diane's inner strength, she's possesses a deep humility and firm resolve. Tell her she's heroic and she'll be quick to tell you no—she's no hero. Then she'll say all she did was accept our country's challenge just as many of her fellow wing members have done and continue to do. Tell her she's lucky to be alive, that she should get out of the military, play things safe. She'll tell you just like she told me that she's not getting out. She wants to continue to serve, and I fully expect her to do just that.

The Bible speaks widely of God's healing hand. I'm convinced He was with Diane in Iraq, and I ask that everyone pray with me for Him to heal her and protect all our troops, wherever they may serve.

Diane's road to recovery will be tough, painful and grueling. But it's a challenge she accepted with the same grace, determination and character she showed all along.

To her, I can say only this: I'm proud to be your commander. You inspire me.

# NEWS BRIEFS

All 920th Rescue Wing personnel who enlist or reenlist in the following Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSC) before Mar. 31 may be eligible for **REENLISTMENT BONUSES**:

## AFSC/TITLE

1A171	Flight Engineer
1A271	Loadmaster
1A291	Loadmaster
X1N051	Intel (Aircrew)
1N091	Intel
X1T251	Pararescue (Aircrew)
X1T271	Pararescue (Aircrew)
X1T291	Pararescue (Aircrew)
2T271	Air Transportation
3M071	Services
4N071C	Aerospace Medical Service (IDMT)

## BONUS AMOUNTS

Non Prior-Service Enlistment Bonus  
6-year contract = \$15,000

### Reenlistment/Retraining Bonus

- Max. years of service increased to 20 yrs
- 6-year contract = \$15,000
- 3-year contract = \$7,500\*

### Prior-Service Enlistment Bonus

- Max. years of service increased to less than 16 yrs
- 6-year contract = \$15,000
- 3-year contract = \$7,500\*

### Affiliation Bonus

- Max. years of service less than 20 yrs
- 6-year contract \$15,000
- 3-year contract \$7,500

For more information, contact Master Sgt. Marian Smith at Bldg. 313, rm. 102 or call (321) 494-9016.

\*Amount = \$6,000 when member has received a bonus for a previous 3-year enlistment.

## W-2 FORMS WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE MYPAY WEB SITE

starting immediately. Retirees and annuitants may begin downloading their forms now. Air Force, Army and Navy Reserve forms are scheduled to be available starting Jan. 2. Civilians may download their W-2s starting Jan. 4.

For more information, visit the MyPay Web site at: <https://mypay.dfas.mil/>.

Universal Pictures is scheduled to make a **MOVIE ABOUT A COMBAT RESCUE INVOLVING 920TH**

**AIRMEN**. According to the studio's public-relations division, Universal officially purchased the rights to ex-Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell's book, "Lone Survivor," which details the account of his rescue in Afghanistan by several 920th personnel, including Col. Jeffrey Macrander and Lt. Col. Paul Nevius from the wing at Patrick Air Force Base, and Maj. Jeff Peterson from the 943rd Rescue Group, the 920th's geographically-separated unit, at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

Peter Berg, who recently directed the action film "The Kingdom," starring Jamie Foxx, is scheduled to adapt and direct the project.



## ON THE RECORD

We are here to laugh at the odds and live so well that death will tremble to take us

- Charles Bukowski

On Oct. 31, President George W. Bush issued a proclamation designating November as **NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH**.

President Bush used the proclamation to highlight the reasons behind the annual celebration, and the positive impact American Indians have made on our nation. He wrote:

"National American Indian Heritage Month is an opportunity to honor the many contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives and to recognize the strong and living traditions of the first people to call our land home.

"American Indians and Alaska Natives continue to shape our

Nation by preserving the heritage of their ancestors and by contributing to the rich diversity that is our country's strength. Their dedicated efforts to honor their proud heritage have helped others gain a deeper understanding of the vibrant and ancient customs of the Native American community.

"We also express our gratitude to the American Indians and Alaska Natives who serve in our Nation's military and work to extend the blessings of liberty around the world."



# Self-testing key to passing inspection

LT. COL. PAUL DECHIRICO  
920th Performance Mgmt. Chief

As you are already aware, our headquarters' inspector general is scheduled to conduct a compliance inspection in conjunction with a Maintenance Standardization Evaluation Program (MSEP) inspection between Jan. 29 and Feb. 3.

Approximately 19 MSEP inspectors will address how well we execute our aircraft-maintenance processes, while 36 others will focus on the rest of our processes, to include those areas mandated by law, our mission and commander's oversight programs.

These compliance inspections fall normally on a 48-month cycle, our last having been conducted in 2003. To prepare for this, we formed an action team composed of Maj. Doug Knight our wing executive officer, Senior Master Sgt. Craig Kennedy and I.

We began 2007 addressing the wing's self inspection

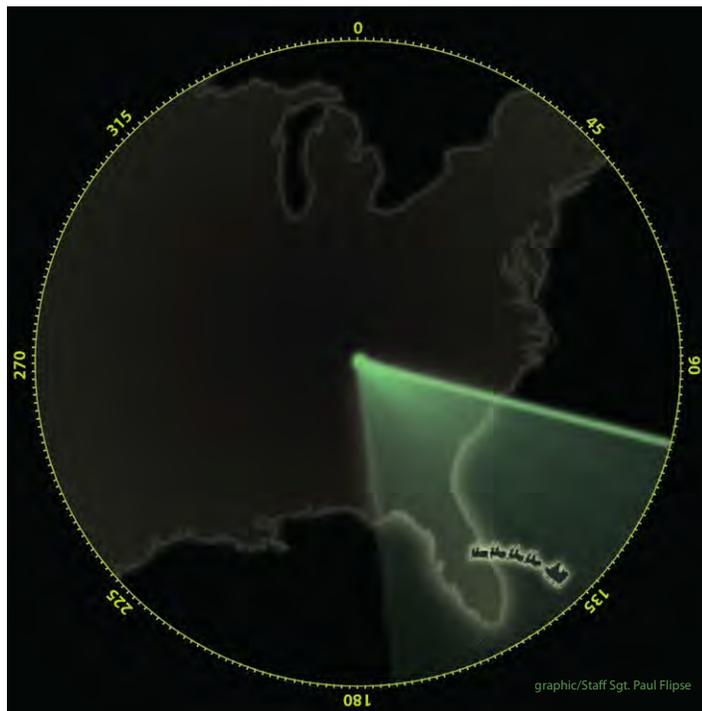
program. Self-inspection is an internal tool commanders use to assess processes, and all AFRC units must perform one annually—by Aug. 31 of each year.

To help facilitate preparations, we built a compliance inspection section on the 920th Intranet that offers quick links—to the AFRC inspector general and inspection management system for example. Also available in the compliance section are previous inspection reports for crossfeed/crosstell purposes.

Another way we tried to prepare for the upcoming inspection took place in September, when we hosted a 10th Air Force staff assistance visit. Overall, the inspectors gave us a clean bill of health.

Having said all this, I feel we're ready. What remains now is merely some last-minute tweaking. Then, we'll have the chance to prove our processes are not only solid—they're effective.

Good luck.



## Tracking Santa

Airmen to spend Christmas Eve scanning skies for portly man in red suit, flying reindeer

For more than 50 years, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and its predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) have tracked Santa.

The tradition began on Christmas Eve in 1955 after a Colorado Springs-based Sears Roebuck & Co. store advertisement for children to call Santa on a special "hotline" included an inadvertently misprinted telephone number.

Instead of Santa, the phone number put kids through to the CONAD Commander-in-Chief's operations "hotline." The Director of Operations, Colonel Harry Shoup had his staff check radar data for any indication of Santa making his way south from the North Pole. Indeed there were signs of Santa and children who called were given an update on Santa's location. Thus, the tradition was born.

Now, children from around the world can log on to the organization's Web site ([www.noradsanta.org](http://www.noradsanta.org)) to see real-time updates on Santa's location as he makes his deliveries—presents for most, coal in the stocking for others (you know who you are).

The NORAD Tracks Santa Program is funded through donations and managed by the NORAD and United States Northern Command Public Affairs Office at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., HQ NORAD/NORTH-COM, (719) 554-6889.



photo/Master Sgt. Ray Padgett

### Show-offs

A 920th Rescue Wing HH-60G Pave Hawk simulates an aerial refueling for spectators on the NASA Causeway below during the World Space Expo, held Nov. 1 - 4 at Kennedy Space Center. In addition to the flyover, 920th Airmen performed an open-water astronaut-recovery demonstration, which simulates one of the unit's primary missions—locating and pulling space shuttle crewmembers from the ocean in the event of a bailout.

# Flight Risk

Air Force reservists at the 920th Rescue Wing earn their keep making one of the world's toughest, most-exclusive jobs look easy

BY MASTER SGT. CHANCE C. BABIN

920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

Lifting skyward in a plume of fire and smoke, the space shuttle leaves Earth's atmosphere in a matter of minutes. For the search-and-rescue professionals at the 920th Rescue Wing, endless hours of training each year prepare them for the possibility of performing a high-profile search-and-rescue (SAR) mission that would have the world's eyes upon them.

Since the early Mercury missions, Reserve rescue Airmen have been involved with NASA and the space mission. Today the mission is much larger and remains high profile with continuing media interest. But the mission for the 920th remains the same—rescue and recovery of astronauts. It's also a mission that brings with it an enormous responsibility.

"It's huge," said Senior Master Sgt. Mike Ziegler, 920th pararescue operations superintendent. "Anytime something

goes in the air, whether it's our pilots overseas or the shuttle, you need search and rescue."

When things go right, which they most-often do, the rescue crews simply head back to base, another successful mission behind them.

Yet the hours of preparation and hard work are not wasted. Rather, they ensure Sergeant Ziegler and his fellow rescue crewmembers will be prepared in the event of a true disaster.

"When it goes bad—that's what we're here for."

The wing brings all their SAR assets to the table for the shuttle mission: HC-130P/N Hercules long-range refuelers; HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters and teams of pararescuemen. In all, the 920th sends more than 50 search-and-rescue experts to support each launch.

These combat-rescue warriors must train throughout the year to maintain their readiness for such a complex mission. They also train with NASA, participating in exercises that simulate conditions the Airmen may face during a launch-related emergency.

A Mode 7 exercise simulates a downed shuttle—on or near the landing strip, while a Mode 8 simulates a scenario involving the astronauts bailing out of the shuttle over and into the Atlantic Ocean, both of which are similar in makeup to the unit's usual fare.

"It's an operational mission," said Lt. Col. Phillip Kennedy, a safety officer with the 920th. "You don't have threats to worry about, but (the shuttle mission) can be more complex. What it comes down to is, we're still doing a rescue where we find, locate and extract a survivor."

For the PJs, working with the shuttle program is yet another skill among dozens they already practice that, but that is essential to perform their job.

"Rescue and recovery of astronauts requires an immense amount of training, and it's just one-tenth of what we do," said Sergeant Ziegler. "It's a very exclusive mission."

According to Sergeant Ziegler, PJs have to use specialized equipment for the mission, which requires additional safety training.

Sergeant Ziegler first worked with the shuttle program in 1988 while overseas at a trans-oceanic abort landing site (TAL)—in case the shuttle can't make it to space and needs to land. Today, you may



(photo/Tech. Sgt. Rob Grande)

## Eye spy

Master Sgt. John Shiman, a pararescueman with the 920th Rescue Wing, leaves the airspace over Patrick Air Force Base on his way to Kennedy Space Center to help clear a 10-mile-wide by 70-mile-long path for the space shuttle.



photo/NASA

find members of the 920th manning one or both of two, remote TAL stations during every launch, including Airmen from geographically-separated units at 943rd Rescue Group, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., and the 305th Rescue Group, Portland, Ore. They also routinely come here to support the shuttle.

Sergeant Ziegler said some of the younger guys working the shuttle mission get excited about watching the shuttle liftoff.

"When the novelty wears off, it's just another alert," he said. "You still have to be

prepared. But you have to be just as prepared for any alert."

To Sergeant Ziegler, it doesn't matter *who* needs help—only that they need it.

"I work just as hard for that fisherman as I would for that astronaut," he said.

One of the major challenges for wing Airmen in relation to the space program is when missions are postponed, like the Space Shuttle Atlantis mission scheduled to launch in early December but was delayed until January.

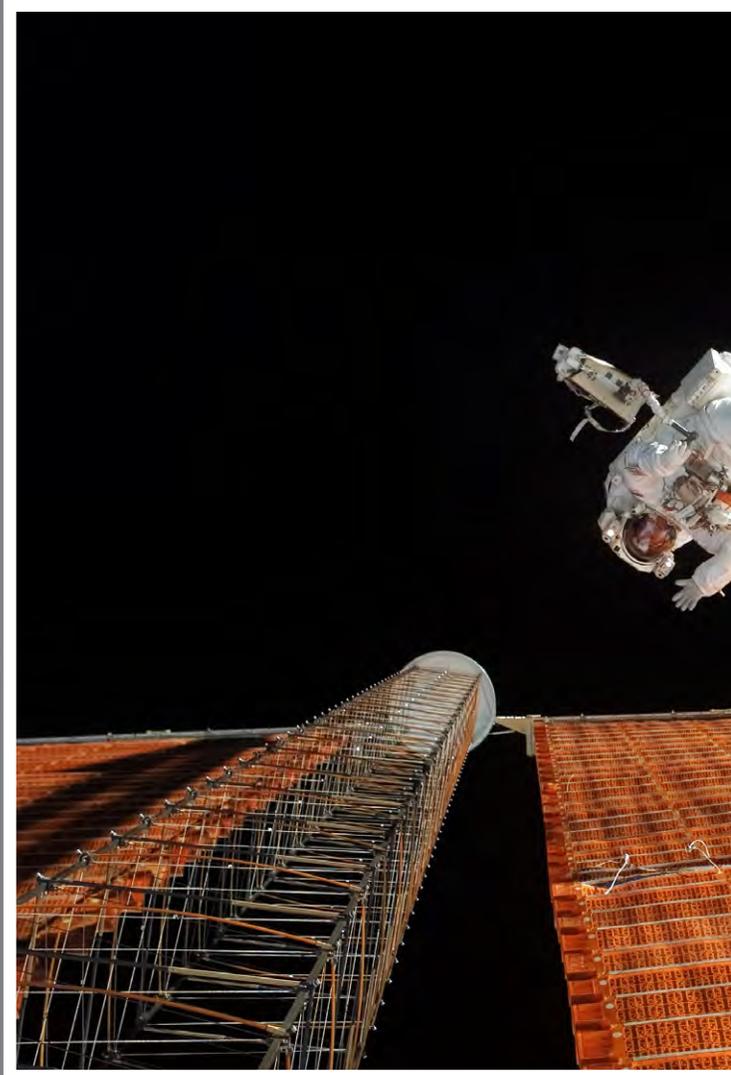
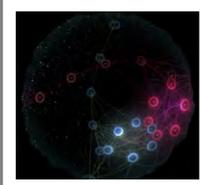
"You have to be flexible working with NASA," said Colonel Kennedy.

In addition to providing SAR support, the 920th plays a vital role during both shuttle and rocket launches by clearing boaters, fishermen, scuba divers and the like from the waters off Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

In all, despite the long hours, constant training and large responsibility, it's a job these Airmen cherish.

"There are a lot of benefits to space travel and we are helping in our own way," said Kennedy. "A lot of us grew up interested in space, and this is our way of contributing."

# EASTERN RANGE LAUNCH SUPPORT 2007



**WHEN** Feb. 17  
**WHAT** Delta II  
**WHO** NASA  
**WHY** Two-year "Themis" mission consisting of five identical probes that will study the violent, colorful eruptions of Auroras in the Northern Lights.

**WHEN** Mar. 8  
**WHAT** Atlas V  
**WHO** USAF  
**WHY** Air Force's Space Test Program-1, with an in-space refueling demonstration by the Autonomous Space Transfer and Robotic Orbiter (ASTRO).

**WHEN** May 15  
**WHAT** Trident II  
**WHO** U.S. NAVY  
**WHY** Launch of two ballistic missiles with new configuration design kits from Navy submarine. The event marks the Navy's 119th consecutive successful launch.

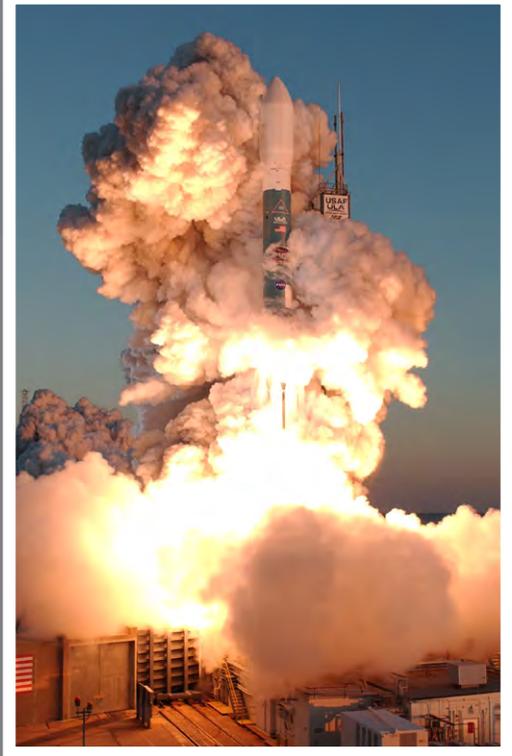
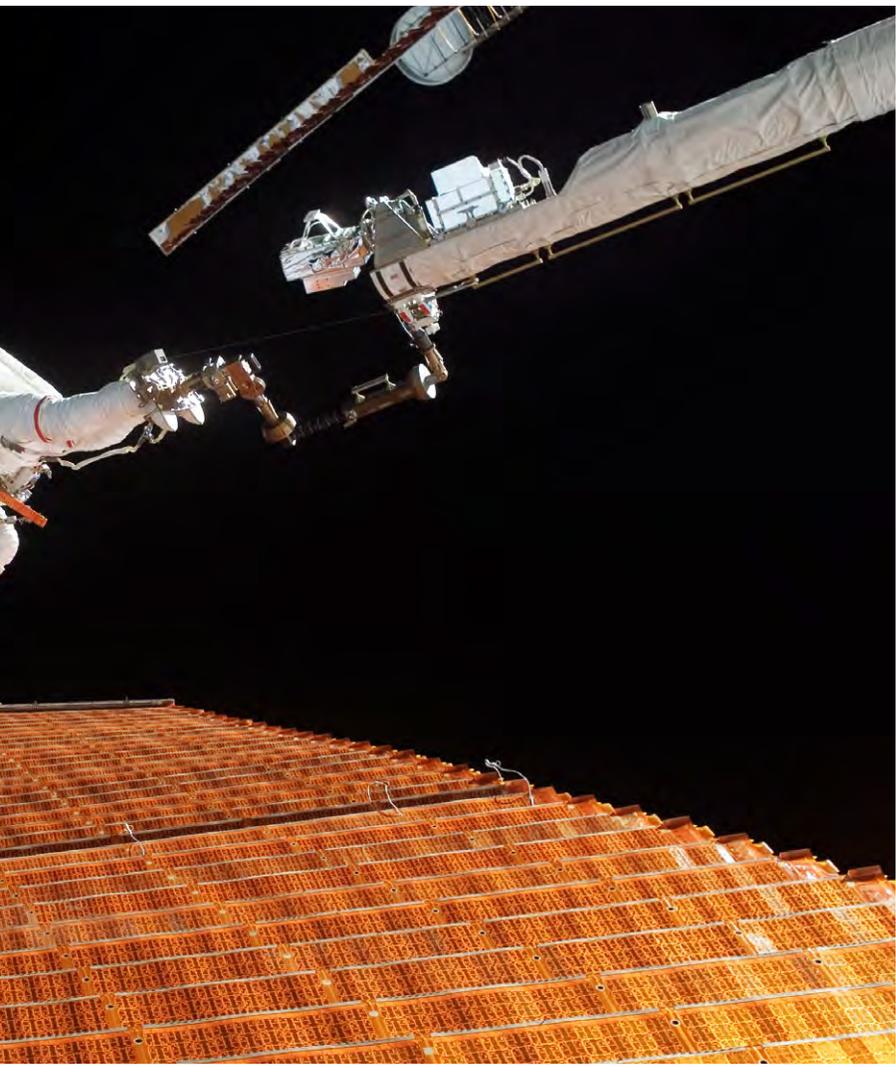
**WHEN** June 8  
**WHAT** Atlantis  
**WHO** NASA  
**WHY** Trip to International Space Station (ISS) where astronauts install & activate a truss segment, retract a solar array and repair an out-of-position thermal blanket.

**WHEN** June 15  
**WHAT** Atlas V  
**WHO** The NRO  
**WHY** **TOP SECRET** Payload for the National Reconnaissance Office. Established in 1961, the NRO manages development and operation of U.S. reconnaissance satellites.

**WHEN** Aug. 4  
**WHAT** Delta II  
**WHO** NASA  
**WHY** "Phoenix" lander will explore Mars' north arctic, record history of water, seasonal climate change and whether the area can support life.

**WHEN** Aug. 8  
**WHAT** Endeavor  
**WHO** NASA  
**WHY** Trek to ISS to deliver third starboard-truss segment. On flight crew is Barbara Morgan, who was Christa McAuliffe's backup for ill-fated STS-51.

Each time a spacecraft lifts off from Kennedy Space Center or Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, our reservists are there. Before a launch, we clear all marine traffic from the Eastern Range, the 100-mile-long, 10-mile-wide swath of ocean that extends east from the launch sites. We also provide search-and-rescue, medical and evacuation support for every launch. The photos and descriptions below describe the array of missions supported by 920th Airmen in 2007.



**WHEN** Sept. 27  
**WHAT** Delta II  
**WHO** NASA  
**WHY** Journey to asteroid belt to describe conditions and processes of solar system's earliest age by investigating two of largest protoplanets.

**WHEN** Oct. 10  
**WHAT** Atlas V  
**WHO** USAF  
**WHY** First of new, military communication satellites, should greatly boost communications bandwidth for Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines.

**WHEN** Oct. 17  
**WHAT** Delta II  
**WHO** USAF  
**WHY** NAVSTAR GPS military navigation satellite that will provide better coverage and performance to military and civilian users worldwide.

**WHEN** Oct. 23  
**WHAT** Discovery  
**WHO** NASA  
**WHY** Delivered Harmony Node to ISS, a module that increased the orbiting laboratory's interior space to accommodate additional scientists.

**WHEN** Nov. 10  
**WHAT** Delta IV  
**WHO** USAF  
**WHY** Defense Support Program satellite that will provide early warning for intercontinental missile launches (used by the military for more than 30 years).

**WHEN** Dec. 10  
**WHAT** Atlas V  
**WHO** The NRO  
**WHY** **TOP SECRET** Payload for the National Reconnaissance office.

**WHEN** Dec. 20  
**WHAT** Delta II  
**WHO** USAF  
**WHY** The fifth modernized NAVSTAR GPS satellite, with increased resistance to interference and greater accuracy for military operations.

Photo credits (clockwise from top left): Pat Corkery/United Launch Alliance; NASA; Jerry Cannon/NASA; NASA/JPL-Caltech; Greenland Explorer; Lockheed Martin; NASA; G. Dunne/D.S. Hesses.

# Deep Blue Force

Coming to you live ... a play-by-play of space-shuttle rescue operations

BY CAPT. CATHLEEN SNOW

920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs



Every time the Space Shuttle lifts off from Kennedy Space Center, the world watches. Watching even closer, from behind the scenes, are reservists from the 920th Rescue Wing—on stand-by to locate, rescue and recover the astronauts and orbiter should something go wrong.

These guardians of the astronauts took center stage Oct. 23 during the Space Shuttle Discovery launch, as the Air Force deployed a new, high-powered tracking device.

Except, the Air Force wasn't using the device to find terrorists or natural hazards. They were using it on themselves.

## How it works

Before the launch, the devices, dubbed "Blue Force Trackers," (BFT) were installed on all Air Force aircraft providing launch support that day, which included four HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters and one HC-130P/N Hercules aircraft from the 920th, plus another Hercules from the 106th Rescue Wing, a New York Air National Guard unit from Westhampton Beach.

In a worst-case launch emergency—the astronauts have just bailed out of a crippled shuttle into the Atlantic Ocean, for example—rescue Airmen would be dispatched immediately to locate and recover the astronauts.

But finding a person floating in the middle of an ocean isn't easy. Until now, finding an astronaut meant rescue teams would have to note the shuttle's launch azimuth—the path it took across the sky—and airspeed, then calculate approximately where the astronauts would land and head in that direction.

In exercises simulating just such a scenario, the 920th routinely located "survivors" in two hours or less. What's more, astronauts carry survival gear capable of keeping them alive in open water for 24 hours. On the other hand, every moment counts when you're bobbing in choppy, shark-infested waters.

Enter the BFT. With the new system, search-and-rescue forces can locate,



photo/NASA

identify and communicate with the astronauts **instantly**—through personal-locator beacons.

Each tracker has an antennae that receives information from GPS satellites. The tracker then sends a pulse of information—latitude, longitude, elevation, track, and speed—to a constellation of Iridium satellites.

“Its data is good anywhere,” said Col. Andy Lasher, director of space forces at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. “It can show every Blue Force Tracker being displayed in the world. But [today], it’s limited to shuttle operations.”

Lt. Col. Robert Lipira, an HC-130 navigator for the 920th and the joint task force liaison for launches, operates

behind the scenes from the Morrell Operations Center at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. He is looking forward to realizing the tracker’s capabilities.

“If an aircraft commander didn’t call a takeoff time, you can see where your air assets are at any given time ... it gives you a visual picture instead of having to communicate.”

#### Where it’s at

U.S. Northern Command (NORTH-COM) is the focal point for the military’s emergency support to the space shuttle, and it has contingency plans to locate and retrieve the astronauts under an array of circumstances: during a pad or

launch emergency; if they’re forced to bail out of the shuttle or have to return for landing. During each liftoff, numerous Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps and Coast Guard aircraft, along with a small fleet of Coast Guard ships, are pre-positioned or on standby to quickly launch for search-and-rescue operations.

#### The Test

As millions of TV viewers watched images of the seven-astronaut crew parading in their orange space suits toward Discovery, 1st Air Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Hank Morrow, was on the opposite side of the state at Tyndall Air Force Base, watching the posturing

(cont. next page)

'FORCE' cont.

of his rescue forces. Air Force support of space shuttle operations is one of many missions, to include air defense of the United States, under the General's charge.

Blue Force Tracking will enable him and shuttle rescue aircrews to keep constant situational awareness of all rescue assets in near-real time.

"Blue Force will provide greater visibility of these assets and access to information for decision makers in rear-

areas," said Colonel Lasher. "It will also provide a trustworthy communication link to aircrews in the air."

The test area spanned from Kennedy Space Center up the East Coast to New York, and while the equipment will take some getting used to, both SAR units coordinated their parts equally.

"The New York C-130 had the same situational awareness as we did," said Colonel Lipira.

"The trackers were provided by

the Air Force Intelligence Agency and NAVAIR Division of Special Operations Command. NORTHCOM disseminated the data and the Space Innovation and Development Center provided high-tech equipment, which enabled our aircrews to see the Blue Force Tracker picture in the flight deck using a situational-awareness display called Falcon View" said Colonel Lasher.

"It was a true team effort making this effort a success," he said.

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## **Holiday season a time for safety, remembrance**

**LT. COL. PAUL NEVIUS**  
920th Rescue Wing Safety Office

**T**he holiday season is upon us, and it's time to reflect on our past achievement and look to a positive future.

This year was one of the most-successful in 920th Rescue Wing history, and each of you has a reason to be proud of your contributions—not only to the wing and the Air Force, but to your community and our nation.

All of you are vital to the safety and security of Americans—you save lives, protect our nation, protect our environment and preserve our way of life.

You are America's guardians, and you work for an organization where success is measured by the courage, strength and dedication of its members.

Even more, I am incredibly humbled to have the opportunity to serve with you during this time in our nation's history.

As you make plans to spend well-earned time with friends and family this holiday season, I ask that you take a moment to remember our fellow servicemembers deployed overseas and throughout the U.S.

They are sacrificing time with their loved ones to stand watch and help preserve America's safety and security while we celebrate another great year.

Please, be safe in all you do, both at work and at home.

Take care of yourselves, your families and fellow Airmen, and have an outstanding holiday.



## A family affair

Wing reservists, civilians and their families took part in the annual 920th Rescue Wing Family Day, held here at Chevron Park Saturday Dec. 8.

Approximately 1,000 people attended the event, which was sponsored by the wing Top 3 Association.

The festivities had a carnival theme, and those in attendance had a variety of ways to enjoy themselves.

Kids took pony rides, blew bubbles, had their faces painted, made Christmas ornaments, visited with Santa Claus and romped in an inflatable "bounce house," a padded, enclosed structure lauded by parents for its ability to let their children play to the point of exhaustion with virtually no risk of injury.

Those of a more muscular inclination—or who had inclination they were more muscular—tried their hands at an old carnival favorite, the hit-the-little-thing-on-the-ground-really-hard-with-a-sledgehammer-and-try-to-ring-that-bell-way-up-there game.

As the smorgasbord of activities began to give way to Herculean appetites, people sought comfort in lite fare provided by the Top 3. Though hamburgers and hot dogs remained as popular as ever, turkey legs emerged as crowd favorite.

In all, the 2007 version of the annual wing Family Day was a rousing success.



photos/Capt. Cathleen Snow

# Last woman standing

*Wing reservist spends a week getting in touch with her kids ... sort of*

BY CAPT. CATHLEEN SNOW  
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

Most parents say they would do anything for their children. Hanging onto a 12-foot statue of a teen idol for nearly a week with little sleep was the least one Air Force Reservist could do to try and win her two kids tickets to a sold-out rock concert.

Master Sgt. Lara Padgett, 920th Rescue Wing safety journeyman and full-time OSHA Compliance Officer for the U.S. Department of Labor, wrote a 500-word essay on the topic, "How Much I Love My Children," which dazzled judges and beat out 5,000 entrants on a Tampa morning-radio-show contest last month.

Her winning essay earned her a spot with 19 others at the foot of a 400-lb. replica of kid's TV show star Hannah Montana. The person who could keep contact with the statue the longest, by hand or by foot, would walk away with backstage passes and four tickets to the Hannah Montana concert (which sold out in 18 minutes), plus \$5,000 dollars cash.

On the morning of Nov. 8, the contestants positioned themselves in the sand-filled box at the base of the statue.

During the day, the temperature reached the high 80s, and at night it dropped as low as 40 degrees. Sergeant Padgett donned her camouflaged Air Force Gortex jacket, which earned her the nickname 'G.I. Jane.'

When night fell, "I was too worried to fall asleep because that's when your body acts on its own," said Sergeant Padgett. "Someone would get cold at night and curl up in the fetal position and their hand would come off—boom! They'd be out."

Thousands of spectators were drawn to the spectacle. Daily, live Web-casts of



photo/Master Sgt. Ray Padgett

the event drew 85,000 viewers. Sergeant Padgett even had her own local fan club.

"Folks from nearby MacDill Air Force Base would come out and cheer me on, people I didn't even know," she said.

One of her biggest fans was her husband, Master Sgt. Ray Padgett, 920th public affairs. He held down the household and tuned in every day to hear interviews with his wife.

Despite a one-hour drive, he took their two pre-teen kids, Bryce and Lauren, to visit his wife at the statue daily. He said the kids did a lot of homework in the car that week.

Contestants received a 12-minute bathroom break every three hours but were unable to bathe or bring comfort items to pass the time.

"There were no phones, no way to entertain yourself," she said. "But the worst thing was not having a shower."

As the contest wore on, Sergeant Padgett found herself in a "tabloid news" environment, as local papers began to sensationalize the event.

"You'd read trash talk about yourself in

the newspapers." She got a dose of Hollywood celebrity life.

With each passing day, more and more contestants dropped out, until it came down to Sergeant Padgett and one male contestant. After a stalemate seemed inevitable, the two negotiated a deal to end the contest and split the winnings.

Then Sergeant Padgett did the unthinkable. In a state of sleep deprivation, she got distracted while being interviewed during the final live Web cast and removed her hand from Hannah.

Contest over.

Not all was lost though. The winner kept the cash and concert tickets but gave Sergeant Padgett the backstage passes.

Yet, the Air Force Reservist and mother of two was determined to take her kids to the show, so she purchased tickets online for, "a good chunk of change," she said.

"But we got what we came after, which was all that matters," she said. "Backstage passes—because they're priceless. You cannot buy them anywhere."

"It was definitely an event in my life I'll always remember," said Sergeant Padgett.

## PROMOTIONS

**chief master sergeant**  
DOUBLAS KESTRANEK

**master sergeant**  
DREW BARBER  
MICHAEL BARTOCK  
BEVERLY FISHER  
GEORGE HIGGINS  
PAUL RANDEL

**technical sergeant**  
DIANA ALCIVAR  
VERONICA AZERA  
DAVID HAUSER  
COREY HELLMAN  
JACQUES GILLES  
JOY PYLES  
ROBERT REED  
MATTHEW SLAGLE

**staff sergeant**  
RONALD ARRORO  
CHRISTINE EDWARDS  
DANIEL MENG  
MATTHEW RIVERA  
JEFFREY TIFFT  
HAROLD TRUJILLO  
SOL WILLIAMS  
DEVIN WILLIS

**senior airman**  
SHANNON FARRIS

**airman first class**  
RUDOLPH PANACCI

## NEWCOMERS

COL. TAMARA KOSS  
LT. COL. KRISTINE  
HENDERSON  
MAJ. THOMAS BUTLER  
MAJ. OCTAVIUS CLARK  
MAJ. MICHELE LEONE  
MAJ. ANDREA EUFRAZIO  
CAPT. TIFFANY INGHAM  
CAPT. PATRICK JAMES  
CAPT. DANIEL POSCH  
CAPT. ROBERT SEITZ  
CAPT. TAMETRIA WHALEY  
1LT CODY ATCHISON  
1LT MERCEDES MCDONALD  
1LT KATHY WHITE  
SMSGT. FRANK SKOWRONSKI  
MSGT. WILLIAM DELLAPE  
MSGT. ERIC DRAPER  
TSGT. ELIDA HANSEN  
TSGT. MARIO FRANCO  
TSGT. TONY GRIDER  
TSGT. JAMES JOHNSON  
TSGT. MICHELLE KRIEG

TSGT. JESUS SIRA  
TSGT. MICHELLE STRICKLAND  
TSGT. HEATHER WHERRY  
TSGT. WILLIAM WILLIS  
SSGT. KENNETH BACHAND  
SSGT. JAMES S. DEPACE JR  
SSGT. STEPHEN DEROHN  
SSGT. JOHN DESALVO  
SSGT. JONATHAN FAIR  
SSGT. JEFFREY GUTTVEG  
SSGT. TEREZIE JONES  
SSGT. MATTHEW LETTS  
SSGT. LUCNER LUCATE  
SSGT. MICHAEL MARONEY  
SSGT. ELVIN RUIZ  
SSGT. STEVEN TIELSCH  
SSGT. TIM WHITFIELD  
SrA ALEXIS AGNEW  
SrA GREGORY BROERSMA  
SrA KAREEM BROOKS  
SrA DENECIA COLEBRANDY  
SrA ANGELA CRUZ  
SrA DAVID DISKEVICH  
SrA RENZO FERREYRA  
SrA ANTHONY FRANKE JR  
SrA ANGELIA GROSSO  
SrA LAUGHTEN HALL  
SrA DAVID HAMPTON  
SrA BARBARA JONES  
SrA LEIGH JOUBERT  
SrA AMMIE LEONARDS

SrA STEVEN NICHOLS  
SrA DAVID SHAW  
SrA CHAUNICE TARVER  
SrA MICHELLE TONDER  
SrA DEREK WRIGHT  
A1C ZOE REA  
A1C CAITLIN SUKOWSKI  
AB GERALD FAVIS  
AB DAVID GEROW  
AB STACIE GREER  
AIRMAN ADAM BOUTELLE  
AIRMAN HELMUT RONER

## FAREWELLS

LT. COL. DALE LEWIS  
LT. COL. JULIO LOPEZ  
LT. COL. JAMES B. SADLER III  
MAJ. MARCIA FINDLEYSHAW  
CMSGT. JEFFREY CURL  
SMSGT. HENRY APREA  
SMSGT. ROBERT SANCHEZ  
MSGT. GREGORY BISOGNO  
MSGT. JAVIER CALDERIN  
MSGT. MAMIE MELVIN  
MSGT. LONGINO RODRIGUEZ  
TSGT. BRANDON MCELROY  
SSGT. IAMAYCA CHAVANNES  
SSGT. JASON FOWEE  
SSGT. STEVEN GOZDZIALSKI  
SRA STEPHEN FRESHLEY



### Red Letter Day

*Master Sgt. German Jaramillo gets a colorful farewell from fellow 920th crewmembers after his final – or, ‘fini’ – flight with the wing. He is leaving the unit to attend the FBI Academy at Quantico, Va. The water used to soak Sergeant Jaramillo gets its crimson hue from sea dye, used during ocean search-and-rescue missions to mark the locations of people floating in the water.*

photo/Staff Sgt. Paul Flipse



### **Bimini Christmas**

A 920th Rescue Wing HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter glides over Bimini, a small trio of Bahamian islands, before completing an aerial refueling during a recent search-and-rescue mission. The tanker providing the gas was also a 920th asset—an HC-130P/N Hercules, which also provided search-and-rescue support for the mission. Some historians have pointed to Bimini, located a mere 50 miles from Miami, as the long-sought location of both the city of Atlantis and the Fountain of Youth.

