

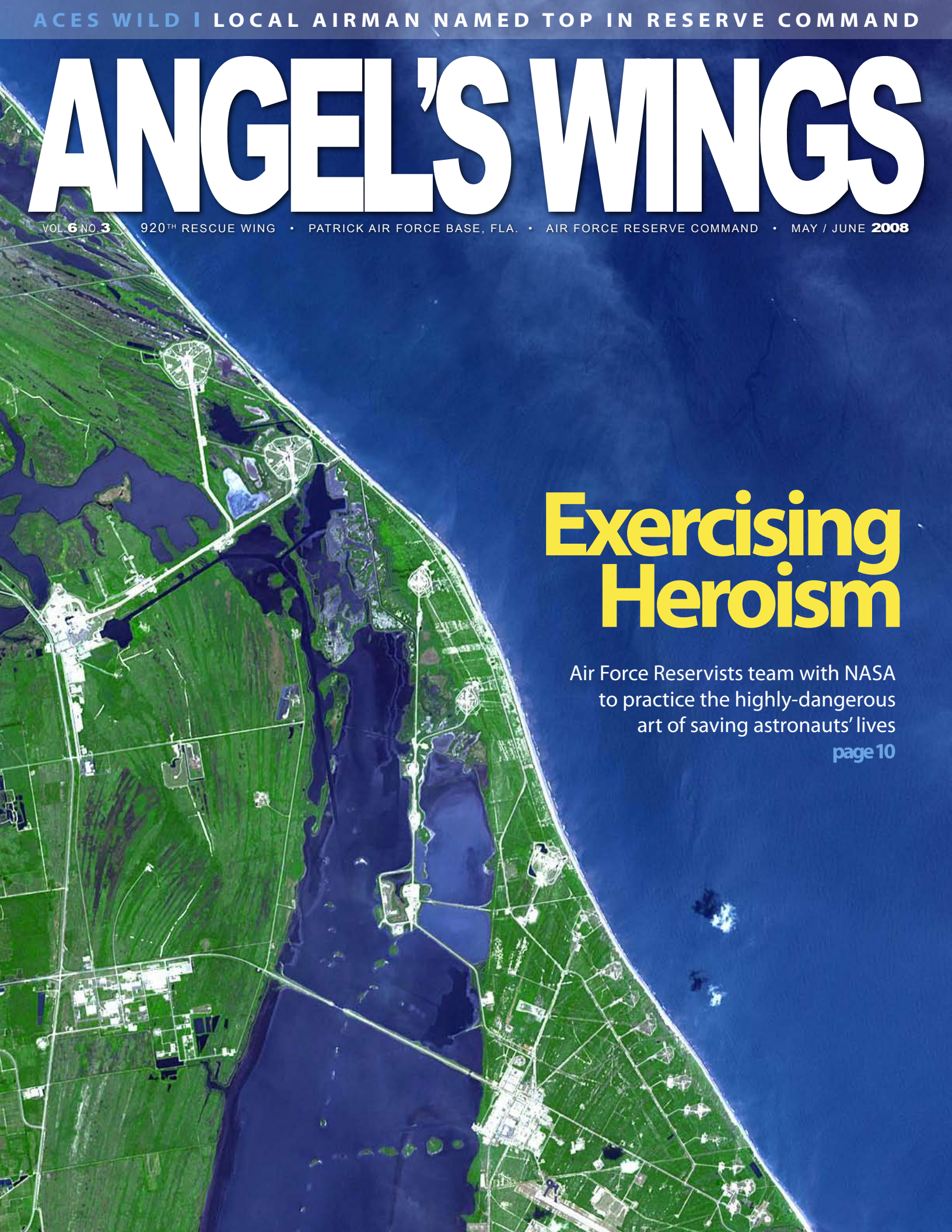
ANGEL'S WINGS

VOL. 6 NO. 3 • 920TH RESCUE WING • PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, FLA. • AIR FORCE RESERVE COMMAND • MAY / JUNE 2008

Exercising Heroism

Air Force Reservists team with NASA to practice the highly-dangerous art of saving astronauts' lives

page 10



ANGEL'S WINGS

VOL.6 NO.3 MAY / JUN 2008

920th RESCUE WING EDITORIAL STAFF

wing commander
COL. STEVEN KIRKPATRICK

chief of public affairs
CAPT. CATHLEEN SNOW

asst. chief of public affairs
1ST LT. JAIME PINTO

ncoic
MASTER SGT. RAYMOND PADGETT

editor
TECH. SGT. PAUL FLIPSE

staff
TECH. SGT. JEREMY ALLEN
STAFF SGT. HEATHER KELLY



contact

920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs Office
1225 Jupiter St. Ste 1-201
Patrick AFB, Fla. 32925-3323
Tel. 321.494.0535
Fax 321.494.1103

Online: www.920rqw@afrc.af.mil
E-mail: public_affairs@rescue920.patrick.af.mil

This funded Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of **ANGEL'S WINGS** are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs office of the 920th Rescue Wing. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

cover photo / NASA-satellite image of Kennedy Space Center, Fla.



THE INSIDE SCOOP

news & features



A PAIR OF ACES pp.6-7

When it comes to pararescue NCOs and flight surgeons, there are none better than the 920th Rescue Wing's own Tech. Sgt. Patrick Dunne and Maj. Patricio Bruno.



CLASS ACTIONS pp.8-9

Chemical weapons, rocket attacks, severed limbs... Are we talking about Iraq? No—Central Florida, and all the things 920th Reservists encounter during their monthly duty.



EXERCISING HEROISM pp.10-15

During a Mode VIII exercise, NASA astronauts plunge into the Atlantic Ocean, then wait for 920th reservists to find them. Here we provide a pictorial of the modus operani of a Mode VIII.

pointsofinterest

NEWS BRIEFS pg.4

MILITARY BALL TICKETS pg.4

GRADUATING CLASS pg.5

NEW COMMAND CHIEF pg.5

POW SPEAKS DURING UTA pg.16

DIRTY JOBS pg.18

PJs TRAIN FOR MODE VIII pg.19

PARTING SHOTS pg.20

timemanagement

UTA SCHEDULE

June 7-8

July 12 -13

August 2-3

Sept. 6-7

Oct. TBA

Nov. TBA

Dec. TBA

Jan. TBA

DINING FACILITY

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

Br. 5:30 - 9:15 a.m. (UTAs)

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. PAUL DeCHIRICO

920th Performance Manager

Smart operations for the 21st Century

"We have the technology. We can make him better than he was. Better, stronger, faster..." This belief not only applied to Lee Majors in the Six-Million-Dollar Man, but to the Air Force of today as well through AFSO21.

Short for Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century, AFSO 21 is an Air Force-unique, continuous-improvement model pulling ideas from: Lean, Six Sigma, Theory of Constraints and Business Process Reengineering. All of these programs used to transform businesses have one thing in common: they apply anywhere there is a process, and any process can be improved.

Recently, Senior Master Sgt. Craig Kennedy and I attended 10th Air Force's AFSO 21 facilitator training course at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Fort Worth, Texas. If all goes according to plan we'll be fully-trained facilitators by October. We even changed our office symbol from 'CCX' to 'CCO,' to keep pace with our new focus.

You may have already read in Citizen Airman about the scope of AFSO 21. For our Wing, we in performance management will take the lead in continuous-process improvement activities by facilitating week-long rapid-improvement events, as well as conducting awareness education for organizations within the wing.

Essentially, the cultural change that began with total quality management (TQM) back in the 90s never went away. 'Smart Operations'

is another tool to help us identify and cut non-value-added parts and processes for continuous improvement. This program is an integral piece to help actualize the command's recently-published strategic plan.

Performance managers will also use another efficiency-oriented procedure, Reserve command's lessons learned program, in which we'll carefully document methods of improvements to operations made by the program.

Through the Web-based Advanced Lessons Learned Management System (ALMS), we'll communicate and elevate contingencies or exercise-related matters affecting operational capability. The ALMS site already offers much valuable information, such as after-action reports from humanitarian relief operations supporting Hurricanes Katrina and Rita (in which the 920th RQW is highlighted for our rescue efforts).

However, in spite of our new mandate, we'll remain your friendly, neighborhood unit-compliance, self-inspection and exercise-evaluation points of contact for the 920th.

Try not to think of AFSO21 as another inspection hoop that must be jumped through by your work center. The goal is to create a culture which promotes elimination of waste, sharing of best practices, and reduction of cycle times across products and services. All Airmen should be involved in the relentless pursuit of excellence.

NEWS BRIEFS

The Military Personnel Flight Career Enhancement Section is offering **OPR/EPR WRITING WORKSHOPS**. Master Sgt. Green and Staff Sgt. Nicole Hanson will conduct the workshop at the Family Support Center (Bldg. 722 - between the lodging office & base library) from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

In an effort to lower the number of overdue performance reports in the wing, attendees are encouraged to bring laptops, blanks forms, writing utensils, writing pads and "open minds."

The plan is to write and complete reports during the sessions. Attendees will be separated into work groups to foster exchanging knowledge and ideas.

For more information, please contact Sergeant Green or Sergeant Hanson at (321) 494-7147/6981.

FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE INTERNET

VERSION OF ANGEL'S WINGS, the official publication of the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., are now available.

The award-winning publication offers news and features on wing personnel and events, and is created by a public affairs staff with more than 75 combined years of Air Force experience and 15 first-place awards for military journalism.

To join the Angel's Wings E-Distribution list, send an e-mail to the following address: join-angels_wings_magazine@mercury.afnews.af.mil

Or, simply log on to the wing's official Web site and hit the "Subscribe Now" hyperlink.

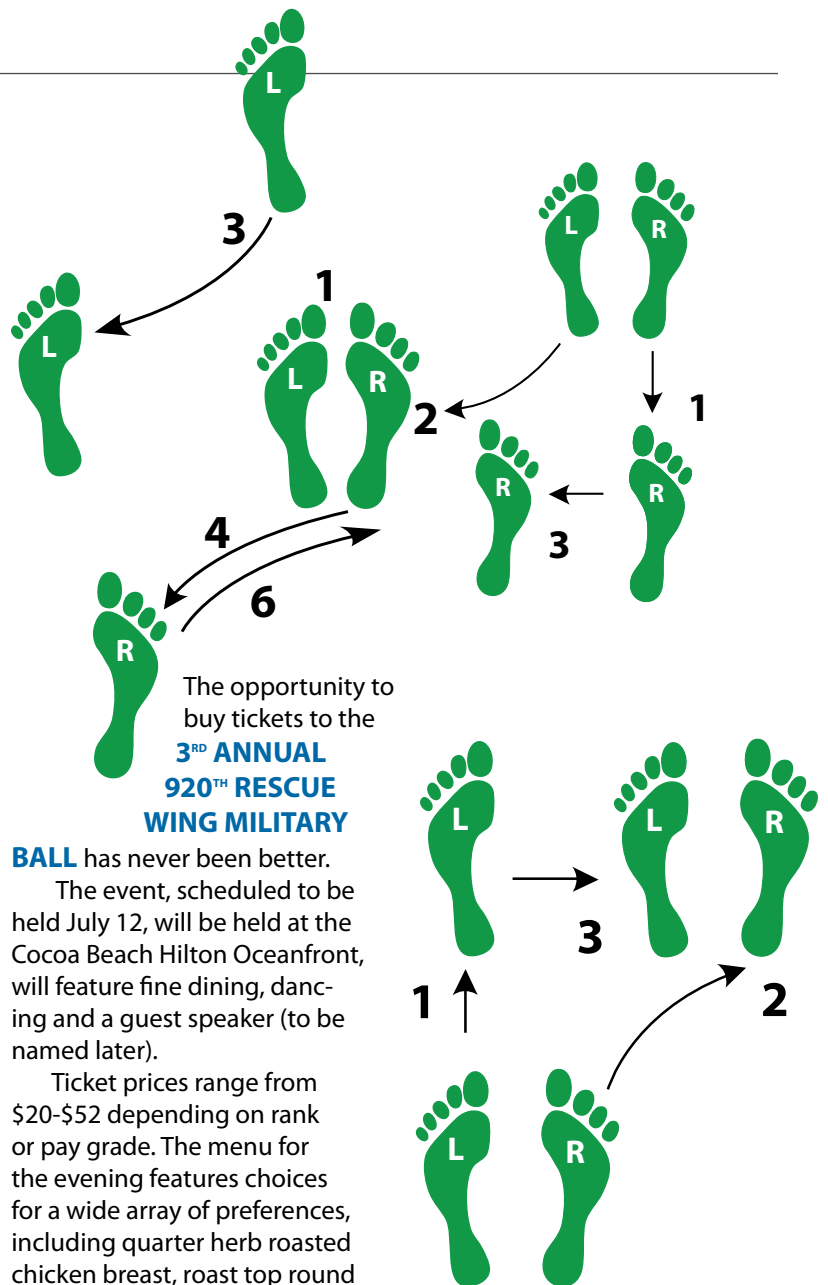


ARPC OFFICIALS NOW SENDING U.S. FLAGS TO RETIRING RESERVISTS.

Honoring retiring reservists with an American flag just got easier through a centralized process at the Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver. ARPC officials now purchase and distribute the flags for all reservists who request one for their retirement.

Flags used to cost units nearly \$20 each and took between three and six months to get, but through the new process, the cost drops to \$12 and will be sent with retirement orders, which is projected to save the Air Force Reserve approximately \$60,000 annually. The initial shipment of flags recently arrived, allowing a backlog of 1,400-plus reservists to have their U.S. flags sent to them now.

For more information, call the Air Reserve Contact Center at 800-525-0102.



BALL has never been better.

The event, scheduled to be held July 12, will be held at the Cocoa Beach Hilton Oceanfront, will feature fine dining, dancing and a guest speaker (to be named later).

Ticket prices range from \$20-\$52 depending on rank or pay grade. The menu for the evening features choices for a wide array of preferences, including quarter herb roasted chicken breast, roast top round of beef, salmon fillet with dill hollandaise and vegetarian tortellini primavera.

For more information, please contact Capt. Arlene Dolphin at (321) 494-6868, or Master Sgt. Val Grijalva at (321) 494-0306.

ON THE RECORD

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

- Abraham Lincoln

Commanding new presence

The new command chief master sergeant of the Air Force Reserve's busiest wing takes a few moments to introduce himself

STAFF SGT. HEATHER KELLY
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

Chief Master Sgt. Gerald Delebreaux (pronounced, "Dell-uh-brew") assumed the role of Command Chief Master Sergeant of the 920th Rescue Wing in April, replacing Chief Master Sgt. William Gatlin, who moved to the operations support squadron.

Prior to joining the 920th, Chief Delebreaux served as the security forces manager of Patrick Air Force Base's 45th Space Wing Security Forces Squadron.

"Helping enlisted Airman as a command chief is a tremendous opportunity," said the Green Bay, Wis., native. "You get to affect people's lives in a positive way."

Having recently returned from a deployment to Saudi Arabia, one of Chief Delebreaux's priorities is to put the spotlight on the wing's mission contributors, and help them to progress in career field and rank.

"A 'thank you' and a pat on the back go a long way," he said. "We need to do more of it as leaders," he said.

A career security-forces member, the chief said he has always looked up to law enforcement. During his 25-year Air Force career, he has mobilized four times and volunteered to augment active-duty security forces to overcome career shortfalls.



photo/Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Allen

The chief isn't the only Delebreaux with a commitment to serve—he has two sons also in the Air Force.

"I'm very proud of them, and their achievements," he said.

The chief said he is also proud to be with the Air Force Reserve's premier search-and-rescue wing.

"When I was selected for 920th Command Chief, I was very happy," he said.

"I knew the folks with the unit by their reputation. It's a great mission and a great unit to be with."

In the next few weeks, Chief Delebreaux plans on making his way around to the squadrons and introducing himself.

"It's important for leadership to be accessible to our Airmen," he said. "I want our members to know that—if they ever need me, I'm only a phone call away."

Rescue Wing sergeants make the grade

The following noncommissioned officers from the 920th Rescue Wing recently graduated from the NCO Leadership Development course, held at the base education center here April 30 - May 9:

TSGT. SHELBY DUGAN
TSGT. SHERRI ELLISON
TSGT. DAVID FULLER

TSGT. ANDY HEINSEN
TSGT. KIM HOWSARE
TSGT. PAUL HUDSON
TSGT. FREDDIE JONES
TSGT. DAVID KRAMER
TSGT. MICHELLE MATOS
TSGT. GREGORY SMILEY
TSGT. DEBORAH SPENCER
TSGT. ERIC TRIMMER
TSGT. GWIN "TONY" WILLIAMS
SSGT. JAMES ABELL

SSGT. ARMIN AGRAVIADOR
SSGT. NIKI BONILLA
SSGT. MARIAN CASTILLO
SSGT. KYLE COLE
SSGT. JONATHAN FAIR
SSGT. ROBERT FARRELL
SSGT. CARLOS MOLINARI
SSGT. NORBERTO NIEVES-CASTELLANOS



A pair of aces

When Air Force Reserve Command officials went looking for the top pararescue NCO and flight surgeon of the year for 2007, they only had to look as far as the 920th Rescue Wing



TECH. SGT. PATRICK DUNNE **PARARESCUE NCO OF THE YEAR**

By Capt. Cathleen Snow

Air Force Reserve Pararescueman Tech. Sgt. Patrick Dunne of the 920th Rescue Wing, makes his living jumping out of aircraft, honing his medical skills and becoming proficient with a wide array of weapons.

He does all of this to save lives and was recently named Air Force Reserve Command's Pararescueman of the Year in the Non-Commissioned Officer category for 2007.

Armed with an M-4 rifle and medical rucksack, Sergeant Dunne has been trained to rescue, stabilize and recover U.S. military and coalition forces shot down behind enemy lines, often under combat conditions.

While at his home station of Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., Sergeant Dunne takes part in civilian and humanitarian search-and-rescue missions, and provides rescue and medical support for all NASA space shuttle launches and landings.

Born and raised in nearby Satellite Beach, he spent most of his time surfing and working in the surf industry before graduating from Satellite High in 1988.

From there, he served a four-year tour in the Marines' 2nd Force Reconnaissance Company, spending his time gathering

intelligence deep behind enemy lines.

As a veteran of both the Gulf War in 1991 and Somalia in 1993, Sergeant Dunne said the discipline of Marine Corps basic training and the high operational tempo during his enlistment gave him the desire and strength to become successful after leaving the Marine Corps.

For the next few years, he worked at local gyms and as a Spinning instructor (indoor cycling), which allowed him the time and atmosphere to race and compete as a sponsored athlete.

In 2002, Sergeant Dunne's resume and race results gained him national recognition and he was selected to compete in the Discovery Channel's "Eco-Challenge," dubbed as the world's toughest race.

A three-person, coed team from Miami asked him to lead them in the reaty-TV adventure race, which pitted them against 76 teams from 27 countries.

The race saw them trek 350-miles 24-7 through the jungles of Borneo, paddle primitive outrigger canoes through the Indian Ocean, kayak through white water rapids, ascend up gorges on ropes, mountain bike rocky inclines, traverse a rugged moun-

tainside and scuba dive into the unknown.

"It teaches you a great deal of teamwork as well as what your boundaries are, mentally and physically," said Sergeant Dunne.

His biggest physical obstacle wasn't the jagged mountains or the dense rainforests.

"It was the sleep deprivation," he said. "Either you have the mental fortitude to endure or you don't."

One year later, with a national championship win in a triathlon series under his belt, Dunne got another invitation to the Eco Challenge. This time, it was the 2001 Armed Forces Eco-Challenge in Alaska.

"It was harder this time, because there was a lot more pressure," he said.

His team of Marine Reservists—three males and one female—were up against 22 other military teams. Because of the impressive credentials of Sergeant Dunne's team, they were favored to win.

However, a victory just wasn't in the cards. Sergeant Dunne injured his ankle during the mountaineering portion of the race. Sergeant Dunne continued, but the act of favoring his defunct joint led to a more-severe knee injury, and he was airlifted off the course.

Not being able to finish the race didn't upset Sergeant Dunne, but what happened shortly afterward did—the sight of the New York City twin towers crashing down, and the emotions of that day stirred a deep sense of duty within him.

"After Sept. 11, there was no way I was going to sit back and be on the sidelines when my country was at war," he said.

He joined the 920th Rescue Wing in September 2002 and began the three-year commitment to become a pararescueman. The process of becoming a pararescueman, or *PJ*, is known informally as "the Pipeline." Successfully completing it takes about two years of intense physical and mental effort. Of the dozens who enter the pipeline, only the most determined graduate—roughly 90 percent of those who enter *PJ* training never make it through.

Now a member of the 920th Rescue Wing, Sergeant Dunne is "... all over everything," says Capt. Rob Effler, a team leader at the pararescue squadron here. "Sergeant Dunne volunteers for all deployments and continually furthers his professional development.

"He's the most stellar NCO on the team."

Air Force Reserve Command officials echoed that sentiment by selecting Sergeant Dunne as the top *PJ* NCO for 2007.

In a congratulatory letter from the vice commander of Reserve Command, Maj. Gen. Allan Poulin wrote, "Sergeant Dunne was awarded this honor because his leadership, experience and tireless enthusiasm have increased the combat capability of his squadron, the 308th Rescue Squadron."

"Being chosen by my peers is a great honor, because I work daily with some of the best *PJs* in the entire career field," said Sergeant Dunne.

When the number one ranked *PJ* in AFRC isn't jumping out of aircraft, honing his medical skills and becoming proficient with an array of weapons, he can be found wearing a pair of surfing shorts, working in his yard with his wife, Tory, at their beachside home. In fact, the Dunne's recently won the Satellite Beach Beautification Award for the best lawn in town.

MAJ. PATRICIO BRUNO **FLIGHT SURGEON OF THE YEAR**

By Master Sgt. Raymond Padgett

The chief of flight medicine for the 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron (ASTS) here was recently selected as the 2007 Air Force Reserve Command Flight Surgeon of the year.

Maj. Patricio Bruno's civilian occupation is the assistant professor of family medicine at the University of Connecticut's School of Medicine, which is affiliated with Saint Frances Hospital in Hartford where he is also the director of inpatient hospital services.

His efforts led to flight medicine receiving an "outstanding" on the ASTS recent health services Inspection, and the in-house training program he developed has resulted in a four-fold increase of flying physical capability.

"We're proud of Major Bruno's selection as the 2007 Air Force Reserve Command Flight Surgeon of the year," said Col. Steven Kirkpatrick, 920th Rescue Wing Commander. "His professional skills, caring manner and willingness to serve have truly made a difference in the war effort and our home-station support of our troops.

"He represents the very best AFRC and our wing has to offer this nation."

Major Bruno has volunteered to serve numerous times overseas and has provided critical care to many wounded Soldiers and Airmen during deployments.

His expertise in the Spanish language was extremely valuable for a short-notice deployment to Moron Air Base, Spain, where he not only provided medical support to deployed aircrew, he rapidly formed a close liaison with the local hospital and provided training to base medical personnel.

On a subsequent deployment to Ramstein AB, Germany, he provided medical care to aircrew and flew downrange himself on several aeromedical-evacuation missions. He also spent much of his off-duty time lending his expertise to the contingency aeromedical-staging facility.

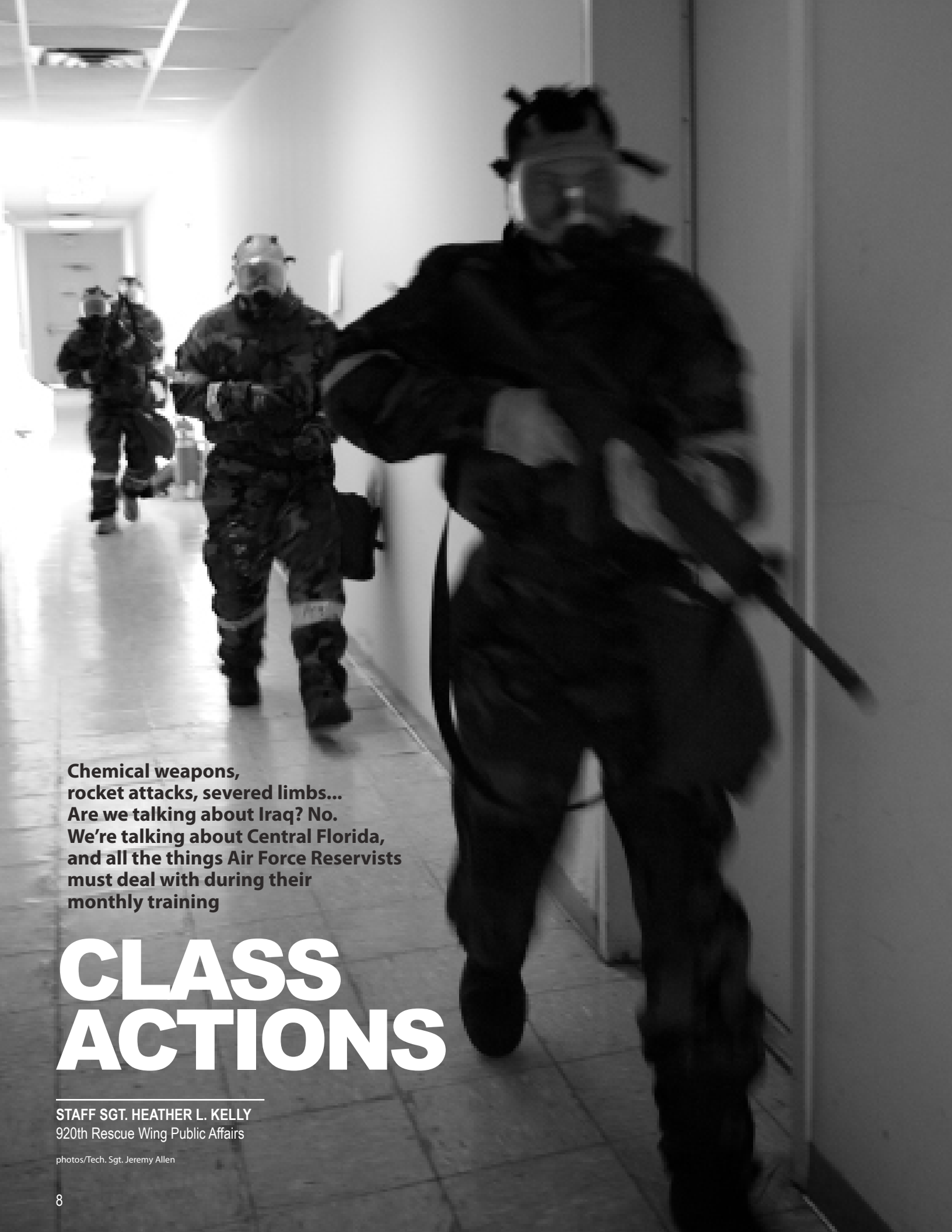
Major Bruno functions as the senior reviewer for all medical-waiver packages, and he developed a system that decreased waiver-turnaround time to less than five days. He is also the chair of the local aeromedical council and has flown rescue-support missions for many NASA space shuttle launches.

"Major Bruno is a highly-skilled physician who possesses exceptional managerial and leadership skills," said Col. Lewis Neace, commander of the 920th ASTS. "I have found no task that he does not accomplish with swift and skillful excellence."

"While I am honored to be selected as the award recipient, I must accept it on behalf of my flight surgeons, nurses and the wing itself," said Major Bruno.

"My accomplishments are only the result of their hard work and dedication."

The award is established by the United States Air Force Society of Flight Surgeons and named after Maj. General Malcolm C. Grow. General Grow was the first surgeon general of the United States Air Force and is credited with many innovations in the area of aircrew safety and survival equipment.



**Chemical weapons,
rocket attacks, severed limbs...
Are we talking about Iraq? No.
We're talking about Central Florida,
and all the things Air Force Reservists
must deal with during their
monthly training**

CLASS ACTIONS

STAFF SGT. HEATHER L. KELLY
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

photos/Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Allen



About twenty miles away from their offices at Patrick Air Force Base, members of the 920th Mission Support Squadron conducted field exercises during the May drill weekend. It was the first time the entire unit trained together at the U.S. Air Force's Malabar Annex.

The exercise began in the morning with a broad array of training. First, troops were taught how to respond to ambushes and mortar threats. Next, some helpful hints on the topic of urban troop movement, with training on effective ways to overcome buildings and obstacles in different scenarios. The group concluded the morning's activities with classes on the plethora of dangers involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive threats.

1st Lt. Chris Dougherty, the mission support group's executive officer and an Orange County Deputy Sheriff in his civilian career, was on hand to participate and help evaluate. Part of Lieutenant Dougherty's training to become a deputy sheriff included classes in emergency management, chemical, biological and explosives training.

"It's crucial to become proficient at these tasks, especially in today's operating environment," he said.

With the morning's activities under their belts, unit members joined each other for lunch at the wing's first fully-operational flight kitchen.

The services staff arrived at Malabar at 5 a.m. to set up the kitchen and prepare for the day's events.

"Everything was very good ... and I've been to a lot of field kitchens," said Senior Master Sgt. Robert Potts, a transportation superintendent for logistics readiness.

When it comes to offering new and diverse additions to the wing, the services staff doesn't stop in the kitchen.

"We manage lodging, fitness, mortuary affairs, morale, welfare and recreation and food services," said Tech. Sgt. John Vreeland, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the services flight.

The team demonstrated the grizzlier aspects of their responsibilities during a simulated recovery exercise, during which team members identified and tagged human remains and performed search-and-recovery of personnel and effects.

Security forces troops performed military-operations-in-urban-terrain exercises next, conducting sweep-and-clear maneuvers throughout a building. They crept around corners and down corridors to accomplish their mission in an array of environments.

A lessons-learned review concluded the exercise, and Lieutenant Dougherty noted the troops' progress.

"There are marked improvements each time we train," he said.

"Our main goal was to train as part of the unit's ongoing readiness initiative," said Lt. Col. Dennis Seymour, the 920th Mission Support Squadron commander.

"Field training is challenging, but it also builds morale and confidence in your fellow Airmen. Today, we accomplished both."



Astronauts Rick Mastracchio, front, and Paolo Angelo Nespoli, don their flight suits May 14, just before being dropped into the Atlantic Ocean to await rescue by Air Force Reserve pararescuemen from the 920th Rescue Wing during an annual search and rescue exercise. Members of the wing are part of a joint task force that supports space shuttle launches and are always ready in the event of an emergency. (photo/Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Allen)



Exercising Heroism

During a Mode VIII exercise, NASA astronauts plunge into the Atlantic and wait in the rolling seas for Air Force Reservists from the 920th Rescue Wing to find them. On this and the following pages, a short pictorial on what life is like on and leading up to exercise day.





photo/tech Sgt. Jeremy Allen

Air Force Reservists from the 920th Rescue Wing conducted a Mode VIII exercise roughly 80 miles off the coast of Kennedy Space Center May 21. The exercise, held here most every year, simulates a scenario in which a space shuttle becomes disabled prior to reaching orbit, requiring the crew to bail out over the Atlantic Ocean. The rescue wing must then locate, rescue and fly the astronauts to a local hospital. Here, 920th para-rescuemen prepare for the exercise by learning about the survival suits worn by shuttle crews during takeoff and landing. The 920th Rescue Wing provides emergency-response medical support for every space shuttle and rocket launch.

Once an astronaut is located by the crew of an HC-130P/N Hercules extended-range search-and-rescue aircraft, the loadmaster marks the astronaut's location with neon-green sea dye, which he throws out of the HC-130 as it flies over. Then, a communications specialist radios the astronaut's coordinates to one of the unit's HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters, which speeds to recover the astronaut and fly him or her to a local hospital for medical care.



photo/Capt. Cathleen Snow



Living history

During a recent weekend of training, reservists got more than they expected out of the Life Support/Survival portion, as a former resident of Vietnam's most infamous prison stopped by to share his wealth of knowledge



COL. ALAN BRUNSTRON

Although I was beyond reach when I was shot down I have great admiration for the rescue organization some of whom joined me at The 'Hilton'.

BY MASTER SGT. RAYMOND F. PADGETT
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

Retreat signals the end of the active duty day. The familiar call of "Sign-out" often ends the drill weekend for reserve members. During the April UTA sign-out time passed by more than an hour earlier and no one in the room moved a muscle as aviators from the 39th rescue squadron hung onto every word of the colonel's ordeal. He was detained, not by a briefing, but by the North Vietnamese for nearly seven years.

Col. Alan Brunstron was the final speaker in a long day of block training for 920th Rescue Wing aviators. He was a prisoner of war in Vietnam with several stays at the Hanoi Hilton and was present to speak to the aviators about survival after being shot down.

The Menominee, Mich. native was credited with flying 155 combat missions but joked he actually flew 114 sorties and one "partie," for the partial mission during which he was shot down.

Colonel Brunstron enlisted in the Army at age 17 with special consent from his parents. His service experiences include everything from being an aviation mechanic supporting the Berlin Airlift to co-piloting the Thunderbirds' equipment aircraft.

After receiving his commission, he flew the F-84, F-86 and T-33 aircraft. In 1964, he was off to Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. for F-101 fighter training before being deployed to Southeast Asia to support combat operations in Vietnam.

The Airmen of the rescue wing listened intently as the colonel described the harrowing mission of April 22, 1966 when he was shot down by anti-aircraft artillery over a target on the North East Railroad roughly 60 miles north of Hanoi.

"I was flying 640 knots at 300 feet of altitude. I never saw what hit me," he said, as he went on to describe losing control of the tail flaps and having to eject over enemy territory.

Colonel Brunstron was captured by what he thinks were militia forces

immediately upon hitting the ground and releasing his parachute. He was then held in several caves before arriving at the "Heartbreak Hotel" the initial interrogation center of the Hanoi Hilton.

During the course of his story, Colonel Brunstron included details such as the nicknames and demeanor of their interrogators—with names like 'Rat' and 'Rabbit' coined by the prisoners.

He was also housed at the infamous Son Tay prison where a rescue attempt was launched by U.S. Special Forces in 1970 but the prisoners had already been moved to a nearby prison camp. "We should have left a forwarding address" colonel Brunstron joked.

Colonel Brunstron said a sense of humor and hope kept the prisoners alive as they shared their knowledge together first by tap code and later by living in a single room with 56 other prisoners. Fellow prisoners included Senators John McCain, Jeremiah Andrew Denton, Jr. and vice presidential candidate Jim Stockdale.

The tap code was etched on the wall of all the cells where the new prisoners were housed. Prisoners tapped codes for letters on the walls separating their cells, then passed the code to the next cell. Tap code was used constantly by prisoners to communicate, whether it was while sweeping the yard, hammering on a nail or any other way to make noise right in front of the captors.

Prisoners also developed a shorthand language much like the text messaging of today. 'GM' was short for 'good morning,' and 'GB' meant 'goodbye.'

With no access to books the prisoners each took a subject area they were expert in and taught courses to all of the other prisoners. Colonel Brunstron said he learned Russian, French, German and Spanish while in captivity. Other prisoners taught courses on aviation, automobiles and even business.

Colonel Brunstron was finally released February 12, 1973 after seven years in captivity. He described the release process and the C-141 flight from Vietnam in great detail. His return

flight path took him through medical facilities at Clark Air Base in the Philippines, a quick stop with the commander of Pacific Air Forces at Hickham Air Force Base in Hawaii and finally back to Travis Air Force Base Calif. to be reunited with his family.

The reunion with his wife and daughter was captured for the world to see in an Associated Press photo and was later painted by artist Amado Gonzalez titled "Joy At Travis" where it currently resides in the Air Force Art collection.

Gonzales' comments from the Air Force Art collection include: "In my painting I tried to convey the spontaneous, exhilarating and explosive joy of coming together and fusing into one very happy family again."

After receiving a thank you plaque and standing ovation from the rescue wing Airmen Colonel Brunstron attempted to downplay his heroic behavior during the course of his captivity.

"We were a random cross section of people flying at the time. The only difference between you and I, is that I took the test and you didn't.

"If you took it you'd probably pass it," he concluded.



Air Force file photo

The ground of Hoa Lo Prison, otherwise known as the "Hanoi Hilton," where retired colonel Alan Brunstron was incarcerated after being shot down in April 1966. Mr. Brunstron recently visited the 920th Rescue Wing, where he shared some of his experiences with reservists during their monthly weekend training.



graphic/courtesy Perry-Castaneda Library



“HYDRAULIC.” On the surface, it seems like such a clean word. Even its definition, “to be moved or operated by a liquid in motion,” sounds crisp and tidy.

Yet, in the 920th Rescue Wing, there is no place Airmen become more covered with grease and grime than while working at the hydraulics shop.

According to shop chief Master Sgt. Steven Lomas, the act of servicing anything in the wheel well of an HC-130P/N ‘King’ aircraft—especially the brakes—is his troops’ dirtiest job.

“The brake dust and grease are really nasty in there,” he said.

Hydraulic maintenance on the Kings also includes the flight controls and cargo ramp, as well as the aerial-refueling system, which is comprised of more than 80 feet of hose coiled inside the aircraft.

The primary mission of the aircraft is to extend the range of combat-search-and-rescue helicopters by providing air-refueling in hostile or contested airspace, which requires the Kings to carry roughly 73,000 pounds of fuel.

During aerial refueling, wind pulls the hose from the aircraft by way of a small parachute—the ‘drogue’—attached to the end of the hose. But on the ground, they use good old-fashioned manpower to pull out the giant, often-filthy hose.

Yet another opinion on the dirtiest job comes from Tech. Sgt. Joe Ethier. His selection was, “changing the rudder pack in the tail section on a hot day.”

“There’s no cross breeze up there, and you get covered in hydraulic fluid and have sweat constantly stinging your eyes,” he said.

And once hydraulic fluid stains a uniform, it doesn’t come out, according to Tech. Sgt. James Regner.

“The camouflage is nice because it kind of blends the stains with the pattern,” he said.



photo/Master Sgt. Raymond Padgett

Air Force Reservist Tech Sgt. Julian Alejos, with the 920th Rescue Wing performs maintenance on the refueling system of one of the unit’s HC-130P/N aircraft. During aerial refueling, drag from the airflow pulls out the hose. But while the aircraft is on the ground, technicians must pull out the giant, sometimes-filthy hose to troubleshoot the system.

“You can get the red out, but the dull, gray stain is there to stay,” Sergeant Lomas agreed.

Hydraulic fluid isn’t the only greasy stuff shop Airmen deal with. They also get coated with ample amounts of dimethylsilicone lubricating compound and graphite grease—both used to lubricate moving parts controlled by hydraulics—along with fuel residue from aerial refuelings, all of which makes the job of

working in the 920th hydraulics shop a truly dirty job.

And remember, we’re always looking for the next subject of dirty jobs. So, if you leave work covered in crud, please call us at (321) 494-0535/6, or e-mail us at public_affairs@rescue920.patrick.af.mil. We’d love to hear from you.

But if you’re going to stop by the public affairs office, please take a few minutes to wash up first.

SAVE OF THE MONTH



Tech. Sgt. Larry Jarrell

distinguished himself in the performance of outstanding service to the 920th Maintenance Squadron, Patrick AFB, Fla.

On March 7, Sergeant Jarrell was working a reoccurring problem on aircraft 6236. On previous occasions, other shop personnel attempted to fix the co-pilots'-rate-of-turn circuit breaker by changing several parts.

However, after each flight the circuit breaker would return from flight "popped."

Sergeant Jarrell had exhausted all common solutions before he was able to isolate the problem. The circuit breaker had "popped" and would not reset when he closed the nose door.

With an issue that was now identifiable, he spent time painstakingly inspecting the associated wiring. At that time, he found a wire that had been chaffed on a radio receiver directly below the circuit breaker that was shorting.

He then repaired the affected wiring, thus allowing the aircraft to be upgraded to fully-mission-capable status and remain on alert for the upcoming space shuttle launch.

Based on Sergeant Jarrell's actions and dedication to duty, he is hereby awarded the "Save of the Month" for March 2008.

Pararescuemen prepare for NASA exercise

STAFF SGT. HEATHER KELLY

920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

Teams of pararescuemen converged 10 miles off the Florida coast in May to prepare for NASA's upcoming rescue training Mode VIII exercise.

Crews with NASA's Freedom Star solid rocket booster ship and Patrick Air Force Base's 920th Rescue Wing participated in the event.

The pararescue portion of the exercise included parachute training, shipboard operations, a medical exercise and two RAMZ drops. A 'RAMZ' is a Rigging Alternate Method Zodiac, which is an inflatable boat deployed out of HC-130P/N Hercules aircraft and used by pararescuemen to reach downed astronauts or mariners.

"Shipboard ops can be pretty dangerous," said Tech. Sgt. Patrick Dunne, pararescue training coordinator for the mission. "Part of it involves pararescuemen (PJs) in the water on a smaller boat getting onto a larger vessel. Some of our PJs are completing this training for the first time."

Another first on the mission included new engines on the PJ's zodiac boats. The equipment is still in the employment-validation phase but comes at a critical time.

"The new engines are more reliable; they start consistently," said Master. Sgt. Blane Morgan, pararescueman. "You can imagine what would happen if equipment failure occurred on an operational mission."

Currently, the 920th is the first and only Air Force unit to have the equipment.

Pararescuemen Master Sgt. Chad

Evans and Sergeant Morgan saw an opportunity to test the new motors while waiting for the HC-130P/N Hercules aircraft to appear overhead. They took turns launching and recovering the craft to the Freedom Star.

Once the HC-130 appeared, low in the sky dropping the remaining personnel and RAM-Z packages, the joining PJs made their way to the vessel for the next leg of training: the medical exercise.

Once aboard, PJs moved throughout the deck and cabin to locate and treat simulated patients.

"In operations like this, the PJ team has to get on board and communicate with crew, treat patients and recover equipment," said Sergeant Dunne. "They don't receive training of this kind at the schoolhouse."

Sergeant Dunne carefully crafted the event during the four months prior.

"It was one of my first tasks when I graduated PJ school," he said. "I felt compelled to take it on this year. An exercise like this has a lot of moving parts. NASA (and us) coming together is huge for us. We are checking a lot of boxes."

In all, Sergeant Dunne and his team were pleased with the outcome.

"We accomplished all of our training objectives today safely. And (considering) all the coordination that was done, it went very smoothly."

Michael Nicholas, first officer on the Freedom Star, immediately saw the value pararescuemen provide on the high seas.

"We perform operations for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and marine fisheries in addition to recovering the rocket boosters. It can be a dangerous job, but nothing compared to what the PJs do. We enjoy working with them.

"If we were ever in trouble out here, I know who I would call."

Coming the next issue of ANGEL'S WINGS...

A feature on Maj. Ken Dempsey, 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, and his work with Traumatic Brain Injury during Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. He served as part of a Critical Care Air Transport Team at

Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Major Dempsey was also directly involved with the case of Bob Woodruff, the ABC news reporter who sustained a severe head injury while imbedded with troops in Iraq.

Read the full story on Major Dempsey, and more on the 920th Rescue Wing in the next edition of the ANGEL'S WINGS.





Nothing is possible unless first we dream

Paolo Nespoli, an Italian astronaut with the European Space Agency, takes advantage of some down time on board the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kingfisher, en route to the “drop zone” for the recent Mode VIII exercise (see *Leap of Faith* pp. 10-15). Mr. Nespoli was a participant in the exercise, which tests the ability of the 920th Rescue Wing to locate, recover and provide medical assistance to NASA astronauts should they have to bail out of a space shuttle over the Atlantic Ocean. In addition to his experience as an astronaut—Mr. Nespoli flew as mission specialist on Space Shuttle Discovery STS-120—he also knows his way around a parachute. He is a former member of the Italian Army’s renowned 9th Parachutist Assault Regiment, also called “Col Moschin,” a special operations unit who train and operate in all conditions—mountains, desert, water and woodlands.
(photo/Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Allen)

