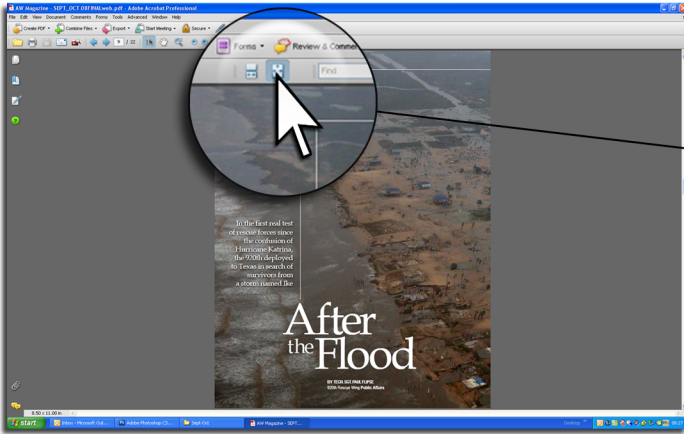
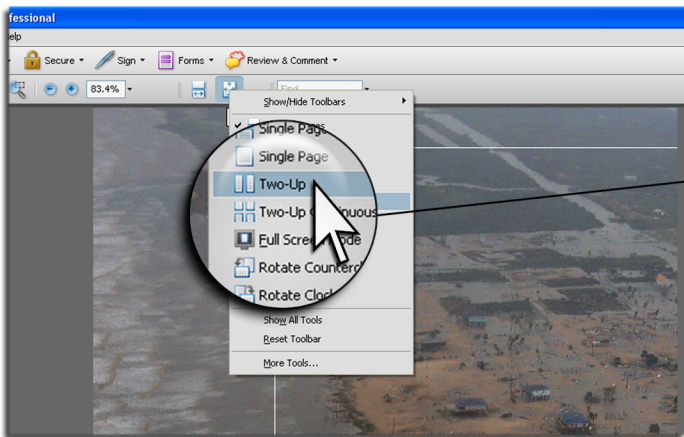


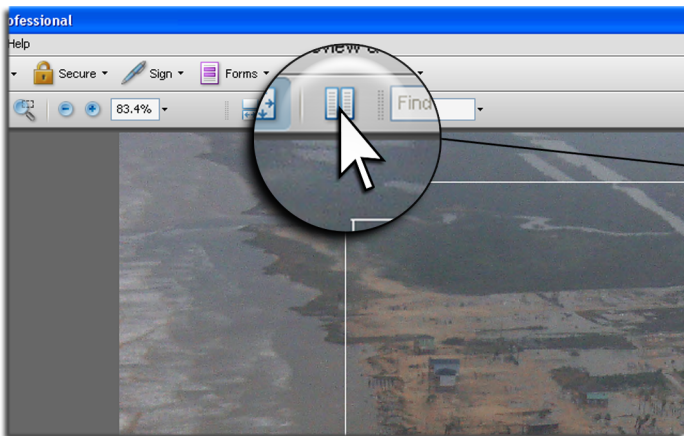
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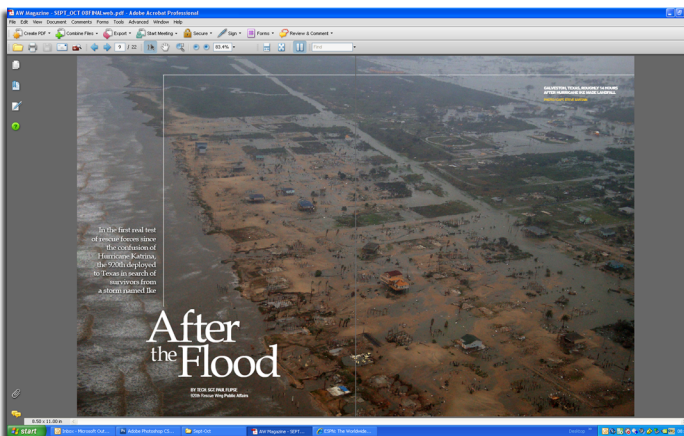
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SPECIAL EDITION

THE HOUSE TRUTH BUILT | AIRMEN ON CAPITOL HILL

# ANGEL'S WINGS

VOL 6 NO 5 • 920<sup>TH</sup> RESCUE WING • PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, FLA. • AIR FORCE RESERVE COMMAND • SEPT / OCT 2008



## TEXAS FLOOD

The 920th Rescue Wing deploys to the Gulf and saves 17 lives in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike

# ANGEL'S WINGS

VOL.6 NO.5 SEPT / OCT 2008

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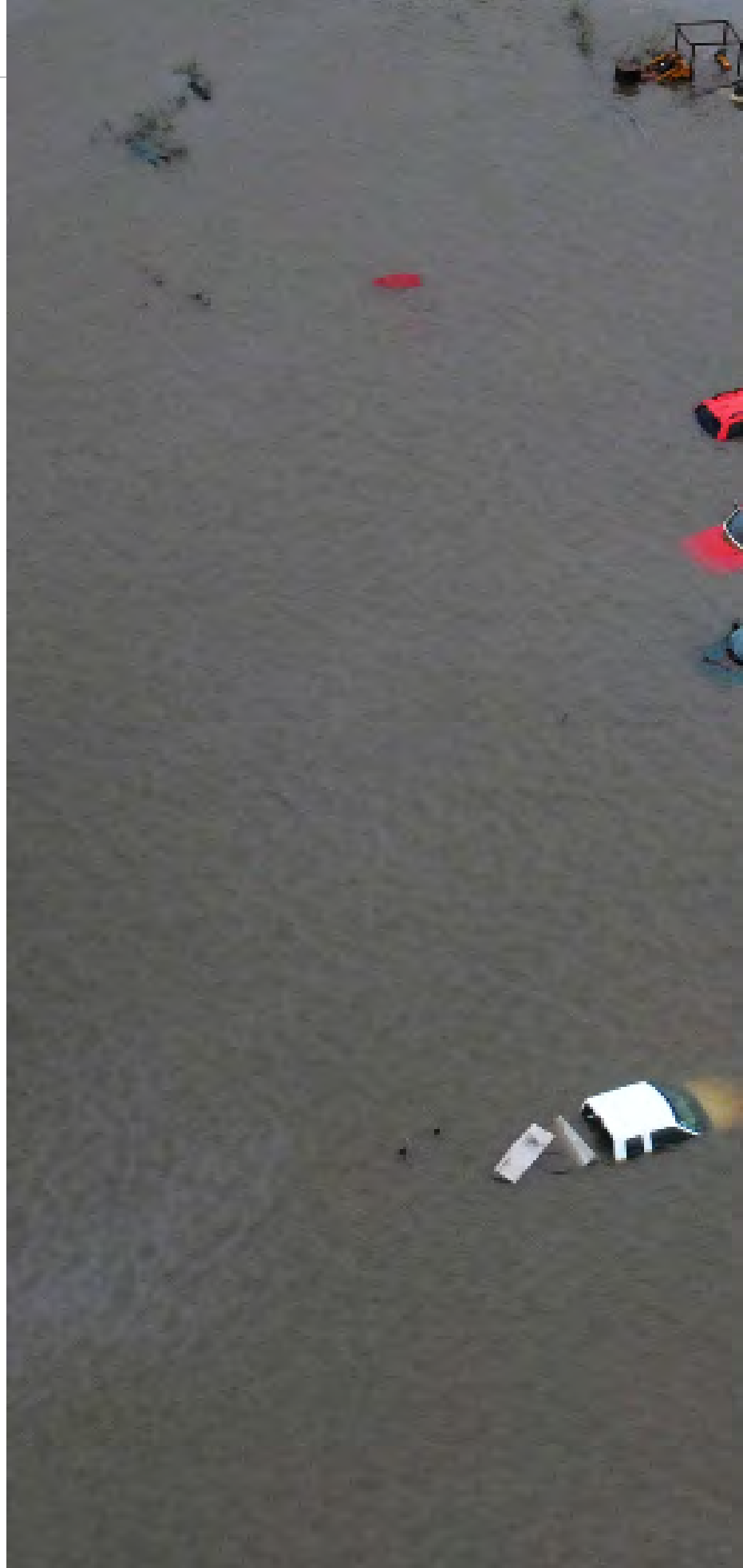
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cover photo / TECH. SGT. PAUL FLIPSE






NEDERLAND, TEXAS  
SEPT. 13, 2008

PHOTO / TECH. SGT. PAUL FLIPSE




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## timemanagement

<p><b>UTA SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>Oct. 4-5 Nov. 1-2 Dec. 6-7 Jan. 10-11 Feb. 7-8 March 7-8 April 4-5 May 2-3</p>	<p><b>DINING FACILITY</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>FITNESS CENTER</b></p> <p>Mon/Fri 5 a.m. - 11 p.m. Sat/Sun 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.</p>	<p><b>BARBER SHOP</b></p> <p>Mon/Fri 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sat 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sun 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.</p> <p><b>CLASS VI / SHOPETTE / GAS STATION</b></p> <p>Mon/Sat 6 a.m. - 10 p.m. Sun 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.</p>
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LOUISIANA COASTLINE  
SEPT. 13, 2008

PHOTO / TECH. SGT. PAUL FLIPSE





**NEW GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARDS WERE MAILED** to Florida cardholders Sept. 15 through Sept. 19. The cards are being sent to addresses on file with Bank of America, so cardholders must ensure their information is current. Any mail sent to an incorrect address will be returned to Citibank. Reservists who don't receive a new card by Oct. 1 should contact their unit program coordinator.

The new cards will be active Nov. 30, so cardholders must continue to use their Bank of America cards until then. Upon receiving the new card, cardholders must verify receipt by following the instructions affixed to the card.

Servicemembers traveling during the crossover (Nov. 29-30, 2008), may charge official travel expenses up to and including Nov. 29, on the Bank of America card, according to Laura Brusca, the 920th Rescue Wing Budget Officer. Travel expenses incurred from 12:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) Nov. 30 must be charged to new card. If a travel voucher is processed for pay after 9 a.m. EST Dec. 6, split disbursement payments will go to Citibank.

The 920th Rescue Wing Airman & Family Readiness Office is **LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES FOR FELLOW WING MEMBERS IN TIMES OF NEED.**

Some examples of these services are installation of hurricane shutters, auto repair, plumbing, foreign-language translation, or anything else that may affect wing members or their families during emergencies or while the member is deployed overseas.

The office will compile a list of all people/services available and contact volunteers only if a need arises.

All those wishing to volunteer their time and services to the program can do so by sending an e-mail to: 920RQW.AFR@rescue920.patrick.af.mil.

## **FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES RETURNING FROM ACTIVE DUTY MAY RECEIVE FIVE DAYS OF UNCHARGED LEAVE**

(excused absence) from their civilian duties each time they return from deployment.

On November 14, 2003, President George W. Bush directed the heads of agencies to grant Federal employees who are returning from active duty 5 days of excused absence from their civilian duties. The President's memorandum is available on the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) Web site at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-14b.asp>. OPM's memorandum and guidance on granting the 5 days of excused absence are available at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-14.asp> and <http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-14a.asp>.

The Total Force Top 3/USAA scholarship committee is accepting information packages from **ELIGIBLE RESERVISTS AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR SCHOLARSHIPS** worth a minimum of \$500 toward tuition, books, and/or academic fees.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- E-9 or below, or immediate family member of E-9 and below
- Current member of Air Force Reserve or AF Reserve Command
- Currently enrolled in associates, bachelor's or master's-degree program at regionally-accredited college or university during upcoming semester or have letter of acceptance from registrar's office from same
- Grade Point Average of 3.0 or above (within last six months) (if new college student, must have last high school transcript)
- Must not have been a Total Force Top 3/USAA Scholarship recipients in the last 12 months

### APPLICATION PACKAGE

- Application form
- Certification form
- Essay
- Unofficial copies of transcripts

### POSTMARK/MAILING ADDRESS

Application packages must be postmarked no later than Nov. 24 and mailed to: Total Force Top 3/USAA Scholarship, P.O. Box 98484, Robins AFB, Ga. 31098-8484

For additional information, including application forms, contact Master Sgt. Corazon Cagina at (478) 327-1676 or toll-free at (800) 223-1784 Ext. 71676; or Master Sgt. Ron Hage at (800) 223-1784 Ext. 71345. Or send e-mail requests to: [corazon.cagina@afrc.af.mil](mailto:corazon.cagina@afrc.af.mil).

*CORRECTION: Last month in the feature "Never Say Die," we incorrectly identified Capt. Patricia Hayden as a major. We apologize for any confusion the faux-promotion caused and wish her luck in getting an actual promotion soon.*

# Music City Muster

The commander of the 920th Rescue Wing gathers his leaders for three days of talks on Total Force, money, and the importance of family support

**BY MASTER SGT. BRYAN RIPPLE**  
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

A meeting of combat search and rescue leaders from the Air Force Reserve's only rescue wing took place July 22-24 in the Great Smokey Mountains at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, Tenn.

Col. Steven Kirkpatrick, commander of the 920th Rescue Wing, gathered his wing leadership personnel from Patrick Air Force Base and the wing's two geographically-separated units (GSU), the 943rd Rescue Group at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., and the 304th Rescue Squadron at Portland, Ore.

The goal was to discuss common issues the GSUs

share and how the wing can benefit overall from sharing information face-to-face.

This was the third consecutive year the conference was held and, according to Colonel Kirkpatrick, it was something that could increase communication throughout the wing. About 85 wing members and 35 spouses attended the event.

"Our ops-tempo is high, and the support we get from our spouses is critical," said Colonel Kirkpatrick, a former B-52 pilot and a member of the combat search and rescue (CSAR) business for a little more than two years now. "CSAR is a dream job, and it gets in people's blood. There's nothing nobler than saving lives, and we've got great people doing great things."

Rescue crews from the 920th have made more than 200 saves and more than 100 assists in Afghanistan already this year during their deployment.

There are also more than 200 wing Airmen deployed to all three theatres.

The colonel stressed the importance of having a forum for spouses to share information because it makes the wing's family support even stronger.

Although about 25 percent of the Air Force's combat search and rescue mission capability is provided by the wing, Colonel Kirkpatrick praised the contributions by the wing's aeromedical staging squadron.

"We can't overlook the work our medical people

are doing," he said. "They're transporting and taking care of wounded patients who really need us, and we also have people deployed in various support roles. They're all doing great things."

In addition to training, funding and deployments issues, other topics discussed at the conference were future Total Force Initiatives, like how the Reserve and active duty can work together in the CSAR mission at Patrick.

"We had a chance to discuss how it might happen to provide a proposal to the Air Force," the colonel said.

"I advocate to all our members to plan visits to their counterparts at our other locations to work on better solutions to situations we all must get through."

## High Definition

*Coming to a TV set near you: two shows with roots in pararescue and survival*

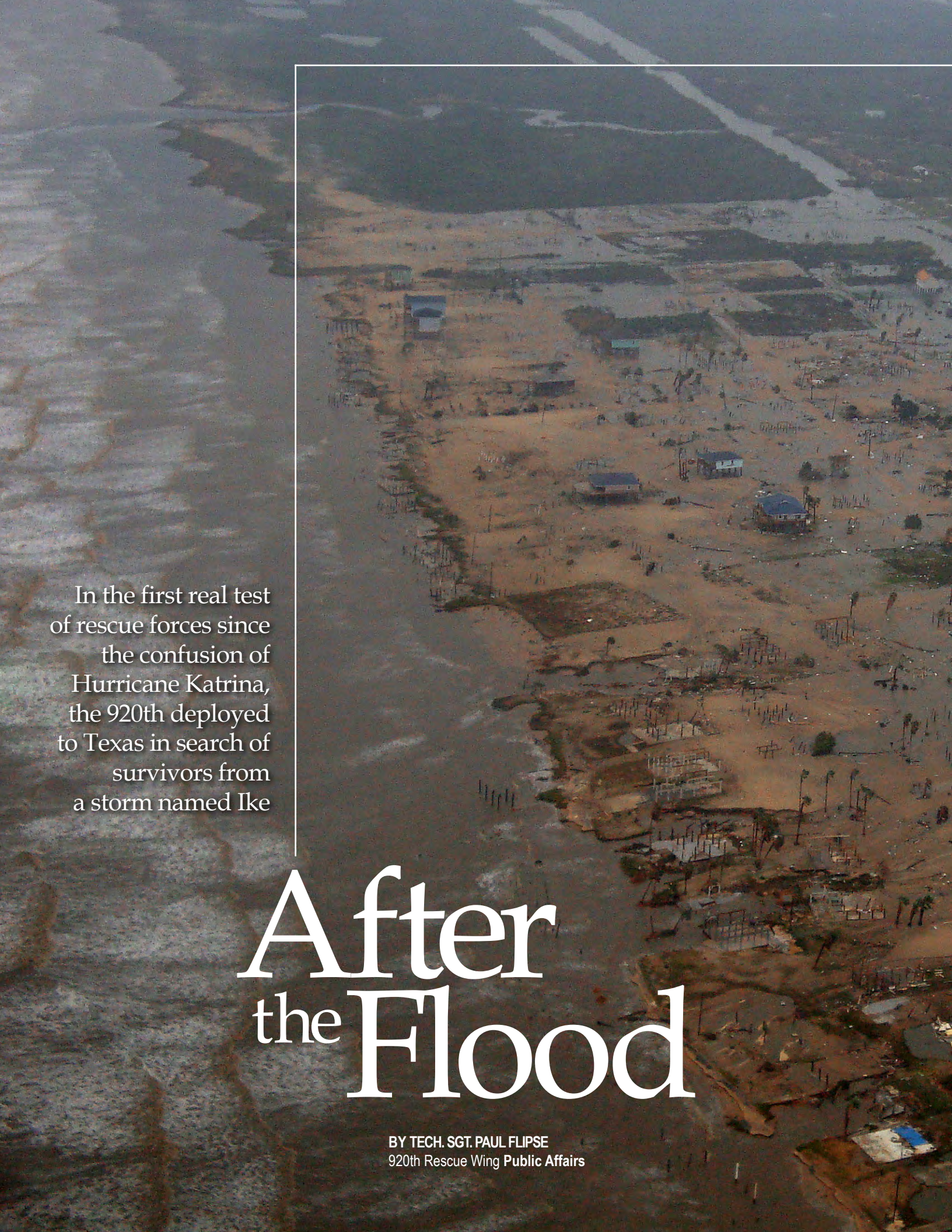
Americans will have two opportunities to get more familiar with the world of Air Force rescue service through two, new reality-TV programs featuring Air force pararescue and survival themes.

"Special Ops: Pursuit," features former 920th Rescue Wing pararescueman Wil Willis, who will spend each episode trying to evade teams of pursuit experts from the FBI, Army Rangers, British SAS and U.S. Border Patrol. The program is due to air on the Military Channel later this year.

"Survival School," scheduled to begin Sept. 9 on the MOJO HD channel, will track 47 Airmen as they face the limits of their skills during the Air Force Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) program located at Fairchild Air Force Base near Spokane, Wash.





An aerial photograph showing a vast area of flooding. The water is a murky, brownish-grey color, covering most of the ground. In the center and right, several buildings are visible, some with blue roofs, appearing partially submerged or surrounded by water. Debris is scattered throughout the flooded area. The background shows more of the flooded landscape under a grey, overcast sky.

In the first real test  
of rescue forces since  
the confusion of  
Hurricane Katrina,  
the 920th deployed  
to Texas in search of  
survivors from  
a storm named Ike

# After the Flood

BY TECH. SGT. PAUL FLIPSE  
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

**GALVESTON, TEXAS, ROUGHLY 14 HOURS  
AFTER HURRICANE IKE MADE LANDFALL**

**PHOTO / CAPT. STEVE SARTAIN**





photo/NASA

**T**HEY WERE CHASING A HURRICANE across the same ground they flew over in 2005 after Katrina shredded New Orleans. Two aircrews from the 920th Rescue Wing here were tracking west behind the storm in two of the unit's HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters on their way to Galveston, Texas—where Hurricane Ike made landfall less than 10 hours before.

Chasing Ike was their plan all along. They would follow the storm closely in an effort to time their arrival at Galveston to coincide with the greatest need for help under the safest conditions in which to fly.

They flew safely but aggressively, close enough to make good time but far enough behind to stay clear of the rain bands—long tendrils of rain that pinwheel from the outer edges of a hurricane that can lash into an aircraft with little warning.

Just two days before, the Reserve aircrews watched with the rest of the nation as Ike grew from a tropical storm into a monstrous category 5 hurricane that threatened to make landfall in exactly the same spot as Katrina did three years before. Then Ike lost its steam over Cuba, weakening to a category 2 before arriving on U.S. soil. Weaker, yes ... but still deadly. Experts at the National Hurricane Center were still predicting a 15 to 20-foot wall of water—called a *storm surge*—would soon wash over the Texas coastline, which meant people would still be in harm's way and likely in desperate need of rescue.

And so, a group of 920th Rescue Wing Reservists, along with two Pave Hawks and two HC-130P/N long-range refueling aircraft were mobilized to the Gulf to provide search-and-rescue (SAR) support.

They were assigned to the 331st Air Expeditionary Group, an inter-agency search and rescue unit based at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. Rescue wing commander Col. Steve Kirkpatrick was put in charge of the inter-agency group, which was comprised of more than 600 personnel, 20 Air Force and Navy HH-60 helicopters and four HC-130s.

"Our SAR crews endure specialized training to conduct humanitarian and combat search and rescues," Colonel Kirkpatrick said. "We always hope there won't be a need for it. But when there is, we'll do it, and we'll do it well."

The day before Ike made landfall, 920th Airmen





**PARARESCUEMEN FROM THE 920TH RESCUE WING SAVED 17 PEOPLE FROM THE FLOODWATERS AT NEDERLAND, TEXAS. HERE, WITH HIS FAMILY SAFELY ON THE HELICOPTER, A HOMEOWNER GATHERS THE LAST OF HIS BELONGINGS BEFORE BEING HOISTED UP TO A HH-60G PAVE HAWK.**

photo/Tech. Sgt. Paul Flipse



photo/Tech. Sgt. Paul Flipse

Rescue missions were staged round-the-clock from the 331st Air Expeditionary Group command post at Randolph Air Force Base near San Antonio, Texas (right). **Of the 27 rescues performed during the operation, Reservists from the 920th Rescue Wing made 17 of them.** Following the storm, more animals could be seen on the streets of Nederland, Texas (above). Two HC-130P/N Hercules aircraft from here provided aerial refueling (below) over the Galveston area for search-and-rescue assets during the operation.



photo/Tech. Sgt. Sean Mitchell



flew from Patrick AFB to Gulfport Biloxi regional airport, Miss., where they could wait safely out of harm's way but close enough to join the rescue effort in a matter of hours.

At just after 2 a.m. Sept. 13, Hurricane Ike churned inland across the Galveston coastline as a category 2 storm with sustained winds of 120 mph and gusts ranging to 140. Before it was through, it would take 116 lives and become the third-costliest storm in U.S. history.

By noon on Saturday, the rotors on the 920th helicopters began slowly turning, creating a cyclone of their own around the

aircraft. The aircrews had been cleared to fly, and their instructions were to head for Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base some 30 miles northeast of Galveston.

It was en route to Ellington Field when the two Pave Hawks flew over the town of Nederland, Texas. Although their flight plan didn't call for any stops except to refuel, the aircrew members who were veterans of the Katrina rescue mission decided a pit stop might be warranted at the little town, which was sitting mostly under water.

Located just 20 miles from the coast, Nederland took a wicked punch from Ike,

and it showed. Houses were smashed to matchsticks, the pieces slowly drifting away like twigs in a stream. Scores of cars sat submerged, resting beneath the surface of the murky floodwaters like sunken ships. Dozens of animals in the water; some dead, some pacing aimlessly. Huge rainbows of pollution snaking along the surface of the water.

After seeing the devastation below, the pilots quickly peeled off their flight path and circled the town in search of people in need of rescue. Within minutes, they spot a family trapped on a rooftop and the rescue begins:



photo/Tech. Sgt. Parker Gyokeres



The task of commanding the 331st Air Expeditionary Group and all its rescue assets and personnel fell to Col. Steve Kirkpatrick (left). Along with his duties overseeing rescue missions, he also made time to let the public know how things were going via local and national media. The ninth named storm of 2008, Hurricane Ike came ashore as a **category 2—sustained winds of 120 mph** and gusts to 140. The damages from the wind and flooding was estimated at more than \$30 billion.



photo/Tech. Sgt. Paul Flipse

A Pave Hawk sweeps down, holds a hover over the house. Then a pararescuer clips himself to a tandem harness, gives a thumbs-up to a flight engineer, who lowers him onto the roof.

One by one, the family members pull the harness around themselves before being hoisted to safety, their eyes closed to slits against the wind from the Pave Hawk's rotors as they're lifted.

And then they're inside the helicopter, out of the harness, scrambling to the far side of the cabin, the realization they're safe spreading across their faces like ripples on a pond, washing away the

stress—smoothing the furrowed brows and wrinkled knots between their eyes.

By the time the pilots turned their Pave Hawks back toward Galveston, 920th aircrews had saved 17 people.

During the next four days, the 331st Air Expeditionary Group launched rescue missions around the clock from its base of operations at Randolph AFB near San Antonio. Pilots and aircrews alike praised the operation for its planning and execution, it's oversight and efficiency.

Many locals heeded warnings to evacuate in the days before Ike arrived, so the total number of rescues made by the

group totaled 27, small in comparison to the ten of thousands made after Katrina.

But 920th Reservists at the 920th didn't spend time talking about numbers. Instead they talked about how things were from Katrina in terms of operations, how many improvements were made, how all the pieces were put in place—from refueling to lodging for crew rest to command and control. This was how it was supposed to run, they said. Maximum effort, minimum delay. That way, all they have to worry about is doing what they do best:

Saving lives.



photo/Tech Sgt. Paul Filipe



photo/Tech Sgt. Paul Filipe



Minutes after stumbling across the flooded town of Nederland, Texas, **920th Rescue Wing** Reservists begin hoisting people off rooftops (top) into their HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters. The Reservists also rescued a few family pets—one of which was personally carried onboard a helicopter by pararescueman Senior Master Sgt. Doug Kestranek (bottom). Before leaving town, the Reservists had saved 17 people, 6 dogs and two (very lucky) black cats.



photo/Tech. Sgt. Paul Flipse

Just 20 miles from the Gulf Coast, the little town of Nederland, Texas (population 2,000) took a near-direct hit when Ike made landfall at nearby Galveston just after 2 a.m. Sept. 13. Many were able to escape their homes and walk through the floodwaters to dry land. But other parts of town were covered by 15 feet of water, trapping local residents on roofs or roads. Two 920th Rescue Wing helicopter aircrews had been on their way to Galveston when they overflowed the little town and, after seeing the damage, quickly began rescue operations, during which they **saved the lives of 17 people.**



# The Benefits of Deployment

Whether Airmen agree to go to war or someone orders them to go matters when it comes to what they're eligible for when they come home

**S**ince Operation Desert Storm, the Air Force has increasingly relied on Reserve and Guard forces to meet combatant commander requirements. Demand for forces dramatically increased after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

The Air Force initially met this demand primarily through partial mobilization of forces. Although Reserve and Guard forces are still being mobilized — particularly in stressed career fields like security forces, civil engineering and operations — the Air Force Reserve has subsequently strived to meet these requirements through volunteerism.

To accommodate this greater reliance on Reserve and Guard forces, Congress and the Department of Defense have revised law and policy, improving benefits in some cases

and outlining accessibility to Reservists in others. The range and conditions of benefits—when they apply and when they don't—can be confusing.

Does a Reservist get a particular benefit when he or she meets a contingency requirement by volunteering as opposed to being mobilized?

For the most part, the answer to this question is yes. However, there are some cases where benefits for volunteers differ from benefits for people who are mobilized.

As Reservists are only mobilized in support of contingencies, this article examines the applicability of benefits for volunteers only in the context of contingencies. Moreover, since mobilizations in almost all cases last longer than 30 days, this article does not address the applicability of benefits for volunteers in situations involving 30 days or less.

This article focuses on 30 benefits or categories of benefits available to Reservists and Guardsmen that include pay, allowances and leave, retirement, health care, legal protections, education, insurance, survivor benefits, privileges, and small business support.

Of the 30 benefits—or categories of benefits—that were reviewed, 25 are the same for both volunteers and people who are mobilized; 5 are different.

These five are legal assistance, income replacement, the 1095 rule, post-deployment/mobi-

lization respite absence and follow-on mobilization. Following is a brief explanation of these five differences:

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Although legal assistance is available to Reservists and their dependents whenever on active-duty orders, a mobilized Reservist is eligible for continued legal assistance after demobilization. This entitlement is available when mobilized for more than 30 days and provides legal assistance to Reservists and dependents after release from active duty, for not less than twice the length of active duty, subject to the availability of legal resources. See 10 U.S.C. § 1044, as amended P. Law 110-181, section 541; 122 Stat. 114.

## INCOME REPLACEMENT

In order to qualify for income replacement of up to \$3,000 per month, a Reservist must be involuntarily mobilized (not on voluntary orders) for any full month following the date on which the member (a) completes 547 continuous days of active duty under involuntary mobilization order; (b) completes 730 cumulative days of active duty under an involuntary mobilization order in the previous 1,826 days; or (c) is involuntarily mobilized for a period of 180 days or more within 180 days of release from a period of 180 days or more of active duty.

This income replacement is only the



difference between the member's average civilian income and the total military compensation, when the member's civilian pay was more. This entitlement is not applicable to federal employees and is set to expire at the end of the 2008 calendar year. See 37 U.S.C. § 910, as amended, P. Law 110-181, section 604; 122 Stat. 145.

### THE 1095 RULE

Reservists may serve on active duty orders for 1,095 days (three years) of the previous 1,460 days (four years). If Reservists serve in excess of this limitation, then they must be counted against active-duty or active Guard and Reserve end-strength limits, unless these Reservists serve on active duty under certain excluded categories.

Days spent on mobilization orders are excluded, as are days on annual tour, days spent as an AGR, duty performed before first entering the Selected Reserve and certain training tours. While the secretary of the Air Force may waive certain Reservists to count against active-duty or AGR end-strength according to established criteria, a waiver is not guaranteed.

These criteria, in order of priority, are members deployed to the area of responsibility; members directly supporting Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom or Noble Eagle; members supporting approved contingencies; members on operational support orders; and members backfilling for active-duty members who are forward deployed in support of OEF, OIF or ONE. In the past year, more than 2,200 Reservists applied for waiver, while more than 1,600 were approved. See 10 U.S.C. § 115,

as amended, P. Law 110-181, sections 403(h), 416(b), 417; 122 Stat. 87, 91, 92.

### PDMRA

Secretary of defense policy establishes the post-deployment/mobilization respite absence (PDMRA) benefit. Department of Defense and AFRC guidance further delineate the policy. Essentially, PDMRA provides for paid days off after extended time spent deployed (minimum of one cumulative year within the last 72 months).

When mobilized, all time is credited toward PDMRA, whether deployed in side or outside the continental United States. By contrast, for volunteers, the benefit applies only when serving in certain designated locations and only if the member is subsequently mobilized within the next 72 months. See Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 19 Jan 2007; OSD/PR Policy Letter, 15 Mar 2007, as amended 18 Apr 2007 and 24 May 2007; and HQ AFRC/A1 Policy Letter, 21 Feb 2008.

### FOLLOW-ON MOBILIZATION

Another difference between volunteering and being mobilized that could affect most Reservists is a secondary or follow-on mobilization. Current policy strives to minimize the disruption to a member's commitments outside the military.

Accordingly, the secretary of defense has established a desired ratio of time Reservists spend mobilized to time not mobilized. This ratio is currently 1 to 5, which means that a Reservist who spends a period of time being mobilized should expect five times that period at

home station, not being mobilized.

A member who volunteers does not establish a new dwell period at home station by virtue of volunteering for a contingency. He or she can still be mobilized upon his or her return from voluntary duty, per the established ratio, based on his or her last mobilization.

It's also important to point out that the dwell rate is a planning objective and, as such, can be changed by the secretary of defense when the needs of the military require. See Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 19 Jan 2007; OSD/PR Policy Letter, 15 Mar 2007, as amended 18 Apr 2007 and 24 May 2007; and HQ AFRC/A1 Policy Letter, 21 Feb 2008.

### SUMMARY

In order for the Air Force Reserve to continue fulfilling combatant commander requirements by way of volunteerism, while minimizing the disruptive effects of mobilization, it is imperative that Reservists have the facts.

The fact is a large number of benefits are the same, regardless of how the Reservist is placed on active duty. Where differences do exist, in most cases the benefits only become available after extensive time on mobilization orders or time spent in designated countries.

However, volunteerism may offer the Reservist greater flexibility and control since orders will be produced and amended (if necessary) locally. References are available to help clarify any misunderstandings about Reservist benefits.

Since benefits for Reservists are always subject to change, Reservists should keep abreast of the latest information available on the Web at [www.defenselink.mil/ra](http://www.defenselink.mil/ra).





photo illustration by/Tech. Sgt. Paul Flipse

# Capitol thrill

Wing Airmen drop in on Washington, brief congressional staff on rescue mission

**STAFF SGT. HEATHER KELLY**

920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

**M**embers of the 920th Rescue Wing recently converged on Capitol Hill to meet with congressional staffers.

The meetings were designed to provide legislators a greater understanding of the rescue wing and Air Force Reserve mission. Coordinated by the Air Force Reserve Policy Integration Directorate (REI), unit members were selected for the trip based on their recent contributions to the wing mission, and included Lt. Col. Phil Kennedy, Maj. Gabriel Ledford, Maj. Paul Schulte, Tech. Sgt. Elisabeth Grosh, Tech. Sgt. Dominique Hogan and Tech. Sgt. Ernest Kunde.

Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner, Chief of the Air Force Reserve, also met with and provided introductions for the 920th representatives.

Sergeant Kunde, an Air Reserve Technician and HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter crew chief with the unit, said the experi-

ence gave him a better understanding of the role REI plays in promoting the Air Force Reserve to lawmakers and their staffs.

"They were impressed with the rescue mission and the support we provide to the active duty," said Sergeant Kunde, who recently returned from a deployment to Qatar.

A member of the unit since 2002, Sergeant Kunde volunteered for the opportunity to go to D.C.

"Anytime we can go up to the 'Hill' and let our congressional leadership know what we do, how we do it and what kind of support we're providing is time well spent," he said.

The group spoke with staffers from the House and Senate during their two-day trip. Between meetings, they received a tour of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill buildings.

As a Reserve unit, the majority of

920th Airmen face unique challenges, according to Colonel Kennedy, director of operations for the helicopter squadron here.

"Traditional Reservists have to balance their civilian careers and families with the demands of their service commitments," he said. "Add deployments and an incredibly high operations tempo on top of all of that ... it's no easy task, but 920th folks get it done."

According to Maj. Bill Bridgemohan, acting chief of congressional inquiries, it's one of the many reasons why educating legislators is critical to the Air Force Reserve.

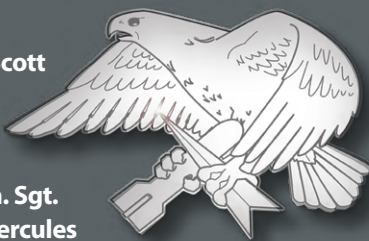
"One thing that remains constant on Capitol Hill is change," said Major Bridgemohan. "It's important for us to continue to inform our congressional leadership about the incredible work being done by rescue and the Air Force Reserve. That is our challenge."

While 920th members were there to tell the Reserve rescue story, they came away with a few lessons of their own.

"One of the things the staffers stressed is the fact that military members and their families should reach out to their congressional representatives if they have concerns," said Sergeant Hogan, a 920th Security Forces specialist. "They are there to help."

920<sup>TH</sup> MAINTENANCE GROUP  
**SAVE OF THE MONTH**

**Senior Master Sgt. Scott Pittman, Master Sgt. Ronald Troxle, Master Sgt. Karl Owens, Tech. Sgt. Nathan Ahola, Tech. Sgt. John Knob, Tech. Sgt. Hercules Thames Jr, Staff Sgt. Joshua Cigainero and Staff Sgt. Kenneth Chapman** distinguished themselves in the performance of outstanding service to the 920th Maintenance Group here for the months of July and August.



On Friday, July 11th, aircraft 6238 landed at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., for high-altitude training (HAT) by our aircrew in preparation of an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. Upon landing, the crew noticed smoke billowing from the #1 engine. Further inspection revealed the engine had lost oil, and three tail rotor blades were damaged during flight. The decision was made to change the engine and repair the rotor blades.

Without hesitation, Sergeants Ahola and Cigainero volunteered to work throughout the night to remove the faulty engine—even though they had just endured a long flight and helped unload a C-5 cargo aircraft.

The next morning, Sergeants Owens and Chapman began the repair process for the tail rotor blades—even though neither had experience repairing them in the past. The repairs they made saved both the unit—and the Air Force—the tens of thousands of dollars it would've cost to order new rotors.

Meanwhile back at home station, Sergeants Pittman, Troxle and Knob worked on a replacement engine for aircraft 6238. They decided to replace the engine with one recently removed from aircraft 6236 for a 600-hour inspection. Sergeant Pittman and his team aggressively tackled this demanding challenge and worked through-

out the day—first to complete the extensive 600-hour inspection along with all accompanying documentation. Normally, this task would've taken three days. Instead, thanks to Sergeant Pittman and his team, it was completed in a day.

The team then faced another challenge: getting the engine prepared and delivered to Davis-Monthan in time for the new engine to be installed and have the aircraft ready for the training mission scheduled for Monday. After finding out the engine couldn't be shipped via trailer, the team devised a way to get a container from supply to ship the engine on a C-5 aircraft. Overcoming all obstacles, the serviceable engine was packed, processed and loaded on a C-5 by 9 a.m. Sunday. In the end, the engine made it to Davis-Monthan AFB in time for Sergeants Ahola and Cigainero to install it prior to the Monday deadline.

Without the diligent effort of these individuals, aircraft 6238 wouldn't have been available for refueling training for helicopter crews. Their incredible teamwork is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of all those members involved.

In August, **Sergeant Thames** distinguished himself in the performance of outstanding service here when an evening training flight encountered a safety issue.

On Thursday Aug. 14, aircraft 4855 was scheduled for a night mission. At approximately 4:30 p.m., the HC-130 squadron reported the aircraft couldn't take off with the current fuel load due to severe wind gusts and a 4,000-foot runway. For the mission to take place, fuel had to be removed.

Sergeant Thames volunteered to stay well past his release time to assist Master Sgt. McAtee and Senior Master Sgt. Mercer in the process of de-fueling the aircraft, after which the aircraft was ready to safely complete its assigned mission.

Based on their selfless actions, professionalism and dedication to duty, the above mentioned are hereby awarded the "Save of the Month" for July & August 2008.



SENIOR MASTER SGT. SCOTT PITTMAN



TECH. SGT. JOHN KNOB



MASTER SGT. RONALD TROXLE



TECH. SGT. NATHAN AHOLA

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

The following "Save of the Month" awardees weren't available to have their photos taken before this issue went to print: Master Sgt. Karl Owens, Tech. Sgt. Hercules Thames Jr, Staff Sgt. Kenneth Chapman and Staff Sgt. Joshua Cigainero.



**Care in the Air** // During a recent search and rescue foreign-exchange visit to Peru, Air Force Reservists from the 920th Rescue Wing here with one of the wing's HC-130P/N Hercules aircraft were called into action to save a man's life. A call came in that an American man at a remote airfield was suffering from acute appendicitis. Although the call was a surprise, the team of reservists didn't hesitate to jump into action. As the aircrew began preparations to start the engines of their 83,000 lb., steel, turbo-propeller-driven aircraft, pararescueman Senior Master Sgt. Doug Kestranek and several aircraft-maintenance personnel climbed onboard. They were soon underway to the remote airfield, located at the coastal town of Pisco, where the aircrew left the engines running while several maintenance members helped carry the patient onto the aircraft. Then Sergeant Kestranek put his medical skills to work—stabilizing the man while the aircraft sped to a medical facility. They flew north up the coast more than 500 miles to a hospital in Lima, the capital of Peru, where the man received further treatment. *(photo/Tech. Sgt. Rob Grande)*



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