

PONY EXPRESS

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943rd Rescue Group, Davis-Monthan AFB Ariz.



Group remembers heritage, honors men of Pony 1-2

PONY EXPRESS

943rd RQG Commander
Colonel Robert Dunn

Chief of Public Affairs
Master Sgt. Ruby Zarzyczny

Editorial Assistance
Team
Major Michael Williams

Contact Information

943rd Rescue Group
Public Affairs Office
5020 E. Arizola Street
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ 85707-3108
Phone: 520-228-5952
DSN: 228-5952
FAX: 520-228-5258
943rqg.pa@dm.af.mil

Pony Express

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FY 2009 UTA Schedule

4-5 Apr 09
2-3 May 09
6-7 Jun 09
11-12 Jul 09
1-2 Aug 09
12-13 Sep 09

On The Cover:

The Davis-Monthan Honor Guard posts the colors during the 20 Anniversary Memorial Service Pony 1-2
Photo by: MSgt Bryan Ripple,
943rd Rescue Group, Public Affairs

From the Top Straight talk Again.

By Col Robert Dunn
943rd Rescue Group Commander

When I sit down to write an article for the Pony Express or Angel Wings, I try to think of some subject that would be relevant to everyone and of military significance. Now I could talk about all the great things the units have done in the last year and are still doing in Afghanistan, Iraq or Horn of Africa. But trying to condense that into one page is like trying to solve world hunger. There is just way to many extraordinary great things that the wing is doing. So in that realm just let me say Hoooo-rah! Well Done!

Now let's take a look at something that took place recently at Davis-Monthan and a little closer to home but is almost as relevant to military readiness of Fit-to-Fight. Don't stop reading now it's not what you think. I'm not talking about doing pushups or running a mile and half, I'm talking about being financially fit to fight. And with the economy the way it is right now with you and the rest of the world having lost about 50% of your retirement accounts, it's probably pretty relevant.

Right now you're probably ready for me to tell you how to be a millionaire by the time you retire, sorry not going to happen: I lost about 50% of my 401K as well. Money problems is the #2 cause of divorce in America and it's probably right up there for causing job dissatisfaction and stress in our profession. I hear more about job complaints and stress, and when trying to get to the bottom of the issue, it often times comes down to money. More often it's about money than it is about stress or worry about going to war and being gone from home. Strange isn't it. People are more worried about how much money they're going to make or lose than somebody shooting at them.

Now back to the real subject, what is this thing financially fit to fight. Most of you are saying, well if I had a million bucks in the bank and didn't have to worry about making my mortgage I would be fit to

fight. I'm here to debunk that idea and here's why. I dare say, I might be more financially fit to fight as a LT than I am right now as a Colonel. Here's what I mean. I wasn't married, didn't have kids, and had no car or mortgage payments and no credit card debt. All my paycheck was spent on food and (we'll stop there and leave it at that) suffice to say I had no debt what so ever. I'm not saying we should fore go any of those things. What I am saying is you have to live a lifestyle within your means and responsibilities in which money is not a care. When you can do this- You are financially fit to fight.

Right now you're thinking this Colonel is full of it because I have that fat O-6 paycheck coming in. I refer you back to the LT sentence. It's not how much money you make it's the plan you have with the money you make. We in the military are used to making operational plans, then we make back-up plans in case the first plan doesn't work and finally a tertiary plan in case both of the first ones don't work. You need to treat your finances and pretty much everything you do the same way.

For example, you have a mortgage, car and credit card payments and your kids need braces and if you don't get that UTA pay one of them doesn't get paid or if that TDY pay doesn't come in the credit card doesn't get paid or only the minimum gets paid. You are living way way beyond your means and are definitely NOT FIT TO FIGHT. But you really have to have all those things. Wrong. You just really WANT those things and your life is now full of anxiety, stress and ulcers. Hey when I was a LT making \$600.00 a month I couldn't afford a car payment or mortgage payment either.

Most of you are now thinking "Well Duh". Well how about for all you out there that are living right now well within your means- What if it all falls apart? You lose your military position? You're BRAC'd? Civil Service abolishes your job? You get sick? You have a plan for that? What about the mortgage, etc? If you don't have a plan for that; YOU ARE NOT REALLY FINANCIALLY FIT TO FIGHT!!!

Tell you what, next article I'll tell you how to get there from here since I've run out of space on this one. Sorry, it's called the hook! Hope you bite.

Group remembers heritage, honors men of Pony 1-2

By Master Sgt. Bryan Ripple
943rd Rescue Group, Public Affairs



Photo by Master Sgt. Ruby Zarzyczyn

Many Airmen from 943rd Rescue Group, officials from the 355th Wing, the Davis-Monthan AFB host unit, retired 943rd and 71st Special Operations Squadron members, and families gathered at Heritage Park here March 8 to honor and remember 15 lives that were lost in the line of duty 20 years ago.

Surrounded by 50 Patriot Guard Rider's flag cordon the unit formed up to honor and remember the men of Pony 1-2.

On Sunday evening, March 12, 1989, while participating in a joint-service training exercise, four aircrew members three Citizen Airmen and an Air Reserve Technician from the Air Force Reserve's 71st Special Operations Squadron, now known as the 943rd Rescue Group, and 11 special forces soldiers from the 5th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, N.C., died in the crash of a CH-3E Jolly Green Giant Helicopter, tail number 65-05692, call sign PONY 1-2. The crash happened in a desolate desert region 20 miles northwest of Tucson.

"This unit has always been a small, very close-knit family, and we swore that we'd never forget about PONY 1-2 and the 15 men who lost their lives that night," he said. "After the initial grieving phase and the accident investigation, we decided the best way to remember them was to place a CH-3E helicopter on display here at Heritage Park for all to see."

The first task then Senior Master Sgt. Bergman and others from the unit such as Maj. Mike Williams, commander of the 943rd Maintenance Squadron and Master Sgt. Chuck Ruth a crew chief faced was to help expand Heritage Park to make room to put a helicopter on display. Personnel from the base civil engineer squadron delivered dirt and gravel for the landscaping, but it would have to be spread into place by members of the unit who volunteered countless hours with shovels, rakes, and hoes to prepare the site.

The project committee contacted Warner Robins Air Logistics Center and asked for help to locate an appropriate helicopter to memorialize Pony 1-2. Soon after, an Army had an H-3 sitting in a field at Fort Rucker, Ala. was donated for the Heritage Park display and shipped by truck.

When the aircraft arrived, the team knew they had to roll up

To remember this day, former members of the, 302 SOS, 71 SOS and 943rd RQG and Master Sgt. Chuck Ruth, 943rd MXS take time for a group picture after the memorial service.

their sleeves and get ready for a lot of work.

"It was in terrible shape. It came to us in pieces on two flatbed trucks. We built cradles for it, put on landing gear and manufactured many other parts to make the aircraft a fitting resemblance of 692. This helicopter was actually a sister ship of 692 at one time. We worked on it for a year and a half with Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm getting in the way for a while. We eventually got it all cleaned up and put together, painted it and towed it down the street from our hangar to the park. The civil engineer squadron moved it into place with a crane for us. This was a truly Herculean effort by everybody. People volunteered on weekends, in the evenings, whenever they were off work—it was an all volunteer effort by a lot of people. Finally, on May 3, 1992 the display was dedicated."

Since the evening of the crash that claimed the lives of those on board PONY 1-2, many reservists have come and gone through the unit. The squadron is now a group; the name of the unit and the mission have changed, but there were still many people in attendance at the memorial ceremony who still recall the event, some of which spent countless hours preparing the static display at Heritage Park. They've done this for their comrades who have gone before them. The memorial of PONY 1-2 is dedicated to their memory, standing for future generations who make the same commitment for their nation.

"I think it's critical for current members to know the history behind the unit. It helps build e sprit de corps to remain true to the past. Without knowing your unit's history, how can you look forward to the future?" said Chief Bergman.

Many will remember that the 71st Special Operations Squadron was, by nature, always a close-knit organization. The aircrew flying PONY 1-2, and the 11 Special Forces Soldiers on board that fateful night were more than comrades-in-arms; they were, in the truest sense of the word, family.



Photo by MSgt Bryan Ripple

Lt Col Steven White, 305th Rescue Squadron Commander leads the group formation in a salute as the Davis-Monthan Honor Guard posts the colors during the 20th Anniversary Pony 1-2 Memorial Service, March 8.



Surrounded by 50 Patriot Guard Rider's flag cordon, fifteen former members of the unit some who were members when the unit was the 302nd SOS at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. and 71st SOS here attended the Pony 1-2 service to pay their respects to men who were like family.



Photos by MSgt Ruby Zarzeczny

Chief Master Sgt. Craig Bergman, retired 943rd MXS superintendent was the guest speaker at this year's Pony 1-2 Service. He personally knew the men who perish March 12, 1989 and helped to uphold the promise to never forget the crew and passengers of Pony 1-2.



During the memorial service, Col Robert Dunn, 943rd Rescue Group Commander, thanked our special guest and unit members for attending the service. He went on to say, "This is a special occasion for us to remember and reflect on our friends, loved ones, heritage and our motto "These things we do; that others may live..." He recalled one of the lines from the Airmen's Creed that states, I will leave no Airman behind. "...For me this does not simply refer to the physical body of an Airman fallen on the battlefield. It also refers to the memory and sacrifices of those that have gone before and paid the ultimate price to win and maintain the freedoms we all enjoy today. For if we forget these sacrifices we will never truly appreciate how precious, valuable and costly these freedoms are. We must remember freedom is not free--it is paid for with the sweat from our brows, the tears of our families, and sometimes the blood of our comrades."



U.S. Army Sergeant 1st Class Derek Dutcher, Tucson Army Recruiting Company and Senior Airman David Brydon, 943rd MXS solemnly carried a wreath to the H-3 Jolly Green Giant memorial static display as the names of the 15 men of Pony 1-2 were read and taps was played by the DM honor guard.

Post 9/11 MGIB

The Post 9/11 GI Bill has dramatically expanded the scope of education benefits. Reservists now can receive up to full tuition at the highest public institution rate in the state of attendance; paid to the school 100 percent of the payable benefit for 36 months cumulative AD since 9/11; stepped down in 10 percent increments for each 6 months of AD service less than 36 months.

- Receive a monthly housing stipend equivalent to the BAH rate of E-5 with dependents in the Military Housing Area in which the ZIP code of the education institution resides; paid to the individual
- Receive up to \$1000 for books, supplies, equipment and other costs; paid to the individual
- Transfer the benefit to dependent spouse or children
- Member must have completed 6 years in Armed Forces and agree to 4 more years of service (or as otherwise determined by SECAF)
- Spouse cannot use the benefit until member has completed at least 6 years of service
- Children cannot use the benefit until member has completed 10 years of service and child has completed high school or equivalent or 18 years of age

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) plans to begin accepting applications of veterans and service members for certification for this program 1 May, with the objective of determining their eligibility amount and notifying them within an average of 24 days; the VA will announce later when dependents with transferred entitlement may apply. The VA will begin paying benefits for education pursued under this program on 1 August 2009.

The Department of Defense hopes to have a website available in June for members to certify eligibility for transfer of their Post 9/11 GI Benefits. Go to <http://www.gibill.va.gov> to learn more

Percentage of Maximum Benefit:

- at least 36 months 100 percent
- at least 30 continuous days on active duty (Discharged due to service-connected disability) 100 percent
- at least 30 months, but less than 36 months 90 percent
- at least 24 months, but less than 30 months 80 percent
- at least 18 months, but less than 24 months 70 percent
- at least 12 months, but less than 18 months 60 percent
- at least 06 months, but less than 12 months 50 percent
- at least 90 days, but less than 06 months 40 percent

For those individuals entitled to the maximum tuition and fee benefit and whose tuition and fees exceed the highest in-state undergraduate tuition at a public institution (i.e. graduate training or training at a private institution), the amount payable is equal to the highest in-state undergraduate tuition at a public institution, unless benefits under the Yellow Ribbon provision apply.



The Yellow Ribbon Program

The Yellow Ribbon Program provision of the Post-9/11 GI Bill allows institutions to enter into an agreement with VA to fund tuition costs above the highest in-state undergraduate tuition rate. VA will match each additional dollar that an institution of higher learning (IHL) contributes toward an eligible student's tuition

costs, up to 50 percent of the difference between the tuition and fees covered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the total cost of tuition and fees. Only individuals entitled to the maximum benefit rate (based on service requirements) may receive this funding. IHLs will offer this additional benefit to eligible individuals on a first come, first served basis. Detailed information regarding the Yellow Ribbon Program, including a list of participating Yellow Ribbon institutions will be posted on our website.

Prior MGIB Eligibility

Those individuals transferring from the Montgomery GI Bill (chapter 30) will have a proportional amount of their basic \$1,200 contribution refunded in the last monthly housing allowance payment when entitlement exhausts. Individuals who do not exhaust entitlement under the Post 9/11 GI Bill will not receive a refund. A refund of the \$600 additional contribution is not authorized.

Applications

We expect to begin accepting applications soon for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. For additional information, including how to apply for benefits, visit our website at www.gibill.va.gov. We will update our website as new information becomes available.

Questions

We hope that this information will assist you in planning for your future. For any questions about the Post-9/11 GI please visit our website at www.gibill.va.gov.

AFRC Interesting Facts

Currently there are five OIF/OEF veterans serving as members of Congress and two of them are also members of the Air Force Reserve.

John Boccieri (D-16/OH) is currently serving his first term in Congress. He is a C-130 Aircraft Commander at the 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown-Warren Air Reserve Station, Ohio. A major in the Air Force Reserve, he has served four tours flying missions into Iraq.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C. 2nd Term) is the only other current member of Congress to boast recent war experience. Senator Graham is a colonel in the Air Force Reserve and spent time performing legal duties in Iraq.

AFRC Aircraft Inventory (PAA)

Bomber, 8, B-52, **Fighter/Attack**, 96, A-10 and F-16, **Tanker**, 64, KC-135, **Special Ops**, 8, MC-130 E, **Personnel Recovery**, 18, HC-130N/P, HH-60G, **Strategic/Theater Airlift**, 154, C-5, C-9, C-130H, C-40C, C-130J, WC-130J, C-17A



Photos by Master Sgt. Ruby Zarzyczny

Group launches to support Space Shuttle Discovery mission

by Master Sgt. Ruby Zarzyczny
943rd Rescue Group Public Affairs

In support of the Space Shuttle Discovery mission, the 943rd Rescue Group deployed two HH-60G PAVE HAWK helicopters, nine aircraft maintainers from the 943rd Maintenance Squadron, and four pararescuemen from the 306th Rescue Squadron March 7 to Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. to augment other rescue Reservists from the 920th Rescue Wing to back up the Space Shuttle launch. The helicopters and rescue Reservists deployed on a C-17 aircraft from the Air Force Reserve's 446th Airlift Wing, McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

Seven additional Reservists including a pilot, a gunner, two flight engineers, a combat rescue officer, and two additional pararescuemen from the 943rd Rescue Group will join them March 9. They will be providing crew rescue support for the Space Shuttle Discovery launch and recovery.

With the Space Shuttle Discovery set for liftoff on March 11 at 9:20 p.m. EDT for the STS-119 mission, the countdown clock begins at the T-43 hour mark at 7 p.m. today, March 8. Earlier today, Discovery's astronauts were scheduled fly from their home base in Houston, arriving mid-afternoon in Florida.

Commander Lee Archambault will lead Discovery's crew of seven, along with Pilot Tony Antonelli, and Mission Specialists Joseph Acaba, John Phillips, Steve Swanson, Richard Arnold and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Koichi Wakata. The Discovery crew members are set to fly the S6 truss segment and install the final set of power-generating solar arrays to the International Space Station. The S6 truss will complete the backbone of the station and provide one-fourth of the total power needed to support a crew of six.

The helicopters and personnel from the 943rd are scheduled to return to Davis-Monthan AFB April 3. For more information about the 943rd Rescue Group, visit <http://www.920rqw.afrc.af.mil/units/943rescuegroup/index.asp>.



A-Team: from the left, Master Sgt. Paul Martzell, Master Sgt. Gregory Nusbaum, Staff Sgt. Anthony Hemingway, Tech. Sgt. Josh Reed, Staff Sgt Kirk Engnes, 943rd MXS.



Diversity

People tend to use the terms Diversity and Equal Opportunity (EO) interchangeably. However, the Air Force makes a distinction between Diversity and EO. Diversity is mission-oriented and leadership-driven—the way we should embrace our differences and utilize them to better accomplish our mission.

EO is compliance-oriented and legally driven—the bare minimum standards by which we must treat others (e.g., don't discriminate or harass).

Diversity is broadly defined as a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force Mission. Air Force Diversity includes, but is not limited to, personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical/spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity and gender.

Because of its broad definition, AF Diversity is categorized in the following four dimensions to facilitate understanding.

- Most people are familiar with **Demographic Diversity** because it is associated with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) protected groups and demographic data

that is routinely captured; such as age, race/ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, marital status and national origin. Demographic trends show that diversity is increasing exponentially in American society; therefore, we need to ensure that we are attracting a diverse pool of candidates to benefit from their valuable contributions.

- The dimension that is probably least understood in the diversity context is **Behavioral/Cognitive Diversity**. It refers to differences in personality types and styles of work, thinking and learning. It brings balance to the workplace by mitigating extremes associated with one particular type/style. Diverse approaches to problem solving increase creativity and innovation.

- Due to organizational and rank structures, **Structural Diversity** is prevalent across the Air Force. Structural Diversity refers to organizational and institutional characteristics that affect interaction. Leveraging skills and experiences from other services, components and occupations (e.g., differences among active, guard and reserve; AFSCs; rank, etc.) increase mission capability.

- The fourth dimension, **Global Diversity**, is knowledge of and experience with foreign languages and cultures of citizen and non-citizen Airmen, exchange officers, coalition partners, and foreign nationals with whom we interact as part of a globally engaged Air Force. Global diversity expands experiences and skills to draw on for problem solving and decision making.

Increasing awareness of diversity enables the Air Force to maximize individual strengths and create synergies that facilitate mission success.

Protecting Your Rights Under SCRA



By Maj. Robert Erbe
Deputy Staff Judge Advocate

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act of 2003 (SCRA), 50 USC App §§501-596, signed into law on December 19, 2003 and amended December 10, 2004, completely rewrote and replaced the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act (SSCRA) of 1940. The SCRA (and previously the SSCRA) protects those persons who serve on active duty for the nation's defense, from adverse consequences to their legal rights that may result because of such service, so that such persons may devote their full attention and all their energies to the nation's defense. The SCRA strengthens the protections originally granted by the SSCRA, extends certain protection for dependents of the member on active duty, and creates new protections for members. The SCRA provides protection for members in civil court and administrative actions. It also provides protections for issues involving taxation, house/apartment leases, car leases, interest rates and insurance. More recently, in October 2008, SCRA was amended to permit a servicemember to terminate or suspend contracts for cellular

telephone service. However, in order for you to take advantage of these protections, you must have a general understanding of SCRA.

First, who is protected by SCRA? The SCRA applies to all military members on federal active duty. This includes the regular forces, the reserve forces, and the guard forces in Title 10 active duty. The SCRA also applies to the Coast Guard and officers in the Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in support of the Armed Forces. In limited circumstances (i.e., evictions, joint leases), the SCRA may apply to dependents of the military member. The SCRA applies to all 50 states of the United States and to all territories (i.e., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and the Marianas Islands) subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

Second, when does SCRA apply? SCRA protections generally begin the first date of the active duty period, and may extend from 30 days up to 180 days after the member is released from active duty.

How do I invoke my SCRA protections? Many SCRA protections are not automatic and require the member to request the protection in a timely manner. For certain SCRA protections (i.e., interest rates), the member also may have to show that the active military service materially affects the member's ability to pay. For example, if military service causes a decrease in income from the individual's civilian job, the member can show that active military

Protecting Your Rights under SCRA , cont .

service materially affected the ability to pay. It is important to note that it is the creditors, not you, who must prove the “materially adverse affect” factor. As a result, if you ask for it you may get the benefit without such a showing.

Finally, you need to know what SCRA protections may apply to your situation. Below is a checklist to consider:

- **Administrative or Court Proceeding:** Are you involved in an administrative proceeding of any kind or a civil court case that you wish to postpone while serving on active duty or within 90 days after completing an active duty assignment?
- **Automobile Lease:** Do you wish to terminate an automobile lease that was entered into before: (1) being called to active duty for a period of 180 or more days; or (2) receiving orders for a permanent change of duty station outside the U.S.; or (3) from a state outside CONUS to a state outside that state or (4) deploying with a military unit for 180 days or more?
- **Rental Lease:** Do you wish to terminate a rental lease that was entered into before: (1) being called to active duty; (2) receiving orders for a permanent change of duty station; (3) deploying with a military unit for 90 day or more; or (4) separating or retiring from the military?
- **Contracts:** Is a creditor threatening to terminate an installment contract for the purchase, lease or bailment of real or personal property, such as an automobile, that you entered into before serving on active duty?
- **Eviction:** Are you or your dependents being threatened with eviction from your primary residence while serving on active duty?

- **Foreclosures and Forced Sales:** Is a mortgagor or lien holder attempting to foreclose a mortgage or enforce a lien on property you acquired before serving on active duty?
 - **Interest Rates:** On purchases you made before serving on active duty, are you paying an interest rate of over 6%—including credit cards and mortgages but not student loans?
 - **Insurance:** Are you having difficulty paying private professional, health or life insurance premiums, or has your insurance been terminated, while on active duty?
 - **Judgments:** Has a court judgment been entered against you while on active duty, or do you anticipate that a judgment might be entered against you while on active duty?
 - **State & Federal Income Taxes:** Are you having difficulty paying income taxes while on active duty? Are you paying state taxes based on your military income or other property, such as a car, to a state other than your home state of legal residency?
 - **Cell Phone Contracts:** Do you wish to terminate or suspend a cellular telephone contract that was entered into before: (1) being called to active duty; (2) receiving orders for a permanent change of duty station; (3) deploying with a military unit for 90 day or more? Is the provider threatening you with an early termination or reactivation fee?
- If you have a question regarding this article or wish to discuss any other legal issue, please send me an e-mail at Robert.Erbe@dm.af.mil. Legal assistance appointments are available during UTA weekends.

943rd Operations Support Flight



KIDCO tours the Group



Photos by Msgt Ruby Zarzyczny

Above: While on the flight line, Maj. Michael Williams, 943rd Maintenance Squadron commander explains the control panel of the HH-60G helicopter to the KIDCO children who toured the group, March 12.

Above right: Senior Master Sgt. Henry Shaw watches a helicopter take off and answers the KIDCO children's questions about the helicopter.



Staff Sgt. Joshua Gonzales, aircrew flight equipment technician and Amn Amanda Misuraca, aircrew flight equipment apprentice from the 943rd Operations Support Flight demonstrated the safety equipment used by aircrew when they fly on the HH-60G Helicopter to 22 children ages five to 11 from TAG Elementary School's KIDCO afterschool program who toured the group, March 12. Their demonstration included protective gear worn by the aircrew, radios, night vision goggles, chem light signaling and more.

Breakfast Burrito Fund Raiser



Photos by Msgt Ruby Zarzeczny

Funding raising never smell so good! Tech. Sgt. Yolanda Esparza, 943rd MSF Staff Sgt. Calista Heath-Martinez, 306th RQS and Master Sgt. Jeremy Malcom, 943rd MXS rolled 60 large breakfast burritos for the unit's Air Force ball fund raiser, March 7.

Staff Sgt. Patricia Salas, 943rd MSF collects money from hunger unit members who made donations during the breakfast burrito fund raiser. The group raised \$183 to go towards the unit's Air Force ball that will be held in November. A car wash fund raiser is planned for April 4.



Mrs. Ruth Dunn, left, presents Mr. William Johnson a gift as a token of her gratitude on behalf of the Family Readiness Key Spouses for his contributions to the Key Spouse program during his wife Lt Col Johnson's farewell luncheon, March 20.

VA Benefits OEF/OIF veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs has recently launched (on 19 Jan 09) an addition to their va.gov website that includes links and information for returning OEF/OIF veterans.

<http://www.oefoif.va.gov/>

Volunteers wanted at VA hospital

The Southern AZ VA Health Care System is currently looking for volunteers. For more information contact the PA office or the VA volunteer services at (520) 629-1822.

Fitness Test, Saturday and Sunday

Mr. Bracamonte will be conducting fitness tests April 4 and 5 at 7 a.m. at the base track. Reservists must be in military status to participate.

Softball Practice

The 943rd RQG intermural softball team practice is Sat., April 11 at 10 a.m. at Thunderbolt Field. If you're interested in playing or supporting the team, please call TSgt Josh Reed at 228-2238.

For on-base emergencies

The direct line to get emergency assistance via a cell phone is **228-3333**. From a government telephone the number is 911.

943rd RQG Webpage

The group has a webpage. It is located on the 920th RQW home website at: <http://www.920rqw.afrc.af.mil/units/943rescuegroup/index.asp>. Check it out.

Celebrating Volunteerism April 19 to 25

*By Master Sgt. Ruby Zarzyczny
943rd Rescue Group Public Affairs*

“One day every person will discover their power to make a difference.”

Creating healthy communities in vibrant democracies around the world is one volunteer organization's goal.

National Volunteer Week is April 19–25. This week recognizes one of America's most valuable assets—its volunteers and reflects on the ways they improve our communities.

Instituted in 1974, National Volunteer Week encourages individuals and communities to discover the power of volunteering to make a difference and to create lasting social change.

People volunteer for many reasons, but most are motivated by the chance to make a difference by helping others.

There are many good reasons to volunteer like to help a friend or a complete stranger, make new friends, self improvement, try out a job, develop new skills, polish your resume (EPRs and OPRs), increase self-esteem, give back to society or to enjoy something you love.

“I volunteered at the orphanage because I love children,” said Staff Sgt. Alan Plante, 306th Rescue Squadron. “Being a father myself, my thought process was, what better way could I spend my time than to help raise the spirits of young children.”

“I hope my efforts made a difference,” he added. “Making a child smile and hearing a child's laugh was rewarding enough for me. It is far too easy not to volunteer because of a busy schedule, however the feeling of being able to assist those less fortunate is indescribable.”

Along with the many reasons to volunteer are also many obvious and not so obvious benefits too. Some research suggest that volunteering can improve your health (physical, mental and social well-being) by increasing social activity and networks and reducing isolation and depression. Regular physical and social activities of volunteering can reduce stress,



Courtesy Photo

While deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Staff Sgt. Alan Plante, 306th Rescue Squadron helps make a difference in a child's life when he and other members of the unit volunteered through the Chaplain's Office to change diapers, feed and play with orphaned children and then rock them to sleep at a local orphanage near Djibouti, Africa.

make you feel happy, help avoid overeating or not eating at all and keep you involved with others. These benefits might also help us stay “fit to fight” both physically and emotionally.

In today's struggle to regain economic stability, volunteering may be key to revitalizing America. We can use the knowledge from lessons learned from our nation's past economic hard times to view volunteerism not merely as an act of charity for the less fortunate stranger but also as a vital exchange of kindness and need between neighbors and friends.

During National Volunteer Week, please thank those who have discovered their power to make a difference through volunteering.

Force development helps put faces in places

by Senior Master Sgt. Kelly Mazezka
Air Reserve Personnel Center Public Affairs

Air Force Reserve officers are reaping the benefits of completing their Reserve Officer Development Plans as they step into new opportunities to serve.

“Without development team involvement, in particular being on the squadron commander list, I would never have received an opportunity to be an IMA to a squadron commander,” said Lt. Col. Mike Heard, the IMA to the 11th Civil Engineer Squadron commander.

“Working with my civil engineering assignment facilitator, who helped me find appropriate opportunities, was invaluable. The work my facilitator does should be studied and copied by all functional areas.”

The R-ODP is an opportunity for officers to voice their Air Force career goals. Airmen are asked to consider where they want to serve, if they want a command position, and what developmental education they desire. They’re encouraged to include their qualifications and short-, mid- and long-term goals.

Colonel Heard said completing the R-ODP was easy; it just takes a small investment of time. “You can get so bogged down in the day-to-day or month-to-month keeping up with participation and readiness requirements,” he said. “The R-ODP gives you an excuse to step back and think about your future and the contributions you could make.”

Reserve officers can complete their R-ODPs by going to the Air Reserve Personnel Center Web site at www.arpc.afrc.af.mil and clicking on the blue “R-ODP — Take charge of your Reserve career” box.

Last year ARPC hosted 34 development team events; the DTs reviewed more than 11,000 officer records. Through open dialog, the DTs determine the best counsel for each member and

create vectors. The teams determine — based on the R-ODPs, performance reports and other relevant personnel information — the officers best qualified to serve in key leadership or commander positions. The resulting key position/commander certified list is then provided to hiring officials across the Air Force.

Despite the many force development success stories, ARPC officials are not satisfied with the number of completed and commander endorsed R-ODPs they receive. To date, only 38 percent of Reserve officers have received leadership endorsement to their completed R-ODPs.

“We’d like to see that number around 80 to 90 percent,” Major Levesque said. “Commander endorsement is vital because it provides additional information the DTs can consider such as if the commander concurs with the officer’s goals or desires. Commander input may also be helpful in deciding if the desires are realistic or not.”

Officers should update their R-ODPs annually, as directed by their career field manager before their DT meets, or any time circumstances warrant an update, he said.

As with any complex process, there have been a few bumps in the road to force development, but officials are committed to improvement. “We’ve streamlined and standardized our process,” the major said. “We’re testing and growing the assignment facilitator concept. We’ve broadened our focus to ensure we provide ‘actionable’ vectors and have developed an updated Master Vector List with links and more information to provide when vectors are delivered.

“In short, we do a lot to continuously refine our program,” he said.

Farewell

The unit said farewell to Lt. Col Mary Johnson during a luncheon March 20.

Colonel Johnson is moving to Dobbins Air Force Base, Ga. to be the 22nd Air Force Chief of Intel.

She joined the 305th Rescue Squadron in 2004 as the Chief of Intel. When the unit became the 943rd Rescue Group in 2005, she became the 943rd Operations Support Flight commander. While here, she helped mentor others and was instrumental in helping the unit grow to become the premiere rescue organization that it is today.

Her husband William was also a big part of the unit. He served as a key spouse for the family support office and helped take care of reserve families while their reservists were deployed. He too was recognized for his contributions. They will both be missed!

