

GOING FOR A DIP | ZERO LEFT OF 'TWO'

# ANGEL'S WINGS

VOL. 7 NO. 4 • 920<sup>TH</sup> RESCUE WING • PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, FLA. • AIR FORCE RESERVE COMMAND • JUL/AUG 09

VICTORY OF  
THE FEET



As the war in Afghanistan continues to rage against enemy al-Qaeda forces, Rescue Reservists get recognized for saving lives under enemy fire

# ANGEL'S WINGS

VOL.7 NO.4 JULY / AUGUST 2009

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cover graphic /Capt. Cathleen Snow



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In the early morning hours of July 28, 2008, a 920th Rescue Wing aircrew left a small Special Forces outpost in the remote foothills of Afghanistan to save the lives of beleaguered Army Green Berets.



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### DINING FACILITY

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

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

### FITNESS CENTER

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

June 5-6

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.



### MAJ. DOUGLAS KNIGHT

Executive Officer, 920th Rescue Wing

# Our Purpose

No matter where I am, how bad the day, how hard the job, or how difficult the challenge and problems, the following thoughts I'd like to share with you are what help me through tough times. It is also something I wish others would think about more often. These thoughts come to me regularly when civilians see me in uniform. I often get a welcome comment like, "Thanks for serving our country."

My standard, heartfelt reply is "Sir/Ma'am, it is an honor and a privilege to serve the greatest nation in the history of the world, the United States of America. It is especially gratifying when I get to serve a great fellow American like you."

I don't believe most of us really consider on a regular basis how lucky we are to be in the greatest Air Force, one of the most powerful organizations ever, serving the greatest nation ever. A nation which has done more for more people, providing more food, aid and freedom to more oppressed and poor people both here and throughout the world, than ever known by any other nation. As members of the Air Force we have the awesome purpose of serving this high cause.

It's not just military support the United States provides. What other nation can claim the amount of food, aid and money the United States so freely gives? This aid comes straight from the American people and their hearts.

And we do not just spread aid, freedom, and military protection. How many hundreds of thousands of missionaries, teachers, and doctors have brought

our love and compassion to every corner of the world? Americans dedicating their whole lives to helping others with complete sacrifice of their own money, safety, and freedom.

We live in a nation where police, firemen, and military, for little and sometimes no money, freely risk their own lives to provide safety and protect our freedom. And while our government has had bouts with corruption and the usual human weakness, the vast majority of these care takers have been, and remain our heroes of integrity, sacrifice and service. Just look since 9-11 what these servants in uniform have shown us.

Yes, I believe we are easily the greatest nation in the history of the world. How did this happen? Because when we formed this country, we declared that we are free people, and we are entitled to this freedom because we "...are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights."

Since that humble beginning, we in the military have proven over and over that freedom is not free, and is worth fighting for at any cost. It is especially true when we are overseas fighting and winning a war, thousands of miles away from home and loved ones.

It is a great comfort to know what we truly stand for and why we are doing this with such pride and success. I believe it is because one day we will and must win this war against global terrorism that threatens us and our loved ones on our home soil. This is our purpose!

God Bless you, our nation and this purpose for which we fight!

# Questions&Answers

In a new feature, we spend time each issue getting to know the Reservists from our own 920th Rescue Wing. This month, we sit down with Staff Sgt. Jackie Greer.

**AW:** When did you first join the unit?

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** I first joined the unit as a civilian student hire with the Security Forces Squadron in January 2003. I was on staff a little over a year when I decided to enlist in March 2004.

**AW:** Have you continued your educational pursuits?

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** I earned my Associates of Arts from Brevard Community College in '04 and I will graduate this December from UCF with a double major in Criminal Justice and Legal Studies. I plan to start grad school in Jan and after that, go to law school.

**AW:** Why did you decide to enlist?

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** My dad had retired from the Army as a first sergeant and my parents bought a house and I thought if I joined it would help pay for school and help them out a little.

**AW:** In addition to going to school at night, you perform an extensive amount of duties around the unit.

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** As a student hire, I work in the front office of the 39th Rescue Squadron providing administrative support. As a Reservist, I work in relocations at the MPF. We support people who are leaving, transferring or going active duty. I am also



Staff Sgt. Jackie Greer

doing RMPs for the 308th Rescue Squadron to help out with EPRs/OPRs, and orders.

**AW:** What motivates you?

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** My children, Javel, 3, and Alijah, 2. Sometimes you see folks who have children try to use that as an excuse not to continue on. My mom did it; my sister and I were in college when my mom got her degree. My sister had two children when she graduated from college as well. I want my children to see me doing something positive so when they grow up they will be inspired to go after their goals, no matter what they are.

**AW:** Who were your role models?

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** My mom,

I also look up to Senior Master Sgt. Debra Levy and Sgt. Nina Watkins a lot. They have been very good motivational wise, and have kept me in line. Whenever I veer off, they are the ones who knock me back on track. I want to learn everything I can.

**AW:** You have family ties to the unit?

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** My mom was Lt. Col. [Dennis] Seymour's secretary before she retired so I feel I have a lot of people watching out for me, but also a lot of people I don't want to let down.

**AW:** What is your end goal?

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** I want to be a good role model. I always want to motivate people to achieve bigger

and better things. Don't ever just settle and don't ever let people tell you you're not good enough or you can't do this or that.

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** Ultimately, I want to be a lawyer and a Supreme Court justice. That is what I have set my goal to be.

Sometimes you see people who are younger than you and they have achieved this or that. I just think it's never too late, just keep on going. If you don't try, you can't complain when you don't get what you want.

**AW:** Your dad was an Army first sergeant. Any chance some of that motivational rigor rubbed off on you?

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** He was a drill sergeant and a first sergeant (laughter). From the beginning, you knew you were going to do the job, get it done and not complain. If you complain, you might as well try to fix it.

**AW:** Mother, student, military reservist. Anything you don't do?

**Staff Sgt. Greer:** I have a good support network. With the opportunities out there, there should be nothing stopping me. Of course, you have days when you're like, 'I don't know if I can do this anymore,' but you push past it...it's not too overwhelming. The only thing that can stop you is yourself.

# Let there be navigation...



Rescue Wing Airmen from the 920th Rescue Wing here supported the successful launch of an a United Launch Alliance Delta II rocket carrying a Navstar Global Positioning System spacecraft into orbit, marking the end of a near-perfect 20-year string of satellite-delivery missions.

Wing helicopter crews were responsible for clearing the Eastern Range, the roughly 10-mile-wide by 70-mile-long strip of Atlantic Ocean that extends out from the launch pad in the anticipated direction of flight, or "launch azimuth."

"We are proud to be a part of these Global Positioning System missions," said Col. Jeffrey Macrander, 920th Operations Group commander.

The 920th Rescue Wing is an Air Force Reserve combat search and rescue unit which performs more than 20 percent of the Air Force's Combat search and rescue missions. The Wing is comprised of 1,500 Airmen and flies both fixed and rotor-wing aircraft: the HC-130P/N extended-range Hercules and the HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter. (Photo/Courtesy NASA)



BY TECH. SGT. HEATHER KELLY  
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

The 920th Rescue Wing showcased its military heroes and hardware for civilian employers as part of the wing's annual Employer Day during the July drill weekend.

Twenty-six participating employers received an HC-130P/N Hercules aircraft orientation flight, combat-search-and-rescue mission briefings, high-impact videos, tours and equipment displays, not to mention lunch

at the base dining facility, sponsored by the Florida Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Committee.

"Everyone in the wing is responsible for saving a life," said Col. Steven Kirkpatrick, 920th Rescue Wing commander. "We put this event on to show civilian employers what their employees' military role is in national defense."

Air Force Reserve Airmen juggle a myriad of tasks to include balancing time with their family, career and selfless service to their country. Civilian employers and family members play

a key role in their success and are often asked to make sacrifices due to extended absences from work and home life due to deployments.

Those sacrifices became apparent throughout the day to employer David Trenn with United Space Alliance. "I didn't quite understand the amount of work that goes into being a Reservist, just how much time that goes into making the mission here happen and how little time you have off," he said.

"This has been a very valuable and



# Crazy? Perhaps.

## Effective? Definitely.

What is an effective way of getting in good with the boss?

How about a crazy day that includes an Air Force flight around the space shuttle complete with weapons tour aboard a rescue helicopter, videos of high-impact training and a combat-search-and-rescue briefing? And if that doesn't do it...offer lunch.

photo/Master Sgt. Bryan Ripple

informative experience, and I have enjoyed every minute of it," Mr. Trenn added.

Mr. Trenn was nominated by Tech. Sgt. Dan Willis, a Space Shuttle optics technician at United Space Alliance by day, and 920th RQW aircraft maintainer during Reserve duty.

"The days of the weekend warrior are forever gone," said Ed Apodaca, Florida ESGR representative and retired chief master sergeant. "Our Reserve and Guard forces are being tapped more than ever before to shoulder major mission taskings. Employers play a critical part in making sure those forces, and our

country, have the support they need to get the job done," he said.

The day's activities ended at the pararescue squadron where employers received a briefing and tour of the facility.

Colonel Kirkpatrick and ESGR representatives presented the civilian bosses with Patriot Awards for their support and participation.

"The Air Force Reserve has extremely supportive communities, families and employers that make it possible for our Reservists to serve their country and be

a part of the Rescue Wing's life-saving force. We hope to get our appreciation across to those who make it possible to perform this important mission," said Colonel Kirkpatrick.

During the closing question and answer session with pararescue Chief Master Sgt. Doug Kestrane, an employer raised his hand. "Today we've seen again and again that you have to be a little crazy to do this mission. Where would you say the pararescue job falls on that scale," he asked.

"I will say this: Crazy, perhaps. Effective, definitely," Chief Kestrane replied.



# Home schooling for rescue student Airmen

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. STEPHEN COLLIER

920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs



Pararescue Airmen-in-training await anxiously as pararescue instructors transport them to their water extraction and insertion location Aug. 19 on the Banana River adjacent to Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. The pararescue class of 22 attended daytime water insertion and extraction training at Patrick, supported by the Air Force Reserve's 920th Rescue Wing.



## Special Forces train for battle in Florida so 'that others may live'

For rescue Airmen-in-training, their office view is unlike any other. From the swamp to the open sea, and the blue sky down to the Banana River, it can change every day, sometimes several times a day. But the men of the Air Force's elite special forces unit wouldn't have it any other way.

"We get paid to do things people only dream of," said Airman 1st Class Nicholas Robillard, Air Force pararescue trainee. "The pay off is really great."

Their first office for the training they received here August 18 was an obscure, square facility where swimming and rescue gear dangles in the beams of the

Florida sunshine. Tech. Sgt. Mike Herrera, non-commissioned officer in charge of advanced weapons training, is one of several instructors looking out for the future pararescue men that one day will take their job. He and the other instructors work to guide the young, 20-something Airmen through the tactics of their craft that may one day save their or another's life.

"We want these Airmen to be proficient in the water and confident enough to facilitate a rescue," said Sergeant Herrera, a native of San Antonio. "We work to build that foundation for more training."

### Another tool in the tool bag

The training for these Airmen is robust. They're introduced to water-based tactics, including a variety of rescue scenarios they may encounter during their career. Other water training focuses on helicopter insertion and extraction, including a 15-foot rope ladder rolled into the water from the helicopter, a 10-foot 'low and slow' drop of the Airmen into the water below and a 40-foot rescue hoist that can be lowered into the water for a pararescueman to extract a downed aircrew member.

After an extensive classroom brief on the nuts and bolts of water rescues, it was time for the Airmen's second office of the day: Florida's Banana River.

The brackish river flows directly into the Atlantic Ocean, but just as important, is located adjacent to this Cocoa Beach-area base. The Airmen are transported to the base's marina, where they board a training whaler and Zodiac boat. They quickly disembark from the boating area and head out for the center of the river.

"Up to this point, the Airmen have had a variety of training for different environments, including land-based extraction and insertions," Sergeant Herrera said. "Learning how to conduct their mission in a variety of locations, including the water, gives these Airmen another tool in the tool bag."

Using a GPS device, the instructors find the exact location where a helicopter and crew from the Air Force Reserve's 920th Rescue Wing will be ready to pick up the men. After arriving at their destination, it's time to get wet. The instructors call out "neutral," signaling the boats are ready to be disembarked. With both the whaler and Zodiac stationary, the trainees, together with two



An Airman trainee gives the all clear he's ready and safe after diving into the Indian River Aug. 19 outside of Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. The 21 students attended daytime water insertion and extraction training at Patrick, supported by the Air Force Reserve's 920th Rescue Wing. The training encompasses work with HH-60 Pavehawk helicopter rope ladders, low-level deployments of teams into the water from the helicopter and 40-foot hoist rescues.

instructors for safety, leap into the warm water.

### Aircraft inbound

The trainees tread water, each going over with the other the exact procedures for each scenario they'll soon be challenged with. With the instructors at their side, the trainees prepare for the aircraft's arrival.

## ***"We get paid to do things people only dream of"***

Airman 1st Class Nicholas Robillard,  
Pararescuman trainee

And not a moment too soon. The aircraft is bound and now in sight, it begins to lower altitude. The students are now faced with the salty water being sprayed all around them, the rotors of the Pave Hawk churning the river below. It's this kind of spatial disorientation in a water environment the trainees need to build their confidence up in said Sergeant Herrera.

"There are building blocks for these pararescue Airmen that get us to this point," the Operation Enduring Freedom veteran and deployer to Africa said. "Beginning at basic training, each Airman

conducts water evaluations for the beginning of the pararescue selection process. Then, they move on to scuba school, and then later with a water survival school. Once you mold together their airborne and (high altitude, low opening) proficiency, these Airmen will be ready to take on real-world scenarios."

As the helicopter hovers overhead, the aircrew tosses down the rope ladder. One by one, the Airmen ascend the ladder into the helicopter for their final office of the day. With all on board, the Pave Hawk makes a quick pass, dropping the Airmen again in the water for a maneuver known as the 10-foot 'low and slow.' Each Airman accounts for the others as the Pavehawk makes a third pass, this time dropping a 40-foot line for a rescue basket, used to put a person with potential neck and back injuries into a secure basket for retrieval. Once the Airmen successfully rig the basket for hoisting, the helicopter quickly hoists it upward, completing the day's training.

### Suck it up

"Being in pararescue means putting aside your personal desires and comforts to accomplish the mission," Sergeant Herrera said. "On a mission, you can be cold, tired or dehydrated, but none of that matters when you have a customer needing

to be rescued. You can't become a casualty; you have to suck it up for the team."

Airman Robillard agreed.

"Before I joined the Air Force, all I was doing was sitting back working in construction with not much going on," the Tilton, N.H. native said. "Becoming a PJ was an impulsive decision. But, it was the best decision I've ever made."

The PJ trainee continued, pointing out how close the bond of brotherhood is between the Special Forces members.

"We're all close; we all watch out for each other," he said. "We depend on each other. I have a lot of friends back home, but none of them compare with the team. We recently lost two friends in training; it was like losing your best friend."

Today's training brings Airmen of the Air Force's pararescue trainee's one step closer to their ultimate goal: graduating from PJ School to become the world's newest edition to the pararescue community. These Airmen will eventually follow in the footsteps of famous PJs, including Airman 1st Class William Pitsenbarger, a Vietnam War-era PJ who sacrificed his life to evacuate Army soldiers under fire from Vietcong forces. But before that day, these trainees continue forth with training. Training that, one day, may signify the motto of the PJ: "That Other's May Live."

*Victory of the feet*

# Dustin' off the Taliban

The Taliban fighters never stood a chance against the crew of Shocker 21 - eight were killed and one command structure demolished. This, however, was ops normal for the crew...

BY TECH. SGT. HEATHER KELLY  
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs



**Shocker 21 // Staff Sgt. James Benson and Lt. Col. Paul Nevius return from a flight to test mission readiness of an HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan.**

photo/Master Sgt. Keith Brown

In a convention hall in Orlando, Fla., a collection of blue service uniforms is scattered throughout a banquet hall. A mixture of laughter and light table chatter can be heard above the sound of silverware clattering as servers bring out the main course. Just a few miles away, thousands of families and tourists are taking in all the cartoon splendor and entertainment that Walt Disney World has to offer.

In the crowded hall sit two helicopter pilots. One is a newly minted captain. The other, a seasoned lieutenant colonel. Both men appear as though they would be more comfortable in a well-worn flightsuit and cockpit rather than sitting in a banquet hall in their dress blues.

Those around them have no idea that one year ago in July 2008, these two men were about as far away from polite table conversation and Walt Disney World as you can get.

## Afghanistan, July 28, 2008

"We were a combined group of Air Force aircrew, pararescue men, maintainers, medical, Army Special Forces and aircrews all

living together on a base the size of a soccer field," said Capt. Brough McDonald.

The consortium of servicemembers was located at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ripley in Afghanistan.

"If a mission dropped, we would pick up the patient, bring them back and hand them over to the Field Surgical Team (FST). This wasn't our traditional search and rescue mission, this was battlefield evacuation."

This was the first deployment for the captain. After enlisting in 1999, Capt. McDonald spent six years as an F-16 crew chief before getting picked up for the Undergraduate Pilot Training program. The mission he participated in July 28 proved to be the hardest flying he's ever done.

According to reports that day, a U.S. Special Forces team operating in Afghani foothills was ambushed by a Taliban force of superior size and strength. The team was able to move into a defensive position but not before sustaining at least three casualties. They immediately requested rescue, close air support and an urgent ammo re-supply.

The helicopter crew of Shocker 21 listened on their radio as

the battle unfolded, anticipating the mission to come.

"When we got launched, we were off the ground in six minutes. We get in and it is a gun fight...between the good guys and the bad...Everybody was calm on the radio but you could hear the stress in their voices," he said.

Capt. McDonald's crew consisted of Staff Sgt. Sean Loose, Staff Sgt. James Benson, Staff Sgt. Jeff Hamilton, and Senior Airman Scott Dowd. In the pilot's seat was Lt. Col. Paul Nevius.

A skilled fixed- and rotary-wing pilot, Colonel Nevius collectively has 22-years of combat-proven aviation experience under his belt. Experience, Capt. McDonald said, that the crew had come to rely on in the thick of battlefield operations.

"It was awesome sitting next to Colonel Nevius. My job as the co-pilot was to back him up and to take as many tasks off his shoulder as possible so he could really direct the aircraft. We were on scene and the PJs [pararescuemen] were in the back and doing an awesome job. They had the patients in the bird in no time."

The crews PJs, Staff Sgt. Hamilton and Senior Airman Dowd, repeatedly departed the aircraft under heavy small-arms fire to unload ammunition, triage and load the patients onto the aircraft.

"We knew other strike assets are responding, but the fight is starting to deteriorate," Capt. McDonald said.

Once the rescue crew arrived back to base and dropped off their patient, they were almost immediately launched again. The Special Forces team had sustained another casualty.

Again, with the battle still raging around them, they lead their flight to the wounded commando and provided additional ammo and supplies to the ground forces.

"When we get back to the zone, the fight was still deteriorating. I'm kind of biting my tongue managing airplane systems, and we get the next patient on board and set off for the base. When we arrived, the team on the ground made an urgent request through the chain for more resources for this fight, because it's still not going well."

The crew of Shocker 21 then made the decision to go back

into the battlespace. For the third time.

"We loaded the aircraft up, we get back to the zone and we offloaded the supplies to the good guys. We took off, monitoring the situation. Other air support assets had checked in, but they still weren't as effective as they had hoped," he said.

After previous efforts to suppress the enemy proved unsuccessful, the combat control (CCT) Airmen requested emergency support from the Shocker 21 rescue crew. From that point, the Captain said, it was a textbook operation.

"We were able to engage the bad guys on the first pass, all fire was on target. That's all we heard from the CCT, 'All fire was on target. Continue to engage.'"

The crew flew a weapons employment pattern six times, maneuvering their aircraft into a position to protect the Special Forces team while neutralizing multiple enemy fires and forcing the retreat of some 30 insurgents.

"So we effectively suppressed the bad guys..." the Captain humbly concluded.

The Captain's modest summary does not adequately reflect the crew's contribution to the operation. In the course of providing fire support for the Army team on the ground, the rescue crew had effectively gunned-down eight Taliban fighters, including three high-value targets, and crippled the enemy resistance by removing the Taliban's Uruzgan Province command structure.

After their close-air-support efforts were successful, the crew then conducted an unrelated follow-on medical evacuation mission 70 miles away. They assessed their fuel and armament status, picked up the patient and handed him off to the FST.

But they weren't done yet.

"When we get to the zone, the Army had a mound of resupply stuff and asked us to take it to the Special Forces team. We loaded the airplane up with everything we could, took off and got back to the zone for the fourth time. At that point, they were rearmed, the bad guys were eliminated and they were able to continue with their mission," said Capt. McDonald.

The Army Special Forces team dodging bullets on the ground held significant ties to the Airmen.

(Cont. on page 18)

**Heroes at Home // Capt. Brough McDonald, Col. Steven Kirkpatrick and Lt. Col. Paul Nevius are presented the Major General Tom E. Marchbanks Jr. Memorial Award by Maj. Gen. Paul Dettmer. The Shocker 21 rescue helicopter crew received the honor in recognition of their lifesaving mission July 28, 2008, in Afghanistan.**



photo/TSGT. Heather Kelly



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

## BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS

**T**here may be times when an Air Force Reserve pararescueman team leader finds him and his team in a situation that requires lifesaving decisions in a very short amount of time. Sometimes these situations are the result of battlefield injuries or mass casualties as a result of an accident or natural disaster.

Regardless of the cause of such a situation, rescue Airmen from the 308th Rescue Squadron here are prepared to respond with lighting speed to save lives. On August 19 five teams of rescue Airmen had a chance to test their medical skills under difficult mass casualty conditions here as part of a mass casualty exercise.

Their day started with an intelligence briefing courtesy of Master Sgt. Jenny Ball from the 920th Intelligence office. She briefed the PJs about their training scenario which involved rescuing 10-12 service members inside a building in Afghanistan where an accidental explosion had occurred. The objective for the day was to give ele-

ment team leaders in upgrade training a chance to demonstrate their ability to direct their teams response actions.

"It's always a learning experience and we take away from it the goods and the bads, but overall it was an awesome experience. We got hands-on medical training on a mass casualty basis and I got to work as the overall team lead in conjunction with the CRO (Combat Rescue Officer). It was a great experience," said Senior Airman Joshua Frost, one of the element team leaders in upgrade training.

The first order of business for each team was to get a good situational awareness of the building they were going into and the status of each of the patients inside. After this information was reported back to the element leader, he would direct the actions of his team members as they began bringing the wounded outside the building to be treated in a makeshift triage area. With a group of patients with varying degrees of injuries, quick action is a must for each team member.

Senior Airman William Posh, a resident of Jacksonville, Fla., has been with the 920th Rescue Wing for a little more than a year and said "For mass casualties, they have to throw in a little above you every time because if you become complacent, it will never be like that overseas. It's always going to be too much for what you've got."

Others like Staff Sgt. Daryl Williams is a new PJ on his first exercise after graduating from the PJ school in June. Now he's on active orders with the 308th Rescue Squadron for a year to a year and a half for further training. "I think it went well, and it was good to get back into this again."

"Hopefully the guys learned from one another today. We always keep up on our medical training, but we don't get to do a lot of mass casualty training like this—maybe once a year."

Judging by the seriousness each team member displayed during the exercise, they should be well prepared for when operational circumstances demand their response.



# All spruced up and nowhere to go



BY CAPT. CATHLEEN SNOW  
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

Space Coast residents may be used to seeing rockets blast into orbit, but something they haven't seen around these parts lately was a historic 9,000-pound Apollo capsule floating from Port Canaveral south through Cocoa Beach, finally landing at Patrick Air Force Base Aug. 25.

The short trip took place on top of a flatbed truck after more than a year of refurbishment at Excell Coatings Inc. at Port Canaveral. The Apollo "Boilerplate, Command Module, Apollo, #1206 command module" as it is referred to in the Smithsonian Institute's Web database, returned to its home at the 920th Rescue Wing.

The Apollo Capsule refurbishment process began at Excell Coatings July 1, 2008 and was completed on August 25, 2009. "It was a lengthy process," said Mr. Darrell Hankins, resource manager for the 920th Rescue Wing.

"The vendor was responsible for meeting the Smithsonian's high standards while working to retain the artifact's historical significance," he said.

The critical repairs, which took more than 500 manhours and \$20,000, were conducted on both the interior and exterior of the capsule. Repairs included the hatch door, boilerplate baffles, I-Beams, sandblasting the original welds and canister plate and a crisp, white, fresh coating of paint. Items such as seals and close-out panels were fabricated by design since they are not commercially available.

As part of the Apollo program, a number of so-called "boilerplate" command modules were constructed to undergo various tests and to serve as training vehicles for astronauts and other mission crew members.

"When looking for a suitable home for the capsule the criteria the Smithsonian used was the ability to maintain and protect the object and access to an appreciative audience," said Allan Needell, Curator for the Space History Division at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C.

"Loaned objects are reviewed for renewal every two years, said Needell. "Given the extraordinary care and expense of restoring the object the 920th RQW can expect to maintain the object for many years to come."

The capsule is a fitting display in front of the pararescue squadron here since the 920th RQW plays a major role in space support, now and throughout its history.

**Shiny and New** / Mr. Darrell Hankins (pictured right), 920th Rescue Wing resource advisor, oversees Staff Sgt. Billie Tyson as he directs off-loading a 9,000-pound space capsule that arrived back at the Air Force Reserve's 920th Rescue Wing from refurbishment at Excell Coatings Inc. at Port Canaveral.

photo/Maj. Trisha Hill



photos/Master Sgt. Victoria Ashley-Manning

# IT TAKES PATIENCE

Patience is key when in a foreign country and in this case, it's very needed. Colonel Dean Whitman, an Oral Surgeon and an Individual Mobilization Augmentee, works with the 920th Rescue Wing's Aeromedical Staging Squadron, bringing his dental skills to Africa to help the local people obtain a better quality of life by providing services to preserve healthy teeth during a deployment August 1-15, 2009. (Photos by Master Sgt. Victoria Ashley-Manning).



# Dental at a premium

Photos / Master Sgt. Victoria Ashley-Manning

Rural conditions did not stop the 920th Rescue Wing's Aeromedical Staging Squadron (ASTS) from performing their duties to the highest standards. (clockwise) A group of eager students at a local orphanage gather around the U.S. Air Force Reserve troops to get the tooth brushes and tooth paste that was handed out. (r) All the clinics were held in school buildings throughout the rural areas. (center) Maj. Kevin Hachmeister and Tech. Sgt. Alessandro Figueroa provide local anesthesia to a patient. Battery operated headlamps were necessary - there was no electricity in the school houses. All medical procedures had to be conducted during daylight hours. (far right) The dental approach was to educate on the importance of brushing and keeping teeth healthy through regular dental care. (bottom right) The students treated the troops to some impromptu dances.

The local residents were receptive to the medical and dental care given. This trip had two parts; to provide dental care to the local residents but there was also a medical approach that was to help identify the tropical diseases present that could be prevented and also treat common illnesses in the field.



# Team in Swaziland



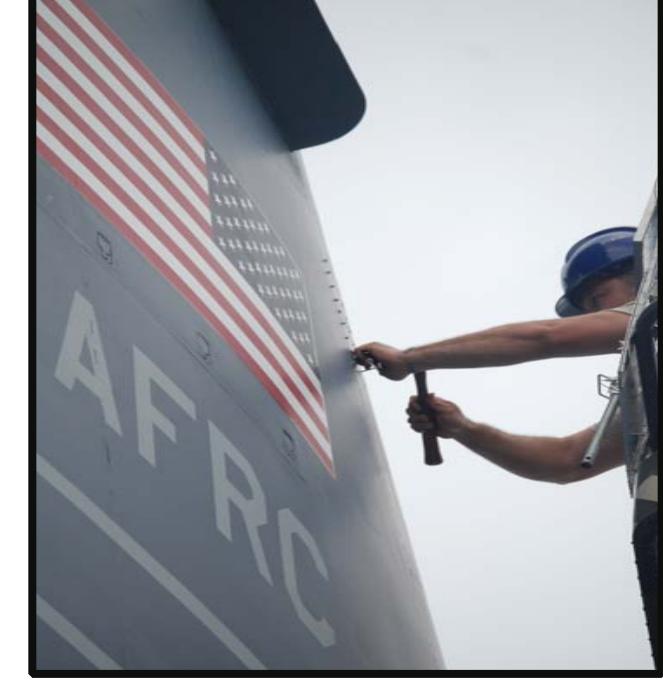


Constant up-keep is necessary for the HC-130/N, the King, and the excellent work and dedication of the Airmen at the 920th Maintenance Group keep it in on track.

Tech. Sgt. Christopher Scholtz, Senior Airman Steve Shirk and Tech. Sgt. Sean Anderson (above) work high above the ground to install new wiring for the radio antenna. The maintenance group works daily to ensure the King is always ready to perform at its best.

Riv





# veting

Photos / Tech. Sgt. Heather Kelly

It takes a village, or at least a maintenance group, to keep up with the King's maintenance needs. This work, replacing the new longwire antenna, is done at least once a year. Every day there is something new to work on with these 45 year-old airplanes.

Tech. Sgt. Christopher Scholtz, left, assists with the installation of the longwire. Replacing a wire like that means taking apart the tail and crawling inside. Above, Tech. Sgt. Sean Anderson works on the panels that allow the crew inside to replace the wire.



(Cont. from Page 13)

"We lived with this Green Beret team at FOB Ripley. We were all there at the same camp fire sharing stories about home. We saw these guys everyday. It was personal when they said, 'Hey, we need your help.'

At the end of the day however, it didn't matter if you were servicemember or a civilian. The motto 'That Other's May Live' is the driving force behind every Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) Airman.

"When you consider what we do as a mission, we go into some really hairy situations," said Capt. McDonald. "In this situation, we told the Army we're an adverse weather, low-light, low-visibility asset...If the guy's out there, we'll go get him, we've got the little Elvis patch to prove it... and on this night they said, 'Prove It.'

### Orlando, July 10, 2009

Back in the convention hall, the plates have been cleared and a Reserve Officer Association speaker has taken the stage. The presentation has officially begun.

Awards, photos and rounds of applause follow. Recipients swiftly make their way to the front of the room, take and shake, and after a brief camera flash, they blindly make their way back to their seats.

A brief pause indicates the most prestigious award is about to be announced, the Major General Tom E. Marchbanks Jr. Memorial Award. The honor is given annually in recognition of unique abilities and demonstrated courage by Air Force Reserve members during aerial flight.

The narrator makes his way through the award write up, describing the events as they unfolded that July evening in Afghanistan.

When it is time, the Captain and the Colonel slowly rise from their seats and take their places in front. The audience rises as well, clapping continuously as the photographer angles to capture each moment.

## "Success is key," says the Top Three

The Combat Rescue Top Three is a private non-profit organization, whose members are Senior Non-Commissioned Officers of the 920th Rescue Wing. This organization was established to enhance morale, esprit de corps, and cooperation between members of the top three enlisted grades and other enlisted personnel assigned to the 920th Rescue Wing.

Membership in the Combat Rescue Top Three is not mandatory for SNCOs but is highly encouraged. The Top Three will provide a forum for its members to meet, share personal experiences and expertise while assisting each other and the 920th Rescue Wing in appropriate projects.



Additionally, the Combat rescue Top 3 functions as an added channel of communication, within the chain of command between the Wing commander and enlisted

Congratulations follow for some time, individual attendees taking the opportunity to personally convey their sentiments. Eventually the crowd dissipates, allowing the service staff to come in and clear the room out.

The two pilots adjourn as well, making their way to an open concourse in the convention center. Outside of the confines of the meeting room, they take stock of the day's events.

"This award was a huge surprise. Some people don't even know the Air Force flies helicopters. It's great recognition for the CSAR community and it also demonstrates our relevance in this unconventional war," said Capt. McDonald.

In the background, a senior gentleman slowly approaches Colonel Nevius. The pair speak for several minutes, sharing a laugh and a hand shake before the gentleman walks away smiling.

The Colonel smiled himself, making his way back to the group and the conversation.

While the two pilots were on hand to accept the award, they are quick to give recognition to the entire crew who participated in the mission.

"I couldn't have picked a better team, they brought everything together," said Colonel Nevius. "If you took anyone of those individuals out of the mix, it may have ended up differently."

Since joining the 920th Rescue Wing in 2002, Colonel Nevius has deployed six times. On this day, he spoke candidly about the last eight-month stint.

"It was easily the most rewarding deployment for me because of the mission set," he offered. "What we were doing is not what we typically do. We were getting called on every day. You don't look forward to people getting hurt, but you definitely want to help when they do."

"There's been nothing more rewarding than the CSAR mission," the Colonel continued. "This is pulling people out of trouble, and that's where it all happens."

When asked "When will your next deployment be", the Colonel responded immediately, "As soon as possible...you got something for me?"

members and provides limited finances for recognition of the Airmen, NCOs and SNCOs within the Wing.

This organization conducts itself in a manner, which is free of discrimination, and provides equal opportunity and treatment for all members and prospective members regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, handicap, age or national origin.

For more information on how you can become an integral part of the enhancement of the Wing enlisted corps, contact SMSgt. Steve Richmond, MSgt. Roy Brown , SMSgt. David Carden or MSgt. Sherry Boswell.

# NEWSBRIEFS

**PAPER PERSONNEL RECORDS FOR 920TH RESCUE WING MEMBERS ARE BEING PROCESSED TO ELECTRONIC FORM** from hard copy via the Personnel Records Display Application process, or 'PRDA.' PRDA is expected to transfer each member's personnel files to digital copies and stored on an server for future use.

Members having difficulty accessing PRDA can call the 920th Military Personnel Flight at (321) 494-6983 or e-mail them at [eduardo.mendoza@patrick.af.mil](mailto:eduardo.mendoza@patrick.af.mil). Members that find discrepancies with their electronic records in ARMS/ PRDA can send an e-mail requesting correction to [arpc.dpq@arpc.denver.af.mil](mailto:arpc.dpq@arpc.denver.af.mil).

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**MEMBERS WHO HAVE SERVED SINCE SEPT. 10, 2001, MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS UNDER THE POST-9/11 GI BILL PROGRAM**, signed into law June 20, 2008 by former President George W. Bush.

Beginning August 1, the Department of Veteran's Affairs began pay out of benefits under the new program, which now provides expanded tuition assistance, repayment of costs incurred for books and supply purchases as well as Basic Allowance for Housing rated at the E-5 with dependent rate for qualifying members.

To apply electronically for these benefit, members can access the electronic form at: <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>.



## ON THE RECORD

I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom.

-Bob Dylan

## AT A GLANCE

### THE POST 9/11 GI BILL

President Barack Obama ushered in the Post-9/11 GI Bill Aug. 4 at George Mason University. The president identified the new GI Bill as a Department of Veteran Affairs-sponsored program that provides the most comprehensive educational benefit package for veterans since the original GI Bill, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, was authorized toward the end of World War II.

### THE FLORIDA ACTIVE MILITARY COMBAT DUTY GRANT

Several counties in the State of Florida, in appreciation for their resident's military service, have established Active Military Combat Duty Grant Programs ("Grant Program").

The Grant Programs are designed to assist servicemembers (Active Duty, Reservist and National Guard), who are fighting in the war against terrorism, with the support of their families and homes.

While each county has specific eligibility requirements for their Grant Program, the common requirements among all are: (i) Proof of residence and homestead exemption; (ii) Payment of property taxes during the applicable year; and (iii) Military service in a combat zone (Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf arena). To meet these requirements, each service member may be required to provide proof of their combat service (Leave and Earning Statement reflecting combat pay, letter from unit commander attesting to combat duty and dates, or an official document specifying dates of combat duty).

For more information: <http://www.military.com/Finance/content/0,15356,143577,00.html>



photo/Ms. Sherri Anderson

## A Different Perspective

Abbie Anderson, 4.5 years old, watched across Banana Creek as Space Shuttle Discovery lifted off from Kennedy Space Center. At the same time, her daddy, Maj. Dave Anderson, HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter pilot, watched the launch from a different perspective. He was on the other side of the space center standing by his helicopter with four teams of aircrew, pararescuemen and flight surgeons, ready to take off to aid the astronauts if something were to go wrong at lift off. Wing Rescue Reservists provide rescue support for all launches from Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.