

Southern Flyer

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New 908th AW commander puts focus on unit's health *Recover and rebalance top priorities*

By Jeff Melvin
908th Airlift Wing public affairs

With a beaming smile that he conjectured could be seen even from the far reaches of an auditorium filled with dignitaries, unit personnel and well-wishers, Col. Michael J. Underkofler accepted command of the 908th Airlift Wing Jan. 7.

"For those of you all the way in the back, I hope you can see the huge smile on my face. I consider myself a very fortunate man and I can't overemphasize how great it is to be back in Montgomery," said Colonel Underkofler.

The ceremony was as much a homecoming as a promotion since between 1998 and 2002 he was first, director of operations and then commander of the 357th Airlift Squadron here.

22nd Air Force commander Maj. Gen. James Bankers, who presided over the change of command ceremony, prefaced his remarks about the wing's departing and incoming leaders with praise for the 908th's people.

The period following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States was "horrendous" for all military units. The military's response, in general, and Reservists response, in particular, was "incredible," the general said.

"You folks have done just an incredible job and I'm really proud of all your efforts. It's been an enormous accomplishment and also an enormous commitment that you lived up to and never faltered" General Bankers told the 908th personnel in the audience.

He then spoke briefly about two attributes that are paramount to leadership: integrity and respect. Respect, he said, is a two-way street. Leaders must have the respect of the people they command but more importantly, they must have respect for them. "I owe you respect," the general said.

General Bankers thanked departing commander Col. Heath J. Nuckolls for his leadership during one of the most demanding periods in the unit's history. He remarked that he wouldn't be surprised if the future held a promotion to the general officer ranks for Nuckolls who is moving on to the 94th Airlift Wing at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga.

The general praised Colonel Underkofler as well, saying he'd be a great commander for the 908th.

Colonel Nuckolls, who received the Legion of Merit prior to the change of command, recapped some of the unit's accomplishments during his 20-month tenure. Among the accomplishments he mentioned were: more than 7,000 flying hours in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom; the wing's superior performance in an operational readiness inspection last year during the midst of a two-year activation, the dedication of the seven transportation flight members who volunteered for convoy duty to assist the U.S. Army and similar accomplishments.

"As I look back on the past 20 months that I've been in the 908th, I am amazed at your accomplishments given the conditions that you had to operate under," Colonel Nuckolls said.

Notwithstanding many accomplishments during this period individually and as a wing, the colonel said he was most proud of the spirit the men and women the 908th demonstrated.

"Many of you have made tremendous personal sacrifices as have your families during the past two years."

He concluded his departing remarks by saying he'd "always be a part of the 908th."

Colonel Underkofler, who spent the past two years at Keesler AFB, Miss., commanding the 403rd Operations Group, parent unit of the famed "Hurricane Hunters," pledged to help wing members



Photo by Jeff Melvin

New 908th AW commander, Col. Michael Underkofler, accepts the wing guidon from Maj. Gen. James Bankers, symbolizing acceptance of the mantle of leadership for the 908th Airlift Wing.

adjust to civilian life after a demanding two-year activation supporting the Global War on Terror.

He sees a pressing need to provide a period of R and R for the 908th: recovery and rebalance, he said.

"We must recover our forces and equipment. ...We owe it to ourselves and our families to recover our physical, mental and spiritual health," the colonel said.

Similarly, rebalance is also critically needed.

"...Since 9/11 the men and women of the 908th have given much to our nation. As your wing commander, I want

you to rebalance your family life. I also want you to rebalance your civilian work life. Be the same superstars for them as you've been for us. ...

"I want you to get back to a model of service that puts your family first, your civilian employer second and us third. We'll all be stronger and better able to serve when those are your normal priorities."

And as if to hammer home his point about family, he ended his remarks by saying, "Finally, and most important, I want to say 'thank you' to my wife, Denise, and my two sons who mean the world to me. You will always be my



Col. Michael Underkofler

No. 1 priority and I wouldn't be here today without your support and the joy you bring to me each and every day."

Commander addresses recovery, rebalancing, getting fit

Recover. Rebalance. These were the two main points from my Change of Command speech.

For Recover, I said we need to recover our equipment and our personnel from our two-year activation and that we all, activated or not, need to recover our physical, mental and spiritual health. I said this because I recognize the tremendous stress and high workload we've all been under since 9/11. I pointed out that over 100 wing Airmen are in need of a medical evaluation or definitive care. In my first two weeks here I've seen a tremendously talented team of professionals, active and reserve, who are working to resolve these medical issues. But we still have a lot of work left to do.

For Rebalance, I said we need to put our families first, our civilian employers second and the unit third. If we do this now, we'll be better prepared if the nation needs us to change the priorities later.

What are some ways we demonstrate and reinforce the themes of recover and rebalance in our organization. Let me offer a few.

Recover. On my first day here, I was welcomed back by one of our pay technicians. She said to me, "I heard you had



Col. Michael J. Underkofler
908th Airlift Wing commander

gotten thin." She and several others had remembered me as being much heavier. To be truthful, I was incredibly thin when I came here in 1998. For all my life I had been thin; thin and unhealthy. But a year, and many barbecue plates later, after becoming the Ops Officer in the 357th AS, I had gained 30 pounds. In the next year, I put on another 10 pounds. I'm not exactly sure where I topped out, but friends from previous assignments couldn't believe how big I had gotten, and it sure wasn't muscle mass.

When I left the 908th, my boss at the 403d Wing told me he expected me to hit the gym during lunch. It's not that he thought I

was obese, but the officer I replaced tragically suffered a heart attack and died. My boss wanted me to adopt a healthy lifestyle so I could be around longer for my family. Although not a gym-rat, this made sense to me since my own father died of a heart attack at 50.

So at least three days a week I hit the track or the gym. What first started out as sheer drudgery, became a routine for physical, mental and spiritual health. The pounds came off, my cardiovascular health improved and I gained a new perspective as I thought things out or sought divine guidance.

I've asked our squadron commanders to try to incorporate unit PT into the UTA schedule. I know it is going to be difficult to break away from training to do this. Some units may find they need to start earlier in the day to get PT in. Some may make it a "walking lunch". Others, something at the end of the day before sign out.

I also know one day a month doesn't make for a complete personal PT program. A unit program, however, does so much more than just set an example of physical fitness. It's a chance to let off steam, provide support and encouragement, and possibly mentoring. A walk around the track can become the venue for real listening and one-on-one feedback. Planned or not, that Airman might have your undivided attention for 30 minutes, something difficult to do in your shop or section.

Obviously, for those who don't have a daily personal PT program, I hope you'll adopt one. Medical studies regularly

point out injuries and recovery times are reduced within those groups of patients who are physically fit and active. Participate and encourage others, two ways you can help us recover our Airmen.

Rebalance. On Saturday of the May UTA we will have our Annual Family Day. If, for the last couple of years, you have been unable to bring your family, try again this year. The city of Montgomery is graciously providing the Montgomery Zoo for us to hold the event. If you haven't been, it is a great little zoo that just recently added elephants. We'll have hot dogs and hamburgers, games, train rides, and booths for everyone. My little monkeys, Jake and Will, never seem to get enough of the zoo. I bet yours, no matter the age, will like it too.

This is also a great opportunity for families of commuting reservists to come and take advantage of the base facilities: Pass and ID, commissary, BX, and more. We'll do our best to provide commuters with a billeting or commercial hotel room that can accommodate them and their family, so get your request in early.

Encourage your family and the family of those you serve with to come. I look forward to meeting and thanking them for their sacrifices which allow you to serve.

Recover. Rebalance. I'm sure you have great ideas to help your commanders and I meet these objectives. Our goal is to make sure your time here, away from your families and employer, is as healthy and productive as possible.

We are each unique, valuable

Nothing can dim the light which shines from within.

-- Poet – Maya Angelou

Each of us brings to the world unique talents, gifts, and abilities. Even if you don't know what it is, or value what you do, someone, somewhere, will benefit from your presence. No one can do what you do exactly the way you do it. It is this uniqueness that makes you valuable to the world. We are each as unique and valuable as the other. It was designed that way. That is a gift from God. Gifts are not given on the basis of race, religion, gender, or ethnicity. As a matter of truth, gifts come in many shapes, sizes, and colors. When you do what you do, exactly the way you do it, you are sharing God's



By Chaplain (Capt.) Val Shumate

gifts, bestowed for the good of the world.

The above expression comes from a book entitled "Acts of Faith" with some minor changes.

This month, let all the members of the 908th Airlift Wing celebrate Black History Month in a positive manner. Allow the beauty of God's creation and every unique expression to be displayed, embraced, and shared among our diverse community. When we do this, then we honor God's rainbow creation.



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New USERRA law reinforces Guard, Reserve re-employment protections; aims to ensure job security for Reservists returning to civilian life

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is lauding the Labor Department announcement issuing rules clarifying re-employment rights for citizen-soldiers. They said the Dec. 16 announcement is a major step forward for guardsmen, reservists and their civilian employers.

Labor Secretary Elaine Chao announced final rules interpreting the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Act that helps ensure job security for reserve-component members returning to civilian life from military duty. The rules will be published today in the Federal Register.

Speaking at the National Press Club here, Ms. Chao said this is the first time since the law's passage in 1994 that regulations have been developed to enforce it. The rules are particularly critical now, she said, when the United States has the large

est group of mobilized guardsmen and reservists since World War II. Since 9-11, almost 530,000 reserve-component people have been mobilized, many for more than a year of duty.

The new rules, drafted in an easy-to-read question-and-answer format, explain how the USERRA law protects against discrimination and retaliation because of military service and prevents servicemembers from job setbacks from performing their military obligations. The law also ensures that guardsmen and reservists have ample time to report back to their civilian jobs after completing their military duty.

"Our citizen-soldiers put themselves in harm's way to defend our freedoms, and now it's our turn to be there for them," Ms. Chao said. "These regulations will ensure that the seniority, promotion, health care, pensions and other benefits of our citizen-soldiers are protected when they return home to the jobs they left to serve our country."

Putting teeth behind the USERRA law benefits citizen soldiers as well as their employers, said Maj. Rob Palmer, a public affairs officer with the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

"Anything that makes it easier for Guard and Reserve members to work with their employers and understand their rights and responsibilities under the law is a benefit to everyone," he said.

With more than 50 percent of the military's manpower in the reserve components, employer support is critical to U. S. national security, Major Palmer said.

But making the relationship work "is not a one-way street," he said. Guardsmen and reservists also have responsibilities under USERRA. Among those responsibilities is keeping their employers informed about their military commitments.

"We encourage Guard and Reserve members to communicate early and often with their employers about upcoming

ing military obligations," Major Palmer said.

Work-related complaints from returning guardsmen and reservist are down 30 percent since their last major deployment in the early 1990s. Officials said this is largely due to the efforts of the Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, and solid support from employers.

During Operation Desert Storm, one in 54 demobilized troops filed work-related complaints with the Labor Department, officials said. During the war on terrorism, the rate

has dropped to one in 81. Officials hope this trend will continue and see the new USERRA rules as a big step toward that end.

Other Labor Department initiatives also are expected to help. These include providing briefings to more than 270,000 servicemembers and others about the law, responding to more than 36,000 requests for technical assistance and publishing information about the final notice on the department's Web site

Guardsmen, Reservists urged to nominate employers for SecDef's Freedom Awards

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Nominations for the 2006 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards will be accepted at Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve web site until Feb. 28.

ESGR national committee officials said more than 1,500 nominations were submitted in 2005 on the ESGR web site. In 2006 the goal is 5,000 nominations.

To nominate their employers, National Guardsmen, Reservists, or their family members need only to visit the ESGR web site at www.esgr.mil, and complete the 2006 Freedom Award nomination form online. ESGR Field Committees will review the nominations, and have the option to present three nominations per committee for review by the National Selection Board which will select up to 15 as 2006 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award recipients.

The award, instituted in 1996, publicly recognizes employers nominated by their employees, who voluntarily serve in the National Guard and Reserve, for exceptional support above the requirements of the USERRA Law. This prestigious award is the highest in a series of Department of Defense employer support awards that include the Patriot Award, the ESGR Above and Beyond Award and the Pro Patria Award.

Previous recipients have included a "who's who" of corporate America, including Home Depot, Wal-Mart, Sears, GE, Verizon, and UPS. State and local governments and a number of America's small businesses, who are the majority of National Guard and Reserve employers, have also been recipients.

When asked about the impact of employee military service on small business, Bob Hollingsworth, ESGR executive director Hollingsworth, said, "At no time in our recent history have the small businesses of America been asked to give so much in our nation's defense."

In today's environment of continuous mobilizations of National Guardsmen and Reservists, ESGR has recognized that more employers are being impacted by the loss of key employees. The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award was expanded in 2004 from five recipients to now recognize up to 15 outstanding employers yearly.

The 2006 recipients will be honored in Washington, D.C. at the 11th annual Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony hosted by ESGR Sept. 19, 2006. (Excerpted from an ESGR press release)

Time running out to request top PME slot

Air Force Reserve personnel, unlike their active duty counterparts, meet a central selection board to compete for limited quota allocations for the USAF Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy.

The selection board for the next SNCOA in residence class will be held during the February UTA, wing training officials said.

In order to allow enough time for review, the packages need to be in the wing training office by close of business, Saturday of the February UTA, Feb. 4.

Applicants should provide the training office a civilian e-mail address or phone number so they may be contacted if there are problems with their packages.

Classes being considered are FY2006 classes 06C, D and E. The class dates are:

March 7 - April 20 (06C)

June 7 - July 25 (06D)

Aug. 14 - Sept. 28 (06E)

The procedures for requesting to attend Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Academy In-Residence Course are spelled out below.

First ALL applicants must

meet all of the following criteria:

- Be in the grade of Master Sergeant or higher
- Have a General ASVAB score of 50 or higher
- Have computer capabilities

- Not be in upgrade or re-training status

- Be in compliance with AF Physical Fitness Standards

Air Reserve Technicians (ARTs) attending in civilian status must meet all of the above requirements and sign a Student Attendance Agreement.

Package must include:

- Application - AF Form 4036
- Current Rip signed on Pg 4
- Last two EPRs

- Full length color photograph - 8 x 10, ¾ turn, Service Blues/no ribbons no service jacket (include 2 copies and a digital copy)

- Rank order class dates available for attendance

If member meets all of the above criteria, the application process will be as follows:

- Application package will be sent to wing education and

training for review to ensure all above prerequisites/requirements have been met

- The wing command chief master sergeant, assisted by wing education and training, will conduct interview selection board, consisting of the wing command chief master sergeant and five wing chief master sergeants

- Results of selection board will be submitted to wing commander for final approval

The wing education and training office will submit the name(s) of the selectees to the appropriate RSG/DPT for consolidation. Any substitutions will be approved by the command chief master sergeant and the wing commander prior to submission. The RSG/DPT office will forward the selected names to HQ AFRC/DPTS to release the quotas. DPTS will fill seats/quotas by name from approved spreadsheet.

Wing senior NCOs experiencing problems with their application packages or who have questions, should call the education and training office at 953-6671/6678.



Airman Howell shows he learned his camouflage and concealment lessons well during basic aircrew survival training.



Airman Howell and classmates test their map reading and land navigation skills.

Courtesy photos



Photo by Jeff Melvin

Senior Airman Joel Howell inspects parachute straps for visible signs of wear and tear or chemical stains. Airman Howell aims to become the 908th's first SERE instructor.

He was looking for excitement

Firefighter set to become wing's first survival specialist

By Jeff Melvin
908th Airlift Wing public affairs

Most would say that Joel Howell's life was full. In his civilian life, the former Air Force enlisted man was a firefighter, rescue specialist, emergency medical technician and full-time father of three. But in his heart Howell longed for something more. He craved excitement.

His adrenaline deficit led him to an Air Force Reserve recruiter who figured he had the perfect job for the fit firefighter – survival, evasion, resistance, escape specialist. The SERE specialty combined the skills Howell already possessed, with extreme mental and physical demands, promised plenty of excitement and, best of all, could save lives.

SERE specialists prepare aircrew and high risk of capture DOD personnel to survive under any conditions. SERE Specialists train over 6,500 aircrew members a year in the proper use of principles, techniques, equipment, and procedures necessary to survive anywhere in the world.

"I got to a point where I could come back into the service. My children are old enough that I can leave home. And I wanted to try something exciting along the lines of what I do in civilian life," said now-Senior Airman Joel Howell, who served four years on active duty in the Air Force nearly 20 years ago, explaining his decision to dive back into military life.

Not many can argue with his explanation though many may question his choice of career fields. You think the service's revised fitness requirements present challenge's for many Reservists, who generally are "more mature" than their active duty counterparts, consider the SERE requirements. They're formidable.

When he first spoke to the recruiter and learned about the physical demands of his new specialty he hooked up with the security forces personnel at a Marine Corps Logistics Base near his southeast Georgia home. The EMT works out with them three times a week. Plus he runs every morning. Also, as public safety worker he's required to maintain an advanced level of fitness.

He admits that although he stays in shape year round being in 'SERE shape' requires additional effort.

"My first test when I get out there (Fairchild AFB, Wash., site of the SERE school) is to swim 750 meters non-stop, then I get a 30 minute break and run 3 miles at a 7:30-minute pace, then I'll have to do 42 push ups, 50 sit ups, 10 pull ups and finish up with a 5-mile trek carrying a 95-pound pack so "I'm having to work a little harder to build up to that," the Airman said.

Having already completed the 17-day basic aircrew survival course and the two-day water survival training, an Indoctrination class at Lackland in August awaits

Airman Howell, followed by a permanent change of station move in October to Fairchild AFB, Wash., home of the SERE school. He'll undergo "three months of classroom instruction at Fairchild, followed by six months in the field going through the different phases of training, capped by six months back in the field teaching – then I get to come home."

Fortunately for him, the pace won't slacken at home. The 908th has been looking for a SERE specialist for some time so his completion of training and return to the unit is eagerly anticipated. "AFRC has only a few SERE instructors, so they are spread very thin and have a high ops tempo and deployment rate," said Master Sgt. Keith Britt, superintendent of the 908th Operations Support Flight's intelligence branch where Howell has been assigned since last February.

While the Airman's return is eagerly anticipated, Sergeant Britt realizes that the waiting isn't over yet. Airman Howell still has to complete "the most physical training in the wing." A good case could be made that SERE training is perhaps the most demanding in the Air Force.

Intel branch chief Maj. Chris Anderson is eager to put the 908th AW's first Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape Instructor to work as well but he, too, notes that the EMT has a lot of work in store.

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:Excitement

Con't from page 4

"He still has to complete an intense six months SERE specialist training course at Fairchild AFB, Wash. before he is fully certified. In this course he will learn how to survive and instruct others how to survive in desert, artic, jungle, open ocean, coastal, rough terrain, combat, and captivity environments. Senior Airman Howell will be a member of an elite group of Department of Defense experts on survival issues," the major said.

Once Airman Howell navigates that hurdle and completes his training he'll "manage the SERE training program for 357th Airlift Squadron and the 908th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron aircrews to include providing High Risk of Capture training--to ensure aircrews are prepared to survive, evade, resist, and escape if they are ever downed in hostile territory, peace time governmental issues training, and hostage scenario training," the intel branch chief said.

AFRC has less than a handful of SERE instructors so Senior Airman Howell will be called upon to train other units throughout the command.

That's good news, Airman Howell said.

"I really enjoy teaching. I teach search and rescue and navigation in the civilian world. Being able to come in and share some of my knowledge -- that's exciting. That's right up my alley. I couldn't have picked a better shop or unit to be assigned. They're high speed."

He knows he'll get lots of work, too.

"Since I've been here I've already had other units requesting me to come even though I haven't completed formal training yet. I'll get plenty of use. I'll make up for lost time," the budding SERE specialist said.

Like many who serve the single parent said he's grateful for his family's support; his children will stay with his parents while he completes training.

"They're excited, too. They realize 'Daddy has been there for them' so they're excited that I'm getting a chance to do something I wanted to do. They've been very supportive."



Photos by Jeff Melvin

Tech. Sgt. Steve Higginbotham, center, gives instructions to squad members armed with the new M4 carbine during a practice patrol mission at the Blue Thunder Field Training

Complex. Early feedback from the security forces personnel give the M4 high marks.

The wait is over, cops get new weapon

After 3 years of waiting, Security Forces outfitted with M4 Carbine

By Tech. Sgt. James Harrell
908th SFS public affairs
representative

Christmas came early for security forces. After nearly three years of waiting, the 908th Security Forces Squadron finally received its new M4 Carbines. It replaces the M-16A2 rifles that have been in the unit's inventory since 1994.

Entering service with the Air Force in 2001, the M4 Carbine is a shorter, lighter version of the M-16A2 rifle. It has a collapsible 4-position stock with a 14.5 inch barrel, making the weapon useful in close quarters or urban settings. The M4 also incorporates the M-1913 Rail Adapter System and detachable carrying handle. The weapon fires the same 5.56 mm ammunition as the M-16A2, and maintains an 80 percent commonality with its bigger brother. With a weight of 7.5 pounds, it is more than a pound lighter than the M-16A2.

The most important difference in the M4 and M-16A2 is the sighting system. The M4 uses a reflex optic as its primary sight instead of the old iron sights. It is mounted on a rail underneath

the detachable carrying handle. The M68 Close combat optic uses a sightable, non-telescopic red-dot aiming point allowing the shooter to use both eyes for shooting.

By using both eyes, the shooter can detect other targets and quickly engage the next. The red-dot aiming point is designed so that even if the shooter moves his or her head position, the aiming point will stay on target as long as the weapon is not moved. The weapon still retains back-up removable iron sights in case the M68 primary sight is inoperative.

Originally scheduled to arrive at the unit in March 2003, the schedule for delivery was pushed back due to Operation Iraqi Freedom. DOD mandated that all combat units deploying to the region be outfitted first. In the interim, the unit began researching how to gain the maximum use of this new weapon. The result was the incorporation of the Rail Adapter System or RAS. The RAS consists of a set of lightweight sections that replace the standard hand guards on the M4 carbine. Accessories such as flashlights, laser aiming devices, and thermal sights can be attached to rails and positioned wherever needed. This allows the shooter to configure his or her weapon depending on the mission or personal preference.



Senior Airman Christopher Pike demonstrates the kneeling firing position with the M4 rifle.

"You can add a lot of bells and whistles to it," said Tech. Sgt. David McCaughtry, NCOIC of combat arms. "The important thing about the M4 is that there won't be a big change in training personnel on the weapon since it is so similar to the M-16A2."

The unit M-16A2 rifles have earned their keep, most have fired tens of thousands of rounds and have been used at various deployed locations

worldwide over the years. "I'm sad to see the old muskets go away," said Tech. Sgt. Brad Counce, supply NCO. "I've been around the world with my rifle, and I hope that it has a happy life elsewhere."

Although no longer the primary weapon of security forces personnel, the M-16A2 rifle will continue its service in the wing for years to come.

2006 Defense Bill offers Reservists enhanced benefits

WASHINGTON – People serving in the Air Force Reserve Command and other reserve components could receive new or enhanced benefits.

The 2006 National Defense Authorization Act lets the Department of Defense offer reservists a variety of benefits more on par with their active-duty counterparts, said Chuck Witschonke, DOD's deputy director for compensation. President George W. Bush signed the defense bill Jan. 6.

One big change is a provision that shortens the duty time before reservists qualify for the full housing allowance. People called to active duty for non-contingency operations for

more than 30 days will now get the full allowance, just as active-duty troops do. In the past, reservists serving in non-contingencies had to be called to active duty for at least 140 days.

For reservists who experience pay cuts when called to active duty, a new provision for income replacement will help reduce the strain military service places on the family, Mr. Witschonke said.

"It can be difficult for a family that has been living on a certain income to now have less money, particularly at a time when they're stressed by a change in their lifestyle" due to a military deployment, he said.

The income-replacement

program won't be instituted for six months, in accordance with the law. At that time, specific guidelines and qualifications will be issued, he said. This authority will end in December 2008.

The 2006 authorization act also permits increases in recruiting bonuses for reservists. People could get accession and affiliation bonuses of up to \$20,000 to enlist in the Selected Reserve. Officers could see an increase from \$6,000 to \$10,000 for initial service in the Selected Reserve.

People who possess a designated critical skill could earn a bonus of up to \$100,000.

Another provision of the bill extends eligibility for a

prior-service enlistment bonus to include Selected Reserve members who previously received one.

Mr. Witschonke emphasized the new law does not guarantee that all service members will qualify for these pays and benefits or that those who do will receive the highest amounts authorized. Rather, the law gives defense and service leaders the flexibility they need to meet operational, recruiting and retention goals.

More information about pay and benefits is posted on the DOD's military compensation Web site at www.defenselink.mil/militarypay/ (AFRC News Service from American Forces Press Service)

Tax info available for
download on myPay

2005 tax statements for Reservists and civilian employees are now available on line at the myPay web site <https://mypay.dfas.mil>.

Customers with myPay access will be able to retrieve their tax statements electronically up to three weeks sooner than those relying on regular mail delivery.

Current myPay account holders who have forgotten their personal identification number, as well as new users can request a new PIN on the myPay web site. Users with military e-mail addresses (i.e., .mil) can receive their new PIN via e-mail. All others will receive their new PIN via mail in approximately 10 working days from the date of request.

2006 Reserve Pay for Four Drills

Years of Service

[illegible]

E-1 with less than four months: \$157.08

Take Note



Photo by Jeff Melvin

Aerial porter advances to chief

Then-Senior Master Sgt. Lynn Whited gets help pinning on his new chiefs stripes from his wife, Shannon. The 25th APS transportation superintendent also received assistance from 22nd Air Force Commander Maj. Gen. James Bankers who dropped in to visit with aerial port personnel prior to the wing change of command ceremony Jan. 7.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder

Senior NCO of the Quarter

908 AW/JA law office superintendent Senior Master Sgt. Cynthia Bennett was named SNCO of the Quarter (Oct-Dec). A Montgomery native, Sergeant Bennett has been with the wing for 22 years. She is also a professor of business information systems at Albany State University in Albany, Ga.

Top 3 News

The 908th AW Top Three Association will sponsor a "Pizza and Soda" party for all wing staff and technical sergeants Saturday of the March UTA at 5:15 p.m. at the NCO Club.

In other Top 3 news, annual dues, \$15 per year, are due NOW. Association secretary Master Sgt. Nancy Butler said each member, new or prior, must fill out a registration form for the Top Three Association records. Registration forms are available from 908th Command Chief Amos Moore or Top 3 president Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Watkins.

Did you know?

Handwashing is the most effective way to prevent spread of infection. Wash your hands after blowing or wiping your nose, before and after eating, drinking, smoking and after using toilet facilities.

The technique for handwashing is selecting a comfortable water temperature and wetting both hands to wrists thoroughly. After applying soap, vigorously scrub both hands and fingers for 10-15 seconds. Rinse hands under running water and completely dry them with paper towel. Turn off the faucet with a dry paper towel. Waterless cleansers are used when hand-washing facilities are inadequate or inaccessible.

Please contact your Wing Infection Control Officers; Maj. Donna Roberts and Capt. Allan Hinton at the ASTS, 3-5404 for any infection control issues you may have.

908th needs air show helpers

The 908th needs to identify volunteers to work this year's Maxwell AFB Air Show by the end of the February UTA. The air show is set for Saturday, April 8. Members in paid military duty status on the day of the event can't volunteer. Spouses are welcome to volunteer as well; many couples have worked the air show in the past.

"It will be a long day of about 10 hours, setup through tear down but well worth the effort for the Wing. The funding we earn will go to the Family Day fund to help offset the costs of the food and games so we will not have to ask for any funding from the unit members. Please ensure your volunteers understand we cannot have any last minute dropouts because we do not have sufficient time to get replacements short notice and the other volunteers would then have double-duty," said Senior Master Sgt. Byron Godwin, services flight.

Pre-training for the event will be held during the April UTA (April 1-2) or the morning of the air show.

Submit volunteers' details to include Name, Work-Home-Cell numbers, and e-mail address via e-mail to Senior Master Sgt. Byron Godwin and CC: Senior Master Sgt. Fanning, the Family Day chairperson.



Courtesy photo

It's a family affair

Long-time unit member 357th AS's Maj. Don Richey poses with his daughter A1C Heidi Carreca. Airman Carreca joined the 908th recently as a flight medic apprentice. "I am delighted to be following in my Dad's footsteps and working with C-130's. I grew up around them and the people at the 908th...it is like family to me," the new enlistee said.

Congratulations to the following people:

Promotions

....to Chief Master Sgt.

Harold L. Whited, 25th APS

....to Senior Master Sgt.

Patrick L. Weir, AES

....to Master Sgt.

Teresa D. Cruger, 357th AS

Samuel M. Ferrell, SVF

Michael S. Haynes, MXS

Richard O. Neal, 357th AS

....to Tech. Sgt.

Teddy J. Dinkins, ASTS

Quintin D. Rudolph, LRS

Scott B. Walter, 25th APS

Donald P. Washington, AES

....to Staff Sgt.

Sylvia T. Bibb, MSS

Joel E. Clark, 357th AS

Jason D. French, AMXS

Richard W. Gilchrist Jr., 25th APS

Richard K. Howard, SFS

Yvonne C. Johnson, AMXS

Heather B. Kitchens, AMXS

Victor Senegar Jr., AMXS

Tracie A. Story, CES

....to Senior Airman

Daniel L. Brown, 357th AS

Wesley S. Carnes, SFS

Jordan D. Criswell, 25th APS

Jacqueline P. Doss, SVF

Charles C. Huys, CES

Joe W. Marks, CES

Peggy M. Price, MXS

Anson P. Pryde, SFS

Sean M. Stewart, 25th APS

Adam D. Weber, 25th APS

....to Airman First Class

Kimberly K. Galy, AES

Joshua R. Jones, MXS

....to Airman

Quiana S. Carter, MSS

Lacammie D. Haynes, AES

James M. Short Jr.,

357th AS

Santana M. Wilson, LRS

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To the Family of: