

# Southern Flyer

9th Air Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, Maxwell AFB, Ala., Vol. 45, Issue 9, September 2008

## Homeward Bound

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# Commander settling in, learning faces, places

By Col. Brett J. Clark  
Commander, 908th Airlift Wing

Since permanently arriving on station June 16, I've been running hard on an aggressive TDY schedule which included new wing commanders training, AFRC commander's way ahead briefings, and multiple senior leader conferences.

When left to my own schedule, I have managed to escape the office and get out to visit many of you in your work areas to introduce myself and get acquainted with you and the specific issues and challenges that you face.

These visits have not only been informative and enjoyable, but in many cases they have created a lens to focus my attention on solving some very important time-sensitive problems that threaten to erode our safe, productive, and efficient work environment.

As you would expect, I intend to continue these visits and I should complete the tour of all wing functions and work areas by the end of the month.

If I haven't come by your work area, expect a visit shortly and my apology for getting sidetracked.

For those units who have already hosted my visit, let me say I am impressed by your professionalism and your mission focus and I am excited about our future. Without a doubt, you have positively charged my attitude.



Col. Brett J. Clark, 908th AW commander

# Chaplain dispels cliché, 'You can never go home again'

By Chaplain (Capt.) Jamie Danford  
908th AW Chaplain's Office

I have always heard the cliché, "You can never go home again". I am not sure who said it, but it is one that we use quite a bit. In one way it is true, because we grow and change, we are not the same person as when we left "home".

However, in many ways we can go home again. Churches hold "homecomings", families have family reunions, and classes have class reunions as a chance to come back home - reunite with friends, renew relationships and enjoy fellowship.

The 908th Airlift Wing is home to me. This is where I first entered the Air Force Reserve - and after a couple of years away - it is good to be "home" again.

In the few drills I have had since I have returned I have enjoyed seeing old friends and meeting new



Chaplain (Capt.) Jamie Danford

acquaintances. I am grateful for the opportunity to once again serve in your midst.

Home has changed though; I have noticed many new faces around the wing. For all the friends that I have not met please allow me to introduce myself. I am Chaplain Jamie Danford - I am an Anglican Catholic priest and serve a parish in Marietta, Ga. I have been in the Air Force Reserve for 8 years and have always been a chaplain. I am married (wife Lynn) and have two small boys (Bill, 5 and Nicholas, 3).

I look forward to our time together - to rekindle old friendships and make new ones. It is good to be home again.



Photo by Jeff Melvin

Col. Brett J. Clark - Commander, 908th Airlift Wing

Lt. Col. Jerry W. Lobb - Chief, Public Affairs

Jeffery Melvin - Deputy Chief/Editor

Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder - Public Affairs Specialist

## Cover photo:

Senior Master Sgt. Owen Duke, one of the first of the deployed security forces members to return last month, gets ready for the homecoming of more of his squadron mates by checking batteries and cables on some of their parked cars. See Pages 6 and 7 for homecoming photos.

## Southern Flyer

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## Hot medical topics --

### Waist measures and Fit to Fight, PIMR is here

By Lt. Col. Carol Anders  
Nurse practitioner, 908th ASTS

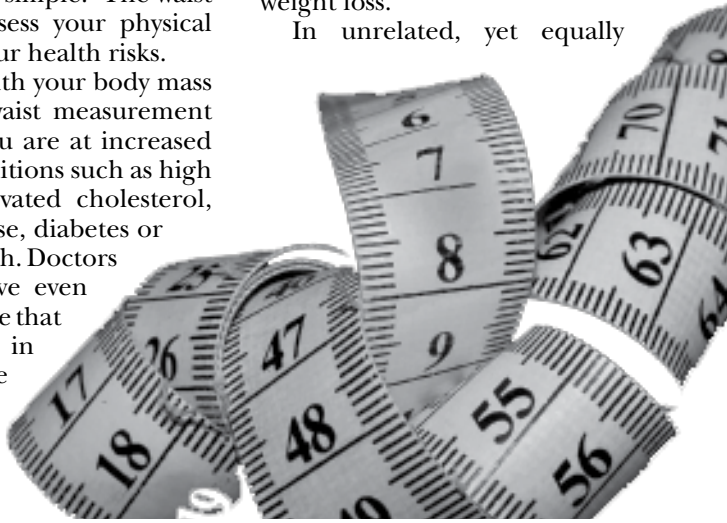
Many Airmen ask, "Why measure my waist as a part of the fit to fight test?" The answer is simple: The waist measure doesn't assess your physical fitness; it assesses your health risks.

In conjunction with your body mass index (BMI), the waist measurement can determine if you are at increased health risks for conditions such as high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, diabetes or even premature death. Doctors and researchers have even identified a syndrome that is highly suspected in those with excessive abdominal fat and increased BMI. It is called Syndrome X or Metabolic Syndrome.

The most cost efficient and practical way to measure excess body fat is to measure the waist. The fat at the waist is called visceral fat and is seen as unhealthy or bad fat. Generally, a person with an "overweight" BMI who has a waist circumference that is greater than 35

inches for women or greater than 40 inches for men is considered to be a candidate for weight-loss treatment to prevent more weight gain that could lead to obesity, and to produce modest weight loss.

In unrelated, yet equally



important medical news for wing members, **PIMR** (Preventive Health Assessment and Individual Medical Readiness) **is here**.

The computer medical tracking system for the military has finally

arrived for the reserve component and more specifically for the 908th. As of August UTA when you came to the clinic for appointments, you were "PIMR-ized".

That just means we looked you up in PIMR and were able to tell what areas you were lacking in your individual medical readiness elements.

As the system comes fully online, we can tell at a glance on one screen what all of your requirements are—from immunization, dental, gas mask inserts, web based HA, occupational health needs, status of 1042's, fitness, and duty limitation codes (Form 469).

You will notice another big difference in that when you process out no 422's are given out when you leave the clinic. As part of bringing PIMR online, the medical unit is reviewing all charts, profiles and dental records to make sure that the information fed into PIMR is accurate. 422's will be used much less and only for specific conditions like Code C's. Duty Limitation Codes (469's) will be e-mailed directly to the unit commanders, and health monitors in each unit for distribution to the member. Expect to hear more information about this new process soon.

### Memory walk supports Alzheimer's association

"Team Montgomery" needs your help.

Team Montgomery is comprised of Reservists, active duty Airmen and civilians from Maxwell AFB dedicated to educating the public about Alzheimer's disease and its effects on the family.

Alzheimer's is not normal aging; it's a progressive, irreversible neurological disorder. Symptoms include gradual memory loss, impairment of judgment, disorientation, personality change, difficulty in learning and loss of language skills. There is no cure. Today it is the seventh-leading cause of death in the United States. There are currently more than 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer's including as many as 500,000 under the age of 65. By the year 2050 there could be as many as 16 million with the disease. There are no effective

prevention or treatment methods to this disease.

Team Montgomery has set a goal of raising \$1000 to donate to the Georgia chapter of the Alzheimer's Association "We're on the Move to End Alzheimer's" memory walk set for Nov. 8. The Memory

walk is the signature event for Alzheimer's Association; events are held at more than 600 communities across the country;

The Montgomery team plans to hold a car wash as well as conduct bake sales to raise money, said one of its organizers, 25th Aerial Port Squadron's aerial port superintendent Chief Master Sgt. Lyn Whited.

Contributions are coming from people at church, friends, relatives, and coworkers, the chief said. Chief Whited said he can attest to the debilitating effects of the disease. His father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's several months ago and the changes have been "startling."

For more information or to find out how you can help, contact Chief Whited at (334) 953-7791 or on his cell at (334) 318-5012.



## European vacation

Communications flight contingent's annual tour pays off for team, Ramstein AB network users



Above, Staff Sgts. Jeff Pierce (left) and Keith Rudolph (right), assisted by a Ramstein AB Airman, create cables for the project rewiring and converting five racks of network servers to four.

A broken airplane delayed but didn't deter 908th Communications Flight from completing a successful annual tour to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, June 19-28. The purpose of the trip was to obtain training on AFSC specific core tasks, and offer support to their hosts as needed.

After a four-day layover at St John's, Newfoundland, awaiting aircraft repairs, the 12-member comm flight contingent touched down in Germany facing a two-week schedule compressed to one.

The 908th group accomplished a number of tasks during their short stay, perhaps none more important than their work cleaning up the network control center servers, earning them a big thank you from their Ramstein liaison Staff Sgt. Joe Johnson, 435th Communications Squadron, NCOIC of boundary protection. The sergeant is part of a team responsible for managing Ramstein's networks and servers.

"Thanks for your help and support. Without your team, this project would have taken us weeks to complete," he wrote in an e-mail thanking Capt. Dreidra Randolph, 908th Communications Flight operations officer, and the members of her team for their support.

Among the tasks the 908th group completed were:

- rewiring, and reorganizing the network floor to make repairs easier; preparing nearly 100 LAN cables to use in the re-wiring; and converting five racks of servers into four new racks, thus allowing their Ramstein hosts to better utilize the space available and by putting like servers together, making replacement and repairs easier
- information management (3A0X1) personnel creating a webpage behind the Air Force Portal, satisfying a content management training requirement; and sharing their expertise in various areas such as publications management, training of information management personnel, form design, records management and ensuring readiness for deployments and AEF rotations
- communication-computer systems operations (3C0X1) personnel observing communications security operating procedures and equipment use



Right, (from left) Senior Airmen Angela White, Master Sgt. John O'Connor and Senior Master Sgt. Tyrone Williams assemble a shelf for one of the server racks.





Senior Airman Daniel Gregory is literally and figuratively up to his elbows in the network servers project.



Staff Sgt. Chris Parker removes old cable.

Courtesy photos



'Pretty servers all in a row' -- three of the finished rewired/restacked racks





Photos by Jeff Melvin

Anxious family members and friends eagerly await the arrival of 13 908th Security Forces Squadron members returning from a six-month deployment to Iraq Aug. 13.



Left, 908th photo.

## Warm welcome greets wing's Iraq returnees



Along with family and friends, the returning 908th SFS members were also met by camera crews from local TV stations. Above, Staff Sgt. Jeremy Flowers, answers a reporter's questions about the deployment.



Jubilant reunions like the one in the center were the order of the day.



Staff Sgt. Je left, and his



# News



h AW Commander Col. Brett Clark delivers congratulatory remarks to the group shortly after their arrival. Above, 908th SFS members pose for a group



ffrey Paul reunites with his neice, Chloeigh Robinson, nephew, Hampton Robinson.



Staff Sgt. Wesley Carnes beams a wide smile as he basks in the company of family and friends.



# A Day at DZ Buzz 11

## Teamwork is key to successful airdrop

By Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder  
908th AW Public affairs

**L**t. Col. Jeff Spencer, 908th Operations Support Flight's operations officer, drove slowly across the drop-zone known as Buzz 11 Aug. 2.

As drop zone officer, he was looking for anything out of the ordinary that might endanger the airdrop.

Accompanied by flight safety officer Capt. Alan White, Tech. Sgt. Cedric Robinson and Senior Airman Vista McDuffie, he inspected every portion of the huge field from a four-door pickup.

He soon selected the site where the target the aircrews would aim for would be located. With his ground crew's help, the target was quickly erected. Once the target was set up, it resembled a nylon tent shaped like a cone and large enough for a man to stand in.

"The orange cone is a raised angle marker, or RAM for short," the drop zone officer or DZO said. "It was first used by the British years ago. Basically, it's the target the aircrew tries to hit. They try to knock it down because that's considered the best, but anything within 200 yards of the target is a good drop."

Besides grading the aircrews on their aim, the DZO's first priority is to ensure the drop-zone is clear. Slowly driving around the grass field and spying cattle in the adjacent pasture, he continued, "We keep the cattle off the DZ too."

His responsibility is also to clear the airspace. "Crop dusters sometimes fly over low," he said, "we then communicate the information to our planes that something's going on. We also make sure there aren't any people out here who aren't authorized."

Captain White said his role was to conduct an annual inspection of the drop zone operation. In order to accomplish his goal of a safe DZ, he looks for things ranging from air traffic to whether the grass level in the field is too high. "I ensure that operations here are safe," he said. "I look at the local area to ensure there are no obstructions and everything is accomplished according to established procedure."

Colonel Spencer, who is an Air Reserve Technician or ART, works as a pilot trainer at the 908th during the week. He explained why the 908th training in airdropping cargo is so important.

"Practicing dropping loads from the C-130 aircraft is a requirement for the 908th's combat mission. The Army drives this requirement. Many of their battle plans require airdropping combat personnel. Due to the complexity of making 'deliveries' on-time, on-target, we practice a lot to maintain proficiency," he said referring to the airdrop exercise.

The C-130, the colonel pointed out, can be used to drop almost anything. "Anything we can fit into the back of the airplane. We have dropped personnel and heavy equipment. Back in Vietnam, the Air Force would drop live cattle so the troops could have fresh meat. So, if it can fit in the airplane, we can drop it."

"The biggest thing we've dropped," Colonel Spencer continued, "is the Sheridan battle tank, airborne troops used to use. The tank can weigh up to 40,000 pounds."

Once the drop is complete, another of the drop zone officer's responsibilities involves recovering the loads. They also check for damage to the DZ such as a pallet hitting one of the many fences criss-crossing the field. "In that case, we would call the owner so he would know the fence needs repairing," he said.

All these efforts ensure proper training for 908th aircrews. A successful airdrop, the colonel said, is a shared success among many contributors. Operations provides the aircrew that flies the plane. Command post provides valuable information on the local area with current weather. CP also helps coordinate the exercise through its communication capabilities. The maintenance squadron ensures the planes are in

proper working order. Aerial port personnel rig the pallets and load them on the aircraft. They also pick up the airdropped bundles and transport them back to base. Each bundle is comprised of four plastic barrels filled with water secured to a pallet. Each complete pallet weighs approximately 1000 pounds.

Soon a roar in the sky above the drop zone signaled the approach of the four airplanes participating in the exercise. As the planes drew near, the three planes following the lead ship veered into several directions offering a sight from the ground similar to an aerobatic display. Completing two sets of drops, a plane on the second run dropped a bundle that landed less than 12 feet from the target!

After the drops were completed, Colonel Spencer continued, "The bundles being dropped are like the ones we drop in Afghanistan and Iraq for the Special Forces. The container delivery system could provide anything from MRE foodstuffs to ammunition to specialty type items troops may need, so we're practicing what is going on in the real world today."







On time

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder  
Senior Airman Vista McDuffie, 908 OSF, gauges the distance to the target.



On target

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder



Photo by Lt. Col. Jerry Lobb



# Sergeant reflects on recent tour, looks to future

**Staff Sgt Hollis Vernetti's small size belies big exploits and take charge attitude**

By Tech. Sgt. James Harrell Jr.  
908th Security Forces Squadron

After six months of hazardous duty in Iraq, Staff Sgt. Hollis Vernetti looks back with pride at her accomplishments at Kirkuk Regional Air Base – Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq.

"I enlisted after Sept. 11th because I felt it was my duty," she said. "Five years and 3 deployments later, I still feel it is an honor as well as a privilege to wear the uniform of the United States Air Force. I thought teaching was the only profession that suited me until I wore the beret. It was then I found my true calling."

Being a security forces member is the best of both worlds for her, she said. "In the civilian sector, I am an educator, an avid reader, and love to garden. In the military, I get to play with the heavy weapons and handcuff bad guys. It doesn't get much better than that."



Photos by Tech. Sgt. James Harrell Jr.

At only 61 inches, her size belies her stature. She stood tall among her peers owing to her reputation for excellence. Not only was she well-known in the Air Force community for her actions, but she was held in high regard also by the U.S. Army and other base agencies that she dealt with while performing her duties.

She showed ingenuity in her approach to force protection and the ability to analyze security deficiencies, threats, and come up with solutions to problems.

Here's an example. She noticed that some local nationals were learning the names of entry controllers in her sector of operation, a potentially seri-

ous OPSEC issue. Her solution was to create nametags that personnel wore on their body armor bearing their call signs instead of their names. Not only did this alleviate the problem, but served as a morale

booster among the troops as well.

She also provided sector leadership with threat analysis for her post and briefed them on incidents that occurred in her sector.

Her ability to perform roles

such as human intelligence (HUMINT) enhanced her sector's and the installation's efforts in detecting individuals suspected of gathering intelligence against coalition forces and stopping criminal activity here.

Tech. Sgt. Eric Townsend, fire team leader and fellow team member, spoke of her actions during her time at Kirkuk. "She dealt with 100 plus degree temperatures on a daily basis with little relief; she never wavered, never complained about the discomforts, nor sought lesser duties," Sergeant Thompson said. "She constantly engaged herself in enhancing the defense of the installation and constantly sought ingenious ways of physical, mental and professional self improvement."

She completed her Airman's Leadership School Correspondence Course and was promoted to Staff Sergeant in May. Already a leader before becoming an NCO, Vernetti immersed herself in the art of mentorship, helping Airmen who needed guidance. She spent many hours quizzing and pretesting other Airmen before their career development course exams and encouraging them to pursue professional military education.

Tech. Sgt. Steven Higginbotham, fire team leader and fellow team

member, described how the young Airman displayed leadership through good followership; backing up her leaders and providing consultation to help them make informed decisions.



Staff Sgt. Hollis Vernetti on duty at Kirkuk Regional Air Base - Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq

"Her ability to operate fearlessly under numerous indirect fire attacks while still providing constant reports to battlestaff was crucial in the response to deter and destroy enemy forces," Sergeant Higginbotham said.

Sergeant Vernetti's position as an effective entry control leader meant that she operated at the most forward and most vulnerable post at the installation. She consulted many times with local Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army, and US Army patrols to better enhance their operations by better understanding Air Force entry procedures to avoid potential problems.

Now that her tour has ended, a new chapter is opening for her. Her next endeavor is to study nursing and join the medical profession.

"I feel very satisfied in my service but it is time for a change," the sergeant said. "I want to do more for our veterans. I want to transition into the medical career field so that I can not only continue my service, but also aid those who have served as well.

*(Sergeant Harrell wrote this article while deployed to Kirkuk RAB, Iraq. He will be among the remaining group of 908th SFS members set to return in late-August)*



## Take Note

### Promotions

Congratulations to the following people selected for promotion lieutenant colonel (projected pin on date in parentheses)

Maj Joseph Accardo, 357th AS (14 Aug 08)

Maj William Bush, OSF (1 Oct 08)

Maj Denver Nolin, OSF (1 Oct 08)

Maj Danny Quitno, OSF (1 Oct 08)

Maj Donna Roberts, ASTS (24 Apr 09)

Maj Jacqueline Jacobs, OG (25 May 09)

Maj Bruce Coole, CF, (8 Aug 09)



Maj. Donna Roberts, right, who is deployed, is one of seven 908th AW members recently selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel.

### Promotions

Congratulations to the following people promoted to the grades indicated:

....to Master Sgt.

**John Farris, CES**

....to Tech. Sgt.

**Melinda Ford, AES**

**Vickie Knight, OSF**

....to Staff Sgt.

**James Bonds, LRS**

**Jason Carmack, LRS**

**Jamaal Dewberry, 25th APS**

**Joseph Scott, AES**

**Eric Thorton, LRS**

**Ebony White, 25th APS**

....to Senior Airman

**Angela Burton, LRS**

**Terance Jackson, CES**

**Julius Johnson, 25th APS**

**Matthew Schwartz, 25th APS**

**Joseph Watkins, 25th APS**

....to Airman

**Marvin Perdue Jr., LRS**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder

### Pinfall patter

Derric Hall, 25th APS, propels his bowling ball down toward the pins during the semi-annual bowling tournament sponsored by the 908th Chief's Group July 2. Team results: 1st place, Recruiters (Casey and Tammy Kelly, Bob and Jennifer Spears); 2nd place, 25th APS 1 (Curtis Henderson, Ray Giadrosich, Shannon Whited and Don Johnson; 3rd place, CES (Herb Pfeiffer Sr and Herb Pfeiffer Jr., Max Evans and Kevin Summerhill. Individual results: High Game/High Series male, Jerry Lobb; High Game female, Diane Martin; High Series female, (tie) Jen Spears, Tammy Kelly.

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