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Year In Review



Year In Review

by Col. Gordon H. Elwell, Jr.,
911th Airlift Wing Commander



Looking back, looking ahead...

This UTA we start a new year. Looking back, we can be proud of our accomplishments in 2008; from our early deployments to include ASTS, SFS, APS, CES and others, to our early May air show where we played host to our Canadian neighbors. Operations and Maintenance deployed over the summer for an AEF assignment, and as a wing we began the long road of preparation for our upcoming ORI in December. Take some time and enjoy this special issue of the Flyover and all the pictures of this past year, in addition to learning about what others in the unit have done to support our efforts overseas.

This is also a good time to take stock of where we are heading in 2009 and beyond. The biggest piece of the pie will be the ORI and all the training and preparations that it will entail. We have our ORTP-4 training deployment in the later part of April (but Gulfport, Miss. should be a good break from our winter blahs). In June we plan on sending a plane to participate in the 65th Anniversary airdrops commemorating the D-Day invasion of Europe. Then we will have our Wings Over Pittsburgh air show on June 20-21. We will also participate in the AMC Airlift Rodeo in July with Operations, Maintenance and AES. Then the wing will deploy in force for the ORE – our big dress rehearsal for December's ORI. Throughout all this, we continue to fly the routine taskings from headquarters, and again outperform the other C-130 wings in almost every measurable metric. All in all, a big schedule.

We must also be prepared, as always, for those pop-up taskings. The world remains an interesting place. We have a new administration in Washington and time will tell how a new perspective about us as a nation on the world stage will affect our ops-tempo. Disasters such as hurricanes and other naturally occurring events can quickly drive immediate responses and we will once again step-up to the challenge.

The one thing that remains unchanged, however, is the can-do attitude and spirit of this wing. I see it day in and day out, and with every challenge and deployment. The pride and dedication within each member comes through loud and clear. I am humbled each time the members of this wing come together and follow in the footsteps of all those who came before us and set the standard!

Commander

Col. Gordon H. Elwell, Jr.

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(Photo courtesy of 911th Civil Engineering)

On the Cover

Staff Sgt. Jim Young greets Iraqi children while performing a site survey for a new fence along the southern border of Kirkuk Regional Air Base, Iraq. Staff Sgt. Young deployed for four months from the 911th Civil Engineering Squadron.

Boots On The Ground



by Senior Airman Tammy Cario
Public Affairs

Support and Defend

With six squadrons, five functional units, two contractors, and one flight, the 911th Airlift Wing Mission Support Group is home to more than 700 people, which is half of the overall base population. Because there are so many different squadrons and functional units, the positions within the MSG vary greatly. One job might be sitting at a desk processing paperwork for a wing member while another might be carrying an M4 while protecting the base. Whatever the job, these squadrons and functional units all have one thing in common: their mission is to help keep the day-to-day work of the base running smoothly.

When the 911th MSG deployed 83 of its Airmen in 2008, the locations were as varied as the jobs they perform: Kuwait, Iraq, South Korea and Germany, to name a few, along with several stateside locations. The Airmen deployed from the 911th MSG had the same mission overseas as they did stateside.

For instance, Senior Master Sgt. Ronald McCausland, operations manager with the 911th AW Civil Engineering Squadron, deployed with 13 other members of the CES to Kirkuk, Iraq, for 120 days beginning in May 2008.

“My main duties were in the operations section of CE managing service calls, work orders, projects and digging requests for the base to include the Air Force, Army, various contractors and the Iraqi Air Force,” Senior Master Sgt. McCausland said. He also helped to build a demonstration water filter for the local Iraqi villages. “My goal was to make this process as quick and accurate as possible. This deployment gave me great satisfaction about being able to help the cause.”

Another MSG Airmen to deploy in 2008 was Senior

Airman Aazita Afshari. An information manager with the 911th Logistics Readiness Squadron, Senior Airman Afshari deployed to Ali Al Salem, Kuwait, for 120 days. Her job was mail control activity, where she drove an hour every day to work at the Kuwaiti City International Airport sorting mail pallets that came in and out of the Middle East.

“The people I worked with were great,” said Senior Airman Afshari. “We worked hard and we had fun.”

“Being deployed helps you see the big picture and you realize that every bit counts.”

- Master Sgt. Dale Canofari

As with any new job and new location, she had to learn to adjust to the situation. With the temperatures soaring to the triple digits, Senior Airman Afshari experienced firsthand how important hydration is, especially in the desert. “You had to drink a lot of water to stay hydrated,” she said. “I made the mistake of saying, ‘No, I don’t need this.’ I had a headache for a week straight.”

Master Sgt. Dale Canofari, a superintendent with the 911th Airlift Wing Security Forces Squadron who deployed to Kirkuk, Iraq, for six months, deployed with 27 other fellow defenders. During his deployment his unit, 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, the largest SFS in Iraq, provided security for more than 5,000 Airmen and Soldiers and responded to numerous rocket and mortar attacks.

“The mission at Kirkuk was very challenging due to the constant threat of attack. Despite that it was also one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. Defenders from numerous Reserve and active duty units pulled together and functioned as a cohesive team in a very challenging environment. Being deployed helps you see the big picture and you realize that every bit counts,” he said.

Senior Airman Matthew Eichenfels, a personnel

(story continues on next page)

“In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility. I welcome it.”

- President John F. Kennedy

(story continued from previous page)

specialist with the 911th Airlift Wing Mission Support Flight deployed to Balad Air Base, Iraq, learned something about the big picture as well. Working on a Personnel Support for Contingency Operations (PERSCO) team, they were responsible for the accountability of over 5,000 Airmen deployed to Balad and numerous forward operating bases.

“As Reservists, our main function is to train and ready ourselves for combat operations,” said Senior Airman Eichenfels. “I had the opportunity to deploy and use the tools the Air Force Reserve gave me in an environment where my expertise was vital. It was an incredible experience.”

Fly, Fight and Win

The moment Capt. Diane Ohm, a pilot with the 758th Airlift Squadron, hit the ground at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, she was off and running.

“On our way to the dining facility one night, we were alerted that we had to fly. I had my hand on the door when the phone rang,” Capt. Ohm said. “From the phone call to the plane, we were in the air within 32 minutes.” With an hour’s time allotted, they made it in half that time. “It was all possible through the dedication of the support staff and the maintainers who deployed with us,” she said.

Capt. Ohm was one of 86 people deployed from the 911th Operations Group in 2008. They deployed to six different locations, some as far away as Al Udeid while others stayed stateside, a little closer to home.

Tech. Sgt. Kevin Shaffer, a health services manager with the 911th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, was deployed to Scott Air Force Base, Ill., for four months. In support of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom, Tech. Sgt. Shaffer helped take wounded warriors from Scott AFB, where they had been treated after returning from the desert, to their home station.

“I was able to help in some of the patient movements. I helped ready the plane for the litters and I helped to transport the patients to the plane,” said Tech. Sgt. Shaffer. “I was part of the process in getting the wounded warriors home where they needed to be.”

For Lt. Col. Richey, the Director of Operations for the 758th AS deployed to Ramstein, Germany, his mission was to support the peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans.

“During our deployment, our crews were tasked with twice as many missions as the previous rotation,” said Lt. Col. Richey. “We transported people and cargo to Africa and Israel. I flew a mission that transported a rotation of people to Kosovo who were doing ground duties as part of the peacekeeping mission.”

This deployment, called Operation Joint Enterprise, was a good experience, according to Lt. Col. Richey. “We worked side by side with our active duty brethren to accomplish various missions,”

he said. “The flying opportunities that we were given enhanced our readiness capabilities and exposed our crews to missions we wouldn’t normally fly.”

For Capt. Ohm, seeing a familiar face while on a mission was a good experience as well.

“We flew a critically wounded soldier to the hospital on Balad Air Base, Iraq, for one of our missions,” said Capt. Ohm. “We were greeted by some friendly faces of the 911th Airlift Wing medical staff that were deployed there. It was great to see people abroad that we work with at home.”

Service Beyond Self

The air is cut by the continuous chopping of the helicopter blades, the deafening sound muffled through a tightly worn headset. Several soldiers open their eyes and realize they are no longer in the fight and that something must have gone wrong. One soldier shifts his weight in the litter and winces from the pain shooting up and down his leg. The ride to recovery is a rough one, but nowhere near as rough as where they had been picked-up.

The flight medics gesture to let them know they have landed. The door slides open and the sight of an Airman in medical

scrubs appears. As they are wheeled off through a tent with an American flag which spans the ceiling, it is now time to relax. Relieved that the firefight is over, above their head they hear someone say, “You’re in good hands; we take care of our heroes here.”

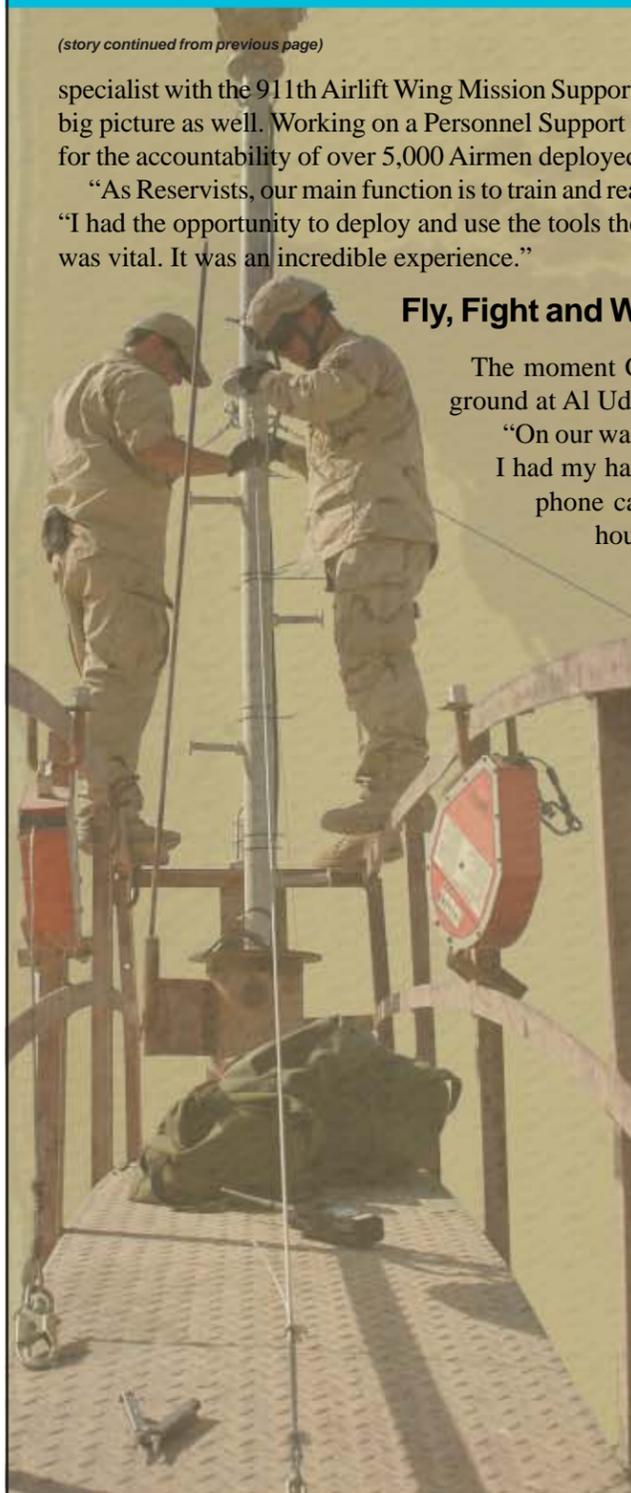
Senior Airman Kayla Presley, a medical technician deployed to Balad Air Base, Iraq, from the 911th Airlift Wing Aeromedical Staging Squadron, saw many soldiers like these on her deployment.

Senior Airman Presley was one of the Airmen who helped to transfer patients from the helicopter to the medical facility. “The first thing the patients saw was a huge American flag that covered the entire ceiling of the transfer facilities tent. This particular tent was affectionately called ‘Heroes Highway,’” she said. “The intent was for them [the patients] to know they were being cared for by their fellow Americans.”

For 120 days, 23 Airmen from the 911th ASTS were deployed to Balad, Iraq. Balad is considered a Level 3 medical facility, due to the number of specialists and medical technology available.

“Our mission was to stabilize the patients so they could be on their way to further care elsewhere,” explained Senior

(continued on page 8)



Deployed

transitive verb

1 a: to extend (a military unit) especially in width b: to place in battle formation or appropriate positions

2: to spread out, utilize, or arrange for a deliberate purpose



(story continued from page 5)

Airman Presley. Along with unloading patients from the transport, she also helped coordinate flights for the patients to their next destination, whether it was to Al Udeid, Qatar, or on to Landstuhl, Germany, for those with more serious types of injuries.

Master Sgt. Diane Douty, a health services manager with the 911th ASTS, was deployed to Balad at the same time as Senior Airman Presley. "We were responsible for the care of our wounded warriors and civilians who were awaiting transportation through the aeromedical evacuation system for further care to a long term medical treatment facility," she said. "We took care of all branches of the military as well as civilians."

Master Sgt. Douty said she really enjoyed being there for the patients. "I liked helping them, even if it was just lending an ear to listen." She was also able to help transport the Iraqi patients from the gate to the Balad hospital for treatment. "I loved to listen to their stories about how they lived."

Some parts of the deployment, however, were more difficult.

"One of the most moving things during the deployment was the ceremony for a fallen hero," Senior Airman Presley said. "They would drape a flag over a fallen hero who died in our hospital. It was a reality check of where we've been and what we've done."

Senior Master Sgt. Carl Reitz, a health services manager with the 911th ASTS was deployed to Balad as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the command and control section. One day, a patient who had severe injuries caused by an improvised explosive device

was being transferred. Senior Master Sgt. Reitz recalls this particular incident as being one of those moments he will never forget. "It was at that moment that I realized and understood the importance of being here," he said.

"I work on the administrative side of the medical field," said Senior Master Sgt. Reitz, who works as a prison guard as a civilian. "Being deployed is completely different; 180 degrees different. When you are there experiencing it, it changes you."

"You really appreciate things more," said Senior Airman Presley. "I came back motivated to go to nursing school. [The deployment] was very rewarding."

Camaraderie

When Airmen deploy, it can affect not only the Airmen but their families as well.

Senior Airman Michael Tucker has been married for 12 years when he deployed to Balad Air Base, Iraq, in May. "I missed my family. I missed being home," he said. "I have two kids; one is 11 and the other is five. I missed my eleven-year-old's birthday. That was tough."

Senior Airman Tucker, who works in military pay and travel at the 911th Airlift Wing, believes the deployment was worth it. "It gave me the chance to see and do new things," he said. "I got the chance to work with the active duty and gain experience in my career field that I would not gain during a UTA."

In 2008, the 911th Airlift Wing deployed 15 of its Airmen to eight different locations including Kyrgyzstan, Spain and Kuwait. The Airlift Wing support staff is a hodgepodge of sections that together support the wing. One of these sections is the chaplain, where Tech. Sgt. Timothy Crane is assigned.

"We were a ministry of presence," said Tech. Sgt. Crane who deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, in May 2008. As the noncommissioned officer in charge of the chaplain's office, he was out meeting and talking to everyone, he said, from the Airmen on the flight line to the general in his office. "We made sure everyone was mentally, morally and spiritually ready to perform their mission."

This was not Tech. Sgt. Crane's first deployment, though this was his first deployment with the Air Force. "I've been deployed before, so my wife of over 20 years handled it

very well," he said. "Fortunately, I was deployed over the summer, so my oldest son was able to come home from college and help out around the house."

One of the things Tech. Sgt. Crane liked most about being deployed were the friendships he developed.

"We were a Joint Readiness Team," he said. "We were there with all branches of the military. I really enjoyed the camaraderie and fellowship we had."

Master Sgt. Jim Kelley, a ground safety manager with the 911th Airlift Wing, deployed for the first time in September to Guam as the noncommissioned officer in charge of weapons safety. He has been married for 20 years.

"My wife told me 'you don't know what you have until you don't have it anymore,'" he said. "She was great about my deployment. It was tough on the younger kids, though. My oldest son left for Air Force basic training while I was gone."

The mail and phone calls helped the four months go by faster, Master Sgt. Kelley said. "Getting letters and hand-drawn pictures from my kids was really nice."

One of the things Master Sgt. Kelley remembers most clearly during his deployment was an investigative team he was on for the near-drowning of a young girl. "It brought the reality of life and death right to the forefront," he said. "That's what my job is all about."

The Big Picture

"Being deployed helps you realize how you fit into the scheme of everything," said Tech. Sgt. Clark Elwarner, a crew chief with the 911th Maintenance Squadron. "It helps you see how your job impacts other people."

Tech. Sgt. Elwarner has been in the Air Force Reserve 13 years. When he deployed in July 2008 to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, he was going on his fourth deployment to the desert.

"[This deployment] gave me a firsthand view of how we, as a squadron, have helped to impact the mission," Tech. Sgt. Elwarner said. He believes Airmen gain a better understanding of the Air Force when they volunteer to deploy because it gives them a broader view of the mission.

As a crew chief, Tech. Sgt. Elwarner was in charge of the maintenance of a C-130 Hercules. "We do any refueling or maintenance that's needed," he said. "We do anything that will keep the aircraft in flying condition."

"We also helped set up configurations in the back of the C-130, depending on what our mission was," said Staff Sgt. Jason Hlavsa, also a crew chief with the 911th Maintenance Squadron who deployed to Al Udeid.

For Staff Sgt. Hlavsa, it was the first time he had deployed to the desert.

"This deployment showed me that I could be successful. This is what we have been trained for and it paid off."



"Never in the face of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few."

- Winston Churchill

Respect for the Red, White & Blue...

Use the following procedures when showing respect to the flag and the national anthem:

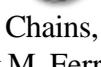
All personnel in uniform and outside must face the flag and salute during the raising and lowering of the flag. Upon the first note of the national anthem or "To the Colors," all personnel in uniform who aren't in formation should stand and face the flag (or the sound of the music if the flag is not visible) and salute. Hold the salute until the last note of the music is played.

All vehicles in motion should come to a stop at the first note of the music and the occupants should sit quietly until the music ends.

When in civilian clothes, face the flag (or the sound of the music if the flag is not visible) and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart or salute.

If indoors during retreat or reveille, there's no need to stand or salute. However, everyone must stand during the playing of the national anthem before a showing of a movie while in the base theater. When listening to a radio or watching television, no specific action is necessary. Additionally, a folded flag is considered cased; therefore, it is not necessary to salute or continue saluting.

PROMOTIONS

 Domenic J. Mash, SFS	 Adam W. Lease, AMS Deida M. Sturges, AES
 Terrell D. Hampton, 32nd APS	 Randall Z. Chains, 32nd APS Robert M. Ferry, SFS Judd S. Holcomb, SFS
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 Peter A. Scalise, 758th AS Jason L. Hlavsa, MXS Charice C. Henderson, 758th AS	 Jason D. Brown, MEO Robert T. Price, SFS Michael L. Vanhorn, SFS

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This nation will remain the land of the free
only so long as it is the home of the brave.
~Elmer Davis



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