

The *Airlift*
CHRONICLE

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Year In Review

The Airlift CHRONICLE

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STAFF LISTING

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL OF GEORGIA

Major General James B. Butterworth

COMMANDER, GEORGIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Major General Thomas R. Moore

AIRLIFT WING COMMANDER

Colonel Jesse T. Simmons, Jr.

EDITORS

Lt. Col. David C. Simons
Public Affairs Officer

TSgt Shaleata S. Johnson
GA JFHQ VI Specialist

Capt. Brannon Bowman
165th AW Chaplain

GRAPHICS/LAYOUT

TSgt Shaleata S. Johnson
TSgt Charles W. Delano
SSgt Noel Velez-Crespo

PUBLICATION SUPPORT

MSgt George D. Burnsed

Send your questions or comments to: Lt Col David Simons, Public Affairs Officer, 165th AW, Georgia Air National Guard, 1401 Robert B. Miller Drive, Garden City, GA 31408-9001. Commercial Phone: (912) 966-8290 or DSN: 860-8290.

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Front cover: Photo by Lt. Col. Don Pallone

Back Cover: Memoriam to A1C Cordarryl Sharrod Talbert

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Commander's Perspective

It has been a busy couple of years since we last published the Airlift Chronicle. Our operators and maintainers have completed another tour of duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, stationed at Bagram. Another deployment for them is coming up soon with another trip overseas. Our individual deployers have included Chaplain Brannon Bowman and SMSgt Vicki Bookhoop serving a tour at Manas Air Base providing for the spiritual needs of the many men and women transiting to and from Afghanistan. SMSgt Dee Phillips completed a tour in the contracting office of Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan while Finance Lt. Col. John Verwiel served in Al Udeid Air Base in support of Operation New Dawn.

Couple the war zones with other deployments in support of Southern Command and their operations, multi-national exercises in Bangladesh, and continued Air Mobility Command support operations, we have been operating again at an extremely high ops tempo and the pace doesn't look to slow down anytime soon. Throw in an Operational Readiness Inspection and the preparation for that, adding to one of our busiest years ever.

We have welcomed a new Adjutant General, Major General Jim Butterworth, a former B-1 pilot with the 116th Air Wing, GAANG. We have seen our funding levels drop and all of us are being asked to do more with less. We have endured the hardships of an operations temple that continues to rise and we continue to fight the battle of proving our value and worth thus avoiding the budget axe. We have seen our

friends and co-workers at the Combat Readiness Training Center lose twenty-six positions and yet, thanks to the efforts of our Congressional delegation, those jobs were saved.

I am extremely proud of all of you for your efforts to keep our focus where it needs to be, answering the call of duty every day. Without your commitment to our country and the 165th Airlift Wing, we could not answer that call to duty. Make no mistake, we are a vital unit in the continued missions supporting war zones, isolated outposts, training with our allies, and supporting our country's military needs. So on behalf of the command team: thank you, thank you, thank you. ↩



Colonel Jesse T. Simmons, Jr.

Lessons Learned

Story By: Lt Col Dave Simons Photos By: Various Contributors

On Dec. 31, 2010, I landed in Kabul, Afghanistan, to start a six-month tour as the Director of Public Affairs for the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan.

It was a valuable learning experience that taught me much and one that I hope not to repeat too soon.

There were good days, but the bad days were much more plentiful. The hours were long, the living conditions frightful and every drive was fraught with danger.

And sadly, I had it better than most who serve in Afghanistan. But that said, the mission is critical for victory.

The following are some of the lessons I learned:

The mission of NTM-A is to train the Afghan army, police and air force and prepare them to secure and stabilize their attempt as a democracy. For America and the NATO allies to leave victorious, a successful transition is a must. Success can only be claimed if the next generation of Afghans can lead, and lead on their own.



Lt. Col. David Simons, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, briefs members of the media at an Afghan Army Training Base during the visit by Vice President of the U.S., Joe Biden.

From The Front



Fortunately, they are moving at a fairly quick pace as the first seven locales have already moved to the role of Afghan-led security. However, the downside is that they may not move quick enough to achieve the gains necessary for country-wide security before the money runs out. For now, Afghanistan doesn't have the financial resources to sustain their new army, police and air force.

Gen. David Petraeus, International Security Assistance Force Commander, may be one of the brightest people I have met and listened to. Most mornings I sat in a video teleconference of his daily briefing and the breadth of his commentary and questions makes one realize one isn't the smartest person in the room.

There is a reason that he is a four-star general and was commander of all the forces in Operation Enduring Freedom during my tour. He has since become the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. I was also highly impressed with Georgia native, Lt. Gen. Bill Caldwell, commander of NTM-A. There are reasons that these men are leading our country's finest and our allies' finest. They are just plain brighter and more experienced than the rest of us.

The United States really does have the best soldiers, equipment, pay, motivation and commitment to duty. As a former Special Forces soldier I have worked alongside and trained foreign troops. But in a high-level international command, the parity becomes less prevalent but is still very much there, and the difference between Afghan forces and ISAF forces is night and day. We Americans can be very proud of the men and women we send to fight for us. They truly are the unsung heroes of our lives.

Family and friends make the time bearable but painful. With their packages, cards, phone calls and prayers, they make our time in a war zone much more bearable. But as most of us know, leaving loved-ones, friends and family is always painful. But I am the first to realize, you can't have a good homecoming until you leave.

The axiom, "there are no atheists in foxholes," is very true. Every drive is potentially your last drive as the weapon of choice for the insurgents is the improvised explosive device.

Those big road-size bombs can render your vehicle destroyed and the passengers dead. And while you take all the precautions possible short of just not doing the mission, the possibility of injury and death surround you at every moment. It makes most soldiers that much more spiritual in their beliefs, prayers much more common and chaplains that much more popular.



Top to Bottom: General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Lt. Gen. Bill Caldwell, Commander of NTM-A, receiving a check from The Afghanistan Fund, a project set up to raise money for Afghan orphans through a fundraising effort led by Lt. Col. Simons through Grace Church of the Islands (PCA). Grace Church is under the ministerial hands of Chaplain Brannon Bowman of the 165th AW. Commander of International Security and Assistance Forces, General David Petraeus.





Lt. Col. David Simons, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, handing out Bernie Babies to Afghan refugees.

It's hard to trust a friend when they keep shooting you. One of the major problems we faced at NTM-A was the very few Afghan army and police trainees that had a bad day or a bad life and chose to shoot the trainers. Over the past five years, there have been more than 50 coalition forces killed via impersonation or combat stressors. The loss of one trainer's life in these situations, where trust has to be the catalyst for the training, can dissolve the cohesiveness and unity of effort.

When nine Americans were massacred at Kabul International Airport by an Afghan Reserve Air Force officer, it was easily the worst day of my life. With every major media outlet wanting the gruesome details, it was extremely painful to know how the innocent American trainers died. What was worse was the aftermath of the murders. Their compatriots grieved and tried to piece the shattered trust with those they had to train back together.

Overall, I learned much about myself, my God, my friends and my family. I was proud to serve and I was rewarded for my efforts. In the end, the most important thing is I returned home with honor. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, and I wouldn't wish it on anyone. 🐱

Right: Chairman of the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, Rep. Buck McKeon.



WWII Hero Tom Davis Receives Bronze Star

Story By: Col. Jim Grandy Photos By: TSgt Charles Delano

Retired Senior Master Sgt. Tom Davis was recognized for his actions during World War II during a ceremony at the 165th Airlift Wing. SMSgt Davis is a survivor of the Bataan Death March in 1942 as the Japanese Imperial Army seized control of the Philippine Islands. Congressman Jack Kingston of Savannah, GA participated in the ceremony presenting SMSgt Davis with a Bronze Star Medal. Colonel Jim Grandy, Davis' son-in-law, arranged for the presentation and recognition honoring SMSgt Davis and his colleagues, many who did not return home. "I am in awe of my father-in-law and his fellow Airmen and Soldiers, who did their duty as America's greatest generation", said Col. Grandy. "Thanks to them, those who survived, and those who paid the ultimate price, the world was saved from the evil of aggression." SMSgt Davis retired in 1974 from the 165th Airlift Wing as an Instructor and Evaluator Flight Engineer with over 25,000 flying hours. Davis also saw action in Korea and Vietnam.



Top Left: Capt. Bowman, 165th AW Chaplain, engages in conversation with SMSgt Tom Davis. Bottom Left: Congressman Jack Kingston, pins the Bronze Star Medal on SMSgt Davis. Bottom: (Left to Right) Col. Jesse Simmons, 165th AW Commander, Col. Jim Grandy, Rose Davis, SMSgt Davis' wife, SMSgt Davis, and Congressman Jack Kingston.



“Smoking Wedding Plans, not what you think...”



Story & Photo By: MSgt Bucky Burnsed, 1st Sgt, CRTC

Tortoises languished on partially submerged logs, bald eagles surveyed the black swamp water and alligators swam lazily between the tall cedars on a late afternoon on an unseasonably warm April day in the Okefenokee Swamp. Nature paid little attention to the dark clouds gathering overhead. A flash in the darkening sky and sparks flew like lightning bugs in the dark bog. The tortoises and alligators submerged and the startled eagles used their terrain masking skills as they flew to safety. No one really noticed, especially Senior Airman Christopher Ethridge. Chris, a traditional member of the 165th Airlift Wing, was finishing his day with Norfolk Southern Railroad, performing maintenance on their rail lines crisscrossing the Georgia countryside. A lightning strike and an airman 200 miles away; two events seemingly unrelated until almost two months later when the former would cause the later to change his plans, well, almost.

In churches and beauty shops, bars and drug stores, the drought was the topic of many conversations in South Georgia during the Spring and Summer of 2011. While the beautiful blue skies and warm temps are great for beachcombers along the coast, the inland landscape that started out green from the warm late winter rains slowly turned from emerald to beige and then to brown as the heat came on and the moisture vanished. The sparks ignited from the lightning strike in the lower third of the swamp eventually became known as the Honey Prairie Complex Fire. Fires from other swamp regions and nearby wooded areas grew until they morphed into one larger fire stressing hundreds of firefighters who labored weeks to extinguish the blaze. But months before the lightning strike and even months longer before the drought, SRA Chris Ethridge had proposed to Ms. Marie Driggers. Her acceptance and their planned marriage was the delight of their lives as they looked forward to June 24, 2011, their nine-month proposal anniversary. Neither Chris nor Marie had any idea that the Okefenokee Swamp lightning strike would pose a conflict in their plans.

On June 16th, Colonel Todd Freeseemann, Commander of the Combat Readiness Training Center, and Colonel Jesse Simmons, Commander of the 165th Airlift Wing, were contacted by Georgia National Guard command concerning the need for heavy equipment and airmen required to blunt the fire with the dozers. More help was needed on the fire lines, cutting firebreaks to limit the fire's further expansion. Their men and material were needed near the swamp and now those things that appeared completely unrelated were on a collision course because while Chris works for the railroad full-time, he is a heavy equipment operator in the 165th Civil Engineering Squadron.

So the call went out and SRA Ethridge responded as he should, "I'll be right there," but at the same time he was thinking, "How am I going to break this to Marie?" Still, Marie understood. She realized Chris certainly wasn't the cause of the fire and she could only appreciate his commitment, albeit grudgingly. Her initial response of, "How are you going to marry me?" soon changed to, "Okay, I'll see you when you get back." Now those are the words of a very understanding bride-to-be knowing full well she's marrying a fully committed member of the Georgia Air National Guard.

As SRA Ethridge reported for duty he told his supervisor, MSgt Timothy Kennedy, of his plans that now appeared to be going up in smoke. (pun intended) As any good supervisor should, he responded, "I can't make any promises." While SRA Ethridge and his cohorts worked the fire lines, driving their bulldozers deep into the underbrush, MSgt Kennedy up-channeled the message through National Guard command that this airman had canceled his wedding plans and reported for duty without complaint.

Still the mission comes first, but as twelve-hour-a-day work schedules were meted out it became apparent that after working six straight days in the blazing South Georgia sun Chris might get a one day break in the action. That day would be June 24th, the very day they had planned to marry, their 9 month anniversary. With command permission to leave, Chris contacted his bride-to-be with the news. Hurriedly, they decided to wed at the Irwington County Courthouse with a Justice of the Peace. (So as not to mislead the reader, it should be noted that this is a second wedding for each of them and a large church wedding was not originally planned.) Still, if it was going to happen and under such austere conditions they would have to act quickly. Marie agreed to the hastily arranged nuptial and Chris left the Waycross area at approximately 8 a.m. to drive to the courthouse approximately 200 miles away. With a few family members and friends in attendance, Chris married his more-than-understanding bride in the chambers of Magistrate Judge Rita Faye Harrison. But the story doesn't end there.

Remember, the mission comes first. The newly married airman had only 24 hours of leave. At 3 a.m. the next morning, SRA Ethridge began his lonely trip back to the fire lines, reporting for duty, on-time and in place. So much for a honeymoon. When asked, Chris was almost whimsical about the short notice, the timing of the wedding and only half of a night afterward, "We got the most important part behind us; we'll have the rest of our lives to make up for what we missed."

Senior Airman Christopher Ethridge remained on the fire lines in the Waycross, GA area until he was relieved by follow-on personnel in early July. 



Guard Hosts Leadership Savannah

Story By: Lt. Col. Dave Simons Photos By: TSgt Charles Delano

In Savannah, the Leadership Savannah program is one of the diplomas found on many community leaders' and business executives' walls next to their college degrees. As it celebrates its 50th Anniversary, the relationship between the Leadership Savannah program and the U.S. military hasn't been stronger. Savannah is home to the Georgia Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Wing, the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center, and the 117th Air Control Squadron, as well as, the home of the U.S. Army's Hunter Army Air Field. The military has a prominent role in the community and the region. Throw in the large footprint of the U.S. Army's Fort Stewart just 45 minutes away, the influence of the military becomes even stronger.

City and regional leadership programs across the state of Georgia, and across the United States, have proven to be an excellent resource and have provided countless teaching moments. Individuals selected for these prestigious programs typically meet once a month for a program that highlights a community issue or major employer in an effort to give the student a broader understanding of how that area is influenced by that issue or employer.

Over the past fifty years the Leadership Savannah program has had different iterations of involvement with the Georgia Air National Guard. Most recently, that relationship has grown into a day long program exclusively dedicated to the positive military influence that both the Air National Guard and HAAF have.

Over the last three years, the leadership of the local Georgia Air National Guard has welcomed the class of community leaders to the Guard base at Savannah International Airport. The class is briefed on the role that the Combat Readiness Training Center provides in bringing tens of thousands of military visitors to the area for its various training programs.

The Leadership class is provided with the sights and sounds of the 165th AW and its many combat deployments to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Following the briefings at the Base headquarters, the students receive a first-hand look at one of the 165th AW's C-130H cargo aircraft. They then load the aircraft and are flown to HAAF to continue the program from the Army perspective.

According to Bill Hubbard, the President of the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, the Leadership Savannah's most exciting and memorable program is the day with the military. "The meeting of our military combat heroes, both Army and Air, and the showcasing of the military assets in the area provide our leadership classes a special look past the gates of our military installations," said Hubbard. "To a student, this is our most popular and well received program and all the classes walk away with a greater appreciation of the U.S. military." 





165TH AW FIRE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES LEED GOLD AWARD



The recently renovated 165AW/CRTC fire station has been designated as the first building in the Georgia Department of Defense to become Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certified. This award, handed down from the United States Green Building Council, demonstrates that the 165th AW is a pioneer in the field of sustainable, environmentally friendly, and fuel efficient design. The Wing now has a second construction project underway that has been designed to meet the same standards. 





Security Forces Squadron Deployment

Story By: Capt. Roy Fountain

The 165 SFS started a busy FY 2011 with thirty-one Security Forces members, almost half the squadron, being activated for nine months in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. The activation started on 1 Dec 2011, and the 165 SFS members departed the next day for Fort Bliss, TX to participate in a three week, pre-deployment, ground combat skills training event. The members received intense training in dismounted and mounted patrolling, land navigation, tactical combat casualty care, tactical communication and many more areas. Luckily, the training ended a few days before Christmas, so all personnel were able to spend the holidays with their families.

Immediately following the New Year, the thirty-one 165 SFS personnel departed for a long three-day journey to Afghanistan. Upon arrival at Bagram Airfield, the thirty-one 165 SFS personnel became members of the 455 ESFS, the largest Security Forces Squadron in the world, and started a deployment which would last over six months. Everyone was separated into different sectors, performing both critical and leadership positions, which contributed to the protection of over 30,000 coalition forces. We had 165 SFS personnel working in the Joint Defense Operations Center, entry control points for the installation, perimeter security and staff functions.

After over six months of indirect fire attacks and other incidents, averaging 14-hour days with about two low battle-rhythm days a month, all 165 SFS members returned from Afghanistan a little tired but with an experience and memories that cannot be matched anywhere in the world. 🐅





Gallery of





PHOTOS





Operational Readiness Exercise

Story By: Lt. Col. (Ret) Ken Luikart
Photo By: TSgt Charles Delano

Three Wings came together, the 403AW, 433AW (Reserve) and the 165th AW (Air Guard) to form the 122 Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW). The 122 AEW prosecuted a successful off-station deployment, to Gulfport Mississippi, ability to survive and operate, mobility, and redeployment exercise during the period 16-21 October 2011. The Wing processed 776 personnel, utilizing 23 chucks, the 165th AW moved 44 short tons and three disparate weapons systems moved a grand total of 373,208st, over a 2-day period of time. They

successfully prosecuted a two-day conventional and chemical threat scenario and affirmed their ORI 12-2B corrective action plans are in place. Noteworthy was the wings ability to demonstrate exemplary command and control using a 'blended' Crisis Action Team,

Emergency Operations Center, and wing functions, executing day and night operations. The amount of coordination and movement of personnel and equipment is extremely complicated and required a great amount of coordination, resulting in an outstanding 'positioning of the force.' During the war the wing demonstrated its ability to survive and operate during four major attacks or accident situations per 12 hour shift. From the first responders using their 'Self Aid and Buddy Care' skills to the Casualty Collection Point (CCP) the wing demonstrated a professional approach to war casualties. Secondly, the wing is extremely strong in highly trained, motivated, and exceptional Emergency Managers. The



depth of the skill and knowledge is great and they will be the back bone of the Operational Readiness Inspection. Equally noteworthy is the wings capability to prosecute two separate human remains exercises (Patriot Exercise) in correct time sequence and in exercise combat conditions. The wing has strong leadership in Public Affairs, Chaplain Services, Finance, Logistics, Maintenance, Operations, Force Support Squadron, and other functions, that provide a stable environment for handling the chaos of war. The

three wings worked hard training for this event and their preparations were evident. They need to continue their momentum and aspire to greater heights under current leadership; they can be very proud of their progress, and should continue their reach toward excellence.

Toward that end, the

403rd AW, 433rd AW and 165th AW will execute a remedial plan looking at several key areas. First, the wings will enhance communications between all functions. Secondly, the units will practice ATSO skills. Third, the wings will endeavor to enhance the job skills set (Mission Essential Task Listings) of everyone involved in the exercise. Fourth the wings will develop an Operational Risk Management study of areas where heavy equipment, cargo movement, and aircraft operations are involved. Lastly the wings will enhance and take a pro active approach to safety. Overall the three wings are mission ready.

OF THE YEAR

2010



Amn Stephen Morris
165th LG



TSgt Jefferson Wade
165th SFS



MSgt Katherine Copeland
165th CF

2011



SrA Sarah Mercer
165th OSF



TSgt Brian Achen
165th MG



MSgt Eva White
165th CES

BIRDIES FOR THE BRAVE

Story By: Lt. Col. Dave Simons Photos By: TSgt Shaleata Johnson

Members of the 165th Airlift Wing have been invited to play in several golf events honoring America's military. For several years, teams from the 165th AW have played in the annual Professional Golf Association's (PGA) Birdies for the Brave Tournament played at the TPC Sugarloaf Golf Course outside of Atlanta. Participating in the tournament's activities was the unit's Color Guard. Senior Master Sgt. Dee Phillips and Staff Sgt. Rico Brown have both sung the National Anthem. Chaplain Brannon Bowman provided the invocation at the events. PGA Tour player and former British Open Champion Stewart Cink provided golf tips and met with the color guard.



117TH AIR CONTROL SQUADRON



2011 was a busy year for the 117th Air Control Squadron (ACS). Operations activity included scheduling and providing Ground Controlled Intercept (GCI) to 179 air-to-air training missions supporting Florida ANG, South Carolina ANG, Active Duty Air Force, and US Marine Corps flying squadrons. The unit participated in planning and execution of a BOAR'S NEST Exercise, a quarterly joint live exercise involving and coordinating various units and specialties from ANG, USMC, USN, Coast Guard, and USAF fighter, and



Command and Control assets off the southeast Georgia coast. Operators participated in planning and execution of Exercise SOUTHERN FURY, a USMC sponsored large-force exercise hosted by MCAS Beaufort; unit personnel provided surveillance and identification of opposing forces.

The 117 ACS Maintenance section fielded the latest version (V500) of software for the AN/TYQ-23 Operations Module; software update changed the graphical interface to emulate the Battlefield Command and Control Center (BC3) interface. 117 ACS was the first Air National Guard Control and Reporting Center to perform this upgrade. Unit personnel installed Distributed Training Operations Center (DTC) Network hardware and software giving Air

Battle Managers access to the Air Reserve Component Network (ARCNET) and virtual training events and exercises. Unit hosted and participated in the Joint User Interoperability Communications Exercise (JUICE) for Air Combat Command (ACC) and Electronic Systems Command (ESC) units utilizing the Theater Deployable Communications (TDC) package sponsored by the TDC Program Management Office (TDC PMO) - 117 ACS was the first ACS to participate. Personnel engineered all available and required data over internet protocol (IP) solutions for legacy serial circuits; provided technical expertise and solutions to Air Force and Air National Guard communications agencies to develop critical solutions in changing technologies and improved throughput by 45% on all data over IP.

117 ACS sponsored and hosted three blood drives; collected and donated over forty pints of blood to The Georgia Blood Alliance, supporting local and regional blood supplies in the South Georgia/North Florida area. The unit Training NCOIC served on the Georgia Blood Alliance Board of Directors for two years. Unit personnel organized and hosted the annual 117th Air Control Squadron Commander's Charity Golf Classic; raised over \$3500 for the Ronald McDonald House and other local charities; a 75% increase over previous years. Personnel collected and donated \$400 to the USMC Reserves at Hunter Army Airfield for "Toys for Tots" campaign. Also, unit Technicians donated over \$5100 to over a dozen charities in support of the United Way's annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC); assisted dozens of charitable organizations to continue life-saving work. Over 40 unit personnel volunteered twice to assist Second Harvest Food Bank with cleanup and food delivery with unit personnel delivering over 110 emergency rations packages to disadvantaged households and providing inside facility and exterior cleanup and landscaping services at the charity location.



COMBAT READINESS TRAINING CENTER



THE THIN EDGE OF THE WEDGE

STORY BY: MSGT BUCKY BURNSED, 1ST SGT, CRTC

(Savannah, GA) Archaeologists tell us one of the earliest implements created by man is the simple wedge. One of the most basic of elements in any given toolbox, the wedge serves a simple purpose; its thin edge is placed between two areas and with appropriate application it creates space. Just like the wheel, the wedge has seen very little improvement since its early origin. Simply put, Savannah's Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) is the perfect example of the wedge.

When appropriately applied, the CRTC creates a space between a military member's typical area of expertise and the war.

This space is absolutely essential. Nothing can take its place.

The CRTC creates an area large enough for any member of the military to train adequately, effectively and efficiently for the task of taking the war to the enemy. This is an environment where the Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine can hone their skills, learn from their mistakes and prepare in a virtual war atmosphere thereby creating the most capable war-fighter possible.

Savannah's Combat Readiness Training Center provides the space in between. Without this unique environment the war-fighter would only be partially prepared for the challenges and rigors of today's battlefield. America and the world can ill-afford a partially prepared war-fighter.

In the past year, Savannah's unique war-fighter training facility has seen a tempo of operations unmatched in recent history. Recently, command and congressional leaders celebrated the blessing of multiple millions of dollars to replace aging dormitory space with an all new, three story hotel-like billeting center, and replaced an aged aircraft ramp with newly stressed concrete capable of supporting any type of aircraft in the inventory. Since the doors of the new billeting center opened and the newly poured aircraft ramp hardened, there has been an unending line of military units from around the world training for battle in the global war on terror at Savannah's *wedge*.

In fact, while the CRTC waited on both projects to be completed it did not rest on its laurels, rather, command focused on those missions it could complete. While the new dormitory created over three hundred new bed spaces, it still featured over 400 useable bed spaces. Secondly, while there is no substitute for a parking area for aircraft, not every military unit actually flies. There are units throughout the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines without aircraft that provide critical support to flying units and they need meeting space and off-site training areas requiring less than 500 beds. During the construction period those types of units would be the 'targets of opportunity' to maintain its relevancy. So, while expedited construction continued unabated, the *wedge* hosted 450 Air Force Reserve Recruiters

for their annual meeting in the newly completed meeting/convention center. Additionally, 450 members of the 263rd Army Air Missile Defense Command (SC ARNG) chose the *wedge* to conduct a ten day exercise which paid huge dividends when they returned a few months later to participate in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs' 'ARDENT SENTRY' national security exercise and joined by the Air Force, Navy, Secret Service and Civil Air Patrol.

Even considering the increased OPS TEMPO, Air Combat Command scheduled the CRTC for a Unit Compliance Inspection, which in civilian terms is not only a thorough inspection of its personnel and capabilities, but also the unit's regulations and finite instructions. There is no more intrusive inspection in today's military than a Unit Compliance Inspection. Colonel Todd Freeseemann had only assumed command two months prior, and as one might imagine he faced the inspection with some trepidation. Ultimately the Inspector Generals' (IG) left town with a glowing report of the resident airmen and their ability to carry out its mission. Col. Freeseemann remarked, "The professionalism of the team showed through. Inspections are never easy but the men and women of the CRTC turned this inspection into a triumph." Additionally, the Air Combat Command (ACC) I G Team commander, Col. Mark Moore commented in their exit briefing that he would be recommending to the ACC command that future inspections of other units should be conducted in Savannah. That's high praise from a group that makes their living in find the faults of others.

And now the *wedge* is busier than ever.

Luckily for the 169th Fighter Squadron (McEntire ANS, SC ANG) , they were receiving the same aircraft ramp replacement but needed a place to park and continue their F-16 Falcon flight operations, so for two months they made Savannah's CRTC and Townsend Bombing Range a home away from home. Similarly, the 440th Airlift Wing from Pope AFB/Ft. Bragg with its 7 C-130's found themselves without a usable aircraft parking area and made Savannah their home away from home for more than a month with an incredible 100% flight generation record while deployed to the CRTC, easily eclipsing their home record.

While most bases dread the thought of an Operational Readiness Exercise, the *wedge* lives for these occasions. Units from across the country regularly visit our confines to enjoy a few days of chemical gear wardrobes, gas masks, and virtual war scenarios meant to prepare the warfighter for the arduous task of not only fighting but expeditiously winning the war.

On any given day the aircraft ramp may feature F-16's from Texas, C-130's from North Carolina, Navy P-3's from Texas, F-15's from Florida or the latest 4th or 5th generation fighter. Savannah's Combat Readiness Training Center is a hive of activity, as it has been for more than sixty years. The history of Savannah's CRTC is resplendent with the training of war-fighters preparing them for their battles, whether training B-24 Bombardiers in 1943 for WWII operations in the Pacific or European theater of operations or providing the Joint Chiefs with a back drop for a recent national security exercise. The *wedge* consistently provides support and expertise for those training in their expanse and continues to do so unabated.

The *wedge*, Savannah's Combat Readiness Training Center, appropriately applied, creating the necessary space in between for today's warfighter. 🖱️



165th Medical Group a Success at Operation Sunrise

Story & Photos By: TSgt Charles Delano

11/18/2011 - Starke, Fla. -- Members from the 165th MDG respond to a simulated chemical incident during Operation Sunrise Rescue at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Fla. Within hours of notification, the 165th MDG (Medical Group) from Savannah

and 116th MDG from Robins arrive with medical equipment and personnel to provide emergency medical triage, treatment, and stabilization to simulated casualties prior to evacuation.

Prior to Friday's Homeland

Response Force (HRF) Exercise Evaluation, Georgia Air and Army National Guard units practiced a week of setting up and tearing down of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, (CBRNE) and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Pack-



Col. Patrick Morgan, 165 Medical Group Commander, interviews a simulated casualty during Operation Sunrise Rescue at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Fla., Nov. 16, 2011. Medics from the 165 MDG, Savannah, Ga. and 116 MDG, Robins, Ga., treated all simulated casualties without any fatalities.

age (CERFP). Evaluators watched and critiqued as Guardsman performed search and extraction, decontamination, medical, and command and control operations at the incident site.

The week-long practice simulations culminated in a final evaluation of the 78th Homeland Response Force (HRF) and Georgia and Florida CERF-Ps. Local residents, laden in moulage and exposed to simulated chemicals, were decontaminated, treated, and documented for accountability. The Airmen from the 165th and 116th not only earned a perfect score on the evaluation but, more importantly, saved the lives of all the simulated casualties.

"We have highly trained and motivated personnel that do an exceptional job (of saving lives). After the decon was set up, we were able to receive patients within 27 minutes and our complex was 100 percent established within 37 minutes", said Lt. Col. Charles Drown, Deployed Medical Group Commander. "They make my job easy."

To ensure immediate response from government agencies and military units, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Homeland Security, and Guard Units collaborated to create CERF-P's than encompasses an Army National Guard Engineering Battalion for search and extraction, an Army National Guard Chemical Battalion for decontamination, an Air National Guard Medical Group for medical, and state National Guard Quick Response Force for security. Together, the HRF can coordinate multiple incidents and disasters in



MSgt Brian Duncan, 165 MDG medic (right), places a neck collar on a simulated casualty during Operation Sunrise Rescue at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Fla., Nov. 16, 2011.



MSgt Glenn McIver, 165th MDG respiratory therapist, connects hoses to a liquid oxygen conversion unit during Operation Sunrise Rescue at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Fla., Nov. 16, 2011.

each FEMA region by deploying CERF-Ps to each site.

With the establishment of one validated CERFP in each FEMA region, it gives governors the ability to deploy immediate rescue resources to incidents and disaster across the nation.

FAMILY DAY



Story By: SSgt Monica Eusebio Photos By: Public Affairs Team

On April 14th, 2012 the members of the 165th Airlift Wing and their families came together to celebrate a day of fun and relaxation. Members were able to dress down and take a day off from their normal duties.

Family members of the nearly 1200 members enjoyed activities such as touring air craft that were on display, a bounce house, petting zoo, dunk tank, face painting, and tons of food.

Col. Jesse Simmons, 165th Airlift Wing commander, said "It's very important just to get them out here to see the base and meet all the folks they work with, and to just show an appreciation and thank you to them for all that they have to put up with, all the stress they go through. Anything that we can do to help them relax for day is a good thing."





165TH AIR SUPPORT OPERATIONS SQUADRON

LEAP FEST

Story & Photo By: TSgt Charles Delano



8/18/2011 - Kingston, RI -- The 29th Annual Leapfest enjoyed another successful year, continuing its streak as the largest and longest running static line international jump competition. The Maryland National Guard Rigger Detachment from Cascade, MD, won the competition with a total jump time of 186.61 seconds. Close behind was the Alaska National Guard 1-297th Cavalry team in second with a time of 205.41 seconds. In third place was Third Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

This year's Leapfest, which was held near the University of Rhode Island, hosted with 53 teams. It included more than 300 participants from the U.S. Army, Navy, Reserves, and National Guard. The international teams hailed from Germany, Canada, Morocco, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.

The state of Georgia was represented by five jumpers from the 165th Air Support Operation Squadron, who were also the only participants representing the Air Force and Air National Guard. The competitors were Capt. Roger Brooks, Senior Master Sgt. A.J. Freshwater, Master Sgt. Ryan Baker, Tech. Sgt. Michael Ashurst, and Staff Sgt. Shawn Gordon. The highest individual finisher from the Georgia Air National Guard was Staff Sgt. Shawn Gordon with a cumulative time of 111.50 seconds.

After the opening ceremony, CH-47 Chinook helicopters from the Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania Army National Guard flew to the drop zone to determine if the conditions were acceptable for the jump. After an hour delay because of low visibility and excessive winds, the first team of jumpers exited the aircraft and began their decent toward the target.

The goal of Leapfest is for teams of four to perform a static line jump from the helicopter at an altitude of 1500 feet. The teams use a steerable parabolic parachute and land as close as possible to a marked target on the ground. They are scored by the cumulative time it takes each jumper to touch the 'X'. The championship team is determined by the lowest time of the three jumps, while an individual champion is recognized as the jumper with lowest personal time.

Additional CH-47 Chinook helicopters were on hand throughout the five hour competition, making drop-off and pick-up rotations in and out of the drop zone. Judges ran with each parachutist to document the individual times, which was then transferred to the respective teams' scoreboards.

This international jump competition was started by the Rhode Island National Guard 56th Troop Command in 1982 as a way to stay in contact with parachutists from other countries and branches of service. 

Final Flights



Col. Jim Grandy



CMSgt Greg Bell



Lt. Col. Kenny Weaver

CMSgt Michael Best



— In Memoriam —

A1C Cordarryl Sharrod Talbert

165th Services Flight

December 22, 2011

--During hard times you can either turn away from God or you can turn to Him. Only He knows what the future holds and as the Talbert families go on, it will get a little better each day. I've known your son since I was 15 and was blessed enough to have known him as a church member also. I love you all.. Mr. Talbert, Mrs. Gretta, Lagarius and Devante..

My prayers are with you.

~ Tiffany Johnson (The Bias' daughter), *Augusta, Georgia*

December 20, 2011

The Lord has added another beautiful flower to his bouquet. Sharrod had a beautiful spirit. He will be missed. There is a purpose for everything under the sun. May God keep you in his arms as you go through the time of great loss.

~ Reva Black, *Augusta, Georgia*

December 22, 2011

As a member of the Woodvalley subdivision; We would like to let you know that your Son set a standard demanding Respect, honor, and commitment. His spirit was unique and genuine, the memory will live on forever. Thank You for being good parents and showing him the way to our Lord. God's will has been done.

-Maxwell Family

~ Maxwell, *Augusta, Georgia*

December 20, 2011

To The Talbert Family
May the presence of the lord comfort and keep you during this time. Your son was blessing to many.

~ The Dallas Family, *Augusta, Georgia*

December 25, 2011

I was Cordarryl's direct supervisor in the ANG and was shocked and shaken to the core when I first heard of his passing. All I could see was his smiling face, which was always contagious. He was the best Airman anyone could ask for, always did what was asked, and went above and beyond to help me out when I needed it. He was always smiling and always there with a witty remark. I can't even imagine how our UTA weekends will be without him. He was so full of life and laughter and I, along with the rest of our FSS Squadron will truly miss him. -TSgt Bridget McCasson

~ Bridget McCasson, *Valdosta, Georgia*



165th Airlift Wing
Public Affairs Team
1401 Robert B. Miller Road
Savannah, GA 31408

To The Family Of: