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AIRLIFTER

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179th receives major awards at NGAUS conference



AROUND THE 179TH

Civilian dental professionals visited the 179th Airlift Wing during the September UTA to complete exams for members that are required every four years. New x-ray equipment has since arrived at the unit, which will allow Medical Group members to complete the exams for the next checks using base assets.



photo by: Master Sgt. Lisa Haun



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photo by: Master Sgt. Lisa Haun

During the September UTA, 2nd Lt. Sarah Ditto, the 179th Airlift Wing's newest Protestant Chaplin, gave her first sermon on base. Services are held each drill for members who wish to attend. Stay tuned to base announcements during each UTA for exact times and locations.



photo by: Master Sgt. Lisa Haun

179th Airlift Wing receives three major awards

RENO, Nev. – During the 134th National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) General Conference, the 179th Airlift Wing received three major awards for unit excellence on Sept. 12.

The wing was awarded the NGAUS Distinguished Flying Unit Spaatz Award, the National Guard Bureau Curtis N. “Rusty” Metcalf Award, and the Maj. Gen. John J. Pesch Flight Safety Award for exceptional readiness, safety, retention and other key factors.

The awards were presented by Lt. Gen. Harry Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard to wing representatives at the conference: Col. Gary McCue, 179th Airlift Wing commander; Col. Lindsey Whitehead, 179th Mission Support Group

commander; Maj. Kevin Wuebker, 179th chief of safety; and Capt. Nicole Ashcroft, 179th chief of public affairs. “I think it’s pretty apparent as we awarded the outstanding unit awards and

gave recognition to the best units in the Air National Guard, the 179th was on stage for three separate awards and walked away with all the honors.” Wyatt said, “I think that’s a

great tribute. Especially when you take a look at some of the turmoil with the PB13 [Fiscal Year 2013 President’s Budget] ; the challenges that the wing has faced while being deployed in the C-27J, seeing all the publicity and being able to work through all those distracters and still have the year that the wing has had. It’s just phenomenal and makes me extremely proud.”

The Spaatz Award is named for Gen. Carl A. “Tooey” Spaatz, WWI ace and first Air Force Chief of Staff. The award is given annually by NGAUS to the overall outstanding flying unit in the entire Air National Guard. Selection of the winner is based on overall combat readiness during the reporting year with specific factors including: flying safety,

aircraft operational readiness, combat skill proficiency, deployments, unit manning, skill level qualifications, retention and drill attendance. Being activated as the first Expedi-

tionary C-27J Spartan Squadron in Afghanistan where, despite several training, maintenance, support and operational obstacles, the unit had a multitude of accomplishments to include:

- created the first Air Force course for Blue Force Tracker to property train aircrews on Army technology
- established initial instructor cadre to train fellow Airmen, resulting in 92 percent of C-27J mission qualified aircrew
- developed first ever C-27J simulator training syllabus for Emergency procedures training of mission aircrew
- developed an overall concept of operations that built a bridge between Army and Air Force opera-

tional concepts.

In addition, the 179th performed exceptionally well during its major Environmental Safety Occupational Health Camp inspection; success-

fully conducted over 1,600 combat sorties during Operation Enduring Freedom; maintained superior recruitment and retention with more than 104 percent personnel end strength; received the ANG Environmental Management System Team Excellence Award; continued to be a pillar for community support by volunteering and maintaining a superb relationship with local community.

The Curtis N. “Rusty” Metcalf Award, bestowed annually by the National Guard Bureau, recognizes the airlift or air refueling unit that demonstrates the highest standards of mission accomplishment. To be considered for this award, units are evaluated in the areas of exercises and deployments, human resources, accident rate history, accident prevention and significant accomplishments during the award period. The award is named for a former deputy chief for plans and operations at the National Guard Bureau, in Washington, D.C.

The Maj. Gen. John J. Pesch Flight Safety Award is presented annually to two flying units judged to have demonstrated the highest standards of flight safety in the Air National Guard. The 179th Airlift

Muncy, command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, offered his congratulations after the awards presentation and some words for wing members. “Congrats on all the awards. It’s pretty

awesome and nothing surprising; you guys deserve it.” Muncy said, “To gain that through all the adversity just shows its great Airmen, from a great state, doing super stuff.”

NGAUS includes nearly 45,000 current or former National Guard officers. It was created in 1878 to provide unified National Guard representation in Washington. It is an association with the goal of obtaining better equipment and training by petitioning Congress for more resources.



DISTRACTED DRIVING NOW ILLEGAL IN OHIO

COMMENTARY BY: TECH. SGT. JESSICA HILL

On June 1, 2012, Ohio became the 39th state to ban text messaging while driving. The ban officially took effect after a 90 period on August 1. Until February 1, 2013, drivers have a warning period where police will make stops but will not write tickets.

The new law is split into two categories. For adults, the enforcement is secondary. This means that a primary offense must be committed for police to stop and cite violators, such as speeding. For drivers under 18, text messaging and the use of other portable electronics while driving is a primary offense. Fines for adult violators are set at \$150. For teen violators, the fines top out at \$300 with the possible loss of license.

"I commend Gov. Kasich and the Ohio legislature for taking an important stand against the dangers of texting while driving today. ... We are especially encouraged by its focus on young drivers, who are more likely to engage in distracted driving," praised U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood about Ohio's efforts to curb teen distracted driving.

Cell phones are everywhere in today's society. They are in pockets, briefcases, backpacks, purses and even diaper bags. Cellphones are great in cases of emergencies when a quick call to police or 9-1-1 could mean

the difference between life and death. One instance where many people argue cellphones should not be used, however, is while a person is driving. Critics of cellphone use while driving cite numerous cases of automobile accidents leading to physical harm or death that are traced directly back to a driver being distracted by their cellphone, as well as the ineffectiveness of hands-free mobile devices and the need for more laws prohibiting this practice that more than make up for the cost and feasibility of enforcement.

The biggest goal of those who oppose cellphone use while driving is reducing the crash rate associated with the distracting devices. In a 2009 study of long-haul truck drivers, drivers who texted while driving were 23 times more likely to be involved in a collision than those who were not using cellphones. In the same study, drivers increased their risk of collision by six times when they were dialing on a cellphone. Tom Dingus, director of the Virginia Tech institute, one of the world's largest vehicle safety research organizations, said of his opinion of texting while driving, "You should never do this. It should be illegal."

While no state has yet to ban all cellphone use by all drivers, law makers are noticing that drivers distracted by cellphones are causing a significant number

of accidents on the roadways. "People are starting to see [texting while driving] like drunk driving, and that's the comparison we need to continue to make," Steve Farley, an Arizona state representative from Tucson, said in 2010. According to polls, more than 90 percent of people think texting while driving is dangerous and should be made illegal.

While there are some who argue that current laws aimed at reducing cellphone distractions



while driving are not effective and do not stop people from engaging in this potentially dangerous pastime, the argument for more regulation has one very strong ally. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has made distracted driving his signature issue since he was hired in early

2009. When speaking of distracted driving, especially texting while driving, LaHood said, "We have to be able to get people to understand that this is very, very dangerous behavior." He is currently pushing for a national ban on texting while driving.

In many jurisdictions where hand-held cell phone use has been banned, hands-free devices such as Bluetooth earpieces are used by people still wanting to use their cellphones while they are driving. While many people

believe these devices are a safe alternative that still enables drivers to keep both hands on the steering wheel and their eyes straight ahead to scout for dangerous situations, studies are showing that this is not the case. A study conducted in recent years by the Highway Loss Data

Institute concluded that drivers holding a cellphone have the same crash risk as those drivers using a hands-free device.

In order to help keep drivers safe and focused while on the road, some car makers are trying to improve on the hands-free idea. Ford has recently released an update to its Sync technology, found in many newer model Fords, to include an option allowing drivers to have text message read aloud. This gives drivers a way to stay connected without having to look down to read a message. The Sync technology had already allowed for drivers to make and receive phone calls through a Bluetooth system that works through the vehicle's sound system. Many other vehicle manufacturers also have Bluetooth enabled calling through the vehicle.

Part of the problem lawmakers have in getting cellphone bans passed is the financial ramifications they can bring to both the jurisdictions enforcing the laws and drivers who get caught breaking the rule. One way they get the laws passed is by having low sounding fees, but the fees end up being anything but low to drivers who get fined. A law in California set penalties for texting or talking on a cellphone while driving without a hands-free device at \$20 for first time offenders. However, court costs and assessment from various

levels of government, such as cities and counties, had the total for first time offenses ranging in price from \$114 to \$143. That could be a very steep price for many people to pay in today's tough economic times.

On the other side of the money debate is the funding for officers needed to enforce the cellphone laws. Many critics of cellphone bans make the claim that there are not enough officers needed to properly enforce the bans to the point where they are effective. A study from 2010 in Canada however, refutes this claim. The study, conducted in Alberta, found that banning all in-car cellphone use could save the province \$136 million, as well as reduce annual crashes by 4,450 and even result in 15 fewer traffic-related deaths each year. "Even with low compliance, a ban reduces the number of injuries and saves lives," said Dr. Alan Shiell, the University of Calgary's Population Health Intervention Research Center and a co-author of the study.

While people may think that they are paying enough attention to the road and other drivers while they are using their cell phones, the proof has been shown that too often they are not. Impaired driving due to texting and talking on cell phones is killing the American population at rates near that of drunk driving and it must be stopped.

Nearly 70 Coast Guard members returning home from Operation Enduring Freedom deployment

Photos by: Master Sgt. Lisa Haun | Story by: USCG Lt. Scott Carr

MANSFIELD, Ohio – Nearly 70 Coast Guard Reserve members based in Port Clinton returned home from a three-month deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on Wednesday, Oct. 3 at the 179th Airlift Wing.

During the deployment, Port Security Unit 309 provided seaward security at strategic port locations around the North Arabian Gulf ensuring the free flow of personnel, equipment and commerce in the region.

Capstoning nearly 10-years of Coast Guard operations, the PSUs were released from their Operational Responsibilities supporting Task Group 56.5 at Kuwait Naval Base, Sept. 24.

“During the past nine-and-a-half years, more than 2,000 PSU members have teamed with our Navy brothers and sisters in arms to protect high-value assets



carrying millions of tons worth of ammunition, fuel, and equipment,” said Capt. Gene Gray, Deployable Operations

Group commander. “These efforts ensured the operational commanders in both the Iraq and Afghanistan theaters had the flexibility to adjust to strategic situations and shifts in offensive operations.”

PSU 309 conducted joint operations and training with the Navy’s Maritime Expeditionary Squadron Three as part of Combined Task Group 56.5, under the Naval Expeditionary Combat

Command. CTG 56.5 is charged with providing harbor defense and security to ports, seaward approaches, and waterways within U.S. Central Command’s area of responsibility.

“I’m very proud of the PSU 309 crew,” said Cmdr. Gerald A. Nauert, PSU 309’s commanding officer. “They provided security to Northern Arabian ports and honed their skills, keeping the edge on

the sword. In addition to that, they also cleaned house and prepared the nearly 10-years of accumulated equipment for our demobilization.”

PSU 309 can trace its history back to mid-80s and early 90s when PSUs were “notional” units, meaning they would remain in a training phase mainly manned by reservists until they were activated to a deployed area as a Rapid Deployment Force.

With the commissioning of PSU 309, in 1995, such units moved from a notional unit to a self-sustaining Coast Guard unit with a proud operational heritage,

including missions in support of Operations’ Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Desert Storm, Noble Eagle, and Uphold Democracy.

PSUs are a component of the Coast Guard’s Deployable

Operations Group (DOG). The DOG provides properly equipped, trained and organized Deployable Specialized Forces (DSFs) to Coast Guard, Department



of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, interagency operational and tactical commanders.

For more information on the DOG, go to www.dog.uscgnews.com.



179TH AW DEPENDANTS EARN TRIP TO SPACE CAMP

STORY BY: TECH. SGT. JESSICA HILL

PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Military members and their families are often presented with chances to take advantage of special opportunities and discounts, but they only benefit those who take advantage. Over the summer, dependants of Senior Master Sgt. Mark Manbevers, Plans, Resources and Information Assurance Superintendent in the Communications Flight, were able to attend a space camp adventure in Huntsville, Ala., due to one of these offerings.

After applying for the first time to attend the camp, Ireland and Gable Connors, children of Manbevers' wife, Tammy Manbevers, were selected to attend the five-day camp. It was the first time the children were without their family for that length of time and the entire

application. "My favorite part was the mission to the moon," mused Ireland, 15-years old, of the space mission," he noted. "We even shook hands with a real astronaut!" In addition to the space camp,



simulated mission completed during the space camp. "We filled out paperwork and our jobs were picked based on our interests. I worked in Mission Control updating the public on the mission. It was very educational." "It was really fun," Ireland's 12-year old brother, Gable, said of his experience. "My favorite was the G Force simulator called the MASTIF. It was like a giant gyroscope."

Fun was not the only impression Space Camp left on Gable. "We learned so much about the

Family Programs, headed by Faline Rowland, sends out information annually for four different adventure camps that military families can apply for. They are Camp Kelleys Island, Hero Camp, Teen Leadership Camp and Troop and Family Camp.

For more information about the camps or other military only events and promotions, contact Rowland at 419-520-6600. One can also follow Ohio Air National Guard Family Programs on Facebook.

family was surprised that the children were selected on the first

2013 FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM PREMIUM RATES ANNOUNCED

Washington, DC - The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced today that the average premium for the 8.2 million people covered by the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program will increase by 3.4 percent in 2013, which is lower than last year's increase of 3.8 percent. The average premium increase for the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FED-VIP) will be less than 1 percent. The average annual increase for FEHB premiums has steadily declined since 2009 when the average premium increase was 7.0 percent. There are no significant benefit changes for 2013.

On average, FEHB Program enrollees with self only coverage will pay \$2.75 more per bi-weekly pay period, and enrollees with family coverage will pay \$6.39 more. Premiums for Health Maintenance Organizations will increase an average of 5.3 percent, while Fee-for-Service plans will see an average increase of 3.0 percent.

"I am pleased that we were able to keep the average increase low again this year," said OPM Director John Berry. "It is important that we deliver competitive rates and benefits through an efficiently run program to attract and retain top-talent in the federal service. Once again, we successfully used our market leverage and previous years' experience to negotiate the lowest possible premium rates without sacrificing benefits."

The 2013 Open Season for health, dental, and vision in-

surance and flexible spending accounts will be held from November 12, 2012 to December 10, 2012. The annual Open Season gives federal employees and retirees the opportunity to review their health plan choices and make changes for the following year. It also allows eligible employees to enroll for coverage. FEHB Program enrollees should review the benefits and premiums for their health plan choices and decide what coverage will best fit their healthcare needs in the coming year.

Additionally, beginning on May 1, 2012, employees of eligible tribes and tribal organizations may now enroll for FEHB coverage. This will be the first regular Open Season enrollment period for tribes and tribal organization employees to make changes to their current health plans. Approximately 33 tribes with 3254 tribal employees are currently enrolled. During Open Season employees of participating tribes and tribal organizations may also stay with their current FEHB plan or select a new one.

Established in 1960, the FEHB Program is the largest employer-sponsored health benefits program in the United States. In 2013, employees, retirees, and their families will have 230 health plan choices. The government provides a weighted average contribution of 72 percent of premiums with a cap of no more than 75 percent of total premium cost. Approximately 90 percent of all federal employees participate in the Program.

Electronic payments required for TRICARE Reserve Select and Retired Reserve monthly premiums

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AFNS) -- To avoid losing coverage, beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) or TRICARE Retired Reserve (TRR) who pay monthly premiums by check need to switch to an electronic form of payment before Jan. 1, 2013.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2013, TRICARE will only accept monthly premium payments using recurring automatic payments by credit or debit card, or by recurring electronic funds transfer (EFT) from a linked bank account. To avoid confusion, beneficiaries should

verify that their bank sends EFT payments.

The Defense Manpower Data Center is notifying current TRR and TRS beneficiaries directly by email, and new beneficiaries will be informed in their welcome package information when enrolling.

Electronic payments streamline account management and ensure continuous coverage for beneficiaries. Failure to pay premiums by the due date results in termination of coverage.

Beneficiaries can contact their re-

gional contractor to set up automatic payments and get more information. Contact information for each region is available online at www.tricare.mil/contacts.

TRS and TRR are premium-based health plans. TRS is available for eligible members of the selected Reserve of the ready Reserve and their families; and TRR can be purchased by retired Reserve members, their families and eligible survivors of deceased retired Reserve sponsors. For more information about TRS or TRR, go to www.tricare.mil.

**To be Chief Master Sergeant:
Lynn Swank - 179 MOF**

**To be Senior Master Sergeant:
Dana Togliatti - 179 FSS**

**To be Master Sergeant:
Efrem Swoope - 179 FSS
Charles Danchik - 179 MDG
Roland McKinney - 179 LRS**

**To be Technical Sergeant:
John Jennings - 179 CES
Allen Lykins - 179 FSS
Alisa Brake - 179AW**

**To be Staff Sergeant:
Sean Walsh- 200 RHS DET 1
Kevin Harvey - 179 MXS
Kyle Grassel - 200 RHS
Bradley Smith - 179 MXS**

**To be Senior Airman:
Todd Canaday- 179 CF**

PROMOTIONS

ROTH THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN NOW AVAILABLE

Beginning Monday, October 1, 2012, active military members of the Army, Navy and Air Force can begin making Roth Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contributions. Active duty members can now start Roth TSP contributions by using their online myPay account or by completing a TSP-U-1 form and submitting it to their local finance office. Further instructions for completing

the forms and links on Roth TSP can be found at www.dfas.mil.

Marine Corps members and all civilians paid by DFAS have been able to participate in Roth TSP since June 2012.

For Reservists and National Guardsmen (exception those in the Marine Corps), the start dates for Roth TSP deductions have now changed to mid to late 2013. The date has changed because the inter-

im solution for reserve component members did not meet Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB) requirements. The new timeline ensures that time is available to make systems changes and electronic deductions that meet all requirements. In the meantime, work continues to attempt to identify options that will be available more quickly and will satisfy both the law and the FRTIB requirements.



A commercial airliner carrying returning Coast Guard deployers taxis past two C-27J Spartans on the ramp at the 179th Airlift Wing.

Buckeye AIRLIFTER

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