A honorable flight returns POWs

By Maj. Ted Theopolos
445th AW/Public Affairs

Wright-Patterson C-141 Starlifter with medical personnel from the 445th Airlift Wing transported 48 wounded personnel— including seven held as prisoners of war in Iraq— to Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

The wounded personnel were taken to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center located near Ramstein for further treatment. Of the seven former POWs, five were from the 507th Maintenance Company that was ambushed along with Pfc. Lynch. Among the other 41 patients on board the Air Force Reserve C-141, 19 were wounded during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“I thought they were all heroes,” said Tech. Sgt. Debra Beck, medical technician from the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. “We treated the POWs no different than anyone else on the plane.”

“I think all of these types of flight are special,” said Beck. “We enjoy spoiling everyone on board.”

“It’s standard to be served a hot meal during a long flight, but the crew purchased special food for the flight,” said Beck. She was referring to serving American hotdogs and chocolate cookies to everyone on board. This wasn’t the first time crews purchase special items for a flight; they served pizza on the mission before this one, stated nurse Maj. Bobbie Stemen, also from the 445th AES.

“It was a busy nine-hour flight with a lot of wounded patients,” said Stemen. “It was my time to serve them. The POWs weren’t expecting anymore special treatment than we gave everyone else.”

“Some patients were reluctant to ask for help, said Stemen, because of my rank.” I was there to serve them and to make them comfortable as possible.”

Beck mentioned helicopter pilot, Warrant Officer Williams, stated, all POWs were so grateful for the American support. It meant the world to them.

Just before the plane started it’s decent into Ramstein Air Base, Germany, the seven POWs signed an oxygen panel commemorating the flight. A suggestion from a pilot from Andrews AFB, whose crew was flying the aircraft. Some took photos of the momentous occasion. The signed panel resembles another signed panel on the Hanoi Taxi, the first C-141 to bring home POWs from Vietnam to Clark Air Base, Philippines.
Making a good hand-off

by Capt. Bill Dickens
435th AW/Senior Protestant Chaplain

You may see me plodding around the base at the speed of sound (ok, it's a whisper). You probably can't tell this by looking at me, but I ran track and cross country in high school and college. All of this occurred many years and pounds ago. One of the events I ran in high school was the 3200-meter relay. Each person on the team ran 800 meters, which is the metric equivalent to the mile.

Practice lasted for hours after school. We did stretching and running. But we spent a good portion of our time working on passing the baton. The single most important thing in a relay race is passing the baton. You can be the fastest person in the world, but if your hand-off is bad, you will lose the race.

This is true of life. With our children, with those who follow behind us, it is imperative that we hand them something of substance, something good, something lasting. The Apostle Paul "handed-off" to Timothy instructions on being a pastor: "Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction... so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience." (1 Timothy 4:12-16) Think of life from the eternal perspective, from God's vantage point and make a good hand-off to those who follow you.

The true price for freedom

by Brig. Gen. Rusty Moen
445th AW/Commander

I was privileged to be the guest speaker at the Memorial Day Parade and ceremonies in West Liberty, Ohio. Lt Col Dan Bratka, our 445th Inspector General, and the current mayor of West Liberty invited me. It seemed like everyone in this small "Heartland of America" town of 2,000 people was there to honor our fallen heroes. This year I believe many more Americans across our great nation took time to pause and reflect on the true meaning of Memorial Day.

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868, by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11, and was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. It wasn't until after World War I that it was expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars. In 1971 Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress. It was then also placed on the last Monday in May, giving many Americans a three-day weekend.

Since the late 50's on the Thursday before Memorial Day, the 1200 soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry place small American flags at each of the 280,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery. They then patrol 24 hours a day during the weekend to ensure that each flag remains standing. Similar ceremonies are held throughout America for Memorial Day is the one day each year that we set aside to reflect on the true price of freedom - the cherished lives of generations of young men and women in uniform. Their wars have been fought on many fronts, far from home - in the jungles of the South Pacific, the bloody beaches of Normandy, the icy slopes of the Korean Peninsula, the rice paddies of Vietnam, and more recently, the mountains and caves of Afghanistan, and the deserts of Iraq

At the Korean War Memorial on the National Mall are inscribed the words: "Freedom is not free." No one knows that more than the men and women who wear our nation's uniform. They (you) are well trained; dedicated, motivated, and prepared, if need be, to pay the ultimate price to secure the blessings of liberty. My thanks to the people of West Liberty for allowing me to be part of their Memorial Day.

As I write this column our first C-141 missions have already landed in Baghdad, with more missions to follow. Most of our aeromedical evacuation personnel have returned from overseas, having performed in an outstanding manner moving hundreds of injured personnel. But we have not seen any letup in the overall taskings for our aircrews and aircraft. Our aircrews have performed magnificently, enduring long crew duty days with many obstacles in their way to safely deliver the cargo that our warfighters on the front lines need. Maintenance has been working 12-hour shifts to fix and turn aircraft as fast as they arrive back to home station. Our Air Force senior leadership has been very vocal about the great job the C-141 community has done. My thanks to all of you here at Wright-Patterson and our two reserve wings at March ARB and Andrews AFB for making a difference.

Buckeye Flyer

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435th Airlift Wing (U.S. Air Force Reserve Command) Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

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SrA Robert Sperling...Public Affairs Trainee
President thanks 445th Airlift Wing reservists

By Senior Airman Robert Sperling
445th AW/PA Affairs

Nine reservists from the 445th Airlift Wing met President Bush here at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, April 24, and four of them received his thanks for their work in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After a formal welcome by Gen. Lester Lyles, Air Force Materiel Command commander, and other high-ranking officers, the president was greeted by more than 250 Team Wright-Patterson people during his visit to Ohio. The crowd, with representatives from every command on base, included four Air Force Reserve Command aeromedical evacuation technicians who participated in the mission of returning former prisoner of war Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch to the United States.

"We were told the president was briefed that the four of us were in the audience while Air Force One was taxiing into position," said Capt. Kimberly Sandusky, a flight nurse with the 445th AES.

After shaking hands with the welcome delegation, the president made his way toward the gathered crowd. Once there, he shook hands and spoke words of thanks as he worked his way through the group.

"Gen. Lyles made a point of directing the president to us," Sandusky said. "He was making sure that he didn't miss us.

"The president thanked me for what I did, and he really meant it. I saw the sincerity on his face and in his eyes," Sandusky said.

"He called me by my name," said Staff Sgt. Hans Jagow, a 445th AES aeromedical evacuation technician. "He said, 'Thank you, Hans.'"

While talking with the president, Sandusky and Senior Airman Heidi Johnston, an aeromedical evacuation technician, reached over to their shoulders and removed their squadron patch from their flight suits and presented the patches to him.

"This opportunity was the perfect way to tie up any loose ends for the mission bringing the wounded home," said Capt. Jim Kern, a squadron flight nurse. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to shake the hand of your boss."

Johnston echoed Kern's sentiments. "I was cleaning my house last night and then went to bed. Never in my dreams would I have guessed that when I woke I would be meeting the president of the United States," Johnston said.

Senior Airman Joseph Halbrook, a 445th AW life support technician, was standing toward the back of the crowd when a security person put his hand on Halbrook's back and told him to "get up there. This is a moment of a lifetime."

"I moved forward, and I got to shake the president's hand," Halbrook said.

All of the reservists said the opportunity to meet the president made their hard work worthwhile.

-President George W. Bush waves to the gathered crowd at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, as he departed Air Force One. (Photos by Mr. Al Bright, 88th Air Base Wing, photographer)
Family support families

By Maj. Richard C. Sater
445th AW/Public Affairs

Reservists learn quickly to respect the triangle: military service, family obligations, and civilian employment. Each of its three points is important.

One of the biggest challenges for a reservist is maintaining the balance, particularly in the face of an unexpected mobilization or extended active-duty tour. The experience can be frustrating, even overwhelming, but the 445th Airlift Wing Family Support office is on hand to help.

“All three areas are important,” according to 2nd L.t. Melissa Oakley, family support liaison for the 445th. “We fill in the space between the sides of the triangle.”

The goal of the family support office is clear: letting the reservist know that the family will be taken care of in the event of a mobilization or deployment. The office serves as a resource for mobilized reservists and their families.

“It’s a place you can come if you have a problem and you’re not sure where else to go,” says Staff Sgt. Angie Burratt, a reservist assigned to the office.

What kind of problems? Any kind. Questions about military pay, medical care or other benefits, family emergencies, education, childcare, car-care? The family support office can provide information, answers, or referrals to get the problem solved. The office is a resource for financial, legal, and emotional support if necessary. Another of its aims is to educate spouses about how to seek services or support within the local communities.

“We’re here for reservists and their families,” says Mikah Klemack, also assigned to the office. “We want people to consider us their first point of contact. If we can’t help, we know somebody who can, and we might be able to cut through the red tape.”

Part of the challenge is making sure that reservists and their families are aware of the help that the family support office can provide. On Sunday, April 12, Family Support held an orientation for spouses and family members of reservists who have been activated. “We have great support from the [active-duty] military and civilian communities here,” Oakley says.

The orientation—which included briefings about medical care, military pay, employer support, and other concerns—was set up specifically to get the word out. “Our aim is to be proactive, not reactive,” Oakley says.

The orientation also provided an opportunity for reservists’ spouses to get to know one another. “It’s networking. People get to know each other. We’re here to help, but we hope they will help each other as well,” Oakley says. Attendees asked questions and voiced their concerns as well. “We don’t know what problems people are experiencing if they don’t tell us.”


Area organizations—civilian as well as military—set up displays explaining support available to the families of mobilized reservists. Representatives from the American Red Cross, United Way, the Miami County Job and Family Services, Tri-Care, Ohio State University, Wright-Patterson Spouses in Action, and the base Health and Wellness Center are just some of the agencies on hand to show what they have to offer families of activated reservists.

The success of the 445th’s Family Support office has depended on a team effort. The office began to take shape in June, 2000, thanks in large part to the efforts of Mikah Klemack, who had just relocated to the area with her husband, then a newly assigned 445th reservist. There were minimal family support services available for 445th reservists at that time.

“I started coming in one or two days a week to set something up,” Klemack says. “It snowballed from there, and now we’re on the way to becoming a household name.”

Klemack has volunteered more than 2,000 hours in addition to being a summer hire civil servant, ensuring that the office is equipped “to deal specifically with reserve concerns,” she says. “It’s working. We’ve established a great relationship with the active-duty support center, and that’s helped us out tremendously.”

The two offices on base share resources and responsibilities. The active-duty 88th Mission Support Squadron here maintains a food pantry, the Airman’s Attic (to provide clothing, appliances, furniture and so on to those who are eligible), a computer lab, job search assistance, and more.

“We serve all the military” — reserve, national guard, active duty, any branch, according to Master Sgt. Tim Bower, family readiness non-commissioned officer for the 88th MSSQ. The aim is true, ensuring deployed military members that “we’ll take care of their families while they’re the troops are gone. They can focus on the mission better if they know their families are being taken care of.

“Even single reservists can come to us,” he points out. “They tend to think that we only work with spouses, but your mom and dad or others in your family might need help too.”

That help is but a phone call or visit away. The 445th Family Support office, located in Room 18 of Bldg. 4035 (the Military Personnel Flight headquarters) is open weekdays from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and during duty hours on drill weekends. Visit or call (937) 656-1502 or toll-free, 1-866-371-2316. For more information, visit the Internet: http://www.afrc.mil/445aw

The family support’s mission is ongoing. Look for a family picnic later this summer, as well as continual communication via the Buckeye Flyer, brochures, e-mail, and regular mail.
MILITARY PERSONNEL FLIGHT

Hours of Operation
Monday-Friday 0730-1600
UTA Saturday 0830-1600*
UTA Sunday 0800-1300

Testing Room
Tuesday 0830
Thursday 1330
UTA Saturday 1000**
UTA Sunday 0900

Phone Numbers
WPAFB 1-866-371-2316
MPF Commander 257-7658
Customer Service 257-6981
Personnel Employment 257-5090
Personnel Relocation 257-4382
Career Enhancement 257-4638
Wing Training 257-5092
Personnel Readiness 257-5086
Personnel Systems 257-5085
Wing Career Advisor 904-2007
Newcomers Flight Cell 371-3622

* No ID Cards after 1500 on the Scarlet UTA
** Testing available for Course S ONLY!! By appointment only!! – Please call 7-5092

June 2003 Combat Arms Training

“SCARLET UTA”
7 Jun 03, Sat. 0800 Classroom, AFQC M9 “Live Fire” 445 AES (3), 89 AS (5), 445 ASTS (12), 445 LRS (2), 445 MXS (2), 445 CLSS (1)
7 Jun 03, Sat. 0800 Classroom, AFQC M9 “Simulator” 445 ASTS (1)

All students for M9 Live Fire & Simulator, Report to Bldg. #883 Hebble Creek Rd., Classes start at 0800

“GRAY UTA”
7 Jun 03, Sat. 1230 Classroom, AFQC M16A2 “Live Fire” 445 TRAN (1), 445 MXS (3), AMXS (2), 445 ASTS (20)

Report to Building # 883, Hebble Creek Rd. Classes start at 1230

Reminder: Exit off base, travel West on St. Rt. 444 to gate by Twin Lakes Golf Course for access to Bldg. # 883, on Saturdays only. All personnel MUST bring their AF Form 522 to class. BDU is Uniform for all Fire Arms Training. For Questions or Cancellations, Contact MSgt. Terry Newman at 257-7440
10. The next screen lists all the various areas of the MPF that are available to you.... to review and or update. You can also print out various records of your personal information....

Please keep in mind that this is a timely process and may take a while to complete. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Military Personnel Flight, Customer Service at (937) 257-6981.

What is vRED?

vRED replaces the DD Form 93 – Record of Emergency Data. It allows you to have 24/7 access to your emergency contact information through the AFPC secure server.

The vRED is a new feature of the vMPF (virtual MPF). It is an automated process to identify your emergency data: identify your beneficiaries for unpaid pay and allowances and who to notify if you are declared missing, etc.

The only person with the ability to access your emergency data and make changes -- is you. The data is user ID and password protected.

Completion of the vRED is mandatory for everyone in the Air Force! Members assigned to Wright Patterson AFB should have their vRED updated and/or verified immediately. Again, for questions and assistance, please call Customer Service at 257-6981.

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Welcome Home

The 445th Family Support Office, would like to say a special WELCOME HOME to the Men and Women that have recently returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom. We appreciate your service and your sacrifice. If there is anything we can assist you with, please contact us at 937-656-1502 or stop by our office in Bldg. 4035, room 18.

CCAF GRADUATES

Congratulations to the following 445th Airlift Wing members who received their Community College of the Air Force Degrees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Major</th>
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<tr>
<td>MSgt Anthony Johns</td>
<td>MA GP</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSgt Samuel Mitchell</td>
<td>MA SQ</td>
<td>Aircraft Systems Maintenance Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSgt Kelly Mobley</td>
<td>AMDS</td>
<td>Education and Training Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSgt Lisa Stewart</td>
<td>ACFT MA SQ</td>
<td>Aviation Maintenance Technology</td>
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<td>SSgt Tamidara Kirkman</td>
<td>AW</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSgt Raquel Matthews</td>
<td>AW</td>
<td>Audiovisual Production Services</td>
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TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Effective immediately, wing training will be implementing a new tuition reimbursement policy. In the past, it has been the responsibility of the student to notify their school to submit their grades. In an attempt to expedite the reimbursement process, the student will now submit their grades to wing training. Grades are to be submitted in one of two ways. First, an official transcript can be requested from the school, or you can print your grades from the school’s official website. Grades need to be received by wing training no later than 30 days after course completion. Failure to submit your grades in a timely
fashion will result in a delay of your reimbursement. Please feel free to contact wing training at (937) 257-5092 if you have further questions.

Community College of the Air Force (CCAF)

Reservists now have access to the Air Force Virtual Education Center (AFVEC). You can access the link at https://afvec.langley.af.mil/afvec/default.aspx. Joining the site allows you access to online transcript requests and degree program reports, along with various other educational resources.

Wing Career Advisor

As of 19 May 2003

Your ETS is about to expire!!

The following people must report to the Wing Career Advisor, MSgt Donna LaPrath or MSGt Gerald Hoke, bldg 4035, room 4 as soon as possible... (Please disregard if you have made arrangements already). Thanks!

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<th>RANK</th>
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<td>Bender Carl E Jr</td>
<td>24 Jun</td>
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<td>Eads Kenneth R JR</td>
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<td>Wade Edward A</td>
<td>22 Jul</td>
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The following individuals are scheduled to reenlist during the JUNE UTAs. As a reminder, reenlistment may take place at each member's unit. After members reenlist, they need to bring the reenlistment contract and a weight letter to Wing Career Advisor, Building 4035, Room 4. The unit weight monitor, first sergeant, or commander must sign the weight letter. If you have any questions, please contact TSgt LaPrath at 904-2007 or Career Enhancement at 257-4638.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>SrA</td>
<td>Mechenbier, Kari N</td>
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<td>TSgt</td>
<td>Snyder Tobie B</td>
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<td>Soriano Jude C</td>
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<td>SSgt</td>
<td>Williams Dawn E</td>
<td>445 SVS</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
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</table>
Happy Trails To You...
Thank you for your commitment and service. You will be missed.

**NAME**  
TSgt Badillo, Damaso A.  
Lt Col Bottenfield, Mark T.  
SMSGt Cupp, Johnny H.  
MSgt Hamsik, Robert F.  
CM Sgt Huntsman, Darrel E.  
MSgt Johnson, Bettye L.

**UNIT**  
Aircraft Maintenance  
445 AW  
ASTS  
CLSS  
CLSS  
87 APS

**RETIREMENT DATE**  
10 Jun 03  
30 Jun 03  
09 Jun 03  
01 Jun 03  
23 Jun 03  
08 Jun 03

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**How do I access the Virtual MPF (vMPF)?**

1. Log on to [http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil) (this will take you to the AFPC page).

2. Click on Virtual MPF Secure Service (top right square of the screen).

3. Scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click on the square vMPF icon.

4. A screen may come up talking about client authentication – cancel through this.

5. The next screen is the AFPC Secure Web Site – Login Screen.

6. Enter your User ID and Password.

   If you do not have one yet, scroll to the bottom of the page where it asks you to click on the appropriate button to create an account – click on Military.

   It will ask for the following information:

   a. Your SSAN
   b. Your Major Command (Note: they mean your active duty gaining command)
   c. Your date of birth
   d. Your paydate
   e. Your date of rank

**NOTE 1:** When you create your password, it should be 8 – 10 characters long, it should contain both upper and lower case letters, and up to three numbers. (Do not use any special characters, they are having problems with them at this time, and the tech rep suggests not using them.)

**NOTE 2:** There is a new feature that might come up – it is a process to help you if you forget your password in the future. It will give you the opportunity to Create/Edit 4 Questions that can be asked to verify who you are in the future. It is pretty self-explanatory.

**NOTE 3:** Make and secure a record of your User ID, password, and Q and A’s for the next time you want to enter the vMPF.

7. Once you have entered your user ID and Password, click on Submit. The next screen will tell you that you have access to the following sites...scroll down the page, and click on the box for vMPF (bottom left side of screen).

8. The next screen may ask you to verify some information, i.e. phone and e-mail address.

9. The next screen is the vMPF. On the left-hand side of the page, you will see a notice if you have any outstanding suspense’s. The box below that will tell you that you have access to “Individual Actions”. Click on this.
WELCOME HOME!
From daughter to parents
Story and Photo by Senior Airman Robert Sperling
445th AW/PA Affairs

As Secretary of the Air Force James Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper initiate the service-wide “Parent Pin” program May 5 to thank the parents of America’s airmen for their support of their children, a reservist from the 445th Airlift Wing’s Safety office presents his pin from his daughter to a local television program.

Master Sgt. Larry Stultz, an Air Reserve Technician with the 445th Airlift Wing Safety office, was presented a “parent pin” from his daughter, Senior Airman Julie Weckerlein, 31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs, Aviano Air Base, Italy, during a live morning talk show on ICN 6 hosted by her mother, Tawana Thomas, in Covington, Ky.

Airman Weckerlein took time during the show to recognize how much her parents mean in her career as an active duty member serving overseas and Sgt. Stultz spoke on what it means to him to have his daughter following in his military footsteps.

Following the discussion Airman Weckerlein presented her father and mother with the envelopes containing the letter from Gen. Jumper and Secretary Roche and their pins. While her parents opened the letters, she described Your Guardians of Freedom and “Parent Pin” programs.

The uniform doesn’t change a thing
An aeromedical comes to the rescue of a car accident victim
by Staff Sgt. Charlie Miller
445th AW/PA Affairs

Recently, a 445th Airlift Wing member was in the proverbial right place at the right time with the right training.

Senior Airman Heidi Johnston, a member of the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, was driving home just a few days after she had participated in the mission that transported U.S. Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch from Ramstein Air Base, Ger, many back to the U.S. when she saw a car flipping end-over-end on Interstate 270 in Hilliard, Ohio.

“I saw this car in mid-air out of the corner of my eye and said to myself ‘That’s not right,’” Johnston said.

Johnston, an aeromedical evaluation technician with AES, stopped, along with two other people who turned out to also be in the medical field, to help the driver, a 67-year-old man. She left the driver’s side door of her car open and the engine running as she ran to the injured man. He had not been wearing a seatbelt and was ejected from his vehicle through the windshield. The man was lying close to the car that was leaking fluid and smoking.

“My first thought was ‘is the car going to catch on fire’? - then ‘do we need to move this guy’?”

Her Air Force Reserve training came into play immediately.

“The ABC’s are the first steps to assisting an accident victim; airways, breathing, circulation. Johnston and the other two good samaritans began to administer first aid to the man, who was traveling alone. They found that he was still alive but had suffered severe head injuries along with other injuries. His breathing was shallow and he had a weak pulse. All three worked to stabilize him.

“He had deep lacerations and it looked like every bone in his body was broken,” she said.

Within a few minutes, Hilliard police officers and emergency medical technicians arrived at the accident scene. Johnston continued to assist them as they treated the victim. She said his heart stopped at the scene but the EMT’s were able to revive him before transporting to an area hospital. They believed the driver was diabetic and that he may have lost control of his car and wrecked due to medical complications associated with his illness. Sadly, the man did pass away at the hospital.

“My military training helped me, absolutely. I work in a Columbus area hospital emergency room and would have never been able to get the job if it weren’t for my military training,” said Johnston.
Wing Notes

101 Days of Summer

May 26 marks the official start of the "101 Critical Days of Summer," a time of increased risk of accidents, injuries and possible death, both on and off duty. Areas of particular concern are heat-related effects, highway safety, seatbelt usage, driving or boating under the influence of alcohol, water sports, motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle operations, and those risks unique to your missions and local environment. You can protect yourself, your family and your friends by being aware of those risks and taking precautions to avoid disaster. Last year, Air Force Reserve Command sustained one off-duty fatality during the 101 Critical Days of Summer.

Inventing Flight
July 3-20, 2003

The Wright brothers' hometown will buzz with excitement during the nation's premier summertime centennial of flight event - Inventing Flight: The Centennial Celebration, July 3-20, 2003. There will be something for everyone to enjoy during this rich collection of events and attractions.

Deeds Point, a 12-acre park overlooking the City of Dayton's downtown landscape at the Great Miami River, will be the convening site for much of the attractions. This site is being called "Celebration Central" and serves as the gateway to all Inventing Flight activities.

Although the hub of activity will be based at Celebration Central, activities will also radiate to a series of satellite locations and citywide events, conventions and ongoing exhibits that will all be a part of the Inventing Flight experience.

For more information concerning Inventing Flight go to their website: www.inventingflight.com

Serving with Honor
by SSgt. Charlie Miller
445th AW/Public Affairs

Perhaps the highest profile duty in the Air Force. It's not an easy duty to pull, but quite rewarding in its own unique way. Demanding perfection from start to finish. Living under a microscope while wearing the Air Force ceremonial uniform isn't easy.

What is this high profile position? The Honor Guard.

One such person is Tech. Sgt. Mark Lyle, 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, mental health technician as a reservist, on active duty with the Wright-Patterson AFB Honor Guard.

Recently Tech. Sgt. Lyle went to Michigan for a funeral of an active duty para-rescuerman who perished in a helicopter crash in Kuwait. Senior Airman Jason T. Plite was his name from Lansing, Mich. He was a young man, a senior airman, just 21-years-old.

"This funeral detail was different with all the media being there. And with him being so young there was a very, very large funeral procession," said Lyle.

"There were eight police cars and four police motorcycles in the procession from the local government," Lyle added.

The Honor Guard from Wright-Patterson AFB helped comprise a 20-person honors funeral with a colors team, a firing party giving a 21-gun salute, pallbearers and a bugler. There was also a brigadier general present, Lyle said. Lyle served as a pallbearer.

Tech. Sgt. Lyle has served over 80 funerals, seven of which were for active duty members.

All active duty honor guard ceremonies have 20-person teams while a retiree will have a ten-person team and a veteran, regardless of how much time they may have served, and in some cases it's less than two years, will have a 2-person team for the honors ceremony.

"I can't tell you how much I enjoy what I do with the Honor Guard. So many have fought in the past and present so we can live the way we do and enjoy our lifestyles," said Lyle.

"Some were over there doing their job while in harms way, fighting to protect what we all believe in. I'm actually not in harms way but I'll stop whatever I'm doing to pay them honor."

"I volunteered for this duty with the honor guard and plan to stay as long as they'll have me," said Lyle. "It's important to honor those who served. It's the least I can do and I'm glad to be able to participate in their honors ceremony," Lyle stated.

Wright-Patterson's Honor Guard has participated in over 1,400 ceremonies each year and logged more than 230,000 miles throughout a six state area according to Master Sgt. Homer Carter, Honor Guard ARC Program Manager.

With the advancing age of WWII veterans, the honor guard is kept busy. Lyle averages about four funerals a week.

"It's extremely important that we have guard and reserve honor guard members to augment the active duty honor guard members," Lyle concluded.