



official newsletter of the 124th Fighter Wing

THE BEACON



March 2013 • Idaho Air Guard • Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho • "First Class or Not at All" • www.idaho.ang.af.mil

124FW simulates combat at Snowbird

By SSgt Robert A. Barney
124th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. Airmen with the 124th Fighter Wing deployed here to simulate combat conditions on the unique Barry M. Goldwater range for two weeks in January during Operation Snowbird.

During Snowbird, Idaho Air National Guardsmen trained in scenarios that demand the use of advanced precision munitions that they don't employ on daily training sorties at Gowen Field. From the 124th Fighter Wing A-10C Warthog, they dropped many live bombs, shot flares, rockets, missiles, and 30 mm rounds from the Hawg's GAU-8 Gatling gun.

Several aircraft missions flew to targets that required the 500 pound inert BDU-50. Other sorties required the 500 pound Mark-82 to destroy range targets. The highlight for many of the airmen here was firing the AGM-65 Mav-

erick missile.

Munitions builders from the Ammo Flight of the 124th Maintenance Squadron enjoyed the most profound differences to their training. They built considerably more live weapons including ten Mavericks.

"We do other TDYs to other locations, but it's the live weapons and the big range here that makes this TDY unique," said Maj. Scott Downey, 124th Fighter Wing project officer for Snowbird.

Traditional Guardsmen are better able (in the Snowbird environment) to plan time away from their daily jobs and routines, and pick up their war fighting gear and deploy for a block of time. This fresh look helps to keep those skills sharp and ready to deploy to operational taskings.

"After coming out of a tough training cycle, it gives the troops a chance to get

a different perspective. To come down here and focus on what we do everyday and not worry about ancillary training creeping into our main mission focus," said Chief Master Sgt. Harold Bongiovi, 124th deployed maintenance chief.

Airmen here get a chance to see how different ANG shops work. They get to see how different jobs are done in action and even give a hand when able.

The 124th Fighter Wing brought their own security forces to provide 24 hour security of the 12 A-10s here. This gave the security team a better view of operations as well.

"It's nice getting to know everyone in our unit and getting to see how crew chiefs work and talk with weapons people and see what their job is. It (has) helped me get to know better those who normally work on the flightline, this gives me a better idea of flightline operations," said Airman 1st Class Denay Rogers.



Loading combat power with a bomblift (left), are Master Sgt. Andrew Reneau, driver and Staff Sgt. Travs Whiting. They are joined by 124th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron member Airman 1st class Mathew Venterlorenz to secure weapons to a 124FW A-10C (right photo) during the wing's recent Operation Snowbird deployment. U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Robert A. Barney.

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COMMANDER'S

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Our Next Challenge, C.U.I.

Colonel Chris Rood,
124th Fighter Wing
Vice Commander
Wing Inspections

In just over four months an Air Force Inspector General Team arrives at Gowen Field again. They will administer our first ever Consolidated Unit Inspection. This was formerly known by most of you as a UCI (Unit Compliance Inspection). A team of about 75 experts will evaluate how we do business in accordance with HAF, ACC, ANG, and our own Unit guidance. In short, it's an open book test and our challenge is to look up the answers and document that we are abiding by the rules.

In 2010, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz tasked the Air Force Inspector General to give the Air Force inspection program a major overhaul. The overall goal was to combine and integrate multiple inspections, thereby freeing up 'white space' on the calendar to allow commanders more time to focus on training and readiness.

Another significant change was the adoption of the Management Internal Control Toolset. MICT is a Guard developed program that takes self-assessment to a whole new level. As units complete compliance checklists in MICT, you are required to not only self-identify deficiencies, but you must also develop and upload corrective action plans in order to demonstrate compliance. If you are not familiar with MICT, then contact your unit administrator. Initially you may be frustrated with having to load info into MICT, but eventually it will save time and resources as it is the future, IG accepted and required method of administering inspections. If you are not using MICT, Start!

Again, the overall objective of these changes is to reduce the amount of time and resources spent on inspections and provide a method of local constant verification/validation of our programs. The 124 FW Unit Self Inspection Program, using MICT as the primary source of info, will be our future method of evaluation. Keep cracking on your checklists, an outstanding program will not only impress the inspectors, but increase our combat capability as well!

Consolidated Unit Inspection at a glance:

The Consolidated Unit Inspection (CUI) from 31 July- 7 Aug '13 will cover the following areas: 1) Logistics Compliance Assessment Program (LCAP). 2) Air Force Vulnerability Assessment (AFVA). 3) Article 6 Uniform Code of Military Justice Inspection (Article 6). 4) Aircrew Standardization Evaluation Visit (ASEV). 5) Airfield Operations Certification Inspection (AOCI). 6) Health Services Inspection (HSI).

Wing MICT Program Administrator: Lt Scott Walker

-MXG: Senior Master Sgt. Robbie Nieskens

-MSG: Master Sgt. James Webb

-OG: Lt. Col. Ryan Odneal

-FW: Maj. Ralph Teeter

Wing Self Inspection Program Manager:

Lt. Col. Mike "Grassy" Knowles

-MXG Self Inspection Program Manager:

Senior Master Sgt. Robbie Nieskens

-MSG Self Inspection Program Manager:

Tech Sgt. Aaron Hassemer

-OG Self Inspection Program Manager:

Lt. Col. Ryan Odneal

-MDG Self inspection Program Manager:

Capt. Eric St Michell

Management Internal Control Toolset, (MICT) deadlines:

- **15 Jan: Questions reviewed by all functions**
- ***15 Feb: WG/CC progress check**
- ***15 Mar: All questions answered**
- ***15 Apr: Progress check by WG/CC (compliance/discrepancy issues identified)**
- ***15 May: Discrepancies addressed**
- ***15 Jun: Final – Ready to send to IG**
- ***30 Jun: 30 Days out – Final answers – deliver to IG!**
- ***31 July – 7 Aug: CUI/LCAP/HSI/AFVA/Article 6/ASEV**

Retiree News

Two events around the corner!

There is a *retiree event during TAG Leadership Day on March 9*. Retirees are invited to join Maj. Gen. Gary Saylor for a briefing on the current status of the Idaho National Guard at the Gowen Field Activities Club at 1400 (2pm). For more detailed information, contact Captain Chris Borders at (208) 272-8629 or via email at christopher.l.borders2.mil@mail.mil.

Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD): The Idaho ANG will host retirees for a full-day of activities, including IDNG leadership briefings about current topics, and vendor briefings from dental Tricare and other benefits-related providers. There will also be vendor tables from military and local organizations, an opportunity for updating ID cards, and learning about VA benefits from local VA organizations. Retirees and spouses will be invited to visit offices and shops at Gowen Field and attend a social at the Gowen Club.

If you know a retiree or surviving spouse who would like to be on our mailing list, and isn't already, please send their name and contact information (especially email address) to Maj. Candis Olmstead at c.olmstead.mil@gmail.com.

Paper checks to end:All payments from the Federal Government will be made electronically beginning March 1, 2013. If you are in the five percent of military retirees or annuitants who still receives a paper check, you should have received notification to sign up for direct deposit. It takes 30-60 days to begin receiving direct deposits. If you still need to sign up, go to www.dfas.mil and click on Retired Military and Annuitants for more information.

MyPay--View statements for the past 12 months: The most convenient way to manage your retirement account is through myPay. MyPay allows you to update your mailing address and direct deposit information, view pay statements online for the previous 12 months, and save Retirement Account Statements to your computer. Accessing myPay saves you time and it speeds up account changes from a 30- to 60-day process to a three- to seven-day process. You can log into myPay by going to <https://mypay.dfas.mil>. If you have not previously logged in, it will help you create an account.



124th Fighter Wing Operation Snowbird January 13-26 Davis-Monthan Air Force Base

Over 180 Airmen from the 124th Fighter Wing participated in Snowbird, a two-week exercise, Jan13-26, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Ariz. Snowbird is a chance for the Idaho Guardsmen to operate in a deployed environment with specific types of munitions they are not able to use in daily training at their home location, Gowen Field, Idaho.



Fighter Wing Snowbird July 2013 in AFB, Arizona



“After coming out of a tough training cycle, it gives the troops a chance to get a different perspective. To come down here and focus on what we do everyday and not worry about ancillary training creeping into our main mission focus.”

Chief Master Sgt. Harold Bongiovi,
124th deployed maintenance chief.

US. Air Force Photos by Staff Sgt.
Robert A. Barney (Released)



Guest Editorial

The case for EANGUS

As a long-time executive board member of the Idaho Enlisted Association of the National Guard (EANGUS) I am often asked, "What is EANGUS doing for me?" With all the catchy little benefits aside, the biggest thing that EANGUS does for its membership is provide a voice on Capitol Hill for all enlisted members of the National Guard. We take the fight directly to DC and ensure that we are just as loud as all the other special interests out there fighting for the limited amount of money that is available.

Earlier this month we made our annual trip to DC to meet directly with Idaho's Congressional Delegation and ensure YOUR voices were heard. The first two days were spent in briefings with CSMs Shultz and Conley, CMSgt Jelinski-Hall, Lt Gen Grass, Senator Graham, and many others in order to ensure we understood the issues and to prepare us for battle on the Hill! On the first day following the briefings, we met with Senator Risch and the Military Legislative Assistant (MLA) for Senator Crapo. On the second day we met with Congressmen Labrador and Simpson. Later that evening EANGUS presented Minuteman Awards to Senators Leahy and Graham for all the work they did ensuring our four-star was seated on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Going into the meeting we understood that DOD cuts were imminent regardless of whether the sequestration occurs or not, so our goal was to ensure the Guard didn't take a larger portion of the cuts than our active duty counterparts. We know the active duty side has a huge voice on Capitol Hill and it is no secret that they are trying to push a lot of the cuts on the National Guard even though we serve for one-third the cost. The Army National Guard is funded with 11% of the Army budget, but provides 32% of the Army's total personnel and 40% of its operating forces. The Air National Guard is just 6% of the Air

Force budget, yet provides 19% of the Air Force's total personnel and 30-40% of the Air Force, fighter, tanker, and airlift capacity! So really our main strategy was to present these facts and then ensure our Congressmen were committed to maintaining the Guard as an Operational Reserve Force rather than a Strategic Reserve as in the past. The other issues we discussed were options for lowering the retirement age for Guard Members, providing compensation for computer based training, and ensuring that all Guard members with 20 years of service were recognized as veterans.

All of the meetings went well and everyone was very receptive to what we had to say although the looming budget crisis was front and center for all. Legislation on these issues should be introduced within the next couple of months and we will follow-up to ensure our representatives stick to their word and hopefully sign on as co-sponsors. Once legislation is introduced we will send out a mass email to all EANGUS members with directions on writing to their congressmen, using CapWhiz, so we can hopefully flood them with letters.

This is our sixth year going to DC and we have always been very successful with State and National legislation. Our legislatures have co-sponsored many of our EANGUS bills immediately after our meetings with them and

we personally ensured that Senator Risch, Congressman Simpson and former Congressman Minnick joined the Guard and Reserve Caucus. In the case of Minnick, it was done within 24 hours of our meeting with him! As a thank you several EANGUS members served on his Veteran's Affairs Committee.

On the State side we have also worked diligently on legislative issues. In 2008 House Resolution 385 was written by current EANGUS members and later that year was signed into law. It allows Idaho guard members living in neighboring states to attend state institutions of higher learning without having to pay non-resident tuition fees. This is huge because it cuts the cost of attending an Idaho college by nearly a fourth for non-resident students serving in the Idaho Guard. In 2006 current EANGUS members also wrote Senate Bills 1375 and 1362 which were both signed into law. Senate Bill 1375 allows State Employees to use military leave for deployments whereas, previously, it could only be used for training. Senate Bill 1362 allows State Employees to keep their medical benefits until Tri-Care kicks in during a deployment. Prior to the bill being passed, employees had to use personal leave to maintain their benefits when activated.

As you can see, the Idaho Enlisted Association is working very hard for its members. All we ask in return is to please join so our voice can be louder. Right now we only have 470 members which is only 11% of our potential membership for Idaho. We will be running another \$5 membership drive very shortly and as always E-3's and below are free, so please sign up today. To learn more check out our website at www.eangusidaho.org or our National site at www.eangus.org. As General Blum once said, "The National Guard will protect our country; the Associations will protect our National Guard."

-MSgt Chris Brearley

The 124th Fighter Wing and Idaho Air National Guard do not endorse professional associations that our members join. They do encourage off-duty participation in these nationally recognized organizations that contribute to professionalism of all members. Coverage on these pages is to allow for communication between group leaders and our general audience.

First Person:

Get Involved

I have been involved with EANGUS (the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States) for 2 years now. I first heard about EANGUS because of their local indoor soccer team. Truthfully, I really just wanted to play soccer. However, as I started to learn about the association, I quickly realized how important it was for me and all National Guardsmen to, at the very least, play a part as a supporting member. EANGUS gives Reservist and National Guardsmen a voice. They are the ones fighting for our benefits such as Tuition Assistance, GI Bills, Veteran Status, Retirement Benefits, Tricare/medical benefits and so much more. Upon joining the National Guard, I figured all these extra bonuses were entitlements that you receive as a member of the Guard. I soon found out that is not the case. These benefits are a privilege, and in order for me and others to partake, EANGUS had to fight for them.

A little over a decade ago the National Guard and Reserve components were what they called, a Strategic Force, meaning we were primarily used for State side missions and in cases of emergency. But then the tragedies of 911 struck our country and the National Guard stepped up to merge with active duty overseas for the war. We have proven ourselves to be an Operational Force, offering Soldiers with many skill sets including their civilian career and background along with their formal military training. It is important that we as Guardsmen take a stand of recognition for our own benefits and worth so we can maintain the Guard as we know it today and continue to grow and improve our missions for the future of the United States Defense. EANGUS is the tool and stepping stone for the future of the National Guard. Being a member will ensure that those on Capital Hill hear our voices and understand what an asset we are.

-Sergeant Stephanie Tuckett

Enlisted Association of the National Guard U.S. leaders met with Idaho Congressional delegation members on a recent trip to Washington D.C. Sergeant Stephanie Tuckett, Master Sgt. Chris Brerley and Master Sgt. Bonnie Davis met with Representative Mike Simpson to discuss issues affecting Idaho Guardsman.



**National
Guard
Association
of Idaho
General
membership
meeting
SATURDAY, March 2
1630 GFAC**



NGAID members have a prime opportunity to meet one week before TAG Leadership Day. Join us at the GFAC at 1630 for a quick quarterly business meeting.

- Hear the results of National Guard Day at the Idaho State Capitol.
- Hear comments from Maj. Gen. Saylor.
- We also have news of the upcoming NGAUS convention in Hawaii this September.



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**Commanders, Lt. Col.'s and above, Senior NCOs
Plan now for
The Adjutant General's
Leadership Training Day
Gowen Field, Bldg. 440
March 9, 2013
ngaid.org & [facebook.com/ngaidofficers](https://www.facebook.com/ngaidofficers)**

- 0715 **Registration in Building 440**
- 0800 **Post Colors, Admin remarks**
TAG Remarks and Q&A
Gus Hargett, MG (Ret), President of NGAUS
Guest Speaker Lt Col (Ret) Barry Bridger
- 1200 **Lunch**
- 1300 **Army and Air Breakouts**
- 1610 **TAG Closing Remarks**
- 1630 **INGOA & EANGUS sponsored reception at GFAC**

After closing remarks from BG Sayler, Everyone is invited to attend a Social at the Gowen Field Activity Center hosted by NGAUS and EANGUS and local generous sponsors. The 25th Army Band's rock ensemble, "Six Rounds to Zero" will be performing during the social.

RSVP with your unit commander