NEW YORK
The AIR NATIONAL GUARD AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Skibird

Magazine of the 109th Airlift Wing, Stratton Air National Guard Base, Scotia, N.Y.

Spring / Summer 2018

Developing Airmen Through CCAF



Recent Community College of the Air Force Graduates
Left to Right: MSgt Matthew Baisley, TSgt Karl Bochenek, SSgt Leighann Brash, MSgt Michelle Brunt, TSgt Ryan Burnah, SSgt Michael Byerwalters, MSgt Johnny Cope, TSgt Michael Eldred, MSgt Charles Fox, SSgt Jeremey Frye, SMSgt Deborah Gardner, TSgt Sabrena Healey, MSgt Jeffrey Jordan, MSgt Ernesto Morales, SSgt Marianna O'Brien, SSgt Steven Perrigo, SSgt Michael Rivers, MSgt Jason Robelotto, SrA Siaianne Roberts, MSgt David Rodriguez, SSgt Emily Roth, MSgt Daniel Swatling, SMSgt David Vesper.

The
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Spring / Summer 2018
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WING COMMANDER
Col. Michele Kilgore

VICE COMMANDER
Col. Christian Sander

COMMAND CHIEF
Chief Master Sgt. Denny Richardson

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPERINTENDENT
Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara

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COVER PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SENIOR MASTER SGT. WILLIAM GIZARA



Lt. Col. David Panzera, an LC-130 "Skibird" pilot here, completes his final flight July 17th, 2018 at Stratton Air National Guard base, Scotia, New York, to cap his 33-year Air Force career. The final flight is a tradition in which a retiring military pilot's accomplishments are recognized by his peers following his or her last mission. Panzera, at the controls of the massive transport, made the traditional pass over the administrative building and then landed to be greeted by family, friends and colleagues. His wife, two daughters and two sons, sprayed him with a fire hose from a base fire truck for the traditional wet down. Then his mother Eva Panzera followed up with a spray of Champagne. The final flight is traditionally a training flight, so this was a chance to do something with the cadet program, by piloting a Civil Air Patrol cadet orientation flight, Panzera explained. He was able to have his father Joseph, a retired Air Force security policeman and CAP member; and his son Phillip, a CAP cadet; on board with him.



PHOTOGRAPHY | Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara

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FIND US ON FACEBOOK "109th Airlift Wing"

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Well, hello! I'm very excited to have the opportunity to write this issue of the commander's call article and tell you a little bit about myself.

In February of this year, I was selected as the new Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander. Prior to taking this position, I spent the majority of my military career as a traditional guardsman at the 174th Attack Wing in Syracuse, New York.

While at the 174th, I initially began my career in the Air National Guard as a crew chief on F-16 aircraft. After a few years on the flightline, I moved over to the QA (quality assurance) office. While in these positions, I was fortunate enough to deploy overseas on multiple occasions. I loved deploying because this gave me the opportunity to acquire real-world, "hands-on" training.

After several years in maintenance, I was commissioned as a Medical Service Corp (MSC) officer in the Medical Group. As an MSC, I deployed to New Orleans right after Hurricane Katrina hit. During my time in New Orleans, I was lucky enough to see firsthand how our joint forces work together to help save American lives right here at home.

Not long after I returned from New Orleans, I learned that the Maintenance Group was looking for a maintenance officer to deploy to Iraq. I contacted the Maintenance Group commander and told him that I was interested in the position. Lucky for me, he brought me back and I became the Equipment Maintenance Flight commander. After a few years in this position, I moved over into the Maintenance Operations Flight Commander's position. As a maintenance officer, I was given the opportunity to travel the world and attend numerous training courses helping me to develop as an officer and an Airman.

Shortly after the wing's conversation from the F-16 to the MQ-9, I felt that I needed a challenge so I took on a new position as the Attack Wing's Chief of Public Affairs. Prior to taking this position, I had no experience working with reporters or community leaders. My first drill in this position was in November 2013; I can remember this as if it were yesterday. Approximately a week or so after drill, the wing suffered a Class A mishap -- one of our MQ-9 aircraft crashed into Lake Ontario! Talk about hitting the ground running!!! Needless to say, I learned a lot in a very short time.

After being in the PA office for about three years, I was offered a position at the Joint Force Headquarters as the Executive Officer where I was fortunate enough to get to work with Col. Maureen Murphy and Col. Jeffery Hedges. While I was at Headquarters, I got the opportunity to learn a lot about all the unique missions of the wings from across the state. I also got the opportunity to work alongside some of the finest individuals I have ever met.

Throughout my career, I have been extremely lucky to have had the opportunity to work with some of the best and most professional Airmen that I have ever known. I've had great mentors and great trainers whose support has helped me throughout my career. I truly believe that all of these experiences, good or bad, have helped shape who I am as a person and who I am as an officer.

As for my civilian job, I work in a school district as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor. My style of therapy is what's called "Reality Therapy" which means, I don't "sugar coat" things, I tend to tell it like it is. In school, I'm responsible for organizing and planning group and individual counseling with at-risk students at the elementary school level.

Basically, that's me in a nutshell! Coming over to become the new Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander has been an incredible honor, and I am truly humbled to have been given this opportunity! This squadron has a long and outstanding history of successfully supporting the National Science Foundation needs/taskings and providing domestic response support in times of natural disasters and emergencies. I am thrilled to be a part of all of this and to be given the chance to get to know everyone who makes this happen.

Going forward, I recognize that there will be many challenges facing my squadron including the never-ending TDYs, the task of maintaining our aging aircraft, the endless training requirements, and let's not forget, the upcoming capstone inspection in November.

With that in mind, I often think about how the great leaders that had come before me had handled challenges in the past. One of my most favorite leaders being Abraham Lincoln who once said, "the best way to predict your future is to create it" and that's exactly what I plan to do! I believe that by working together as a team and tackling these challenges "head-on" we can and will overcome any obstacles that may come up.

As you can see, I have high expectations not only for myself but for the people who are around me. Moving forward, I am 100 percent committed in making the AMXS the best squadron in the wing, the state, the ANG, and the Air Force! Not that I'm aiming high or that I have any lofty goals set, but that's how much I believe in what we do to help support our communities, state, and nation.

In closing, I'm very excited to be a part of the AMXS team! I would also like to thank all of you for your dedication and commitment to serving our nation and our communities. I am truly humbled and honored to be the AMXS commander and to be a part of the 109th Airlift Wing family.

Sandra D. Stoquert

SANDRA STOQUERT, Lt Col, NYANG
Commander, 109th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

GRAPHIC | Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara

Airmen of the Year

Greetings my fellow Airmen! I have decided to utilize this Skibird edition to highlight the accomplishments of our 2018 Outstanding Airman of the Year recipients for the 109th Airlift Wing. These members are the best of the best and have demonstrated characteristics of a 21st Century Airman throughout calendar year 2017. We could only select one recipient from each category; however, all Airmen submitted are considered successful and their efforts will be recognized as well. These resilient members have exceeded expectations and demonstrated relentless pursuit of the continuum of learning while creatively finding efficient paths for achieving mission objectives. Congratulations to all Airmen; the future is extremely bright for the 109th Airlift Wing. Aim High Airmen!

DENNY L. RICHARDSON, CMSgt, NYANG
109th AW Command Chief

OAY - Amn Category

Wing Recipient:



Senior Airman Christopher Denegar

Group Winners:

Mission Support Group
Senior Airman Brett Stanavich

Operations Group
Senior Airman Scott Squadere

Medical Group
Senior Airman Ayla Bardin

Maintenance Group
Senior Airman Christopher Denegar

OAY - NCO Category

Wing Recipient:



Staff Sgt. Matthew Gleason

Group Winners:

Mission Support Group
Staff Sgt. Matthew Gleason

Operations Group
Tech. Sgt. Jason Derose

Medical Group
Staff Sgt. Marianna O'Brien

Maintenance Group
Tech. Sgt. David Falcon

Wing Staff
Master Sgt. Jeremiah Henderson

OAY - SNCO Category

Wing Recipient:



Master Sgt. Nicholas Bastiani

Group Winners:

Mission Support Group
Master Sgt. Nicholas Bastiani

Operations Group
Master Sgt. Mark Swiderski

Medical Group
Senior Master Sgt. Rebecca Graham

Maintenance Group
Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Moughan

OAY - Honor Guard

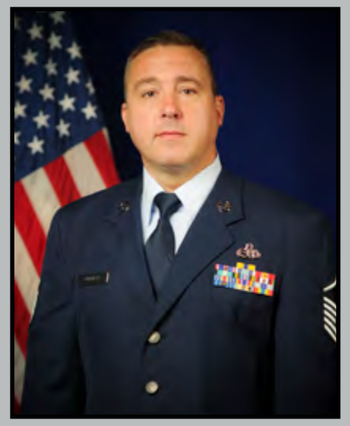
Wing Recipient:



Senior Airman Joshua Byerwalters

OAY - First Sgt Category

Wing Recipient:



Master Sgt. Gary Fiorillo

Group Winners:

Mission Support Group
Master Sgt. Amie Moore

Maintenance Group
Master Sgt. Gary Fiorillo

OAY - Company Grade Officer

Wing Recipient:



Chaplain (Capt.) Xiomara Diaz

Group Winners:

Mission Support Group
Capt. Shawn Rulison

Wing Staff
Chaplain (Capt.) Xiomara Diaz

Airmen get 'Kool' training in Greenland

RAVEN CAMP, Greenland – Twenty-five Airmen with the 109th Airlift Wing spent three days learning to survive in the at the wing's annual "Kool School" at Raven Camp on the Greenland ice cap.

This "barren land arctic survival training," which ran June 7 to 9, provides vital life support training to Airmen who routinely operate in the Arctic and Antarctic.

Because the wing operates its LC-130 ski-equipped aircraft in the Arctic and Antarctic, wing members have to know how to survive if an aircraft is forced down.

This year, 25 Airmen participated in this unique training experience. The students were taught how to procure water, build shelter from available materials and how to properly treat/prevent cold-weather injuries.

The school is led by a team of four Survive Evade Resist Escape or "SERE" specialists, who are subject matter experts in barren land arctic survival skills.

"The 109th has a unique mission set," said Master Sgt. Mark Richard, a SERE specialist with the 66th training squadron, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. "We spend about 48 to 72 hours out here [on the Greenland ice cap] teaching [the students] how to take care of themselves; find food, water, and shelter."

The students are tasked with building their own shelters out of ice, snow, and scavenged materials, to live in for the duration of the training.

"It's been interesting to see the different types of shelters you can build," said 2nd Lt. Phil Piombino, a Kool School student and navigator from the 109th. "You would think it's pretty barren out here, but it's surprising what you can use in the surrounding environment."

Along with conducting Kool School, the 109th Airlift Wing continued seasonal support of the National Science Foundation (NSF) in Greenland this month.

As of June, the 109th has transported nearly 850,000 pounds of cargo, 175,000 pounds of fuel, and 670 passengers to research camps across Greenland.

The ski-equipped LC-130 aircraft operated by the 109th provide transportation of fuel, supplies and passengers to remote camps on the Greenland icecap throughout the summer season.

The wing's Greenland missions also serve as training for the support the unit provides for the National Science Foundation's Antarctic Program when it is winter in New York and summer in Antarctica.

The Greenland season for the 109th will wind down in August, with only a brief respite before the focus shifts to Antarctica for the southern hemisphere summer.

STORY | Staff Sgt. Benjamin German

VIDEO | Staff Sgt. Jamie Spaulding



Video also available online by clicking here.



DV Greenland visit

Army Lt. Gen. Reynold Hoover, U.S. NORTHCOM Deputy Commander, was able to visit Greenland with the 109th Airlift Wing May 16-19, 2018. One of his stops included Summit Station. Pictured are (from left) 2nd Lt. Peter Gioia, 109th AW Protocol Officer; Army Maj. Judd Douglas, Hoover's Aide; Col. Cliff Souza, 109th Operations Group Commander; Col. Michele Kilgore, 109th AW Commander; Hoover; Lt. Col. Mario Zocchi, NGB Tactical Airlift Branch Chief; Army Col. Robert Mitchell, Joint Forces Headquarters J3 Director; and Army Maj. Justin Couts, Hoover's Aide.

Courtesy Photo

Wing finishes 30th season providing Antarctica support

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY | Master Sgt. Catharine Schmidt

Airmen and aircraft here returned home to Scotia, New York, from McMurdo Station, Antarctica, in March after another successful Operation Deep Freeze season.

During this season - which marks the 30th year the wing has provided support - crews completed 120 missions within Antarctica. They flew an estimated 2,300 researchers and support staff and carried about 2.7 million pounds of cargo and 135,000 gallons of fuel to research stations across the continent.

Operation Deep Freeze, the military component of the U.S. Antarctic Program, is managed by the National Science Foundation. The 109th Airlift Wing operates in Antarctica from October to March, when it is summer at the South Pole.

The unique capabilities of the ski-equipped LC-130 aircraft make it the only one of its kind in the U.S. military, able to land on snow and ice.

Col. Michele Kilgore, who took command of the wing in October, took her first trip to the ice this season, and said she was impressed by the job her Airmen do on a regular basis.

"I was able to see first-hand the amazing mission I get to be a part of now," she said. "The work the Airmen of this wing do makes me proud to be their leader, and to see them doing it in such austere conditions is just astounding."

Col. Alan Ross, the 109th vice commander, who took his last trip to the ice this season before retiring in , said he was still impressed by the job the wing does from October to March.

"After almost two decades of being part of this mission, it still amazes me that this wing does what it does. We extend air power from our home in Scotia, New York, to literally the ends of the Earth, in this case Antarctica and the South Pole," he said. "Each year, after flying our aircraft 11,000 miles to reach Antarctica, our Airmen set up operations on an ice shelf with no hangars or permanent facilities, perform maintenance operations while exposed to the elements, and conduct flying operations to remote locations on the harshest, most unforgiving continent in the world.

"It's been my privilege to be a part of it for so long, and I will maintain a sense of pride for Airmen and this mission long after my retirement," Ross said.

109th AW participates in Polar Reach 2018

By Canadian Armed Forces 2nd Lt. Daniel McCall

ALERT, NUNAVUT, Canada - From May 8 to 23, Canadian Forces Station Alert was proud to support the New York Air National Guard 109th Airlift Wing from Scotia, New York, and 440 Transport Squadron from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories during the expeditionary exercise Polar Reach 2018. The purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate the expeditionary capabilities of the LC-130, as well as develop the ability to land aircraft directly on the ice shelf north of Ellesmere Island, Nunavut.

The LC-130 is a ski-equipped variant of the C-130 Hercules aircraft, intended for use in the Arctic and Antarctic. Its ability to land on snow and ice makes it ideal for remote northern operations. Traditionally, the LC-130 has been used for scientific support.

For Exercise Polar Reach, 440 Squadron conducted the initial reconnaissance of the skiway location and took ice measurements to ensure it could support the weight of an LC-130. The squadron also helped members of the 109th AW establish a camp on the ice in order to build the skiway, flying in US personnel and equipment in advance of the LC-130's arrival.

"The RCAF's 440 Squadron is critical to our operations in the Canadian High Arctic," said Maj. Steven Slosek, 109th AW. "Without their support, it would be impossible to conduct LC-130 operations this far north."



Courtesy Photo

Slosek also touched on the benefits of this exercise as a training venue. "We have Ski Landing Area Control Officers and a Skiway Construction Team with us, both of which will gain valuable experience from taking part in this exercise."

The exercise was not without its challenges. Between the reconnaissance of potential Skiway sites in April and the actual construction that began in May, one of the sites had accumulated massive amounts of snow, throwing an unexpected hurdle into the already daunting task of constructing a skiway. CFS Alert was able to provide winter equipment and support to enable the construction team to overcome the obstacle.

Rice, Anderson visit wing

STORY | Master Sgt. Catharine Schmidt

Director of the Air National Guard Lt. Gen. L. Scott Rice and Air National Guard Command Chief Master Sgt. Ronald Anderson visited the base Aug. 2 to meet the Airmen of the 109th Airlift Wing and get a first-hand look at how the mission here gets accomplished.

The day was full with a walk around the base, learning about the mission, meeting and talking with Airmen, an all-call and, of course, some impromptu selfies. After touring different areas around the base, Rice and Anderson were able to get a clearer picture of the Wing's polar operations in both Antarctica and Greenland in support of the National Science Foundation.

Rice and Anderson ended the visit with an all-call to address all of the Airmen of the wing.

"We think there's a couple things that make you great. One is the people – all of you, all of the energy that you put into it," Rice said. "It takes a culture. It takes commitment. And that's what makes you bigger as an organization. Now I can proudly say that the chief and I have seen it.

"We think there's something special here in this wing that we really value, and that is your wing commander and your wing command chief," he said before coining them both.

Anderson talked about the importance of keeping Air National Guard organizations viable well into the future.

"We're trying to make sure that this organization and this mission that you have here survives long into the future," he said. "We talk about some of your kids serving here. We're more concerned that your grandkids have a mission here."

Both Rice and Anderson thanked the Airmen for the work they do to keep the mission going.

"There's a bigger more important more personal reason that we're here," Anderson said. "That's simply to say thank you. Thank you for what you do every day. We recognize this isn't easy … It's hard to try and find that balance between ... everything you have going on, but somehow you've figured it out. You've been able to perform a mission here that nobody else can do. You should be proud of that."

"I see first hand that you are making a difference," Rice said. "You are the ones who are exporting across the world this thing called respect for each other, this thing called freedom, this thing called liberty that we all hold so dear and it's hard to put your hand on it, but you are doing it. You are making a difference for our country. This place, this world, this land we live in now is better off tomorrow because you are working here today. For that my dear friends, I thank you all."



Lt. Gen. L. Scott Rice, Director of the Air National Guard, and Air National Guard Command Chief Master Sgt. Ronald Anderson meet with Airmen during a visit to Stratton Air National Guard Base, New York, on Aug. 2, 2018. Rice and Anderson toured the base to get a first-hand look at how the 109th Airlift Wing's mission here gets accomplished.

PHOTOGRAPHY | Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara



(Above) Air National Guard Command Chief Master Sgt. Ronald Anderson and Lt. Gen. L. Scott Rice, Director of the Air National Guard, pose for a selfie with the Airmen of the Small Air Terminal during a visit to Stratton Air National Guard Base, New York, on Aug. 2, 2018. Rice and Anderson toured the base to get a first-hand look at how the 109th Airlift Wing's mission here gets accomplished.

VIDEO | Staff Sgt. Jamie Spaulding

Video also available online by clicking here.



Master Sgt. Daniel Spiewak
109th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
Dec. 27, 1967 - June 30, 2018



Daniel Kerry Spiewak, 50, passed away on June 30, 2018 at Ellis Hospital, after suddenly being stricken by heart complications. Born on December 27, 1967 in Schenectady, he was the son of Ellen (Kelly) Spiewak and the late Thomas Spiewak. Daniel was a member of Mont Pleasant's 1986 graduation class as well as it's stage and marching bands. He served aboard the USS Saratoga in the active Navy for four years then as a reservist. In 2000 he was employed part time by the 109th Airlift Wing, then as a full time aircraft mechanic in 2002, taking part every year in "Operation Deep Freeze" to Antarctica.

He married the former Elena M. Pandori on January 27, 2007. Daniel's life centered around his family and co-workers at the 109th where he loved his work. He enjoyed carpentry and gardening and a good laugh. A passion of his was meticulously caring for his all white Lincoln MKZ.

In addition to his mother, and wife, he leaves behind three sons, Nathaniel, Camden and Cullin Spiewak and stepsons, Anthony Ackerman Jr. and Christopher L.H. Ackerman; four brothers, Chip (Janet) and Thomas (Connie) Woods, Christopher (Kim) Spiewak and Keith (Gretchen) Spiewak; sisters: Kathy (John) Simkins and Cindy (Harold) Simkins. Several nieces, nephews and cousins also survive.

PHOTOGRAPHY | Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara







Safety: Shaping our culture, not watching it change



STORY | Master Sgt. Catharine Schmidt **PHOTOGRAPHY | Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara**

When Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. David L. Goldfein directed all Air Force wings with flying and maintenance functions to conduct an operational safety review, the 109thAirlift Wing's safety team answered the call and brought about 500 Airmen together to discuss risk management and mitigating mishaps.

On June 18, Airmen gathered at the Saratoga Hilton in nearby Saratoga Springs to receive insight on risk management and safety trends from the 109thAW safety team as well as guest speaker Doug Downey of Convergent Performance, LLC. Downey, a 24-year Air Force veteran, is recognized as an industry expert in risk management, safety management systems, safety program management and aviation accident and mishap investigations.

The 109thAW safety team identified safety trends and risk factors while Downey discussed human factors affecting safety along with the importance of compliance.

Lt. Col. Dean Johnson, the 109thAW Chief of Safety, talked about how every person at the wing, regardless of their job, has a direct effect on the mission.

"Safety and risk management must be practiced from when you get up in the morning to when you get safely back to your bed at night," he said. "And at any point along that continuum, both professional and personal, [if something] results in a mishap, then the mission fails. It doesn't matter if you're security forces or services or a flyer or finance or maintenance or medical -- risk management, assessment, mitigation is applicable to us all.

"Everyone in the wing should be able to say that they operate ski-equipped C-130s when asked what they do at the 109thAirlift Wing," he said. "When things go wrong in your work group, no matter what your job description is, that has a trickle-down effect on the whole organization and it goes right into the cockpit."

During the second half of the day, Airmen broke out into different groups to participate in feedback sessions with wing safety representatives about the trends they are seeing not just throughout the wing, but also within the Air Force as a whole.

"It's more of a data-pulling event," said Senior Master Sgt. Rick Rueda, 109thAW Occupational Safety Manager. The breakout sessions were designed to facilitate discussion among Airmen. "What are your concerns as it relates to safety within the organization? Is it a lack of experience in the work center? Is there lack of training? What are the shortfalls in each of the different groups."

The safety team is currently compiling all the feedback received from Airmen.

"This will paint a big picture of what our safety culture is across the wing," Rueda said. "We can then target our leadership goals to (address) those concerns and shortfalls to prevent future mishaps."

"Our philosophy in the safety office, is that your 109thsafety team is shaping our culture not watching it change," Johnson said. "That's our motto, and that's the motto that we want to impart on the wing. If we have influenced the culture positively, then this will be a net win."



safety

Airmen help each other reach fitness potential through bodybuilding

feature

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY |
Master Sgt. Catharine Schmidt

Finding a fitness routine to stay motivated throughout the year can be a struggle for some Airmen. Running programs, group workout classes and regular visits to the gym are just a few ways Airmen find ways to stay engaged. A few Airmen with the 109th Airlift Wing have taken it a step further with a fitness and nutrition routine where discipline is imperative.

Siblings Staff Sgts. Perry and Meya Rayner along with Tech. Sgt. Kat Gregory have all found a common fitness routine through bodybuilding. Throughout each of their journeys they've relied on each other to help stay motivated in obtaining the best results possible for bodybuilding competitions.

When Perry, who works in the 109th Services Flight, first started lifting weights in 2013, he started to notice a difference which was the motivation he needed to keep pushing.

"I started doing research and learning more about nutrition and training," he said. "With those years of gaining experience and knowledge, I applied it to myself and really learned what types of food are good for me."

In 2016, he took his hard work to the stage and competed in his first competition, placing in the Top 3 in men's physique. During this time, he also became a certified online personal trainer.

Meya, who is assigned to the 109th AW's command support staff, was at her brother's competition to help cheer him on and began following his journey.

"I didn't know anything about bodybuilding, but I was always interested to see what level I could get my body to," she said. She decided it was something she'd like to try out and turned to her brother for nutrition advice.

See FITNESS, Page 18



(Above) Staff Sgt. Perry Rayner works out at the fitness center here. He has been competing in bodybuilding competitions since 2016. (Left) (from left) Staff Sgt. Meya Rayner, Staff Sgt. Perry Rayner and Tech. Sgt. Kat Gregory found a common bond in the bodybuilding sport.

FITNESS

"People started to reach out to me for meal plans and training plans," Perry said. "My sister was the first girl I helped out with nutrition, really applying everything I had learned."

Meya competed in March and placed second in the World National Bodybuilding Federation's bikini category.

Meanwhile, Gregory, assigned to the 109th Civil Engineer Squadron, had already competed in her first two competitions in 2015, but she didn't connect with the Rayners until preparing for her latest competition in April. When she found out about Perry's qualifications and experience, she reached out to him for help.

"I applied the same protocols for Kat that I used for my sister," Perry said.

Gregory had learned a lot about her body from her previous competitions and knew that by committing to another competition it would help get her into a fitness routine.

"When I commit, I commit," she said. "I spent two years trying to get back in the gym and could not find a routine to save my life. I knew committing to a competition would get me back on track."

Both Perry and Gregory competed in April in the National Physique Committee's New York Capitol Championships. Gregory placed second and third in her competitions, and Perry placed in the Top 5 in his.

"It was so helpful to have Sergeant Rayner with me at the show to help me out," Gregory said.

All agree that their journeys have not only inspired others to get into a fitness routine, but that their inspiration has also motivated them to keep going.

"Other people see your work and reach out to you," Meya said. "People look up to you as being motivation for them, but when people reach out to us, it motivates us. You don't realize that there's people watching and paying attention. It helps us to help others reach their goals."

"With our dedication and discipline, I think people will find their way to reach out to us whether they want to compete or take their fitness to a higher level," Perry said. "That communication is always open."



TIMELINE

2018

1 OCT

Serviceable OCP's may be worn.

Airmen can purchase OCP's at the following AAFES locations: Aviano AB, Charleston AFB, Shaw AFB and MacDill AFB

2019

1 APR

Expansion of in-store AAFES sales locations continues

Tan T-shirt must be worn (Desert Sand is authorized until this date)

OCT

Online sales projected to be available

2020

1 JUN

Coyote Brown boots must be worn (Tan is authorized until this date)

DLA Issued green socks must be worn (Desert Tan, Tan authorized until this date)

2021

1 APR

OCP Mandatory Wear Date

BENEFITS

- The OCP works in all climates and across the spectrum of missions we perform
- Over 100,000 Airmen have been issued and/or are already wearing OCPs. This includes Air Force Central Command, Air Force Special Operations Command and our Air Force Global Strike Command Defenders
- The OCP will bring back Air Force heraldry with unit patches
- The OCP celebrates our joint warfighting excellence and close ties with the Army

AIR FORCE OCP UNIFORM GUIDANCE

Further official wear guidance will be available soon in AFI 36-2903, Dress and Personal Appearance



Airmen gather together for a prayer before a run/walk as a show of support for Senior Airman Stephanie Seney of the 109th Medical Group who was diagnosed with cancer.





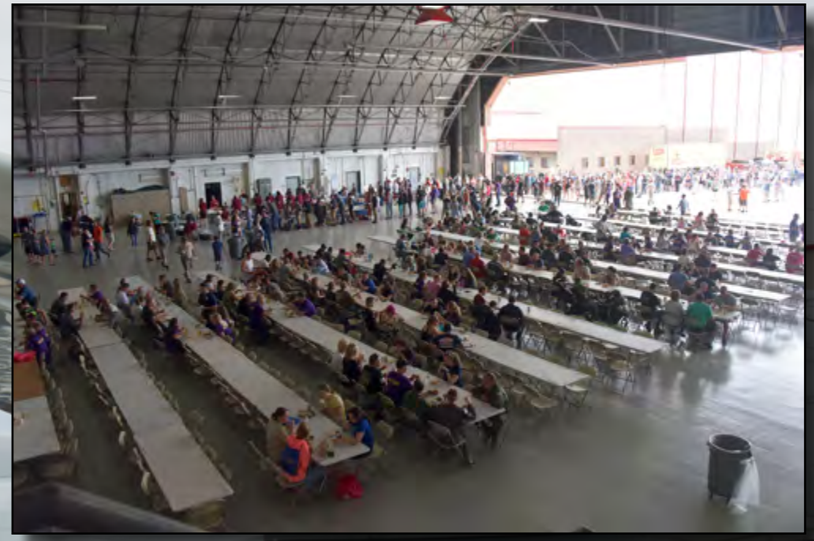
(Above) JJ and Tommy Zeliph enjoy some treats while walking around.

(Left) Children were able to enjoy bounce houses and more throughout the day.



(Left) Families were able to enjoy the music of local band Grand Central Station.

(Below) More than 2,000 people attended this year's Family Day which included food, music, games, static displays and more.



PHOTOGRAPHY Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara

family day

June 3, 2018

Wing donates computers to Anderson Center for Autism

The Anderson Center for Autism in Staatsburg, New York, has about 100 new computers thanks to the 109th Airlift Wing and the Department of Defense's computers for learning (CFL) program.

"We are allowed to donate computers that are no longer in service to local schools to help them save money and give them brand new assets to replace old and aging assets," said Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Reimann, 109th Communications Flight superintendent of policy and plans.

According to the Defense Logistics Agency, The DOD CFL program was created to provide useful IT equipment to schools and educational nonprofit organizations serving grades pre-K through 12. The program is designed to streamline the transfer of excess and surplus DOD IT equipment to schools.

Airmen with the 109th Communications Flight took the old computers to clean them up and then distributed them to the center on June 4. Without the program, the computers would have been returned to the Defense Logistics Agency for repurpose or destruction.

Computers on base are life-cycled every four years allowing many computers to be donated each year, said Reimann.

The Anderson center will use the computers in their computer club and their electronic library. According to Christine Wolcott of the center, this donation saves them roughly $30,000.

"Not only does this provide quicker and more effective technology, it also allows us to stretch our budget for other needs like life-experience trips," she said.

The Anderson Center for Autism's philosophy states that "all people deserve to live a life of quality. ACA has evolved into an organization that has the expertise, resources and technology to enable the agency to contribute much toward the optimization of the quality of life of those it services."

comm

STORY | **Master Sgt. Catharine Schmidt**

PHOTOGRAPHY | **Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara**



(From left) Senior Airmen Damon Mason, David Crandall, Michael Hack and Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Reimann load up computers for the Anderson Center for Autism on June 4, 2018. About 100 computers from the 109th Airlift Wing were donated to the center as part of the Department of Defense's computers for learning program. The Airmen are all part of the 109th Communications Flight.



The challenge and pride of the GAFPB qualification

STORY | Staff Sgt. Stephanie Lambert



While scrolling through my email months ago, I read about a German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge qualification which was to be held on base by our Security Forces personnel over April UTA.

I consider myself someone who enjoys a challenge, and this seemed to be an attainable one for me. The qualification consisted of several different physically demanding events over three days, which at first didn't sound as challenging as they ended up feeling.

I planned to train for each event, but life got in the way, and while I had been working out regularly I hadn't done any training for the specific events.

The day came for the qualification to begin, and I was a little nervous but went about it as I did most challenges; "How hard can it be?"

My answer to how hard came in the form of 11x10 sprints from a belly down position followed by a flexed-arm hang and a 1,000-meter run.

Standing around the dining facility waiting for the first event with many much younger Airmen and a smattering of Soldiers, I started to have second thoughts about this challenge.

When my turn came I flopped down on the mat and sprinted with all the speed my 41-year-old legs had in them and just made it in time to try for the bronze badge.

The next event was a flexed-arm hang; I thought I needed to hang for at least 5 seconds to move on. I watched other Airmen hang for as much 1 minute and 20 seconds; I was able to get a very shaky 14 seconds.

The next event I moved on to was the 1,000-meter run on the track, which amounted to two full laps around with another almost half a lap at a full-out run. Normally I am a leisurely runner which made this fast track run grueling.

As I loped around the track sucking wind like a horse in its last dying run, I once again had second thoughts about my decision to do this challenge. I completed the run in five minutes and thirty one seconds and went on.

The first challenge for day two was a swim in my uniform blouse and pants in an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

To complete this part of the qualification I had to swim up and back twice in 4 minutes and then remove my uniform in deep water while treading water.

I knew this would be the most mentally challenging task for me because I hate the feeling of helplessness I have when I can't touch the bottom of a pool.

With trepidation I jumped in and swam the required laps with a weird, formless, flap-like stroke which degraded to a stilted backstroke. I finished under the 4 minutes and tried to rest in a back float.

At this point I attempted to remove my sopping-wet ABU pants from my tired body while staying afloat. This feat proved too difficult for me, and I panicked when the sensation of being pulled under by my pants occurred, causing me to flail wildly and call out for help.

Since the swim was a pass/fail event I figured that I was finished, but I was told there would be an opportunity to re-take that part of the qualification in June when it would be given again at another base. I would also be able to re-take the initial three events for a better score.

I left the pool with disappointment, but my mood was buoyed with the knowledge that I would be allowed to try again and also complete the remainder of events.

The next event was a ruck march around our base with a 33-pound pack. The distance would depend on which medal you had qualified for in the initial three events.

I did the shortest distance which was 6K to qualify for a bronze medal. Those who qualified for silver had a 9K distance, and those who qualified for gold had a 12K distance.

The ruck march happened to fall on a winter-like spring day with gusting winds and brutally cold temperatures. I marched into the wind with my heavy pack as fast as I could without realizing that my pace needed to be faster than it was.

With a little group cheering me on, I ran up the hill to complete the march in 59:45 with 15 seconds to spare before I would have been disqualified.

The next day I had to qualify on the 9 mm pistol at an indoor gun range. I had to hit each of the three targets at least one time. I hit all three targets and hit two of them twice, qualifying for silver in that category.

Over the course of three days I attempted each event with the knowledge that I may not make it in time or have enough speed or skill to get a medal.

The fact that I have to wait to re-take portions of the qualification doesn't take away from the pride I feel for completing it.

The turnout for this year's German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge was 39 Airmen and Soldiers; 27 of those qualified for a medal and 12 will have to re-take portions of the qualification to earn their badge.

(Left) Staff Sgt. Stephanie Lambert completes the ruck march portion of the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge on April 14, 2018. She completed 3.73 miles in just under 1 hour carrying 33 pounds in her rucksack.

(Right) Airmen and Soldiers participate in the Ruck March of the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge. Thirty-nine Airmen and Soldiers participated in the three-day event which consisted of four different qualification tests.

(Center Right) Maj. Heather Miner, 109th Airlift Wing executive officer, swims 100 meters with the hopes of qualifying for the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge on April 14, 2018, at the Glenville YMCA in Glenville, New York. This was the second of four events for the participants.

(Photos by Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara)







VIDEO | Staff Sgt. Jamie Spaulding

Video also available online by clicking here.

Tech Sgt. Sean Redden, of the 224th Air Defense Group in Rome, New York, assists Staff Sgt. Stephanie Lambert, 109th Airlift Wing Public Affairs photojournalist, with the pistol qualification portion of the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge on April 15, 2018, at the American Tactical Systems firing range in Green Island, New York. This was the last of four events for the participants. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jamie Spaulding)



Families strengthen relationships at Strong Bonds family retreat

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY |
Master Sgt. Catharine Schmidt

"Learning our different personalities."
"Talking straight."
"Listening first."

These were just a few of the things families took away from this year's Strong Bonds Family Retreat at Jiminy Peak Resort in Hancock, Massachusetts, July 6-8.

The 109th Airlift Wing's Chaplain Corps holds Strong Bonds events a few times a year for families, couples and even singles in an effort to strengthen relationships.

"The main reason why Strong Bonds exists is because of the brokenness in families that can happen over deployments," said Chaplain (Capt.) Joshua Choquette, 109th Airlift Wing chaplain. "Along with that, in the Guard life, we're transitioning from civilian to military, and the lack of understanding can really break down relationships. The Guard came up with this program to help rebuild relationships. It started with couples and then graduated to families because the kids are affected as well. And then they thought it was great to use with singles to help them build healthy relationships."

The Strong Bonds events are centered around Stephen Covey's bestselling book "The Speed of Trust" and incorporate lessons and activities designed to strengthen relationships. Aspects of the

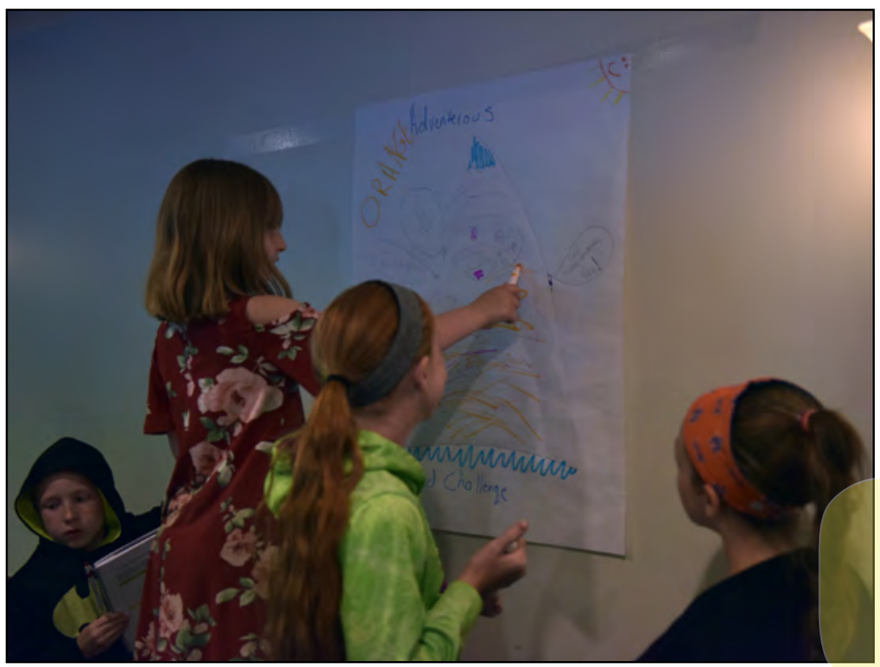


program include understanding the different personalities within your relationships and various behaviors that help improve trust.

"It really gets you to think a lot about how your family interacts, how you can improve and also how to enjoy your successes," said Nicole Aldi. The Aldi family was one of 20 families to attend the family retreat.

"The resources that we're able to take home with us are also great," added her husband, Master Sgt. Gregory Aldi.

Lindsay Knott attended the event with her husband, Tech. Sgt. Michael Knott, and their three children, and said they loved being able to "spend time together as a family, without the normal hustle and bustle of home."



(Above) Families attended a 109th Airlift Wing Strong Bonds event July 6-8, 2018, which was centered around Stephen Covey's bestselling book "The Speed of Trust" and incorporated lessons and activities designed to strengthen relationships.

(Left) Some of the children who attended the Strong Bonds Family Retreat come up with some characteristics of their similar personality type.

She also said learning about their different personalities was great.

"It helps us to understand ourselves, our spouses and our kids' personalities. It also shows us how those personalities work and what does not work for them. It will be interesting to see how we can put that knowledge to use in the future."

For Tech. Sgt. Stephanie Perkins and her son, Jaksen, it's the bonds they are able to form during the program that really have an impact.

"I think the biggest thing we get out of it is to be able to have an environment where we can actually get to know other military families," she said. "It's nice to share that bond."

"The chaplain team does an amazing job of fostering a loving and judgment-free environment," said Senior Master Sgt. Aletha Camack who attended with her husband and daughter. "This extends a willingness for families to participate in the group discussions and activities, resulting in revealing areas of concern families may be facing and allowing them to work through them together."

Families also got time to explore the resort with their families and spend some quality time together.

"I think everyone is going to walk away with different things, and I think that's great," Choquette said. "My hope is that they're open. Whether it's something concrete like the 13 behaviors or just talking about trust and engaging with their families or maybe it's just time away with their families. Whatever it is that that family needs."

Chaplain's Corner: Spiritual Connections Abound

By Chaplain (Capt.) Julie Taylor, 109th AW Chaplain



File Photo

The warm weather is finally here! Trees are budding, flowers blooming, green life blankets the landscape. Warmer weather beckons us outside to explore and participate in this season of rebirth. For as far back as humans have been telling stories or drawing pictures to record history, there is documentation that being in nature is a significant way we connect to Something Bigger Than Ourselves. Spending time outside whether it's at the beach, in the mountains or just out in the garden can bring significant peace, wonder and awe.

Spirituality is defined in many ways. Christina Puchalski, M.D. and Director of the George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health defines it as such, "Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature and to the significant or sacred." Some people connect to their spirituality through organized religion, others find it in art, doing service for others, 12-step programs or spending time in the natural world.

Being in touch with our spirituality, however we define it, strengthens us. Spirituality is considered important enough to be one of the Four Pillars of Resilience in the Comprehensive Airmen Fitness framework. One of the jobs of the chaplain corps is to support you in connecting to your meaning and purpose in the way that best fits you.

Stories are significant in processing or making sense out of the challenges and triumphs of life. Stories certainly come in the form of books, plays, sacred literature and movies, but they can also be communicated through paintings or dance. Humans use storytelling to wrestle with big questions: What am I doing here? Why do terrible things happen? Where do we come from? How does anybody go on after tragedy? What can one person do to make a difference? Is there something bigger out there? Telling and listening to stories connects us.

Spiritual connections are everywhere. Sometimes those connections are made solo, sometimes they're made with others. It doesn't have to take a lot of time to get quiet and breathe in the splendor of the stars at night or a morning sunrise. There are a lot of great movies and television shows out that spark fantastic conversations between friends and colleagues about those big questions. Contemplating and then hashing out our thoughts and ideas are ways we figure out what is important in our lives, how we make sense of the world.

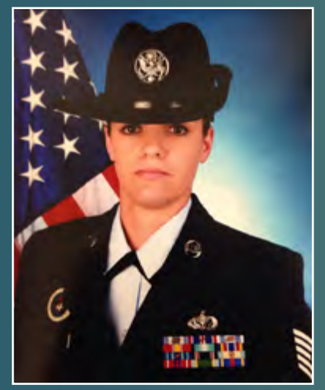
Just like we exercise our bodies for physical fitness, we can exercise these connections for our spiritual fitness. Take a minute. Notice how you are connected to the moment, to yourself, to others, to nature and to the significant or sacred. You can do this in a cathedral or temple; you can do it in an art gallery or a theater; you can do it at a lake or in your backyard. Spirituality is everywhere, all it takes is a moment of intentionality to notice and connect.

Meet your new 109th AW Recruiters

recruiting



Tech. Sgt. Timothy Lyons comes to the 109th Airlift Wing from the Florida Air National Guard where he served as a production recruiter since 2016. Sergeant Lyons began his Air Force career with the active duty in 2004 in Communications. He transferred to the Florida ANG and then retrained into the Public Affairs career field as a broadcast journalist telling the story of the 125th Fighter Wing in Jacksonville, Florida. While at the 125th FW he transferred over to the Command Post and then a few years later became a recruiter, where he established new and effective ways to communicate with the next generation of Airmen. "I'm excited to bring a fresh perspective and innovative ideas to help the 109th AW Recruiting Team exceed expectations. "



Tech. Sgt. Terra Martin is no stranger to the 109th Airlift Wing. She enlisted with the unit in 2000 with the 109th Services Flight. On the fulltime side, she worked as a criminal analyst with the New York National Guard Counterdrug Task Force. She has also deployed to McMurdo Station, Antarctica, in support of Operation Deep Freeze. In 2013, Sergeant Martin was selected to become a military training instructor for Air Force Basic Military Training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. After training the U.S. Air Force's future Airmen for nearly five years, she returned to the 109th Airlift Wing as a recruiter. "I've seen everything that new Airmen go through, from their struggles to their achievements. Now, I can guide civilians who have little to no knowledge of the Air Force by helping them choose a career path of their own."



Staff Sgt. Stephanie Lambert enlisted into the New York Air National Guard with the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron in October 2010. She volunteered during Superstorm Sandy to help those in Long Island affected by the storm. She also volunteered to be part of the 109th Security Forces Squadron augmentee program giving her a diverse view of the many different aspects of the Wing. She transferred over to the Public Affairs shop in 2016 as a photojournalist and also worked as the Wing community manager bringing a wealth of knowledge with her to the recruiting position. "I hope to bring a new dynamic into recruiting and focus on getting the very best people in place to continue our mission."

Be ready to shine during our upcoming Unit Effective Inspection (UEI)!

It will take place from Oct. 31 - Nov. 8, 2018. Our base is ready, and we are prepared to show our visiting AMC inspectors our one-of-a-kind mission and the people who make it happen year after year! The four Major Graded Areas of Wing Readiness are: Managing Resources, Leading People, Improving the Unit and Executing the Mission. Let's make sure we tell our story!

109th Inspector General's Office:
Lt. Col. Ron Ankabrandt- Inspector General
Maj. Amanda Coonradt- Director of Inspections
Senior Master Sgt. Joe O'Connor- IG Superintendent/SAPM
Maj. Kelly Person (DSG) – Director of Complaints
Maj. Kim Husher (DSG) – Deputy Director of Inspections
Tech. Sgt. Chris Pierson (DSG) – Self-Assessment Program Manager

The Air Force wants to hear from you! As part of our Unit Effectiveness Inspection (UEI) visit coming up in October, a survey has been created to get input from our Airmen, families and our civilian workforce and contractors. This survey is a critical part of the inspection process so maximum participation by everyone is encouraged. This is a completely anonymous survey and inspectors are looking for honest and sincere answers. This is the ideal time to let the Air Force know what is working within our unit and what may need some work.

******The survey will close on Sept. 1, 2018******

Click here to access the survey which only takes about 20 minutes to complete.



Pillar of success

2nd Lt. Abby Carkner was one of six nurses with Albany Medical Center to receive the prestigious Pillars of Nursing Award for 2018. The Medical Center's honor is given annually to six nurses who have demonstrated excellence in leadership and patient care. Carkner is with the 109th Medical Group here, and Capt. (Dr.) Kevin Collins presented her the award while she was on duty with the 109th Airlift Wing. (Courtesy photo)

ANG takes home Marathon award

Congratulations to the Air National Guard for winning the 2017 Air Force Marathon MAJCOM Challenge Award with a compiled time of 22:03:25, defeating The Air National Guard defeated 11 other MAJCOM teams to take the trophy! Tech. Sgt. Randy Welch, 109th Airlift Wing, was part of the team. Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson, U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein and Air National Guard Director Lt. Gen L. Scott Rice joined the winners for a group photo at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, June 14, 2018. (Photo by Wayne A. Clark)





Airmen welcomed home on 4th of July

Staff Sgt. James Candido hugs his family after returning from a 60-day deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Candido was one of five 109th Airlift Wing Airmen who returned home on July 4, 2018.

PHOTOGRAPHY
Senior Master Sgt. William Gizara

(Below) Family and friends welcome home Airmen with the 109th Airlift Wing who were deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on July 4, 2018, at Stratton Air National Guard Base.





(Above) Staff Sgt. Christopher Dumond greets his family after returning from a 60-day deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on July 4, 2018.

NEW YORK AIR GUARD

the 107th Attack Wing's mission is to provide Global Vigilance and Strike Capability in support of federal authorities.

The 109th Airlift Wing provides airlift support to the National Science Foundation's South Pole research program.The wing operates LC-130Hs, modified with wheel-ski gear.

The 174th Attack Wing provide qualified Airmen and weapon systems for joint global air, space and cyberspace operations, in support of homeland defense.

The 105th Airlift Wing is assigned C-17 Globemaster III airlifter aircraft and supports both state and federal missions.

Counter all air threats to the EADS' Area of Operations through vigilant detection, rapid warning and precise tactical control of NORAD and USNORTHCOM forces.

The 106th Rescue Wing deploys worldwide to provide combat search and rescue coverage for U.S. and allied forces

PROMOTIONS

Dec. 1, 2017 - June 1, 2018

Lieutenant Colonel

Matthew Johnson	AS
Justin Marrero	OSS
Malcolm Schongalla	AS
Sandra Stoquert	AMXS
Jason Zeliph	MSG

Major

Ashley FitzGibbon	JFHQ
Brian Pustolka	AS
James Roth	CPTF
James Vendetti	CF

Captain

Brian Alexander	AS
Gregory Durrant	SFS
Mark Fuller	AS
Tiernan Nolan	AS

First Lieutenant

Dan James	AS
Laura James	AS
Erin McDonough	AS
Philip Piombino	AS
Daniel Urbanski	AS

Chief Master Sergeant

Siobhan Macaulay	MOF
Frank Vallsdelosreyes	CES

Senior Master Sergeant

Jim Dupuis	SFS
Brandon Hudson	OSS
Bradley Phillips	MXS

Master Sergeant

Stephen Brown	AMXS
Brandon Guthinger	OG
Allen Moon	OSS
David Rodriguez	AS

Technical Sergeant

Rachel Bentley	JFHQ
Sean Chester	AW
Jessica Collins	LRS
Matthew Gleason	LRS
Michael Jenkins	OG
Sarah Ledger	FSS
Christopher Lovelock	AMXS
Daniel Marchand	CES
Christopher Meyer	CES
Jason Miller	AES
Michael Perez	OSS
Steven Perrigo	LRS
Keith Posson	CF
Casey Preyer Blakney	AS
Brittany Rankin	OG
Aaron Rodgers	AS
Thomas Rorick	SFS
Andrew Smith	MXS
Kristopher Towne	MXG
Zachary Villano	SFS
Latisha Webb	AMXS

Staff Sergeant

Sarah Anderson	MXS
Christopher Bailey	CES
Michael Bala III	MXS
Emily Bogart	AW
Jason Burr	MXS
Justin Candee	MXS
James Cappadora	MXS
Christopher Denegar	MXS
Miles Faas	SFS
Samantha Gifford	OSS
George Girtler IV	MXS
Derek Hakes	MXS
Jacey Hill	AW
Jonathan Hooker	AMXS
Rafael Lopez	CES
Katilyn Keefe	LRS
Michael Manship	MXS
Jeremy Morey	SFS
Luis Parrilla	OSS
Adam Podbielski	SFS
Meya Rayner	AW
Trevor Rivenburgh	SFS
Emily Roth	MDG
Shannon Schiller	OSS
Samantha Sherman	LRS
Steven Yuhasz	LRS

Senior Airman

Dante Angerosa	LRS
John Burnett	MXS
Christopher Clemente	CES
Nathaniel Fort	CES
Ryan Foster	MXS
Kevin Gabay	LRS
Robert Gould	AMXS
Carley Herb	AES
Damon Mason	CF
Daniel McLaughlin	AS
Heath Mennig	AS
Alexander Miller	AMXS
David Nocera	MXS
Shannan O'Connor	LRS
Zachary Randall	LRS
Ryan Rhoads	AS
Travis Shafer	MXS
Kevin Shufeltmange	MXS
Rachael Wehrenberg	MDG
Brandon Winchell	FSS

Airman

Sean Durfee	LRS

AWARDS

Dec. 1, 2017 - May 1, 2018

Meritorious Service Medal

Col. Charles Hutson	JFHQ
Lt. Col. Sandra Stoquert	AMXS
Maj. Joshua Carter	AS
Senior Master Sgt. Kelly Eustis	SFS

Aerial Achievement Medal

Senior Master Sgt. Matthew Ausfeld	AES

Air Force Commendation Medal

Tech. Sgt. Andre Noel	CF
Tech. Sgt. Catlin Boyle	SFS
Senior Master Sgt. Jim Dupuis	SFS
Master Sgt. Donna Torres	JFHQ
Lt Col. Steven Cousineau	OSS
Tech. Sgt. Logan Brennan	AS
Master Sgt. Dylan Hassis	AS
Tech. Sgt. Matthew Jones	AS
Tech. Sgt. Matthew Lucier	AS
Tech. Sgt. Casey Preyer Blakney	AS
Tech. Sgt. Kyle Ray	AS
Master Sgt. David Rodriguez	AS
Tech. Sgt. Michael Wallace	AS
Tech. Sgt. Terra Martin	FSS

Air Force Achievement Medal

Chaplain (Capt.) Xiomara Diaz	AW
Senior Airman Joshua Byerwalters	LRS
Staff Sgt. Matthew Gleason	LRS
Staff Sgt. Christopher Denegar	MXS
Master Sgt. Nicholas Bastiani	MSG
Master Sgt. Gary Fiorillo	MXS
Senior Master Sgt. Matthew Ausfeld	AES
Lt. Col. Keith Fly	AES
Lt. Col. Julia Moretti	AES
Tech. Sgt. Kathleen Gregory	CES

109th AW Airman receives Levitow Award



Photo by Master Sgt. Jerry D. Harlan

Senior Airman Laura Saddlemire, from the 109th Operations Group, receives the John L. Levitow Award for Airman leadership school Blended Learning Course class 18-7 from Maj. John Capra, Deputy Commander of the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center, Chief Master Sgt. Ed Walden, Command Chief Master Sgt. of the 134th Airlift Wing, and Chief Master Sgt. Winfield Hinkley, Comandant of the Paul H. Lankford Enlisted PME Center on June 15, 2018 at the TEC in Louisville, Tenn. The John L. Levitow Award is the highest award for enlisted Professional Military Education in the Air Force and is presented to the student who demonstrates the most outstanding leadership and scholastic achievement throughout ALS, NCOA and SNCOA.

109th Airlift Wing
1 Air National Guard Road
Scotia, NY 12302-9752



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Gabriel Enders

Mission statement

The 109th Airlift Wing employs the Department of Defense's only ski-equipped aircraft to conduct operations in remote Polar Regions. We train, equip and deploy premier, combat-ready Airmen to support state and national objectives.

Vision statement

Unparalleled tactical airlift to remote polar environments, propelled by highly trained, combat-ready Airmen.