

THE BEACON

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE 124TH FIGHTER WING

Winter 2021



Combat Excellence-Always on Mission



FROM THE 124TH FIGHTER WING
WING COMMANDER
COL. SHANNON SMITH

Welcome to the second edition of the quarterly Beacon. We are hoping that this change in frequency enables us to better focus on the quality of this publication. The Beacon is our way of telling your stories. This Winter 2021 edition does just that. Have a look; share it with your friends and family; and, most importantly, give us feedback on how we can improve.

Master Sgt. Kerry Lavelle and I recently engaged in a lunch discussion with Airmen from the mission support group. A particular Airman asked me how I keep it going ... or something like that. What I heard in my mind was “how do I show up each day?” My answer was an honest one. Given the challenges of 2020, I admitted at times I have struggled to “show up.” I also shared that I believe my contribution matters and what I do makes a difference – and that belief inspires me to show up and to do my best.

I’ve dwelled on that brief interaction for the past week, and I’m not confident I gave that Airman my whole answer. What I didn’t share is that I’ve heightened my focus on relationships. In times like these, I believe human connection is foundational to my personal resilience. I’m blessed to have a life partner in my wife Laurie, and I draw incredible strength and confidence from her. I turn to my faith, as it provides me a place that feels distant from the daily challenges and, more than anything in my life, gives me something reliable and unchanging to hold onto. I am focusing on the best achievable balance I can find. That means fully committing to this fighter wing and our incredible Airmen, but also fully committing to my well-being. I do my best to make time to lift weights, run, play guitar (not well) and am even exploring yoga (don’t laugh).

That’s how I’m striving to show up every day. The question I was asked is so fitting these days as we continue to face incredible challenges in this nation with COVID-19 and civil unrest. I am immeasurably proud to serve with all of you, and to be a part of an organization within our United States Air Force that believes in the unselfish ideals of service and defending freedom.

Lastly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff drafted and signed a memo for each of you. I’m sharing it in this edition of the Beacon. Please take time to read it and internalize it in your way. What we do matters. How we do it matters even more. Find strength and hope in our nation and in the men and women you serve with.

Attack!
Col. Smith

UNCLASSIFIED



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, DC 20318

MEMORANDUM FOR THE JOINT FORCE

SUBJECT: MESSAGE TO THE JOINT FORCE

The American people have trusted the Armed Forces of the United States to protect them and our Constitution for almost 250 years. As we have done throughout our history, the U.S. military will obey lawful orders from civilian leadership, support civil authorities to protect lives and property, ensure public safety in accordance with the law, and remain fully committed to protecting and defending the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

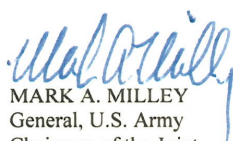
The violent riot in Washington, D.C. on January 6, 2021 was a direct assault on the U.S. Congress, the Capitol building, and our Constitutional process. We mourn the deaths of the two Capitol policemen and others connected to these unprecedented events.


We witnessed actions inside the Capitol building that were inconsistent with the rule of law. The rights of freedom of speech and assembly do not give anyone the right to resort to violence, sedition and insurrection.

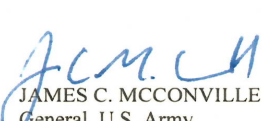
As Service Members, we must embody the values and ideals of the Nation. We support and defend the Constitution. Any act to disrupt the Constitutional process is not only against our traditions, values, and oath; it is against the law.


On January 20, 2021, in accordance with the Constitution, confirmed by the states and the courts, and certified by Congress, President-elect Biden will be inaugurated and will become our 46th Commander in Chief.

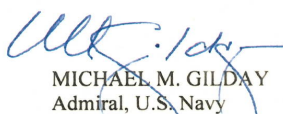
To our men and women deployed and at home, safeguarding our country—stay ready, keep your eyes on the horizon, and remain focused on the mission. We honor your continued service in defense of every American.



MARK A. MILLEY
General, U.S. Army
Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff



JOHN E. HYTEN
General, U.S. Air Force
Vice Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff



JAMES C. MCCONVILLE
General, U.S. Army
Chief of Staff of the Army


DAVID H. BERGER
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine
Corps


MICHAEL M. GILDAY
Admiral, U.S. Navy
Chief of Naval Operations


CHARLES Q. BROWN, JR.
General, U.S. Air Force
Chief of Staff of the Air
Force


JOHN W. RAYMOND
General, U.S. Space Force
Chief of Space Operations


DANIEL R. HOKANSON
General, U.S. Army
Chief of the National Guard
Bureau

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WINTER 2021

2 COMMANDER'S LETTER

6 FSS UNIQUE MISSION

8 FLAG DEDICATED TO TRIBE

9 SPECIAL OLYMPICS TORCH RUN

10 POL TANK PROJECT

12 IDNG COVID RESPONSE

14 124FW HOLIDAY MEAL

15 LRS'S VERTICAL STORAGE

16 124 OPS RIBBON CUTTING

17 CREW CHIEFS DE-ICE A-10'S

18 RANS RETURNS

124TH FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
Capt. Rebecca Solosabal

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPERINTENDENT
Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Allmaras

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF
Senior Airman Joseph Morgan
Senior Airman Mercedee Wilds
Mr. Ryan White

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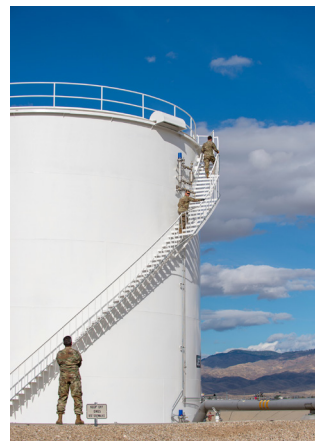


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ON THE COVER:



POL Tank Project
pg. 10

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**“THIS TRAINING
ENSURES WE’RE
BOTH ORGANIZED
AND READY FOR THIS
TO BE IN THE FIELD.”**

THE SPEK

Story by: Senior Airman Joe Morgan

Photos by: Senior Airman Mercedee Wilds

Enlisted Services Airmen from the 124th Fighter Wing spent drill taking inventory and cleaning the unit’s Single Pallet Expeditionary Kitchen while also highlighting its unique mission for the state of Idaho and the greater Pacific Northwest with another functional mobile kitchen, the Disaster Response Mobile Kitchen Trailer in Boise, Idaho, October 4, 2020.

The SPEK’s primary function is to be deployed out of a C-130 Hercules in remote locations to serve as a fully functional, forward-operating kitchen for deployed Airmen.

“In Puerto Rico, when they had the hurricanes, the National Guard Bureau deployed various SPEKs to different states to help cook and supply food,” said Master Sgt. Scott Ross, who oversees management for base enlisted services. “This training ensures we’re both organized and ready for this to be in the field.”

Unlike the SPEK, the DRMKT is a towable, mobile kitchen unique to the Air National Guard, designed exclusively to support state and regional missions, as well as natural disasters. Most recently, the 124th’s DRMKT was deployed in 2017 to the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana to feed troops as they built houses for the reservation’s residents.

“The mobile kitchen is equipped to feed 2,000 people per meal or 6,000 people per day,” said Tech. Sgt. Audenne Valdez, dining facility manager for enlisted services. “This equipment is unique to the Air National Guard because, unlike active duty Air Force, part of our mission is to support local natural disasters.”

DRMKTs all across the country, to include the 124th’s kitchen, are being cleaned prior to being sent to the manufacturer to be retrofitted and updated to better serve those impacted by natural disasters.



FLAG DEDICATED TO LOCAL TRIBE

By: Master Sgt. Becky Vanshur

A U.S. flag, in honor of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, was presented on Nov. 2 to the tribe council. This special flag was flown through the skies over Afghanistan one night during the Idaho Air National Guard's recent Southwest Asia deployment.

The "Warrior Spirit," an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft dedicated to the tribes several years ago by the IDANG, participated in several night missions throughout the deployment.

Capt. Mike Shufeldt, 124th Fighter Wing pilot, remembers the night of June 18, 2020, vividly. He was flying the Warrior Spirit and situated next to him, near his lap, was the special U.S. flag honoring the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

He recalls taking off as the sun was setting, climbing above the mountain peaks off to his west. He saw a flash of light on the ground near a known allied checkpoint location. He immediately realized the checkpoint was under attack by what appeared to be grenades and gunfire.

He spent the next three hours defending the checkpoint from the air in the Warrior Spirit against the enemy ground forces. Although he received fire several times throughout the altercation, the enemy was unsuccessful in hitting the aircraft.



"BE IT LUCK OR FATE, THE WARRIOR SPIRIT AND I WERE AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME THAT NIGHT..."



"The Warrior Spirit kept me safe and granted me the ability to protect the friendlies," said Shufeldt. "Be it luck or fate, the Warrior Spirit and I were at the right place at the right time that night to save lives and affect the fight."

While presenting the flag, Shufeldt told the Shoshone-Bannock Council about that special night in the Warrior Spirit.

"On behalf of myself and the Idaho National Guard, please accept this flag that I flew on that mission that night, in recognition of the Warrior Spirit and the mission it continues to help us accomplish," said Shufeldt.

During the 124th Fighter Wing's deployment to Southwest Asia, several U.S. flags were flown in honor of each tribe and will also be dedicated and presented.



Special Olympics Idaho

Staff Sgt. Jonathan R. Finer and Staff Sgt. Sterling P. Harris of the 124th Security Forces Squadron participated in the Special Olympics Idaho torch run ceremony at the Idaho Statehouse, Oct. 22, 2020, Boise, Idaho. The Idaho Air National Guard joined Idaho Gov. Brad Little and local law enforcement agencies from around the state of Idaho to celebrate and support Special Olympics Idaho athletes and their message of inclusion for all.



REVEALING THE CHAMPION IN ALL OF US



PETROLEUM, OIL, LUBRICANTS

**“WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR
FORECASTING OVER 2.9 MILLION
GALLONS OF JET FUEL EVERY
YEAR FOR LOCAL AND
TRANSIENT AIRCRAFT.”**

**-SENIOR MASTER SGT. BRIAN HAIN
POL SUPERINTENDENT**

POL is wrapping up a 2-year refurbishment project on its 400,000-gallon fuel storage tanks. The modernized tanks are equipped with new alarmed shutoff sensors and heating elements to prevent freezing. Additional updates included new rail systems with widened stairs, new valves and piping, and fresh paint.



IDNG'S COVID RESPONSE

By: Master Agt. Becky Vanshur

On Nov. 13, 2020, Gov. Brad Little activated 100 members from the Idaho National Guard as cases of COVID-19 elevated throughout the state. For the past several weeks, the Idaho National Guard has partnered with agencies and organizations across Idaho as the battle against COVID-19 continues.

On Dec. 11, 2020, that number was increased to 250 under an authorization pursuant to 23 U.S.C. Section 502(f), which uses a mixture of state and federal resources to fund personnel. Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen are expected to remain on duty through March 2021.

"As medical providers across the state continue to call on the Guard for assistance, this additional authorization provides the Guard with an increased capability to respond to simultaneous short-notice requests," Little said. "With members of the Guard performing these missions, it frees up health-care workers to focus on providing critical patient care."



"WHEN THE IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD IS CALLED UPON, IT'S YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS COMING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITIES."

The activation was the second time Little has called on the Idaho National Guard for additional assistance. In April 2020, Little activated nearly 50 citizen-Soldiers and Airmen for approximately a month to assist at food banks throughout the state as the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic hit Idaho.

Guardsmen are currently stationed at several central district health centers, local hospitals, health-care facilities and medical centers, COVID-19 testing stations, foodbanks and the Lighthouse Rescue Mission, while also partnering with Good Samaritan staff and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

"When the Idaho National Guard is called upon, it's your friends, family and neighbors coming together to support our communities," said Maj. Gen. Michael Garshak, adjutant general of Idaho. "We are all citizens of Idaho, working toward the same goal."

Idaho National Guard leadership recently visited several sites across the state to see how Idaho citizen-Soldiers and Airmen are making an impact throughout the community. Primary Health's CEO, David Peterman, told the Guard's leadership on that visit that since the Idaho National Guard began assisting, Primary Health has completed roughly 15,000 extra COVID-19 tests.

Guardsmen are conducting COVID-19 testing and screening, traffic control, lab work, data entry and facility decontamination and sanitization. Additionally, personnel are helping prepare baskets full of food and other necessities to be delivered to those in need.

"The Idaho National Guard is proud to partner with the incredible staff and leadership of Idaho's health districts and our tribal leadership to build capacity across multiple fronts," said Brig. Gen. Russ Johnson, director of the joint staff. "From COVID testing and screening, to essential distribution of food and daily staples, together we are making a positive impact in the lives of Idaho's Citizens."

**"WITH MEMBERS OF THE
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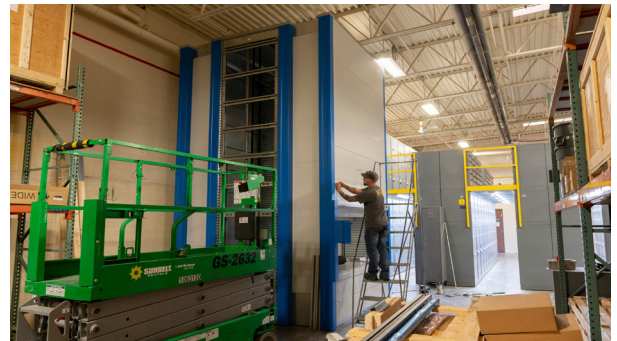




Leadership from the 124th Fighter Wing served a holiday-themed lunch during November UTA, Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, November 8, 2020. Their participation helps boost morale and put emphasis on the holiday through service and Thanksgiving.

LOGISTICS READINESS SQUADRON

LRS is using innovation funds to update its warehouse with a new state-of-the-art vertical shelving unit, which was installed Nov. 2020. The fully automated unit saves both time and manpower, while allowing for more efficient storage. LRS hopes to install more of these units in the future to fully automate the entire warehouse.



124TH OPERATIONS GROUP



Col. Shannon Smith, commander of the 124th Fighter Wing, and Tech. Sgt. Jared Inbody, an engineering technician with the 124th Civil Engineer Squadron, cut a ribbon for the grand opening of the new 124th Operations Group building, Dec. 14, 2020, Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho.



124TH FIGHTER WING CREW CHIEFS

Crew chiefs from the 124th Fighter Wing at Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho, prepare an A-10 Thunderbolt II for a flight by spraying de-icing fluid on the aircraft after the first winter storm of the season covered the aircraft in ice and snow November 8, 2020. The snowstorm gave the Airmen an opportunity to work in inclement weather during their November Unit Training Assembly.



THE 266TH RANS RETURNS FROM SCOTLAND



Airmen of the 266th Range Squadron returned to Boise, Idaho, in November 2020, from a TDY to the United Kingdom for Exercises Joint Warrior and Crimson Warrior. During Exercise Joint Warrior, they operated joint threat emitters to support training of F-35 Lightning II pilots from the Royal Air Force and US Marine Corps. During Exercise Crimson Warrior, they simulated surface to air missiles to help train Royal Air Force F-35 Lightning II and F-15E Strike Eagle pilots. It was the first time the 266th RS had their mobile command unit in a different country than their threat emitter unit.

**"I AM INCREDIBLY PROUD TO SERVE WITH THE AIRMEN OF THE IDANG... THEY ALWAYS ANSWER THE CALL, EVEN IF IT TAKES THEM NEAR THE TOP OF THE WORLD TO SCOTLAND, OUR AIRMEN ARE READY TO GO. IT'S HUMBLING AND AWE INSPIRING."
-BRIG. GEN. TIM DONNELLAN**



IT'S TIME TO LEVEL UP



MONTHLY BEACONS

ARE NOW...



QUARTERLY
BEACONS



124TH IN
124



VIRTUAL
CC CALLS