

The TANKER TIMES

ANNUAL 2020 EDITION

OLD GLORY

A SHARED CALLING

RECRUITING DURING COVID

DEFENDERS - ALWAYS READY



A LOOK BACK AT THE 171ST AIR REFUELING WING



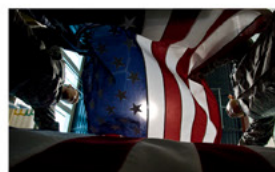
The TANKER TIMES

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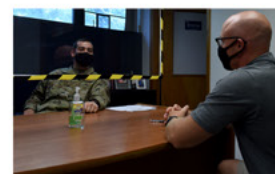
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This special edition of The Tanker Times was created as a year in review product to highlight the stories of the men and women of the 171st Air Refueling Wing and the Pennsylvania National Guard.

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WHAT'S IN A YEAR?

BY CAPT. JODI SNYDER

As a year comes to an end, we often reflect on the previous year's happenings and think about what made that year. Thoughts tend to encompass the highs and lows of events throughout the year.

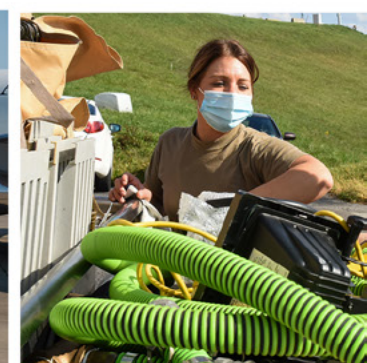
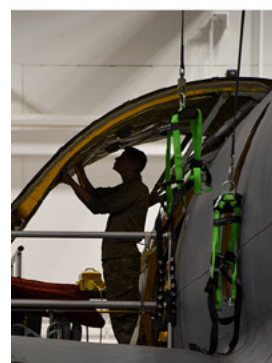
Reflecting on 2020, we all know it was anything but typical. While typical is not the usual descriptor for the work the 171st Air Refueling Wing produces, the impact of COVID-19 provided more obstacles for everyone. But, with hard work and dedication, the wing continued to make significant contributions towards training, homeland response efforts, and overseas deployments.

Training is vital for success. It can be difficult and take long hours, but members of the guard do it with pride. The 171st participated in numerous training activities and exercises throughout the year to ensure preparedness. For example, what may seem like a routine training flight from afar is actually a mission to provide 100 thousand pounds of fuel to a B-1B Lancer. These training activities and others directly inform and provide readiness towards homeland response capabilities. Whether it was working with the Marine Corps to complete emergency medical response training or flying aircraft during Global Thunder 21, an exercise designed to employ global operations in coordination with other combatant commands, the 171st ARW stood ready.

Demonstrating their commitment, guard members continue to make significant homeland response contributions. In addition to completing 3,942 flying hours, other support functions include direct support of COVID-19. The guard distributed 890 million masks, gloves, gowns and other personal protective equipment. At the 171st, the aircrew flight equipment shop, along with other members, made approximately 600 masks in support of the pandemic. Supporting our local communities continues to be a steady focus, but the 171st also contributes to overseas deployments.

Guard members have supported more than 1.1 million overseas deployments since 9/11. The 171st ARW has numerous deployments each year resulting in hundreds of individuals traveling around the world each year. Unexpected events can occur during these deployments, like when crewmembers from the 171st contributed to the rescue of three mariners who went off course and ran out of fuel leaving them stranded on a tiny island south of Guam. Experiences such as this demonstrate the importance of the preparedness of the guard.

This year brought significant challenges to Americans across the globe. As 2020 comes to a close, members of 171st and Air National Guard remain always ready.



Mark A. Goodwill - Commander



TEAM 171st, Thank you for another productive year! During 2020, we have been able to increase the wing's readiness and improve our war fighting capabilities despite all of the obstacles the pandemic has thrown at us. 171st Airmen have successfully deployed to the Pacific, southwest Asia, and Europe. We supported our communities throughout southwest Pennsylvania, and we remain ready to answer the call to serve the nation and the commonwealth. Throughout the year, our base facilities have undergone many construction upgrades. The aircraft hangar project, which is the largest project in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard since 2003, is nearing completion. Our Maintenance Group, Communications Flight and some of our wing staff agencies will now work in a modern, professional workspace for years to come.

Resiliency

Our Resiliency Team has grown this year, and they are ready to support the wing's airmen and their families. Help is always available

to you. We're pleased to share that in the face of this difficult time in our lives, the 171st has never been better equipped than we are today. We have an entire team of helping professionals that are always ready and able to help you—even if it's just to talk. As part of our Integrated Resilience Programs, we have two directors of psychological health— Ms. Julia Catanzarite and Mr. Matt Dalrymple. We have our airman & family readiness program manager—Ms. Deb Krall. This summer we welcomed our new sexual assault response coordinator, Mr. Kirk Simpson, to the wing. Also, Lt. Col. Jonathan Bell is now serving as our full-time wing chaplain.

Mission

The National Guard has a unique dual mission that consists of both federal and state roles. For state missions, the governor, through the state Adjutant General, commands guard forces. The governor can call the National Guard into action during local or statewide emergencies, such as storms, fires, earthquakes or civil disturbances. National Guardsmen have again proven their value to the nation and the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Our members volunteered to support missions to assist long-term care facilities affected by COVID-19. In addition, some of our members were placed on orders to assist with COVID-19 mitigation efforts at the base in order to keep the remaining force focused on readiness and mission. Finally, we received and housed at the wing over 120 Pennsylvania Army Guardsmen who provided civil support to local authorities. In our federal role, we provided 24/7 support of our alert mission.

We deployed a large number of personnel from throughout the wing to the Pacific theater. 171st members deployed to southwest Asia, Europe and many other locations throughout the world in support of our nation's efforts to deter war and protect and secure our nation. We conducted a large scale aircraft generation exercise, which further enhanced our airmen's skills and warfighting capability. As a result of your hard work, we have adapted to and overcome the roadblocks caused by the pandemic and provided tremendous support to the nation's security. Many of our drill status guardsmen are firemen, police officers, doctors, nurses, teachers, corrections officers, and numerous other professions that have been on the front lines during the pandemic. We owe them a profound debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

Promotions

Congratulations to the wing's airmen who have been promoted this year! Your hard work and service has been recognized by your commanders. We look forward to your increased leadership role throughout the wing. I hope these promotions bring new challenges and opportunities to you as you continue to serve in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

Retirements

33 of our fellow airmen have retired this year. I would like to say thank you to these incredible warriors for dedicating so much of their time and effort to the wing over their careers. The profession of arms is very challenging and these men and women have answered our nation and commonwealth's call time after time. We could not have been

successful as a wing without each and every one of these guardsmen. Their families have also endured many sacrifices during their loved one's military career. They, too, served this nation. No guardsmen can be successful without the love and support of their families. Thank you to all our retirees and their families for their service and sacrifice. Remember, you are always a member of Team 171st!

Command Chief Judy McGrath retired this summer concluding a long and distinguished career of service to the nation. It was an honor and privilege to serve with Chief McGrath. Her dedication and support of all 171st airmen will be greatly missed. Our wing's 12th Command Chief, Chief Master Sgt. Chuck Wiley, has done a phenomenal job since taking over the reigns, and I look forward to working with him in the future.

During his radio address to the nation on the evening of June 6, 1944, after the long first day of the Allied invasion of Europe, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called our military forces the "pride of our Nation." I think that fits well with our 171st airmen, the pride of our Nation, the pride of our commonwealth, the pride of our communities and the pride of our families. Please keep our health care professional and front line responders in your thoughts and prayers.

Charles W. Wiley - 12th Command Chief



It has been six months since I have been selected to serve as the 12th Command Chief for the wing. This is both an honor and a privilege. I wish to extend my appreciation to Col. Goodwill and Col. Hyland for demonstrating their confidence in me to serve as the first full-time senior enlisted advisor. I also want to say thank you to my fellow wingmen (both officers and enlisted) who have shown their support in my selection. I would like to thank my wife, Cindy, and my two children, Charles and Madeleine, without them and their support, I wouldn't be where I am today. I owe a lot of my success to all of my mentors and fellow airmen who, over my career, supported me, trusted me, challenged me and gave me the opportunities to grow and develop.

I want the enlisted airmen to know that I have an open door policy! However, I urge you to work any issues through your chain of command first. I believe an important part of taking care of airmen starts with good communication. It is my responsibility to deliver the proper information to my fellow chiefs, 1st Sgts and other senior non-commissioned officers in order for them and our enlisted core to succeed. At the same time, I need to receive true and honest feedback and information from our airmen to ensure we focus on the right

things. I am a firm believer in preparing yourself for the next level. I challenge all airmen to seek out enlisted development opportunities, mentorship and most importantly, complete your military professional education courses. You never know when an opportunity will arise. Be prepared!

Lastly, I know the COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges for us to face. It made us look at our processes and programs differently and create new ones along the way. I want to thank all the airmen of the 171st for being adaptable, ready and resilient during these ever-changing, difficult times. I want every one of our airmen and their families to come out of this pandemic safe and healthy.

Mission:

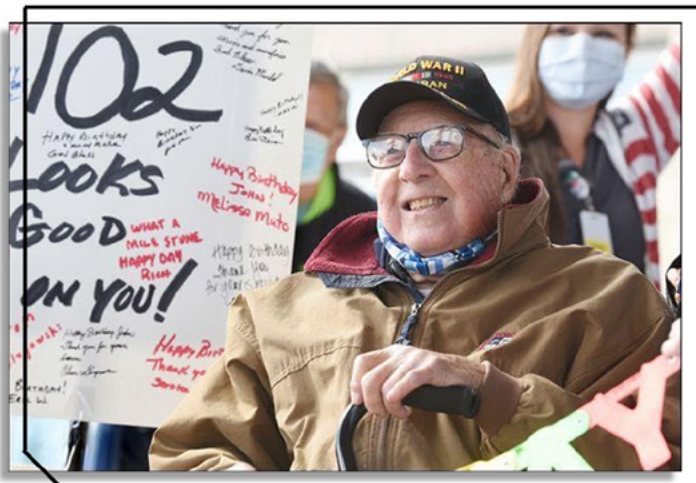
To enable global reach through superior air refueling expertise.
To provide the best mission support in domestic and international operations in the USAF.

Vision:

To be the premier flying wing in the USAF. A unified team of Airmen who empower excellence, embrace innovation and embody the AF Core Values in everything we do.



171ST CELEBRATES WWII VETERAN'S 102ND BIRTHDAY



"We at the 171st are proud to recognize, Lt. Col. (ret) John Mahler, who is part of America's greatest generation."
-Col. Mark Goodwill



BY CAPT. JODI SNYDER

The 171st Air Refueling Wing participated in a celebration honoring a World War II veteran who turned 102 years old on Nov. 12, 2020.

John M. Mahler, a resident of Butler County, is a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel and WWII B-17 bomber pilot. Mahler was surprised with a parade of vehicles consisting of local police and fire departments as well as members of the 171st Air Refueling Wing who greeted him outside the Butler Veteran's Affairs facility. Staff Sgt. James Norman with the 171st Security Forces Squadron drove the police truck that was in the parade.

During World War II, Mahler, who was assigned to the 342nd Bombardment Squadron, flew 38 combat missions. His plane was hit with bullets and shrapnel for all but one of those missions. He survived a mid-air collision and two emergency belly landings. Through it all, Mahler continued to fly and fight for his country.

"It is an honor to help celebrate the birthday of one of America's heroes. We at the 171st are proud to recognize, Lt. Col. (ret) John Mahler, who is part of America's greatest generation," said Col. Mark Goodwill, commander of the 171st ARW.

Mahler is an active veteran who prior to the COVID-19 pandemic visited the Butler Veteran's Affairs Health Care Wellness Center office twice weekly. His favorite pastimes are woodworking, building model airplanes and gardening.

"My first interaction with Mr. Mahler was in November of 2019. There was an announcement that he was having a small birthday party to celebrate his 101st birthday in our wellness center. I decided to stop by and wish him a happy birthday. When I arrived, I didn't think he was there because the room was filled with only employees and some veterans working out. To my surprise, Mr. Mahler was burning off some cake calories on the shoulder machine," said Mark Okeson, a detective with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Police and a retired senior master sergeant from the 171st SFS.

Mahler's eyes lit up as he watched the parade of vehicles pass by. His advice for longevity is eating healthy and staying active.

"I am an active person – I'm on the go all the time. I go to the Wellness Center at the VA twice a week. At my age, if you sit in a chair too long, that's where you are going to stay," said Mahler.

Along with the 171st patrol car were vehicles from the local Army Reserve unit, dozens of emergency and law enforcement vehicles, family, friends, and even American Legion motorcycle riders. Mahler acknowledged and waved to each of the over 50 vehicles.

"It truly is an inspiration to see a man of his caliber put forth his best every day of the week. It's humbling to say the least," said Okeson.

ARMY JOINS AIR FORCE FOR OSHA TRAINING

BY SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS

Soldiers and Airmen in the Pennsylvania National Guard attended an Occupational Safety and Health Administration course hosted at the 171st Air Refueling Wing, Jan. 29-30, 2020, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Eighteen members from the Army National Guard were in attendance in addition to 10 airmen. The goal is to minimize the amount of injuries and accidents by properly informing military members of safety standards. Guardsmen are constantly working towards integrating safety into their daily work centers.

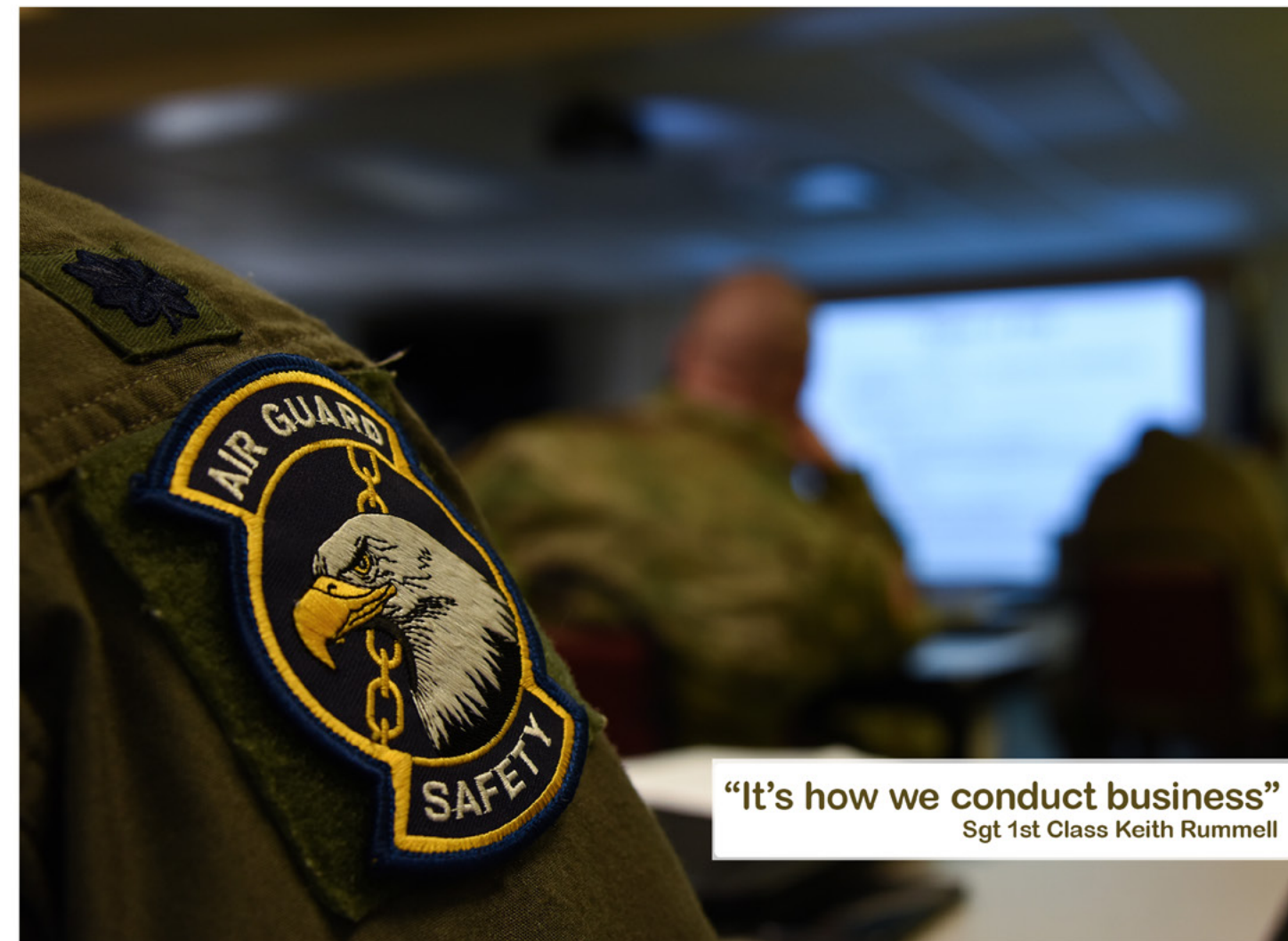
"I now better understand the general job-related health and safety hazards and how we can mitigate future injuries," said 1st Sgt. Roger Nichols, Army National Guard. "The military uses OSHA guidelines for safe working conditions, assuring both our troops and missions are not negatively impacted."

This course was introductory and touched on all aspects of safety in the military. It was taught in 10 hours and was broken into topics of fall protection, egress and fire prevention, electrical

safety, personal protective equipment, hazard communication, machine guarding, blood borne pathogens, health programs and ergonomics. When there are two different standards between the military and OSHA, the most stringent one is adopted and followed.

This was the first course held that the Army and Air National Guard attended together. The Pennsylvania National Guard is hoping to unify the safety standards across both Army and Air. The Air Force has a full-time career field dedicated to safety whereas the Army treats it as a temporary duty for all other specialties except aviation.

"It's how we conduct business," said Sgt. 1st Class Keith Rummell, from the PA National Guard state safety office at Fort Indiantown Gap. "We provide soldiers the training to keep them safe whether on or off duty hoping they take bits and pieces back to co-workers and their home lives to keep everyone safe."



"It's how we conduct business"
Sgt 1st Class Keith Rummell

258TH RAPCON VICTORY



BY SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS

The **258th** Air Traffic Control Squadron's Radar Approach Control (RAPCON) received the D. Ray Hardin Air Traffic Control Facility of the Year award, at the **Air Force level**. The 258th is a geographically separated unit of the 171st Air Refueling Wing and is located at the John P. Murtha Cambria County Airport in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

The award, which is given to an ATC facility that has made notable contributions to the ATC system is judged on a variety of areas ranging from unusual traffic workload to deployments and emergency situations.

The Johnstown RAPCON team had 10 members deployed to Central Command in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. While deployed, they controlled 12 in-flight emergencies helping to save over \$600 million in assets and 51 personnel.

To ensure the safety of flight for countless operations, the team persevered through difficult situations and less than ideal conditions. With a high workload and low manning, the 258th RAPCON strived for excellence regardless of daily stressors.

The 258th ATCS is one of only 10 Air Traffic Control squadrons in the Air National Guard. They have 18 full-time employees in addition to their traditional drill status guardsmen.

"I can't say enough about the teamwork and culture that the RAPCON team built and this award is a testament to what they were able to accomplish," said Capt. Ben Kaufman, 258th Airfield Operations Officer.



“The 258th is a vital part of the 171st ARW. They are true professionals that rise to the occasion when called upon. I believe there is no other Air Traffic Control squadron in the entire Air Force that can perform to the level that the 258th can. I am proud not only to be the group commander of the 258th but to be considered a part of an organization with such amazing men and women.”
Col. James Swanik
171st Operations Group Commander



The 258th Air Traffic Control Squadron is a geographically separated unit of the 171st ARW and is located in the John P. Murtha Cambria County Airport in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Although the 258th only has 80 members, its mission is integral to the successful and safe operations of USAF, Department of Defense, and allied aircraft in the continental U.S. and outside the continental U.S. airfields.





**ALWAYS
READY**



BY TECH. SGT. BRYAN HOOVER

The Pennsylvania National Guard has served, supported and protected American citizens well before we declared our independence. In 1747, nearly 30 years before the declaration was signed, Benjamin Franklin led a group of individuals, which developed into a volunteer militia. The militia consisted of people from small villages, towns and robust cities like Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. During the Civil War, President Lincoln called on these volunteers to fight for the union and guardsmen quickly assembled, earning the nickname “The First Defenders.”

Almost 300 years later, guardsmen are still members of our communities, and when called upon, they answer. They train and prepare and are ready to protect each one of us by stepping forward as an American defender. Today, our nation is defended by over 450,000 guardsmen from all 50 states and U.S. territories that have sworn to defend the constitution of the U.S.

When our nation was attacked on September 11, 2001, guardsmen left their homes to fight against our enemies. Likewise, when COVID-19 began to spread at dangerously high rates, guardsmen were ready to help safeguard their states.

Guardsmen partnered with food banks to help sort, package and distribute food to those impacted by COVID-19. They established field hospitals and testing sites so citizens had immediate access to medical attention. They transported equipment to the

regions that needed it the most. When the world began to shut down, guardsmen stepped up.

Every U.S. state has its own National Guard including the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The National Guard is a combination of both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force. These soldiers and airmen are the only U.S. service members to serve both their state and country.

Since 9/11, the Pennsylvania National Guard has become one of the most deployed in our nation. More than 35,000 Pennsylvania citizen soldiers and citizen airman have deployed worldwide over the past 19 years.

The strength of the National Guard lays in the blending of Air Force, Army and civilian skills. Therefore, the National Guard is one of the most capable and adaptive forces in the world. From “The First Defenders” to today’s guardsmen, the PANG is and always has been ready.

Pennsylvania is a commonwealth of guardians. Guardians that have volunteered to train, prepare and protect because just like you, this is their home. They are guardians that have sworn that they will always be there when called upon because they live here, train here and serve here, in the commonwealth. They have and always will be our nation’s sword and shield, its sentry and avenger. They are guardians of freedom and the American way of life. These Air National Guardsmen and Army National Guardsmen will never falter and they will not fail!

GUARDSMEN QUICKLY
ASSEMBLED, EARNING THE
NICKNAME “THE FIRST
DEFENDERS”





BY SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS

Master Sgt. Bryan Curzi, assigned to the 171st Air Refueling Wing, Pittsburgh, won the 2020 First Sergeant of the Year award for the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. Curzi is the first sergeant for the 171st Medical Group during his traditional drill weekends and is employed full time with the Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

Curzi enlisted in the Air National Guard in 2006 as a crew chief. He was looking for an opportunity to serve his country while maintaining the strong ties he had established in the community; the 171st was the perfect fit.

So far, in his 14 year career Curzi has deployed six times in support of U.S. Central Command and has participated in several security missions in the Indo-Pacific region. He has taken great pride in wearing the uniform since day one. One of his biggest motivators is the camaraderie he feels with his fellow guardsmen.

“Serving alongside my colleagues, though both rewarding and challenging at times makes it all worthwhile,” said Curzi.

What started out as a way to meet Air Force fitness standards turned into a hobby over the years. Being very involved in sports during high school, Curzi constantly looks for new ways to challenge himself. He started lifting weights during technical training and eventually grew an interest in bodybuilding.

Curzi always strives to do the best he can, from making a positive impact on Airmen’s lives to placing second in the Pittsburgh ProAM bodybuilder competition. Though he doesn’t take all the credit, he says his wife is the real rockstar. With two young children at home, he considers family his first priority.

It was just a normal day for the KC-135 Stratotanker crew. A routine air refueling mission? It was a little more than that. On Aug. 17, 2020 the 171st Air Refueling Wing provided 100 thousand pounds of fuel to a B-1B Lancer from Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota.

The tanker from **PITTSBURGH** was the lead jet in a 4-ship formation; the others were from MacDill Air Force Base, Fairchild AFB and Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. Each tanker refueled a Lancer. The bombers were on their way to the East Sea to meet up with the Koku Jieitai or Japan Air Self-Defense Force for routine interoperability training.

While there, they conducted training together that further strengthened the allied partnership. Together, four B-1B Lancers, two B-2 Spirit Stealth Bombers and four F-15C Eagles conducted Bomber Task Force missions within the Indo-Pacific region over the course of 24 hours. This demonstrated the readiness to deliver wide-range support in a moment’s notice. **BY SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS**



171ST TANKER LEADS THE WAY

PUBLIC HEALTH'S MVP

BY TECH. SGT. BRYAN HOOVER

Athletes train their entire lives for a chance to move onto the next level to compete. Each step becomes increasingly more difficult. Football players strive to play in the Superbowl, while hockey players dream of showcasing their talents in the Stanley Cup Finals. This is sports; where a life of hard work can lead to one pivotal moment. Tech. Sgt. Jacob Linsenbigler, a public health technician and non-commissioned officer in charge of communicable disease assigned to the 171st Air Refueling Wing, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, used these examples to explain what the COVID-19 pandemic means to his career field.

Linsenbigler, or LB if you work close with him, is 5 feet 8 inches tall with a medium build and blond hair. He's quick with the jokes and always has the others around him smiling. "At the end of the day, it's just about comfort level," said LB. "Regardless of what rank you are, you want a good team environment. Of course, there are times when you need to be professional, but we all want to be treated like people. It goes a long way when you want to get results out of others."

LB enlisted in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard in 2013 to work in Medical Logistics. After a few years, LB cross-trained into public health after learning about a potential opportunity to work full-time at the wing. As time went on, LB worked his way up the chain in public health and became well known around the installation. He also accepted a six-month active duty tour working as the commander's support staff for the wing. During this time, he worked directly with the wing command staff, group commanders and superintendents. He had a chance to witness operations at the wing from the top down. This provided him with an opportunity to learn about military professionalism, attention to detail and how to develop himself into a valuable member of a team.

He would normally have spent early spring performing tic drags, monitoring food preparation or educating service members about the importance of washing your hands. Unfortunately, things changed dramatically when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania imposed restrictions due to COVID-19. LB found himself going from a typical nine-to-five guy, to a twenty-four hours a day guy. "Overnight, we went from being just a wing asset to more like an Air Force asset." In order to help as many members as possible, he opted to forward his office line directly to his cell phone, so he could continue to support service members during the evening hours.


The pandemic challenged the 171st Public Health office to work outside of their normal environment. The team had to begin communicating regularly with nearby agencies like Allegheny Health Network, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Heritage Valley and the other Department of Defense medical teams within the region to obtain and distribute information. "We were kind of a regional asset working hand-in-hand with the reserves (910th Airlift Wing in Youngstown, Ohio and the 911th Airlift Wing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), our active duty and other guard counterparts," said LB. "We also worked directly with nearby hospitals, VA centers and other local medical facilities sharing information." A beneficial outcome of this are the bridges that were created. "These connections will greatly benefit the wing moving forward. Sometimes, it can be hard for us to get good training with our limited resources so establishing these connections will really help us out." Training with the local medical providers can open the door for recruiting opportunities as well. "Once some of these doctors and nurses get a chance to work with us, they can see for themselves what it's like and hopefully put on a uniform and become a part of our team."

The 171st Medical Group has a small but cohesive full-time team. Maj. Lindsay Jones, physician's assistant-certified and acting public health emergency officer, Capt. Joelle McGrath, public health officer, Tech. Sgt. Megan Messner, NCOIC of public health, Airman 1st Class Madison Posterivo, public health technician, and LB have molded into a strong team supporting one another. Everyone on the team looks out for one another and does what they can to make sure each member of the team feels supported. "We've been really good with that. Maj. Jones and I always end the conversation with 'if there is anything else I can do, let me know'. It's been really supportive," said LB. "The pandemic has helped our team become stronger together."

During a time when there is so much uncertainty, it is nice to have someone like Jacob Linsenbigler around. As things slowly return to normal, it is still very easy to feel down or depressed. The pandemic has a way of doing that to you. Fortunately, LB is gifted in putting a smile on your face. It is one of his best characteristics.

“REGARDLESS OF WHAT RANK YOU ARE, YOU WANT A GOOD TEAM ENVIRONMENT”



A silhouette of a person's head and shoulders is positioned in the foreground, facing right. The background is a large, waving American flag. The stars are visible on the left side, and the red and white stripes fill the rest of the frame. The overall tone is patriotic and solemn.

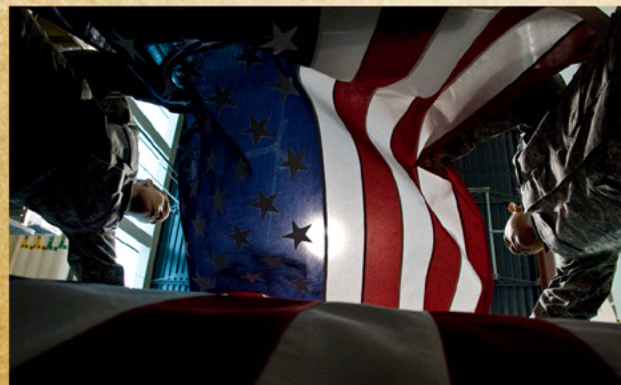
“It flies over the land of the free
and the home of the brave.”

Old Glory

We the People

“...it represents the freedom, dignity, and true meaning of being an American ”

Shipping specialists Staff Sgt. Star Samuels (left) and Tech. Sgt. Willard Rico place a U.S. flag over a casket March 31 during a dry run of shipping process procedures for the dignified transfer of remains at the Charles C. Carson Center for Mortuary Affairs, Dover Air Force Base, Del. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III)



Throughout American history, there has always been a constant. The American flag is a knot in the American legacy that won't come undone. It is worn on the right sleeve of our uniform. It is painted on every military aircraft. It was raised atop Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima and at Ground Zero of the World Trade Center after the attacks of 9/11. It was oil-spattered and saved from the wreckage of the USS Arizona during Pearl Harbor. It was planted on the moon's rocky surface in 1969. It lines the streets of American hometowns and is painted on the cheeks of children for Independence Day. It is the American flag, and it represents the freedom, dignity and true meaning of being an American.

The servicemen and women who take an oath to fight for this country are prepared to give their lives. They swear to protect it and bring honor to its colors. Red symbolizes hardiness and valor while the color white symbolizes purity and innocence. The blue represents vigilance, perseverance and justice. American citizens are willing to stand for the American flag, and all that it represents, time and time again.

To the American service member, the American flag is more than just fabric, it is a connection to one another. It is a symbol of freedom and equal opportunity. It embodies our common mission and history as well as service members' timeless bond. Each of the 13 stripes represents the original colonies that fought for our independence, and the stars depict every one of the 50 United States. Those stars and stripes unite us, as Americans, to protect and defend this nation. Citizens enjoy the freedom and liberty to express their constitutional rights thanks to the sacrifices Americans have made throughout the years.

Often called “Old Glory”, the American flag has come to mean a great deal to Americans. It flies over the land of the free and the home of the brave. It has been there with us through times of war as well as times of great triumph. We carry it with us when we are deployed overseas. It gets tattered and torn during firefights and missions outside the wire, but it is mended by the tired hands that carried it. Some members will carry it for many years, while others' time is cut short. At the end of their days, they return home in a flag-covered casket. The ultimate sacrifice was made, and they are to be honored with the red, white and blue. While the flag rests atop the casket, there can only be one sound, the sound of Taps. The flag is then folded in half, and then again from corner to corner until its final position is that of a triangle. And one final salute, to that American flag.

BY SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS



BY CAPT. JODI SNYDER

The 171st Air Refueling Wing hosted a Red Ribbon educational event for its members to spread awareness of the effects of drug prevention and education with a personal commitment to live a drug-free life on Oct. 25, 2020.

“The 171st ARW is committed to raising drug awareness for airmen and their families. Family support is an integral part of keeping our missions successful. A healthy family unit contributes to our ‘Always Ready’ mindset,” said Col. Mark Goodwill, commander of the 171st.

Red Ribbon week is a nationally recognized campaign that takes place each year from Oct. 23 through Oct. 31. The event is the largest drug abuse prevention campaign in the nation.

The event at the 171st consisted of a drug awareness table and an opportunity for members to pledge to be drug free.

Decorated with red ribbons and this year's theme, “Be Happy. Be Brave. Be Drug Free.” Participants were able to take a selfie with a framed pledge to post on social media with the hashtag **#ANGcares365**.

The booth and photo frame pledges of staying drug free was organized by Kimberly Rose, the base's drug demand reduction program manager.

“I whole-heartily believe in the program and Red Ribbon week,” said Rose. “It's community outreach, which gives us the opportunity to talk about drugs with members and their families.”

Red Ribbon week began in 1985 to raise awareness and remembrance of a Drug Enforcement Administration agent, Enrique Camarena, along with all men and women who gave their lives in support of our nation's struggle against drug abuse. Communities across the country began wearing red ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to raise awareness of drug abuse.

“If I can help one person from ruining his or her life or one family from losing a loved one, that's what is most important to me,” said Rose.

Kim Rose, 171st Air Refueling Wing drug demand reduction program manager, poses for a photo in front of a display during Red Ribbon week Oct. 25, 2020.



TACTICAL COMBAT CASUALTY CARE



BY TECH. SGT. BRYAN HOOVER

Pennsylvania Air National Guardsmen participated in a National Association of Emergency Medical Technician (NAEMT) Tactical Combat Casualty Care for Medical Personnel (TCCC) course at the Marine Corps Reserve Center Aug. 19, 2020, in North Versailles, Pennsylvania.

Conducting this training was necessary for 171st Air Refueling Wing guardsmen to meet the requirements of the USAF Surgeon General. This class held nine guardsmen from the 171st and one member from the 111th Attack Wing.

TCCC was created by the U.S. Department of Defense to teach evidence-based, life-saving techniques and strategies for providing the best trauma care on the battlefield. It is divided into three different sections. The first section is care under fire. This discusses the need for the responder to safely arrive at the patient. The medical provider could be under direct fire and need to return fire or take cover. The responder should check for and attempt to treat life-threatening external wounds if feasible, such as apply a limb-tourniquet or apply an instant clotting agent. Finally, providers must establish an airway so that the patient can breathe.

The second section of TCCC is tactical field care. The responder must establish a security perimeter by removing the patient from immediate life-threatening danger. Then, the responder will conduct a thorough search for injuries and attempt to stabilize the patient.

The final section is tactical evacuation care. The medical provider will establish an evacuation point to remove the patient from the combat zone.

This training will provide service members with a better understanding of providing immediate life-saving medical attention to service members wounded in combat and even non-combatants like civilians who may have been caught in the line of fire. TCCC will replace the existing immediate care program "Self-Aid Buddy Care." SABC was a course utilized by the **USAF** to provide basic life support and limb-saving techniques to help wounded or injured personnel in medical emergencies. TCCC will encompass all of the DoD by providing four tiers of training dependent on the service member's role. Tier one is for all service members, tier two for combat lifesavers, tier three combat medics and hospital corpsmen and tier four is for combat paramedics or medical providers.

LEADERS

WORTH FOLLOWING

BY: TECH. SGT. BRYAN HOOVER

The Pennsylvania Air National Guard 171st Air Refueling Wing plays a vital role in the global Air Force mission. The “Superwing” is home to 16 KC-135 “Stratotanker” aircraft, which support aerial refueling missions almost daily. Behind each aircraft is a force of guardsmen with all kinds of missions besides flying. For example, aircraft maintenance, providing medical support, preparing meals, and maintaining the infrastructure of the installation are just some of the jobs that keep the base running. The Civil Engineer Squadron is the organization responsible for maintaining and updating that infrastructure used by every member within the wing.



Air Force civil engineers have widespread skillsets, which include electrical, power production, plumbing, HVAC, carpentry, surveying and drafting, operations management, and heavy equipment operation, such as moving the earth or doing concrete work. CES is also responsible for snow removal, fire and emergency services as well as all emergency management. To lead this diverse team of careers, the 171st has assigned Maj. Jeremy Ketter as the base civil engineer and Capt. Matthew Saccone as the deputy base civil engineer. The two work together, but their time apart is what has truly set an example worth following.

As the CES commander, Ketter leads 91 guardsmen and nine state employees. The majority of the CES are drill status guardsmen, which means they mostly meet one weekend a month with an additional two weeks a year for training. Ketter serves as the manager behind some very important projects that can span over many years. For example, the base’s hangar that is under construction has been an ongoing project since 2013 due to planning and design. It is the largest PAANG construction project since 2003. The dual aircraft hangar, which was originally built in the early 1950’s, is receiving important, modernization updates resulting in millions of dollars of renovation.

Months into the start of the project, Ketter deployed to the United States Central Command. He continued to advise the management of the hangar project while he was 7,000 miles away. Saccone continued the mission in Pittsburgh and made sure nothing fell to the wayside. Saccone is the primary project manager for the hangar renovations. The two, conjoined buildings received an exterior makeover in 2012, but this project is a complete remodel of the interior. The completed project will bring the nearly 126,000-square-foot facility in compliance with building and life safety codes, which includes adding an elevator to comply with the Architectural Barriers Act.

MAJ. JEREMY KETTER

MAJOR GENERAL L. DEAN FOX AWARD

2018

THIS AWARD RECOGNIZES ONE CES OFFICER PER MAJOR COMMAND BETWEEN THE RANKS OF MAJOR AND COLONEL FOR SUPERIOR JOB PERFORMANCE.

CHIEF MASTER SGT. CHARLES STOYER

MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH A. AHEARN AWARD

2020

THIS AWARD IS ONLY GIVEN TO ONE CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT FOR OUTSTANDING QUALITIES DEMONSTRATED IN SUPPORT OF CE WITH EMPHASIS ON LEADERSHIP AND OVERALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE ENLISTED FORCE



While Saccone managed the CES at the 171st ARW, Ketter managed a very different mission in CENTCOM. He supported 220 airmen spread out across eight countries. A team of 60 Air Force and U.S. Army Engineers completed an \$8 million dollar construction project, which happened to be the Department of Defense's number one infrastructure priority in Afghanistan. Most importantly, while Ketter was the director of operations for the 577th Expeditionary Prime Beef Squadron, the unit kept a \$2.8 billion dollar project in Kuwait on track. The overall scope included four, individual projects to relocate 13 facilities.

Shortly after Ketter's return to the 171st, Saccone deployed to Lithuania with guardsmen from multiple bases. He was responsible for managing the group that constructed an air-to-ground firing range, the Kazys Veverskis Training Area. His efforts were recognized by the commandant of the training area in the form of the Lithuanian Armed Forces Medal for Distinction.



Top: A look from the top of the stairwell during demolition.
Middle: The new concrete steps forms being built.
Bottom: Contractors are pouring concrete into the new stair forms.
U.S. Air National Guard photos by: Tech. Sgt. Jason Nelson



Right: Pennsylvania Air and Army National Guardsmen participate in a 3rd Civil Support Team exercise at the 171st Air Refueling Wing in Coraopolis, Pa. on Sept. 24, 2020. U.S. Air National Guard photos by: Tech. Sgt. Michael Fariss



Bottom: Pennsylvania Air and Army National Guardsmen participate in a 3rd Civil Support Team exercise at the 171st Air Refueling Wing in Coraopolis, Pa. on Sept. 24, 2020. U.S. Air National Guard photos by: Tech. Sgt. Michael Fariss



In 2019, Ketter was awarded the Major General L. Dean Fox Award for his work during the previous year, which included his managerial accomplishments at the 171st and his contributions to the global mission during his deployment to CENTCOM. This award is only given to one CES officer per major command between the ranks of major and colonel, making Ketter the sole recipient during 2019 for the ANG.

It's in the blood of an engineer to get the job done no matter what comes up or who is in charge; however, finishing the job is much easier when the person giving commands is a leader worth following. Fortunately, the 171st has two stellar, award-winning, and highly productive officers leading one of the most diverse squadrons in all of the U.S. Air Force.

Engineers will always tie up their boots, grab their hardhats, and get to work when there is work to do.

STRIPES for EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMERS

The 171st Air Refueling Wing utilized the Stripes for Exceptional Performers (STEP II) program to promote two stellar airmen.

Senior Master Sgt. Darin Beckes and Senior Master Sgt. Andrew Mowry were both promoted to chief master sergeant through STEP II, which is a program designed to promote outstanding and well-deserving airmen one grade over the authorized grade for their position.

“We are proud to promote both of these individuals who have accomplished so much in their decorated careers,” said Col. Mark Goodwill, commander of the 171st ARW.

The STEP II process starts with a nomination from an individual’s immediate supervisor. Next, an endorsement from a unit commander, group commander and wing commander is necessary. The nominated airmen compete in a variety of ways and are rated based on completion of professional military education, mentorship and other contributions before meeting a board of people for an interview. After all the preliminary work of the nomination package is accomplished and approved by the wing, the package is forwarded to the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Joint Force Head Quarters where it undergoes another rigorous review. The nominee competes against peers across the state for the promotion, which includes another interview with a board panel consisting of the state command chief and command chiefs from each wing throughout the state.

“This program is designed for the best of the best. Individuals are competing against top-performers, and imagine sitting in front of all the command chiefs across the state. That’s intense,” said Chief Master Sgt. Charles Wiley, command chief of the 171st ARW.

Beckes has been a member of the 171st ARW for 20 years. He enlisted in active duty Air Force in January 1997 before transferring to the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. Beckes has held several positions within the 171st Fire Emergency Services including driver operator, crew chief, station chief, assistant chief of training, assistant chief of operations, deputy fire chief and most recently, fire chief.

Mowry serves at the 258th Air Traffic Control Squadron in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, a geographically separated unit of the 171st ARW. He enlisted in active duty Air Force in January 1991 before transferring to the Pennsylvania Army National Guard and then to PAANG where he has been a member for 18 years. Mowry has been in charge of several areas including airfield systems work center, ground radar/airfield systems maintenance superintendent, and currently serves as the radar airfield weather systems production manager.

“Both of these individuals did an outstanding job on the boards and representing the pride of our wing,” said Wiley.

BY: CAPT. JODI SNYDER

A look at the STEP II program

TANKER TIMES



BY: CAPT. JODI SNYDER

The 171st Air Refueling Wing created a Diversity Committee in order to promote diversity and inclusion while fostering a supportive environment where difficult conversations can occur to address inequality issues that may arise.

“As military members, **we are all ONE TEAM**, and there is no place for bias and prejudice within our ranks,” said Col. Mark Goodwill, commander of the 171st ARW.

The diversity committee was developed to align with the Air Force’s reinvigorated effort towards creating actionable change to increase racial diversity and ensure equal opportunity throughout the force.

Working alongside already established support functions on the base like equal opportunity, first sergeants and chaplains, the hope is this committee will become a permanent group at the 171st. It is comprised of highly motivated individuals committed to bringing awareness and acting as a resource for members of the wing.

The committee, led by Senior Master Sgt. Jeremy Cameron, Human Resource Advisor at the 171st, asked for volunteers who are interested in tackling issues that prevent unit cohesion.

“Our experience shapes our perspectives, forms our biases, and our points of view. If you have a broader perspective and empathy of where people are coming from, it leads to better understanding and communication,” said Cameron.

The goal of the group is to provide greater opportunity in achieving support surrounding diversity and inclusion.

“In the past we’ve had similar initiatives, but it seems there was nothing specifically geared towards a diversity committee, so in my mind this committee is a way to address the issues the Air Force has been talking about, the current climate in our society, and a way for us at the wing to say where do we start,” said Cameron.

Organizational and cultural shifts that result in lasting change take time to develop. The 171st ARW continues to take steps towards increasing awareness of peoples’ cultural differences and perspectives.

“**We at the 171st embrace diversity and inclusion.** We will continue to promote healthy, open and equitable organizational culture,” said Goodwill.

2020 EDITION

171ST GUARDSMEN TAKE AIM AT NATIONAL TITLE

“ I have never been among better teammates in any other organization...”



BY SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS

BREATHE IN... BREATHE OUT.

Concentrate, aim and slowly squeeze the trigger. The same steps are repeated over and over in order to perfect the craft of a master marksman. Two members from the 171st Air Refueling Wing Security Forces Squadron, Staff Sergeants Robert Lydic and Nick Yackovich, placed in the Governor's Twenty, Aug. 14-15, 2020, at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

The Governor's Twenty is a state level competition held by the National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit, sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Governor, that any Army or Air Force National Guard member can take part in. It is an individual competition testing multiple different weapon systems at varying distances in order to determine the best marksman. The competitors are evaluated on the 400-yard slow fire, combat rifle excellence in competition,

30-yard slow fire and combat pistol excellence in competition. In addition to Lydic and Yackovich placing in the top 20, Airman 1st Class Noah Grice and Tech. Sgt. Shawn McCreary, from the 171st SFS, and Airman 1st Class Zach Paff, 171st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, participated.

The top 20 marksman receive the coveted Governor's Twenty tab to wear on their uniform. This year, of those top 20, **four of them were Air National Guard members.**

After having competed as individuals, National Guard members take part in the Adjutant General's Combined Arms Match. This is a team competition however, made up of four members from the same unit. In addition to shooting the same events as the Governor's Twenty, they also shoot the

Bianchi Battle and the General George Patton Team Pistol match. Both involve a lot of coordination, communication and teamwork. The team from the 171st ARW, made up of Lydic, Yackovich, McCreary, and Master Sgt. Scott Shay, from the 171st Medical Group, **placed first in the Combined Arms Team Aggregate.**

Once the results are final from the Governor's Twenty and the TAG Match, the State Marksmanship coordinator invites the top 15 from each to move forward and participate in a selection trial to be picked for the Marksmanship Advisory Council Region match. The MAC is put on by the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center and is separated into seven regions, with Pennsylvania being a part of Region 2. Three members from the 171st were sent to compete, Yackovich, McCreary, and Master Sgt.

Eric Moskal, from the 171st SFS. **Together they placed first in the team pistol event** and third in the team rifle event.

"I have never been among better teammates in any other organization," said Yackovich about the MAC. "We challenge each other to become better in every match and lift one another up when we fall short of our mark."

The base marksmanship team is open to anyone who has a current expert qualification on either weapon, M4 carbine or M9 pistol. If interested, reach out to Staff Sgt. Lydic, robert.lydic@us.af.mil or Staff Sgt. Yackovich, nicholas.yackovich@us.af.mil.



C O R O N A V I R U S

PUBLIC HEALTH TEAM ADJUSTS TO COVID-19

BY SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS

Everyone has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in one way or another, big or small. For the 171st Medical Group's Public Health Office, it has been a whirlwind. Transitioning from having one full time member to providing 24/7 phone support is just one of the changes they've had to adjust to.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Health office has been the epicenter for medical screening, referrals, quarantine and restriction of movement recommendations, pre- and post-activation medical processing and on-going follow-up of members reporting COVID-19 symptoms or exposures," said Maj. Lindsay Jones, public health emergency officer.

All of the additional duties the members of public health office are doing in response to the pandemic are on top of their regular day-to-day tasks such as deployment processing, food safety and occupational health physicals.

"Our biggest adjustment would be the stoppage of patient care," said Tech. Sgt. Jacob Linsenbigler, Public Health Technician. "Pre-COVID, we would allow walk-ins and have office hours for members who needed to complete medical requirements. Now, we have gone to a scheduling-based patient care approach."

They have to document all after hours calls relating to COVID-19 and follow-up with individuals currently being tracked for exposure or illness. These seemingly simple tasks are part of what keep the members of the 171st ARW up and running. Without being cautious and knowledgeable about the risks of COVID-19 the base wouldn't be able to continue with their essential missions.

Public health has a yearly requirement to complete a Public Health Emergency Exercise, with the outbreak of COVID-19 they have been able to put their previous plan into action in a real world emergency. In addition to testing its effectiveness, the members of public health can make necessary changes for future pandemics.

The Public Health team has created networks of communication not just with county and civilian entities but with surrounding Air Force installations to stay current on COVID-19 statistics as well as coordinating proper emergency responses.

Everyone is adjusting to a new normal since the outbreak of COVID-19, and the 171st Public Health team is there to help.

Over the course of a couple months, the Aircrew Flight Equipment shop along with additional volunteers across the 171st Air Refueling Wing made approximately 600 masks in support of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was because of an initial request to equip the bases' Fatality Search and Recovery Team members who were on stand-by to deploy that the AFE shop began making masks. The FSRT got sent to Brighton Rehabilitation and Wellness Center, Beaver, Pennsylvania, to assist with the COVID-19 outbreak. They also provided the masks to the 171st essential workers and Army National Guard members.

They used their medium weight sewing machines that typically maintain and repair operational aircraft equipment to sew the masks. The AFE shop typically work on life rafts, cargo seats, flight clothing and protective covering for equipment.

Some masks were made from old uniform items while others used donated materials. The uniforms were washed and only the backs were used.

Other cotton material that would normally be used for seat covers was used as well as unopened t-shirts.

It was a team effort to enable guardsmen to continue completing the regular mission by utilizing preexisting training and equipment.

AFE MASKED UP

BY SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS



RECRUITING DURING COVID

BY STAFF SGT. KYLE BROOKS

Traditionally, the age-old custom of military recruiting has required going into a recruiting station, shaking the hand of your recruiter, attending MEPS, and raising your right hand for the oath of enlistment. But, the military recruiting process, much like all other aspects of normal operations, has been forced to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's how the men and women of the 171st recruiting team are working to overcome this challenge.

In response to COVID-19, the 171st Air Refueling Wing implemented stringent safety and health protocols including operating under mission essential personnel, limiting base access, and social distancing measures. All of which have presented unique challenges for recruiting.

Another large piece of the recruiting effort relies heavily on in-person gatherings such as high schools or community events. Most of which have been canceled until further notice due to COVID-19.

"All of the events got canceled and that's our bread and butter with getting out and contacting folks," said Tech. Sgt. Alex Wagner, production recruiter with the 171st recruiting office.

"Our challenge is that our whole approach is being oriented in the community and being out and about and meeting people," said Wagner "Which is essentially the one thing you weren't allowed to do during all this, so we had to be resourceful and work as a team to figure out unique ways to still get our job done."

To overcome this challenge, the focus of the recruiting team has been to use the advantage of a social media presence to get information safely to the masses. One way they have done this is by advertising the recent enlistments during the pandemic so members of the community can see the 171st is still open and operational.

"We have focused our efforts on social media and getting very active on the states recruiting website, posting a lot of materials and informative information as well as advertising our enlistments," said Master Sgt. Lindsey Brent, recruiting flight chief with the 171st recruiting office.

Take a look at the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Recruiting Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PAANGrecruiting/

To meet the virtual demand, 171st recruiters have been in touch with local chambers of commerce to coordinate participation in recruiting at virtual job fairs.

"So far I've been in contact with three local chambers of

commerce and we're working on jumping into more events with them, as well as seeing who's still functioning, how they're functioning and how we can be a part of it," said Wagner.

In the early stages of the pandemic, the 171st recruiting team switched to a teleworking or remote environment. Now, the team has resumed daily staffing on base with shift rotations.

"Fortunately for us, a huge percentage of our job responsibilities were fully functional from a remote environment, except for losing that face-to-face interaction with the applicants," said Brent.

To conduct applicant interviews safely, recruiters have shifted their efforts to virtual interviews, phone calls, and emails.

Another big challenge for the recruiting team has been MEPS or Military Entrance Processing Station. MEPS closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, causing a standstill on pre-qualification for military applicants for approximately eight weeks. Now that MEPS has reopened, recruiters have had to work diligently to keep compliance with a 14-day mandatory self-quarantine for applicants before being sent to MEPS.

"A good majority of the things we use to get applicants to MEPS requires a face to face visit, and we couldn't have them on the installation," said Wagner.

Even with lifting restrictions and some facilities reopening, such as MEPS, limitations are still in place for occupancies, scheduling, and hours. Recruiters must have precise coordination and teamwork to meet the demands to get applicants onboard.

"I anticipate seeing an influx of folks,

especially those that have separated previously and see the benefit in that additional income and those additional benefits," said Brent.

For approximately 4,000 members, the Pennsylvania Air National Guard provides a steady paycheck, access to low-cost health insurance, and a military retirement plan.

Flexibility and productivity have been at the forefront of recruiting during the pandemic. With many unknowns about future recruiting events at schools or other gatherings, the team has been in constant communication with state and local updates.

If you or someone you know is interested in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, get in touch with the 171st recruiting team at 412-776-7636 or by email at usaf.pa.171-arw.list.recruiting@mail.mil





SAFETY

INNOVATES AND ADAPTS TO COVID

BY SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS

The Wing Safety Office at the 171st Air Refueling Wing, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has shifted their human interaction filled work day to a socially distanced and virtual presence. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have fine-tuned their sharepoint site, provided vital insight to the quick response “Tiger Team,” and gone to a two shift schedule for more hourly safety coverage.

The safety team had to transition to a mostly online approach during the pandemic. In order to keep guardsmen up to date on their required training, they made it all available on their sharepoint site, including privileged training, motorcycle training and mishap response plan training. COVID directly impacted the annual safety down day and resulted in the cancellation of the keynote speaker. However through the use of technology, they were still able to ensure there was a virtual safety down day available via the sharepoint site.

Transitioning to providing virtual safety training, instead of in-person classes, has been made possible through the use of the safety SharePoint site. The site was recently recognized by the Air National Guard Safety office as a “shining example” of a comprehensive safety sharepoint site. They made it user friendly with all aspects of the wing safety programs accessible 24/7.

“WE ARE STRIVING FOR CONTINUAL EXCELLENCE FOR OUR SAFETY PROGRAMS”



David Sparkman, occupational safety manager, inspects the track at the 171st Air Refueling Wing July 9, 2020, Pittsburgh, Pa. Sparkman is looking for any issues with the track that would be a safety violation.

At the very beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, the base put together a quick reaction team, **“Tiger Team,”** that was made up of subject matter experts to provide ideas on

how to keep the members healthy and safe. One key contribution from the safety office was ensuring the safe installation of the plexiglass shields that mission essential personnel who needed to continue with face to face contact could have at their desks. They ensured the air force instruction and occupational safety and health administration regulations were adhered to.

The safety team switched to a two shift work-week. The idea was to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out for all 171st ARW members, but it also guaranteed there was no absence of a safety member during wing work hours.

“We in the wing safety office are committed to ensuring not only a safe working environment for the members of the 171st ARW, but also are striving for continual excellence for our safety programs,” said Lt. Col. Ian Hurbanek, 171st ARW chief of safety.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR



BY STAFF SGT. KYLE BROOKS

It's not always a normal day at the 171st Air Refueling Wing, anticipation fills the air as military members, bystanders, federal authorities and media alike wait for the arrival of one of the most recognizable symbols of the United States. However, an event requiring rigorous planning and participation from hundreds of people for days can be over in merely a few hours.

The 171st has capped off another busy year of supporting the presidential aircraft. Many may not know the full extent of logistics and planning needed to seamlessly support the Air Force One mission, so we talked to the office responsible for coordinating it all, the 171st Logistics Readiness Squadron, Plans and Integration Office.

In 2020, the 171st “DV team” supported six visits from Air Force One carrying the President of the United States and Vice President of the United States totalling 12 aircraft. Master Sgt. Heather Helsel, a logistics planner with the 171st LRS, has been involved in supporting the Air Force One mission for the past five years. Helsel recently transitioned as the lead Presidential Support Liaison for the wing and supported the very busy presidential mission.

“It's indescribable, you put so much work in, it's just amazing,” Helsel recalled when asked how coordinating a successful mission makes her feel.

The 171st DV team may have as much as a week or as little as a few days'

notice to successfully plan and execute an Air Force One support mission. This is no little task. The DV team has to hit the ground running once notice is received of a visit. The team is virtually on call 24/7 until the visit is completed, including nights, weekends and holidays.

“It (the DV team) almost touches every section in the wing when there's a visit,” said Helsel.

Planning involves coordination from sections inside the 171st and outside agencies such as the United States Secret Service and the White House. Each party has a slightly different set of priorities and agenda requiring them to work together but also trust each other to accomplish the task properly.

Internally at the 171st, the LRS DV Team coordinates with all major groups on base. They require additional help from specific sections like Security Forces, Petroleum Oil and Lubricant, Aircraft Maintenance, Vehicle Transportation, Air Transportation, Airfield Flight Equipment and Public Affairs. Each section is vital to achieving a successful mission.

“The biggest challenge is getting all the entities with different views and ideas on the same page,” said Helsel.

Although this may be a challenge, relationships and camaraderie are built between agencies that work to meet the synergistic goal of a successful visit.

“The Secret Service and White House team are always professional and personable, they are just wonderful to work with,” said Helsel “Without the cooperation of all the other sections involved, these (visits) would never go off smoothly”.

Helsel recalls one memorable visit on Halloween this year, while families were participating in Halloween traditions, the DV Team oversaw coordination for 24-hours with multiple aircraft. Air Force One arrived with three accompanying V22-Osprey, two VH-60 White Hawks from Marine One and a Gulfstream Aircraft. In addition to the visit taking place on a weekend, this mission happened three days before the presidential election while the entire nation was watching the President's every move. The demands of the DV team were even more stressful than usual that particular visit.

“Every visit has its own challenges, every visit is different,” said Helsel. “You have to be able to adapt very quickly”.

It's thanks to the tireless efforts, planning and coordination from guardsmen with the 171st LRS DV team that made all this possible.

“It's a really great feeling when you see the jet finally take off,” said Helsel. “Everyone kind of high-fives and celebrates”.

At the Pennsylvania Air National Guard's 171st Air Refueling Wing, a long history of service among families is interwoven into the daily life of the unit's culture and mission.

"The 171st has been built and sustained by the numerous families that have chosen to call the 171st their 'other home.' We have everything from husband and wife teams to aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters and cousins in the unit," said Col. Raymond Hyland Jr., vice commander of the 171st ARW. "The pride they have in their family members translates to pride in the 171st and we are better because of it."

One of these military families is the Hutsler Family, which began with the enlistment of the father who then positively influenced his children's lives with his military service. The first of his children to also join the military were his twin daughters, followed by his son, another daughter and lastly, his wife.

For 1st Lt. Brittany Stephenson, formerly 1st Lt. Hutsler and the youngest of the family, the 171st ARW is a place that was an integral part of her childhood.

"I've been coming to the base since take your child to work day," said Stephenson.

Fond memories of spending time with a parent at work is special, but one might wonder what kind of pressure is placed on a child to also join the military when growing up in a military household. Capt. Gary Hustler Jr. reports he did not feel pressured at all. He just thought having a dad coming home from work in a military uniform was a cool part of his childhood.

"The stories he would tell and seeing my dad take care of other people is why I wanted to do it. I wanted to be able to help other people," said Gary Hutsler.

Beyond serving to help others, there is also a drive for many service members to have a positive influence, which is how Maj. Alecia Hutsler explained her call to service. Hutsler and her twin sister, who is now out of the service, enlisted together right out of high school when they were 18 years old and describes her call to her service as a realization.

"A realization that you're not the most important thing in the world. There are more important things out there and you can have an impact in a positive manner. It's something we grew up with," said Alecia Hutsler.

Growing up in a household filled with military service must have some type of effect beyond the drive to a call of duty. "We grew up being kids but also knowing what's important. We grew up really knowing how to respect people and each other and striving for more," said Stephenson.

The list of family members serving in the military for the Hutsler family does not stop there. Three of the siblings' spouses are serving or have served as well as their uncles. These siblings' mother, Maj. Pauline Hutsler also joined the unit, but she was the last of the family to join the service.

"I always felt like I needed to be the one that stayed behind and hold down the fort while everyone else got to go and do what they wanted, which was great, but then there was that part of me that thought 'oh my gosh' I wish I could do that too," said Pauline Hutsler.

Having family in the unit is not the only thing that makes the guard so appealing. "You have people who watch you grow up as a child and now you work with them. Being in the guard you have more than just your family that are looking out for you," said Stephenson.

The family atmosphere the guard promotes creates a cohesive environment filled with teamwork. Although helping and supporting people through service is an important part of joining the military for many service members, it's also about the willingness to sacrifice.

"You do have to sacrifice when you're in the military. That's just what happens," said Alecia Hutsler.

Sacrifice is something all military members do. It is in the history of guardsmen since early days with a legacy of valor and a history of honor. But we do not accomplish this alone. It is done with the support of community members like friends and neighbors but most importantly, family.



A Shared Calling

BY:
Capt. Jodi Snyder

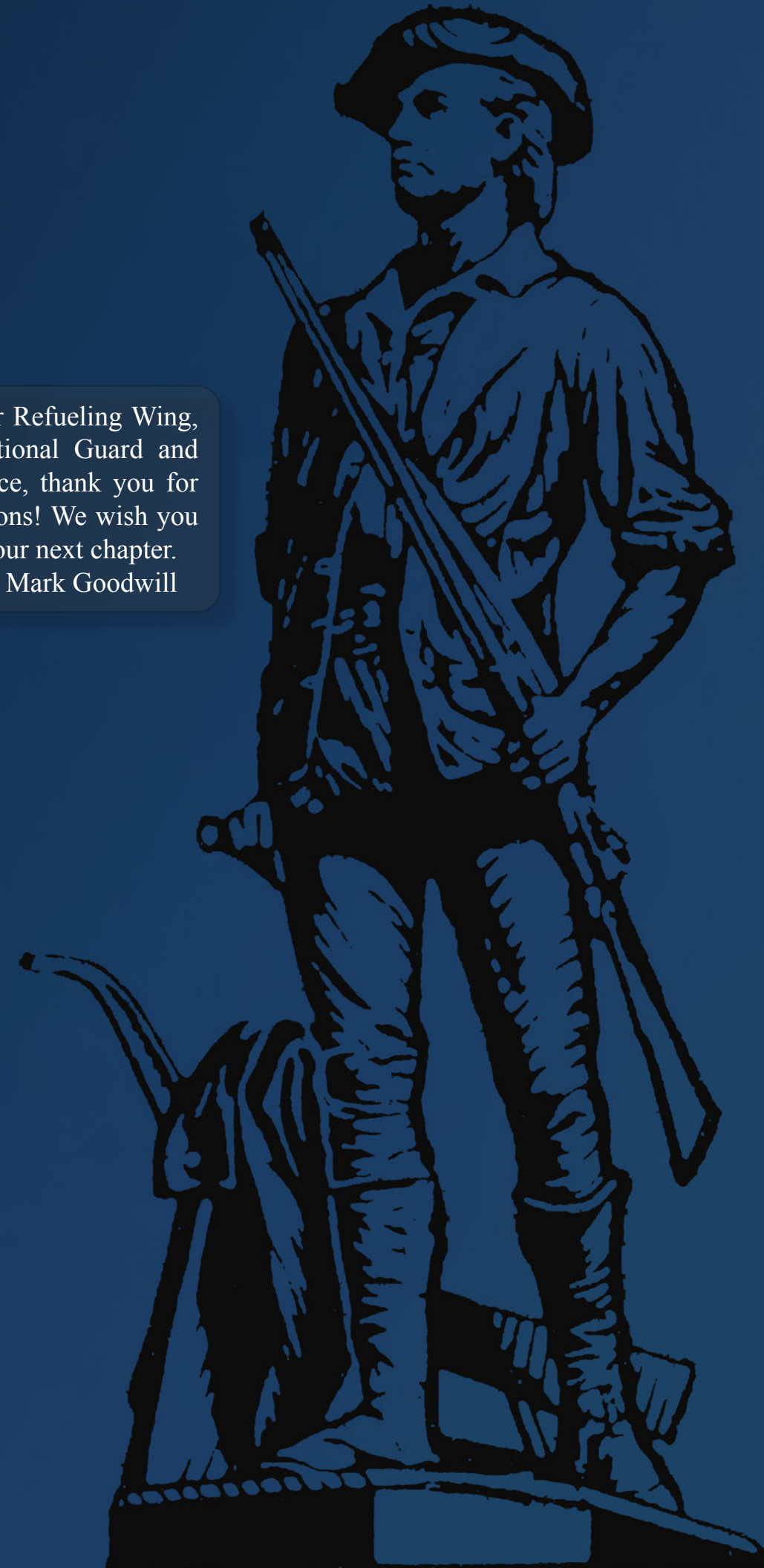
PROMOTIONS

BYERLY, JESSE EDWARD ART	Amn	POWELL, NICHOLAS	SrA	CIARAMELLA, JOSEPH JOHN JR	TSgt	VARGO, JOSHUA J	MSgt
IRWIN, SEPTEMBER ALEAH	Amn	RODEN, SEAN	SrA	ELDER, BENJAMIN P	TSgt	WHITEHAIR, ARIANA MARIE	MSgt
LARGE, CARLYN JOY	Amn	ROVDER, JACOB WILLIAM	SrA	GILLAM, BRYAN DANIEL	TSgt	WILLIAMS, KREIG A	MSgt
RISHER, CHRISTOPHER JOSEPH	Amn	RUSSELL, RASHAWN DUANE	SrA	GRANT, GARRETT F	TSgt	BEVERIDGE, ROBERT W	SMSgt
THOMAS, KAITLYN NICOLE	Amn	SCHNELBACH, JACOB	SrA	GREENE, TYLER R	TSgt	BRENNAN, DANIEL J	SMSgt
ABRAHAM, TIMOTHY ALAN	AIC	SCHON, ANDREW THOMAS	SrA	HATCHER, CALVIN J	TSgt	HRITZ, RICHARD W	SMSgt
AKINTOLA, OLUWTOBILOBA	AIC	SHAFFER, VICTORIA MARIE	SrA	HOOVER, BRYAN CHRISTOPHER	TSgt	LONG, WILLIAM F	SMSgt
BEAM, JUSTIN ROBERT	AIC	SWANSON, GARRETT JAMES	SrA	HROBLAK, BRETT DAVID	TSgt	MORGAN, JOHN M	SMSgt
BISH, FALLON ABIGAIL	AIC	UPP, ALEXANDER CHARLES	SrA	JIMENEZ, NESTOR IVAN	TSgt	SCHANCK, MICHAEL G	SMSgt
CAMPBELL, MORGAN RAE	AIC	URBAN, MADELEINE MARIE	SrA	KLECK, STEPHEN B	TSgt	SHANNON, GARY L	SMSgt
EVANS, ELIJAH NEHEMIAH	AIC	WAIGAND, MICHAEL GEORGE	SrA	KNUPP, KATIE L	TSgt	SPARKMAN, DAVID C	SMSgt
FELIX, MATTHEW RYAN	AIC	WILSON, RONALD LOUIS JR	SrA	KORAIDO, THOMAS M	TSgt	BECKES, DARIN G	CMSgt
HETRICK, CALVIN D	AIC	WOCKENFUSS, ZOE MARIE	SrA	LILLY, ADAM B	TSgt	COSTOLO, RICHARD T	CMSgt
IRWIN, NATHAN ROY	AIC	ANTIS, MATTHEW J	SSgt	LOWMASTER, LEE TYLER	TSgt	EVERETTS, JASON A	CMSgt
KETTER, KIERSTEN LEE	AIC	BLAKER, ROBERT EDGAR	SSgt	MARTIN, MICHAEL H	TSgt	MADER, WILLIAM J JR	CMSgt
MASNERI, THERESA MARIE	AIC	BOGASKI, COREY TYLER	SSgt	MCAFOOSE, MYKE MARTIN	TSgt	MOWRY, ANDREW W	CMSgt
MOLINARO, DOMINIC MARTIN	AIC	BOLIND, DAVID LAWRENCE	SSgt	MCMULLEN, PATRICK J	TSgt	PERKINS, YALE D II	CMSgt
NEYMAN, PAYTON NELSON	AIC	BRALEY, ZACHARY ALLEN	SSgt	MORAN, VICTORIA M	TSgt	RYAN, ALBERT A	CMSgt
SCARSELLA, REBECCA	AIC	CARVLIN, ERIC P	SSgt	NUTTER, ERIC J	TSgt	EDSALL, HEATHER MICHELE	2nd Lt
SZUMINSKY, SADIE LOUISE	AIC	CHAPPELL, FRANK RUBEN	SSgt	PARFITT, JOSHUA ROBERT	TSgt	HANEY, JACK G	2nd Lt
VAUGHAN, ALEXANDER	AIC	CLAURE, CHRISTOPHER	SSgt	PORTER, NATHAN WILLIAM	TSgt	MALONEY, THOMAS J	2nd Lt
WAREHAM, HANNAH	AIC	DANFORTH, COLE MARTIN	SSgt	PTASZKIEWICZ, JOSEPH AARON	TSgt	WARD, HEATHER MICHELE	2nd Lt
WILKINSON, ALEXANDER	AIC	DOWNEY, LEE W JR	SSgt	SEKELY, NATHAN M	TSgt	WEST, BRADFORD J	2nd Lt
AGNEW, NOAH ORRIN	SrA	DUBINA, NICHOLAS KALAN	SSgt	SHAW, RYAN M	TSgt	BOWSER, TOBIAS J	1st Lt
BOWSER, RONALD LEVI CHOI	SrA	GALL, SHAWN P	SSgt	SHAY, LINDSEY RAE	TSgt	BOYD, MICHAEL W	1st Lt
BUCKNER, EMMA KATHRYN	SrA	GARVEY, CALEB L	SSgt	SNYDER, MICHAEL A	TSgt	DIFRISCHIA, ALLEN F	1st Lt
CECOTTI, THEODORE REDSHAW	SrA	HARHAI, JOSHUA MICHAEL	SSgt	THRONE, ASHLEY NICOLE	TSgt	ENGASSER, KYLE CLIFFORD	1st Lt
CERMINARA, CODY NICHOLAS	SrA	HAZEL, KASSIDY CAROLINE	SSgt	TOY, AARON JOSEPH	TSgt	KNORR, DONALD LESTER III	1st Lt
CHARLIER, JUSTIN DAVID	SrA	HUBBELL, CHASE CLINTON	SSgt	ZAJDEL, MATTHEW M	TSgt	MALL, KEVIN LOUIS	1st Lt
CZERNIAK, ADAM NEIL	SrA	JACOBS, FAITH M	SSgt	ALBERTSON, JACOB M	MSgt	MESINERE, MICHAEL S	1st Lt
FLEMING, RACHEL ELAINE	SrA	JOHNSON, CLAY B	SSgt	ANDREASSI, ALEXANDER	MSgt	MORETTI, LISA F	1st Lt
FLOWERS, DAWSON ELIJAH	SrA	KAPELEWSKI, PHILLIP JOHN	SSgt	BAGLEY, JOSHUA ALLEN	MSgt	PREFFER, RALPH E III	1st Lt
FRITZ, ALEXANDER JOSEPH	SrA	KISS, JACOB D	SSgt	BLACK, KEITH M	MSgt	REESE, CALEIGH L	1st Lt
GARBINI, ALEXANDER DOMENIC	SrA	KOLAR, SCOTT JOHN JR	SSgt	BLINKEY, JUSTIN D	MSgt	SAHD, STEVEN W	1st Lt
GLESSNER, KATLYN RENEE	SrA	KOZIKOWSKI, SHANNON L	SSgt	BRANER, JOSEPH R	MSgt	SMITH, ALEXIS R	1st Lt
GREGOR, ROBERT JOHN III	SrA	KUSHNIRENKO, DEANNA	SSgt	BROGE, RICHARD W	MSgt	STEPHENSON, BRITTANY P	1st Lt
HAMILTON, ALAYNA LEIGH	SrA	LEIBOWITZ, JOSEPH M	SSgt	DAVIS, BILLY R	MSgt	TRAUTMAN, TAYLOR N	1st Lt
HOWARD, OLIVIA NICOLLE	SrA	LOGAN, MORGAN J	SSgt	DAVIS, JUSTIN E	MSgt	VEGA, DEMETRIO V JR	1st Lt
KARPINSKY, NATALIE LAUREN	SrA	LOWSTETTER, JACOB CARL	SSgt	DEEMS, RYAN JAY	MSgt	COLON, JEFFREY ANDREW	Capt
KIRKPATRICK, SHANNON	SrA	MALONEY, JOHANNA P	SSgt	HARRIS, NIKI SHAUNTA	MSgt	GAJEWSKI, JUSTIN MICHAEL	Capt
LAUDERBAUGH, CHARLES EDWIN	SrA	MILLER, ALEXANDER C	SSgt	HEWITT, MICHAEL T	MSgt	GARDNER, MICHAEL DAVID	Capt
LYNCH, MARISA LEE	SrA	MOELLER, JONATHAN C	SSgt	HIRLEHEY, MEGAN S	MSgt	KELLY, ERIN NMN	Capt
LYNCH, MICHAEL CHAD	SrA	PHELPS, ADAM MICHAEL	SSgt	KOVACIC, JOHN A JR	MSgt	KISTLER, RAYMOND MATTHEW	Capt
MAGLICCO, WILLIAM JOSEPH III	SrA	PREFFER, CHRISTOPHER R	SSgt	LARSON, ERIK S	MSgt	LERDA, JOHN EDWARD	Capt
MANUEL, NICHOLAS JOHN	SrA	PREST, BRANDON MICHAEL	SSgt	LIEBERUM, NATHANIEL S	MSgt	LIMINA, MATTHEW R	Capt
MARSH, JARED JAMES	SrA	RATCLIFF, TAYLOR ALEXIS	SSgt	LUGO, JANETT	MSgt	MCGRATH, JOELLE M	Capt
MARTIN, MICHAEL WARREN JR	SrA	RICHER, VICTORIA M	SSgt	MAIURE, ALPHONSUS P JR	MSgt	SNYDER, ROBERT CHARLES	Capt
MCCOY, DANIEL MOYER	SrA	ROELL, MARK BERNARD	SSgt	MCCOY, MORGAN L	MSgt	SPRAGUE, ALLEN D	Capt
MCQUAIDE, DANIEL PATRICK	SrA	SIWULA, MICHAEL THOMAS	SSgt	RISHEL, SHANE A	MSgt	WARACK, MARK CHRISTIAN	Capt
MEANS, KACIE DORISE	SrA	TRUNZO, ZACHARY COLE	SSgt	RUMBAUGH, KATJIE R	MSgt	SCHOTT, TY B	Maj
MUNIZ VILLALON, GASPAR JOSE	SrA	ZABELSKY, ETHAN MAREC	SSgt	SHAPIRO, WILLIAM M	MSgt	CASTONGUAY, DERYCK ROBERT	Lt Col
PAES, ALEXANDRA LEA	SrA	AXTON, JEFFREY D	TSgt	SHAWLEY, JENNIFER A	MSgt	COSNEK, DAVID A JR	Lt Col
PANTUSO, TANNER LAVELL	SrA	BINEGAR, ANDREW D	TSgt	SWOGGER, RONALD	MSgt	SCHAPPERT, ANDREW A	Lt Col
PENN, GARRETT DALE	SrA	BRONDER, SCOTT M	TSgt	SZALLAR, PAUL M	MSgt	STAAB, LEE A II	Lt Col
PFROGNER, RYAN JACOB	SrA	BURGESON, MAURA C	TSgt	THEOBALD, ANDREW D	MSgt		
PHINNEY, MARIEL LEE	SrA	CAMERON, EVAN JACOB	TSgt	TOMES, KATHERINE B	MSgt		

RETIREMENTS

1/4/2020	CMSGT GERALD LEVATO
1/31/2020	TSGT CHARLES CARR
1/31/2020	MAJ FRANK SEMPLE
2/18/2020	MSGT BRIAN BALL
3/2/2020	TSGT BRIAN FINNERTY
3/27/2020	MSGT DANIEL PARISI
4/01/2020	TSGT ALAN BRIGHT
5/6/2020	CMSGT RICHARD DILLAMAN
5/15/2020	SMSGT SEAN BUZZARD
6/1/2020	LT COL WILLIAM SCHENK
7/1/2020	LT COL JASON LUHN
7/10/2020	SMSGT ANTHONY ABATE
7/14/2020	MSGT JACK WALTERS
7/26/2020	CMSGT JUDITH MCGRATH
7/31/2020	TSGT RONALD SCHWENNING
7/31/2020	MSGT MICHAEL BORDONARO
8/1/2020	CMSGT WILLIAM SCHULTZ
8/1/2020	SMSGT KIMBERLY ROSE
8/1/2020	MSGT PATRICK SHARKEY
8/9/2020	TSGT CHAD PARKER
8/10/2020	MSGT JASON MILLER
8/21/2020	MR. DANIEL KREMPASKY
8/22/2020	TSGT CHRISTINE KINZEL
8/28/2020	MR. ROBERT BRINDZA
8/31/2020	MSGT CHRISTOPHER EBERT
8/31/2020	MAJ ALBERT HIBPSHMAN
9/1/2020	MSGT CURTIS ARMSTRONG
9/2/2020	TSGT MAUREEN PRICE
10/1/2020	MSGT DAVID BRINK
11/5/2020	SMSGT BRIAN KADLECIC
12/1/2020	SMSGT AMANDA GALVAN
12/9/2020	MAJ JASON POTTLE
12/20/2020	SMSGT ALAN SMITH
12/31/2020	TSGT THOMAS SMITH
12/31/2020	SMSGT MICHAEL TURK
12/31/2020	MSGT RAYMOND BIDDLE
12/31/2020	MSGT DAVID MARTIN

On behalf of the 171st Air Refueling Wing,
the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and
the United States Air Force, thank you for
your service. Congratulations! We wish you
nothing but the best in your next chapter.
Col. Mark Goodwill



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Engaging with a global audience requires captivating and informative communication. It's the job of a mass communication specialist to observe and document what will become the history of the Air Force. Public affairs is more than just capturing photos and videos. Experts work with commanders and media operations to inform the public with factual and timely information. Public affairs is more than just taking pictures; it's telling the story of the Air Force.

Public Affairs Officer - Capt. Jodi Snyder

Superintendent/Public Affairs Operations Chief - Senior Master Sgt. Shawn Monk

Mass Communications Specialist/Photojournalist - Tech. Sgt. Michael Fariss, Tech. Sgt. Allyson Manners, Staff Sgt. Kyle Brooks, Senior Airman Zoe Wockenfuss

Mass Communication Specialist/Broadcast Journalist - Tech. Sgt. Bryan Hoover

Technical Sergeant Allyson Manners



Tech. Sgt. Allyson Manners is a Public Affairs Specialist who joined the 171st Air Refueling Wing in 2012 as a photojournalist. She has worked with multiple squadrons within the 171st and 258th at locations across the world. She also deployed to Africa in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. Allyson worked with the 171st Base Honor Guard and Veterans Entombment Testimonial Service, which allowed her to partner with multiple military branches and civilian agencies across western Pennsylvania providing support and honors at military funerals. This led to her being named Honor Guard Airman of the Year in 2016. Most recently, she completed a tour with the National Guard Bureau working as a protocol specialist at the Pentagon for the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. She has received two Joint Commendation Medals and joint Army and Air Force achievement medals among other notable accomplishments spanning the service branches and other

government agencies. Allyson is proud to serve and represent the 171st, PAANG and the LGBTQ+ community at all levels of the Department of Defense and wherever her travels may take her. She also loves plants, tattoos and yes - she has good manners.

Staff Sergeant Kyle Brooks

Staff Sgt. Kyle Brooks is a drill status guardsman with the 171st Air Refueling Wing in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. During college, Kyle became interested in joining the military and had always aspired to serve the country. Ultimately in December of 2014, Kyle joined the 171st as a photojournalist with the base Public Affairs shop. Before joining the unit, Kyle had little knowledge of public affairs, and he would start his career as an airman basic. Kyle would go on to train at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, Fort Meade, Maryland, and McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tennessee. Following training, Kyle returned to the 171st in 2016 where he has published photos, written articles, and produced videos of activities around the base. Over the past six years, Kyle has grown a great passion for public affairs and multimedia. In 2019, Kyle was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant and looks forward to following his aspirations to become a commissioned officer in the Air Force. Kyle's favorite part of the job is getting to highlight all the airmen at the 171st for the hard work they do and getting to work with an outstanding group of colleagues in the 171st Public Affairs shop. Kyle graduated with a bachelor's degree from Slippery Rock University, and he now works in the occupational health and safety field outside of the military. Outside of work, Kyle enjoys spending time with family, friends, and outdoor activities.



Technical Sergeant Michael Fariss



Tech. Sgt. Michael Fariss is a photojournalist with the 171st Air Refueling Wing since joining the Air National Guard in 2014. He began his military career in the Army Reserves in 1987. He completed basic training at Fort Bliss, Texas and then advanced individual training as a combat field medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He trained at various bases throughout the eastern United States, including Fort Drum, New York and Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. Prior to joining the Air National Guard, Mike served in the Air Force Reserves as a personnelist. He earned Distinguished Honor Graduate at his technical school at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. Mike deployed to Anderson Air Force Base, Guam in 2019 and completed training at Fort Meade, Maryland and McGhee Tyson Air Force Base, Tennessee. He was born and raised in

Pittsburgh, attended Central Catholic High School and earned a bachelors and masters degree from the University of Pittsburgh. In his civilian job, Mike has been teaching social studies for over 25 years. When he is not teaching or serving in the military, he enjoys spending time with his wife Susan and 12-year-old son Mark.

SENIOR AIRMAN ZOE WOCKENFUSS



Senior Airman Zoe Wockenfuss started out as an active duty photojournalist in 2017. After completing technical school at Fort Meade, Maryland, she was stationed at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. While at Dover, she received Airman of the Quarter and was coined by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein. Alongside her supervisor, she was one of the first 9C operational support fliers and flew approximately 70 hours between the C-5M Super Galaxy and the C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. She covered the Air Force Association's Air, Space and Cyber Conference in National Harbor, Maryland and travelled to Gulfport, Mississippi, for exercise Jersey Devil 19. Shortly after arriving at Dover, she deployed in support of Operation Faithful Patriot, which helped secure the southwest border of the United States. From that trip, she had work published on ABC, NBC, FOX

and CNN. In May 2019, Zoe palace chased and came to the 171st Air Refueling Wing. Shortly after, she recieved a position as a temporary technician in January. Even though Zoe loves her job in public affairs, she hopes to cross-train and become a boom operator and follow her dreams of flying. Some of her interests include hiking, kayaking, tattoos and spending time with her great dane "Lola."

TECHNICAL SERGEANT BRYAN HOOVER

Technical Sergeant Bryan Hoover is the Broadcast Journalist in Public Affairs. He joined the 171st in 2017 after a four-year break in military service. He originally joined the Air Force in 2003 after graduating from East Allegheny High School. He had a great 10-year career on active duty as a firefighter in Civil Engineering. Bryan was assigned to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Enrique Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, and Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, and served two deployments to Al Dhafra Air Base and Al Udeid AB. After separating from the Air Force in 2013, he attended college where he graduated with high honors earning an Associate's Degree in Electrical Engineering Technology. When he is not at the wing, he is usually very busy always working on side projects. Most notable, he has been a disc jockey for over 20 years. After getting married and having kids, he transitioned his business towards high-end wedding entertainment. Bryan has been fortunate enough to perform across the U.S. and other countries but most of all enjoys being a part of someone's wedding. His claim to fame came back in 2007 when he performed at an official white house correspondents dinner after-party hosted by Capital Magazine at the Newseum.



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CAPTAIN JODI SNYDER

Capt. Jodi Snyder began her career at the 171st Air Refueling Wing in the Logistics Readiness Squadron after her enlistment in August 2003. She worked in supply as a maintenance liaison and then switched to equipment, obtaining the rank of technical sergeant. In 2015, she became a commissioned officer and joined the Public Affairs team. She has deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as well as NATO missions in both supply and public affairs roles. In 2020, Jodi obtained a doctorate in education with a concentration in special education from the University of Pittsburgh. She has been teaching for over 12 years and has a passion for helping students with special needs succeed. In addition to her love of service, she thoroughly enjoys traveling and leading one of the best teams - Public Affairs!



SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT SHAWN MONK

Senior Master Sgt. Shawn Monk is the Operations Chief of Public Affairs. He joined the 171st when he was still in high school in 1998. He still considers it to be the best decision he has ever made. Shawn has been able to see many places since joining the unit, including Tennessee, Virginia, Washington D.C., Nebraska, Oregon, Germany, and all over the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He has always had a talent for the visual arts, from painting and drawing to digital graphic design, photography and video. Shawn has always enjoyed telling the story with images more than words. That lined up perfectly for him because his first job at the 171st was a graphic designer. Shawn had an opportunity to use a talent he already had while also serving his state and country. The National Guard eventually became like a second family helping Shawn hone in and continue to develop the skills he already had. As his career progressed, Shawn expanded into photography and videography. During his career, the base multimedia shop merged with public affairs, which helped him develop a skillset for journalism, and community and media relations all while being guided by several great mentors. His proudest achievements are sharing his interest and knowledge of visual arts. Watching someone else display their pride in a unique creation is extremely rewarding to Shawn even if his influence was very small.

