

★ ★ ★ BIG SKY
FLYER



Vol. XXVII, No. 4 - Oct 2007

Our
HISTORY
on display

{ INSIDE }



A few welcoming words on
the unveiling of the new
Big Sky Flyer



Operation Great Falls
showcases talent,
technology and teamwork.



EXCELLENCE ★ INTEGRITY ★ SERVICE



By Col. Michael J. McDonald
120th Fighter Wing Commander

New Big Sky Flyer represents New Vision

Showcasing the proud accomplishments of the 120th FW.

Welcome to the first edition of the Big Sky Flyer in its new format. We are excited to give you this quarterly newsletter that will showcase the hard work and accomplishments of the Montana Air National Guard. Each edition will feature professional photography and writing by the public affairs staff about our wing's accomplishments. We will continue to provide unit members with a smaller monthly newsletter that contains news you can use.

Why the change? First and foremost, your accomplishments are something to be proud of and they deserve to be showcased. We want you to be proud to show them off to your friends and family. Second, we've expanded the mailing list beyond members and retirees to include local businesses, elected officials and government offices. We want our communities and civic leaders to know what their hometown Air Guard is doing and why we're doing it.

Third, I'm committed to building a world-class organization through open communication that fosters pride, morale and esprit de corps for all unit members.

We have had a banner year for recruiting and retention and the key to maintaining that success is increasing Montanan's awareness of our career opportunities and benefits. If your employer or local chamber of commerce would like to receive a copy of our new Big Sky Flyer, please contact the wing public affairs office at (406) 791-0228.

I mentioned in my CCTV commander's briefing during the September UTA that we are trying to reach out to communities across the state through recruiting visits and involvement in local events. We're asking you to let us know of opportunities where we can engage your communities to help bring new members on board and to keep the members we have. We have a great mission, a bright future and need to tell that story across our state and nation.

The 120th Fighter Wing senior staff crafted our wing goals prior to the September UTA after the newsletter went to print. To ensure that you know what we're trying to accomplish and where we are headed, I've have them included here. They aren't very standard as far as goals go, but they target the organizational needs that you identified in the unit climate assessment. They support the themes that I discussed in my change of command address and in the most recent article in the Big Sky Flyer.

These goals aren't lofty proclamations to be hung on a wall; they are designed to form the basis of how we behave, work together, and get the job done, and prepare ourselves for future missions and personal growth. Keep them visible, and use them as guidelines. Your input from the climate assessment is being taken seriously. I encourage you to participate in the development of group and squadron goals to address your concerns and to build a world-class organization. We are all Airmen committed to building a world-class organization through open communication and trust that fosters pride, morale and esprit de corps for all unit members.

MANAGE RISK TO OPTIMIZE OUR PEOPLE AND RESOURCES
Wing-wide assessments that are objective, balanced and out in the open.

MISSION DRIVEN, AIRMEN FOCUSED
Reconnect with "why" we exist and prepare our Airmen for future missions and personal success.



120th Fighter Wing Emergency Management Journeyman Staff Sgt. Justin Hutchins (right) selects samples to be tested for hazardous materials during the recent "Operation Great Falls" exercise held recently at Montana ExpoPark. He was assisted by two members of the Emergency Management and Biomedical Flights of the 341st Space Wing.

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Staff Sgt. Robert Starkey operates the Meriwether Fire checkpoint leading into the Holter Lake area.



“It humbles you in one respect, but it makes you feel great that you’re doing something for your home state of folks. We go all over the world but when you do something right here in Montana it makes you feel really good,”

–Senior Master Sgt. Prideaux.

Guarding the fire lines

Volunteers provide security and communication support

On August 1, two teams of twenty-six Montana Air National Guard personnel responded to the call to provide security duty during one of the worst fire seasons in Montana’s recent history. They had been activated by Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer to provide security for the homes and property of residents living in the vicinity of the Meriwether Fire, located near Holter Lake, Mont. The fire was started by lightning on July 21st and had since grown to nearly 40 thousand acres in size. This call to state duty marked the first of the activations to support fire security during the summer of 2007.

“What they’re doing is ensuring that only authorized personnel can pass their checkpoints,” said Senior Master Sgt. Gary Prideaux, serving as a squad boss for the Montana National Guard. “Primarily, residents are the only ones allowed to pass their checkpoint other than fire crews, forest service, Sheriff’s Department, those types of people.”

The guardsmen and women were warmly received by members of the Lewis and Clark Sheriff’s Department, whose deputies had previously staffed the roadblocks. Forest Service Public Information Officer Cheryl Larsen discussed the reaction that the law enforcement community had to the activation of the Guard personnel. “They have been a great asset. Sheriff Liedle made a comment when she announced that the National Guard



Army National Guard Capt. Dorvall discusses the growth of the Jocko Fire with Chief Master Sgt. Dana Darko at the Montana National Guard Operations Center on August 21, 2007. The Jocko Fire Base Camp is located near Seeley Lake, Montana.

would be taking over the roadblocks she just said, ‘hooray’, she was so excited because now it freed up the law enforcement to go back to some of their normal routines,” she said.

The activated members of the Montana National Guard are proud to be ready to serve when called, but these guardsmen and women received the added satisfaction of coming to the aid of their state during a time of need. “It humbles you in one respect, but it makes you feel great that you’re doing something for your home state of folks. We go all over the world but when you do something right here in Montana it makes you feel really good,” said Prideaux.

As of this printing, 92 Montana Air National Guard personnel have been activated to provide fire security for the Jocko Lakes, Ahorn, Meriweather and the Sawmill Creek fires located throughout central and western Montana.

Photos and Story by:
Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson
120th Fighter Wing Multimedia Manager

Communications keeps all on fire security in constant contact.

RIGHT: Master Sgt. Earl Nilsen secures an antenna to a mast at the Jocko Fire Base Camp located near Seeley Lake, Montana on August 21, 2007.



FAR RIGHT: (Left to right) Master Sgt. Earl Nilsen and Staff Sgt. Ray Cozino prepare an antenna to be mounted on top of the mast at the Jocko Fire Base Camp.

Manning security checkpoints in the path of wild fires is not the only task the Montana National Guard performed during the 2007 fire season. The Montana Air National Guard also provided communications personnel and equipment to assist with the National Guard security checkpoint program near Seeley Lake.

Two-way radios have provided a critical communications link between Montana National Guard personnel serving at checkpoints near the Jocko Lakes Fire and the Montana National Guard operations center located at the base camp.

In an effort to improve the range and quality of the signal of the VHF radio, members of the Montana Air National Guard 120th Communications Flight installed a base station, mast and antenna at the operations center.

The four-person crew of communications experts put the telescoping mast and antenna up in less than one hour. The team then set up the base station and ran their necessary operational checks on the radio, which has proved to be a valuable tool to the airmen and soldiers in the field.

Photos and Story by: Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson
120th Fighter Wing Multimedia Manager



Operation Great Falls

Agencies act as one in exercise depicting terrorist attack.

Local, state and federal agencies participated in a terrorism response exercise in Great Falls, Mont., on Aug. 9 at the Montana Expo Park fairgrounds. Over 30 members of the Montana Air National Guard, including personnel from the fire department, hazardous materials group, emergency management flight, and the quick response force, contributed their expertise to Operation Great Falls.

The exercise scenario involved a simulated terrorist attack directed against a civilian pesticide delivery site. An explosive device had dispersed the toxic industrial chemical in the air, causing a mass disruption within the local community. The purpose of this joint emergency exercise was to demonstrate local, state, federal and interagency information flow and coordination; to demonstrate integrated interoperability of land and air; to build communications; fire fighting, HAZMAT response and emergency management capabilities; test all mutual aid systems; deploy National Guard forces in support of civil authorities; and close training gaps in capabilities identified by past exercises and gap analyses.

Senior Master Sgt. Dan Zent, the 120th Fighter Wing installation emergency management supervisor, said the unit gains experience and familiarity through exercise like Operation Great Falls. The exercise also served as a way for leaders in each agency to meet and get experience working with each other in case of an actual crisis. "My job is to plan, and my plans do no good unless I can exercise them," said Zent. "The wing needs to be ready for anything that we do, and having the ability to go down to the local community and know the people that are going to be responding, which is huge, and the only way that we can do it is through exercises."

Malmstrom Air Force Base provided the Airmen that played the role of the victims, and members of the 341st Medical Operations Squadron applied believable moulage to the simulated casualties.

The exercise provided a realistic scenario and valuable training for the individuals responding to the incident. Staff Sgt. Justin Hutchins, a 120th Fighter Wing emergency management journeyman, said he appreciated the training that the exercise provided to his squadron.



A member of the 341st Space Wing plays the role of a victim during the terrorist attack exercise.

"Our career field is going through a tremendous transformation right now, and being able to take on an exercise like this, which kind of refocuses the direction of our career field, is a tremendous training opportunity," said Hutchins.

The Montana National Guard Joint Force Headquarters at Fort Harrison, Mont. spear-headed Operation Great Falls,

an exercise expected to be held annually in the future. Zent said the major players agreed that this effort of conducting a community wide disaster exercise was a positive accomplishment for the first responders in the community. "The overall consensus was that it was a huge success," said Zent. "There are a few things that we need to work on, but that's why we exercise-to develop your limitations, what you need to work on."

Zent added that the exercise exposed some areas that still need work and improvement. "Other than a few minor things not moving in the right direction, it was a huge success," said Zent.

By: Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson
120th Fighter Wing Multimedia Manager



Montana Air National Guard firefighter Joe Keller extends a three inch hose line intended to be used in the decontamination corridor during the "Operation Great Falls" exercise held at Montana ExpoPark.

Placing the 120th Fighter Wing's static aircraft
outside the Main Gate shows

Our HISTORY on display.



A Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star jet trainer once used by the Montana Air National Guard is gently lifted into position in the new static aircraft display near the Main Gate. A crane and personnel assigned to the 819th RED HORSE Squadron assisted unit members during the historic move.

“As younger people join the Guard, it’s important for them to see where we came from. Unless you know where you came from, it’s hard to see where you are going.”

-- Master Sgt. Blair McAnally

The static display of 120 Fighter Wing Aircraft located outside the main gate is the culmination of team and individual effort that began nine years ago. The concept of placing the 120th Fighter Wing’s aircraft on static display began in 1998; however, the original location on the south-east end of the Montana Air National Guard’s property was less than ideal.

“The aircraft were located behind an eight foot fence with no place to park. All you could do was look at them as you drove by,” explained Master Sgt. Blair McAnally.

In 2005, Col. Mark F. Meyer, 120th Fighter Wing Commander, initiated a land swap with the Great Falls International Airport so the aircraft could be located outside the Main Gate. Col. Mike McDonald, 120th Fighter Wing Commander, said, “This project was years in the making. It might look like it took place in a few months, but that’s not the case. The refurbishing of the F-89J, once displayed from on top of the old Main Gate, took years because it was accomplished in the paint and sheet metal shops only after mission essential projects were completed. The process was very valuable because it allowed the shops to strip the aircraft all the way down and reconstruct it – not something many shops get an opportunity to complete.”

Many individuals from the 120th Fighter Wing are credited with getting the aircraft ready to be displayed. The 819th RED HORSE Squadron from Malmstrom Air Force Base spent four days on the project. According to McDonald, “The RED HORSE had just received a new crane. It was an excellent training opportunity for them to lift and move the aircraft, and it was great training for the 120th crash recovery team to secure and lift a dead aircraft.”

Four aircraft comprise the current static display. The F-89J, is the actual aircraft and the only aircraft to fire the “Genie” air-to-air nuclear missile. The F-106, which while assigned to another unit, knocked the Montana Air Guard out of the William Tell competition in the mid 1970s. The T-33A is

an aircraft that has been in Great Falls since 1954. The F-16A, though never assigned to the 120th Fighter Wing, flew several combat missions during Operation Desert Storm in 1991. A fifth plane, an F-102 that was originally assigned to the unit and displayed in Helena, will hopefully be added to the display within a year.

“Blair McAnally was my go-to guy” said McDonald. “He worked with all the shops on the hill, Air Force historical personnel and state and local agencies. He can take great credit for this project.”

McAnally, who coordinated the completion of the project, added, “As younger people join the Guard, it’s important for them to see where we came from. Unless you know where you came from, it’s hard to see where you are going. This will not only benefit new airmen, but will also benefit the entire Great Falls community.”

By: Tech. Sgt. Charlie Heit
120th Fighter Wing Multimedia Correspondent



Master Sgt. Blair McAnally, static aircraft curator.



TOP: An F-106 Delta Dart that was lifted over the installation fence is lowered onto Airport Way in preparation to be towed to the new static display area.

MID: Tech. Sgt. David Ridl guides the T-33 as it is towed on Airport Way.

BOTTOM: Unit members hold the F-89 steady while the crane lowers the aircraft onto its permanent location at the static display area.

Did you know?

The 120th began five minute runway alert on October 1, 1958. The unit’s F-89H Scorpions and their two man crews, stood alert for 14 hours a day. They were under the control and direction of the 29th Air Division at Malmstrom Air Force Base. Once launched, the interceptors were directed to the area of the target by the 29th’s controllers.



The big news in 1972 was the change over from the F-102 to the F-106. While some experts predicted that it would take the unit up to 6 months to convert to the 106, the 120th got the job done in a record 59 days, that was nothing short of amazing.



By Tech Sgt. (retired) Jim Sharpe 120th Fighter Wing Historian
Photos by Master Sgt. (ret.) Jack Carte

New Leader for RED HORSE

Maj. Frederyck Cayer, Jr. takes command

The parade field at Fort Harrison served as the backdrop for the change of command ceremony of the 219th RED HORSE Squadron of the Montana Air National Guard. Maj. Frederyck Cayer, Jr. assumed command of the heavy construction engineer unit from the departing commander, Lt. Col. Daniel Biles.

Montana National Guard Assistant Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. John Del Toro, presided over the ceremony, letting the RED HORSE troops know the type of leader they had gained. "You've got another great leader coming to the mix, the trust, the loyalty, the respect, it's all there," said Del Toro. "You just build on the foundation that you've established as a unit, with a new commander, a new leader that you know, that you trust, and know that you can go to war with. And that's really the big thing, knowing that your wingman's going to be there at the appropriate time. It's not just a flying thing, it's mutual support, it's knowing your strengths, it's knowing your weaknesses, it's knowing how to get the job done, and doing it as a cohesive unit."

Prior to the change of command ceremony, the U.S. Air Force Meritorious Service Medal was presented to Biles for his distinguished service while serving as the commander of the 219th RED HORSE Squadron.

"It's tough moving on, it's tough taking off the red hat," said Biles. "But as I move on, it's been a great 10 years, and I'm moving on to a new challenge at the 120th. It's going to be exciting, (and) it's going to be different. But it's not easy to say goodbye to friends and to family, and that's what you are."

The incoming commander, Maj. Cayer, enlisted into the 120th Civil Engineering Squadron in 1985. He received his commission in Sept. 1995, and has since served in a variety of civil engineer assignments and deployments with the Montana Air National Guard. "It is with great honor and a tremendous sense of pride that I accept the 219th RED HORSE guide on," said Maj. Cayer. "To the men and



Brig. Gen. John Del Toro presents the 219th RED HORSE Squadron guide on to Maj. Frederyck Cayer, Jr. during the Change of Command Ceremony.

women of the 219th, it's with immense respect and admiration that I stand before you today. Your legacy as tough, dependable, mission ready citizen-Airmen precedes you. It is a privilege to serve beside you."

The 219th RED HORSE Squadron serves as an associate unit with the active duty 819th RED HORSE Squadron of the U.S. Air Force. The unit was involuntarily activated in 2002 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During the deployment of the 819th/219th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron, 27 projects were completed in Kuwait, Pakistan, Qatar, and Oman.

The squadron again activated with the 819th RED HORSE Squadron in 2004 for a five-month deployment supporting Operation Enduring Freedom to the Horn of Africa. While there, they constructed and renovated clinics and schools in the countries of Djibouti and Ethiopia. In 2005 the 219th was again involuntarily activated with the 819th for a seven-month deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where they completed 58 construction projects. As the incoming commander, Maj. Cayer will oversee a new chapter in the proud history of the 219th REDHORSE Squadron.

By: Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson
120th Fighter Wing Multimedia Manager

219th supports the Blue Angels

Braking system installed in West Yellowstone

The measurements must be exact, the tension must be precise, and the installation team must be focused, if not, the result could mean a multimillion-dollar fighter aircraft careening off the runway and ultimately becoming destroyed.

Specialists from the 219th RED HORSE Squadron of the Montana Air National Guard and an engineer from 819th RED HORSE Squadron from Malmstrom Air Force Base were recently sent to install a mobile aircraft arresting system to support the U.S. Navy's Blue Angels demonstration team at the Yellowstone Airport in West Yellowstone, Mont.

To conduct safe flying operations, the Navy and Marines have specific requirements that are not normally established at Air Force bases or commercial airports. One of these requirements is a mobile aircraft arresting system. The MAAS is a hydraulic braking system that is designed to stop a fighter aircraft, equipped with a tail-hook, during in-flight emergencies or inclement weather conditions.

The average runway has a lot of room for pilots to land safely; however, in case of an emergency, such precautions are necessary. The MAAS is one of the precautionary measures that is available to stop a 40,000 to 50,000 pound jet traveling approximately 150 miles per hour. A 175-foot, steel cable is attached to a complex, modified B-52 brake system. Nylon tapes are revolved around individual 66-inch reels. As the tape gyrates out to the hooked aircraft, hydraulic pressure to the braking system slows down the aircraft in a matter of 1,000 to 1,200 feet.

According to Master Sgt. Brian Imbrescia, the RED HORSE chief of electrical and power production, the complex braking system is vital for aircraft and pilot safety. "The aircraft drops its tail-hook; the aircraft tail hook engages a one and a quarter-inch, steel cable that is floating two inches above the runway with the help of a number of black, rubber disks," said Sergeant Imbrescia. "The system is necessary and saves aircraft and pilots' lives." Imbrescia said it was rewarding to see the results of the RED HORSE efforts. "The most rewarding part of the experience was having the number seven Blue Angel come in and take the



cable evenly and then come to a complete stop. We did our job safely and correctly," said Imbrescia. To ensure the MAAS is safe and operational, an aircraft will deliberately drop its hook and grab the wire while landing.

RED HORSE units are an elite corps of rapid deployment civil engineers and specialists who work in very challenging, but rewarding conditions. They are the engineering SWAT team of the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard. Their specialty is what officials have called "horizontal capability," runway and ramp construction, maintenance, and repair. In addition, they are meant to be extremely flexible, with the ability to do all civil engineering tasks.

RED HORSE is trained to operate in highly dangerous and austere environments, and are trained to be self sufficient to deploy with their own weapons, equipment, rations, and medical supplies.

By: Maj. Rick Anderson
Public Affairs Officer



TOP: A four ship performs during a recent show.
BOTTOM: The Angels passing over the mountains.

HISTORY Of THE MTANG

The Montana Air National Guard turned 60 on June 27th of 2007. There are so many stories to tell, it is difficult to abbreviate our history without minimizing our many achievements. Instead of a detailed list of events, here is the first in a series of the top historical eras that span the years.

THE MUSTANG ERA: 1947-1952

On June 27, 1947, the 186th Fighter Squadron was activated with 73 personnel assigned. Six P-51D Mustangs soon arrived, each equipped with six .50 caliber machine guns and six 2.75-inch rockets. Due to pilot inexperience, lack of range facilities and little ammunition, no live firing would take place for the first three years.

By Master Sgt. Al Garver
Joint Force Historian



The News You can Use

DOD announces improvements to Tricare Reserve Select

The Defense Department is making some major changes to the Tricare Reserve Select health plan. Beginning Oct. 1, all drilling Reservists will have access to this health-care benefit at its lowest premium rate, according to Lt. Col. Alexander Alex, Air Force Reserve Command's health benefits manager. TRS will require a monthly premium of \$81 for a Guard member and \$253 for a Guard member and his/her family. Additionally, there is no Service commitment associated with TRS. TRS is medical coverage available during non-active duty periods.

This is a very competitive 80/20 indemnity plan where the government pays 80 percent and the member pays 20 percent of the cost share. One of its huge benefits is the pharmacy program. If used wisely, members can get a 90-day supply of medicine for \$3 per prescription. Additionally, there is a \$1,000 catastrophic cap that is among the lowest in the industry. Once a member has paid \$1,000 in a fiscal year, Tricare will pay 100 percent of the Tricare allowable cost after that.

The Bottom line

- The current TRS program ends 30 September 2007 and all TRS members currently enrolled must reenroll
- IRR/ING are not eligible for TRS
- Drilling Selected Reserve members are eligible for TRS with the exception of those eligible for FEHB
- There is no service commitment
- DEERS accuracy is critical
- When a Guard member is in TRS and is placed on active duty orders for greater than 30 days, they are dropped from TRS and must reenroll within 60 days to continue coverage
- Members/families disenrolled from TRS (voluntarily or involuntarily) will be locked out of TRS for one year.

All interested Reservists, including those who are currently enrolled in Tricare Reserve Select, must fill out a newly developed DD Form 2896-1 to take part in this restructured program. To begin the application process, Reservists should visit the Guard and Reserve Web portal at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/tsa/index.jsp>. DOD officials said they are looking into a simpler application process. For specific information as it becomes available, go to the TRS Web site (<http://www.tricare.mil/reserve/reserve-select/>) or contact the Air Reserve Personnel Center toll free at 800-525-0102 or DSN 926-6730. The fax number is commercial 478-327-2215 or DSN 497-2215. Online customer service is available at <https://arpc.afrc.af.mil/vPC-GR/>, then click "New Request."

For more details about costs for covered services, visit www.tricare.mil/tricarecosts.

Promotions

The following named Airmen, unit as indicated, this station are promoted in the Montana Air National Guard, and as a Reserve of the Air Force to the rank indicated. Authority: ANGI 36-2502 and JF HQ-MT (Air) Supplement. Date of Rank and Effective Date 01 September 2007 unless otherwise indicated.

RANK	NAME	PROMOTE TO	UNIT
A1C	EVANS, BRYANT A	SrA	CES
A1C	HOLLAND, CHRISTINE L	SrA	SFS
A1C	SCHULTE, RORY M	SrA	SFS
A1C	SPINDLER, JESSICA R	SrA	LRS
SrA	BENSON, EUGENE P.	SSgt	AMXS
SrA	FRANCO, CHANDRA L	SSgt	186 FS

By order of the Governor Brian Schweitzer

Faces of the Guard



Senior Airman Runner wins Levitow Award.

120th Fighter Wing Commander Col. Mike McDonald congratulates Senior Airman Jonathan Runner for earning the distinguished "John L. Levitow" award for leadership and scholarship while attending the Airman Leadership School held at Malmstrom Air Force Base.

Runner is a Drill Status Guardsman assigned to the 120th Security Forces Squadron. Following a tour with the United States Navy, he began his civilian career with the Great Falls Police Department, where he currently serves additional duties as a firearms instructor, GFPD Honor Guard team member and law enforcement course instructor.



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