



Thunder Bird



107th Airlift Wing, New York Air National Guard, Niagara Falls, NY

Winter 2015

INSIDE:

HRF

OPERATION LAKE EFFECT

SNOWSTORM SAFETY

Are you ready?

From the Desk of the 107th Wing Commander

Colonel John J. Higgins

As the sun sets on my time in the Air Force I would like to reflect on the past two years I have served as your wing commander. I took over as the 107th Airlift Wing commander in the midst of a very tumultuous time for the 107th. As a wing we have met and overcome some huge obstacles; the loss of our C-130 mission with no replacement mission in sight, sequestration and budget cuts, the passing of current and former members and the eventual conversion to the MQ-9. During these challenging times the 107th always maintained a professional stance and positive attitude while completing our missions in spectacular fashion. It was this response that made me realize the honor I have to be your Wing Commander.

Throughout the past two years there have been many 107th members deployed in support of our war on terror. In 2013, 132 Operations and Maintenance personnel supported Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), achieving a never before seen mission capable rate of 100%. Our Aerial Port personnel supported OEF processing over 10,000 tons of cargo, over 1,700 passengers and 1,220 missions. Security Forces personnel deployed multiple times for training, providing airfield security and detainee removal operations. Our Civil Engineer Squadron recently deployed to Western Australia to construct a building to house Air Force Space Command's radar network. While in Australia they aided the local population during a flash flood. Medical personnel deployed to Tennessee to aid over 11,000 community members with wellness screenings.

We are currently the process of converting to the MQ-9 platform. In order to do that, we saw the dissolution of the Air Reserve Component Association with the 914th Airlift Wing. There were many pieces of that puzzle that needed to be unwound, and as usual the 107th carried this out in a precise and professional manner. With the dissolution came the new manning document and the hiring frenzy that would take place throughout the wing. In typical fashion, 107th members came together to prepare for this change. The wing conversion office was stood up, with the sole purpose of educating the wing about all aspects of the new mission. Squadrons took it one step farther, helping to prepare Airmen for retaking the ASVAB, conducting resume writing and conducting mock interviews. We came together as a family to take care of our own.



Throughout this busy time of disassociating, preparing for our future and conducting the current mission, you found the time to pay back to the community that has supported us for the past 66 years. Your generosity was always in the forefront with the many hours of volunteer time supporting the Community Mission, Buffalo News Kids Day and other local schools and charities. As you can see, our members truly display Service Before Self.

As I wrote in my incoming article, “you have shown me that you are the epitome of the Air Force Core Values: Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence in all We Do.” To this day I stand by this quote. The work that the unit has done over the last two years has been truly impressive. We are solidly in the midst of our conversion to the MQ-9, we have several people certified and combat mission ready in our new platform, and dozens more currently attending technical training for their new specialties. We are poised and ready at the tip of the spear to serve our country and the state of New York.

In closing I want to thank each and every member of the 107th for their sacrifice and service to this great nation of ours. It has been an honor and a pleasure being your commander. God bless.



Over the course of my career in the Total Force, I have certainly experienced a wide variety of leaders. Some were good, some were bad. Most were somewhere in-between. There is one who stands out in my mind as exceptional. As I don't have his permission to use his real name, I'll refer to him as Chief Jones.

I was a young junior grade Airman stationed in Germany when I first met the Chief. He seemed gruff and to the point but we didn't interact a whole lot, as there were many grades between us in the chain of command. I didn't think about him much unless he was coming to visit our shop. Then of course, my supervisor would say, “Hey Chief Jones is coming over, make sure your uniform and this shop are squared away.” We all had a healthy level of respect for him (and some degree of fear, to be honest). That's not why he was an exceptional leader. I had not yet seen his true leadership abilities in action.

That changed on 28 August 1988. It was the annual open house and airshow at Ramstein Air Base. The gates were open to the local population, who we welcomed every year for the event. This year, however, the open house took a tragic turn when three of the Italian Air Force aerial demonstration team aircraft flew into each other while performing aerial acrobatics.

Consequently, two of the mishap aircraft crashed into a crowd of spectators, killing nearly seventy people and severely injuring many more. As you can imagine, there was great chaos as the happy, light-hearted event turned to horror in mere seconds.

Shortly after the mishap, efforts were underway from both bystanders and emergency response personnel to render aid to the injured. Helicopters that were on station as open house displays were quickly cranked up to bring the victims to near-by Landstuhl Army Medical Center. The unique whine of European emergency vehicle sirens seemed to go on endlessly. I am not ashamed to tell you that I had an empty pit in my stomach and a deep pain in my soul as the tragedy of the day's events continued to unfold. Ironically, all this transpired against the backdrop of what had been a beautiful, sunny summer day.

Before long, by word of mouth, my friends and co-workers Craig, Ron and I learned that our Squadron had implemented a recall to account for our unit members. We were to report to the Munition Control branch office. We walked and ran to get there as quickly as possible. There was no driving there, as traffic was at a standstill with hundreds of German Nationals trying to drive off base, to go home away from the catastrophe.





HOMELAND RESPONSE FORCE

November, 2014



Exercise held at the Erie County Fire Training Center in Cheektowaga N.Y.







107th Security Forces removed snow from the Eden Heights Assisted Living Facility in West Seneca, N. Y.



New York Army National Guard help with snow removal and traffic control in south Buffalo, N.Y.



OPERATION LAKE EFFECT
NOVEMBER 2014

The snow was about four feet deep covering the 55,000 square feet roof



What to do if trapped in a car in a snowstorm

The massive snowfall that's buried parts of the Great Lakes region this week, seemingly out of nowhere, is more than just an inconvenience -- it's already proven deadly. One of the fatalities was a man near Buffalo, New York, who was found dead inside his car after the area got hit with more than 4 feet of snow. Getting trapped in a blizzard is a potentially life-threatening nightmare for anyone who lives in a part of the country where a brutal winter is simply a fact of life. It goes without saying that if the snow is coming down hard and you hear blizzard warnings on the news, then it's probably best to stay indoors, ideally in a home that's well stocked with emergency provisions such as food, water, flashlights and a battery-powered crank radio. (Take a look at the lists from the Ready.gov for suggestions.)

But if you do find yourself on the road, there are some ways to avoid becoming a statistic.

- **Gas up.** Always drive with a nearly full gas tank in case travel slows to a crawl or you get stranded.
- **Have an emergency kit.** Keep these essentials in your car throughout the winter season: Blankets, pillows, extra warm clothing, non-perishable food and snacks, water, flashlight with spare batteries, a few doses of any essential prescription medications, a first aid kit, whistle, hand-warmers, snow shovel, ice scraper and jumper cables. (Yes, this list may be long but if you find yourself in the lurch you'll be glad you went to the trouble.)
- **Charge your phone.** Keep your cellphone charged in case you need it to call for help. Keep phone use to a minimum to conserve batteries.
- **Be visible.** If you're stuck in the snow, tie something brightly colored onto your antenna. This is a common way to signal that you need help. You can also blow that whistle from your emergency kit.
- **Stay in the car.** It may be cold and claustrophobic, but ultimately it's safer than being outside exposed to the elements in a winter storm.
- **Check the tailpipe.** This is a simple way avoid a deadly buildup of carbon monoxide in the car if you're sitting with the engine running. You should also crack open the back window slightly, which will keep fresh air circulating and prevent poisoning.
- **Run the engine intermittently.** Run your engine for 10 to 15 minutes every hour to keep the car sufficiently warm and also melt some of the ice and snow.
- **Leave the dome light on.** This will allow you to see inside the car, and also help people find you if search and rescue teams are out looking for folks who need help.
- **Keep moving.** It's important to avoid frostbite so try to keep up your circulation by moving your fingers and toes and changing your seated position frequently.
- **Share body heat.** If you're in the car with other passengers, huddle together to keep warm.

Stay in your car until the snow stops and weather conditions improve. It may feel like an eternity, but if you plan ahead with emergency supplies and prepare for the worst, you'll have the best chance of getting through it.

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as reported by Jessica Firger, CBS News - November 19, 2014

Meet YOUR Top 3 Council!



MSgt Vicki Weaver



MSgt Chanda White



MSgt Melissa Shenefiel

Elected Members for 2013-2015

Along with the elected members, the council is comprised of two members of each squadron, a primary and alternate, to represent their units accordingly.

Top 3 Council Representation

Wing Staff

MSgt Jennifer Blamowski	x2468	jennifer.blamowski@ang.af.mil
MSgt Venita Jackson	x2518	venita.jackson@ang.af.mil

Force Support Squadron

MSgt Timothy Gemsheim	x2528	timothy.gemsheim@ang.af.mil
MSgt Kevin Huff	x2432	kevin.huff.1@ang.af.mil

Civil Engineer Squadron

MSgt Frederick Radley	x2402	frederick.radley@ang.af.mil
MSgt Robert Hull	x3439	robert.hull@ang.af.mil

Security Forces Squadron

MSgt Jon Kokotajlo	x2447	jon.kokotajlo@ang.af.mil
MSgt Matthew Szczepaniec	x2447	matthew.szczepaniec@ang.af.mil

Logistics Readiness Squadron

MSgt Kenneth Devole	x2580	kenneth.devole@ang.af.mil
SMSgt Christopher Druzvik	x2490	christopher.druzvik@ang.af.mil

Communications Flight

MSgt Michael Supon	x3064	michael.supon@ang.af.mil
MSgt Andrew Gasiewicz	x2397	andrew.gasiewicz@ang.af.mil

Medical Group

MSgt Francis Krathaus	x2452	francis.krathaus@ang.af.mil
MSgt Thomas Larson	x2404	thomas.larson@ang.af.mil



OUR MISSION: The mission of the **Top 3 Council** is to address and recommend solutions to the issues and concerns of our upper-level enlisted members, grades E-7 through E-9, who are assigned to 107th Airlift Wing. It is our goal to encourage patriotism and loyalty of our members and to embrace and uphold the Air Force core values thereby improving the morale, quality of life and retention of our unit members.

The **Top 3 Council** was established as an advisory body to inform the Wing Commander and the Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant of the issues and concerns of our upper-level enlisted members. The Top 3 Council will serve as the voice of these enlisted members and will aid in implementing programs, improving communication flow, offering suggestions to existing programs which help to promote and improve the morale and the well-being of our members and their families. The Top 3 Council will take a proactive, positive approach to resolving the concerns of the upper-level enlisted members.

The time is near to elect new board members!

The Board serves for a period of two years. Every two years a new Board is elected.

This gives anyone looking for a chance to make a difference a chance to make a difference! If you are interested in becoming the next Top 3 Council President, Vice President or Recorder, please plan on attending the March 2015 meeting. We've made great strides in the two years since our inception,

NOW IT'S TIME TO BREATHE NEW BLOOD INTO THE COUNCIL!

WHAT WE'VE DONE:

- Established our charter and bylaws, for us to be a legal council.
- Designed and ordered our first Top 3 Council coin.
- Initiated Out and Abouts – members of the Top 3 and the JEC go to scheduled sections every drill weekend to get the word out and socialize.
- Asked for and received more Four Lenses classes from the HRA.
- Held numerous clothing and household goods drives for the WNY Housing Coalition for Homeless Vets and a food drive for Community Missions in Niagara Falls.
- Established suggestion boxes in all sections.

WHAT WE HOPE TO DO:

- Establish a Mentoring Program, with ALL ranks.
- Lunch and Learns, focusing on Personal and Professional Development, writing EPRs and Awards and Decorations, etc.
- A field trip, with JEC, to the Veteran's One Stop.

Anyone in the rank of MSgt to CMSgt is more than welcome to attend our next council meeting. Meetings take place on Saturdays of the January, March, May, July, September, and November UTAs, at 1530. If you'd like more information on the council, please contact one of the many mentioned above or stop by the next meeting!



As I was considering what to write for this article, a few things came to mind. With the conversion and the new mission, I decided to write about the importance of editing what is posted on social web sites. We, as members of the New York Air National Guard, have voluntarily signed up and made a conscious decision to be in the Armed Forces. With that being said, we have also agreed to hold ourselves to the higher standards that are expected of that membership. We have a responsibility to ourselves and to the mission of the 107th. It is imperative that we are not doing anything that could affect our security clearances, our image as members of the NYANG, or post any mission related information that could adversely affect our unit.

Social media sites are excellent ways to get information out to a lot of people, and to keep in touch with friends and family outside of the area or our deployed friends. It is a fun way to share pictures and what is going on in our lives, and in many cases what was made for dinner and to let the world know that you are tired, but with that freedom of expression comes a responsibility. IAW AFI10-701 Operations Security (OPSEC) “1.4.17, All Air Force Personnel: OPSEC is everyone’s responsibility. Ideally, the AF uses OPSEC measures to protect its critical information. Failure to properly implement OPSEC measures can result in serious injury or death to our personnel; damage to weapons systems, equipment and facilities; loss of sensitive technologies; and mission degradation or failure. OPSEC is a continuous process and an inherent part of military culture. Failure to implement directed OPSEC measures will be considered by commanders/directors for appropriate disciplinary action.” If you have a question about posting or publishing work-related information, it is always a good idea to check with your supervisor, security manager or the OPSEC manager prior to posting it. The 107th Airlift Wing website also has guidance on social media. Keep in mind once it is posted it can never fully be retracted.

It is also important to be conscientious about how others may perceive your posting. With just about everyone having a camera on their cell phone, ensure that you are behaving in a way that will not affect your security clearance, or posting information or pictures that could be perceived as an illegal act. We as members of the NYANG have every right to our opinions, but it is not acceptable to post derogatory materials or comments. Before information is posted, take a second look. Make sure that it cannot be perceived in such a manner that would reflect poorly on you as a member of the 107th. Safeguard your own privacy and whereabouts. Don’t post that you are deploying or away at school, and ask your family members and friends not to post that you are away from home.

I am in no way suggesting that social media sites are not important to our culture, nor am I trying to discourage their use, I am just asking that we all take a second look at what is being posted and ask yourself before hitting the enter key “do I really want this on the internet forever, how will it be perceived and will this have a negative effect on my career or have an impact on the mission?”

Chief Langenfeld



DoD
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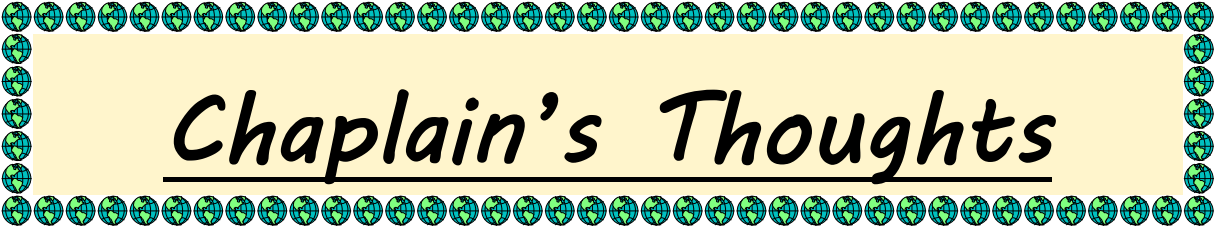
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Chaplain's Thoughts

Many celebrations and observances take place in December. Rohatso – Bodhi Day is a Buddhist celebration of the awaking of Buddha, (8 December); **Hanukkah (Chanukah)** is a Jewish holiday (starting sun down on the 16 December – 24 December) which celebrates where a committed band of people led by the Maccabee family overthrew the most powerful army of their time and won their liberty. The ancient temple in Jerusalem held an eternal flame, but because of the desecration of the foreign invaders only one day's worth of purified oil remained. The faithful Jews went on to light it anyway, and the oil burned in the rededicated temple for eight days, long enough for a new supply to arrive; **Christmas**, a Christian holiday (celebrated -25 December and 7 January for Christian Orthodox), celebrates the birth of Jesus, who is believed to be the Messiah or Savior of the world by Christians. **Kwanzaa** is an Interfaith observance for African-American celebrated 26 December – 1 January. Kwanzaa is a Swahili word that means “first,” signifying the first fruits of the harvest. In the United States since most African Americans do not live in an agricultural setting, the basic principles found in the community for producing a successful harvest is celebrated by recommitting to the collective achievement of a better, strong and wholesome life for families and community.

Even though this is a time of celebration for many, waves of despair and depression can occur for others. Family traditions might be hindered and hampered because of the sickness or death of a loved one. Or perhaps, people get down because of separations such as divorce or deployments. The month of December hasn't always been just a time of joy in the United States. Yet, spiritual resilient people have eyes to see the positive even when that around them can look full of despair.

For instance, a time of despair for our country took place on December 7, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was attacked. What permeated our country afterwards was destruction, depression and despair. On that same day, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt told Admiral Chester Nimitz that he would now be Commander of the Pacific Fleet. On Christmas Eve 1941, Admiral Nimitz landed on Pearl Harbor and the next day...Christmas Day 1941, he got a tour of the destruction on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. After the tour he was asked what he thought of all the destruction. His reply shocked everyone, a remark that showed what it is like to be a spiritual resilient person. He replied that, “The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make or God was taking care of America.” He was asked what he meant by saying that the Japanese made the three biggest mistakes



First Mistake: The Japanese attacked on Sunday morning. Nine out of every ten crewmen of those ships were ashore on leave. If those same ships had been lured to sea and been sunk—we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800.

Second Mistake: The attackers were so busy sinking our battleships that they forgot to bomb the dry docks. That allowed the American fleet to tow the sunken ships into dry dock and repair them right there, instead of towing them all the way to the mainland, which would have taken months.

Third Mistake: Every drop of fuel was in storage tanks five miles away. One attack plane could have destroyed the entire supply, but the tanks were left intact.

“That’s why I say the Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could make or God was taking care of America,” he replied.

Take the month of December and enjoy the celebrations! Use the witness of Admiral Nimitz to look for the spiritual resiliency inside of yourself to help lift others up in times of hardships. If you are down and out, hang around people that will help lift you up and bring about the positive even in times of despair. We do have something wonderful to celebrate this December for our country, and spiritually in our various religions. May God continue to bless America and may we all celebrate and thank God and those who have fought for our freedom throughout the ages.

A Blessed December To You All!

Chaplain, Lt. Col. Jackie Ann Rose Kraft

CHAPLAIN SERVICES

Wing Chaplain

LtCol Jackie Ann Rose Kraft

Asbury United Methodist Church

P.O. BOX 743

850 Dodge Road

Getzville, New York 14068-0743

Office: (716) 688-8677

Home: (716) 625-6266

Chaplain Crisis Phone: (716) 228-7719

PROTESTANT SERVICE

Saturday-1600

Wing Conference Room-Building 901

CATHOLIC MASS

St. Leo’s R.C. Church

2748 Military Road

Niagara Falls, NY

Sat. Mass 1600

Sun. Mass 0900

**If you need to see a chaplain please call Chaplain Services, at extension 2395 or the numbers listed above. Chaplains and Chaplain Assistants are always on call

For Service schedules of other religious communities contact the Chaplains’ office at ext. 2395.



Airmen of the United States Air Force:

Last year, in response to budget sequestration, we launched the Every Dollar Counts campaign. Since that launch, your innovative ideas and money-saving efficiency changes saved our Air Force hundreds of millions of dollars during these challenging fiscal times.

From public-private partnerships at base level, to centralized engine repair Air Force wide, your ideas are saving precious resources all across the enterprise. To each Airman who took the time to send in an idea, influence change or create a new efficiency in your shop: thank you -- job well done! But we can't stop now...we must do more.

Now is the time to leverage the success of last year's campaign and continue to cultivate a culture of innovation, efficiency, and savings. This letter is our call to action to Make Every Dollar Count. Our goal is to take as many of our efficiencies and savings initiatives as possible and multiply them across the entire spectrum of operations. From large scale initiatives, such as implementing cutting-edge energy practices or acquisition process improvements, to base-level actions, such as video teleconferencing and contract review, everything counts.

Our current initiatives are just the beginning. We challenge each of you to develop initiatives in your own areas of expertise. If there was ever a time for out-of-the-box ideas, it's now. Each of us must be "all in, all the time" to make this work. There are two programs available to submit your great ideas to increase cost savings across our Air Force.

You may submit ideas online to our Airmen Powered by Innovation website at <https://ipds.afpc.randolph.af.mil> or by contacting your local Air Force Smart Operations for the Twenty-first Century Office. All ideas will be actively processed by the Office of the Under Secretary of the Air Force for Business Transformation.

As you know, there are consequences of this fiscal climate we cannot change, but we must do our very best to improve the things we can and ensure we are good stewards of every taxpayer dollar. Let's all take ownership – each active duty, Reserve, Guard and civilian Airman – to improve what we can control and to Make Every Dollar Count.

“Make Every Dollar Count: All In, All The Time.”

Deborah Lee James
Secretary of the Air Force

Larry O. Spencer
General, USAF
Vice Chief of Staff



Social Media Tips

**Please keep the following in mind
when posting to social media sites like Facebook or Twitter.**

Once it's out there, it's there forever

- When you post something on social media, you can't "get it back." Even deleting the post doesn't mean it's truly gone, so consider carefully before you hit enter.

No classified information

- Don't post classified or sensitive information (for example, troop movement, force size, weapons details, etc.). If in doubt, talk to your supervisor or security manager. "Think OPSEC!"

Replace error with fact, not argument

- When you see misrepresentations made about the Air Force in social media, you may certainly use your social media property or someone else's to correct the error. Always do so with respect and with the facts. When you speak to someone who has an adversarial position, make sure what you say is factual and respectful. No arguments, just correct the record.

Admit mistakes

- Be the first to respond to your own mistakes. If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear you have done so (e.g., use the strikethrough function).

Use your best judgment

- What you write may have serious consequences. If you're unsure about a post, discuss your proposed post with your supervisor. Ultimately, you bear sole responsibility for what you post.

Avoid the offensive

- Don't post any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially and ethnically hateful or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.

Don't violate copyright

- Don't post any information or other material protected by copyright without the permission of the copyright owner.

Don't misuse trademarks

- Don't use any words, logos or other marks that would infringe upon the trade mark, service mark, certification mark or other intellectual property rights of the owners of such marks without owner permission.

Don't violate privacy

- Don't post any information that would infringe upon the proprietary, privacy or personal rights of others.

No endorsements

- Don't use the Air Force name to endorse or promote products, political positions or religious ideologies.

No impersonations

- Don't manipulate identifiers in your post in an attempt to disguise, impersonate or otherwise misrepresent your identity or affiliation.

Stay in your lane

- Discussing issues related to your career field or personal experiences are acceptable and encouraged, but you shouldn't discuss areas of expertise where you have no firsthand, direct experience or knowledge.

Be cautious with the information you share

- Be careful about the personal details you share on the Internet. Maintain privacy settings on your social media accounts, change your passwords regularly and don't give out personally identifiable information. Also, be mindful of who you allow to access your social media accounts.

Don't promote yourself for personal or financial gain

- Don't use your Air Force affiliation, official title or position to promote, endorse or benefit yourself or any profit-making group or agency. For details, refer to Code of Federal Regulations, Title 5, Volume 3, sec. 2635.702, Use of Public Office for Private Gain, in the Joint Ethics Regulation or Air Force Instruction 35-101, Public Affairs Responsibilities and Management.



HEY NIAGARA...

We want your Feed-
back!!!

Email us @
107aw.TBIRD@ang.af.mil

THUNDERBIRD

Brought to you by:

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