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The **AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

# Skibird



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



## FLYING WITH CANADA



Spring / Summer 2014

# Commander's Corner

## 'Skibird' back in production

By Col. John Russo  
109th AW Vice Commander

**Y**ou asked for it, and we heard you... the Skibird is back!

June 2014 marks the relaunch of the 109th Airlift Wing's beloved magazine. The Skibird has historically been a monthly publication. But with increased mission driven requirements, and subsequent time constraints on our Airmen, it became increasingly challenging to carve out time in everyone's schedule to continue it as a monthly publication. As a result, the decision was made to make the Skibird a quarterly publication. Then, as fiscal constraints hit the Wing, the decision was made to stop publication all together.

But then something began to happen... unit members and alumni provided feedback that the Skibird was missed; consistent feedback. They said they missed the articles, they missed the photos, and they missed event and activity reminders. Some people shared that they saved every issue they had ever received because it was a timeline and historical reference for the Wing. And this feedback continued, unabated...

So, in an effort to bring the Skibird back, while also taking into account the challenges that led it originally being discontinued, the magazine will now be published biannually. A June/December publication schedule will also allow it to be themed as a "Look Back—Look Forward" at what's happening with the Wing, our Airmen and our families. Each issue will balance providing updates and highlights from the past six months while

communicating anticipated trends, events and activities for the next six months.

Printed versions will be made available throughout the Wing to all unit members and will be mailed out to our alumni. Additionally, in an effort to address the reality of increasing fiscal constraints, electronic versions will be available for viewing at the Wing's official website [www.109aw.ang.af.mil](http://www.109aw.ang.af.mil) and shared on the "109th Airlift Wing" Facebook page.

With that said, I would like to take a moment to say "Thank You" for all the hard work and long hours everyone put into preparing for, and completing, the recent inspection. The 109th Airlift Wing was the first stand-alone Air National Guard unit to be inspected under the new Air Mobility Command inspection format. And as expected, the execution of our primary mission was graded "Highly Effective." With this new inspection process in place, I am confident that the Wing will continue to remain consistent in our ongoing self-evaluations and remain Air Force compliant while meeting our day-to-day mission demands.

The Operation Deep Freeze mission is inherently demanding. However, these challenges have afforded the Wing the opportunity to develop very unique capabilities, enjoy worldwide recognition, and draw attention to the need for the U.S. military to continue funding the LC-130s. Additionally, as interest in the exploration of Arctic natural resources increases, these capabilities have resulted in the Wing being well positioned to take advantage of



File Photo

newly emerging opportunities to support NORTHCOM and EUCOM. The value our unit brings to the National Science Foundation, and our nation as a whole, cannot be overstated.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Skibird. This is your magazine, and your feedback as to what you want included in it is welcomed. Please forward proposed submissions, articles and photographs to the Public Affairs office at [109AW.Public.Affairs@ang.af.mil](mailto:109AW.Public.Affairs@ang.af.mil). Alumni who are currently not on the mailing list can forward their address to the above email address as well.

Thank you for your service to this unit, past and present, and I look forward to hearing from you. Stop in, send an email, or participate in one of our many scheduled events.

**SAVE THE DATE:  
FAMILY DAY  
SUNDAY, SEPT. 14, 2014**

## 109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing



Commander

Col. Shawn Clouthier

Vice Commander

Col. John Russo

### **The Skibird**

Spring/Summer 2014  
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DEADLINE NOTICE: All items for The Skibird must be received by May and November UTAs. Address changes for alumni members, as well as addresses for new alumni members, should be directed to: 109AW/PA, 1 Air National Guard Road, Scotia, New York 12302-9752; by email to [109AW.Public.Affairs@ang.af.mil](mailto:109AW.Public.Affairs@ang.af.mil); or by calling (518) 344-2423.

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### **On the cover:**

An LC-130 Skibird flies over Ice Camp One near Resolute Bay during Operation Nunaliut 2014 on April 15, 2014. **See full story on [Page 6](#)** (Photo by Canadian Army Capt. Graham Macmillan/Joint Task Force (North), Yellowknife N.W.T.)



# Command Chief Notes

## Wing keeps busy with many 'firsts'

**By Chief Master Sgt. Amy Giaquinto**  
109th AW Command Chief

I am very excited that we are bringing back the Skibird magazine, not only for our members, but for our alumni and families! Past and present – everyone should see the great things the members of this Wing do every day! Thank you to everyone for the hard work put into this publication. A special shout out to the entire Public Affairs team for making it happen!

There were a lot of "firsts" this year. The Chief's Council sponsored the first Leadership Development Course. This three-day course for technical sergeants through senior master sergeants and second lieutenants through captains covers topics such as Profession of Arms, managing your career, force management, team building, and many more. Between January and May 2014 almost 90 students have gone through the course. Thank you to all the members involved in making this a reality!

The 109th was the first Air National Guard unit to go through the new Air Force Inspection System. Over 70 inspectors came to the base to grade us on Managing Resources, Executing the Mission, Improving

the Unit and Leading People. We were graded "Effective" overall and had a long list of exceptional performers. We have some work to do and some improvements to make, but we will get there. Great job everyone!

This year for the first time in history, the 109th Airlift Wing was invited to participate in Canada's annual Operation Nunalivut Exercise. The 109th Airlift Wing team operated out of Resolute Bay and Thule Air Base, Greenland, during the weeklong exercise. The maintenance team built a skiway out of sea ice in the vicinity of Resolute Bay to support LC-130 flight operations.

We welcomed back a team from the Small Air Terminal who deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. After some brief downtime, those same folks will gear up for our Arctic mission. We sent firefighters to the desert and aeromed folks to various time zones all in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

I would like to congratulate the Airman of the Year recipients:

**SNCO** – newly promoted Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Fitzgerald (LRS)

**NCO** – newly promoted Tech. Sgt. Robert Harrington (CF)



File Photo

**AMN** – newly promoted Staff Sgt. Kylie Tucker (MXS)

**First Sergeant** – Master Sgt. Amanda Blodgett (LRS)

Thank you for representing the 109th Airlift Wing so well! I wish you and your families the best. I look forward to seeing everyone during the 109th Family Day on Sunday, Sept. 14.



### CHIEF'S NIGHT AT THE ALL RANKS CLUB SATURDAY, JUNE 7

*The 109th Chiefs Council invites you  
to join them at the All Ranks Club  
for pizza and wings.*

*The All Ranks Club will be hosting an open  
house for non-members that evening.  
(Free admittance)*

# NYANG medics come together for HRF exercise

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt  
109th AW Public Affairs

**ORISKANY, N.Y.** – Medics with the 109th Airlift Wing joined Airmen from four other New York Air National wings to participate in the Homeland Response Force (HRF) exercise at the New York State Preparedness Training Center in Oriskany, N.Y., April 29 to May 2.

The medical Airmen were among 600 National Guard HRF troops from New York, New Jersey and Puerto Rico in the exercise, designed to test their ability to respond to disasters. The training evaluated the HRF's chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear response capability requiring the evacuation, decontamination and medical triage of casualties.

The Airmen comprised the medical element of the HRF, and their primary mission was medical triage in the wake of a disaster. Led by the 105th Airlift Wing, out of Newburgh, N.Y., the medical element is also made up of medics from the 109th Airlift Wing; the 106th Rescue Wing out of Westhampton Beach, N.Y.; the 174th Attack Wing out of Syracuse, N.Y.; and the 107th Airlift Wing out of Niagara Falls, N.Y.

"Our team includes physicians, nurses and (medical technicians)," said Lt. Col. Linda Rohatsch, the medical element commander. "When the patients get to us, they've already been decontaminated, and our job is to triage and stabilize them so we can return them to duty or send them out to a local hospital for definitive care."

During the week, the teams had to endure cold, rain and high winds. Due to the inclement weather, some of their training had to be conducted at an alternate location other than the tents they had planned on. The Airmen agreed that the flexibility they needed mirrored what may happen in the real world, and only made their training more realistic.

"We make do with what we have," said Rohatsch, who is the 105th Medical Group commander.

The medical area was set up with an immediate care tent as well as a minimal care tent. Medics in the noncontaminated zone, or "cold zone," triaged the patients and determined which tent they went to once they arrived. "We're set up to do anything that can be done in an emergency room," Rohatsch said.

Maj. Sharon Westbrook, 109th Medical Group, said this was her first experience with a HRF exercise.

"I am assigned to the minimal tent as a nurse," she said. "We get them bandaged up or if they have any eye irritations from the chemicals they were exposed to, we take them to the eye wash. We try and get them as stable as we can so we can get them out the door."

Lt. Col. Michael Fishkin, 106th Medical Group, was also assigned to the minimal area. He said all of the units coming together made it a great training environment. "There are 10 of us here from the 106th," he said. "It's always a pleasure to work with the other units. Everyone has their own unique talents that they bring with them."

"We always work well together," said Senior Master Sgt. Jacqueline Sweet-McNeill of the 109th Medical Group. She was one of two medics working the cold zone triage. "We're definitely ready for our validation on Friday."

The medics and the rest of the Soldiers and Airmen in the HRF put their training to the test and successfully completed their validation portion on May 3, with the medical element receiving an outstanding score.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt

Staff Sgt. Lorenzo Rodriguez leads a simulated patient to get medical help after triaging him in the "hot zone" during the FEMA II Homeland Response Force validation exercise at the New York State Preparedness Training Center in Oriskany, N.Y., on May 1, 2014. Lorenzo is assigned to the 109th Medical Group at Stratton Air National Guard Base and was one of almost 50 New York Air National Guard medics who participated in the exercise.



# 109th participates in Canadian Forces Arctic exercise

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt  
109th AW Public Affairs

Nearly 40 Airmen and two LC-130 ski-equipped aircraft from the 109th Airlift Wing demonstrated their vast capabilities on the Arctic ice as they joined Canadian Forces on April 11 to participate in Canada's annual Operation

Nunavut Exercise. Canada's Joint Task Force North has been conducting this exercise in and around the area of Resolute Bay, Nunavut, Canada, since 2007. This was the first year the 109th participated. This year more than 250

people were involved in the exercise, including the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy Fleet Diving Unit and the Royal Canadian Air Forces 440 (Transport) Squadron. The 109th Airlift Wing team, which consisted of maintainers and aircrew, operated out of Resolute Bay and Thule Air Base, Greenland, during the weeklong exercise. Shortly after arriving, maintainers and operations Airmen established a "skiway" camp in the vicinity of Resolute Bay to support LC-130 flight operations. "We see on the horizon the need for aircraft capabilities to meet Arctic taskings," said Lt. Col. Clifford Souza, 109th

Operations Group who was the lead 109th officer on the exercise. "We're trying to get out ahead of it and demonstrate LC-130 capabilities, so we're taking advantage of this exercise. We want to develop joint capabilities and interoperability with the Canadian Arctic Forces because they have a need to maintain an airlift reach throughout the high Arctic." The Canadians have ski-equipped CC-138 Twin-Otter aircraft which don't have the lift capacity or range the 109th LC-130s have. The 109th helped to bring fuel and supplies to the forward-deployed locations during the exercise. Normally Canadian aircraft would do this,



A CF-138 Twin Otter from 440 Squadron is being passed by an LC-130 ski-equipped aircraft April 15, 2014, during Operation Nunavut 2014. The 109th Airlift Wing used the LC-130 to position fuel and supplies for the operation.



The 109th Airlift wing ski-equipped LC-130 aircraft lands at the Resolute Bay Airport, Nunavut, on April 12, 2014, as part of Operation Nunavut 2014.

but the LC-130 is able to do in one trip what they would need to do in 10, Souza said. "This shows interoperability and integration between the U.S. and Canada to jointly develop capabilities for the future to operate in the Arctic," Souza said. "The Canadians are very interested in what we can provide," he said. "We're also taking advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate those capabilities to set up an expeditionary skiway on the sea ice. This has significance for search and rescue, because now we have the ability to go somewhere where there's no runway, set up a ski landing site on sea ice which can provide a forward staging area for personnel, supplies and fuel, to increase the operating radius of other aircraft." "Conducting joint and combined operations with our allies is a valuable learning experience for both sides, but in this case, the capabilities of our respective aircraft complement one another seamlessly," says Royal Canadian Air Force Maj. Bert Bolderheij, Air Task Force commander for Operation Nunavut. While the 109th AW's primary mission is to support the National Science Foundation in Antarctica and Greenland, in the past "the unit existed to support military customers from the high arctic,"

Souza said. This exercise gave the 109th AW the opportunity to prove that they can still support those missions if needed.



Lt. Clifford Souza talks to media at Stratton Air National Guard Base on April 10, 2014, about the upcoming Canadian exercise the 109th Airlift Wing participated in for the first time. Souza was the lead 109th AW officer for the exercise.



Inspection

Setting precedence



Col. Shawn Clouthier recognizes the newly formed Inspector General office April 6, 2014, following the 109th Airlift Wing's Unit Effectiveness Inspection. The 109th IG team was formed in September 2013 as part of the Air Force's new inspection process.

109th first ANG stand-alone unit to complete UEI

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt  
109th AW Public Affairs

The 109th Airlift Wing became the first stand-alone Air National Guard unit to complete their Unit Effectiveness Inspection capstone visit here March 14 under the new Air Force inspection system. About 75 inspectors from Air Mobility Command's Inspector General Team at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., consisting of functional experts from various career-field backgrounds, were here March 6-14 to inspect and validate the effectiveness of programs and self-assessment processes within the Wing. Most of the visit was comprised of IG-to-Airmen session interviews in conjunction

with the IG surveys conducted prior to the visit. "They based a lot of how they graded the four major graded areas [Managing Resources, Improving the Unit, Leading People and Executing the Mission] from information provided to them by the Airmen," said Chief Master Sgt. William Nolin, 109th AW Inspections superintendent. While the unit has yet to receive the formal report, Lt. Col. Matthew LeClair, 109th AW IG, said the feedback he has received has been positive. He recently received an email from Col. Andrew Molnar, AMC's IG Team Chief for the visit, stating: "A Gallup survey recently showed that 80 percent of Americans believe that serving in the U.S. military shows real

patriotism. I also want to thank you for your volunteer service in a mission done nowhere else, and even if they did, could not execute it better. With that level of responsibility no bonus can adequately compensate you for the contribution you make, and no deficiency can deter us from looking at the results to see what we can do better for our Airmen and our nation's assigned mission." LeClair said Airmen throughout the Wing impressed the IG team with the jobs they do each and every day. "Our performance and how well we did is the direct result of individual Airmen being professionals, doing their job right every day," he said. "Those Airmen who take pride in their role in the Wing and in the mission

Inspection

OUTSTANDING UEI PERFORMERS

- IG Coin Recipients**  
Senior Master Sgt. Greg Mihalko, 109th CF

**Individual Recognition**  
1st Lt. Angela Vasilakos, 109th AW  
Chief Master Sgt. Orlando Rodriguez, 109th AW  
Tech. Sgt. Kyle DeFeo, 109th SFS  
Tech. Sgt. Francis Johnson, 109th OSS  
Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Muller, 109th LRS  
Tech. Sgt. Brian Rulison, 109th AMXS  
Staff Sgt. Catlin Boyle, 109th SFS

**Team Recognition**  
*Aircrew Intelligence Training Team – 109th OSS*  
Staff Sgt. Joshua Hague  
Senior Airman Travis Inman

*Communications Flight Operation Raven Dew Team*  
Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Lapp (retired), 109th CF  
Senior Master Sgt. Greg Mihalko, 109th CF
- Master Sgt. Patrick Reimann, 109th CF  
Tech. Sgt. Scott Anderson, 109th CF  
Tech. Sgt. Robert Harrington, 109th CF  
Staff Sgt. Johnny Cope, 109th CF  
Senior Airman Daniel Street, 139th AES

*Food Service Team – 109th FSS*  
Tech. Sgt. Beth Davis  
Tech. Sgt. Keith Eriole  
Tech. Sgt. Dean Lansley  
Senior Airman Joseph Campbell  
Senior Airman Gary Doyle  
Senior Airman Joshua Henderson  
Senior Airman Nick Hochmuth  
Senior Airman Robert Johnson  
Senior Airman Jonathan Saunders  
Senior Airman Amy Scott  
Airman 1st Class Perry Rayner  
Airman Kahdeem Defreitas

*Inspector General Communications Support Team*  
Master Sgt. Christopher Moore, 109th CF  
Tech. Sgt. Jodi Habbinger, 109th CF  
Tech. Sgt. Robert Harrington, 109th CF  
Tech. Sgt. Henry Smith, 109th CF
- Senior Airman Matthew Almy, 109th CF  
Airman 1st Class Collin Eustis, 109th CF  
Airman 1st Class Joshua Speziale, 109th STUF  
Airman 1st Class Nicholas Tousignant, 109th STUF

*Inspector General Team*  
Lt. Col. Matthew LeClair, 139th AS  
Lt. Col. Alan Ross, 109th AW  
Maj. Glen Hisert, 109th AW  
Maj. Ernest Lancto, 109th MXG  
Chief Master Sgt. William Nolin, 139th AS  
Chief Master Sgt. Mark Schaible, 109th LRS  
Senior Master Sgt. Greg Mihalko, 109th CF  
Senior Airman Brittany Rankin, 109th MXG

*Aeromedical Evacuation Team*  
Entire 139th AES

have helped secure the future of the Wing through this inspection system." "Typically a capstone visit is a culmination of 48 to 60 months of continuous snapshots of how the wing's commander's inspection program is progressing," said Nolin. Because the program is so new and didn't go into effect until August of 2013, the Wing only had a few months to prepare for this visit. "This was not only verification and validation of how we were doing as a Wing, but how we were approaching this new Air Force inspection program as a Wing IG office," Nolin said. Under the new system, the goal is to have a continuous inspection process, instead of the typical inspections in the past which required a lot of preparation time. "The capstone is unlike in years past where after it's over we cycle down," Nolin said. "We want to keep pushing. We need to maintain the constant focus on ensuring compliance with all our directives and programs, and we as an IG are always looking out for potential undetected noncompliance. MICT [Management Internal Control Toolset] is one source of that. We still want people to maintain their MICT, even if it's just five minutes a day." Since the 109th AW is the first Air National Guard unit to undergo this inspection, in many ways it's become the model for other units to follow. More than 100 Airmen from various bases – active duty, Reserve and Guard – have come to the base to see the IG office and get a better understanding of how the new system works. Members of the IG team have also conducted site visits to other units to offer their expertise. LeClair said the Wing's receptive attitude toward the new system continues to make the program successful. "People have embraced the new program," LeClair said. "Colonel Clouthier articulated his vision for this, and his leadership team has supported him by allocating the right amount of resources that should ensure us success in the future."





# 109th AW takes on additional ODF mission

An LC-130 Skibird from the 109th Airlift Wing is jacked up on the frozen ice shelf of Pegasus Field, Antarctica, on Jan. 16, 2014, after aircrew discovered a landing gear issue. The maintenance crews of the 109th Airlift Wing do not have hangars to work out of while deployed to Antarctica for Operation Deep Freeze and must work in the elements and handle unique challenges nearly every day.

109th AW Public Affairs Staff

Airmen here capped five months of support of U.S. Antarctic research efforts by flying 1,100 researchers and support staff, and 43 tons of cargo, from McMurdo Station, Antarctica, to New Zealand aboard seven of its 10 ski-equipped LC-130 cargo planes.

This year, however, the snow and ice runway the C-17s and other non ski-equipped aircraft, use to land on is too soft to support their weight. Last year, strong winds blanketed the airfield and the area around it for several

square miles with volcanic dust and dirt from nearby terrain. When combined with the warm summer sun and mild January temperatures, this dirty snow and ice melted rapidly, forming melt pools 2 feet deep in areas. Although temperatures were cooling, the runway's condition made it impossible for any wheeled aircraft, including the C-17, to land or take off on it. Only the LC-130s flown by the 109th AW, which land on skis as well as wheels, could use the runway to move people and cargo.

The LC-130 has a maximum passenger load of 35-40 people for intercontinental flights between McMurdo Station and Christchurch, New Zealand, and for this reason it took more missions to redeploy research and support personnel to New Zealand as they started their journeys home. This extended the Airmen's deployment by a few weeks. The wing's Airmen normally return in mid-February to begin preparing to fly science support

## Schumer visits 109th AW

109th AW Public Affairs Staff

Sen. Charles Schumer was here Jan. 3 to tour the base and learn more about the 109th Airlift Wing's unique mission with the National Science Foundation. Schumer's support for the unit's mission was evident as he vowed to fight to maintain current levels of funding the wing receives through National Science Foundation appropriations. Budget debates in the Senate are certain in the coming months, and Schumer stated that the base is both a local economic resource and national scientific resource worth maintaining. Schumer's visit was an important step in gaining visibility of the wing's unique mission with political leaders throughout New York. Chuck Steiner, President of the Chamber of Schenectady County and Chairman of the Unified Military Affairs Council, worked with Schumer's office to arrange the meeting. "Senator Schumer's timely visit and tour of the Stratton Air National Guard Base has demonstrated his strong interest and ongoing support of the mission of the 109th Airlift Wing, especially as the Senate determines appropriations for the National Science Foundation and the Department of Defense," said Steiner.



Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara

Sen. Charles Schumer tours the cockpit of a 109th Airlift Wing LC-130 Skibird with Col. Shawn Clouthier, 109th AW commander, at Stratton Air National Guard Base on Jan. 3, 2014. Schumer visited the base to show support of the unit's unique mission and in preparation for the upcoming appropriations debate in the Senate.

"We are pleased to have Senator Schumer visit our unit today and learn more about our mission with the National Science Foundation," said Col. Shawn Clouthier, 109th AW commander. "We have a unique mission here, and his support, along with other community leaders, is greatly appreciated. While our mission and unit remain strong, the support from our

legislators is imperative because of the fiscal uncertainty." Joining Schumer for the tour were Chuck Steiner, Schenectady County Chamber of Commerce president, Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, New York Adjutant General, and Brig. Gen. Anthony German, Chief of Staff of the New York Air National Guard.

missions to Greenland during the Northern Hemisphere's summer months. "The unique capabilities of our aircraft have made it possible for scientists to do their work and get the most of the Antarctic summer research season," said Col. Shawn Clouthier, 109th AW commander. "I am proud of our Airmen who have deployed this season and the dedication and hard work they have and continue to put into this season." The wing has deployed 479 Air National Guardsmen to

Antarctica since the season began in October, with an average of 150 on duty at any one time. The partial federal government shutdown in October 2013 forced the U.S. Antarctic Program to consider canceling or deferring many research projects, primarily in and around McMurdo Station, and running the three U.S. Antarctic research stations in a caretaker mode. When the budget problems were resolved, the program

moved ahead with as much planned research as possible. The problems with the runway also meant the C-17s have not been flying into and out of the Antarctic since November 2013. This resulted in the 109th AW's Airmen flying more missions than first planned, Clouthier said. The wing normally deploys six LC-130s and six crews to fly missions. This year, the wing deployed seven aircraft and added additional crews and maintainers to handle the

extra mission requirements, Clouthier said. "Without the efforts of our aircrews and ground crews the 2013-2014 research season would not have been as successful," he said. This season, the 109th AW completed about 275 missions. The new missions represent a 57-percent increase in workload for the 109th. To accomplish this, the wing scheduled up to seven missions each day.





Airmen from the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing pose for a team photo in front of a C-130J Super Hercules on Feb. 28, 2014, at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The team was deployed from their home base in Scotia, N.Y.

## 109th SAT Airmen take mission overseas

By Senior Master Sgt. Gary J. Rihn  
455th AEW Public Affairs

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – Afghanistan is a world away from Antarctica.

But for a team of Airmen from the 109th Airlift Wing at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, N.Y., they are both familiar places.

The group of Airmen from the New York Air National Guard usually is responsible for supporting scientists from the National Science Foundation during their excursions to ice-covered regions, using their ski-

equipped LC-130 Hercules aircraft. They fly missions to Antarctica during the New York winters, which are summers in the Southern Hemisphere, and then shift missions to support Greenland during the northern summers.

However, a team of Airmen recently found themselves deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, working at the 455th Expeditionary Aerial Port Squadron.

At Bagram, they covered a wide range of duties at the passenger terminal, in the

aerial port yard, at a civilian contract airlift provider, and overseeing hazardous materials as part of Special Handling. Unlike at their home station, the team here was busy around the clock supporting the Operation Enduring Freedom mission.

Master Sgt. Patrick Fitzgerald, passenger terminal superintendent, noted that Bagram is the busiest airfield in the region, in both cargo and number of passengers handled.

“Between all of the jobs, we’re covering all aspects here. It’s extremely busy. If you take your hands off the wheel, your

eyes off the road, you’re going in the ditch,” said Fitzgerald.

“The Greenland season back home gets busy, but nothing like this here,” added Tech. Sgt. Matthew Pierce.

The passenger terminal was responsible for processing and moving hundreds of passengers every day, traveling to and from every corner of the region.

“We bring troops in, send troops home, and get their replacements here so that they can get back to their families,” said Tech. Sgt. Shane Long, line supervisor at the terminal.

Besides using large cargo

planes to move personnel, they also relied on smaller Short Takeoff and Landing aircraft that are able to fly passengers more efficiently on shorter routes while the larger C-17 and C-130 aircraft could concentrate on routes with heavier cargo loads.

Senior Airman Robert Buehler, here on his first deployment, said he enjoyed working the STOLS mission.

“I’ll always remember the sense of family; definitely everyone is close. We were in remote locations, but bonds developed, we grew together, and had each other’s backs every day,” said Buehler.

Besides handling passengers, the team also moved thousands of tons of cargo. The most memorable cargo loads were the ones called for during emergencies, and airdropped as bundles.

“Everything has to be

bundled quickly when called for in an emergency, for a serious cause, those guys really need that stuff quick, and we get it to them,” said Senior Airman Brittany Foster, who worked the dispatch desk.

Another important cargo, that required special handling, was explosives and ammunition. Tech. Sgt. Thomas Houck was responsible for ensuring proper packaging and labeling of hazardous goods.

“I know that I’m supporting the war effort by getting ammo to the guys that need it downrange,” said Houck.

Pierce added that while other cargo was important, the most meaningful events for him were Dignified Transfers of fallen warriors on their journey home.

“Human Remains transfers were definitely the most precious cargo we handled, they needed and deserved extra special attention,” said Pierce.

Though all of the team members were with the Air National Guard, that never seemed to matter to them or their leadership.

“We never differentiated between Active, Guard, and Reserve ... all were members of the 455th EAPS ‘Port Dawg’ family,” said Lt. Col. Ryan Norman, commander of the 455th EAPS. “All the members were vital to the fight and pushed the mission forward every day. They understood the importance of the mission and made it happen. I could not be more proud of their accomplishments, and I hate to see them leave. Their talents will be missed. I hope our paths cross again one day down the road.”

For some, this was their first deployment. For others, their last.

Airman 1st Class Stephen Marra was on his first deployment and happy to be

with a familiar group of Airmen. “I’m proud of what we do here, getting people to where they need to be. I couldn’t do it without the people around me”, he said.

At the other end of the spectrum was Houck, who spent time in the Navy, the Army and the Air Force and will be retiring soon. He said that this was his last deployment. “I know this will be my last deployment. I wanted to get the most out of it, and I know I did,” he said.

Houck surprised everybody by actually getting married, by proxy, while deployed. He was engaged before he left New York, planning to marry upon his return. When his fiancée’s sister passed away unexpectedly while he was here, he thought about the uncertainty of life and decided to move the marriage to the front of his priority list.

Everybody agreed that their time here was rewarding, even if separated from friends and family at home.

“It’s important to remember the families. When one member serves, the entire family gives,” said Tech. Sgt. Amie Moore, who worked at the passenger terminal.

“When you go home, people will say thanks for your sacrifice. Though maybe not outside the wire any more, you did sacrifice, and you accomplished something; all of those missions, those thousands of people and tons of cargo, you made it happen,” concluded Fitzgerald.

The team will return to New York in time to take part in their home station mission of supporting the polar flights. As one team member put it, “Sand to snow, pole to pole, we do it all.”



Airman 1st Class Gerald Mesick uses an all-terrain forklift to move cargo at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, on Feb. 28, 2014. Mesick was deployed from the 109th Airlift Wing, New York Air National Guard, and worked on the ramp at Bagram.





Family, friends welcome home Airmen

About 15 Airmen with the 109th Small Air Terminal returned home March 15, 2014, following a six-month deployment to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Friends and family filled Albany International Airport to greet their loved ones. At Bagram, the Airmen covered a wide range of duties at the passenger terminal, in the aerial port yard, at a civilian contract airlift provider, and overseeing hazardous materials as part of Special Handling, all in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photos by Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt)



Chiefs leave New York legacy behind at Camp Bastion

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt  
109th AW Public Affairs

The New York Air National Guard made its mark on Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, for almost a year and a half with the presence of New York Air National Guardsmen for three consecutive rotations – more specifically, three chiefs who each assumed the role of superintendent of the camp’s 651st Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron’s Aerial Port Flight.

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Mann, 109th Airlift Wing’s Small Air Terminal superintendent here, deployed in August 2012 to replace Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Wessberg, the 105th AW’s SAT superintendent in Newburgh. Six months later, Chief Master

Sgt. Robert Ward, 107th AW’s SAT superintendent in Niagara Falls, relieved Mann.

Wessberg deployed with his unit in March 2012. His team played a major role in training International Security Assistance Force personnel in loading and unloading cargo aircraft at forward operating locations.

They also designed loading and unloading procedures, which reduced air cargo idle time by 45 percent. Higher headquarters inspectors declared the Camp Bastion air cargo operation run by the 105th AW members the best in the area of operations and estimated they saved almost \$20 million by reducing backlogs in the cargo handling system. Wessberg’s team received the

Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award for their work.

“As the title states, it was truly a team effort from all of our folks, and I’m sure the other chiefs feel the same,” Wessberg said.

“This was my third deployment to Afghanistan, while difficult, it was probably the easiest transition I ever had,” Mann said. “(Chief Wessberg) had set up an aerial port, in a new facility, and established procedures and policies which made it easy to take control and keep the mission running smoothly.”

Mann was deployed with Airmen from the Guard, Reserve and active duty from various different states. During their rotation, the team moved more than 31,000 tons of cargo and assisted in moving more than 34,000 passengers. During an inspection in November, the aerial port was singled out for their outstanding achievements. The flight set a new Air Force Central Command record with the entire Air Terminal

In late February 2013, Ward arrived at Camp Bastion with his unit, as well as Guard and active duty Airmen. “This was my second deployment, first in Afghanistan,” Ward said. “Chief Mann had everything organized, every couple of weeks he sent me information and forms to complete prior to arriving. It was one of the smoothest transitions I have seen. My men were working missions within 24 hours.”

During Ward’s rotation, his team successfully moved 22,000 tons of cargo and assisted in the movement of 24,000 passengers.

During that time, Camp Bastion was slated to close, resulting in very little cargo coming in, but a lot going out.

During both Mann and Ward’s rotation, the camp came under attack. During Mann’s rotation it was one of the largest insurgent attacks in the camp’s history. “The next couple of days were very solemn, as some of our U.S. Marines had lost their lives,” Mann said.

The camp came under indirect fire attacks while Ward and his team were there. These were the first aerial attacks the camp had endured. On one attack, a rocket hit just outside the aerial port building, Ward said. “Luckily no one was seriously injured in the attack,” Ward said. “We had a long night assessing the damage, making workarounds and ensuring the building and personnel were safe.” Within seven hours of the attack, the aerial porters were back to loading cargo and processing passengers.

Over that year and a half, the deployed aerial port had become one of the most dependable and efficient aerial port units in Afghanistan. And the New York Air National Guard played a large role in making that happen.

“It was an honor to have followed two dynamic New York chiefs,” Ward said. “They both skillfully paved the way for operation success in the AOR.”

“It was an honor to have served with Chiefs Wessberg and Ward and to have left a New York legacy at Camp Bastion, knowing we made a difference,” Mann said.



Courtesy photo

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Mann (left) hands over the keys to the 651st Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron’s Aerial Port Flight to Chief Master Sgt. Robert Ward in March 2013. Ward was the third consecutive chief from the New York Air National Guard to take over the deployed aerial port. Mann is the 109th Airlift Wing’s Small Air Terminal superintendent.



## Wing comes together to congratulate promotees

Story by  
**Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt**  
Photos by  
**Staff Sgt. Benjamin German**  
*109th AW Public Affairs*

Airmen packed the Dining Facility on April 6 to cheer on their fellow Airmen who were getting promoted to the ranks of airman first class through technical sergeant.

This was the second promotion recognition ceremony the base has held for the junior ranking Airmen on the base. Chief Master Sgt. Amy Giaquinto, 109th Airlift Wing command chief, said in an earlier article that she hoped these basewide promotion recognition ceremonies would promote wing cohesiveness and boost morale.

"I want everyone to realize that their promotions are important," she said. "I heard someone who was being promoted to E-6 say that it was no big deal. ... I think that EVERY promotion is a big deal. It is important and a great way to recognize members in front of their peers."

"I do feel this type of ceremony will help with unit cohesiveness and boost morale because no matter what squadron you come from, the 109th is and will always be one big family," said Tech. Sgt. Anastasios Mantzouris, of the 109th Logistics Readiness Squadron who was one of the newly promoted Airmen being recognized. "I have heard many individuals say they wish there would be more Wing functions, and this can be one of those functions. It doesn't matter if someone in your section/squadron is being promoted or not, going and giving up a little of your time to congratulate an Airman is the right thing to do, and it should be something everyone wants to do."

Morale and cohesiveness were apparent

in the audience as each section was there to support their co-workers in the most spirited way they could. Force Support Squadron banged pots and pans together whenever one of their Airmen was called for their next stripe. Security Forces cheered loudly and shot Nerf darts at their promotees. Logistics Readiness Squadron was there with signs, noisemakers and confetti. And the Medical Group donned surgical masks and gloves as they cheered and held up signs for their peers.

To make things a little more interesting, a spirit stick, made by Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Gifford and his son, Nicholas, was up for grabs for the section that showed the most spirit. In the first ceremony held in December, the Medical Group was awarded the spirit stick. This time, Chief Master Sgt. Richard King, New York Air National Guard command chief, was the guest judge who would make the call – Force Support Squadron.

"I think this program is good for the units," said Senior Master Sgt. Peter Latniak, 109th Force Support Squadron's Base Services manager. "It brings Airmen together to form ideas enabling them to think outside the box to figure out how they can outdo other units to win the 'spirit stick.' It is also helping build camaraderie amongst members within their units."

While the spirit stick was maybe the most coveted item in the room, the real recognition went to the newly promoted Airmen in a ceremony that for most of them, was their most memorable yet.

"It was very motivating to have that kind of support from not only my peers,

but also the leadership within my section," said newly promoted Senior Airman Xenia Wieland, 109th Medical Group. "This will definitely be a memorable promotion, and with it being my first, it will help keep me driven to strive for excellence toward my future promotions."

"Congratulations to all of you, it is well deserved," King said to the newly promoted Airmen. "Promotions in the Air National Guard aren't just given anymore, they're earned."



More than 15 Airmen were promoted to E-3 through E-6 during a basewide promotion recognition ceremony on April 6, 2014.



109th Airlift Wing Airmen from all different sections on base cheer on their peers during a promotion recognition ceremony for E-3s through E-6s on April 6, 2014.



Chief Master Sgt. Richard King, New York Air National Guard command chief, holds the spirit stick as he decides which section showed the most spirit during the promotion recognition ceremony April 6, 2014



Airmen of the 109th Force Support Squadron celebrate after Chief Master Sgt. Richard King, New York Air National Guard command chief, named them the winner of the promotion recognition ceremony spirit stick on April 6, 2014.



# Airmen of the Year

## Airmen earn 109th AW honors

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt  
109th AW Public Affairs

Four 109th Airlift Wing Airmen were honored during the annual Airman of the Year Dinner as the Water's Edge Lighthouse on April 5, hosted by the 109th AW's First Six Council.

Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Fitzgerald, Master Sgt. Amanda Blodgett, Tech. Sgt. Robert Harrington and Senior Airman Kyliel Tucker were named as the Wing's top performers for 2013.

"I couldn't be prouder of each of these Airmen," said Col. Shawn Clouthier, 109th AW commander. "All four have proven to be the Wing's best and brightest and are the epitome of leading by example."

"I am quite honored to be the Airman of the Year," said Tucker, who was named the Wing's Airman of the Year and is assigned to the 109th Maintenance Squadron. "To be recognized by so many respected and established members of the wing was incredible. It was awesome to hear each of the speeches about the selectees, and I was honored to stand amongst such incredible NCOs. I know that the Wing expects great things from me, and I will not let them down."

This is the third year the First Six Council has hosted the Airman of the Year Dinner, and council members said they received a lot of positive feedback about the night.

"The First Six Council did an amazing job for the dinner," said Master Sgt. Amanda Blodgett, 109th Logistics Readiness Squadron first sergeant. "It was a great experience, and I was very honored and humbled to be nominated as First Sergeant of the Year."

"Hosting the dinner is very important to the Council because it is our chance to give back to the base," said Senior Airman James Comstock of the First Six Council. "We are able to spotlight the achievements of our fellow Airmen."

"The First Six Council once again put on a fantastic dinner to honor our Airmen," Clouthier said. "Their hard work was instrumental in giving the Airmen of the Year the recognition they deserve."

### Senior NCO of the Year

*Senior Master Sgt.  
Patrick Fitzgerald*  
109th Small Air Terminal

### First Sergeant of the Year

*Master Sgt. Amanda Blodgett*  
109th Logistics Readiness  
Squadron

### NCO of the Year

*Tech. Sgt. Robert Harrington*  
109th Communications Flight

### Airman of the Year

*Senior Airman Kyliel Tucker*  
109th Maintenance Squadron



Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara

The First Six Council coordinated the annual 109th Airlift Wing Airman of the Year dinner on April 5, 2014, at the Water's Edge Lighthouse in Scotia, N.Y. This the third year the council has hosted the event.



Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara

Senior Airman Kyliel Tucker, Tech. Sgt. Robert Harrington and Master Sgt. Amanda Blodgett were all honored during the 109th Airlift Wing's annual Airman of the Year Dinner on April 5, 2014. Chief Master Sgt. Mark Mann (right) accepted the award for Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Fitzgerald (not pictured).



## Addressing the ever-changing needs of our most valuable resources...

### *Our Airmen, Families and our Workforce*

#### Health and Wellness Center Staff

About three years ago, the 109th Health and Wellness Center opened its doors to address the idea that prevention and early intervention, education, and support were the keys to maintaining mission readiness. Opening the first known Wellness Center on any National Guard base was unique and trailblazing in a time when Airmen and their families were being asked to juggle more and more responsibilities on the work and home front.

Since its introduction to the base, the Health and Wellness Center Team has changed and evolved to address the ever-growing breadth of deployments, job demands, physical requirements and family needs. Community resources have been utilized to augment the services led by the Wellness Team incorporating vetted and trusted community partners.

Over its three-year development, the Health and Wellness Center has grown to encompass Mental Preparedness, Spiritual, Social and Physical Health, the four pillars that anchor the Wellness Center.

#### **The Social Pillar**

Social fitness refers to the ability to engage in healthy social networks that promote overall well-being and optimal performance. **The Airman and Family Readiness Manager** provides information, referral, career assistance, retirement planning, financial classes and addresses the varied landscape of Airman and Family total fitness.

#### **The Physical Pillar**

Physical fitness refers to the ability to physically accomplish all aspects of the mission while remaining healthy and uninjured. Focusing on endurance, strength, nutrition and recovery, the **Physical Health Director** provides consultations on nutrition and physical fitness related to achieving optimal health and mission readiness.



Courtesy photo by Joanna Henderson

Six families attended the 2013 Family Strong Bonds event at Camp Fowler near Speculator, N.Y. (pictured) The next Family Strong Bonds event is scheduled for June 13–15, 2014, at 1,000 Acres Ranch and Resort near Warrensburg, N.Y. For more information about Strong Bonds, contact Chaplain (Maj.) Jacob Marvel at [jacob.marvel@ang.af.mil](mailto:jacob.marvel@ang.af.mil).

#### **The Spiritual Pillar**

Spiritual fitness means strengthening a set of beliefs, principles or values that help your sense of well-being and purpose. It includes, but is not limited to, religious faith, world views, a sense of connectedness, ethics and morals. Spiritually fit Airmen use their beliefs, principles and values to persevere and accomplish their mission. The **Chaplain Corps** can aid you in identifying, nurturing and integrating your beliefs.

#### **The Emotional Pillar**

Psychological fitness refers to the ability to effectively cope with the unique mental stressors and challenges needed to ensure mission readiness. **The Director of Psychological Health** provides consultation, assessment and referral for Airmen and their family members.

The multidisciplinary team approach, as adopted through evidence-based theory and research, mirrors the collaborative measures we take to address the Airman's total fitness. Sensitive to the confidential

needs of all of our members, each member is treated with dignity and respect, addressing issues with confidentiality and care, all the while, wrapping the member with layers of support. The Wellness Team also provides educational classes, briefs, outreach and support, prescriptive to each member, unit and group's needs.

Our Health and Wellness Center continues to be recognized by higher headquarters as a model. As we continue to evolve and grow, we will be assisting other Air National Guard bases in their development of Health and Wellness Centers in New York and in other far-reaching states. Look for your next Health and Wellness Center catalog outlining resources, classes and upcoming events for you and your family or stop by the Health and Wellness Center, peruse the resource library and familiarize yourself with the Health and Wellness Team. We are here to help and assist. Thank you for your support.



# Leading the way

## Course teaches Airmen skills to become better leaders

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt  
109th AW Public Affairs

More than 25 New York Air National Guardsmen got “re-blued” over the January Unit Training Assembly during the 109th Airlift Wing’s first Leadership Development Course held by the 109th AW Chief’s Council.

The three-day course, held Jan. 10-12 for technical sergeants through senior master sergeants and second lieutenants through captains, covered topics including Profession of Arms, performance review writing, time management and career management.

In an article published in October, Chief Master Sgt. Amy Giaquinto, 109th AW command chief, said her priorities mirror Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling, Air National Guard command chief, which is for Airmen to renew their commitment to the Profession of Arms and Health of the Force, and recognize/ embrace our accomplishments. These three focus areas cover training, leadership, mentorship, the “little Brown Book,” safety, resilience, recognition and realizing how each Airman fits into the mission.

Giaquinto had said she wanted to bring all this back through

the Leadership Development Course.

“I was expecting to gain some valuable tools that I could take back with me to my office to utilize in my job,” said Senior Master Sgt. Brian Roberts, human resources specialist with Joint Forces Headquarters in Latham. “I was hoping it wouldn’t be death by PowerPoint, and it turned out it wasn’t. It was really great getting to meet some of the men and women who work on the base. They bring a lot of perspective and diversity from working in the field that I normally wouldn’t get a chance to see while working here at (the Division of Military and Naval Affairs).”

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Schaible, 109th Logistics Readiness Squadron, said one of their goals was to get Airmen to know others around the base. “All these people now know people they probably didn’t even know before the course because of the different duty sections. Now they have a common ground after going through the course together.”

“Seeing the different perspectives from different areas on the base is not always available when you are coming in doing your job and going home,” said Tech. Sgt. Anna

Franklin, noncommissioned officer in charge of formal schools with the 109th Force Support Squadron. “Talking to other members in the unit that work in all different areas provided the exposure to how what we each do really impacts the mission.”

Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Trottier, 109th Intelligence Office, served as an instructor for a teambuilding exercise on the second day. Students were separated into three teams and given a box of uncooked spaghetti and a bag of marshmallows. They had 50 minutes to build a tower with just those supplies.

“The goal was to come together as a team to build the highest tower,” said Trottier. “We asked what strategies they used, did they assign taskers and how they communicated. Did the teamwork work, did they establish a goal? We also wanted to know what challenges they had. Everybody did a great job. The winning team built a tower that was 39.5 inches. They all communicated and worked as a team, even with the time constraint.”

“Exposure to problem solving with other members in the unit was eye opening,” Franklin said. “Everyone has a different perspective, but working together we can come

to a solution.”

“It was a very good way to teach how you can accomplish a common goal when you work together,” said Master Sgt. Donna Torres, equal employment specialist at Joint Forces Headquarters.

Along with teamwork, Torres said some of the things she took away from the weekend were “leadership skills, a better understanding of the (Enlisted Performance Review) process, great information about counseling subordinates, (the importance of) communication, programs that were offered by the Wellness Center, dress and appearance, great pointers on organizing outlook, and much more.”

“I would absolutely recommend others to take this course,” Roberts said. “In the Guard, we sometimes don’t have the opportunities to attend these types of courses. Any chance a member gets to get ‘re-blued’ they should jump on it. We should never stop trying to learn and grow as NCOs and senior NCOs.”

Schaible said they received very positive feedback from the students. He said their feedback is what will continue to make the course even better.

“One of the key things we kept reiterating to the class is this is not the Chief’s Council’s class, this is your class,” he said. “You can help us do this better for the next class. This should be an ever-evolving and changing leadership development course.”

“I was fortunate to observe different portions of (the



Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Michelle Shafer

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Schaible instructs a portion of the 109th Airlift Wing’s first Leadership Development Course at the Naval Operations Support Center on Jan. 12, 2014.

course),” Giaquinto said. “Leaders came together to create the three-day course curriculum and a small group of students were the first to take advantage of this training opportunity. I want to thank both groups for laying the groundwork, and I am looking forward to more future leaders attending this course in the upcoming months. I highly encourage all 109th members take advantage of this unique training opportunity.”

The Wing has held two additional classes since the first one in January. Airmen who are interested should be on the lookout for announcements of upcoming classes and talk with their first sergeants about signing up.

Airmen construct a tower made of spaghetti and marshmallows during a team building exercise May 8, 2014, during the 109th Airlift Wing’s third Leadership Development Course.



Photo by Senior Airman Xenia Wieland





Senior Master Sgt. Michael Decker goes over what the Small Air Terminal will be training on for the day on April 7, 2014. Training included preparing vehicles and other cargo that would be transported to Greenland for the start of the 2014 season.



(Above) Senior Master Sgt. Michael Decker shows Airmen how to measure the height of aerospace ground equipment (AGE) that will deploy to Greenland. (Left) Tech. Sgt. Kyle Partlow and Staff Sgt. Jessica Collins measure the wheelbase of AGE equipment. The Airmen were getting training on preparing cargo for deployment which would actually be deploying to Greenland for the start of the season.

Real-world training

Photos by  
Staff Sgt. Benjamin German



(Above) Master Sgt. Rick Cowser and Staff Sgt. Jason Borgen compute the center of balance of each piece of AGE equipment and then document it for computer input. (Right) Master Sgt. Chris Wood guides Master Sgt. Rick Cowser on to wheel scales to get axle weights. Senior members of the 109th Small Air Terminal trained Airmen on how to weigh, center and balance vehicles and AGE equipment that was going to be transported to Greenland for the start of the 2014 season. For some Airmen in the Small Air Terminal, this was their first opportunity for hands-on, real-world training.





# Playing for a cause

*Hockey team keeps memory of fallen firefighters alive*

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt  
109th AW Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Adam Myers, 109th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, and Master Sgt. Mike Lazzari, 109th Mission Support Group first sergeant, faced off on the ice during a charity hockey game hosted by the MacBoston FD Hockey Team on March 22 at the Civic Center in Queensbury, N.Y.

MacBoston played against the FDNY (Squad288/Hazmat-1/Rescue-1) Hockey Team, which Lazzari is a member of, raising money for the MacBoston 18 Truck organization, a nonprofit that “promotes the brotherhood of the Fire Service and keeps the memory of our Fallen Brothers and Sisters alive.” The game was in conjunction with the Adirondack Phantoms game later that evening.

Myers started the team about a year ago, with the intent of raising money for various fire service organizations. MacBoston 18 Truck was one of those organizations and was also close to his heart.

“My father was a line of duty death in 1997,” Myers said. “MacBoston started their organization a couple years prior because of a line of duty death in Hudson Falls, and they were there for my father’s funeral.”



Courtesy photo by Joanne Duffy

Staff Sgt. Adam Myers is the founder of the MacBoston FD Hockey Team. The purpose of the team is to organize and participate in benefit games to raise money for charities and organizations that pertain to the fire service, honoring Line of Duty Deaths and their families. Myers is a firefighter with the 109th Civil Engineer Squadron and a volunteer firefighter with the Schuyler Hose Company in Schuylerville, N.Y.

Myers, a volunteer firefighter with the Schuyler Hose Company in Schuylerville, said his father had gotten him into playing hockey as a child. “He got a little upset with me when I stopped playing,” Myers joked. “So this is kind of a tribute to him.”

The MacBoston Hockey Team consists of about 25 local firefighters, both volunteer and career, throughout the area. He and two other firefighters with the 109th CES, Fire Capt. John Saupp and Senior Airman Daniel Marchand, are part of the team.

“More people are getting to know about us now, which is great, and we’re also getting better as a team,” Myers said. “We kind of just threw 20 guys together who really didn’t know each other. We’re really starting to work well together as a team.”

The team comprises all different skill levels. “We have some who are really good and some who have just started.”

Myers said they reached out to the FDNY after Lazzari mentioned they also had a team. “They were all for it,” Myers said. “It was a joint effort. Having them there really helped, because pretty much anything that has FDNY involved brings in a lot of people.”

Myers said they had a good turnout, especially being that they are such a new team. MacBoston won the game 9–5, but said FDNY may be able to come back for revenge. “We’re trying to make this an annual event.”

More than \$6,700 was raised during the game through ticket sales and raffles. The mission statement of MacBoston 18 Truck is “to keep alive the memory of NYS firefighters who died in the Line of Duty by promoting firefighter safety through education and raise public awareness with fire safety and prevention and assist in the



Courtesy photo by Andy Camp/AC Design

The MacBoston FD Hockey Team played the FDNY Hockey Team on March 22, 2014, as a benefit game to raise money for the MacBoston 18 Truck organization. MacBoston beat FDNY 9–5.

recruitment of firefighters.”

While the team’s intent is to benefit firefighters who have died in the line of duty, they have also done events for other charity organizations, including a game in October to benefit breast cancer awareness, where they raised just over \$1,000.

Myers is currently working on the team’s next benefit game to raise money for the New York State Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Albany. The game is scheduled for Labor Day weekend at Union College. To find out more about the MacBoston FD Hockey Team, visit their website at [www.macbostonhockey.com](http://www.macbostonhockey.com). They are also on Facebook as “MacBoston FD Hockey”.



Courtesy photo by Andy Camp/AC Design

MacBoston’s Daryl Clifford faces off against Anthony Galtie from FDNY Squad 288 during a benefit game March 22, 2014. The teams raised more than \$6,700 for the MacBoston 18 Truck organization.

# Stratton Activities Club



Join the Stratton Activities Club Facebook group to get information on upcoming events. The group is set up to connect members together in physical activity off base, advance at whatever pace they wish, and achieve their individual training or racing goals.

[www.facebook.com/groups/109thSAC](http://www.facebook.com/groups/109thSAC)



# In the Community



Courtesy Photo

## Victory Parade

Airmen with the 109th Airlift Wing and family members participated in the Union Dutchmen's victory parade in Schenectady, N.Y., on April 17, 2014. This was the first national championship for the men's hockey team. Pictured are (from left): Lt. Col. Matthew LeClair, Chief Master Sgt. Mark Giaquinto, Col. Walter Wintsch, Capt. Ashley FitzGibbon, Sara O'Connor, Katie Nealon, A.J. Giaquinto, Chief Master Sgt. Amy Giaquinto, Senior Airman Brittany Rankin and 1st Lt. Lynsey Cross.



Courtesy photo

## Memorial Day Parade

About 40 Airmen with the 109th Airlift Wing marched in the annual Scotia-Glenville Memorial Day Parade on Wednesday, May 21, 2014. The 109th also displayed a Humvee, the Baby Herc and their recruiting car in the parade.

# In the Community



Photo by Staff Sgt. Blair Sass



Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara



Photo by Staff Sgt. Blair Sass

## Stratton Interns

High school seniors recently completed their 22-hour internship at the 109th Airlift Wing. The students pictured top left completed their internship through Troy Questar May 5–9, 2014, in Aviation Maintenance. The students pictured top right also completed their internship through Troy Questar in Aviation Maintenance March 24–28, 2014. The students pictured left completed their internship through Hudson Questar in Welding May 5–9, 2014. Not pictured are the students who completed their internship through Hudson Questar May 5–9, 2014, in Aviation Flight.



Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara

## Plane Pull

The 109th Airlift Wing's team of 25 kicked off the Unified Military Affairs Council Airplane Pull event on May 22, 2014, at Richmor Aviation, Schenectady County Airport. About 20 teams from around the local area participated in the event with the goal of pulling a LC-130 "Skibird" 15 feet in the fastest time possible. The 109th AW team pulled the aircraft in 14:48 seconds.



# Retired pay age reduced

**By Capt. Thomas Feeley**  
109th Force Support Squadron

**D**id you know that if you are going to retire under traditional guard status some of you may be able to start collecting your retired pension earlier than age 60? Effective January 28, 2008, the FY 2008 NDAA has authorized the Reserve retired pay age to be reduced below age 60 by three months for each aggregate of 90 days active duty performed in support of a contingency during the same fiscal year. The age for retired pay cannot be reduced below the age of 50.

Involuntary mobilization and voluntary active duty in support of a contingency qualify, but there is no requirement to be involuntarily mobilized, to support a contingency or to serve on active duty outside the continental United States to receive credit under the law. Most active-duty time qualifies,

including training, operational support duties and school tours. It does not matter whether active-duty time is paid for under military or Reserve personnel appropriation accounts, provided such active duty is performed under the authority of 10 U.S. Code statute 12301(d).

Also included is full-time National Guard duty served under a call to active service by a governor and authorized by the President or the Secretary of Defense under 32 U.S.C. statute 502(f) for purposes of responding to either a national emergency declared by the president or a national emergency supported by federal funds.

The following time served on active duty is not creditable service for purposes of reducing retired pay age:

- As a member of the Active Guard and Reserve (10 U.S.C. statute 12310);
- On an annual tour (10 U.S.C.

statute 12303);

- While in captive status (10 U.S.C. statute 12301 (g));
- As a member not assigned to, or participating satisfactorily in, units (10 U.S.C. statute 12303);
- Under active-duty agreements (10 U.S.C. statute 12311);
- For disciplinary/courts-martial (10 U.S.C. statute 12315);
- For muster duty (10 U.S.C. statute 12319).

Qualifying active-duty service performed after January 28, 2008, the date on which the fiscal 2008 National Defense Authorization Act was enacted, is creditable. The law does not provide credit for time served on or before that date.

To determine if the time on active duty you have performed is qualifying service toward the reduced retired pay age, you will need to submit completed and certified copies of the orders through vPC-GR for review and verification. If ARPC determines that the service is qualifying, the

documents will be approved, and you will have the ability to view your Confirmed Retired Pay Eligibility through vPC-GR. If ARPC determines that the service is not qualifying, the documents will be disapproved.

In order to submit the request, log into vPC-GR and click on the "Actions Requests" tab. On the right side of the page underneath the Retirements heading, click on the Reduced Retired Pay Age link. Type your initials on the next page and you will be taken to the submission form. Log into AROWS and save the orders you believe are qualifying of this provision to your desktop and then upload those documents into the submission form and then click submit. To monitor the status of the submission, you will be able to see the submission under the worklist tab in vPC-GR. Any further questions regarding this can be directed to the 109th FSS Military Personnel Flight.

# StARS gains 5 new members

**By Senior Master Sgt. Greg Mihalko**  
109th Communications Flight

**T**he Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) – formerly known as Military Affiliate Radio System – is a Department of Defense (DOD) sponsored program, established as separate managed and operated programs by the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The program consists of licensed amateur radio operators who are interested in military

communications. They contribute to the MARS mission providing auxiliary or emergency communications on a local, national, and international basis as an adjunct to normal communications.

In order to fulfill the base MARS requirements, a team of Amateur Radio Examiners led by FBI specialist Frank Frisone, provided testing for amateur radio licenses which took place

in the Dining Facility on Jan. 12. Congratulations to Senior Airman Matthew Livingston, Tech. Sgt. Scott Anderson, Tech. Sgt. Dave Gifford, Master Sgt. Christopher Moore and Master Sgt. Patrick Reimann on successfully passing the test. Senior Master Sgt. Greg Mihalko was also successful in obtaining the next level of privileges on his amateur license.

StARS Club members

will prepare for emergency communications to include Sky Warning weather tracking, MARS and satellite communications working with local and federal authorities for exercises and real world events. For those interested in joining the world of amateur radio, please contact Chief Master Sgt. Michael DelGiacco. The next testing date is scheduled for June UTA.





Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara

Members of the 109th AW Alumni Association cook lunch for members on the base on May 14, 2014, as part of their Summer Wednesday Lunch Program.

## Alumni Association seeks new members

**By Retired Chief Master Sgt.  
Bill McBride**  
Alumni Secretary

### Summer Lunch Program

The Summer Wednesday Lunch Program began April 30 on base at the All Ranks Club. We are always looking for volunteers from our members to help with this program. Volunteers are needed between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on scheduled Wednesday lunch days. The meal program runs through the last Wednesday in August.

### Who We Are

The 109th Alumni Association was formed back in the early 1980s as a support organization for the 109th Airlift Wing. Since its existence, the Alumni has been involved with and has supported Wing Family Days, full-timers' picnics, All Ranks Club events and Wing anniversary celebrations. The Alumni has donated benches for the Base Flagpole area and

bicycles to local schools for merit programs. Our Alumni also provides tuition funds to send Junior Class Boys to the American Legion Boys State Program every June.

Alumni membership is open to any former 109th member. You do not have to be retired to belong to the Alumni. At this time we have about 110 members, and we would like to see that number grow. Applications are available in the All Ranks Club. All meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the All Ranks Club in Bldg. 24 at Stratton Air National Guard Base. We always look forward to seeing new faces at our meetings.

### 2014 Officers

Alumni Election of Officers was held at the January 2014 monthly Alumni meeting. (You just may recognize some of these people).

President: John Ryan  
Vice President: Milt Terwilliger  
Secretary: Bill McBride

Treasurer: Ken Bliss,

Board of Director Members:

Bill Pickney, Howard Ray, Charlie Shatley and Annette Briggs.

### Upcoming Events

The 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association Summer Picnic will be held on Saturday afternoon on Aug. 2 this summer on base at the picnic area. Plan on attending for some plain old camaraderie. All Alumni members whose dues are paid up for 2014 will receive a Picnic RSVP form in the mail.

We also have a swell Christmas party every year. The party is always held on our December meeting night. The last two of these were held in the dining hall and were catered by the Turf Tavern from Scotia and were wonderful events. We hope to see you there also.

Until the next issue of this Skibird Magazine Alumni News, stay happy, healthy, safe and enjoy Spring and think Summer.





Courtesy photo by Carrie Krogmann/Parental Releases Confirmed

Staff Sgt. Jeff Hayes spoke to first-graders at Kensington Road Elementary School in Glens Falls, N.Y., on Nov. 8, 2013, about Veterans Day.

**Staff Sgt. Jeff Hayes** joined the active duty Air Force in 2006. He said he was looking for direction and purpose, and the military offered him those opportunities.

After his initial enlistment, Hayes looked into the Reserve so he could further his education. He joined the Reserve unit at Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass., where he earned his associate's degree. He decided he wanted to be closer to home and a friend of his told him about the 109th Airlift Wing. "Ultimately I wanted to represent the Air Force and the state of New York while being close to my family and friends at the same time," Hayes said. "This unit allowed me to do just that."

Hayes joined the unit as a knowledge operations manager with the 109th Airlift Wing staff.

"Being on active duty and a reservist was a great experience because it allowed me to see the ebb and flow of dramatic changes in ops tempo and the effects it has on its personnel. Once I was stationed here, I was almost taken aback by how friendly everyone was and how close-knit their relationships with their colleagues were. You can feel the genuineness when you come through the gate. I'm blown away and so grateful to be a part of this base."



Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara

Staff Sgt. Kylie Tucker works in the Sheet Metal Shop with the 109th Maintenance Group. Tucker was recently selected as the 109th Airlift Wing Airman of the Year.

**Staff Sgt. Kylie Tucker** has been with the 109th Airlift Wing for five years. He said he joined the Air National Guard because he wanted to do something that mattered. "The job I was at was going nowhere, and I wanted to actually DO something that mattered. I heard about the Guard, and all of the benefits associated with it, and I made my decision to join."

Tucker is assigned to the 109th Maintenance Group and was recently selected as the 109th Airlift Wing's Airman of the Year. He was promoted to staff sergeant in May of this year. Besides his work with the Wing, he is also a lifelong fitness enthusiast and loves martial arts.

"I have studied many different disciplines over the years and have even obtained a boxing instructor certification," he said. He said he hopes to bring the knowledge he has learned as a personal trainer over the years to the members of the 109th Airlift Wing.

## Awards

### Meritorious Service Medal

Col. Joseph E. Lamendola – JFHQ  
Lt. Col. Fabio S. Ritmo – MXS  
CMSgt Timothy M. Kane – SFS  
SMSgt Joseph V. Cerniglia – MXG  
SMSgt Edward A. Holub – JFHQ  
SMSgt John W. Lawlor – AMXS  
SMSgt Greg M. Mihalko – CF  
SMSgt Peter C. Nestor – LRS  
MSgt Gary R. Brown – SFS  
MSgt Mark C. DeMichele – ARPC  
MSgt Jeremy P. Martelle – OSS  
MSgt Joseph F. Thorpe – AS

### Air Force Commendation Medal

Lt. Col. Alan N. Ross – AW  
Maj. Ryan P. Walsh – LRS  
2nd Lt. Colette D. Muller – AW  
SMSgt Richard D. Felton – OSS  
SMSgt Patrick J. Fitzgerald – LRS  
MSgt Amanda L. Blodgett – LRS  
TSgt Scott E. Anson – SFS  
TSgt Richard W. Hall – MXS  
TSgt Matthew R. Kergel – AMXS  
SSgt Kevin D. Ronca – MXS  
SrA Brittany L. Rankin – MXS  
SrA Kylie J. Tucker – MXS

### Aerial Achievement Medal

MSgt Michael D. Cousineau – AS

### Air Force Achievement Medal

Col. Joseph E. Lamendola – JFHQ  
Lt. Col. Ronald H. Ankabrandt – CF  
TSgt Eric D. Carlo – MXS  
TSgt Jeremy C. Naparty – AES  
SSgt Raymond E. Crispell – MXS  
SrA Christopher P. Holt – AMXS  
SrA Latisha C. Webb – AMXS

*Dec. 1, 2013 – May 1, 2014*



## Officer Promotions

### Brigadier General

Dawne L. Deskins – JFHQ

### Lieutenant Colonel

Daniel P. Legere – AES

James E. Maunz – AS

### Major

Anthony L. Bucci – AW

Rita M. O'Brian – AES

### Captain

Joshua A. German – AS

Jennifer L. Seney – AES

James R. VanWormer – CES

Kenneth C. Walther – MDG

### First Lieutenant

Michael E. Fusaro – MDG

Colette D. Muller – AW

Joseph C. Nolan – MDG

Shawn R. Rulison – LRS

### Second Lieutenant

Matthew E. Cotter – OSS

David H. Koscinski – AS

Tiernan J. Nolan – STUF

### Satellite NCOA Class 14-7

**Phase I:** Aug. 25 – Nov. 25

Weekday Night Schedule

Stratton ANGB

**Phase II:** Dec. 2 – Dec. 18

McGhee-Tyson ANGB, Tenn.

### Satellite ALS Class 15-2

**Phase I:** Oct. 25 – Nov. 25

Full Saturday/Sunday Schedule

Stratton ANGB

**Phase II:** Dec. 3 – Dec. 18

McGhee-Tyson ANGB, Tenn.

*Contact your UTM for eligibility and application process.*

## Enlisted Promotions

### Chief Master Sergeant

Ward M. Lacy – CES

Joshua Walters – SFS

### Senior Master Sergeant

Kelly Eustis – SFS

Kevin Moughan – MXG

Brian M. Roberts – JFHQ

Kenneth Towne – MXG

### Master Sergeant

Bret Backus – AS

Christopher Collins – AS

Jennifer Conti – AW

Paul Davignon – SFS

Kyle DeFeo – SFS

Aletha K. DellaRocco – JFHQ

Keith Eriole – FSS

Edward Lovett – MXG

Scott Molyneaux – LRS

Jeremy Muller – LRS

David R. Ricks – MXG

Joseph S. Smith – AES

Daniel W. Swatling – AS

April E. Veeder – AES

### Technical Sergeant

Michael Bernardi – MXG

Joshua Bowers – MXG

Caleb T. Brumleve – LRS

Scott Carpenter – MXG

Johnny N. Cope – CF

Kevin J. Couture – CES

Scott Everson – AS

James Gagne – AW

Robert C. Harrington – CF

Todd W. Howard – LRS

Anastasios G. Mantzouris – LRS

Mark Milian – AW

Kerry Nicklas – MXG

Andre Noel – SFS

Andrew Nowacki – MXG

Kevin Ronca – MXG

Shaun Stillman – CES

### Staff Sergeant

Stephen Bogart – CES

Jeremy Bourquin – CES

Steven DeRuggiero – MXG

Nathan P. Jordan – AS

Ashley Leonard – MDG

Abby Nelson – MDG

Brian M. Reith – OG

Kylief Tucker – MXG

Marcus Wallace – MXG

Nicholas S. Willard – STUF

### Senior Airman

Joseph M. Campbell – FSS

Jason Candido – MXG

Thomas Gallagher – MXG

Joshua L. Henderson – FSS

John Konczeski – CF

Christopher Lovelock – MXG

Manuel Morales – SFS

Steven J. Perrigo – LRS

Joseph V. Peters – AS

Adam Podbielski – SFS

Christopher Prusak – MXG

Xenia Wieland – MDG

### Airman 1st Class

Morgan K. Boldish – LRS

Ray A. Caban – STUF

Elizabeth M. Campbell – STUF

Patrick A. Cotnoir – FSS

Francis DiCaprio – SFS

Tiffany S. Dobrzanski – STUF

Edward Gregory – LRS

Sean M. Madigan – STUF

Sarah B. McKinney – STUF

Edwin P. Murey – STUF

Cody Platt – STUF

Scott C. Pierce – STUF

Matthew S. Rivera – STUF

Emily A. Roth – STUF

Nyan W. Tun – STUF

Jared M. Walker – STUF

Benjamin J. Watsky – STUF

### Airman Basic

Austin S. Dean – STUF

Jaelyn M. Lavin – STUF

Cody B. Russell – STUF

*Dec. 1, 2013 – May 1, 2014*



**109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing**  
1 Air National Guard Road  
Scotia, NY 12302-9752



File Photo illustration

### **Mission statement**

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

### **Vision statement**

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