

## Capt. Jodi Snyder

*Public Affairs Officer in Charge*



### Honoring the Fallen

*(Feature Story)*

An Airman from the 171st Air Refueling Wing honors fallen veterans by cleaning headstones and placing wreaths on their graves during the holiday season.

Tech Sgt. Robert Hasenflu, an aircraft mechanic at the 171st ARW, has volunteered for the past six years to support the efforts of volunteer organizations in commemorating those who served our country.

“It brings joy to my heart,” said Hasenflu. “It’s something that I really feel good about doing.”

For the past five years, Hasenflu has volunteered at the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania. He partners with Wreaths Across America to ensure members of the armed forces are remembered.

“After the first time that I volunteered, I wanted to be an advocate. I just felt like a lot of people don’t know about their efforts,” said Hasenflu. “So I became a sponsorship group leader and signed up for a website through Wreaths Across America to try and get more wreaths donated.”

While laying the wreaths is important, Hasenflu adds a special touch to each grave after all the wreaths are laid.

“It’s for honoring people so you want it to look as good as possible, so for me it is the attention to detail. Each wreath has to be placed just right, so if I need to take the time to straighten and fluff a ribbon, that’s what I’ll do,” said Hasenflu.

In addition to placing wreaths on graves, Hasenflu also volunteers to clean headstones. Most recently, he volunteered at a ceremony paying tribute to all those who died on 9/11.

“It was very humbling. Cleaning the headstones in such a quiet place creates time for you to take a moment to reflect,” said Hasenflu. “I feel like remembering those who are gone is a small, little thing that we can do to show we are proud of our country.”



### Air National Guard Continues 30 Year Partnership with Lithuania

*(Information Story)*

Air National Guard Continues 30 Year Partnership with Lithuania-  
2nd Place Information Story

The 258th Air Traffic Control Squadron, a geographically separated unit of the 171st Air Refueling Wing, conducted airfield surveys with Lithuanian military partners during a country visit May 20-27, 2023.

During the most recent visit, Airmen from the 258th, partnered with Lithuanian airfield officers and pilots to set up aerial surveys to collect data for future planning. An airfield site survey involves inspecting the airfield for quality landing surfaces or any other obstacle that could prohibit an aircraft from landing there.

“It was really insightful to get their (Lithuanian’s) perspective on how the airfields can be used, where we fit into that, and how we can contribute to making the vision successful,” said Capt. Benjamin Kaufman, an airfield operations officer who was a part of the trip.

The Pennsylvania National Guard has connected with the Lithuanian military for the past 30 years through the State Partnership Program. The SPP is a program designed to increase cooperation between Guard units and other nations’ militaries.

“Practicing together builds continuity. The familiarity of being in Lithuania and being around some of the same people, you already know the goals and what the intent is. It helps kick things off in the right frame of mind for what we are trying to accomplish. The more we work together, the better off we will be,” said Kaufman.

Since 1993, Guard units across Pennsylvania have hosted Lithuanian personnel and participated in U.S. European Command, U.S. Army Europe and NATO exercises.

“Working together gives each one of us a different perspective on operations, the way we train, and how we can move forward,” said Chief Master Sgt. Jason Everetts, an air traffic controller who also attended.

Because of the SPP, relationships have been successfully formed within 100 nations.

The SPP enables the United States, allies, and partners to build stability while increasing security around the world.

“Overtime, these relationships lead to a force multiplier,” said Everetts.

When units conduct military-to-military engagements with partner nations, defense goals are fortified.

“It’s great for joint training. We can get out equipment, go through different scenarios and pass the information along back and forth. It’s productive for both of us to get that information,” said Kaufman.

Building relationships throughout the world also creates opportunities for mutual assistance.

“Having conversations about what each one of us can contribute is valuable. Air traffic control partnerships create potential for us to grow capabilities,” said Kaufman.

# Senior Master Sgt. Shawn Monk

*Public Affairs Senior Enslited Leader*



## Ten Tankers Launched from 171st in One Day (Information Story)

Ten KC-135 aircraft were launched in a single day by the 171st on Oct. 25, 2022, making it one of the busiest days for flying at the unit on record.

The ten aircraft were supporting a wide variety of different missions all over the country and globally.

Typically, a day of flying at the 171st Air Refueling Wing would include the launch of four to six aircraft.

Of the ten missions, four crews under the call sign Reach departed from Pittsburgh carrying over 100 Guardsmen and their equipment to Southeast Asia in support of Operation Enduring Sentinel.

The crew of Steel 51 provided immediate air refueling to a B-2 Stealth Bomber aircraft that was low on fuel. The crew was returning the tanker from Tinker Air Force Base after receiving regular maintenance when the call for immediate air refueling was received. The crew was airborne within minutes and prevented the stealth from needing to divert.

The crew with call sign Teddy provided aerial refueling to an E-8C aircraft assigned to the 116th Air Control Wing. The E-8C is an aircraft that operates the most advanced ground surveillance and battle management system in the world.

Supporting Operation Noble Defender was the crew with the call sign Gasman. Noble Defender is a series of operations that incorporates military assets from the United States, Canada, and other allied nations. It's a North Aerospace Defense Command operation that demonstrates the capability to defend the United States and Canada.

The crews under call signs Steel 71, 72, and 73 conducted routine training missions. These missions involved refueling a C-17 aircraft from the 911th Airlift Wing, an EC-130J aircraft from the 193rd Special Operations Wing, and a C-17 from the 167th Airlift Wing. These missions maintain the proficiency for both the tanker crew and the air crew receiving the fuel.

In addition to the aircraft that were launched, ground crews prepared a backup aircraft in case one had an issue that would prevent it from flying.

Launching an aircraft takes four to six of hours of maintenance between each mission. This is required to maintain the safety and reliability of the 65-year-old KC-135.

"The entire maintenance crew was on hand to make this happen," said Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Brennan, an aircraft maintenance supervisor with the 171st. "All specialists were on standby for each launch to address any maintenance issues that might come up."

"We launched ten aircraft with a part-time staff, while maintaining 65-year-old aircraft, while having a particularly high mission success rate, while unexpectedly needing to refuel a B-2 bomber with zero notice," said Lt. Col. Eric Schillo, Chief of Plans at the 171st.

The 171st Air Refueling Wing is an Air National Guard unit located at Pittsburgh International Airport. It distinguishes itself from other Air National Guard tanker units by being the only one with two flying squadrons. Each flying squadron at the 171st has eight KC-135 tankers assigned.



## Feature Photo







*News Photo*





## Master Sgt. Bryan Hoover

*Public Affairs Craftsman*



### *Feature Photo*



### *Portrait Photo*



### *Multimedia Product*

ANG Fire Fighter Summer Training



### *Video Story*

171st Welcomes Home Deployed Guardsmen



### *Video Series*

316th Soldiers Speak - Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month



Soldiers Speak - Women's History Month



Soldiers Speak - Black History Month





## Tech. Sgt. Michael Fariss

*Public Affairs Craftsman*



### Making A Difference

#### Feature Story

Making a difference, today and for the future-this is the goal of Tech. Sgt. Frank Chappell, 171st Air Refueling Wing NCOIC/ Religious Affairs Airman. This year, Chappell accomplished both of these goals.

The National Guard Bureau selected Chappell to help rewrite the 3-Level and Career Development Course for the Religious Affairs field. The Religious Affairs Apprentice Course Development Team was chosen for this task and consisted of five other Airmen, all active duty. Chappell was the only National Guardsman selected for the RAAC Development Team.

The Airmen gathered at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. from January 9-13, 2023. After the initial week of meeting in-person, the group would converge via the internet over the next five months to complete the mission.

“Being chosen for this assignment was very much an honor,” said Chappell.

“Plus, working with Airmen who had so much knowledge and experience was truly inspiring and rewarding. I learned a tremendous amount from this endeavor.”

The goal was to create new Career Development Courses based on a real-life competency model. Each member of the RAAC Development Team would use their own military experiences to create the course and the test. This would be the Air Force’s first CDC test that was online. “We were the first career field to transition to a real-life, hands-on competency model and electronic CDCs,” said Chappell.

Three course instructors led the RAAC Development Team. They would give a scenario, leave the room and the group would get to work.

“We would get a heading or a few subtitles of a topic,” continued Chappell, “and then essentially the instructors would say, ‘Go’, and leave the room. We would reference Air Force Instructions, other regulations, 3-level material and old CDCs and infuse these with our field

experience to create a new course based on a competency model.”

“The team would be in the room discussing the material and shooting ideas back-and-forth,” explained Chappell. “Then the instructors would come in and have the practical layer of this on how to teach it. We would try to dove-tail with them on how it would be taught in the classroom. That collaboration was essential for us to reconceptualize the material.”

Seeing the completion of this project was very gratifying to Chappell. He believes it will benefit future Religious Affairs Airmen.

“The Airmen taking 3-level training and CDCs in the future will benefit greatly from the input of the RAAC Development Team’s military experience,” said Chappell. “They will be learning competencies that will be used throughout their military and AFSC career.”

## Tech. Sgt. Kyle Brooks

*Public Affairs Craftsman*



### Video Documentation - B-Roll

Tri-Wing Readiness Exercise

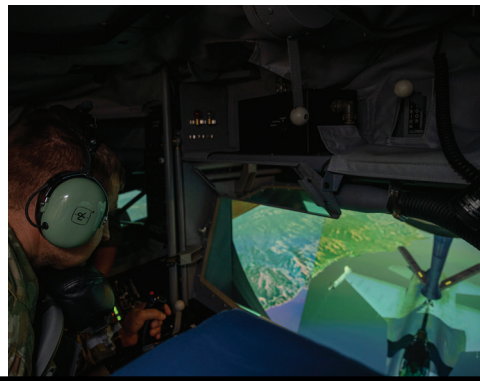


## Staff Sgt. Zoe Wockenfuss

*Public Affairs Craftsman*



*Air Force Military Photographer of the Year*



*Feature Photo*



*News Photo*







*Photo Series*

