

The **TANKER TIMES**



The TANKER TIMES

A year-in-review journal of the 171st Air Refueling Wing

2023 - Vol. 4

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FEATURE STORY



Crew Chief Marshals Daughter's First Flight, PG 22

Written by: Senior Master Sgt. Shawn Monk

Master Sgt. Kevin Clancy dedicated over 38 years of service to the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and finds himself in a position to end his service as an aircraft crew chief marshalling his daughter's first flight as a pilot at the 171st Air Refueling Wing.



Pennsylvania Air National Guardsmen with the 171st Air Refueling Wing returned home from a deployment where they supported in-air refueling for the Bomber Task Force and other aircraft in the Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility Nov. 2, 2023. The returning Guardsmen arrived in KC-135 aircraft and reunited with friends, family and co-workers. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Shawn Monk)

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Raymond L. Hyland Jr. - Commander



First and foremost, “Thank You!”. This past year was terrific, and you are amazing! I am tremendously proud and humbled to be your Wing Commander. You make our mission a success. Over the past twelve months, we worked our tails off, and then we worked some more. We took a few breaks, but collectively it was an extremely productive 75th year for the base.

✦ Addressing Issues

A visit to the Air National Guard Reserve Center for the PA State of the State, resulted in the addition of a few new items on our “To Do” list. None bigger than the necessity to fly our training hours. We took the advice and stepped up our flying hours during FY 23. Notably, the Wing participated in a once in a lifetime flying event when our KC-135 refueled an EC-130 from the 193rd Airlift Wing all over unique Pennsylvania landmarks to celebrate 100 years of Aerial Refueling on Jun 27th.

The Maintenance Group started the year off in the hole. Some of the jets in our fleet were down due to a tail pin issue that caused them to be deemed, “unflyable”. This, coupled with autopilot

issues and other restrictions, made flying and maintaining very difficult. As true professionals, the MXG pushed through and replaced all the faulty pins themselves once were available. Great work!

✦ Mobilization

A healthy handful of our team participated in the Indo-Pacific theater security package in Guam and many more areas in the Pacific. Your performance was exceptional, and I can’t thank you enough for your dedication and hard work on the deployment.

Additionally, 13 of our Airmen from the Security Forces Squadron and Weather Flight spent the holiday season deployed to the CENTCOM area of responsibility for Reserve Component Period 3. Reports have indicated they are doing well. We wish them a safe and productive remainder of their deployment and we also wish to send our gratitude to their families.

✦ Crushing it

Nearly 30 Airmen assigned to our team participated in the Homeland Response Force (HRF) evaluation at Fort Indiantown Gap this past summer. Eleven members from the Civil Engineer Squadron, Chaplains Office, Logistics Readiness Squadron, Medical Group, and Weather Flight joined with their Army counterparts to create the Homeland Response Force Command and Control (C2) element. This team provided coordination to synchronize force response operations. C2 was supported by six Airmen assigned to our Communication Squadron who provided full spectrum cyber and radio communication support while utilizing Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC) equipment. Force Support Squadron provided an additional 11 Airmen for the Fatality Search and

Recovery Team (FSRT), whose mission was the expeditious and dignified removal of fatalities throughout the area of operations. The results were extraordinary, with zero deficiencies noted by inspectors. Brigadier General Michael Regan, Deputy Adjutant General Air, Pennsylvania National Guard, reached out to me directly to tip his cap to our HRF team, “Please pass my congratulations and sincere thanks to all who participated in the HRF eval (evaluation). The results were outstanding across the board!”

Furthermore, 12 Airmen assigned to the Medical Group teamed up with nearly 280 other joint service members from the USAF, USAFRC, USN, USNR, USMCR, USAR and USPHS in support of the Healthy Tennesseans Innovative Readiness Training program. Led by members from the 101st ANG, this program completed over 26,000 hours of no-cost medical care to the residence of Rhea and Bledsoe, Tennessee counties. The hands-on training enabled 23,095 procedures for over 2,600 patients saving the communities and families nearly \$1.7 million dollars in healthcare costs. This real-world opportunity provides invaluable training that cannot be simulated in an exercise. In fact, so good that we are going to do it again with a larger group in Alaska in 2024.

Crushing it does not describe the entire story of 2023, the truth is, we worked our tails off last year! During an increasingly difficult time under “do more with less”, I asked you for even more. You performed three readiness exercises in one year, and you knocked it out of the park. I pushed you as hard as I could, because I want you to be ready for the next fight. You demonstrated our ability to perform over 100 assigned Air Force mission essential tasks. You stepped up and continued our normal ANG mission while the majority of our assigned personnel participated in the March Readiness Exercises (RE), Iron Keystone ’23, and Steel Resolve. Simply put, you killed it! Rather than taking a break from the exercises, this became our year to lean forward, get readiness training done, make mistakes,

and learn from them. To say that I am pleased with the results would be a severe understatement. I am ecstatic with the amount of training, knowledge, and repetitions accomplished. Going into 2024, I am confident that our upcoming statewide RE, Iron Keystone ’24, combined with our Air Mobility Command Readiness Evaluation, Steel Forge, will be another opportunity for the Airmen of the 171st ARW to shine and knock the socks off AMC’s Inspector General.

✦ 75th Anniversary

I know you all worked hard this year; but we did have some opportunities to relax as well. June was a huge month for us here at the 171st. The wing open house was held over June drill to kick off the summer. It was exciting to have all the families and retirees come to the base and learn a little about what we do every day and how our mission has changed through the years.

Following the open house, the wing hosted a 75th Anniversary Ball with resounding success. The formal event welcomed 615 attendees celebrating a momentous milestone in the history of the Pittsburgh ANG installation. The event showcased a remarkable sense of camaraderie and pride as members gathered to commemorate the installations achievements and contributions; as well as created lasting memories for all in attendance. It was a wonderful evening, and I cannot thank you enough for all of the members who help orchestrate the event and to everyone who attended.

Finally, the 2nd Annual 171st ARW retiree luncheon returned this December bringing back 155 retirees for food, fun and memories. It provided a relaxed environment for retired members to reconnect, share experiences and celebrate the enduring bonds forged

during their service. We are looking forward to continuing this event in the future and molding the retiree luncheon into a 171st ARW tradition.

✦ Opening the Gates & Looking Ahead

Having reopened the installation to our retiree community post COVID, the wing also hosted several prominent distinguished visitors this year. We warmly welcomed Col. Ananas Matutis, Lithuanian Air Force Commander in March. Lithuania is our State Partnership country, and this event marked the 30th year of that special relationship with the state of Pennsylvania. In April, we welcomed Mr. Devin L. Cate, Executive Director of the Air National Guard, to the base in conjunction with the first-ever Air Reserve Component (ARC) ATHENA Event. This conference was co-hosted by the 171st and the 911th (Airlift Wing Air Force Reserves) and was specifically designed to bring awareness to women’s issues within the military, specifically the ARC. Throughout the rest of the year, several federal and state level Congressional leaders like U.S. Representative Chris Deluzio and Lt. Governor Austin Davis made multiple base visits where the CODEL (Congressional Delegations) increased their awareness of the importance of air refueling within the National Defense Strategy and the domestic capabilities our unit can bring for state response.

Several other tours were accomplished for various outside agencies including the Pittsburgh Tech. Council, ROTC (Reserve Officers’ Training Corps) and JROTC (Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps) detachments, and the U.S. National Elite Baseball Team. These events showcased our capabilities to the community and helped us progress towards our number one state priority, recruiting and retention. I will begin with the latter because retention is terrific for the 171st. We closed out the

year with a 92.41% retention rate, which is the best in the state among the three wings. Thank you for taking care of each other and for taking care of your people. However, recruiting has continued to be challenging. The aftereffects of the pandemic and the inclinations of the newest generation continue to impede our progress. That said, we were happy to welcome a large handful of new Airmen to our team. Moving forward, we have added five recruiters and temp AGRs (Active, Guard, Reserve Airmen serve full-time and enjoy the same benefits as active-duty Airman.) to attempt to bolster our recruitment efforts in 2024. In addition to everything that you have been tasked, I am asking for more. The wing has a plethora of vacancies, and we need all of you to double down your efforts to help recruit. We will not climb out of the hole on the backs of the recruiting team alone. If you have the availability, days are available to help, please reach out to the recruiting team for more details.

✦ Conclusion

Team 171st, that was a hell of a year! Thank you for making our 75th Anniversary Year one to remember. As we look ahead into 2024 and beyond, one thing is certain, there will be change. A-staff, a new Unit Manning Document, Air Force wide leveling across all wings, enlisted grade reviews, RTIC, and peer competition are just a few challenges that await. I am confident that no matter what type of change, challenge, or Operation; the Steel Airmen of the 171st Air Refueling Wing will be ready to kick ass when the time comes.

NKAWTG!

(No One Kicks Ass Without Tanker Gas)

Mission:

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

Vision:

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





Charles W. Wiley
12th Command Chief

As I reflect on my role as the Command Chief of the 171st Air Refueling Wing, I am humbled and honored for the opportunity to continue to address the incredible men and women who make up the backbone of our Pennsylvania Air National Guard. We continue to gather monthly, united by our commitment to service. I want to reflect on our achievements, acknowledge our challenges, and chart a course for the future.

+ Celebrating Our Achievements

Over the past year, our unit has achieved remarkable success. Your dedication and professionalism have been evident in every mission we've undertaken. We've not only met but exceeded our goals, whether it's in training exercises, deployments, or community

outreach. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed, and I am proud to serve alongside such a talented and driven group of individuals.

+ Acknowledging Challenges

In our journey of service, challenges are inevitable. We've faced adversity, and some days have tested our resilience. But it is in overcoming these challenges that we truly define our character. Let us remember that each obstacle is an opportunity for growth, and our unity as a force is our greatest strength. Together, there is no challenge too great for us to conquer.

+ Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, we must remain vigilant and adaptive. Our roles are evolving, and the demands on our force are ever-changing. Embracing innovation and continuous learning will be key to our success. I encourage each of you to seek new opportunities for professional development, to stay ahead of the curve, and ensure we are prepared for whatever challenges may come our way.

+ Unity in Diversity

Our strength lies in our diversity—diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skills that come together to form an unstoppable force. Let us celebrate and embrace this diversity, understanding that

each individual brings something unique to the table. Together, we are stronger, and our differences make us resilient.

+ Recognition and Gratitude

Before I conclude, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you. Your sacrifices, your dedication, and your unwavering commitment to service do not go unnoticed. Our unit is a family, and it is an honor to serve as your command chief.

In closing, let us continue to uphold the values that define us as members of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard—integrity, service, and excellence. Together, we will face the future with confidence, knowing that the strength of our force lies in the courage and commitment of each individual.

Thank you for your service and dedication. And thank you to your families. Without their selfless sacrifice, we could not do what we do. May we continue to soar to new heights in the service of our nation.

Air National Guard Strong!

Pennsylvania Air National Guard
171st Medical Group



The 171st Medical Group is honored to serve you. Our medical team is connected with some of the largest health care providers in the nation. We value the quality health care they deliver not only in the communities they serve but to our nation's service members.

Colonel Scott Coradi, D.O.

Commander, 171st Medical Group
Emergency Medicine Physician, South Carolina

Colonel Steven Guyton, M.D.

171st Chief of Aerospace Medicine
Emergency Medicine, Allegheny Health Network, West Penn Hospital

Lt. Col. Ryan Heitmann, D.O.

171st Flight Surgeon
Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility, WVU Medicine

Lt. Col. Scott Dillard, M.D., MPH

171st Flight Surgeon
Occupation/Aerospace Medicine

Lt. Col. Nicole Kichta, D.O., FAAFP

171st Chief of Medicine, 171st Medical Group

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171st Flight Surgeon
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Lt. Col. Joseph Woodley, O.D.

171st Optometrist, Vision Works

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Director of Business Development, Primary Care Solutions

1st Lt Emily Cornetta

171st Clinical Nurse
Travel Nurse

Capt. Heather Edsall, R.N.

171st Clinical Nurse
Emergency Nurse, AHN Forbes

1st Lt. Jessica Henderson, R.N.

171st Clinical Nurse
Travel Nurse

1st Lt. Victoria Richer, R.N.

171st Clinical Nurse
ICU Nurse, West Virginia

1st Lt. Esther Moore, C.R.N.P.

171st Provider
Nurse Practitioner, CVS Pharmacy

2nd Lt Brandon Pelosi, RN

171st Clinical Nurse
Emergency Nurse, WVU Medicine



SUMMITTING MOUNT KILIMANJARO

🇺🇸🇧🇪 CHAPLAIN (MAJ.) GRETCHEN HULSE
PUBLISHED OCTOBER 19, 2023

I've always wanted to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest peak on the continent of Africa, for as long as I can remember. This summer that dream came true for me.

The whole excursion took seven nights and eight days to complete. It took our team six days to reach base camp for the summit. The summit took seven hours in the blistering wind. It was -15 degrees when we began the summit hike. It was the kind of cold when the tears freeze on your cheeks. The kind of cold where each breath feels like your lungs are burning. The rocks and boulders were difficult to climb over in the bitter cold. But each step in the volcanic ash felt like a major challenge. One step forward felt like two steps back as your foot would sink into the thick ash. Each step required so much mental fortitude and physical perseverance. Moving slowly was the strategy to

overcome this challenge. Each small step seemed like it was taking three minutes as we got closer to the peak.

When we reached the top we were tired, thirsty, and sore - but we actually made it! We reached the peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro. I had accomplished my dream. What a rush! As I looked out at the vastness of the peak surrounding me, I was overcome with a sense of gratitude and awe. The peak was far above the clouds and looked like the surface of the moon. All I could see was a thick blanket of clouds below us. It was surreal.

Each day we spent grinding out the miles, hoping to find what we were seeking, the mountaintop. What are you hoping to find? What is your mountain? Is it a new job, a promotion, a new relationship, a new degree, a spiritual renewal, a life changing experience or challenge? Whatever you seek, that goal

is dependent upon you making it to the end. If you have the motivation to accomplish your goal, you can and will do it.

But what about the many miles walked to get there? What about all the experiences and people you meet along the trek? What are you able to discover about yourself along the way? If we only focus on accomplishing the goal, we will likely miss the lessons and opportunities for reflection along the way.

You are more than the sum of your accomplishments. Your journey is just as important as your destination. If you're uncertain about the future, have questions about how to discover your path forward, or could use some encouragement along the way, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Religious Support Team. We're happy to help you achieve your goals and discover the joys of the journey! Keep trekking!

Yinz Hungry?



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AIRMAN SPOTLIGHT

STAFF SGT ROBBIE GREGOR – CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

Emergency Responders like Staff Sgt. Robbie Gregor train physically and mentally to prepare themselves to help at moment's notice. But if you peel off the heavy bunker gear and the helmet, you will find that selfless service runs deep in this Zelienople native. Robbie graduated from North Catholic High School in 2017 without any idea of what it was he wanted to do beyond his high school endeavors. He received some positive guidance in his volunteer fire hall from two Pennsylvania Air National Guardsmen. They directed him towards enlisting. Through his enlistment, Robbie received 100% tuition assistance and earned a Bachelor of Science in Safety Management from Slippery Rock University. Robbie goes above and beyond as a community service provider by maintaining his positive status at Harmony Volunteer Fire Department despite living in downtown Pittsburgh. Robbie even dedicates portions of his Friday evenings at Children's Hospital holding newborn infants born into broken families. Occasionally, Robbie takes a moment to recharge his batteries through activities like SCUBA diving or skiing. We look forward to watching Robbie's career grow and hope that we can help you find your path to a better future.



MASTER SGT LUCAS CURTACCIO – MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

Pennsylvania Air National Guardsman, Master Sgt. Lucas Curtaccio, an Aircraft Metals Technology Craftsman, uses a Scotchman Ironworker to cut a piece of metal for the maintenance stand that removes the Ray-Dome from the KC-135 aircraft at the 171st Air Refueling Wing on September 13, 2023. Curtaccio has been in the Air Force for 20 years. He has been deployed several times to various locations including Kuwait, Qatar, and Guam. He enjoys the camaraderie and working as a team in the military. Curtaccio is also married with two children, whom he loves to play sports with.



10 TANKERS LAUNCHED IN 1 DAY

📷 👤 SENIOR MASTER SGT. SHAWN MONK

PUBLISHED JANUARY 3, 2023



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,"

- 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.

Lithuanian Air Force Commander Visits 171st Air Refueling Wing

✈️ MASTER SGT. BRYAN HOOVER 📷 STAFF SGT. ZOE WOCKENFUSS
PUBLISHED MARCH 31, 2023

Col. Raymond L. Hyland, Jr., commander of the 171st Air Refueling Wing welcomed Col. Ananas Matutis, Lithuanian Air Force Commander, to visit the 171st ARW in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Wednesday March 22, 2023.



Col. Matutis boarded a KC-135T aircraft in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and witnessed an aerial refueling mission between the KC-135T and an EC-130J aircraft assigned to the 193rd Special Operations Wing while en route to the 171st ARW.



Col. Hyland and Command Chief Master Sgt. Charles Wiley shared lunch with Col. Matutis, Command Sergeant Major Alvydas Tamošiūnas, Command Senior Enlisted leader of the LTU AF, and Major Romualdas Gečionis, Military Assistant to the Commander of the LTU AF, as well as other senior members of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard to strengthen State Partnership Program security cooperation and to strategically plan current & future military-to-military engagements.



“It was great to get a chance to meet Col. Matutis in his new position and renew old friendships with him and his staff,” said Col. Hyland. “During the visit we were able to brief him on our capabilities and how we can continue to support the LTU AF and grow the state partnership program. Because of this discussion Col. Matutis discovered other areas and developed some new ideas of how the 171st can support the LTU AF in the future. We look forward to continuing our strong cooperation with him and his county.”



The Pennsylvania National Guard has partnered with the country of Lithuania since 1993 as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program. Through this security cooperation program, the PNG has hosted Lithuanian personnel and participated in U.S. European Command, U.S. Army Europe and NATO exercises. For more information, visit www.pa.ng.mil/Offices-Programs/State-Partnership-Program/.

Multiple Outstanding Performers @ 258th Air Traffic Control Squadron

 CAPT. JODI SNYDER

PUBLISHED JULY 11, 2023

The 258th Air Traffic Control Squadron, a geographically separated unit of the 171st Air Refueling Wing, had multiple winners of various Airfield Operation Division awards at the National Guard level.

The categories of the competition included Air Traffic Control and Radar, Airfield and Weather Systems for both military members and civilians. There were multiple competitors in each category from across the entire country.

“Our members uphold a legacy of excellence, and we are proud of all their achievements,” said Col. Ray Hyland, commander of the 171st.

The winners of the awards include Chief Master Sgt. Jason Everetts, Master Sgt. Keith Boring, Master Sgt. Frederick Wolfe, and Tech. Sgt. Ashley Stainbrook. Stainbrook and Everetts won within the air traffic control category, which focuses on the movement of aircraft on the ground and in the air. Both Stainbrook and Everetts are

drill status Guardsmen at the 258th. Stainbrook won within the specific category of Air Traffic Control Watch Supervisor of the Year, while Everetts, a civilian employee during the week at the 258th, won Air Traffic Control Civilian of the Year.

Air traffic control is a highly specialized, intensive job that requires years of training.

“Being an air traffic controller is very hard because it’s constantly progressing. It’s not something you can learn and forget. It’s something you must learn and build upon,” said Everetts.

“There is never a day that we are not training on something,” said Stainbrook. “We deal with FAA regulations and Air Force regulations. They review and update them based on trends and analysis, so it’s always evolving.”

Being an air traffic controller also means you need to be an effective communicator.

“It’s a lot of coordination. I communicate with the aircraft, within the tower, emergency services, and other entities. We coordinate with several air traffic control facilities,” said Everetts.

“We need to think very quickly. There are times when four or five different people are asking you for different things. You need to figure out the sequence of priorities by impact,” said Stainbrook.

Even though the career field is known for its difficulty, long hours, and hectic work schedules, both Everetts and Stainbrook love being air traffic controllers.

“I don’t feel like I’m going to work. I really enjoy what I do. I enjoy the challenge of seeing how the puzzle pieces fit together,” said Stainbrook.

“I’ve been an air traffic control for a long, long time—20 some years. I really enjoy what I’m doing, and it fits my personality. It’s a rewarding career field, and our success is a total team effort,” said Everetts.

The other winners at the 258th, Wolfe and Boring, won within the Radar, Airfield and Weather Systems category. Both Wolfe and Boring are drill status Guardsmen. Wolfe won within the specific category of Radar, Airfield and Weather Systems Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, while Boring, a civilian employee during the week, won Radar, Airfield and Weather Systems Technician of the Year.

RAWS focuses on deploying important warning systems, ensuring the equipment used by air traffic controllers is operational, and much more.

“RAWS is a big career field. It’s a very long process to be qualified. There’s a vast amount of knowledge to retain,” said Wolfe.

The career field is multifaceted because once you know your equipment, you also have to know how to deploy your equipment, said Wolfe.

A former Apache helicopter mechanic, Boring, said he joined the career field because he wanted to be part of anything that had to do with air traffic control. Working on different equipment like radios, navigational aids, tactical air navigation and other instruments, allows Boring to use his prior mechanical knowledge towards a new skill set.

“It’s a career that allows you to think outside the box to solve a problem. We get to do a lot of different things. We are currently performing air traffic control, but we are training to become a Combat Airspace Operations Squadron where we will align

better with the ACE (agile combat employment) concept,” said Boring.

While very different career fields, air traffic control and RAWS are closely associated, intertwined professions.

“Air traffic controllers and RAWS specialists are essential to the safety of our aircraft and our Guardsmen,” said Hyland.

Whether on the ground or in the air, Airmen of the 258th ATCS and 171st ARW continue to uphold a high-achieving standard with ongoing training and readiness efforts. The awards received serve as a reminder that they continue to perform with the core value of ‘excellence in all we do’ at the forefront of all their actions.



MASTER SGT.
BENJAMIN PRICE





CONTINUING OUR

30-YEAR PARTNERSHIP



 CAPT. JODI SNYDER
PUBLISHED JULY 12, 2023

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.

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.

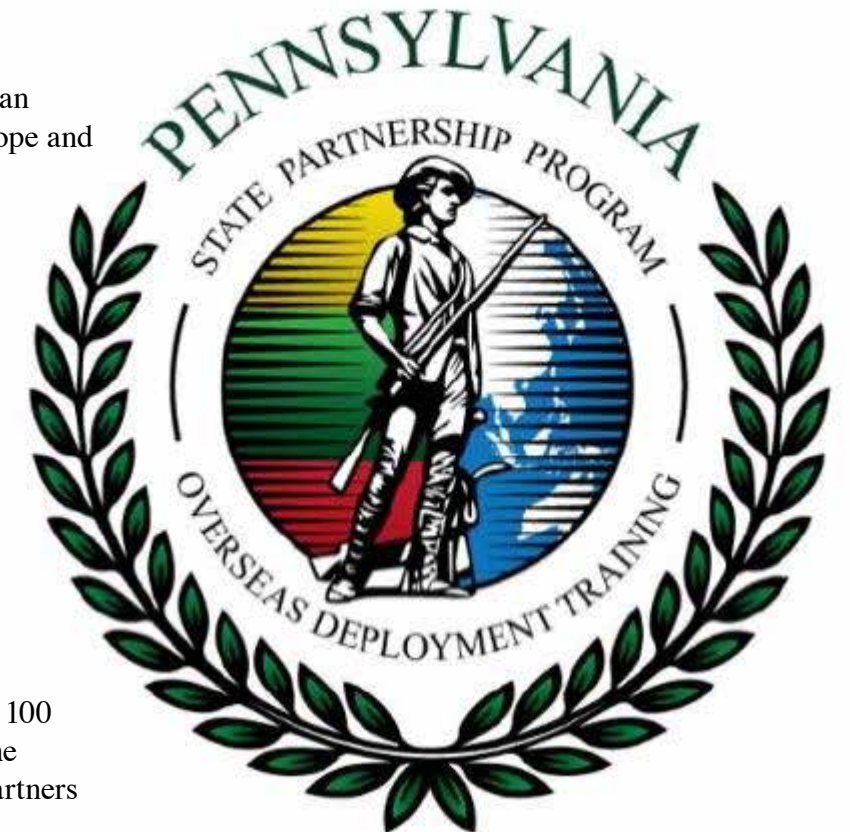
“It’s GREAT for joint training...”

- Capt. Benjamin 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





CREW CHIEF DAD MARSHALS DAUGHTERS FIRST FLIGHT

✈️ SENIOR MASTER SGT. SHAWN MONK

✈️ MASTER SGT. BRYAN HOOVER

PUBLISHED JULY 12, 2023

Megan Hirlehey wanted to be a pilot ever since she came to the base for family day as a kid with her dad Kevin Clancy, a Master Sergeant in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

“This is kind of the last thing I’m hanging around for, because I’m 38 and a half years in,” said Kevin.

“When she was 13, it was right after 9/11, we had to generate an alert crew,” Kevin continued to say that he was asked to stay at the base for five straight days.



“My wife and two daughters, Megan being the oldest, came out and brought me a change of clothes... Brian Krawchyk, (a KC-135 pilot), put my two kids in front of the refrigerator that was full of ice cream, and he opened that door and there was nothing but ice cream, I swear that’s what made Megan decide to join the guard,” he laughed.

In 2008, before graduating high school, Megan followed in her father’s footsteps and enlisted in her dad’s unit, the 171st Air Refueling Wing, located near Pittsburgh. There she served at the base’s Education and Training office and also the base’s Small Air Terminal, while her dad continued to serve in the unit’s Maintenance Group as a crew chief.

Megan followed her dream to be a pilot at the 171st. She applied for the position and later commissioned to be an officer in 2020. She overcame many obstacles and stayed patient and determined.

“She really showed determination. You know, when they say no you can’t do that, and you turn around and say oh yeah? Hold my beer and watch this! You know - and now she is in the pilot seat. It was kind of a big deal, and I’m real proud of her.”

“As a dad you want the best for your kids, alright, and the 171st is the best, so I guess I win”.



On July 6, 2023, 1st Lt. Megan Hirlehey flew her first mission with the 171st - aboard the very aircraft her dad served as a crew chief on for six years. Kevin marshaled his daughter off the flight line and saluted her as she steered the KC-135 aircraft towards the runway for take off.



“The highlight of my career was watching her taxi for her first, it was good, it was a great day for me, now I can retire.”





Chief Master Sgt. Edward Altmeyer of 171st Air Refueling Wing, Pennsylvania National Guard is the National Record Holder for number of years the Chief's 50 award has been earned, totaling to 13 awards. Altmeyer, known for his exceptional dedication to marksmanship, received his very first Chief's 50 award in 2006.

 U.S. Army Photo by Serena Juchnowski



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*O*n Feb. 19, 1956, two F-84F Thunderstreaks from the 112th Fighter Group were on a routine training flight out of Greater Pittsburgh Airport where the group was based. In one jet was Lt. Thomas W. Sonnett of Kennedy Township, a pilot for the Air National Guard. He was an officer in the 146th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. In the other was Sonnett's "wing man," Wilford Pagachnick. The two were in constant communication.

The pilots had just passed Beaver Grade Road and were about half a mile from Steubenville Pike, over the old Gormley Farm, when Pagachnick noticed something wrong. "You having trouble?" he radioed his partner. Sonnett replied tensely, "I think I had a flameout. I'm going to crash it."

At the time, Sonnett was flying at 2,500 feet, which was high enough to bail out. He knew, however, that an unmanned plane would almost certainly crash into a neighborhood. Instead, he instantly decided to aim for the nearest field to avoid a housing development. Just seconds before reaching the ground, his landing

gear clipped some trees. By chance, another National Guard fighter pilot, Lt. Clarence Kouche of Bellevue Avenue, witnessed the incident from the ground.

"When he hit those trees, I knew he was in trouble," he was later quoted as saying.

The plane crashed with neither an explosion nor fire but wreckage was strewn over a wide area. Kouche and two other witnesses ran to the wreckage and pulled the pilot from the cockpit that was lying on its side. Sonnett was rushed to Ohio Valley Hospital where he died three hours later.

Sonnett's wife, Eleanore, and their two daughters had been waiting for him in their new home only a mile from the crash site. Sonnett was just 32 years old.

Because of his quick decision to crash the jet rather than endanger the lives of many on the ground, he died a true hero. He is buried at St. Mary Cemetery in Kennedy Township.



1st Lt. Thomas W. Sonnett



Making A Difference

 TECH. SGT. MICHAEL FARISS
 MASTER SGT. BRYAN HOOVER
PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

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. TED NICHOLS

Security Forces Airmen from the Pennsylvania Air National Guard's three wings participate in a simulated exercise involving recapturing an airfield held by adversaries as part of exercise Iron Keystone 2023 held at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania Aug. 5, 2023.



EXERCISE IRON KEYSTONE

In an unprecedented display of unity and innovation, 150 Airmen hailing from the three Pennsylvania Air National Guard wings converged upon Fort Indiantown Gap for the groundbreaking Exercise Iron Keystone, held from August 3 to 6. This landmark exercise marked the very first joint endeavor among the wings, signaling a powerful commitment to enhance their collective combat prowess.

“Across our three wings, we have similar units that perform dissimilar missions. We wanted to bring together these units with their unique tactics and insights to see if we could meet a common objective,” said exercise planner Lt. Col. Stephen McNamara.

At the heart of this dynamic exercise lay a paramount objective: to pioneer innovative approaches in executing Agile Combat Employment (ACE) concepts. ACE, a transformative doctrine, empowers Airmen and small units to conduct missions from decentralized locations. This adaptability enables them to align with commander’s intent despite minimal guidance and respond effectively to unforeseen variables.

“We recognize the growing threat China poses to the United States, and their ability to disrupt our capacity to operate from large, centralized locations,” said Col. Edward Fink, 193rd Special Operations Wing commander. “The lessons we’re learning in this exercise will increase our survivability and ability to project airpower in a future conflict.”

Senior Master Sgt. Alexander Farver

Pennsylvania Air National Guard Airmen arrive in Middletown, Pennsylvania and begin constructing a plan as part of Exercise Iron Keystone on Aug. 4, 2023.



U.S. Army Capt. Christopher Booker

Soldiers with the 28th ECAB flew a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter and CH-47 Chinook helicopter from Muir Army Heliport at Fort Indiantown Gap to Harrisburg International Airport to pick up the Airmen and flew them to the Regional Equipment Operators Training Site at Fort Indiantown Gap where the Airmen continued their exercise.

“We recognize the growing threat China poses to the United States...”

- Col. Edward Fink
193rd Special Operations Wing commander

Exercise Iron Keystone also aimed to lead the way in tactical innovation; by synchronizing participants with the new Air Force Force Generation (AFFORGEN) model. This model outlines a meticulous 24-month rotational cycle segmented into four distinct phases: prepare, certify, available, and reset. By aligning their goals with the required Mission Essential Tasks (METs) of units entering the commit phase, the participants ensured that their readiness was honed to an exceptional degree.

Validating Regulations

“The old ways of waging wars from massive, secure bases have become antiquated, and the Pennsylvania Air National Guard has chosen to lead the charge in refining the ACE and AFFORGEN paradigms,” said Brig. Gen. Michael Regan, Pennsylvania Air National Guard commander. “The lessons distilled from Iron Keystone will resonate throughout the entire force, fortifying our lethality and resilience.”

As the last echoes of the exercise faded against the backdrop of the Keystone State, it was evident that the Pennsylvania National Guard had etched a new chapter in their storied legacy. Exercise Iron Keystone was not just an assembly of exercises; it was a symphony of innovation, unity, and adaptability that will ensure the three wings of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard can adapt to an ever-changing security environment.

TECH. SGT. TED NICHOLS

Security Forces Airmen from the Pennsylvania Air National Guard’s three wings — including deployed aircraft ground response element (DAGRE), team members from the 193rd Special Operations Wing — participate in a simulated takeover of a hostile compound as part of exercise Iron Keystone 2023 held at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania., Aug. 5, 2023.



Two Airmen from the 171st Air Refueling Wing volunteered to help the National Guard Bureau validate and rewrite Air Force Instruction essential to the financial management career field.

When the National Guard Bureau sent out a request to the financial management community asking for subject matter experts to assist with a regulation update, Master Sgt. Morgan McCoy, a financial management superintendent, and Master Sgt. Clint Ferringer, a financial service supervisor, volunteered to help.

“When the regional chief asked for expertise, we picked an area we had extensive knowledge and background in,” said McCoy.

“It was pretty cool that the request came down to our level, and NGB asked for our input,” said Ferringer.

McCoy and Ferringer were assigned a specific section of instruction to review based on their experience. They were in charge of basic allowance for subsistence, which provides financial assistance to offset costs for military member’s meals.

“Ensuring this regulation is correct is definitely important for effectiveness. We need to ensure entitlements are paid the way they are intended,” said Ferringer.

Finance management has two different sections, budget and pay and entitlements. The budget office keeps the base functioning and the mission continuing while pay and entitlements is money going directly to military members. Basic allowance for subsistence is a part of pay and entitlements.

“Members getting their pay and entitlements on time takes the burden off of them while they are focusing on their essential functions to complete the mission,” said Ferringer.

McCoy and Ferringer were responsible for validating and updating the regulation with any necessary changes. While they were in charge of the specific chapter assigned to them, they were not alone in the validation process.

“It was truly a collaborative effort,” said McCoy. “We established timelines with other units, submitted our work for feedback, and gave monthly status updates.”

The finance career field is a core function of the Air Force and ensures funds are available for equipment, supplies and services Airmen need, making this regulation review essential to protecting funding and helping Airmen continue success.

“Our goal is to be a go-to flight for finance questions and provide field level support to NGB,” said McCoy. “That’s why we volunteered for this. We want to be the subject matter experts the Air Force needs.”

 CAPT. JODI SNYDER

 TECH. SGT. MICHAEL P. FARISS



“Our goal is to be a go-to flight for finance questions and provide field level support to NGB...”

Master Sgt. Morgan McCoy
171 Financial Management Superintendent



The 171st Air Refueling Wing celebrated 75 years as an installation within the Pennsylvania Air National Guard in the Pittsburgh Area. There were many functions during the calendar year to celebrate.

Col. Raymond L. Hyland Jr., 171st wing commander, hosted a patch design contest for members of the wing to use their creativity for a new morale patch. The drawing submitted by Master Sgt. Benjamin Smith, a crew chief assigned to the 171st Maintenance Squadron, was selected and worn on the right arm of nearly all 171st Guardsmen during the 2023 year.



Public Affairs with the help of others like 2nd Lt. April Lemon, Capt. Joelle Wallace, and retired Command Chief Master Sgt. Judy McGrath went through historical yearbooks, photo catalogs and other various historical documents to create seven, three-foot by five-foot aluminum panels, which illustrated the history of the installation. Each panel was broken into a 10-year span with historical moments and photos. The panels were displayed on seven, interlocking wooden-framed stands constructed by Senior Master Sgt. William Long. To kick off the 75th anniversary celebration, retirees and 171st alumni were invited to the installation to reconnect with their previous work centers and tour hangar 302 where the panels and other historical items were proudly showcased.



Col. Hyland also appointed Maj. John Higgins, 2nd Lt. April Lemon and Capt. Joelle McGrath to plan, prepare, and execute an anniversary ball, July 22, 2023. The team worked diligently and created a beautiful event hosted at Acrisure Stadium. Nearly 700 current and past members from the Pittsburgh Area PAANG attended the event dressed in Air Force mess dress, tuxedos, suits, and ball gowns. Members entered the stadium ballroom where the historical panels were proudly displayed once more before moving back to the 171st where they will be mounted on the wall in the headquarters building near the executive suite for all to enjoy.



The next few pages are a smaller, modified version of the historical panels. These panels were designed by the public affairs operations chief, Senior Master Sgt. Shawn Monk. Monk spent countless hours reviewing the historical information given to him by Lemon, Wallace and McGrath before writing a brief version of the installation's history. He also scanned hundreds of photos and designed the entire layout of all seven panels.

1946 - 1959

At the end of World War II, many civilians had vast military flying and combat experience. Some of these people simply came back home after serving in the war and settled back into their lives as farmers, steel workers or other professionals. However, other Veterans still wanted to continue to fly and serve their country, but there was no real way to do that. Military budgets were very limited after the war. Because of this, in 1946, a handful of people decided to start a fighter squadron in Pittsburgh. At first, it was more like a flying club, with no airplanes, trying to get government support. They were humble beginnings, with 10 officers and 12 airmen without an actual workplace to call home. This group performed non-paying drills before the unit was federally recognized in 1948. Later, this would grow to become the 171st Air Refueling Wing, the only super tanker unit in the Air National Guard.

On October 13, 1945, the Secretary of War approved a plan for reorganizing the National Guard. The first post-World War II units were extended federal recognition June 30, 1946, and the air units of the National Guard were organized as a separate entity.

During the beginning of 1946, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania received authorization to organize a number of units, both flying and non-flying, with missions to support the U.S. Army Air Force. The allotment to Pennsylvania included the following units:

- HQ, 53rd Fighter Wing
- 112th Fighter Group
- 146th Fighter Squadron
- 147th Fighter Squadron
- 148th Fighter Squadron
- 112th Air Service Group
- 111th Bomb Group (Light)
- 103rd Bomb Group (Light)
- 117th Bomb Squadron (Light)
- 211th Air Service Group
- 153rd Aircraft Control and Warning Group
- 103rd Communications Squadron (Wing)
- 603rd Light Signal Construction Company
- 1902nd Aviation Engineering Battalion
- 553rd Air Force Band



This is what the flightline area near 146th hangar looked like in the 1950-1951 era.

Within that year, the Headquarters, 53rd Fighter Wing (Harrisburg), and eight other units were activated in Pennsylvania. Those at Pittsburgh were:

- 146th Fighter Squadron and its Utility Flight, June 17, 1946
- 146th Weather Station, November 26, 1946
- Detachment A, 212th Air Service Group (Fighter), November 26, 1946

Much work was done before the units actually earned federal recognition. At that time, the primary prerequisite for unit designation, in addition to manpower, was adequate facilities to conduct training, and maintain and store equipment. Until the 1950s, the 146th Fighter Squadron, with its total assigned strength of 22 members, would continue pulling drills each Tuesday evening at the Coraopolis Armory, while they shared space at the Air Force Reserve Base.

Lt. Col. William A. Shomo was appointed commander during the organization of the 146th Fighter Squadron. Lt. Col. George J. Ola was assigned Air Instructor for all Pittsburgh units. Training was accomplished in the T-6G, the first utility aircraft assigned to Pittsburgh units. These units included: the 146th Fighter Squadron, its Utility Flight, its Weather Station and Detachment A, 212th Air Service Group (Fighter). With the assistance of Ola and Mr. Clifford Ball, president of the Aero Club of Pittsburgh, Shomo conducted an intensive recruiting campaign during 1946-47.

On February 21, 1949, the following Pittsburgh units were organized: HQ 112th Fighter Group (Major George F. Swearingen, Commander), HQ 212th Air Service Group (Colonel Albert F. Heineman, Commander); 147th Fighter Squadron (Major Richard E. Grant, Commander); 147th Weather Station (Captain Frederick Sohoenweis, Commander); Detachment B, 212th Air Service Group (Captain Robert G. Sheets, Commander) and the 146th Weather Flight.

On April 1st of that year, the first Federal Recognition Inspection was conducted at Pittsburgh, with the 146th Fighter Squadron, under the command of Major Albert B. Starr, receiving its recognition retroactive to June 18, 1948. Three weeks later, federal recognition was also extended to those units who organized in February, the 146th Utility Flight and Detachment A, 212th Air Service Group (Fighter).

In the beginning, start-up operations were conducted out of tents and old shacks along the flightline. The shacks were constructed from salvaged crates that originally carried aircraft parts and engines. Construction of a real home began in early 1949. Top priority was given to the completion of the 146th hangar. Construction was also started on the administration building, base supply warehouse and motor vehicle building. It was a first for the National Guard Bureau to construct a total installation at a cost of \$2.5 million with their own funds. In the meantime, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Ball negotiated a 25-year lease with Allegheny County for the construction of permanent facilities. A lease for 70 acres on the southeast portion of the Greater Pittsburgh Airport was completed in 1948.

With facility construction underway, operational aircraft began to arrive. The P-47N Thunderbolt/Jug was first. Aircraft had to park on grass ramps and taxiways, which became very muddy with rain and made work difficult. With little protection from the elements, maintenance crews took advantage of the Air Force Reserve facilities, oftentimes bringing tools from home to accomplish tasks.

Now that the Group had a home, manpower and aircraft, it was time to perform its first training mission. The first annual training was August 1949 at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. The fighter squadron arrived with twelve P-47Ns, two T-6s, one C-47 and one B-26. A wing total of 1,799 members attended the training, approximately half were World War II Veterans. Training included air-to-air gunnery, air-to-ground dive-bombing, rocketry, and night and formation flying. The highlight of the first encampment occurred August 25 when Pennsylvania Governor, the honorable James H. Duff visited the air base and inspected troops and facilities. During the afternoon, before a mass formation on the flightline, Governor Duff presented the colors to the Pennsylvania unit, while P-47s and a B-26 roared overhead in precise formation. This training and the subsequent unit training assemblies resulted in an overall satisfactory rating on the unit's first federal inspection in February 1950.

It was later in 1950 that the 112th Maintenance and Support Group, commanded by Colonel Maurice V. Salada and the 112th Medical Group, commanded by Major James B. Medlock, was extended federal recognition. In June 1951, the 146th and 147th Fighter Squadrons converted to F-51H Mustangs, considered one of the fastest of all World War II aircraft. The mission was the defense of the eastern United States. Teamwork flourished in support of this amazing aircraft. In October 1952, the 112th Fighter Group at Pittsburgh and attached 146th and 147th Squadrons were prematurely redesignated fighter interceptor group and squadron, with no mission change. However, on December 1 of the same year, all units were redesignated fighter-bomber. By December 31, a total of 34 of the 63 authorized aircraft had been received by Pittsburgh Units. Composition was: twenty five F-51Hs, two C-46s and three C-47s and four T-6Gs. On Flag Day 1953, Air National Guard facilities at Greater Pittsburgh Airport were dedicated. Local dignitaries and more than 5,000 civilians attended the ceremony, officially opening the base for full utilization by all units stationed at Greater Pittsburgh. Cochairing this event were Cliff Ball, James C. Chaplain III and Oliver M. Kaufmann. The speaker for the dedication was Lt. Gen. Frank A. Weber, representing Governor John S. Fine.

The new facilities included two hangars which could house 32 aircraft, 62 shops, offices, classrooms, a 500,000 square-foot aircraft parking area, base supply warehouse with loading dock, offices and a motor pool maintenance building. Finally, a permanent home.

Also in 1953, the unit vaulted into the jet-age with the arrival of the first T-33A for training. In spring 1954, the F-86A replaced the F-51H. Spaatz Field again was the site of field training, however, the newly acquired aircraft were not utilized. It was in the old familiar F-51s that both Pittsburgh squadrons and the Reading 148th attained the highest scores recorded to date on air-to-air gunnery qualifications.

In the end, the 146th Fighter Squadron received the Adjutant General Trophy, and the 147th Fighter Squadron was the recipient of the Year Round Flying Safety Award. Upon completion of summer camp, in 1954, the unit received official notification that the tenure of the F-86A was to be short-lived; the first F-84F Thunderstreak arrived in September. These aircraft were the early model F, with flying characteristics completely foreign to conventional fighter pilots. Thus, there was much to learn, usually the hard way. Two things are important to remember about this time period, one is that the pilots were not being paid for flying - only for Unit Training Assemblies. And, two, the Air National Guard started to receive pilot training slots from the Air Force. These events and an official change to a Fighter Interceptor mission made for many reforms in 1955. Even though a lot of hard lessons were to be learned with this aircraft, excellent training was achieved and maintenance crews did their best to keep aircraft in commission.

It was in the F-84F, that Captain George McCrory, representing the 112th, set a new speed record of 611 mph and placed third in the first Ricks Memorial Trophy Race. The Earl T. Ricks Memorial Trophy Event, sponsored annually by the Air Force Association in memory of Major Gen. Ricks, former chief of the Air Force, Division of the National Guard Bureau, was established in 1954 to focus national attention on the high level of proficiency attained by the Air National Guard. The 1955 race, which started in Fresno, California, and finished in Detroit, Michigan, had five types of Air National Guard jet aircraft, which were judged by a handicap system, designed to equalize the aircraft's capability and award points based upon pilot skill. In September, a four-man team also flying F-84s managed to outscore their opponents in the Air National Guard Gunnery Meet.

The following year, the 112th Wing Headquarters moved from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh, streamlining operations with its mission and support units. Since there were no spaces available to Guardmembers in Air Force basic training, Summer Camp of 1956 at Hancock Field in Syracuse, New York, provided an opportunity to provide an in-house basic training, including small arms qualification. In the fall of that year, all aircraft were modified with a drag chute for landing, deceleration and better braking action on wet runways. This was indeed a welcomed improvement.

In 1957, Captain McCrory again represented the 146th while Major Pete Phillipy represented the 147th against 12 other Air National Guard units in another Ricks Memorial Trophy Race. This time it was from Washington, D.C., to Fresno, California. Major Phillipy finished in first place, with a time of 4:13:42. In the process, he also set a new speed record of 638 mph in aircraft 508, an F-84F Hog, which is now proudly displayed near the wing entrance.

Phillipy received a Pa. Distinguished Service Medal and a congratulatory letter from USAF Chief of Staff Thomas White. The Ricks Trophy victory marked the end of the F-84F era for the unit. The F-86L Sabres became the new flying machines of the 146th, while the 147th temporarily flew the F-84Fs. By the following year, 1958, the 147th converted to the F-86L as well.

On January 1, 1959, the unit began its first Air Defense Command alert commitment with the F-86s. Shortly afterward, a Continental Air Command inspection team arrived to administer an Operational Readiness Inspection to test the unit's combat capability. The final score was 943 points out of a possible 1,000. It was the highest score ever awarded by the command.

Annual training for 1959 was again conducted at Hancock Field, New York. Rocket firing re-qualification was a priority, since suitable range time was always at a premium. Even though the unit experienced an unusual pilot turnover during the mission change to Air Defense Command, 74 percent of assigned pilots qualified in the two-week period.



This is the Motor Pool/Motor Veh. Sqdn Supply Room. The building was brought from Reading to Pgh., after one of the Summer Camps.



C. Alessandro
SGT A. ELLIOTT AND UNK SERVICING P-51 IN MAY 1952



SGT E BATNACH AND UNK ON FLIGHT LINE AT GTR PGR IAP, PA. 1952



112 TAC HOSP, LT DOROTHY ROSS, HANCOCK FIELD, N.Y. AUG 1957



CAPT IVAN ALLEN AND MSGT TOM BROSS USING PLOTTING BOARD IN OPERATIONS 1954



SGT BILL MACDONALD, AF INSPECTOR AND SGT PAUL BELL, INSPECTION OF SUPPLIES APRIL 1953



Top F-47 on Ramp in 1949

1960-1969

In the fall of 1960, the 146th began to convert to the F-102 Delta Dart. The mission was to guard the nation's skies by intercepting the bad guys before they got to us.

On May 15, 1961, all ANG units disengaged from all official activities with Continental Air Command and were gained by specific major commands. Air Defense Command was now responsible for supervising the training of the 112th and also for inspecting the units for proper compliance with standards.

The 146th converted to the F-102 and honed their skills in the Deuce. Crews were charged with the responsibility of defending a large section of the United States with an alert force on duty 24/7. Becoming proficient immediately was paramount.

As a matter of fact, they became so proficient that they were the first F-102 unit in the Air National Guard to pass an Air Defense Command tactical evaluation. They also scored Outstanding on the Operation Readiness Inspection, which was another first.

In September 1962, a 26-man team deployed to Tyndall Air Force Base, FL for the Ricks Trophy Event against seven other ANG F-102 units. After the five-day competition, the 112th was declared the 1962 Ricks Trophy winner.

On the other side of the house, the 147th was diverted from the fighter interceptor mission to an aeromedical transport mission for Military Air Transport Command in 1961. They were now designated the 147th Aeromedical Transport Squadron. The unit converted to twin engine C-119J Flying Boxcar aircraft and began training for its new mission.

After two short years with the C-119, the 147th converted to the sleek and exciting C-121G Super Constellation. Now, the primary mission of the 147th was to perform military airlift, with a secondary mission of aeromedical evacuation.

In March 1963, the 112th was selected to represent the Air National Guard in the William Tell competition on the basis of winning the 1962 Ricks Trophy event, outsourcing all other ANG F-102 units in live firing exercises that closely resembled the William Tell.

When the dust had settled, the PAANG team had won the F-102 competition and was declared the overall winner of the William Tell 1963.

In 1964, the 147th was redesignated as the 171st Air Transport group. The mission remained the same. The units support of the Vietnam effort began in late 1965 with Operation Christmas Star. These missions marked the first time citizen-Airmen, though not mobilized, served in combat.

The trips to Southeast Asia continued for more than a year, causing the hiring of new technicians to support the effort.

In February 1967, the unit was redesignated as the 171st Military Air Group. One year later, on February 19, 1968 it was again redesignated, this time the 171st Aeromedical Airlift Group.

A day that will always be remembered by 672 members of the 171st Aeromedical Airlift Group is April 11, 1968. They were among 24,000 Reserve Forces personnel called up by the President of the United States. The specific reasons for the call-up were in response to the increase of casualties in the Vietnam conflict and the forthcoming conversion of the regular Air Force units to the C-9 Nightingale aeromedical aircraft.

The unit was demobilized Dec. 12, 1968, after serving a seven-month tour of active duty. The final results of the call-up were impressive, with a total of 510 missions flown and a total of 11,947 patients airlifted.



A VENERABLE GOONEY BIRD C-47 WAS STATION AT PITTSBURGH FOR TRANSPORT TO STATE FUNCTIONS.

1970-1979

In early 1971, the 112th was awarded its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period of July 1968 to June 1970.

Six major accomplishments were enumerated as the basis for the award: one for having completed more than seven years of accident-free operations, involving more than 41,000 flying hours in a single-engine jet fighter aircraft. This was the best F-102 safety record to date.

Air Defense Command presented a special Flight Safety Award to the 112th to recognize the achievement of operating single-engine, jet aircraft accident-free for a period of eight years while flying 52,254 hours. This surpassed all other active and ANG units in ADC.

Creek Guardlift took place from April 4, 1971, to April 1, 1972, with six Air National Guard units participating. Each unit was responsible for a 10-week tour of duty providing two aircraft, 24 aircrew members and 21 support personnel. The focal point of the operation was Torrejon AB, Spain.

During the spring of 1972, confirmation was received of yet another mission change. The new mission was air refueling, and the unit would soon be equipped with the Boeing KC-97L and redesignated with Tactical Air Command as the gaining command. Even though the official unit redesignation as the 171st Air Refueling Wing was established in October 1972, initial conversion actions were implemented during the summer months.

On October 4, 1972 a new era started as the 171st became an Air Refueling Wing, with Tactical Airlift Command as the gaining command, the 171st received its first KC-97L.

On September 8, 1974 the base held its first ever open house to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Pittsburgh ANG units. The widely publicized event brought a crowd of about 30,000 visitors from the local area to see static displays and flyovers.

From October 19-31, 1974 the 112th took part in the William Tell '74 competition at Tyndall AFB Florida. The team headed by Lt. Col. Richard Law, took second place in the competition.

Two months before the A-7s arrived on December 31, 1974, the 112th ended the 24-hour alert commitment to Air Defense Command. This ended a 16-year tradition.

Support of Creek party continued until July 1977.

The old hangar renovation was completed and the base Engine Shop was in operation, which further relieved the space crunch. Contract awards were made for the new base Supply Warehouse and an Avionics Shop for the 112th Fighter Group.

In March 1976, after 27 years, the supply function was operating under satisfactory warehousing standards. The new warehouse was complete, and it took everyone several months to set up the new space.

Another high-cost construction project was underway in January 1977. A jet fuel storage and pressurized dispensing system with six underground refueling pits located on the aircraft parking ramp was designed to support the heavy fuel loads of the KC-135A, a four-engine jet aircraft, that would arrive in June of 1977.

In June 1977, the first KC-135 arrived, bringing with it 12 SAC Air Advisors, who stayed with the unit for two years, and three instructor aircrews, who stayed for six months to help with the conversion.

When a group of individuals got together attempting to develop a formal method of recognizing retiring members of the unit, the base social committee was formed in 1975.

The mission of the 171st Air Refueling Wing in 1979 was to provide command, operational and staff supervision, for two assigned air refueling groups, 160th at Rickenbacker AFB, Ohio and the 170th at McGuire AFB, New Jersey.



1980-1989

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

On September 19, 1984 Major James Barnette was piloting an A7D when the engine failed. With expert airmanship, he was able to successfully guide the disabled Corsair away from populated areas, clearing Steubenville, Ohio and successfully ditching the aircraft in an unpopulated area before ejecting.

In 1980, Lt. Col. Larry Santerini was the first pilot in the ANG and USAF to amass 2,000 flying hours in the A-7 Corsair aircraft.

DEPLOYMENTS, EXERCISES, and INSPECTIONS

Throughout the 80's, the 112th participated in several Coronet Cove tours at Howard AFB, Panama in defense of the Panama Canal Zone, Red Flag exercises in Nevada, and operational training missions during exercise Snowbird at Patrick AFB, FL.

In 1983, the 112th engaged in their first overseas deployment as prime players in Operation Coronet Mail at RAF Wittering, Great Britain, surpassing required sortie taskings in this European theatre wartime scenario exercise. They deployed there again in 1987, participating in an exercise that enabled the unit to operate under simulated wartime conditions and to test supply and logistics capabilities.



In November 1983, fifty-seven officers and Airmen from 112th TFG flew to Nellis AFB, Nevada for a two week long Red Flag training exercise. The exercise consisted of a series of flying-training scenarios, which were so vigorous and thorough that they provided tactical fighter forces with the most realistic experience possible, short of engaging in actual air battle situations.

In July of 1985, the 171st deployed overseas to Moron Air Base, Spain. This marked the first time in 13 years that the unit deployed aircraft and personnel in mass overseas. A total of 350 personnel spent up to two weeks at Moron in support of NATO exercises. They deployed again in 1988. The mission was to practice going to a forward operating location and working in a wartime environment.

In 1982, 1985, and 1989 the 171st received an overall ORI rating of 'excellent'.

In 1985, the 112th deployed 14 aircraft and 400 troops to Phelps-Collins Field Alpena, Michigan for a full scale ORI. The overall rating was 'excellent'. They deployed there again for another ORI in 1987, garnering the recognition as Best Unit in the 9th Air Force, Air Reserve Forces.

In 1987, Keystone Badger 87-05 was born. The 171st accepted a unique tasking to operate in a chemical warfare environment at Volk Field training site, Wisconsin. Then, to redeploy to their home station to regenerate in an Emergency Wartime Operation scenario. The 171st was the first KC-135 unit to operate in this type of environment.

In 1988, the 112th participated in its first Maple Flag Exercise in Cold Lake, Canada. The 112th was the only ANG unit deployed during this two-week exercise and gave operations, maintenance, and support personnel the experience of working and flying with participants from active USAF, U.S. Marines, Canadian, and RAF Forces.

AWARDS and RECOGNITION

In 1981, the 146th Weather Flight won the Collins Award.

In 1983, KC-135 59-1484 was entered in International Air Tattoo at Greenham Common, England. It competed with 300 aircraft representing more than 30 countries. This 171st aircraft was judged the winner for overall general appearance and mechanical condition and was awarded the Concours d'Elegance Award. Aircraft 59-1457 was awarded second place in 1985.

In 1983, Public Affairs won 1st place for best ANG newspaper in Pa and best ANG public affairs program.

The 112th TAC clinic received the Major General William D. Prescott Award in September 1986 in recognition of superior performance, service, training, and mission accomplishment.

In 1985, Captain Robert J. Slusser, 112th TFG, won Tactical Air Command Intelligence Awards Competition in the Outstanding Officer category for the Air Reserve Forces. In the 1985 9th Air Force Outstanding Intelligence Awards, Captain Slusser was also named as the Outstanding Intelligence Officer, Air Forces Reserve winner. In addition, Airman First Class James R. Forsyth was named as the Outstanding Intelligence Airman Reserve Forces winner.



In 1989, a new unit, the 112th Services Flight was federally recognized in April. Later in the year, this flight was awarded the USAF Hennessey Award for the Best Services Program in the Air National Guard.

MORALE, WELFARE, and RECREATION

February 1984 was the first edition of the 112th newsletter "TAC TALK" that was commercially printed and mailed to members' homes.

Base picnics started in 1980 at White Swan Park and continued annually until the parks closure in 1989.

The first Officers Dining Out was held in 1983. Enlisted Dining Outs followed. The Dining Outs were combined in 1996.



(left to right) Staff Sergeants Robert M. McArdle, Ronald E. Snyder and Terrance A. Buechel, 112th Tactical Fighter Group, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, load a 25-pound practice bomb on an A-7D

The inaugural Base NCO Council was established in 1983 with MSgt. Anthony "Tony" Mileca as the first chairman. Tony went on to serve as the 112th Senior Enlisted Advisor from 1988-1990.

MANPOWER AND PERSONNEL

In 1976, the first females were admitted to the Air Force Academy. This started a conscientious effort to recruit females into all ranks of the Air Force.

As of 1 Jan 1984: 171 – total was 876, minorities – 48, females – 75: 112 – total was 708, minorities – 36, females – 56

According to the recruiting and retention report FY84, "The base recruiting office is aggressively prospecting for minority and female recruits through high schools, colleges, minority organizations, radio and TV and Bring-A-Buddy referrals."

The Pa. Guard magazine in spring of 1984 quoted Brigadier General Wilma L. Vaught, one of the highest ranking military woman in the DOD as saying, "The impact of women's roles in the military has been slow, and changes are gradual."

In 1981, Cheryl Helgerman, the first female aircrew member in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, joined the 171st ARW as a boom operator. In 1989 171st ARW unit members paid tribute to MSgt. Helgerman who was killed while serving with the 168th ARW in Anchorage, Alaska when one of the units aircraft exploded on the flightline after landing. The year of 1982 saw the first female pilot - Kim Dranko Schmidt, and navigator - Aja Vogel at the 171st and in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. In 1987, Lt. Col. Virginia E. Logan became the first woman line officer in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard to command a unit. She was selected to command the 112th Resource Management Squadron.

On January 16, 1982 Brigadier General Peter R. Phillipy retired, handing the reins over to Col. Robert G. Chrisjohn. General Phillipy began his military career by enlisting in the U.S. Army on July 14, 1942. During World War II, as a P-51 fighter pilot, he flew 56 combat missions totaling 278 combat hours in the European Theatre. He joined the Air National Guard in 1948. In 1955, he was reassigned as the commander of the 112th TFG. In 1961, the 112th was designated as the 112th Air Defense Wing and General Phillipy was assigned as wing commander. In 1964, he assumed command of what was to become the 171st Aeromedical Airlift Wing and then redesignated to the 171st Air Refueling Wing in 1972.

1984 brought news of a new fitness test that was to be implemented starting in April 1985. The test consisted of either a 1.5 mile run or a three mile walk. As there was no track, the route started at the front of building 300, down and around the gate guard shack, back up past building 300 out to AGE, around the AGE building twice and back to building 300. A time keeper shouted out your time as you crossed the finish line. You then proceeded to sign your name on a nearby clipboard and enter your time. Prior to the fitness testing, there was a weight control program that required annual weigh-ins.

In 1987, TSgt. Keith Stevens became the first African-American aircrew member as a boom operator.

1988 marked another first for the 171st ARW. The first Noncommissioned Officer Preparatory Course was offered and graduated 19 students. The class represented the 171st ARW, the 112th TFG, and the 911th TAG.



CORONET MAIL RAF WITTERING UK
JULY 1983 112TH TFG PAANG



1990-1999

1990 held many once-in-a-lifetime events. The 171st was chosen by Strongheart Productions for location shots for the feature film "The Silence of the Lambs."

Master Sergeant Bonnie Catrain (Kriberny) became the first female to be promoted to the rank of Senior Master Sergeant at the 171st. She was also the first female enlisted recruit back in '73 when she joined.

With the declaration of Operation Desert Storm in December of 1990, the unit provided essential fighter support for the eastern seaboard. It also provided airbase survivability, security police and support agency personnel for worldwide taskings.

In early 1991, 200 personnel and the wing's eight KC-135E Stratotanker aircraft were merged with Ohio and Tennessee units to form the 1713th ARW (Provisional) in Saudi Arabia. The wing flew a total of 556 sorties during Desert Storm, off-loading more than 30 million pounds to 2,921 receiver aircraft.

The 112th started the A-7 to KC-135 conversion with the arrival of their first KC-135 in July '91.

In 1992, the 171st ARW became one of the largest tanker units in the Air National Guard with 20 KC-135Es and a newly-constructed 92,689 square yard ramp.

The Total Quality Leadership Class, headed by Lt. Col. Dan Rota, launched in 1993, tailored to meet the 171st's values and goals.

Five KC-135s and nearly 250 troops flew to Pisa, Italy, for a month in 1994 to completely take over the air refueling support of the no-fly zone over Bosnia in Operation Deny Flight.

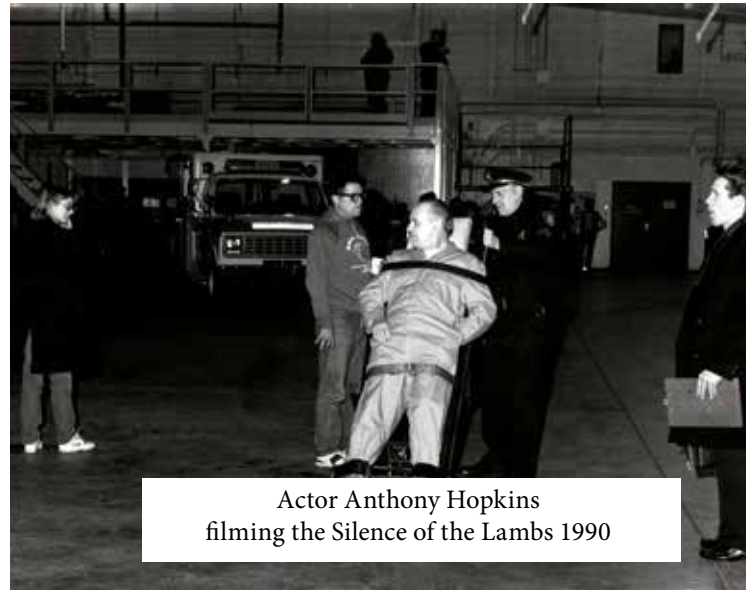
The unit participated in Operation Sea Signal alongside the 193rd Special Operations Group from Harrisburg in 1994. Refueling the EC-130 was an acquired skill that the 171st had already perfected back in Pennsylvania allowing for flawlessly-executed sorties in the Caribbean.

September 12, 1994 was declared a state of emergency by the governor when US Air Flight 427 crashed in Hopewell. 116 members of the 171st were activated to assist with search and recovery and decontamination procedures.

Throughout 1995, the wing received three awards, the Distinguished Flying Unit Award, the Major General John J. Pesch Flight Safety Award and the Curtis N. "Rusty" Metcalf Trophy.

The Security Force Squadron sent members to Atlanta, Ga., in support of the 1996 U.S. Summer Olympics where they provided security and assisted local authorities with antiterrorism activities. As a result of their efforts they were awarded the Joint Meritorious Unit Award for Exceptional Meritorious Achievement.

In 1996, 50 members of the 171st Medical Squadron were sent on a humanitarian mission to Ghana, Africa, in support of the International Training Assistance Program. The end result was 13,056 immunizations, 3,243 eye exams, and 453 dental exams.



In 1997, the 171st had some of the first (if not the first) Ravens in the Air National Guard with SSgt. Ron Ryckman being one of the earliest. SSgt. Steven Barr was also one of the earliest. The Ravens supported missions all over the world including distinguished visitor security, including security for the president.

For the first time in Pennsylvania history, the 171st Medical Squadron received an 'excellent' rating from the Health Services Inspection Team in 1997.

In 1998, five KC-135 Stratotankers and 260 troops were sent to the Persian Gulf to participate in Operation Southern Watch. The unit was the first guard tanker unit to assume responsibility for the ongoing mission.



2000-2009

2000

Istres France: December 23-January 8

Major William Post was awarded the 2000 Air National Guard Outstanding Physician of the Year Award.

On May 15, Ann Young became the first female CMSgt. at the 171st ARW.

2001

Civil Engineering had a busy year. In March, fifteen fire fighters deployed to Al Dhafra, UAE. In June, 34 CE craftsman attended training at Baden, North Carolina. In July, six fire fighters and two power production members supported an AEF deployment to Curacao, Netherlands Antilles and in July, forty-five CE and five services members attended construction training at Ramstein AB, Germany.

The 171st was awarded its eighth Outstanding Unit Award for meritorious service from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1999 for call ups that supported worldwide operations while maintaining a 99 percent Mission Effectiveness Rating.

Dining Hall and CE building construction projects were underway. The new Steel City Café opened in June.

On March 3, Chaplain Assistant, Deb Krall was given a 12 hour notice to deploy on a casualty assistance mission. Twenty-one people had been killed in a military plane crash in Georgia on their way home from Florida. Deb was sent to Virginia Beach for approximately eight weeks to assist grieving families of the Air National Guard and Army decedents.

In April, the 171st ARW Logistics Plans Office was named “Unit of the Year” for 2000, and Plans team member TSgt. Pat Mostyn was named Junior NCO of the year. Highlights of the year included Warrior Week, an innovation project to maximize warrior training, overseeing the deployment and processing of 849 personnel (to Germany, Turkey and France) and 849 tons of cargo. They also shined when they executed their first tasking of deploying support under the Air Expeditionary Force. They were able to arrange predeployment briefings for 225 personnel deploying to 11 different contingency locations with only a 90-day window.

For the second year in a row, the 171 ARW Intelligence Shop won the Outstanding Unit Contribution to Air Mobility Command’s Intelligence Mission. Their proudest contribution was their homepage which appeared on the SIPRNET, allowing Intel units to chat in a classified manner.

In September 2001, a key KC-135 modernization project began. The Pacer CRAG (Compass Radar, and Global Positioning System) avionics upgrade allowed the aircraft to be flown by the pilot and co-pilot, thus eliminating the navigator position.

September 11 - When the twin towers were struck, the 171st had two available jets out of twenty one. The remaining jets were undergoing maintenance for an upgrade from analog navigation instruments to a digital compass radar, and global positioning system.

The supervisor of flying that day was Major Raymond L. Hyland Jr. While on his way to answer a phone call at the Operations Desk, he looked at the TV and saw the first plane hit the tower. The call was from the commander of the 180th Fighter Wing in Toledo, Ohio asking for fuel for their F-16s that were already airborne.

When the second plane struck, it became clear this was a deliberate attack. The pro-superintendent of maintenance ordered the full-time staff to start putting the parts back together on the aircraft to get them ready to fly ASAP. Maintainers scrambled to get the tankers ready for flight.

As the world watched the unfolding events in New York, drill status Guardsmen who were with their families at home, at work, or in school dropped what they were doing and took action. They showed up at the base and offered to support wherever they possibly could.

The Wing Commander, Brigadier General William Boardley, ordered the base to get the planes airborne and directed everyone to figure out the details in the air.

Nobody expected to be flying a combat mission over their own hometown.

The Airmen in Maintenance Group were able to scramble to get an additional aircraft ready for launch. One of the tankers that day was originally scheduled for a routine training mission but had been suddenly canceled due to being denied the airspace where the refueling was to occur. Later it was discovered that the airspace was denied due to a search for American Airlines flight 77. Flight 77 would later be found when it was purposefully flown into the Pentagon by terrorists.

Three tails were launched. Air crews said that from the sky, looking at the streets below, all the parking lots and shops were eerily empty. The crews provided combat air patrol supporting the areas over New York, D.C. and Pittsburgh. They provided fuel to multiple receivers, including the F-16’s out of Toledo. In addition, two aircraft were intercepted and were ordered to land as all commercial and civilian aircraft were ordered to clear the sky. Of the three tails launched, one landed outside of Pittsburgh, was refueled and quickly turned to provide more support. 171st members were calling their families to say that they weren’t sure when they would be back home and everyone knew that things would never be the same.

The maintainers at the 171st went from having only two available jets at the start of the day to eight by the end of the day. The 171st was ready and available for what might come next.

In the months after 9/11, the 171st stood up its alert mission, and for a year flew nearly every day in areas over New York and D.C. after the attack. The 171st still stands ready to launch on alert 24/7 to this day.

171st ARW retiree, Major Jay Mershon was selected to carry the Olympic flame for two-tenths of a mile on December 19, 2001 in the Pittsburgh area. Jay’s wife Alison submitted the winning essay to Coca-Cola Co. describing how the nominee embodied the “Olympic spirit.”

2002

January – presented with the eighth Outstanding Unit Award

March – 12 POL specialists were deployed to Shaikh Isa, Bahrain.

May – For the third time in eight years, the 146th Combat Weather Flight was awarded the Maj. Gen. John W. Collens Award. This award recognizes the outstanding Air National Guard Weather Flight and is given annually to the best of the 33 Air National Guard Weather Flights nationwide. The flight proved itself by executing the difficult mission of providing detailed operational weather and environmental support to the 193rd Special Operations Wing, the 919th Special Operations Wing and the 2nd Psychological Operations Wing. During the award period, personnel of the 146th Weather Flight were deployed a total of 828 days. Considering there were only 21 people in the flight, this is pretty significant.

June – 15 Food service members were deployed to Prince Sultan AB, Saudi Arabia and became part of the 363 Expeditionary Services Squadron, which received the Sharp Team Award for the Food Service Team.

In July, the Air National Guard instituted the new physical fitness test to include crunches and push-ups in addition to the annual walk-run.

September- Aircraft 56-3648 won Concourse D'Elegance Best in Show at Air Tattoo in England.

1 October the 258th ATCS (Air Traffic Control Squadron) in Johnstown became part of the 171st ARW as a GSU (geographically separated unit). They were previously attached to the 193rd SOW in Harrisburg.

October thru December – deployment to Incirlik AB, Turkey in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

November – Results of the NORI were 'outstanding' – the highest rating possible in the IG five tier grading system. This was the first 'outstanding' the IG had given to any unit in the past two years.

2003

January - MSgt. Roy Lewandowski of the Intel Shop was presented the Bronze Star for exceptionally meritorious service as the Tactical Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility Security Officer, and Geographic Productions Manager, Task Force Bowie while deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

Five Medical Group members were deployed (date not specified) in direct support of Operation Iraqi Freedom for over 130 days. For the first time in 171st history, the MDG personnel were involved in direct care of combat casualties.

March – Mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

July – 146 Weather Flight awarded Collens award for the second year in a row, the fourth time in the last nine years and the fifth time overall.

August – August 15-30 - Thirteen MDG members deployed to Cusco, Peru to perform a Humanitarian/Civic Action mission seeing over 8,000 patients – and an average of 900 patients a day!

171st awarded the 2002 Lt. Gen. Malcolm B Armstrong Trophy for being the best Air National Guard unit in the 21st Air Force.

2004

March – During the stockholders meeting, Maj. Gen. James Skiff presented the 171st ARW with the Lt. Gen. Malcolm B. Armstrong Trophy for the Best in the 21st Air Force. This trophy has been given out only five times, starting in 1998. The 171 ARW can be proud to have received the trophy two of the five years it has been awarded.

May or June – Carol Houston became the first black female CMSgt.

2005

February – Chief Loretta Kendall was commissioned as a 1st lieutenant. She was the first female chief in Pa. in the legal field. Lt. Maj. Gen. Jack Clark, ANG assistant to The Judge Advocate General, the United States Air Force stated, " We believe this may be the first time within the Judge Advocate General's Corps and possibly throughout the Air Force that a Chief has accepted a commission to become a lieutenant."

September- For the first time in 21 years the 171st Women's Softball team took first place at the 40th Air National Guard Softball tournament in St. Joseph, Missouri.

2006

January – Sixty one years prior, former 146th Fighter Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. William Shomo was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic acts as a P-51D pilot in the 82nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron. On January 11, 1945, on a strafing and photo reconnaissance mission during assault landing on Luzon, Philippine Islands, Captain Shomo encountered an enemy bomber and 12 fighter planes. He attacked and shot down six fighters and the bomber while his wingman took out three more. The display of courage was unparalleled in the S.W. Pacific and gave him the distinction of becoming an Ace in a Day. On April 1, 1945 Shomo received the Medal of Honor.

Jun/Jul – SMSgt. Cheryl Guandolo's photo, taken by unit photographer MSgt. Stacey Barkey, was selected to be used as the face of the New Guard for the national level DoD recruiting program. It appeared on recruiting posters, tri-fold pamphlets and the DoD Guard Recruiting Assistance Program credit card.

2007

Chaplain Jonathan Bell, 1st PA Guardsman in Antarctica as part Operation Deep Freeze.

2008

When Bonnie Kriberney sewed on CMSgt. stripes on August 14, 2008. Her and her husband Bob became the first husband and wife team to achieve the rank of Chief Master Sergeant. Bob was promoted to Chief August 14, 2006. He retired in December 2007.



2010-2019

The 171st was awarded three outstanding unit awards in the span of the 2010-2019

2010
-Leisa Weiss with the Services Flight was selected to travel the world to perform with the Air Force entertainment group Tops in Blue.
-More than twenty inches of snow fell in a single day during a blizzard that became known as snowmageddon.
-The last printed issue of the Tanker Times was printed and mailed to unit members. The newsletter was replaced by the website.
-Col. William Post became the Medical Group Commander.

2011
-The 171st supported the National Veteran Wheelchair game with arrival and departure of more than 600 disabled Veteran athletes and later supported the games at various locations throughout the city.
-The 171st participated in Patriot Exercise, which tests local, state and federal organizations' ability to coordinate the response to simulated emergencies, such as a hurricane and collapsed buildings, and search and rescue victims.
-About sixteen new recruits were sworn in during a Pittsburgh Pirates baseball game. The recruits would later attend basic military training together in the same flight and graduated together.
-Pittsburgh Penguins players and their coach Dan Balmisa visited the 171st to meet with Airmen and autograph the nose art featuring the Penguins logo.
-Uniform style began to change and a mix-match of uniforms were observed as green BDU uniforms were phased out by the digital pattern ABU.

2012
-Construction began on aircraft hangars 301 and 302. The project was the largest construction project in the PA National Guard since 2003.
-A change of command was held and base leadership changed from Brig. Gen. Uptegraff to Col. Anthony Carrelli.
-The 171st has its Operational Readiness Inspection.
-CMSgt. Randy Miller became the 10th 171st ARW Command Chief.

2013
-Security Forces returned home after a deployment to Southwest Asia.
-A change of command was held and base leadership changed from Col. Anthony Carrelli to Col. Ted Metzgar.
-Construction on the facade of hangars 301 and 302 is complete, the sliding metal and glass doors were replaced with vinyl doors that raise upwards.

2014
-40 members volunteered for the Salvation Army Project Bundle-Up Telethon. The telethon has been an annual tradition.
-Col. Gilbert Patton became the Operations Group Commander.
-Brig. Gen. Bill Boardley was nominated into to the PA National Guard Hall of Fame.

2015
-The 171st was part of Operation Saber Strike.
-Unit members at the 171st went through the Unit Efficiency Inspection with the new Wing Inspector Generals Office in place.
-Unit members returned from a deployment to Al Udeid in November.
-The 171st participated in the Honorary Commander Association, which educates local business leaders about the military installations in the region.
-CE deployed to the Naujene Orphanage in Latvia from June to July.
-A change of command ceremony was held and base leadership changed from Col. Ted Metzgar to Col. Gregg Perez.

2016
-25 members of the 171st deployed to the Middle East at night in January.
-Col. Joseph Olszewski became the Vice Wing Commander of the 171st.

2017
-A change of command ceremony was held and base leadership changed from Col. Greg Perez to Col. Mark Goodwill.
-A ribbon cutting ceremony was held, marking the opening of a flight simulator built in hangar 304 operated by CAE. The simulator is used to train KC-135 pilots from across the country.
-The Dining Facility was renovated to include a new polished concrete floor, booth seating, paint, and a custom mural painted by Kayla Stapf.
-The 171st coordinated the Steel City Salutes the Troops event in downtown Pittsburgh. The event showcased military equipment and personnel from local units as well as historical vehicles.
-The Communications Squadron was relocated to mobile trailers as building 302A was renovated as part of the hangar construction project.

2018
-Judi McGrath became the 11th Command Chief at the 171st and the first female to hold this position.
-President Donald Trump visited the 171st in January and then again in October.
-A ceremony at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen in Germany marked 25 years of partnership between the Air National Guard and NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force.
-Lithuanian Command Sergeant Major Nerijus Petravičius visited the 171st as part of the State Partnership Program in April.
-Col. Gilbert Patton became the Vice Wing Commander of the 171st
-Col. Joseph Olszewski became the Misison Support Group Commander.
-Col. Jim Swanik became the Operations Group Commander.

2019
-19 Members of the 258th return home in September from being deployed to the Middle East.
-Lt. Gen. L. Scott Rice, Director, Air National Guard, visited the 171st in September.
-President Donald Trump landed at the 171st in August.
-Col. Brian Lehew became the new Mission Support Group Commander replacing Col. Joseph Olszewski.
-Col. Joseph Olszewski became the Vice Wing Commander of the 171st.
-The PA National Guard launched the Military Family Education Program. The program affords family members the same education benefits the member receives after 12 years.
-The 171st executed more flying hours than any other KC-135 Air National Guard Unit.
-The 171st had over 62 years of flying without a Class A mishap. Over 283,000 flight hours.
-COVID-19 made it into the news and the world began to respond.
-Vice President Michael Pence landed at 171st in December.





The **TANKER TIMES**
2023
AIRMEN *of the* **YEAR**



AIRMAN

STAFF SGT. GARRETT SWANSON
AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER
258TH AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SQUADRON
171ST & PENNSYLVANIA WINNER



NCO

TECH. SGT. PHILIP KAPELEWSKI
EMERGENCY MANAGER
CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON
171ST, PENNSYLVANIA & ANG REGION 2 WINNER



SNCO

MASTER SGT. LUCAS WILKINS
WATER, FUELS & SYSTEM MAINTENANCE
CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON
171ST WINNER



FIRST SGT.

MASTER SGT. ERIC WEARING
FIRST SERGEANT
LOGISTICS READINESS SQUADRON
171ST & PENNSYLVANIA WINNER

PROMOTIONS

Timothy Abraham	SrA	3/20/2023	Ethan Edgar	TSgt	3/29/2023	Austin Macek	SrA	6/15/2023	Madelyn Schmader	AB	6/22/2023
Steven Adair	1st Lt	9/3/2023	Alex Edmundson	SSgt	6/1/2023	Dale Madonna	SrA	1/18/2023	Jacob Schnellbach	TSgt	10/11/2023
Oluwatobiloba Akintola	SrA	6/23/2023	Matthew Felix	SSgt	9/6/2023	Jordan Maglicco	SSgt	9/22/2023	Conor Shanley	MSgt	4/18/2023
Benjamin Albert	Amn	12/7/2023	Rachel Fleming	TSgt	8/17/2023	Thomas Mahosky	Lt Col	1/9/2023	Alexander Sharpe	TSgt	10/27/2023
Joseph Albert	MSgt	2/1/2023	Luke David Foster	SSgt	3/8/2023	Johanna Maloney	TSgt	2/1/2023	Ryan Shaw	MSgt	11/21/2023
Ryan Alexander	SSgt	3/30/2023	Alycia Frederick	MSgt	1/13/2023	Tiaira Maloni	SSgt	7/5/2023	Kyle Shinn	2nd Lt	3/10/2023
Jeremiah Allen	TSgt	9/19/2023	Shana Frey	SMSGt	8/11/2023	Jacie Mangold	TSgt	6/2/2023	Frank Shoaf	Col	7/27/2023
Kassidy Amicone	TSgt	3/30/2023	William Frey	MSgt	8/25/2023	Andrew Marflak	A1C	5/9/2023	Cory Shoemaker	1st Lt	9/3/2023
Brandon Amrhein	TSgt	8/16/2023	Kaitlynn Fuga	MSgt	5/1/2023	Cody Martin	TSgt	1/23/2023	Caleb Simmons	SrA	4/19/2023
Joshua Armstrong	AB	6/11/2023	Jackson Fulton	Amn	5/15/2023	Catherine Martsof	SrA	9/7/2023	Jerrad Skone	TSgt	6/15/2023
Taylor Auen	SSgt	9/16/2023	Brandon Garland	A1C	5/5/2023	Erin Mcbane	MSgt	6/2/2023	Avery Smith	SSgt	9/13/2023
Levi Baer	A1C	7/6/2023	Caleb Garvey	1st Lt	4/16/2023	Justin Mccrea	SSgt	6/2/2023	Jolene Smith	SrA	8/17/2023
Jacob Bailey	SSgt	6/15/2023	Dale Glotfelty	SrA	7/6/2023	Chase Mchenry	SrA	9/6/2023	Lauren Smith	SSgt	10/14/2023
Evan Ban	TSgt	9/19/2023	Jessica Gonzalez	CMSGt	2/28/2023	Kyle McLaughlin	SSgt	7/11/2023	Hannah Sprunk	SSgt	10/4/2023
James Barnett	Lt Col	4/26/2023	Phillip James Good	SSgt	2/7/2023	Patrick Medinacollazo	A1C	1/23/2023	Ashley Stainbrook	MSgt	1/13/2023
Matthew Bedekovich	AB	11/21/2023	Sean Gould	A1C	5/30/2023	Erik Mendes	TSgt	11/4/2023	Kayla Stapf	MSgt	4/17/2023
Reed Bell	SrA	8/31/2023	Michelle Greenwood	TSgt	10/5/2023	Kade Meredith	SSgt	7/31/2023	Alex Steele	Lt Col	4/26/2023
Landon Blower	AB	6/13/2023	Noah Grice	SSgt	11/5/2023	Christian Miller	TSgt	3/16/2023	Hunter Stevick	SSgt	6/15/2023
Kirk Boring	MSgt	12/6/2023	Steven Guyton	Col	7/27/2023	Misty Miller	AB	1/24/2023	Andrew Stover	TSgt	12/6/2023
Anthony Bovay	MSgt	3/16/2023	Spencer Hagen	SrA	10/19/2023	Dominic Molinaro	SSgt	3/8/2023	Riley Tkatch	SrA	6/2/2023
Evan Bradley	SSgt	2/14/2023	Mohamad Hamad	A1C	6/14/2023	Jeffrey Moore	SMSGt	1/13/2023	Elizabeth Venesky	MSgt	2/6/2023
Zachary Braley	TSgt	3/17/2023	Bo Haney	SSgt	9/29/2023	Casey Moorman	TSgt	10/23/2023	Michael Waigand	TSgt	9/11/2023
Jessica Brooks	1st Lt	1/5/2023	Diana Hannan	SrA	2/3/2023	Jose Alberto Moran	MSgt	3/16/2023	Elisabeth Wajler	AB	4/21/2023
Mason Brown	A1C	6/1/2023	Louis Hapach	SSgt	6/7/2023	Daniel Moretti	Capt	9/29/2023	James Norman Ward	CMSGt	6/2/2023
Benjamin Bruce	TSgt	3/6/2023	John William Hatfield	MSgt	3/16/2023	Olivia Morgan	AB	5/25/2023	Justin Wardman	TSgt	11/3/2023
Emma Bucheli	AB	4/28/2023	Julia Hazel	SSgt	8/29/2023	Timothy Mulvihill	Capt	9/29/2023	Andrew Warwick	MSgt	4/21/2023
David Burda	SSgt	1/18/2023	Patrick Heaney	SMSGt	9/8/2023	Payton Neyman	SSgt	8/3/2023	Kyle Watkins	A1C	2/2/2023
Nicholas Burns	SrA	9/22/2023	Mitchell John Hegarty	TSgt	8/3/2023	Johnathan Nixon	SSgt	8/23/2023	Eric Wearing	SMSGt	10/5/2023
Jesse Edward Byerly	SrA	1/27/2023	Nathaniel Henzel	SrA	12/2/2023	Shannon Noonan	SSgt	1/25/2023	Seth Weckerly	AB	11/3/2023
Derrick Cable	SSgt	4/19/2023	Zackary Herrle	1st Lt	6/1/2023	Conner Nyman	SrA	8/8/2023	Peter West	A1C	1/20/2023
James Callahan	SSgt	6/20/2023	Benjamin Hodgdon	Lt Col	11/22/2023	David Oneil	TSgt	6/27/2023	Trevor Wieland	AB	11/7/2023
Ethan Casperson	A1C	3/14/2023	Marissa Hodges	SrA	3/6/2023	John Owens	Capt	4/27/2023	Audrey Williams	SrA	3/17/2023
Timothy Cavanaugh	SrA	8/31/2023	Mason Hoffman	AB	10/27/2023	Zachary Paff	SSgt	11/21/2023	Derek Wilson	SSgt	8/8/2023
Sean Cercone	1st Lt	11/19/2023	Daniel Horwitz	Lt Col	3/1/2023	Nathan Pahel	TSgt	7/14/2023	Mark Wilson	CMSGt	10/1/2023
Michael Charsar	TSgt	2/13/2023	Jonathan Hough	MSgt	4/21/2023	Anthony Palombo	TSgt	5/11/2023	Lisa Withrow	SMSGt	2/28/2023
Jesse Cheek	SSgt	5/31/2023	Devin Irwin	SrA	10/11/2023	Tyler Parisi	SrA	6/6/2023	Tierney Woitas	SrA	10/5/2023
Andrew Clendennen	MSgt	11/2/2023	Kierra Jackson	SrA	11/27/2023	Tyler Parsons	TSgt	8/24/2023	Jamie Wolf	SMSGt	1/13/2023
Sean Cloonan	TSgt	8/16/2023	Tanner Jackson	2nd Lt	3/10/2023	Traviston Pauly	2nd Lt	3/10/2023	Emily Woods	SrA	10/13/2023
Marco Colavecchia	SSgt	9/14/2023	Seth Jeffers	A1C	7/21/2023	Christopher Pendel	Amn	9/19/2023	Zachary Young	MSgt	3/16/2023
Brooklynn Cole	AB	8/1/2023	Alex Jesse	A1C	2/28/2023	Frankie Perez	SMSGt	1/13/2023	Ella Zelinsky	AB	7/5/2023
Reed Conlon	A1C	6/14/2023	Joshua Johnson	MSgt	4/18/2023	Ryan Pfrogner	TSgt	11/1/2023			
Joseph Cosnek	AB	2/3/2023	Evan Jones	A1C	6/1/2023	James Pirinelli	Capt	9/27/2023			
Michael Cosnek	SrA	8/9/2023	Lindsay Jones	Lt Col	2/24/2023	Rinaldo Policicchio	Maj	10/5/2023			
Dylan Craig	SrA	3/8/2023	Jacob Kahle	2nd Lt	3/10/2023	Allison Poole	SSgt	8/31/2023			
Larry Crouch	A1C	7/27/2023	Alexander Kanell	SrA	6/11/2023	Alexander Popko	SrA	5/4/2023			
Dylan Culver	AB	5/12/2023	Derek Kauffman	SSgt	11/19/2023	Savannah Price	SSgt	8/8/2023			
Lucas Curtaccio	MSgt	8/31/2023	Logan Keast	SSgt	9/19/2023	Hunter Prilla	SrA	11/27/2023			
George Steven Daniels	TSgt	10/11/2023	Matthew Kensecki	TSgt	5/25/2023	Brandon Rader	Maj	5/4/2023			
Nicholas Darrigo	TSgt	6/20/2023	Brayden Kinney	SrA	10/14/2023	Matthew Ramsdell	SSgt	6/9/2023			
Connor Daugherty	SSgt	1/25/2023	Sophie Kinney	Amn	8/8/2023	Byron Richards	AB	9/7/2023			
Jillian Deitrick	TSgt	6/2/2023	Cory Klucick	SSgt	7/14/2023	Kenneth Richardson	CMSGt	10/5/2023			
Sarah Dellich	MSgt	3/16/2023	Jacob Kriebel	SSgt	8/8/2023	Victoria Richer	1st Lt	6/18/2023			
Alexa Di Pietrantonio	SSgt	9/11/2023	Courtney Lambie	TSgt	6/20/2023	Derek Robertson	TSgt	5/2/2023			
Andrew Dipietro	1st Lt	4/16/2023	Kameron Langston	TSgt	6/20/2023	Jeremy Rohanna	CMSGt	2/28/2023			
Carlisa Dixon	TSgt	7/14/2023	Carlyn Large	SSgt	8/24/2023	Laura Roncaglione	MSgt	1/13/2023			
Evan Dougal	A1C	4/16/2023	April Lemon	1st Lt	5/21/2023	Michael Rose	SSgt	8/4/2023			
Alexander Downey	SSgt	6/6/2023	Jeremiah Leonard	TSgt	9/5/2023	Nathaniel Sanders	AB	9/6/2023			
Nicholas Dubina	TSgt	2/3/2023	Jacob Linsenbigler	MSgt	4/21/2023	Robert Sant	TSgt	8/11/2023			
Jonathon Duran	Amn	6/20/2023	Morgan Logan	TSgt	10/6/2023	Brian Scanlan	SMSGt	10/30/2023			
Keegan Dziadik	SrA	6/6/2023	Alec Londino	TSgt	9/20/2023	Rebecca Scarsella	SSgt	5/5/2023			

“On behalf of the 171st Air Refueling Wing, the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and the United States Air Force, congratulations on your promotion! You will be challenged with more expectations and expected to lead by example.”

**Command Chief Master Sgt.
Charles Wiley**

RETIREMENTS

SSgt	Nathan	Anderson	1-Oct-23
MSgt	Donald	Beseny	1-Aug-23
TSgt	Norman	Black	31-Dec-23
MSgt	Justin	Blinkey	11-Nov-23
CMSgt	Brian	Sheets	31-Dec-23
Lt Col	Donald	Calkins	1-Mar-23
TSgt	Cory	Coffey	18-Dec-23
CMSgt	John	Craven	30-Nov-23
MSgt	Timothy	Dauk	31-Dec-23
CMSgt	Michael	Duganieri	7-Aug-23
SMSgt	Daryl	Ferricks	1-Feb-23
TSgt	Jeremy	Field	5-Apr-23
MSgt	Christopher	Lape	15-Feb-23
MSgt	Steven	Mccandless	27-Jun-23
SSgt	Brian	Mcgrath	9-Nov-23
TSgt	Amber	Mckenzie	30-Jun-23
TSgt	Shannon	Miller	6-Mar-23
MSgt	Nathan	Miller	6-Aug-23
CMSgt	Andrew	Mowry	15-Oct-23
TSgt	Savannah	Nelson	29-Sep-23
MSgt	Daniel	Novak	11-Jun-23
MSgt	Jeremy	Shawley	1-Jan-23
MSgt	Shawn	Snyder	30-Nov-23
Lt Col	Lee	Staab	16-Aug-23
MSgt	Leanna	Taracido	21-Dec-23
COL	James	Vogus	30-Jun-23

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

Col. Raymond L. Hyland Jr.

