

FEBRUARY 2024

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# **THE LOSS OF FOUR WING MEMBERS**

S U.S. AIR FORCE

BLACK HISTORY REMEMBERING THE HARLEM HELL FIGHTERS WING'S LEGACY AIRCRAFT RECEIVES NEW PAINT TO CELEBRATE 100 YEARS OF AVIATION

### CHIEF'S CORNER 141ST WELCOMES NEW COMMAND CHIEF

# THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 141ST AIR REFUELING WING

### VOLUME 61 ISSUE 1 · FEBRUARY 2024

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### THE MISSION

THE MISSION OF THE JET GAZETTE IS TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE EVENTS AND INFORMATION OF THE 141ST AIR REFUELING WING TO UNIT MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES AND RETIREES AND TO RECOGNIZE PERSONAL AND UNIT ACHIEVEMENTS WITHIN THE WING.

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FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION BY MASTER SGT. MICHAEL STEWART

## NOTES FROM THE TOP **COLONEL JAMES MCGOVERN 141ST AIR REFUELING WING COMMANDER**

elcome to February RSD! I hope months, we will complete the first vou all had an amazing Holiday season and had a chance to relax and recuperate from a busy 2023. It has been 1 year since I took over as the Wing Commander of this amazing organization. In my first address to the wing, I laid out my priorities: Airmen, Mission, and Culture. Reflecting over the past year it is evident that we have accomplished a great deal and have improved in all three focus areas.

This past year we have reorganized our RSD schedule to provide the best possible AFSC training opportunity for our DSG force, while maintaining time for other critical readiness areas, team building, and family events. We've done this with the intent of striking the best possible balance between Military / Civilian Employment / Personal Lives – while meeting the ever-increasing demands on our military and preparing us for the future fight.

We continue to reinvigorate Guard campus, and to date, have moved approximately 90% of our Airmen back to campus. Over the next few

stage of the project by moving Force Support Squadron (Military Personnel Flight) to Building 399, holistically housing the squadron Airmen together. We will also move Maintenance shops back to their permanent residence in Hangar 1033 after a yearlong construction project. Although there are more projects on the horizon for Guard campus, we will have completed all the moves attainable under the current square footage available during the first stage of the project.

We have definitively excelled in our mission, both on the federal and state side – executing 379 sorties and nearly 1200 Flight hours. We deployed 178 Airmen in support of INDOPACOM, CENTCOM, and EUCOM. We've maintained our 24/7/365 Operation Nobel Eagle Alert mission and continued to excel in our 801X mission through two Total Force Exercises. We also executed the first ever ANG sponsored Enduring Partners engagement between the WA ANG, OR ANG, and the Royal Thai Air Force just to highlight a few.

This year we will be celebrating the 116 ARS' 100th Anniversary, and our Guard heritage with the kickoff event on Friday, 2 February with a Tail Reveal. The paint scheme chosen to highlight and celebrate this amazing milestone is the same paint scheme our unit tails flew in the late 1920's. We will continue the celebration in August with the 100th anniversary picnic over August UTA, and an evening Gala later in the same month. As we enter our 100th year of service to neighbor and nation I would like to expand on our continued focus on Airmen, Mission, and Culture. Know that every decision made by your leadership team is aimed at further improving in all three areas. To help you understand the why, I will be discussing the three buckets that focus our attention and efforts: Bucket 1 - Guard Culture,

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Bucket 2 - The Future Fight (China), and Bucket 3 – Unit Equipped. As we move forward together towards an uncertain future all our efforts will be directed towards one of these three buckets. As your commander, I am committed to improving our culture, not just merely saying the words Guard Family, but intentionally focusing efforts at every level towards that goal. I will reiterate from my first message to you all that I truly believe in the "Guard Family" concept. It's the way we treat one another, the respect we give to each member and each AFSC in our organization. It's simply Never Failing an Airmen! I am also committed to ensuring that we are all prepared for the next fight (China). This is first and foremost on my mind - That I provide every Airmen with: the means to train,

opportunities for team building, and an environment to thrive as we strengthen our capabilities and resolve to be best prepared. Finally - we will continue to work to become unit equipped. General Welsh along with state, and wing leadership are tirelessly working to make this happen. Over the past year we have had some victories and some setbacks - but know that the fight is not over, and we are closer to our goal now than any other time during out TFA history. 2024 is going to be an extremely busy year, and a lot will be asked of us. We will continue to foster and build a Guard Family culture, focus our training efforts on the next fight and come out of this year a better and stronger Wing – The best KC-135 unit in the nation!

"J-Mac"

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# CHIEF MASTER SGT. STEVE WEBSTER





appy New Year and welcome to February Drill everyone! Hope you all had a great holiday season and enjoyed time with family and friends. For those of you that don't know me, I'm Steve Webster the new 141 ARW Command Chief. I just want to start off with, what an ABSOLUTE HONOR AND PRIVILEGE it is to be a part of this organization and to serve with you.

A brief history. I'm a Guard Baby. I grew up in Spokane and joined our Wing in 1988 while still in High school. Yes, that's right, 36 years ago. It's true what those old folks say, "time fly's when you're having fun". At that time, I had two other family members in the Guard. An uncle in LRS (Motor Pool) and a cousin in Supply. Shortly thereafter, I had 7 blood relatives join and inherited hundreds of family members and friends from the Wing.

The love for airplanes, landed me in the Aircraft Maintenance Group as an Isochronal Section aircraft mechanic (Phase Dock). I was a Traditional Guardsman for 5 years before becoming a full time Technician and soon after, transferring to the Flight Line (AMXS) and became a Dedicated Crew Chief on our KC-135's. I spent the next 25 years floating around the Maintenance Group and traveling the World.

MY VISION: My Vision for our Wing is the same as our Commander's. Col James "J-Mac" McGovern stresses (A)irman, (M)ission, (C) ulture "AMC". Our goal is to be the best Guard Unit and Flying Wing in the world. Airman: Our number 1 priority is you. You are the future of this organization, and we are going to do everything we can to ensure you are successful and have an amazing career in the Washington Air National Guard. **MISSION:** Our mission in the Guard and at Fairchild AFB is crucial to the defense of our nation. Every AFSC is critical and we must continue to aggressively train and not only be the best in our career field, but be the most well rounded airman possible. The best way to prevent war is to prepare for war and our goal is to make sure you are the foremost trained airman possible.

**CULTURE:** When I joined the Guard and for the first 20 years, I felt like I knew everyone in the Guard. You couldn't go anywhere in Spokane without running into someone affiliated with the Guard. It was truly like a big extended family. Like I said earlier, I inherited hundreds of new friends and family and that's my hope for you. The Boss has us 90% back on the Guard Campus, so please get to know as many people as possible, experience, and help build the culture so many of us old folk enjoyed.

The priorities in my personal life are **faith**, **family** and **service**. For me, it's important to keep my personal life in balance because if my home life is not my priority and in order, it's difficult to give the proper attention to my service commitment. Freedom to believe in what I want and protect my family are my priorities. That's why I feel it's important to serve. We live in the greatest country in the world, and I serve to keep our freedoms and protect our way life. On a side note...I enjoy the heck out of the Washington Air National Guard, and I hope you do too!

That's me in a nutshell everybody. I can't wait to get to know you all and have a GREAT DRILL!

Steve

## ARMAN SPOTLICHT TSGT. ROSETTA HEINEN UNIT: 141ST MEDICAL GROUP JOB: PUBLIC HEALTH TECHNICIAN

"I would encourage other people to join the guard because I think the guard provides stability in your life, especially in a time when things can be so uncertain. You can always fall back on your Guard family to support you through tough times. What stands out about this unit specifically, is we emphasize family, coming together, and readiness. I think that as far as involvement, the 141st is always ready to help the community."

## TAIL ART WING COMMEMORATES 100 YEARS OF AVIATION EXCELLENCE WITH NEW TAIL ART

### STORY BY: SENIOR AIRMAN TRAVIS MILLER PHOTOS BY: MASTER SGT. MICHAEL STEWART

Throughout history soldiers would distinguish themselves with adornments whether it be plumes or brightly colored uniforms to help identify friend from foe. Medieval knights took this to a whole other level. Bold colors gave way to complex patterns. In time the designs seen on their shields and horses became the heraldry of families and later inspired the flags of nation states. For example, it

is believed by historians that George Washington's family crest influenced the design of the American flag. By the time of World War I, uniforms changed drastically to meet changing environments. Gone were the days of seeking attention on the battlefield for glory and recognition. Bright colored uniforms gave way to dull earth tones, this was the beginning of camouflage. Industrialization made quantity

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more important than quality. The soldier's individuality had been muted. Just when everyone thought the days of chivalry were dead and the need to be recognized on the battlefield were over, a new form of warfare had emerged.

Airplanes had barely been around for a decade and were being used for observation over battlefields. When Airmen encountered the enemy in the sky they would salute or wave at one another. There was no way to engage other planes or so they thought.

In 1914 a Serbian pilot drew his pistol on a Austro-Hungarian plane and warfare was forever changed. Aerial combat had been born. Within a month all military planes had machine guns attached to them. Most of these new pilots hailed from aristocratic families. They were gentleman who saw themselves as knights of the air. As such they started painting family crests and symbols on their planes. They did this for many reasons. Mostly for identification and the pride of being recognized for their heroics in the sky. Most famously known would be The

S. AIR FORCE

Red Baron with his bright red triplane. These historical references have continued into the twenty-first century, where Air Force units paint designs on their aircraft to distinguish them from other units. It's a symbol and mark of pride to let others know where they are from.

The 141 Aircraft structural maintenance was tasked with painting the tail of the wing's flagship aircraft honoring the 116th Air Refueling Squadron's 100th anniversary. They are the unsung heroes of the aviation world, virtually working on every part of the aircraft, the job took close to two months to complete.

"This is a visualization of the men and women past and present serving our nation and we look forward to another 100 years. It was a long-involved process, but it finally came together. Personally, I was nervous that it wouldn't come to fruition and there would be roadblocks when we really articulated the story and what we were celebrating it was great to see people support celebrating our heritage." 141st MXG commander Col. Mark Scott Retired Master Sergeant Shayne Meder volunteered her time to paint the nose and tail art. Shayne runs her own company called Flygirlpainter. Shayne got her start in 1987 painting B-52s in the Air Force until she retired. In 1999 she began painting planes for various museums and then the U.S. Navy had her paint active duty aircraft. She has been painting military aircraft now for 25 years.

"I use the same techniques that were used in the beginning of aviation," Shayne said. "All the aircraft I paint, I do so free of charge. My payment is the love of my country and the joy it brings to people." A fin fold was performed, a procedure that aero maintenance, a team in the repair and reclamation section in the 141st Maintenance Squadron rarely does. It is exactly what it sounds like, folding the entire tail of the aircraft 90 degrees to the body.

"We began prepping the aircraft surface starting with sanding the entire tail," said Staff Sgt. Chase Chapman, 141st MXS sheet metal technician. "It was a daunting task but there's nothing we can't do"



Aero repair was brought in to bring down the tail and remove the rudder. They brought the rudder into the Fuel Cell hangar to be primed and then painted. Approximately four large SUVs worth of paint was used to paint the entire tail..

"Being asked to help with the tail art 100 years of service was truly an honor and I couldn't be more proud of the final product that really shows the skill and creativity of our structural maintainers. Being asked to manage this project was truly an honor." Senior Master Sgt. Don Grant, 141st MXS sheet metal senior enlisted leader

Our new tail design harkens back to our beginning. An homage to when pilots had nerves of steel and dared to do the impossible. Where "fortune favors the bold" was a phrase pilots lived and died by. The 116th refueling wing started out as an observation squadron and transitioned to a fighter squadron during World War II. The red and white stripes on the tail were first adopted in 1926 and stayed with us through the war. In the 1930s, blue and yellow adorned the panels of 116th Aircraft. The national star insignia on the fuselage is the old style from the Army Air Corps. The Ace of spades was first created by First Lieutenant Laurence S. "Laurie" Heral, one of the original sixteen officers of the 116th. It was adopted in 1931 and still represents the unit to this day. The ace of spades on the tail is seven feet tall The scroll beneath the ace of spades has the Latin phrase "Caveat Hostis" which means let the enemy beware.

This tail design is our family heraldry, it represents our storied past and present. It shows the world who the 116th is and that we are not done defending the skies. Tech. Sgt. Aaron Schrock(left) and Master Sgt. Dennis Lee (right), 141st Aircraft Structural Maintenance, apply the finishing touches on the tail art of the wing's flagship aircraft.

Colonel James McGovern, 141st Air Refueling Wing commander presents a certificate of appreciation to retired Master Sergeant Shayne Meder for her work painting the nose art and tail for the wing's flagship aircraft.



Colonel Mark Scott, 141st Maintenance Group commander presents a coin to retired Master Sergeant Shayne Meder for her work painting the nose art and tail for the wing's flagship aircraft.

Colonel Craig Gural, 141st Operations Group commander presents a coin to retired Master Sergeant Shayne Meder for her work painting the nose art and tail for the wing's flagship aircraft.

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# HARLEM HELL FIGHTERS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

STORY BY SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE

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• ne of the most renowned units of African American combat troops was the highly decorated 369th Infantry Regiment-best known as the "Harlem Hellfighters"-heroes whose stories, until recently, had largely been forgotten.

Before setting out for Europe, the unit was refused permission to participate in the farewell parade of New York's National Guard, known as the "Rainbow Division," because "black is not a color in the rainbow." But after being assigned to fight under the 16th Division of the French army-because many white American soldiers refused to serve with black soldiers-they quickly proved their bravery and combat skills.

The regiment was initially nicknamed the "Black Rattlers" for the rattlesnake insignia that adorned their uniforms, and they were called "Men of Bronze" by the French. It is believed that their German foes were the first to dub them "Hellfighters" for their courage and ferocity.

In one engagement two of the most celebrated members of the unit, Private Henry Johnson and Private Needham Roberts, fought off an entire German patrol despite being severely wounded and out of ammunition. After Roberts became incapacitated, Johnson ultimately resorted to using his bolo knife. During the war, the Harlem Hellfighters spent more time in continuous combat than any other American unit of its size, with 191 days in the front-line trenches. They also suffered more losses than any other American regiment, with more than 1,400 total casualties.

The extraordinary courage of the Harlem Hellfighters earned them fame in Europe and America, as newspapers recounted their remarkable feats. After the war, the French government awarded the coveted Croix de Guerre medal to 171 members of the regiment, as well as a Croix de Guerre citation to the unit as a whole. Some members of the Harlem Hellfighters received military awards from the U.S. government, including the Distinguished Service Cross. In 2015, Johnson was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest military honor.

The Harlem Hellfighters were the first New York combat unit to return home, and the regiment, which had been denied a place in the farewell parade the prior year, was rewarded with a victory parade.

On Feb. 17, 1919, New Yorkers of every race turned out in huge numbers to cheer as 3,000 Harlem Hellfighters proudly marched up Manhattan's Fifth Avenue to the music of their renowned regimental jazz bandleader, James Reese Europe. Unfortunately, their fame quickly faded, and for nearly 100 years the remarkable story of the Harlem Hellfighters was largely erased from America's national consciousness.

LINK TO ORIGINAL STORY

# ESSO-77 25TH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE

STORY BY TECH SGT. KAYLEIGH PHILLIPS Photos by Master Sgt. Michael Stewart

TO THE MEMORY OF MAJ. DAVID W. FITE CAPT. KENNETH F. THIELE MAJ. MATTHEW F. LAIHO TSGT. RICHARD G. VISINTAINER LET THEM NOT BE FORGOTTEN GEILENKIRCHEN AB. GERMANY 13 JANUARY 1999



A irmen of the Washington Air National Guard, retirees, airmen of Geilenkirchen Air Base, and local community members gathered to remember the fallen crew of ESSO-77 in a ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the crash, January 13, 2024, on Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, Germany. 25 years ago, Maj. David Fite, Maj. Matthew Laiho, Capt. Kenneth Thiele and Tech. Sgt. Richard Visintainer, perished when their KC-135 Stratotanker dubbed "ESSO-77" crashed just outside the airfield boundary on January 13, 1999.

Honoring their memory, wreaths were laid at the memorial site at Geilenkirchen during the ceremony by Mathilde and Marcel Schmetz of the Remember Museum 39-45 and American Legion Post NL01.

"Their unwavering dedication to duty, their sacrifice, and their legacy will forever resonate within the corridors of our Wing," said Col. Craig Gural 141st Operations Group Commander. "Let their spirit inspire us as we continue to uphold the principles they stood for—excellence, commitment, and most of all service."

The crew had been in Geilenkirchen for a two-week training mission and were set to return to Fairchild the next day. The tanker had just finished refueling an E-3 Sentry, an Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft commonly known as AWACS, over the North Sea and began its return to Geilenkirchen. The crew informed the air traffic control tower that they were aborting their attempted landing and were going to go around again. That would be their last call to the tower.

After the formal ceremony, six members of the 141st that had served with the crew visited the crash site and shared words of remembrance together.

"It was emotional. Seeing it again brought everything back," said Ret. MSgt Steven Tillford Boom Operator. "I am proud that we have such a great memorial to symbolize and remind us of the ultimate price they paid."

The crash was the single worst incident resulting in the loss of life for the unit since its formation in 1924 and the only fatal accident to occur with a KC-135 since the 141st began aerial refueling in 1976. An investigation following the crash determined that a fault in the horizontal stabilizer trim, which is a piece of equipment on the aircraft's tail that provides stability and control for the aircraft, was the cause of the accident. The Department of Defense temporarily grounded all KC-135s following the accident to conduct inspections on all stabilizers.

"May we carry with us the spirit of camaraderie, the significance of service, and their enduring legacy," said Gural. "Let us continue to remember, to honor, and to strive for a better tomorrow in their honor." Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, Germany ESSO-77 Memorial "Let their spirit inspire us as we continue to uphold the principles they stood for—excellence, commitment, and most of all service."

-Colonel Craig Gural

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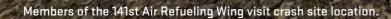






1st Lt. Greysen Bjork, 116th Air Refueling Squadron co-pilot, hands wreath to Mathilde and Marcel Schmetz of the Remember Museum 39-45 and American Legion Post NL01 to lay at the memorial.

Mathilde and Marcel Schmetz of the Remember Museum 39-45 and American Legion Post NL01 prepare to lay a wreath at the ESSO-77 memorial at Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, Germany.



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ESSO-77 crash site location memorial at Geilenkirchen, Germany

# WE CARE TEAM

alentine's Day 2024 might be right around the corner, but healthy relationships take yearround work. Whether with a partner, a spouse, or a date; with children, siblings, or parents; or with friends or colleagues, good relationships with the people around us are key to health, resilience, and performance. Sometimes, though, we need help building those good relationships. Here are a few resources and things to remember:

### Whitworth University Marriage & Family

**Therapy Center:** This center offers low-cost, sliding-scale services provided by advanced graduate students with supervision from experienced practitioners. They offer family therapy, individual therapy, premarital counseling, and marriage counseling, regardless of sexual orientation. You can reach them at the Marriage and Family Therapy Center at 509-777-3411.

•Love Is Respect: This organization offers 24/7 information, support, and advocacy to young people from 13 to 26 who have questions or concerns about their romantic relationships. It also provides support to concerned friends and family members, teachers, counselors, and other service providers through the same free and confidential services via phone, text, and live chat. Visit loveisrespect.org or call the hot line at 1-866-332-9474.

### •Military and Family Life Counselor (MFLC):

Denise Pulido, the 141st MFLC, is now in the Wing Annex Bldg. 2185 full-time, and she can meet on or off base within a 50-mile radius to provide services. MFLCs keep no records and assist service members in a short-term, issue-focused way. They can also refer clients to more extended services in the community. Call Denise at 507-369-4596 to schedule an appointment.

### •Directors of Psychological Health (DPH):

Michelle Link (509-979-0051) and Aaron McCormick (509-385-1174) are available to assist service members and their families with counseling for marital, relationship, and family-related issues, including parenting, divorce, healthy relationship practices, stress, grief, and more. Contact them directly to set up an appointment. Note: DPHs can see all guard members and their family members aged 18 years and older.

•Military Family Readiness: As always, Mary Thomas and Melissa Maher can assist with connecting you and your family with resources on base and in your communities to help ease your home life. Whatever your issue may be – whether financial, employment, family, or something else – this team will assist you. Their office is also in Bldg. 2185.

### •There is "No Wrong Door" for reaching out:

Contact anyone on the We Care team, whatever the topic, and if that person does not have the resources or answers, they will make sure you are connected to the services most appropriate to your needs.

### **CURRENT TEAM MEMBERS ARE:**

### Chaplain (Col) James Whiteley: 509-991-1114

#### Mary Thomas

Military & Family Readiness Program Manager: 509-247-7009

Melissa Maher, Military & Family Readiness Specialist, We Care Team Resource Advisor, & TAP Manager: 509-247-7192

Michelle Link, Director of Psychological Health: 509-979-0051

Aaron McCormick, Director Psychological Health: 509-385-1174

Denise Pulido, Military & Family Life Counselor: 507-369-4596

Alexa Spielhagen, Primary Prevention Specialist: 253-339-1553

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS NOW A CRIME 141st Legal Office

• ver the past few years there have been many significant changes to how the Department of Defense evaluates, charges, prosecutes, and punishes certain crimes pursuant to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The most recent changes were fully implemented on 27 December 2023 when the Office of Special Trial Counsel reached full operational capability and took primary responsibility over certain covered offenses. One of those covered offenses includes Article 134: Sexual Harassment.

Sexual harassment is a crime and punishable by a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for two years. It is also a violation of DoDI 1020.03. There can be a violation of DoDI 1020.03, but not a violation of Article 134: Sexual Harassment or both can be violated. The requirements for a violation of Article 134 and DoDI 1020.03 are different, but it needs to be understood that the consequences for any violation of either the UCMJ or DoDI 1020.03 can be severe.

Regardless of who does the investigation, evidence for which investigators will be looking include: discussing sexual activities, sexually suggestive pictures or videos or those that reference subjects of a sexual nature, unnecessary touching, commenting on physical attributes, using demeaning or inappropriate terms (e.g. "babe"), and using sexually profane gestures or language.

It is important to remember that offenses can occur on or off-duty. It does not matter if you are in your office, in a shop, at an office function, or simply downtown on your own time. The bottom line is members need to remember to always be respectful and professional.

Members who are victims of sexual harassment have rights. Those rights include the ability to make a restricted report with the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPR). The SAPR is a good place to engage to learn about member rights and options in a confidential setting. Members can also engage with the chain-of-command, the Department of the Air Force Equal Opportunity Office (EEO/MEO), OSI, or Security Forces.

The Air Force is working to ensure each member is treated with dignity and respect. Sexual harassment has always been unacceptable under any setting. Making it a violation of the UCMJ simply emphasizes the point. Sexual harassment damages both unit cohesion and good order and discipline, which are critical to mission success. The elimination of sexual harassment is imperative. There is no room for anything less.

For additional resources, please see the information on the 141st Legal Office/JA SharePoint. If you have questions about this or any other article, please contact the legal office at 247-7036.