

★ ★ ★ BIG SKY
FLYER

Vol. XXXV, No. 11 - November 2013



FINAL
FLIGHT

NEXT UP: THE C-130

EXCELLENCE ★ INTEGRITY ★ SERVICE

2013 Family Holiday Party!

Please join us in celebrating the Holiday Season with activities

Saturday, December 7th

Time:

Location:

*There will be

Holiday Party

Time 10:00am

Location:

Cost: \$7.60

Vigilantes,

The Montana Air National Guard has had another incredible year filled with remarkable accomplishments. We executed a critical Aerospace Control Alert missions for United States Pacific Command at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. In concert with deployment, the Wing underwent a Combined Unit Inspection from Air Combat Command Inspector General, earning an "Outstanding" rating for the Maintenance Group in the Logistics Compliance Assessment portion with 43 benchmark programs identified. We deployed Airmen from every group to support Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and NEW DAWN, participated in a Nuclear Weapon Accident Incident Exercise with Federal Bureau of Investigation and Malmstrom Air Force Base, as well as four major training deployments and conducted Major Accident Response Exercises. I am extremely proud of each and every one of you during these demanding times. Stay focused on our impending C-130 mission and good things will continue to happen. I wish you and your families the happiest of holiday wishes and look forward to another exciting year for the most outstanding unit in the Air National Guard!

As we convert, it's important our goals change as well. The 120th Airlift Wing Goals have changed to reflect our new mission. Listed below are the two significant changes.

MISSION FIRST-SAFETY ALWAYS

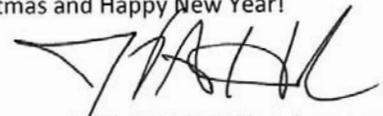
Efficiently and safely complete our conversion to the C-130 to achieve Initial Operational Capability (IOC) by the end of the fiscal year 2015 and Full Operational Capability (FOC) by the end of fiscal year 2016

PROACTIVELY ENGAGE IN MAINTAINING AND STENGTHENING THE FUTURE OF THE WING IN CORE AIR FORCE AND STATE MISSIONS

Continuously engage with national, state and local leaders to remind them of our greatest asset, our Airmen. The dedication and expertise they provide in the defense and support of our Nation, both at home and abroad, is invaluable now and for the future of our great country

December is packed full of events and I wanted to highlight those for you and your family. This is the time of year that I truly enjoy and I hope to see you enjoy it as well!

I sincerely hope to see all of you as we celebrate the holidays, our accomplishments and our bright future. Traci and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



J. PETER HRONEK, Col, MTANG
Commander, 120th Fighter Wing

RIOR
★ MAI
FLAT RATE ENV
ONE RATE ★ ANY WE

* For Domestic shipments, the maximum weight is 70 lbs. For inter-



Staff Sgt. Ben Parriman stands in front of a retaining wall constructed by members of the 219th REDHORSE during a recent deployment to Colorado to assist with repairing damages caused by severe flooding in September. National Guard photo / by Senior Master Sgt. John Rohrer.



Vol. XXXV No. 11 - November 2013
Col. J. Peter Hronek
Wing Commander
2nd Lt. Robin Jirovsky
Public Affairs Officer

FLYER STAFF

- Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson
Writer/Photojournalist
- Master Sgt. Jason Johnson
Photojournalist
- Technical Sgt. Christy Mason
Photojournalist
- Staff Sgt. Michael Touchette
Editor/Photojournalist
- Airman 1st Class Nikolas Asmussen
Photojournalist

pg. **1** **Commander's
Comments**

RED HORSE pg. **3**
Assist in Colorado

Members of the 219th mobilized to assist rebuild roads - and lives - in Colorado following severe flooding there.

pg. **4** **Chief Prideaux
Retires**

Equipment Maintenance Flight Superintendent retires after 32 years of service.

Final Three Depart pg. **5**

Final three F-15 fighter aircraft depart Great Falls, heading for the 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno, Calif.

pg. **6** **MXG Change
of Command**

Lt. Col. Hover assumes comand of the Maintenance Group from Col. Mora.

NCO, SNCO pg. **7**
Induction

The newest Non-commissioned Officers ad Senior Officers are recognized at a ceremony.

pg. **9** **Fighter History:
F-15 Eagle**

The F-15 Eagle was the last jet fighter aircraft assigned to the MTANG.

**End of the
Weapons Era** pg. **11**

Montana Air National Guard weapons specialists say goodbye to career field.

pg. **12** **Continuing Process
Improvement**

Enlisted Guardsmen participate in development of solutions to problems.

**Operation
Giving Spirit** pg. **13**

"Operation Giving Spirit" ushers in season of giving at the 120th Fighter Wing.

pg. **14** **F-102 Redo**

F-102 static display restored by Montana Air National Guard mechanics.

History of the pg. **15**
MTANG: 1963

Formations and dinners, a Montana Air National Guard tradition.

The News You Can Use . . 16
Faces of the Guard . . 17

This funded Air Force newsletter is an authorized publication for members of the US military services. Contents of the Big Sky Flyer are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the US government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force, or the Air National Guard. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office of 120th Fighter Wing, Montana Air National Guard, 2800 Airport Ave. B, Great Falls, MT 59404-5570, phone (406) 791-0228 or DSN 791-0228. Internet: www.120fw.ang.af.mil. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated. The deadline for unsolicited submissions is Saturday of the UTA. Change of address: for military change of address, visit the MPF in headquarters. For non-military or retiree changes of address contact: Master Sgt. Kim Gunter, (406) 791-0285, kim.gunter@ang.af.mil or Maj. Cody Smith, 791-0159, cody.smith@ang.af.mil. Military retirees must also contact: Under age 60 - Air Reserve Personnel Center 1-800-525-0102, over age 60 - DFAS Cleveland 1-800-321-1080.

FRONT COVER:
The last of the F-15 Eagles leave the Montana Air National Guard headed for Fresno, California on October XX, 2013.

REDHORSE Activated

Governor Bullock sends 219th to assist in Colorado disaster relief efforts

On Oct. 11, 2013, 31 members of the 219th RED HORSE Squadron of the Montana Air National Guard deployed to Colorado to support flood relief efforts there.

The engineering specialists were activated by Montana Governor Steve Bullock to assist the Colorado National Guard and the Colorado Department of Transportation with repairing roads and highways damaged by the devastating September flooding.

During the deployment the Guardsmen were able to assist with rebuilding State Highway 36 damaged by the September flooding between the Lyons and Estes Park area of Colorado.

The engineering specialists were also able to utilize a Guardsman's specialized civilian experience to build a retaining wall used to support a highway off-ramp from State Highway 36 to Longmont Dam Road. This was an important project, because that road leads to a reservoir that provides the water supply for the community of Longmont Colo.

In his civilian career, Guardsman Staff Sgt. Ben Parriman has worked with similar construction projects in Montana and was excited to put his knowledge and experience to work for the state of Colorado.

"In this situation we had an Airman who has a business on the side where he actually does landscape construction and so he's building a retaining wall here using that skillset," said Lt. Col. Michael Turley, who serves with the 1457th Engineer Battalion of the Utah Army National Guard.

The project required the Guardsmen to stack boulders on top of one another in a sort of puzzle-like fashion. Heavy equipment operators using excavators had to gauge the size of each rock prior to placing them into the retaining wall. A flowable sealing material was then poured into the crevasses between the rocks.

"I came down here and did a site visit and I knew right away that it was something that I could handle and the 219th RED HORSE could accomplish," Parriman said.

In the flood-damaged location, the North Saint Vrain Creek had breached its banks and was running far from its normal channel. The flooding destroyed home foundations located near the original river. The Guardsmen planned on returning the river to



Members of the 219th RED HORSE Squadron of the Montana Air National Guard build a retaining wall for the North Saint Vrain Creek on Oct 21, 2013. The unit deployed to Colorado to assist in flood relief efforts. National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. John Rohrer.

its original riverbank to allow homeowners to reclaim their property.

Another unique aspect of the deployment was the fact that the senior enlisted member during the trip was Parriman's uncle. Senior Master Sgt. Joseph Carter served as the NCOIC for the deployed members of the 219RHS during the deployment.

"That's another aspect of the Air National Guard that allows families to work together and serve together," said Turley.

The Guardsmen are confident that the Colorado residents appreciated the contribution that 219RHS members made to rebuilding flood-damaged roads in their communities. They also believe that Colorado would return the favor to the state of Montana, if it were needed.

"We know that this could happen in our communities back home," said 219RHS First Sergeant Robert Brewer. "We love to jump in, get our hands dirty and get the job done. Maybe someday they'll come help my community out. It's what Guard family is all about."

The deployed leadership was satisfied that the members of the 219RHS did their best in their effort to fix broken roads to help bring back a sense of normalcy to the residents of Colorado affected by the flooding.

"I have never been more proud of working with a group of individuals, than I have on this project," said Brewer. "I've had five deployments in my career and have been all over the world. The attitude of the Airmen and soldiers I worked with was outstanding. I've never worked with a finer group of people."



Members of the 219th RED HORSE Squadron wish deploying personnel well as they board a bus bound for Colorado to support flood relief efforts on Oct. 11, 2013. National Guard photo/Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson.

By Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson, 120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Farewell Chief

Chief Master Sgt. Prideaux retires after 32 year career

A young boy's dream to live in Montana came true the day he was assigned as a first-term Airman to Malmstrom Air Force Base.

"Ever since I was nine years old I told my folks that someday I was going to live here," said Chief Master Sgt. Gary Prideaux, the 120th Fighter Wing Equipment Maintenance Flight Superintendent. "They laughed. Now they come and visit every year."

Prideaux recently completed a successful and exciting 32 year military career that included world-wide deployments, state activations and community-service projects.

Following high school graduation in 1980, the Elkhorn, Nebraska native joined the active-duty Air Force and was trained in the medical career field.

His first duty assignment was located at Iraklion Air Station, in Crete, Greece. Three years later he received orders to transfer to his duty station of choice, Malmstrom Air Force Base.

While serving at Malmstrom, Prideaux was made aware of the Montana Air National Guard and upon completion of his active duty commitment in 1987 joined the 120th Medical Group as a medic.

It wasn't long before the sound of fighter aircraft launching from the Great Falls International Airport attracted the fast-burning Prideaux to the aircraft maintenance career field.

He cross-trained into the aircraft weapons job specialty, first serving as a weapons loader, then rising through the ranks to become a member of the load standardization crew in charge of training weapons personnel.

He then served over eight years in the quality assurance office before being selected as a superintendent and earning the top enlisted rank of chief master sergeant.

One of his favorite deployments was to Iraq in 2004, where he witnessed 120th Fighter Wing Airmen demonstrating the Montana work ethic and operating the "wingman concept" while they maintained and launched aircraft during wartime.

"We are a family so that no matter what you do you know somebody's got your back. You've always got that wingman off to your left or right. I know from my position that we're only as strong as our weakest link, so we make our weakest link the strongest person in the group," said Prideaux.

Prideaux joined other unit members activated by the



Photo of Chief Master Sgt. Gary Prideaux taken during his Chief Induction Ceremony held at the Great Falls International Airport Aug. 8, 2008. National Guard photo/Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson.

governor to respond during the 1991 state strike at the Montana Developmental Center in Boulder, Mont. and also served state active duty during the severe forest fires of 2000, 2003 and 2007.

He proudly served as a member of the Great Falls Overlook Park flag project for over 12 years. This volunteer position included raising and lowering the giant 30-foot-by-50-foot flag for national observances and ensuring its removal from the 120-foot flagpole during inclement weather.

"The celebrations that were done every Flag Day at Overlook Park were over the top, and they've just kept growing and growing. The first one I worked we had six fold-up chairs in front of the podium. Now, it's quite a production with the honor guard and guest speakers," Prideaux said. "It's a sign within the community of how proud we are of that flag. That's why we serve."

On Oct. 6 unit leadership, enlisted personnel and members of Prideaux's family gathered together at a local Great Falls restaurant to celebrate his many years of service to country, state and community.

Many years ago on a family trip the young Prideaux selected Montana to be his home. He now intends to remain in Montana and enjoy the great outdoors during his retirement.

"It's the last best place, big sky country," Prideaux said. "It always seemed like it would be the most wonderful place to live."

By Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson, 120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

CHIEF'S CREED



Chief Master Sergeants are individually to be regarded as people -

Who cannot be bought:
Whose word is their bond:
Who put character above wealth:
Who possess opinions and will:
Who are larger than their vocations:
Who will not lose their individuality in a crowd:
Who do not hesitate to take chances:
Who will be as honest in small things as great ones:
Who will make no compromise with wrong:
Whose ambitions are not confined to their own selfish desires and interests:
Who are true to their friends through good report and evil report, in adversity as well as prosperity:
Who do not believe that shrewdness, cunning and hard-headedness are the best qualities for winning success:
Who are not ashamed or afraid to stand for the truth when it is unpopular, who can say "no" with emphasis, although all the world is saying "yes"

Into The Wild Blue Yonder

Last 120th fighters take off, head for Fresno

The 120th Fighter Wing ramp sat empty of aircraft as three F-15 Eagle fighter jets flew in tight formation over the Montana Air National Guard base Oct. 24.

This was the final mission unit pilots would fly as members of a fighter wing, as they were bound for Fresno, Calif. to complete the transfer of fighter aircraft to the California Air National Guard.

Earlier that morning, unit members conducted the final sweep of the ramp to remove rocks and any other material that could potentially cause foreign object damage to the F-15 engines.

The aircraft were then carefully prepared for flight by maintenance crews, ensuring that the aircraft would be delivered to the 144th Fighter Wing in top shape.

Lt. Col. Anthony Brim, Maj. Matthew Ohman and Maj. Lee Bouma carried their flight equipment out to the ramp, escorted by family members to witness their last unit mission flown in an F-15 airframe.

Unit personnel and retirees also gathered on base to watch the as the last three fighter aircraft taxied to the end of the runway for the final flight preparation and takeoff.

One-by-one each fighter jet went from a virtual standstill at the end of the runway to rolling extremely fast to attain the fighter jet's needed takeoff speed. The audience appreciated hearing the loud familiar roar of the F-15 engines as each aircraft quickly lifted up from the pavement and gained altitude.

Once all aircraft were airborne, the three fighters



A Montana Air National Guard pilot walks with his son out to the aircraft flight-line Oct. 24, 2013. National Guard photo / Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson.

assembled into a basic "V" formation and flew one last ceremonial flight over the 120th Fighter Wing's airfield.

The 120th Fighter Wing's aircraft and personnel spent over 66 years of service to the nation flying fighter aircraft. The fighter unit flew numerous legendary aircraft during its rich history, including the F-51 Mustang, F-86 Sabre, F-89 Scorpion, F-102 Delta Dagger, F-106 Delta Dart, F-16 Fighting Falcon and the F-15 Eagle.

The unit's personnel are now focused on

By Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson, 120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs



An F-15 Eagle assigned to the 120th Fighter Wing of the Montana Air National Guard takes off from the runway at the Great Falls International Airport. Oct. 24, 2013. National Guard photo / Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson

Maint. Group Gets New Commander

Col. Mora relinquishes duties to Lt. Col. Patrick J. Hover

Col. Thomas H. Mora relinquished command of the 120th Maintenance Group to Lt. Col. Patrick J. Hover during a change of command ceremony held at the 120th Fighter Wing Sept. 8.

Wing leadership, Airmen and families of the honored commanders gathered together in the Larsen Room of the headquarters building to witness the passing of the maintenance group guidon from Mora to Hover.

The 120th Maintenance Group experienced great success under Mora's leadership.

The group supported a short notice Aerospace Expeditionary Force mission and mobilized 100 Airmen and F-15 Eagle fighter aircraft to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska in January.

Just one month later, the maintenance group garnered an overall excellent rating on the Air Combat Command Inspector General's Combined Unit Inspection.

Mora was recognized during the ceremony for having instilled a culture of compliance-based aircraft maintenance. He was also recognized for building a sense of great pride and satisfaction in job performance among the Airmen he led, which was demonstrated in the high rating of the CUI.

"Four years after I asked Col. Mora to take the position the results speak for themselves of what the Maintenance Group did under his leadership. They received outstanding and excellent ratings not only in the inspection world, but more importantly in the mission world," said 120th Fighter Wing Commander Col. J. Peter Hronek.

Hover steps up to command the maintenance group after



Above: 120th Fighter Wing Commander Col. J. Peter Hronek places the 120th Maintenance Group guidon in the hands of Lt. Col. Patrick Hover during the 120th Maintenance Group change of command ceremony held in the Larsen Room of the base headquarters building. Hover assumed command of the group on Sept. 8, 2013. National Guard photo/Staff Sgt. Michael Touchette



Thomas Mora, 120th Mission Support Group Commander's official portrait. National Guard photo / Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson

having served as a squadron commander and deputy maintenance group commander for the organization. He will continue to lead the group as the unit converts from the F-15 Eagle mission to the C-130 Hercules air transport mission.

"I was very proud to select Lt. Col. Hover as the maintenance group commander. He is a lean-forward, proactive officer with a strong command presence and will continue in the conversion to the C-130 mission, which will be our biggest conversion ever," Col. Hronek said.

Mora now assumes command of the 120th Mission Support Group and will provide leadership to the support units and assist the wing commander on planning and executing unit programs.

By Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson, 120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs



*NCO and Senior NCO Induction
November 2, 2013*





"You, the inductees, have attained the rank and position through hard work and perseverance. You're rank was earned by continuously striving to be the best at your profession and by dedicating yourself to carrying out the mission with the highest regard for your people."
-CMSgt Dale Gunter



MTANG FIGHTER HISTORY



F-15 Eagle

In January 2009, the 120th Fighter Wing began the conversion process from the F-16 Fighting Falcon to the F-15 Eagle which required both pilots and ground crews to learn the new aircraft.

It took just 18 months from when the unit flew its first F-15 sortie until it finished its first ORE, completing its conversion from the F-16 to the F-15 one year ahead of schedule.

Lt. Col. James McComas flew the wing's first sortie with the jet on January 15, 2009.

The 120th Fighter Wing participated in DACT training during Combat Archer at Tyndall AFB, Fla. in April 2010 and followed that with a Phase-II Operational Readiness Exercise in June 2010.

Wing Commander Col. J. Peter "Hoops" Hronek, declared the 120th Fighter Wing IOC, or Initial Operational Capable, to Montana's Adjutant General and the Assistant Adjutant General for the Montana Air National Guard in June 2010.

Within months of declaring IOC F-15s, pilots and personnel were assigned to conduct an Air Sovereignty Alert mission Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. Six of MTANG's F-15s were sent to stand ready on 24-hour alert against threats to the Hawaiian Islands and a large area of the Pacific Ocean.

In March 2013 the 120th Fighter Wing deployed to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska to provide for the air sovereignty alert mission as part of homeland security while the Alaska F-22s underwent modifications.

The Air Force announced in October 2010 the Montana Air National Guard would lose its F-15 fighter jets to another base.

The last F-15 departed October 24, 2013, heading to the 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno, Calif.

From the history files of the 120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office.



Gunners Say Goodbye To Career Field

Mission change requires retraining to new job specialty

Past and present members of the 120th Fighter Wing Weapons Element gathered together at lunch during the September unit training assembly to share memories of their careers serving together.

The weapons job specialty is one of three career fields that will be eliminated at the base during the unit's conversion from the F-15 Eagle fighter aircraft to the C-130 Hercules air transport mission. Guardsmen who currently hold these job specialties will now select a new career field available at the wing to retrain into.

"I'll definitely miss all of the people," said Weapons Manager Senior Master Sgt. Greg Grosenick. We're very close and we're a brotherhood down here. Working around weapons and getting a chance to go to a temporary duty location and load live munitions, you know you don't get to do that often, so I will definitely miss that."

The proud group of gunners invited former members of the section, retirees, family members and wing leadership to enjoy a lunch of pulled-pork sandwiches, cole slaw, beans and a personalized cake, all while they reminisced about their days working in a career field they loved.

"This is the end of an era," said 120th Fighter Wing Safety



Airman 1st Class Stefan McCrumb holds a commemorative challenge coin that recognizes the weapons career field during the Weapons Element lunch held for members, retirees, family members and wing leadership Sept. 7, 2013 at the 120th Fighter Wing in Great Falls, Mont. National Guard photo/Staff Sgt. Michael Touchette.



120th Fighter Wing Weapons Element members, retirees, family members and wing leadership gather together for a lunch to celebrate the weapons career field on Sept. 7, 2013 at the 120th Fighter Wing in Great Falls, Mont. National Guard photo/Staff Sgt. Michael Touchette.

Manager Senior Master Sgt. Ronny Grina. "The gunners have always been very significant to the Montana Air National Guard. I joined in 1987 and had all of these wonderful people to mentor me, awesome supervisors, and really just a tight-knit group that's only gotten better, I think. So with the end of this mission, the F-15s go away and the need for a weapons shop goes away. It's kind of a sad day."

The last member of the section to attend weapons technical training will now train to become an air transportation specialist.

Airman 1st Class Stefan McCrumb says he will miss the camaraderie he's experienced being a member of the gunners.

"Well, I think it's good for everyone to get together one last time at least to celebrate," McCrumb said. "Someone told me today that I was the last weapons person-the last gunner-which was kind of cool. I never thought of it that way."

The close group of Guardsmen will now focus on career opportunities with the unit's new C-130 mission, but they will always remember their days spent together working as gunners in the Weapons Element.

"Once a gunner, always a gunner," said Grosenick.

By Senior Master Sergeant Eric Peterson, 120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Continuing Process Improvement

Wing enlisted Airmen search for solutions to problems

The 120th Fighter Wing held an enlisted continuing process improvement event during the November unit training assembly.

The event was open to all enlisted members of the 120th Fighter Wing and the 219th RED HORSE Squadron and was designed to solicit ideas from the Airmen that could lead to process improvements in the Montana Air National Guard.

The idea to hold the event originated with five MTANG enlisted members who attended the Air National Guard Enlisted Force Challenges Process Improvement Event held in Tulsa, Okla. in 2012. The Airmen believed the process they observed at the national event could be put to good use at the unit level. They presented a plan for a local event and it was approved by senior leadership.

The program organizers had identified perceived problems in Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) training programs, Professional Military Education (PME) testing and the retention and recognition programs that the group could address. As each issue was discussed, facilitators logged the comments and solutions offered from members of the group into a com-



Enlisted members of the Montana Air National Guard participate in the enlisted continuing process improvement event held at the 120th Fighter Wing in Great Falls, Mont. on Nov. 2, 2013. National Guard photo/Tech. Sgt. Christy Mason.

puter.

puter.

“We took some topics that we feel we need to look at and improve on for the betterment of our enlisted personnel,” said Senior Master Sgt. Beverly Christian, an event organizer who serves as the 120FW Financial Management Superintendent. “It was an opportunity for us to get together, brainstorm and come up with some solutions that we can present to leadership.”

At the end of the event the suggestions for improvement were compiled by the facilitators. The results were then briefed to senior leadership during an officer’s call that was held near the end of the duty day.

The Airmen that participated in the event were pleased that senior leaders were sincerely interested in hearing their

process-improvement ideas. “I think we really did a good job working on our solutions and that was actually the good part about having such a big group of people with a lot of different experiences and rank,” said 120th Logics Readiness Squadron Senior Airman Corrie Chaffin. People that have worked in the civilian world for 20 or 30 years brought different experiences than I have experienced as a young Airman.”

The program was designed to allow Airmen to attend as their work schedule allowed. Christian estimates that during the peak of the participation as many as 40 Airmen attended the event.



Enlisted members of the Montana Air National Guard participate in the enlisted continuing process improvement event held at the 120th Fighter Wing in Great Falls, Mont. on Nov. 2, 2013. National Guard photo/Tech. Sgt. Christy Mason.

The event ended with participants taking part in a communication training exercise designed to highlight the different strengths and motivations possessed by the Airmen.

Christian said that she would like to see this enlisted feedback provided to senior leadership continue.

“We’d love to do something in the future. We know there’s always going to be issues and there’s so much change going on all the time,” said Christian. “It’s a lot easier to put our heads together and try to come up with solutions as a team and make some change than it is just on an individual basis. So I see this being something that we’ll do down the road.”

By Senior Master Sergeant Eric Peterson, 120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Operation Giving Spirit

An opportunity for Montana Guardsmen to help those less fortunate

Needy Montana Air National Guard families may have more food on their tables during the coming holiday season, thanks to "Operation Giving Spirit," which officially kicked off Oct. 15.

The annual food drive is organized by the MTANG Chief's Council and Family Readiness Program and is intended to assist Guard families that are experiencing financial hardships.

Unit members are encouraged to submit names of Guardsmen that would benefit from the program to 120th Fighter Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Tim Huffman, or Family Readiness Support Assistant Staff Sgt. Paige Held.

Forms to nominate a Guard member for assistance have been emailed to all unit personnel or are available at the Family Readiness Program office.

Chief Huffman says unit members need to watch for signals that their fellow Guardsmen are experiencing financial difficulties with their family life. A Guardsman may be more open about a personal problem with their peers than with their supervisor.

"It's so important to serve as a wingman," said Chief Huffman. "It's okay to let us know if someone is aware of a coworker that is suffering or in need of help."

There are two ways that MTANG members can participate in the program. They can donate money to the "Operation Giving Spirit" fund set up at the Russell Country Federal Credit Union, or non-perishable food can be placed in any of the "Operation Giving Spirit" donation bins located on base.

The canned food will be distributed to families living near Great Falls and those living in distant Montana communities will receive gift certificates to purchase groceries in their local stores.

Fresh turkeys will also be purchased using the donated funds and placed in the food boxes to be delivered to local Guard families.



Chief Master Sgt. Roy Hannah sorts food collected and donated to the "Operation Giving Spirit" program by members of the Montana Air National Guard on Dec. 18, 2009. The food was boxed and delivered to needy Guard families. National Guard photo/Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson.

Chief Huffman estimates that the program assists between 15 and 25 Guard families located throughout the state of Montana each year.

He says the recent government shutdown and the lagging economy may result in additional need, but ample donations will be collected regardless of the number of names submitted.

"That's our job," said Chief Huffman. "Our job is to take care of our Guardsmen and our neighbors, that's what we're here for."

On Dec. 20 members of the Chief's Council will collect all of the donation bins, sort the food equally and build food boxes to be delivered to the needy families. The recipient's names and addresses will be provided only to the members of the Chief's Council that are delivering the food.

Held considers the "Operation Giving Spirit" program additional proof that MTANG truly is a family organization that takes care of its people.

"Outside of the military someone can be seen as just an employee, whereas here we really care about our Guardsmen," said Held. "If they are hurting, we don't want them to suffer." For more information on participating in the annual "Operation Giving Spirit" food donation program, please contact the Family Readiness Program Office at 791-0122.



An "Operation Giving Spirit" box sits full of canned goods at the entrance of the Dining Facility on Dec. 18, 2009. Similar boxes will be distributed around the 120th Fighter Wing to collect food for this year's event. National Guard photo/Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson.

By Senior Master Sergeant Eric Peterson, 120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

GUARDSMEN REPAIR MEMORIAL

Air National Guardsman restore local landmark

Five Montana Air National Guard Airmen spent the first days of September repairing the exterior of an F-102 Delta Dagger placed on static display in the Great Falls Lions Park.

The 120th Fighter Wing aircraft maintenance personnel stepped up to restore the older fighter aircraft after it began showing the effects of exposure to 43 years of direct sunlight and the harsh elements of the weather.

This was the first vintage military aircraft restoration project that Sheet Metal Journeyman Senior Airman Aaron Duboise worked on. He enjoyed working on the classic fighter aircraft.

"There's sun damage that bleaches out the paint," said Duboise. "Wind, rain, just any sort of erosion can cause the damage over time."

The aircraft was carefully prepared for painting. The maintainers sanded and scraped the old layers of paint



A bronze plaque is affixed to the base of the F-102 in Great Falls/ Lion's Park dedicating the memorial to all Montana Air National Guardsmen past, present and future. National Guard Photo / Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson.

and several pieces of sheet metal were formed and applied as patches to the areas of corrosion found on the fuselage. Primer was placed over the repaired area, then a latex-based gray paint was carefully selected to color match the original shade and was applied to the aircraft. Finally, the words, "Air National Guard" were placed back onto the side of the F-102.

120th Maintenance Group personnel have always gone the extra mile when it comes to the appearance of the aircraft assigned to the fighter unit.

This pride in ownership carried over to the quality of work performed on this static aircraft, even though most of the Guard personnel working on the project weren't born when this F-102 flew missions in the sky over Montana.

"When the plane was placed here in August of 1970 I was two months old," said Master Sgt. William Schilling,



Tech. Sgt. Jacob Jones, Tech. Sgt. Michael Elliot, Staff Sgt. Michael Charron and Senior Airman Aaron Duboise of the 120th Fighter Wing, Montana Air National Guard work to restore the exterior paint of an F-102 Delta Dagger fighter aircraft that serves as a Lions Park static display in Great Falls, Mont. on Sept. 3, 2013. National Guard photo/Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson.

who serves the unit as a Flightline Expeditor and was the F-102 restoration project liaison. "I think the way the aircraft looks is a reflection of us at the Montana Air National Guard and the pride that we take in our aircraft."

The F-102 restoration work was completed in three days, but the Airmen who worked on the project are confident that the restoration work will last well into the future.

"The amount of corrosion and age-related cracks were significant, but then again it's 60-years-old," said Aircraft Structural Craftsman Tech. Sgt. Jacob Jones. "The work will definitely help prevent any moisture from getting into the aircraft and causing corrosion."

During the restoration work several local residents stopped to talk to the Airmen about the project and thanked them for their service.

"The public supports us really well, and being a part of the community it's great to give back when we can," Jones said.

Motorists driving down 10th Avenue South honked and waved to the team as they worked on the aircraft.

The Airmen were glad to help improve the look of a local landmark that was made of an aircraft once flown by members of their unit.

The local Guard unit flew the F-102 model aircraft from 1966 until 1972 when the conversion to the F-106 Delta Dart fighter aircraft began.

According to an old edition of the base newsletter, the Montana Air Guardsman, the F-102 static display was presented to Great Falls Mayor John J. McLaughlin in a brief ceremony held at Lions Park on Aug. 31, 1970.

During the ceremony, the Montana Air National Guard Chief of Staff for Air, Brig. Gen. Rodger D. Young, dedicated the aircraft display to all Air National Guardsmen, past, present and future. A bronze plaque noting this dedication is permanently fixed to the concrete pedestal at the base of the display.

By Senior Master Sergeant Eric Peterson, 120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

HISTORY *Of* THE MTANG

1963

Formations and Awards in 1963

Guardsman stood in formation as officers from the Air Defense Command performed an inspection of troop on Nov 23, 1963.

The following drill weekend, an awards dinner was held on Saturday, December 28, 1963.

From the 120th Fighter Wing History Archives



The News You Can Use



Reward Your Supervisor

Show appreciation for supportive employers by nominating your supervisor for a Patriot Award.

It's a free and easy way to say thanks. The Department of Defense will send your supervisor a personally prepared certificate of appreciation if you, the Guard or Reserve member, simply nominate them for the award.

The certificate comes mounted in a folder, bearing a gold embossed Department of Defense seal.

Take time to "brag" about your supervisor today!

Visit www.ESGR.mil/PA to nominate your employer.



Job Seekers Assistance

MilitaryHire.com has been created for you and continues to be a work in progress. With your input, this site will continue to evolve to provide you the best career transition services available on the web.

MilitaryHire is a tool to help you in your job search. Like any tool, it will be most effective when you use it well. They have developed a set of best practices to help you find a job and also offer a wealth of advice in our Career Resources section.

Log on to register with Militaryhire.com, post your resume, search for and apply for jobs online.

For additional information contact: Parker Sullivan Montana Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, 406-791-0895.

First Sergeant Packets

First Sergeant packages are due no later than January 3, 2014 to Wing Command Chief Huffman's office for Airmen meeting the First Sergeant board during the January drill.

First Sergeants are responsible for the morale, welfare, and conduct of all the enlisted members in a squadron and are the chief advisor to the squadron commander concerning the enlisted force.

If you are interested in filling one of these positions turn in your application with the following:

- *Letter of Intent
- *Resume (AF Tongue and Quill version only)
- *Records Review RIP (Virtual MPF)
- *Copy of Current FIT Test results
- *Letter of Recommendation (Optional) (AFI 36-2113)

Applicants must be in the grade of technical sergeant or master sergeant., must be highly motivated and capable of fulfilling the role of the first sergeant

Wing Hotline

The Wing Commander's Hot Line is the primary way to let Airmen know of changes at the Wing due to weather or unforeseen events.

Other means such as phone recalls, and/or facebook may be used, but the hot is our best way for you to reach us on critical information at the Wing!

Wing Hot Line: 406-727-4650 - then select option 2.

Want to be in the Big Sky Flyer?

If you enjoyed this month's Big Sky Flyer center photo layout and would like to feature your shop or section in a future display, please contact Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson at 791-0226.

We're always looking for opportunities to photograph our personnel in their work environment doing interesting and visual activities. This is a good opportunity for you to recognize your employees or co-workers for all of their hard work.

Faces of the Guard

Chaplain Allen slated to retire during December UTA



(National Guard photo / Staff Sgt Michael Touchette)

Montana National Guard Chaplain Lt. Col. John D. Allen will step down from the pulpit after performing his last Protestant worship service during the December UTA.

Chaplain Allen, who has been serving his State and Nation for 23 years as a chaplain in the Air National Guard, announced he will be retiring during November UTA roll call.

Chaplain Allen entered the Air National Guard in December 1990 and as served as pastoral advisor to the 120th Wing's leadership and Airmen.

A retirement party is planned for chaplain Allen on Sunday of the December drill at 1000 hours.

