

BIG SKY FLYER



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Command Information

Col. Lee Smith

120th Airlift Wing Commander

I want to start by simply saying "Thank You". It has been an absolute honor and a privilege to be your commander these past two-plus years and I can't thank you enough for what this experience has meant to me both personally and professionally.

Before coming to the 120th, I was not only an outsider...I was the Active Duty outsider...who made at least one of you cringe at the thought I was coming. (Frankly, I loved that kind of honesty in the DEOCS survey). But once I arrived, you didn't treat me like one. It was asking a lot to not only trust me as your new commander, but to have faith in me and in the direction we were going. You also embraced my family and I as members of the Vigilante

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Lt. Col. Trace Thomas, 120th Operations Group commander, received the OG command guidon from Col. Lee Smith, 120th Airlift Wing commander May 6 during an assumption of command ceremony at the OG auditorium. Thomas previously served as the 186th Airlift Squadron commander. (U.S. Air National Guard photo/Staff Sgt. Lindsey Soulsby)

120th Operations Group receives new commander

By Staff Sgt. Lindsey Soulsby

Lt. Col. Trace Thomas assumed command of the 120th Airlift Wing Operations Group during an assumption of command ceremony during the regularly scheduled drill May 6 in the ops group auditorium.

Thomas is the second commander to lead the 120th AW Ops Group since the MTANG converted to an airlift wing March 1, 2014.

Part of three conversions and moving from the enlisted to the commissioned force, Thomas is not a stranger to change.

"Change is not a bad thing," said Thomas. "We've already got all of the hurdles behind us and now we'll just look to the future."

Ready for the changes in the

future Thomas expressed his gratitude.

The only reason I'm here right now is because of this outstanding support team," said Thomas.

The guidon was passed to Thomas by Col. Lee T. Smith, 120th AW commander.

The position has been vacant since the retirement of Col. Patrick J. Hover last month.



Quarterly awards presented



The 120th Airlift Wing quarterly awards were presented to recipients by 120th AW Commander Col. Lee Smith and 120th AW Command Chief Master Sgt. Steven Lynch during a commander's call held in Building 25 during the May regularly scheduled drill.

120th Maintenance Group Senior Airman Steven Hamell won the award in the Airman category of the competition.

120th MXG Tech. Sgt. Desiree Sehr was presented the award in the NCO category.

120th Mission Support Group Master Sgt. Adam Reers was named as the Senior NCO of the Quarter.

120th MDG Capt. Jennifer Gunter was named Company Grade Officer of the Quarter.

Maj. Wendy Lund of the 120th MDG was named as Field Grade Officer of the Quarter.

The Innovator of the Quarter was presented to Tech. Sgt. Chad Rearden from the 120th MXG, and the Team of the Quarter award was presented to the 120th MXG Dock Shop and R and R Shop.



Restructuring brings new capabilities to the 219th RHS

By Senior Master Sgt. Eric Peterson

The commander of the 219th RED HORSE Squadron of the Montana Air National Guard said his squadron has changed some of its responsibilities and capabilities with recent RED HORSE organizational restructuring.

RED HORSE stands for Rapid Engineer Deployable, Heavy Operational Repair Squadron, Engineers. The heavy construction specialists support contingencies and special operations through-

out the world, often in austere environments.

"We're a classic association with the active duty 819th RED HORSE Squadron, we share space, we share training, we share equipment as a total force initiative," 219th RHS Commander Rusty Vaira said. "We've been paired now as guard team, the 219th, the 210th RED HORSE Squadron out of New Mexico, and the 254th out of Guam make up an equivalent

RED HORSE squadron."

Vaira said the 219th serves as the lead unit for the three guard RED HORSE squadrons. This additional command responsibility has brought a full colonel position to the Montana squadron.

The reorganization began in 2011 and culminated with a change of direction of the squadron's building specialties.

"We're no longer focused on vertical construction being our case span arch metal facilities, our pre-engineered buildings, wood construction—we're more horizontal construction," Vaira said. "We've really shifted our focus more towards asphalt, concrete, roads, runways, anything that has to do with that."

The chief enlisted manager for the 219th RHS said the limited time provided by regularly scheduled drills offer

challenges in meeting training goals, but he looks for opportunities to continue to provide quality training for the unit's members.

"It's very rewarding to see the training that the Airmen go through to succeed, not [CLICK FOR COMPLETE STORY](#)



219th RHS Airmen survey a construction project during their 2015 Southwest Asia deployment. (219th RED HORSE Squadron photo)

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50 years ago this month—the history of MTANG (From the June 14, 1967 Montana Air Guardsman)



The Air Guard parade in downtown Great Falls has been rescheduled for Friday, June 16 at 10 a.m. Eyes still will be on the weatherman, however, and the rain could again wash out the march. But if the weather cooperates, the route will be the same as that originally planned. The band from the Washington Air National Guard plans to return to Great Falls for the parade. Remember, the uniform will be Class A blues.

Permission to have the parade Friday was given June 12 by the Great Falls City Council, which must give its approval for such events.

GO FOR GREEN®

Eating well to perform



June RSD lunch menu

Saturday-Chicken, Baked in Gravy, Spaghetti Red, Noodles, Rice, California Vegetable Medley, Louisiana Style Smothered Squash, Chicken Gravy

Sunday-Sweet and Sour Pork, Country Fried Steak, Fried Rice, Mashed Potatoes, Stir Fry Blend Vegetables, Corn, Country Gravy

Monday-Yakisoba, BBQ Chicken, Macaroni and Cheese, Savory Beans, Green Beans, Peas with Mushrooms