

# The Patriot



THE PHOENIX AIR NATIONAL GUARD PATRIOTS

PHOENIX • ARIZONA

Fall 2009

## Airmen receive heroes' welcome

By Glen Creno, The Arizona Republic—August 5, 2009

There were happy kids, crying spouses and grateful parents to greet more than 50 members of an Arizona Air National Guard unit that returned home Monday after more than a month overseas.

More than 80 airmen from the 161st Air Refueling Wing were deployed on June 27, and 57 of them landed at the guard base at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport at midday Monday. The others are expected to return in September. *(Editor's note: The second phase of deployments had just returned as this issue was being finalized.)*

Families gathered in a lunchroom at the base to wait for the return of two of the four air tankers sent to support military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. And about 30 people with a motorcycle group called the Patriot Guard Riders stood in a line outside the room holding flags.

The crews, in their fatigues, trooped in to cheers. Then the hug-fest began.

Camille Donaldson was relieved to see her son, Maj. Pat Donaldson, a pilot from Phoenix, who was reunited with his wife and four kids. His mother has been lighting prayer candles during the deployment.



AZ Republic photo by Mark Henle

**Maj Pat Donaldson hugs his daughter Josephine, 5, after he returned to Phoenix from being deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Cheering is Patrick's mother, Camille Donaldson.**

"I'm very, very grateful to God," she said. "You never know what's going to happen over there."

Donaldson brushed off the challenges of the deployment. He said there's an adjustment in living with a bunch of friends, rather than at home, but time goes fast.

**'Heroes...' continues, page 2**

## Scouts maintain bond with PANG

Article & Photo—2Lt Matt Murphy  
Public Affairs Officer, 161st ARW

"Duty to God and Country" is the Boy Scout oath, and "Doing a good turn daily" the slogan. Scottsdale's Troop 648 made those tenets come to life as they provided valuable assistance to the 161st ARW June 26. Led by scoutmaster Bill Mack (a member of the PANG Patriots), about a dozen scouts showed their support to airmen deploying to Qatar.

The scouts helped serve refreshments after early morning briefings and cheered as the crews exited the staging area to leave for their mission. The troop rotated with 161st members to load luggage on a transport truck.

The scouts shook hands with all the deploying airmen as they left the building on their way to support war efforts in the Middle East. 161st ARW crew members enjoyed the cheers and snacks—and the scouts' unwavering support—for the 20-plus hour journey ahead.



**SMSgt Kevin Richards, 161st ARW Logistics, greets several Boy Scouts of Scottsdale's Troop 648. The troop helped load baggage for the first Qatar deployment June 26.**

## Heroes welcomed home

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His wife, Shannon, said they hadn't planned a big homecoming shindig.

"We're just going to hang out with dad," she said.

The crews were stationed at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. They fly and support the KC-135R Stratotanker, a flying gas station that is a military version of the Boeing 707. Two of the planes, with air crews only, were recently sent to replace the ones rotated home. The entire deployment has gone smoothly; no one hurt, none of the equipment damaged, a spokesman said.

Maria Weitz of Phoenix was waiting for the planes to land. She had her 21-month-old twins, Jesse and Veronica, along to meet her husband, MSgt Steve Weitz, an avionics technician.

She said that, previously, the longest her husband was deployed was about two weeks. This one doubled that, and she said it's hard to explain to the kids.

"The difficult part of him being gone is having the children ask about daddy, and me saying, 'He's at work.' It changes the routine," she said.

About 30 people showed up from the motorcycle group, 14 on bikes and the rest in cars. Craig Smith of Mesa said the group wants to be sure troops come home in style.

"A lot of our members are Vietnam veterans," he said. "One of our mottos is, 'Never again.' We want to be sure service members are welcomed home in the proper way."



AZ ANG photo by 2Lt Matt Murphy

**When members of the 161st ARW deploy around the world, activities gear up before the Airmen move out, while they're on site, and once they've returned home to the Arizona soil.**

**Above, deployment and readiness specialists from the 161st ARW Forces Support Squadron make sure everyone's personal records are as they should be in preparation for deployment.**

**At left, TSgt Tracy Locke, SSgt Brian Franks, TSgt Tim Vigen- ser and SrA Adam Carter (L-R) enjoy chips and salsa July 29 at the deployed site. The snacks were part of a community care package drive for all deployed personnel.**



USAFCENT photo by SSgt Robert Barney

# 'Autumn' experiences many seasons of change

By Maj Lynda Lovell  
Commander, 107th ACS

The 107th Air Control Squadron has had a busy year! Since our December move to Luke Air Force Base we've been running non-stop. I'm proud to share with you a few of our significant events, but first—a little background on who we are.

As many of you may already know, the mission of the 107th (tactical callsign "Autumn") is to train weapons directors for the Air Force, and we are the only unit in the Air Force charged with this mission. Weapons directors provide command and control information by interpreting radar data and communicating with pilots over radios and datalinks. Weapons directors act as an additional wingman and help identify aircraft as friend or foe. They also help pilots to target and prosecute unidentified or hostile aircraft.

Our graduates earn 25 credit hours in the Community College of the Air Force and go on to work at air control, air defense or range control squadrons. Since we began this training mission (1999), we've graduated more than 360 weapons directors, providing command and control in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

The 107th includes a blended team of professionals. We have 74 Guard members, 49 of whom are full-timers and 25 "weekend warriors," working in the Maintenance, Operations and Command Support and Services sections. We also have 21 Active Duty instructors and 11 contract simulation pilots. These Airmen work together seamlessly to make our mission a complete success.

On to the changes! Moving an Air National Guard unit onto an Active Duty Air Force base has been a huge opportunity for our unique squadron to highlight our people and capabilities. We have had a great influence on Luke AFB, and I can say we have already had much success.

We celebrated our ribbon cutting in February, highlighting our new facilities and enhanced relationship with the 56th Fighter Wing. We also facilitated a syllabus review conference and a weapons director symposium that same month, hosting 40 people from headquarters, air con-

trol, and air defense units to shape the changes needed to meet the needs of the Combat Air Forces.

Many of our members were at the 2008 Arizona Outstanding Airman of the Year Awards Banquet in Tucson in March, and I am proud to say that the 107th received two honors in Airman and Senior NCO categories: SSgt Jared Sawyer (then a senior Airman and currently a drill status Guard member) and MSgt Jesse Bautista (a fulltime active Guard member)

In April, our big event was the change of command ceremony. After 4½ years, then-Lt Col Pam Jackson handed me the reins to "Awesome Autumn." It was sad to see Colonel Jackson go, but she continues to represent Arizona admirably in her current position as the vice commander of the 161st ARW.

The 107th also experienced tragedy in April, when we lost an invaluable Airman to an automobile accident. SSgt Brandon Pilcher was a hard worker

and a great friend to many. He left behind two children; William, 8 and Isabella, 7. He continues to be greatly missed.

In July, we hosted the 65th Aggressor Squadron from Nellis AFB for two weeks. Using our advanced controlling equipment, they conducted 11 Large Force Exercises in the Barry Goldwater ranges.

On August 22, the 107th hosted its first annual golf tournament at the Wigwam Golf Resort. We had a great turnout of 36 teams and we appreciate the PANG Patri-



Brig Gen Michael Colangelo, Arizona Air National Guard Commander, hands the controls and the 107th squadron guide-on flag to Maj Lynda Lovell, as she assumed command April 5.



SSgt Brandon Pilcher  
Dec. 4, 1981 – April 19, 2009

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AZ ANG photos by MSgt Carlos Soto-Cruz

ots forming a team! Some of the proceeds from that tournament is going to the William Pilcher and Isabella Olmos Children's Fund.

As always, the 107th continues to support the community with blood drives, highway adoption, family adoption at Christmas to help provide gifts for underprivileged kids, serving food at a women's shelter on Mother's Day, participating in the Phoenix Veterans Day Parade, and participating with the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and the ALS Foundation to help fight against cancer and Lou Gehrig's Disease. These activities are just a few highlights of our community service.

On Autumn's radar is a unit compliance inspection next April. We are planning the inspection as though it is our "Super Bowl." We are now part of the NFL and our theme for the Inspection is NFL: No Fear Leadership! We will have a "Fan Appreciation Day (otherwise known as Family Day)" November 7 at our new home on Luke, and we hope you can take some time to join us for this big event.

The PANG Patriots have always been great supporters of the 107th and we hope to continue our relationship, even though we're way out west now. Autumn changes, but we will always be part of the Phoenix Air National Guard Patriot Team!

The Patriot

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# Update from state

**Col Wanda Wright  
Chief of Staff, AZ ANG**

We have had a very busy year at the Joint Force Headquarters. As we close in on the end of the fiscal year, I would like to express my thanks to the 161st Air Refueling Wing for the support given to Headquarters in everything from financial assistance to packing boxes for us, and everything in between. We would truly be unable to accomplish all that we do without the help from everyone in the wing.

During this year we've had many changes in leadership. The 161st ARW, the 162nd FW and the 107th ACS all have new leaders. The headquarters has also seen some changes in leadership—and, that said, I would like to close out by congratulating Chief Daniel Irving on his selection as the new Command Chief Master Sergeant (CCM) for the Arizona Air National Guard.

## Wing holiday party set

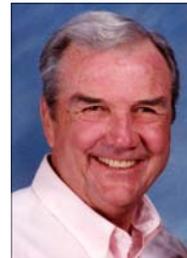
**Lt Col Shanna Woyak**

The 161st ARW annual holiday party has been set for December 12, 2009. Just some of the features planned so far:

- Red Door Spa
- Oraibi Hospitality Suite
- Silent Auction
- Dinner, dancing (with live band) through midnight
- A "Pow Wow Kids Camp" during the party for our children (between 5-12 years old).
- Low room rates – \$122 per night
- Same low price as last year, with a better menu selection
- Door prizes are planned, along with table arrangements

Tickets will be on sale very soon. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at 602-302-9255.

## Remembering Brownie DuBose



Brown "Brownie" Roberts DuBose, 75, passed away June 28 in Pinetop.

Brownie, a charter and lifetime member of the PANG Patriots since 2003, was also an officer in the Phoenix

Rotary 100 Club. He served as past president of the Valley Field Riding and Polo Club, past chairman of AAA of Arizona, and on the board of Behavioral Health at St. Luke's Medical Center. A recipient of many national business and local community service awards, he was a member of both the Phoenix and White Mountain Country Clubs.

Brownie was born in Tucson July 29, 1933. A University of Arizona alumnus, he retired from his family's food and beverage business in 1985, formed his own consulting firm, and served many years as a volunteer consultant for small businesses in Arizona.

He is survived by his wife, Ginny; daughters Karen DuBose Werner, Cathy Byram, and Tricia Olesen; brother H. Brooks DuBose, and seven grandchildren.