

Wing Tips



108th Wing
NJ Air National Guard

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Commander's Column

Tools for dealing with stress from high operational tempo

By: Lt. Col. Steven Rothstein, 108th Mission Support Group deputy commander

As many of you already know, military members deal with stress much more than their civilian counterparts.

Citizen Airmen often get the worst of both worlds – civilian and military - through dealing with the high military Operational Tempo (OPSTEMPO) of deployments, inspections, and exercises, while juggling the demands of their civilian jobs and families.

The 108th Wing recently earned “EXCELLENT” ratings in both the Nuclear and Conventional Operational Readiness Inspections, which culminated an intense period of three operational readiness exercises and several home station exercises that were scheduled immediately after the Unit Compliance Inspection in 2009. Now that we have entered a period of relatively reduced OPSTEMP, it is time for all of us to actively explore ways to reduce our stress levels in order to build our resiliency skills. Within the Wing, there are several resource tools available here that each of us should be aware of and make use of when needed.

One of them is the chaplains' office. Everyone is aware of the confidential and spiritual counseling available from the committed and caring chaplains and their staff. They offer this and much, much more! They can provide direct counseling and advice on many issues, and when they can't address the issues themselves, they can refer you to the appropriate source. During Wingman Stand Down Day, chaplains were recognized as the first resource in suicide prevention. Also, in the February 2011 issue of Wing Tips, Lt. Col.

Christopher Miller, 108th Wing chaplain, wrote on the Commander's Column an excellent article on resiliency and how to develop skills essential to coping with stress.

Another resource within the Wing is the Airmen and Family Programs office, which is led by Senior Master Sgt. Doug Ridgway. While one of Ridgway's primary duties is to assist family members of deployed Airmen, he also has access to many resources that can help with day-to-day problems. Whether through Air Force channels at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst; New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs or the State Family Programs Office, Ridgway can arrange for many things such as financial counseling and access to grant applications, to name a few. In addition, Ridgway works directly with the chaplain's office on scheduling marriage enrichment and relationship seminars. This is only a partial list that the AFP office can provide Airmen to help them deal with whatever problems they might face.

The Wing recently hired Jill Barrett to become the Wing's director of psychological health, a newly created, contract position, thus providing another resource to help all members of the Wing. Barrett has an extensive background in counseling and working with military members. The Wing Psychological Health Program supports our members' mental and emotional strength, endurance, and resilience. Maintenance of psychological health can improve job performance, enhance relationships, and advance skills for personal growth and well-being. The program offers



confidential consultations, education, resource material and referrals to community providers. Furthermore, this program also offers consultations to supervisors on best practices for supporting troops on psychological health issues.

These are three offices within the Wing offering a wealth of resources for us to tap into. They are all located adjacent to each other in the Wing headquarters building 33-27. It is essential we all know about these and other available resources. Whether for ourselves, our coworkers, or, most importantly, those we supervise; these and other programs will make all of us better and more effective people.

108th SFS deploy to Southwest Asia, support New Dawn

By Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, 108th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J., -- More than 25 Airmen from the 108th Wing's Security Force Squadron deployed from here July 12, for a six-month tour in Southwest Asia in support of Operation New Dawn.

Amidst family members and senior leadership from the 108th Wing and New Jersey Air National Guard, the 108th SFS Airmen said goodbye to their loved ones during a farewell ceremony held at the 108th Wing's conference room here.

Senior Airman Omar J. Navarro, a Newark resident and recent college graduate, said he was a little nervous about the deployment, but he was also excited at the opportunity.

"My sister and mother have both been deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq and they told me I would be alright," said Navarro. "My father is a nervous wreck, though."

After a couple of weeks of training in Nevada to hone their security forces skills, the Airmen deployed to Southwest Asia to commence the mission.

The 108th SFS Airmen are well-equipped and well-prepared to accomplish their mission, said Col. Robert A. Meyer, vice commander for the 108th Wing.

Maj. Gen. Maria Falca-Dodson, commander of the New Jersey Air National Guard, told the family members that they should be proud of their Airmen for serving in the military.

"They are American heroes," said Fal-



Senior Airman Jeffrey Stich, a member of the 108th Security Forces Squadron, New Jersey Air National Guard, holds his daughter, Kyleigh, during a farewell ceremony at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst on July 12, 2011. Stich, along with more than 25 other security forces members, have deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation New Dawn where they will be responsible for maintaining security at the air base. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman Kellyann Novak, 108th WG/PA)

ca-Dodson. "Only one percent of the population in the United States serves in the military and these are some of them."

During their deployment, the Airmen

will conduct air base ground defense missions, which may include perimeter patrols, flight line security, vehicle searches, and processing personnel at base entry points.

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A Message From the Safety Office

Tips to enjoy motorcycle riding safely

The sun is out, the beaches are open, and it's an ideal time to get out and go for a ride.

We are more than halfway through the summer and motorcycle riders can be seen on the road on a regular basis, both off-base and on Joint Base McGuire Dix-Lakehurst here in New Jersey.

Riders rarely think about having a mishap or getting seriously injured. During the summer months, motorcycle mishaps rise due to many different factors; inexperience, risky riding, alcohol, speed, distractions, and fatigue. Fortunately, all of these factors can be preventable and can lead to fewer mishaps during this time of the year.

Before operating a motorcycle, make sure your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is serviceable. In accordance with DODI6055.04, the mandatory PPE for operating or riding as a passenger on a motorcycle is:

- Helmets – certified to meet Department of Transportation standards; properly fastened under the chin.
- Goggles and face shields – impact or shatter resistant goggles, or full-face shield properly attached to helmet.
- Sturdy footwear – leather boots or over the ankle shoes.
- Clothing – long sleeved shirt or jacket, long trousers, and full-fingered gloves.
- Garment visibility – a brightly colored outer upper garment during the day and reflective upper garment during the night.

No rider should ever feel safe enough to ride without the mandatory PPE. It's your life you are playing with.

The Joint Base leadership and Joint Base Safety remind all JB MDL warriors to get proper training prior to operating a motorcycle. It is imperative that riders of all skill levels are fully qualified and their bikes ready for riding. For Active Duty military personnel, training is not optional, it's mandatory!

There is always risk when operating a motorcycle and poor preparation



amplifies that risk. Summertime can be a challenging time for motorcyclists. It is wise to remember it can take a little time for you to get back into the riding mode to the level you were at last summer.

During the week of Aug. 29 through Sept. 2, the Joint Base Safety will be out at the gates ensuring all motorcycle operators and passengers have all re-

quired PPE and have in their possession a Motorcycle Safety Foundation course completion card, pertinent to the type of motorcycle they are operating.

The joint Base offers several motorcycle safety foundation courses. Check the COP link for further class dates and details at:

<https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/community/views/home.aspx?Filter=25618>.

Airmen participate in rodeo, IG watches



By Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, 108th Wing Public Affairs

Airmen from the 108th Wing, 150 of them to be exact, went to the rodeo on Saturday, June 11.

No, not the type that you see on television where participants ride bulls, tie down cattle, wrestle steer, etc., but instead to an ability to survive and operate rodeo, commonly known in the Air Force as an ATSO rodeo.

The ability to survive and operate is a major tested area on an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). And the 108th Wing was scheduled for one in June, but due to real world operations the Wing was currently supporting worldwide, the inspector general of the Air Mobility Command felt the Wing was able to respond to global threats and deploy combat ready Airmen on short notice around the world, which is exactly what an ORI tests for. Thus instead of having a full ORI for the Wing, the ATSO rodeo was tasked to Wing.

Within an ATSO rodeo, the Inspector General team looks for common core skills tasks to be completed by any Airmen regardless of career field or assigned unit type.

Such common core skills are proper wear of chemical protective equipment; understanding current alarm signals and mission-oriented protective postures; contamination avoidance and contamination control; ability to process through a contamination control area; self-aid buddy care; ability to perform post-attack reconnaissance; and individual weapon familiarization and more.

“All these tasks are critical,” said Col. Andrew Molnar, the IG team chief. “It’s about saving yourself and your buddy’s life.”

And that’s exactly how the 108th Wing personnel tackled each of the tasks at the ATSO rodeo, knowing they were being evaluated by the AMC IG team.

Reporting at 7 a.m. Saturday morning for roll call with their MOPP gear, Kevlar, interceptor body armor vest, and load bearing equipment on hand, the 150 Airmen that participated on the ATSO rodeo brought their game face and attitude to the event.

During a short rest period between events, Lt. Col. Stephen Henske, commander of the 108th Force Support Squadron, said he was impressed by “the great

attitude and engagement” of the Airmen. And to ensure the participants didn’t lose their sharpness, Henske kept walking around from group to group giving them pointers and advice on the tasks evaluated by the IG team, showing a leadership and teamwork attribute that wasn’t lost on the IG team.

He observed the 108th Wing’s great attitude from the beginning, said Molnar.

“They showed up wearing that,” continued Molnar. “From the point they walked into the hangar to now. I’ve seen what an exceptional Guard unit the 108th is.”

But he was more impressed with how the 108th Wing was able to complete AMC missions, a Nuclear Operational Readiness Inspection and the ATSO portion of the ORI within a drill weekend, said Molnar. “It’s not easy.”

Mainly since being a Guardsmen carries a dual role of being an Airmen during a drill weekend and being a civilian the rest of the month, which means that a traditional Guardsmen has to stay operational ready constantly even though they are only at the Wing two days in a month.

And the readiness of the

108th Airmen can be attributed to the constant training the Wing had been completing for the past two years, as they prepared for both inspections.

But leadership and “can do” attitude is also critical, and the 108th Wing showed that during the rodeo.

“Leadership is lived at all levels in the 108th Wing,” said Molnar. “From an Airmen to an officer; everyone had an answer for any questions I asked.”

“Coming into this joint base, when you can’t tell the difference from a Guardsmen and the active duty personnel; it says a lot about the 108th,” said Molnar.

Although a traditional rodeo event tests an individual’s mettle, the ATSO rodeo requires teamwork participation in order to successfully complete all the common tasks.

“Teamwork is key in order to complete the mission,” said Staff Sgt. Janice River, knowledge operations management non-commissioned officer at the 108th Mission Support Group.

And that’s how the Airmen of the 108th Wing accomplished the ATSO rodeo on that hot and humid Saturday morning.

108th Wing rises to the occasion

By Staff Sgt. Brian Carson, 108th Wing Public Affairs

The 108th Wing is used to deploying on short-notice to answer the nation's call, and Operation Odyssey Dawn, later called Operation Unified Protector, is no exception.

"It's pretty amazing to see a large tanker operation stand up in less than 48 hours," stated Capt. Chris D'Erasmio, 108th Wing Executive Officer. "It's a bit hectic when you get a few hours notice to deploy, but that's our job."

The goal of Operation Odyssey Dawn/Unified Protector was to enforce a no-fly zone and to promote a cease fire in Libya – both of which are still ongoing operations. The initial deployment in support of the operation consisted of nine personnel from the 108th Wing. However, over the duration of Unified Protector, the 108th will probably deploy more than 200 members in support of this operation.

It is the constant mission readiness training and focus on operational readiness that allows the Wing to seamlessly deploy its members when the nation needs them.

"With a few hours notice, there isn't much time for preparation and that is why it is very important to remain mission ready by staying on top of our training and to ensure prerequisites are met for deployment at all times," stated D'Erasmio.

In addition to being able to rapidly respond when called upon,



the 108th's real-world training mission has other benefits as well.

The Wing was scheduled to go through an Operational Readiness Inspection in June; however, due to the professionalism and expertise that the 108th showed in its response to Operation Odyssey Dawn, the inspection was cancelled, as Air Mobility Command gathered that a unit so readily prepared to deploy for a real-world mission met the criteria that the ORI look for in a unit.

The 108th Wing has a history of supporting the goals of our state and nation when called upon to do so, and the recent deployment for Operation Odyssey Dawn is another example of that proud tradition.

108th Wing is 'Excellent' in all they do

By Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, 108th Wing Public Affairs

Amid applause, cheers and high-fives, the 108th Wing out of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., learned on June 14 they had received an "excellent" rating from the Inspector General's Office of Air Mobility Command during their readiness inspections at JBMDL.

Present at the IG out briefing were Maj. Gen. Maria Falca-Dodson, commander of the New Jersey Air National Guard; Navy Capt. Andrew Butterfield, deputy commander of JBMDL; Brig. Gen. Michael Cunniff, commander of the 108th Wing; commanders from the 108th Wing groups and various Wing Airmen and their families.

During the tough but fair inspection, they found that very strong leadership and teamwork were clearly evident at all levels in the 108th Wing, said the team



of inspectors.

With a tough mission to support operation Odyssey Dawn, and other deployments around the globe, the 108th Wing prepared for two years to undergo the IG inspection.

"Team Air National Guard New Jersey; team joint base. I don't know what to call you, except I know to call you 'Excellent!'", said the IG team

chief, Col. Andrew Molnar, as he announced the overall grade of the inspection to the 108th Wing personnel. "This is the best inspection I've ever witnessed and you can take that to the bank."

"'Brave and undisciplined will always lose or be killed by valor with discipline', and that is exactly what I saw in the Air National Guard," said Molnar

as he paraphrased one of his heroes, Gen. George Patton.

"Teamwork from the joint base with you, and a discipline in every step of the operation at every rank, Airmen, NCO, officer, senior officer, leadership, a round of applause for yourself," continued Molnar as he described his overall observation of the 108th Wing during the inspection.

Cunniff thanked the IG team for their professionalism and fairness during the inspection.

In addition, Cunniff said he was proud of the Airmen of the 108th Wing for their hard work and excellent attitude throughout the inspection, and told his Airmen to thank their families for the sacrifices they made during preparations and deployments throughout the year as the Wing got ready for the inspection.

"I am extremely proud to be your commander," said Cunniff.

Odds & Ends

Free mental health program available for Airmen

Attention members of the 108th Wing. A new program is now available to help Airmen deal with issues associated with stress and psychological challenges.

Led by Jill Barrett, the Wing Psychological Health Program is here to support our members' mental and emotional strength, endurance, resilience and well-being.

The Psychological Health Program can offer confidential consultations, education, resource material, and referrals to civilian providers.

Maintenance of your psychological health can improve your job performance, enhance your relationships with family and friends, and advance your skills for personal growth.

The office is located at the Wing Headquarters building 33-27, next to the Airmen and Family Readiness office. Call Ms. Barrett at 609-754-2159 or via email at jill.barrett@ang.af.mil at anytime for a consultation.

In addition, services are also available for family members.

Ex-Marine looking for former leathernecks

Airmen, if you are prior service and at one time were a Marine and would like to meet other ex-Marines here in the unit, we are looking for you.

Tech Sgt. Willmont Griffin from the 108th Civil Engineer Squadron is planning for a get-together during the November drill to celebrate the 236th birthday of the Marines, as well as have an opportunity to meet other ex-Marines here in the unit.

If you are interested, please contact Griffin at 201-394-0259.

Depending on the response and turn-out for this event, this can be an annual get-together.

Fish with a pro at Big Bass event

As a "Special Thank You" to the military members of New Jersey, the Big Bass Association will host a bass tournament on Sept. 10 at the Wawayanda Lake that will allow a Soldier or Airmen to fish on the tournament with an experienced bass fisherman.

The event will be held at the Wawayanda State Park and participating members will need to arrive between the hours of 5 – 5:30 am for a boat launching time of 6 a.m.

Please contact Raymond Verheek at 201-290-0399 or via email at rverheek@harsco.com for tournament information.

New Jersey National Guard participants will require a freshwater fishing license, which can be obtained by contacting Edward Turrian at 609-530-6866 or email at ed.turrian@njdmava.state.nj.us.

Lake Wawayanda is located at 885 Warwick Turnpike in Hewitt

Operation Readiness to help school children

Parents! Are your kids ready for school?

The St. Barnabas Episcopal Church is hosting an event on Aug. 27, from 1-6 p.m. at their church to prepare children for the first day of school.

Operation Readiness will provide a fun day of food, school supplies and free backpacks for children in the grades of kindergarten through eighth.

Please register for the event by Aug. 24 at the church's gym.

Volunteers for the event are needed and welcomed, as well as donations of food such as water, hot dogs, hamburgers, etc. Also, backpacks and school supplies donations would be appreciated.

Contact Pastor Andre Williamson at 973-951-6936 or via email at drewwilliamson@aol.com for more details.

The church is located at 6 Roseville Avenue in Newark, N.J.

Air Force rolls out new PT test standards

By Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, 108th Wing Public Affairs

The U.S. Air Force revised its fitness program effective July 1, 2010, with an implementation date of January 1, 2011 to new physical fitness assessment standards.

Gone are the days of the body mass index and testing once a year. Instead, Airmen must now test twice a year and meet minimum requirements for the aerobic component (1.5 mile run), body composition and muscular fitness component (push-ups and sit-ups) in order to achieve a passing score of 75 within their age and gender group.

Furthermore, physical fitness assessments will now be conducted at central locations called Fitness Assessment Cells and Airmen will receive an assessment score in one of three categories: Excellent – composite score equal to or greater than 90 with all minimum components met; Satisfactory – composite score of 75 – 89.99 with all minimum components met; Unsatisfactory – composite score less than 75 and/or one or more minimum components not met.

Hodges Horton, fitness assessment personnel at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, said he noticed that Airmen were paying more

attention to their physical fitness now that it's harder to pass with the new testing standards.

"I see more people in the gym," he said. "Their careers are on the line if they don't pass."

Officers and enlisted personnel will now be required to have a passing and current fitness score in order to be selected for or attend professional military education. In addition, there will be restrictions regarding retraining, reenlistment eligibility and assignment eligibility that could be impacted by a failed fitness score.

Although the measuring bar has been raised, passing the assessment is not impossible if one maintains a regular exercising routine and a healthy diet.

"If you are planning to take the test, prepare yourself 60 days before by exercising for an hour at least three times per week," said Horton.

While the Air Force Fitness Program's goal is to motivate Airmen to participate in a year-round physical fitness program that benefits the Airmen, the overall health benefits from an active lifestyle is priceless.

Air Force, Army work together on joint goal

108th CRG and 688th RPOE display teamwork during Eagle Flag 2011

By Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, 108th Wing Public Affairs

The 108th Contingency Response Group is a rapid-deployment unit designed at the initiative of Air Force leadership to be a first-in force that will secure an airfield, establish and maintain field operations.

Tailored for a specific mission, the CRG incorporates more than 20 military specialties and it comprises of approximately a 120-person unit ready for deployment around the globe with no more than 12 hours notice.

From their inception in 2008 into a contingency response group, the 108th CRG's goal has been to become fully operational capable (FOC) certified as soon as possible.

And this past week, they took another step towards that goal, as they participated in an exercise designed to strengthen their capabilities, exercise Eagle Flag 2011 at Lakehurst Naval Station, N.J.

They achieved initial operation capable status after Eagle Flag 2010, said Senior Master Sgt. Grieg Moore, flight commander for the security forces at the 108th CRG. "Now we want to be FOC certified."

During that exercise, which was also held here at Lakehurst Naval Station, called for a play scenario in which the 108th CRG was tasked with opening an air base and provide humanitarian relief after a hurricane passed through an area on the East coast.

Changing the scenario, Eagle Flag 2011 tasked the New Jersey Air National Guard unit into a Joint Task Force Port Opening operation. Along with active duty



components from Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., the 633rd Mission Support Group and the Army's 688th Rapid Port Opening Element, the JTFPO operation required these units to deploy to a fictional region somewhere of the north eastern coast of Africa and rapidly open and establish an aerial port of debarkation in the country of Nessor that would allow for additional forces into the region.

Operation Scorpion, as the fictitious operation was called, was a joint coalition effort between U.S. Armed Forces and local Nessorian military to counter terrorism operations and bring stability to the region.

For the Army's 688th RPOE, the training done during the week was critical as they were looking for certification as a JTFPO operational capable element, said Army Maj. Joe Borovicka, commanding officer of the 688th RPOE.

"Tons of lessons learned during the exercise," said

Borovicka. "We needed to identify our strengths and weaknesses and get better for the next alert cycle."

On the other hand, for the 108th CRG, this scenario allowed them to "be part of an exercise in which we used our own equipment and personnel," said Lt. Col. Lawrence Klein, commander of the 108th CRG's Global Mobility Readiness Squadron. "This Eagle Flag was a readiness exercise, next year's Eagle Flag will be to validate as JTFPO qualified."

Pfc. Eric Duran, a cargo specialist with the 688th RPOE, said he was glad to be helping the 108th eventually achieve certification.

And the Pico Rivera, Cal., resident did his part by transporting on his HEMMET numerous pieces of cargo from the APOD to a forward node.

"I've put in about 100 miles per day, travelling back and forth on this operation," said Duran. "This is good training."

The help reciprocity went

both ways. When the 688th RPOE found themselves short of drivers during one of the missions, 108th CRG Capt. Joseph Schultz stepped up. Since he had prior service with the Army and was trained on the HEMMETS, Schultz quickly familiarized himself with the truck and went out on a convoy with the Army unit. Thus allowing them to continue their mission without any interruption.

As both units move into the direction of eventually becoming JTFPO qualified, they understood the importance of working together.

"The 108th were excellent to work with," said Borovicka. "I would go on alert with them any time."

And those were the sentiments of Col. Robert Brazel, the 108th CRG commander.

"I hope this becomes a long lasting relationship," said Brazel.

Feature Story

Decorating his way to 'Cake Boss' status

By Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, 108th Wing Public Affairs

"In my senior year of high school, I had a commercial baking class," said 21 year-old Rashawn Robinson. "The first day of class I picked up the spatula and started decorating cakes."

And for the past three years he has been mastering the art of cake decorating in his civilian life and during drill weekends at the 108th Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, in Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

"I fell in love with the art and have been doing it ever since," said Robinson, a senior airman with the 108th Force Support Squadron here at JBMDL.

"You can definitely tell he takes pride and enjoys what he does," said Master Sgt. Lauren Holba, base service manager at the 108th Wing, and Robinson's supervisor.

With the use of icing, frosting and other edible decorative elements to make otherwise plain cakes more visually interesting, the art of cake decorating has become very popular in this reality-TV driven culture.

There's the show "Ace of Cakes" on the Food Network; "Amazing Wedding Cakes" on WeTV and New Jersey's own "Cake Boss" on the cable network TLC.

And recently, Robinson, a Browns Mills native currently residing in Brooklyn, N.Y., accepted a job at the famous bakery in Hoboken, Carlo's Bakery, and the set for "Cake Boss".

"I will be a cake decorator," said Robinson. "I will cut, fill, and stack numerous cakes. Then decorate them with sugar flowers or any other sugar decorations."

"Cake Boss" follows Buddy Valastro, star and owner of the bakery, and his family as they operate their business, which mainly focuses on how they bake and decorate cakes for all types of occasions and events.

Holba said Robinson had talked about how much he enjoyed baking and decorating.

So much he decided to take a chance and drive to Carlo's Bakery and hopefully receives a try out for the show.

Robinson was well aware of the opportunities that an internship at the "Cake Boss" would open to him. Thus, armed with his portfolio, he met with Buddy's right-hand man, Mauro "Chef Mario" Castano, and was given a tryout, which he passed with flying colors.

Consequently, he was first offered a 30-day trial period to bake for the show and displayed his decorating skills.

During his internship, he was able to network with different people and meet new friends, said Robinson. "The experience alone is an amazing opportunity."

Yet Robinson has maintained a humble approach to his military career and personal life.

"The environment in the show is really fun, and a little crazy with cameras everywhere and people screaming all the time," said Robinson. "My friends bombard me with a million questions about the show, but I gladly answer them with a smile on my face."

"We keep looking for him on TV," said Holba.

Cake decorating was not originally in his career plans, said Robinson. "I never went to culinary art school."



But Robinson said he always listened to what his parents had to say. "My mother and father have always been supportive of what I decide to do. They always say 'just do what you love and everything else will follow'."

And now he finds himself on television and having his work displayed for the world to see.

But this would not be happening if he hadn't picked up the spatula back in high school, and then hone his skills later in the military.

And those skills were honed because of his choice to enter the services career field with the New Jersey Air National Guard in May of 2008.

"I wanted the experience to be part of something that was bigger than me and to have the ability to afford to go to school," said Robinson.

In the services career field, Airmen are trained to manage and direct services programs, operations and retail operations, which include food service activities, lodging, recreation, fitness, and sports programs.

With his career goal of getting a bachelor's degree in hospital-ity management and opening his own shop one day, Robinson also realizes the opportunities the military can open up for him. Being a veteran would allow him to obtain a veteran-owned small business enterprise, which provides the business owner with various incentives and benefits designed to ease the economic disadvantages of being a small business owner.

"The military is a great career choice," said Robinson. "But I haven't decided what I will do when my enlistment is up. It all depends on where I am in life."

Being that a famous baker thought high enough of Robinson's work that he hired him for his show, the 108th Wing members are hoping that their own celebrity Airman will bake and decorate those exquisite cakes at the dining facility for a long time.