

# DISPATCH



AIRLIFT

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Vol. 39, No. 34

437th Airlift Wing, Charleston AFB, SC

Friday, September 1, 2000

## 14 AS aircrew flies mission of mercy

By Maj. Stephen Clutter

374 AW Public Affairs, Yokota AB, Japan

Both the fervent heart and tender hands of America's airlift force were on display Aug. 19 as two real life dramas melded together. One was 50 years in the making, the other just five days. One brought honor to the fallen, the other hope to a baby fighting for life.

In the first event, remains of 14 U.S. soldiers killed in the Korean War were repatriated from North Korea in a solemn ceremony inside a hangar. The melodious tones of the bagpipes had barely faded when the second drama began to unfold.

A C-17 Globemaster III which moments before had flown the repatriation mission from Pyongyang was hurriedly configured in an urgent attempt to save a 5-day-old baby girl by flying her halfway around the world to increase her odds of survival. With little notice, a C-17 crew from the Charleston AFB's 14<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron were assigned the mission. It involved departing Yokota AB, aerial refueling near Alaska and arriving at Kelly AFB, Texas, where the baby would be transported to Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland AFB.

Orchestrated from the Tanker Airlift Control Center, Scott AFB, Ill., the mission was supported by dozens of airlifters, medical specialists, three aircraft and a one-of-a-kind life-support machine and medical team flown from Wilford Hall, to Japan and back.

As the flag-draped coffins were carried off the C-17, Alexis Kronshagen, 5-day old daughter of Staff Sgt. Christopher Kronshagen, 18<sup>th</sup> Transportation Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, was being flown 900 miles from Okinawa aboard a C-9 Nightingale to rendezvous with the C-17 at Yokota.

And to make the event even more dramatic, the "babylift" included a delicate midair refueling with a KC-10 Extender on the 14-hour return leg to the United States after departing Yokota. The tanker was also carrying an urgent care patient — an active-duty member being flown to San Diego for a life-saving operation.

"It's the first time in history that's happened, as far as we know," said Col. David Adams, Yokota's 374<sup>th</sup> Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron commander.

According to Capt. Keith Thibodeaux of the 14 AS, a team of approximately 20 doctors, nurses and technicians joined the family and the baby for the flight to Kelly AFB. The baby was on life support because her heart and lungs were not functioning properly. There was no mistaking the importance of the 14-hour mission.

"There was a sense of urgency about it," Thibodeaux said. "It was a high priority mission. This baby needed to get where she was going as soon as possible."

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### Volunteering for veterans

Staff Sgt. Corey Clements

**Airman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Erik Sonnenberg (right) and other volunteers set up tents for Operation Standdown, an annual VA Hospital event for homeless veterans held Aug. 25. The event offered hot meals, clothes and haircuts at no cost to homeless veterans.**

## Make your voice heard, apply for absentee ballot

By Lt. Col Ed Memi

437 AW Public Affairs

The deadline for military members to apply for an absentee voting form is rapidly approaching if they want to vote in the upcoming Nov. 7 general elections.

Service members and their families must submit a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), SF-76, request for registration or absentee ballot before early September if they want to vote. An absentee ballot is required when servicemembers and their spouse live in another state other than that of their legal residence. The easy-to-complete form is available on line at [www.fvap.ncr.gov](http://www.fvap.ncr.gov) or by contacting their unit voting representative.

Forty-two states and territories allow citizens to register and request an absentee ballot by submitting a single FPCA. However, other states may require the use of two separate FPCA forms: one to register, and a second FPCA to request an absentee ballot.

Generally, the FPCA used to request a ballot that should be received by election officials at least forty-five days before election day to allow ample time to process the request and mail the ballot. Contact your unit voting representative for more details.

Maj. Gus Schott, 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Plans and base installation voting officer, said that each unit has a unit voting officer. He added, it is also

important to send in your ballots as soon as possible to allow for delays in transit time.

"The time required in requesting an absentee ballot can take several weeks, and with the November presidential elections just around the corner, now is the time to act," said Schott. "Make your mark and ensure your voice is heard."

To register and/or vote absentee, an eligible U.S. citizen must carefully, and accurately, complete an FPCA. Federal law recommends that a single FPCA simultaneously serve all states and territories as both a registration form and application for absentee ballot. Because of varying state and territorial procedures, military members should refer to the appropriate state or territorial section of the 2000-01 *Voting Assistance Guide* to determine how he or she must complete the FPCA. Unit voting representatives should have a copy of this guide.

Some suggestions in completing the FPCA is to use only correct and current information.

"In most cases, the voting residence address (the citizen's address in their state of residence) must be different from the current mailing address. Without the voting residence address, which gives a geographic location, the Local Election Official cannot process the request, or without a current mailing address, election materials cannot be mailed to the voter," advises the August issue of *Voting Information News*.

When using the electronic transmission service,

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