

Bulldogs ***On Five***

*148th Fighter Wing
Duluth, Minnesota*

April-May 2008



148th Fighter Wing

Commanders' Column

By Col. Gary Moe
Mission Support Group Commander



After more than 36 years of being a proud member of the 148th, the time has finally come for me to say goodbye and say thank you to all the members of this great organization (past and present) for all the support and opportunities I have been afforded. I will retire from Technician status effective May 3, 2008 and cannot believe the time has gone by so fast. I remember the day I took my entrance exam in mass at the OLD dining hall along with 20 others. I must have passed because I was off to basic training shortly after that. When I returned, I was fortunate enough to be offered a short active duty tour at HQ ARPC in Denver, CO to work the Palace Chase program. Not too long after returning from Denver, I was hired full-time in the Personnel office as a Personnel Clerk (GS-4). Life was simple back then. Our office equipment was a phone (rotary and included a base operator), pencil, pen, paper and a

MANUAL typewriter. Fast forward to today - high tech computer systems, advanced technical weapons systems, highly educated, trained and talented individuals. I am thankful I did not have to compete against the talent and high caliber people we bring into the organization today.

We now have modern, efficient facilities and equipment, the community knows and supports us, and we are the best Fighter Wing in the business. The demands and sacrifices of you, your families and employers are greater than they have ever been. Yet you all seem to balance those demands and make it work. I am truly marveled by the performance and results you all have achieved.

Any individual can achieve their personal goals, but the organization needs the entire "Team" to be successful. It does not matter what your job or rank is, you are a key player in the Wing's success. The team needs your talent, attitude, support and performance to always be at its highest level to keep moving forward and ensure we continue to be relevant and the best of the best.

I think the future looks good. With your consistent outstanding performance over the years, and the strong support we have gained from important and highly influential officials, both military and civilian, I believe the unit will be around for a long, long time and will be flying more modern aircraft in the not too distant future.

There will be many changes and challenges coming. You have successfully dealt with them before, and I am confident you will do it again. Keep up the great work and attitudes. The

Wing has a bright future and I wish you all the best. I want to especially thank my family for their never ending support over the years. I have truly been blessed.

Thanks to everyone for your friendship, support and help in making my career so rewarding and enjoyable. You are the best!

National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Awards

The National Guard Bureau recently held its 30th Annual Joint Media contest. A distinguished panel of 10 judges selected the top 30 products in multiple media categories.

The following 148th personnel earned top honors in the below categories:

Art/Graphics – 2nd Place:

Tech. Sgt. Jason W. Rolfe.

Pictorial Photograph - 2nd Place:

Senior Airman Donald Acton

Video Documentary - 3rd Place:

"Memories of the 148th:

A Living History"

Staff Sgt. Margaret Engebretson,

Tech. Sgt. Jason Rolfe, Tech. Sgt.

Jodi Kiminski

148th Commander's Coin

see story on page 6



On the Cover

Crew Chief, Staff Sgt. Brian Pawlovich recovers an F-16 at a recent 148th Fighter Wing deployment to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. Photo by Lt. Col. Reed Bowman.

See story on page 3.

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Year 2008 Unit Training Assembly (UTA) and other training schedules for the 148th Fighter Wing and all subordinate units:

UTA	SUTA	MANDATORY
19-20 Apr	None Apr	AFT
16-18 May	03-04 May	
13-15 Jun	None Jun	
None Jul	None Jul	28 Jul - 1 Aug
02-03 Aug	None Aug	18-22 Aug
23-24 Aug		
13-14 Sep	None Sep	
04-05 Oct	25-26 Oct	
01-02 Nov	None Nov	
06-07 Dec	None Dec	

Duluth Mayor visits 148th Fighter Wing

By Capt. Audra A. Flanagan

Duluth's newly-elected Mayor, Don Ness along with Dave Boe, Margaret Hodnik and Jeff Papas visited the 148th Fighter Wing on Monday, Feb. 4, 2008. The visit included a mission brief, F-16 familiarization and Explosive Ordnance Disposal demonstration.

Topics included in Mayor Ness' briefing included the 148th history, current mission, personnel metrics, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) mission, current and future construction projects, and significant accomplishments.

Mayor Ness presented 148th Fighter Wing Commander, Col. Mark Johnson with a proclamation making Feb. 4, 2008 "148th Fighter Wing Day" in the city of Duluth. The proclamation states "the 148th Fighter Wing has a long history of excellence in the national service and in the defense of the United States of America" and "We wish to honor the members of the 148th Fighter Wing for their devotion, dedication to duty and the vital role they play both in the vitality of Duluth as well as the

148th Deploys to Elmendorf Air Force Base

By Capt. Audra A. Flanagan

While approximately 50 personnel were returning from a three-month long Pacific Air Force (PACAF) Air Sovereignty Alert mission at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii; another group of personnel were planning their next adventure in a very different place. The Air Force requested the 148th Fighter Wing, by name, to support North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Air Sovereignty Alert operations at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.

148th personnel supported NORAD missions in Alaska for almost six weeks. While deployed, members of the 148th were visited by Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Larry Shellito and Assistant Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Tim Cossalter. Maj. Gen. Shellito and Brig. Gen. Cossalter traveled to Alaska to thank 148th members for their continued service



Duluth Mayor Don Ness sits inside the cockpit of an F-16 during a tour of the 148th Fighter Wing. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason W. Rolfe.

security of our nation."

Mayor Ness stated that "I've long been aware and appreciative of the important role the 148th plays in our national security, but I learned about many of the other ways this dedicated group of servicemen and servicewomen helps Duluth grow and prosper. The 148th has my full support and I thank Col. Johnson and his entire command for their leadership and service."

148th Fighter Wing Vice Commander, Col. Frank Stokes who was a participant on Monday's tour stated that

"Mayor Ness' visit to the 148th helped to lay the foundation for a close partnership between the Bulldogs and the Leadership of Duluth. He was keenly attentive to our presentation, and has a strong understanding of the issues affecting the future of the Wing. The mayor was sincerely interested in the past accomplishments of the 148th, and recognized the Wing's recent success with a City proclamation. The 148th is fortunate to have the continued support of the Community leaders and elected officials."



A 148th Fighter Wing F-16 taxis during a recent deployment to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. Photo by Lt. Col. Reed Bowman

to the state and nation. "The 148th continues to impress not only the Air National Guard leadership, but leadership at all levels of the Air Force. The unselfish acceptance of additional missions and willingness to endure the hardship of being away from home has not gone unnoticed. The 148th "Bulldogs" established a benchmark for total force support to the Air Force,"

stated Brig. Gen. Cossalter.

The 148th was the first non-Alaskan or Canadian unit to support Alaska Command (ANR) alert. Additionally, the 148th was the first F-16 unit to intercept Russian bombers, also known as "Bears." NORAD routinely intercepts, or visually identifies the Russian bombers and considers such flights training opportunities for its pilots.

35th Annual Norwegian Exchange

By Tech. Sgt. Jason W. Rolfe

On Feb. 13, 2008, 11 members of the 148th Fighter Wing and fellow Minnesota National Guard members deployed to Norway for the Norwegian Troop Reciprocal Exchange. This exchange program, now in its 35th year, continues to be a great opportunity for Minnesota National Guardsmen to experience winter training, participate in Norwegian culture and traditions, and establish lifelong relationships.

Soldiers and Airmen trained with Norwegian Home Guard instructors to learn the importance and history of winter training. At Haltdalen, the Norwegian Home Guard training center, the troops learned valuable winter training such as setting up emergency bivouacs, lighting a fire, catching food in snares, the theory of avalanches and rescue training, and ski-joring. Ski-joring, a favorite training activity for many of the troops, involves 20 soldiers being pulled behind a tracked vehicle through the snow. The final challenge of the winter training involved a 5 kilometer ski march through the challenging mountainous terrain traveling upward approximately 200 meters in elevation where they set up bivouac once



TSgt Jacob Derungs completes a winter training exercise in Norway. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason W. Rolfe.



Minnesota National Guard members complete a winter training exercise called ski-journing in Norway during the 35th Annual U.S./Norwegian Troop Reciprocal Exchange. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason W. Rolfe.

again and began digging snow caves in the side of a massive snow drift to spend their last night during the FTX.

The guardsmen were immersed in various cultural exchanges and learning activities while in Norway. Formal dinner programs were filled with tradition and culture from both U.S. and Norwegian influences. The U.S. contingent visited nearby towns like Roros where they toured Olav's Mine and experienced a traditional sleigh ride through the picturesque town. Soldiers and Airmen also participated in a "Buddy-weekend" program and traveled to Norwegian host families throughout the country.

Minnesota National Guard Soldiers

and Airmen along side Norwegian Home Guard trainers developed deep relationships during this two-week exchange. They shared cultural values of their respective military and home lives, learned valuable survival skills, and built lifelong friendships. As the "Partners for Peace" program finishes its 35th year, Minnesota Guardsmen will forever look back at one of the most exciting, demanding and rewarding training experiences in their careers.

The 148th Fighter Wing will again participate in the exchange program in Feb. 2010. Be sure to ask your supervisor how you can be apart of this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Military Ball

The 2008 Military Ball took place Mar. 1, 2008 at Blackwoods Conference Center in Proctor, MN. Ball attendees enjoyed great food, company, speeches and an emotional presentation from the 148th Honor Guard.



Key note speaker Maj. Gen. (ret.) Joe Gomer addresses the crowd at the 2008 Military Ball. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason W. Rolfe.

148th Fighter Wing supports John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon

By Tech. Sgt. Jason W. Rolfe

On Jan. 29, 2008, Jason Rice, President of the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon, woke up from a short nap and logged onto the computer to enter his daily blog, "Near the shores of remote Pike Lake just outside Grand Marais, MN, the Air National Guard is on a mission to keep Beargrease teams safe..." He completed this blog not from his office or home, but from the middle of the great northern woods where the 148th Fighter Wing of Duluth, MN set up a Joint Communications Platform (JCP).

The 148th Fighter Wing Communication Squadron completes winter training on Minnesota National Guard's high tech JCP and supports the Beargrease while doing so. Their eight member team sets up the JCP and a field tent to live and work out of for their cold five day mission. They need to be prepared for any type of conditions especially when facing 20 below zero temperatures like this past week. NCOIC Master Sgt. Bryan Druar also mentions, "One of the biggest challenges is just getting up here." Being such a remote location, most times snow chains are required on the vehicles to reach the site.

The 148th members operate day and

Gas-For-Vans Program

By Master Sgt. Mark J. Wasserbauer

The 148th First Sergeant's Council presented the Military Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV-Duluth) with \$1225 worth of prepaid gas cards on Mar. 2, 2008 in the Great Lakes Inn. The Council raised the money for the Gas-For-Vans Fundraiser, a program helps provide funds to assist MACV and the Combined Honor Guard in the operation and sustainment of their vans. The vans provide critical transportation needs for many area veterans.

"We would like to thank the 148th Fighter Wing for its generous donation of gas cards to support our Honor Guard and MACV-Duluth . . . Your support of the Duluth Combined Honor Guard is a statement of the type of unit you portray. You personify all that is honorable and are the embodiment all the values we hold dear as soldiers and veterans," said Durbin M. Keeney, MACV Regional Director.

In 2007, the MACV van provided over 10,100 miles for direct services to veterans including transporting veterans to hospitals, appointments, and shopping. The Community Outreach program made 107 trips with our veterans to help bring food, pumpkins, canned food deliveries, and toys. The Duluth Combined Honor Guard is one of the busiest in the state. In the last year, the Honor Guard has put on over 4000 miles on their vehicle. Last year, they performed services for 148 funerals (895 funerals in the last five years). Keeney said, "Not only do we serve the families of our fallen comrades but we serve in many other capacities as well. We attend parades, teach flag etiquette and history, post colors for organizational meetings and conventions, go into the schools and talk about our military/combat experiences, and whatever we can do to help the community and instill a real sense of patriotism and pride."

The Gas-For-Vans fundraising drive, the second annual drive hosted by the 148th First Sergeant's Council, also serves a dual purpose. The money raised is used to purchase pre-paid gas cards from St. James Catholic School. Three percent of the total cards purchased from St. James goes back to them and is used to purchase school supplies and sports equipment for the school.



Members of the 148th Fighter Wing Communication Squadron brave below zero climate to support Beargrease. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason W. Rolfe.

night, often by a small crackling fire, to aid the sled dog teams and race officials. They inform snowmobilers and the rare car or two about the race and safety on the trail. Their main mission is to transmit information to the Beargrease base in Duluth. Transmissions would include time, team number and the number of dogs for each sled dog team. The 148th participates as part the Beargrease Amateur Radio Coalition or BARC. They are also there in case of any emergency on the trails.

The JCP is a state of the art communications platform used for State emergencies. The Minnesota National Guard uses the JCP during contingencies to provide on site communications such as satellite phone access, network

connection, weather updates, and radio communication. The last time the 148th performed these capabilities was for the 2007 Cavity Lake Fire in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

"As I type this posting inside the JCP, two generators rumble away, supplying enough power to run a house or two. High-speed data links and tons of gadgets to make a tech guru drool," stated Jason Rice. The communications wasn't always this high-tech. In the beginning, the 148th members used a small pick-up camper packed with radio gear.

The 148th has supported the Beargrease since 1995 with the exception of the 2001 race when the unit was supporting Operation Noble Eagle throughout the United States.

First Commanders Coin awarded

By Senior Airman Donald L. Acton

On Saturday, Jan. 12, 2008, Wing Commander Col. Mark R. Johnson presented the Commanders Coin to two Security Forces Squadron (SFS) members.

Tech. Sgt. Nathan D. Sykes was awarded the coin because of his efforts to streamline the front gate process which he began reformulating in Nov. of 2006. He also created an efficient process for visiting dignitaries that would expedite their arrival and departure. To operate the new front gate and visitor center, five individuals were handpicked by Sykes that he felt would have an extreme emphasis on customer service, display exemplary professionalism, and focus on good first impressions for non-base members to experience when visiting the 148th Fighter Wing. After accomplishing these goals, Sykes was hired into the SFS



Tech. Sgt. Nathan D. Sykes is awarded the first 148th Commanders Coin by Col. Mark Johnson, Base Commander. Photo by Senior Airman Donald L. Acton

training manager position in June of 2007 and gave control of the visitor center to Staff Sgt. Stephen L. Tuohy.

Tuohy took over in June of 2007 and has continued to carry on the superb performance of the visitor center team.

Since the new front gate was opened in June 2007, the visitor center has received over 40 written compliments and countless verbal compliments from both visitors and guard members.

Exceptional Promotion Program (EPP)

By Chief Master Sgt. Jodi Stauber

"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."

The State has recently finished the 2008 EPP cycle. Please congratulate Senior Master Sgt. Paul Raj of the Mission Support Group and Senior Master Sgt. Marvin Misgen of the Maintenance Group for their nomination and selection for promotion to Senior Master Sergeant. Both individuals are truly "exceptional" performers as proven by their selection by the State board. Congratulations to both of you. You have truly earned it!

WHAT IS EPP? The Exceptional Promotion Program was developed to provide promotion opportunity to Senior Master Sergeant and Chief Master Sergeant for traditional guard members when staffing document authorizations do not exist. The State of Minnesota is extremely fortunate to be able to promote four exceptional members every year with EPP. The important word to emphasize is "exceptional." These promotions are not unit vacancy promotions or even deserving airman promotions. Selection for promotion is based on exceptional performance. It is purely reserved for those who strive to be the very best and epitomize the Air Force Core value "Excellence in all we do."

HOW DOES EPP WORK? EPP is a very unique program in that it is a competitive process. Eligible candidates

are nominated by their commanders. The candidates then interview at the Wing level and the four successful candidates are forwarded to a "paper only" board and compete against members of the 133rd Airlift Wing at a state level paper-board. The final selections are made at the State level boards and forwarded to National Guard Bureau (NGB) for final approval.

HOW CAN I BECOME ELIGIBLE?

The eligibility factors include the same as those listed in ANGI 36-2502, Promotion of Airmen. In addition, you must be a traditional guard member, fully qualified in your DAFSC, have at least 17 years satisfactory service, and must agree to transfer to the retired reserve after three years or find a valid staffing document vacancy commensurate with the your EPP grade.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE

INFORMATION? If you are interested in learning more about EPP, please refer to ANGI 36-2101, Assignments in the ANG, ANGI 36-2502, Promotion of Airman, DANGBI 36-2502, JFMNR 36-2504, MNANG SOAR and SEAR Programs or contact the MPF or the CCM anytime.

A WORD ON PME: PME is about developing leaders! You should never "do your PME so you can get promoted." PME is NOT about promotion. Promotions are based on past performance and future potential. PME is simply a tool to help you develop and become a well-rounded person and leader. If you are competent in the execution of

your duties and display leadership qualities, promotion will come. However, promotion will not come without preparation on your part. Like with all things in life, you get out what you put in. The biggest ineligibility factor for 148th members is incomplete Professional Military Education (PME). For example, we have 71 potential Master Sergeants on this Wing who have not completed their PME – which in turn makes them "ineligible."

Chief Rick Davis summarized it best: "If you are lucky enough to be nominated for EPP competition, make sure you shake the hand of everyone who wasn't prepared and thank them for making the competition a little easier!"

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." ~ John F. Kennedy

I can be reached at (218)788-7330 or (218)788-7249 or email jodi.stauber@mndulu.ang.af.mil

Have an Idea for the Bulldog BX?

The Bulldog BX is looking for ideas for 148th Fighter Wing 60th Anniversary clothing and merchandise. If there is something you would like to suggest, please contact Master Sgt. Mark Wasserbauer at (218)788-7479.

Your dental readiness

By Lt Col. Wayne Gatlin, DDS
148th Medical Group

All military members are aware of the importance of readiness to mission accomplishment. A high state of readiness includes such things as proper training, equipment maintenance and medical and physical fitness. What sometimes is overlooked is dental readiness. Dental emergencies are historically and currently the most common preventable reason for the loss of personnel in the wartime theater. This has a direct negative effect on mission accomplishment. The Department of Defense has taken a hard look at this and decided that all military members require an annual dental exam.

The annual dental exam can be

done by your civilian dentist or an Air National Guard dentist. If your civilian dentist performs the exam, he or she will need to complete a DD Form 2813 which can be obtained at the 148th Medical Department. After examination, a classification will be assigned indicating your dental status. Class 1 indicates you have a normal and healthy dental condition. Class 2 indicates you have a minor dental problem that is not likely to become an emergency within 12 months. Class 3 indicates that you have a major dental problem that will become an emergency within 12 months. Class 4 status is assigned if you have not submitted a DD Form 2813 within 12 months of your last exam, and dental status is then considered unknown.

Dental Class 3 or 4 both indicate

unacceptable levels of dental health and preclude a member from deploying under any circumstances. Once placed in Class 3 or 4, the member will be profiled on the AF Form 422 to P4T status, and therefore not qualified for worldwide deployment. Failure to complete the necessary dental treatment or to have an annual exam may result in ineligibility to perform UTAs, AFTs, or deployments. Ultimately, a member could be administratively discharged for not complying with these regulations.

Fitness for duty, including dental health, is a personal responsibility. The annual dental exam requirement is here to stay. Dental health is vital for force health protection and for mission accomplishment. Get that exam done- it is good for you and for the Guard.

DOD decal no longer required

On Feb. 20, 2008, the 148th Fighter Wing's Installation Security Council had determined that DOD vehicle decals will no longer be required at the 148th.

"Since Sept. 11, 2001, security forces for military installations are required to perform 100% identification check on the driver who enters the installation. The ID checks greatly reduce the need for base vehicle decals since the decals used to be the primary method to enter the base." ~ Air Force Print News Today; March 2007

"Vehicle decals are a force protection vulnerability. They are easily

counterfeited, moved from one car to another or found in used car parking lots." ~ POV Registration; About.com: US Military; June 2007

The Department of the Air Force states "there is no requirement for vehicles entering AF installations to be registered via DD Form 2220 (vehicle decals)."

The front gate at the 148th will continue to do 100% ID checks and will implement additional measures of security such as increased FPCON Levels as needed and/or directed.

Upcoming 148th Fighter Wing events

The Services Club Spaghetti Dinner will be held on Saturday, April 19, 2008. Social hour is at 4:30 p.m., Dinner starts at 5:30 p.m., and the band "The Basement" will perform from 7-11 p.m. Tickets are \$5 at the door. If you have any questions, please contact Staff Sgt. Liz Hansen at (218) 788-7326.

The Guard Family Network's Annual Silent Auction and Basket Raffle will be held during the Spaghetti Feed, Saturday, April 19, 2008 from 5-7 p.m. If you would like to support the event with a donation item, please call Jennifer at (218) 788-7833.

Driftwood Estates at Fish Lake is offering four temporary seasonal sites. Are you interested? Deadline for these four sites is April 20, 2008 by noon. If more than four interested parties a lottery will happen Sunday afternoon of UTA. You must be an eligible paid club member. The fee for a seasonal site is \$400.00 which includes your Driftwood Estates dues. Questions or interested contact Master Sgt. Stephanie LaFleur at (218) 348-2692 as soon as possible. Sites Available May 1 - Sept. 30, 2008.

The Retirees Breakfast will be on June 19, 2008.

148th FW PROMOTIONS

RANK / NAME S Q

As of January 2008

MSgt. Robert R. Santmyer CES
TSgt. Zachary J. Graves CES
MSgt. Jill M. Haapala MSF

As of February 2008

MSgt. Vernis E. Ziegelmann CES
TSgt. Jacob J. Derungs Med Gp
TSgt. Aaron N. Doering LRS
SSgt. Donald L. Acton H Q
SSgt. Steven w. Braman Maint Sq
SSgt. Steven L. Johnson CES
SSgt. Joshua p. Kolkind CES
SSgt. Anthony J. Schnellbach SFS
SMSgt. Daniel E. Lysher CES
SMSgt. Marvin M. Misgen Maint Sq
SMSgt. Paul J. Raj MSF
MSgt. Mark A. Graves CES

As of March 2008

CMSgt. Steven F. Adolfs AMXS
CMSgt. Patricia K. Beaudry MSF
SMSgt. Anthony J. Beatrez Ops Spt Flt
SMSgt. Brian L. Isaacson AMXS
MSgt. Scott T. Castleman CES
TSgt. John R. Laitinen Comm
TSgt. Jessica R. Laurin LRS
TSgt. Reginald E. Saxton Comm
SSgt. Beau M. Dyste AMXS
SSgt. Samantha L. Gerber Maint Sq
SSgt. Gretchen K. Mertzig LRS
SSgt. Angela M. O'Hara MSF
SSgt. Joshua S. Reiman Comm
A1C Adam C. Ault Maint Sq
Amn Martha S. Chartier Ops Spt Flt

As of April 2008

MSgt. Jeffrey A. Groves CES
TSgt. Mark R. Schieb AMXS
TSgt. Elizabeth A. Hansen Maint Sq
TSgt. Nicholas M. Peterson AMXS
SSgt. Joshua A. Bartel AMXS
SSgt. Annie JL Berg Svc
SSgt. Scott G. Herrington Comm
SSgt. Jeremy J. MacNair Comm
SSgt. Amanda J. Nelson Med Gp

Congratulations!!!

BULLDOG BITS...

By Lt. Col. Penny J. Dieryck

Spring is almost here. Hooray! It's the middle of March. Congress has decided to implement day light savings time even earlier this year. It may save on heating bills and lighting your homes, however, it will mean running the air conditioning systems longer in the summer. Once we turned the clocks ahead, it was nice to see the sun while we drove home at night.

Speaking of air conditioning, last time I wrote this column, I was in sunny Hawaii. This time, I am in the heart of the wilderness, ALASKA. Yes, the aircraft and people moved back toward the east and a few thousand miles to the north and landed at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. Talk about a whirl-world opportunity. From the sunny beaches of OAHU to the snow covered mountains of Anchorage. I thought maybe it was a April Fool's joke, but not too many people saw the irony in the swift movement from one location to the other to include the weather forecaster.

We went from hanging with the HIANG to being under the control of TOP ROC, the air space controllers of the Alaskan Command. The opportunity to experience an Alaskan winter made the Minnesota one seem very mild. Not only did our members get to snowmobile, snow shoe, and cross country ski at Hatcher Pass, they got to see "Bullwinkle the Moose" up close and personal. We may have FOD gates at the 148th; however, Elmendorf has moose gates and fences to keep the lumbering creatures off the runway. The pilots got to fly by Mt McKinley and see Denali National Park from a bird's eye view.

Our first week in Alaska was a blur. We stood up on alert with three F-16Cs. Half way through the day, Col Spencer called and said to get the other three aircraft ready to go on a BEAR hunt. In

one day's time, we had all the aircraft ready to go, and the temperature was a balmy -30 degrees. The next day the aircraft were launched on one of their missions, however, the BEAR was hiding behind a glacier and initially could not be seen. Those first two aircraft returned to base and before they shut down, we launched another set of Falcons. In the middle of the night over the Bering Sea, the BEARs were found. Yes, Gen. Broman the Russian war planner is alive and well. To think our unit has been a part of intercepting our friends from the Cold War on two separate occasions, two opposite coasts, and 20 years apart. And we thought the Cold War was over.

Along with the moose and the bird's eye view, our members fed bald eagles, saw Dahl sheep and watched the Raptors fly. Not the bird type of Raptor but the F-22 "RAPTOR." The aircraft loomed large sitting next to the sleek F-16, however, the RAPTOR has a surface that makes it invisible to enemy radar. Col. Johnson said when he got to fly against the F-22 that the RAPTOR locked onto the FALCON from 20 miles away and killed the Falcon without being seen.



15th Wing Commander, Col. JJ Torres thanked all deployed 148th members by presenting a paddle-shaped plaque stating that our members "represented your unit, your Adjutant General, and the state of Minnesota well." Photo by Vanessa Perez, Hickam Air Force Base.

Another wildlife opportunity which took place in Alaska was the sighting of gophers and reindeer. The gophers were the Minnesota Golden Gophers men's hockey that played in Anchorage while our deployment was taking place. The 148th hockey buffs got to see a Seawolf take on a Gopher at center ice, and the Gophers swept the Seawolves back into the Gulf of Alaska. Our unit members also got to see the 1st ever running of the reindeer in downtown Anchorage. Just like Spain's running of the bulls, the citizens of Anchorage paid money to race against the reindeer on a course in their beautiful downtown. See what those long, dark winters do to a person.

Well, I have to end with one final running story. The running of the 148th Mission Support Group is going to change hands by the May 1, 2008 due to the retirement of Col. Gary Moe. After 33 years of service and 12 years as Mission Support Group Commander, Col. Moe will join the ranks of the retired, so now he can attend the monthly retiree's breakfasts. Good Luck Col. Moe with your future golf, fishing, and fun-filled adventures, whatever they might be!

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