



WRIGHT NOTES



News from the USAF Band of Flight

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The Band of Flight's New Harmony ensemble is preparing to deploy to Central and South America with the Navy in support of Southern Command's Continuing Promise 2010.



Commander's Corner

Maj. R. Michael Mench

Year of the Air Force
Family



Thanks for joining us for this quarter's edition of *Wright Notes*, the USAF Band of Flight's newsletter. I'd like to thank everyone from the band who contributed—a lot goes into this endeavor, from photography and planning to writing and editing. The Public Affairs shop provides excellent leadership on this project.

It's been a busy, rewarding few months for the Band of Flight, and we're extremely excited about our spring and summer plans. In this newsletter you'll read about: our preparations to deploy in support of Operation Continuing Promise 2010, which will take ten of us to Central and South America for a humanitarian mission; our small groups hitting the road for community relations concerts; our summer collaboration with the Air National Guard Band of the Great Lakes; and some reflections on our performance with the incredible Mnozil Brass in March. We'll also focus on some recent noteworthy achievements by our band members; the musical excellence of Band of Flight airmen has been on full display!

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As is the case nearly every quarter, we're thrilled to welcome an excellent new musician to our family. Airman 1st Class Jesus Delgado from Defiance, Ohio, who has filled in perfectly with our percussion section from time to time as a member of the Air National Guard Band of the Great Lakes, has made the jump to active duty and will immediately join our deployment band, New Harmony. And as always, we're saying farewell to a terrific band member: Staff Sgt. Shane Spanier, who will be moving his keyboards to Alaska to join the USAF Band of the Pacific. Though we'll miss him here, we're delighted that Shane will continue to use his talents to represent the Air Force throughout the world.

This will be my last newsletter column for some time; I'm off with New Harmony to perform for military and civilian audiences throughout Central and South America. During my absence, the Band of Flight will be ably led by our Deputy Commander and Assistant Conductor, 2nd Lt. Daniel Boothe. I look forward to seeing you at a Band of Flight concert when I return; in the meantime, have a wonderful spring and summer.

Major R. Michael Mench



Band of Flight supports Continuing Promise 2010

2nd Lt. Daniel Boothe

This summer and fall 10 members of the USAF Band of Flight, led by Maj. R. Michael Mench, will be involved in a humanitarian and civic assistance mission throughout Central and South America. Referred to as Continuing Promise 2010, this Southern Command mission will be the fifth one conducted since 2007. The purpose is to train U.S. personnel while providing humanitarian assistance to our Host Nations and to send a strong message of U.S. compassion, support and commitment to the Caribbean and Latin America.

During Continuing Promise 2009, U.S. and international military medical personnel treated 100,049 patients, conducted 1,657 surgeries, filled 135,000 prescriptions, relieved 15,003 dental patients, and treated 13,238 animals in need, all in the span of four months! The U.S. Air Force Bands Program offered the support of 18 Airmen, commanded by Capt. Christina Moore-Urrutia, to provide musical support in over 90 operation-enhancing missions. Some of the performances were conducted alongside hospital beds or in large community parks to provide outreach and build goodwill. Other times the band was used to draw the attention of crowds so our medical personnel could conduct dental procedures. Such outcomes reflect on the unique and powerful ways that music can bind us across cultures and nations while also highlighting the power of Joint Force operations.

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Before we climb aboard in 2010, all members must meet rigorous training requirements in preparation for risks related to the mission. This has required a lot of research by our Unit Deployment Manager, Tech. Sgt. Tom Shriver, who ensures all deployment members are properly trained, prepared with the necessary documents, and are aware of any last minute changes in requirements. Our Unit Fitness Program Manager, Tech. Sgt. Jeremiah True, ensures that members are physically fit for the tough challenges inherent to sea-based operations. Once the deploying ensemble members are cleared, they depart in July for the final round of hands-on training before boarding the USS Iwo Jima for the four-month tour.

The tools of choice for this mission will be our instruments. A wide variety of musical options are planned, including ceremonial, jazz, rock, and most of all, Latin-American music that will interactively engage with audiences through fast-paced, high energy musical arrangements. The charts will be custom arranged and will require a vocalist who can sing in Spanish. Senior Airman Andrew Jones has already been hard at work preparing for these vocal challenges, while Staff Sgt. Scott Wise and Senior Airman Andrew Duncan continue to meticulously arrange some of the music. Coordinating all of these musical details is the Noncommissioned Officer in Charge Master Sgt. Jay Halpin, lead trumpeter in the band.



The U.S. Air Force Bands Program promoted goodwill throughout the Caribbean and Latin America in support of Continuing Promise 2009.

Performances for the band must be planned in advance, which is the job of our Director of Operations, Master Sgt. Tyler Selden. He will ensure that the band can successfully travel from point A to point B and that venues are in safe, suitable locations that appeal to the best possible mission-oriented demographics. Leading this dynamic group of talent is our Commander, Maj. R. Michael Mench. He has been involved in the planning of this operation since spring of 2009, working tirelessly to ensure that all available resources are gained, that programming is creatively designed, and that all members and their families are prepared. Here at home, I will be taking the reins temporarily with the help of Chief Master Sgt. Eric Strohecker. Together we will provide updates about the deployment band while addressing operations on the home front.

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The Secretary and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force named July 09 - Jul 10, Year of the Air Force Family. The Year of the Air Force Family will provide leadership at all levels a vehicle to communicate information and data to Airmen, family members, surrounding communities and Department of Defense audiences on the variety and scope of programs offered by the Air Force. The Year of the Air Force Family will be used to highlight the many successful programs already in place and to inform Airmen and their families of the development of new programs, unveiling them throughout the year. (from af.mil, the official Air Force website)



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While only a handful of names were mentioned here, the fact is none of this would be possible without the incredible hard work of our entire squadron. Countless hours have been devoted from every facet of our operations to help plan for this unique mission. Everything from budgets to posters has been worked and reworked—all in the midst of rehearsals and concerts! The efforts will be ongoing, for as the deployment band takes to the sea, we must continue to take to the land. It is vital that we remain committed to our home mission with the professionalism and high expectations synonymous with our organization. Our Airmen's creed reads, "I will never falter and I will not fail!" I am confident that from the coasts of South America to the Great Lakes of North America, our men and women of the Band of Flight will succeed letting freedom ring through each and every note!

Delivering the Air Force story over land and sea

Staff Sgt. Jennifer Kost

In response to fiscal and manning changes within the Air Force, the Air Force Band of Flight is transforming into a smaller, leaner and more capable force. As New Harmony travels in support of Continuing Promise, the rest of the band will be covering our own territory here in the United States. The Band of Flight's stateside area of responsibility is Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, West Virginia, part of Maryland, and Western Pennsylvania. Promoting the Air Force doctrine of economy of force, the Band of Flight's rock band, woodwind quintet, and brass quintet will be touring much of this area this spring.

The Band of Flight's popular music group, Systems Go, will inspire youths in Ohio and Pennsylvania through a series of school assemblies. Senior Airman John Sayre, Systems Go drummer, says, "The ensemble's objective is to inform audiences of all ages about the Air Force mission. The group uses a lively mix of popular music and dialogue to inform audiences about our Air Force's role in overseas contingency operations, homeland defense and humanitarian missions. This highly entertaining and energetic group is a favorite with area recruiters who utilize the band to get the Air Force message out to high school students. The group deployed in 2009 to the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom."



Tech. Sgt. Denny Pack and Staff Sgt. Terra Mason perform with Systems Go at the Adriel School in West Liberty, Ohio, in February 2010.

Although Systems Go is the Band of Flight's main recruiting element for the Air Force, the Huffman Prairie Winds woodwind quintet will also influence students throughout the

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Midwest. The group's Operations Representative, Staff Sgt. Megan Russell remarks, "In a culture where the Air Force is trying to 'do more with less,' a small chamber group like ours is an essential element to the Air Force Outreach Program. Throughout these tours, we will be doing everything from formal evening concerts to school recitals, a key tool for Air Force recruiting. We're very excited to be given this opportunity. It's a great chance for us to reach out and interact with the public in many ways a large ensemble like the Concert Band can't."



The Huffman Prairie Winds woodwind quintet, led by Tech. Sgt. Michael Eakin, is scheduled to tour Michigan in May.

Wright Brass, the Band of Flight's traditional brass quintet plus percussionist, will also be taking the Air Force Band of Flight mission on the road. "While much of the Air Force Band of Flight is deployed," according to the group's Operations Representative Senior Airman Renée Parcell, "Wright Brass will be touring in Kentucky and Ohio to reach out to our surrounding communities and share some great music, as well as inform the public of the incredible work that our deployed men and women are doing." These spring tours will be centered in educational outreach, including master classes, in which the group will give feedback to young musicians.

The Band of Flight, with its flexible ensemble structure, is mightily serving the United States Air Force. This organization is strengthening relationships with a variety of publics to enhance the reputation of the Air Force as a respected professional group charged with the responsibility for national security, as well as advancing international relationships, using music to bridge language, cultural, societal, and socio-economic differences – across the Western Hemisphere!



Wright Brass performs for high school students at Butler High School in Vandalia, Ohio, in February 2009.

Total Force bands tour Kentucky

Technical Sergeant Becky Taylor

This summer the Air Force Band of Flight (AFBF) will be joining forces with the Air National Guard (ANG) Band of the Great Lakes for a concert tour in early July. According to AFBF Commander Maj. R. Michael Mench, “Just as our brothers and sisters deployed to Southwest Asia rely on our National Guard and Reserve brethren, we rely on the talents of the members of the Band of the Great Lakes.”

As Air Force bands decreased in size and developed temporary vacancies, they embraced the Total Force concept of utilizing members of the Guard bands. With the exception of the 2009 holiday concerts, Guard members were used on every Band of Flight concert band tour and National Museum of the United States Air Force concert series performance in 2009 and so far in 2010. The AFBF has reciprocated and sent members to perform with the Great Lakes band, stationed near Toledo, Ohio. AFBF Deputy Commander 2nd Lt. Daniel Boothe has guest-conducted the Band of the Great Lakes and says, “They are quite versatile and professional in all that they do. It is a win-win for our bands and the audiences!”

Last summer 15 members of the Band of the Great Lakes joined the AFBF for a summer tour of Maryland, Ohio, and Pennsylvania while the remaining members of the ANG Band were preparing to deploy to Southwest Asia to entertain U.S. and allied forces. This summer while members of the AFBF are supporting a humanitarian mission in Central and South America, the remaining AFBF members will join the Band of the Great Lakes for their summer tour. The tour will include a stop in southern Ohio and six locations throughout Kentucky.



Second Lieutenant Daniel Boothe will conduct a Total Force Band during a tour through Kentucky.

Superintendent of the Band of the Great Lakes, Senior Master Sgt. Phil Smith, says, “I am very excited and grateful for the opportunity to have the ANG Band of the Great Lakes and the Band of Flight tour this summer as a Total Force band. The Band of Flight has been offering their services in many of the logistical areas leading up to this tour including operations, publicity, and transportation.” Performing together as a Total Force band is not the only joint effort this summer between the two bands. Senior Master Sgt. Smith adds, “Another area of cooperation that is happening is in the area of training. During our summer tour, members of the Band of Flight are going to work on training the ANG Band in areas where we have new people in leadership positions. Using the full-time expertise is going to be a major help to our band that we couldn’t get anywhere else.”

“The American Dream!” is the theme of this summer’s concert tour. Musical selections will celebrate
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American achievement, to include our Winter Olympics successes, New Orleans' Super Bowl victory, and our nation's independence. We will also pay tribute to our veterans and our military heritage. Wingspan, the popular music ensemble of the Band of the Great Lakes who deployed last summer, will be featured at each concert. There will be something for everyone – marches, patriotic music, vocal selections, and even a novelty piece composed by our own Lieutenant Boothe.

We hope you will come join us for an evening of American music presented by the combined forces of the Band of the Great Lakes and the Band of Flight.

International sensation “Mnozil Brass” shares the stage with concert band—— Technical Sergeant Eric Knorr

Mnozil Brass from Vienna, Austria, performed as guest artists with the concert band at the National Museum of the United States Air Force on Saturday, March 20th. This amazing collaboration was born from a deployment by the Band of Flight's Hot Brass in 2007-08. Members of Hot Brass first discovered Mnozil Brass on YouTube as they were looking for new and interesting ways to entertain the troops. They were inspired by Mnozil's “outside-the-box” ideas.

Hot Brass specifically targeted Mnozil's arrangement of “Bohemian Rhapsody” by British rock group Queen. Hot Brass performed the song at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, for more than 4,000 multi-service troops awaiting a visit by President George W. Bush. The assembled crowd sang along as they stood waiting to hear from the Commander in Chief. “Bohemian Rhapsody” and other tunes inspired by Mnozil received rave reviews from crowds throughout Iraq, Afghanistan, Djibouti, United Arab Emirates, Kyrgystan, Qatar and Kuwait in the band's effort to bring a piece of home to our deployed troops.



Internationally renowned brass septet, Mnozil Brass, displayed distinctive teamwork during a combined concert at the NMUSAF.

Shortly after returning from that deployment,

I wrote an email to Wilfried Brandstotter, Mnozil's tuba player. I relayed the story above, said how much we love their group, and asked them to please include us in their plans if they ever have a U.S. tour. To
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be honest, I felt that Mnozil Brass coming to perform with the Band of Flight was a tremendous long shot. However, Mnozil Brass was so impressed by Hot Brass's overseas tour that they enthusiastically responded "yes" to coming to Dayton and performing at the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

This concert was part of Mnozil's first ever United States tour that took them from New York City to L.A. These seven musicians have gained a worldwide reputation as virtuosic brass players, comedic actors and vocalists that appeal to all ages. They have performed throughout Europe, Taiwan, Japan, Canada and Australia at such illustrious venues as Royal Albert Hall in London, the Salzburg Festival in Austria and now, the Modern Flight Gallery at the National Museum of the United States Air Force!

Formed in 1993, the members of Mnozil Brass were all students at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria. Across the street from the school was the Mnozil Inn, which provided a relaxed environment where many musicians manifested their craft. Mnozil Brass, as they came to be known, initially gained notoriety performing marches, polkas and concert pieces indigenous to Austria (songs they all grew up playing in their respective town bands). They improvised on these common melodies by injecting modern tunes like themes from *James Bond* and *Superman*, to name a few. A writer for the *British Bandsman*, an international brass magazine, wrote, "A trip to a Mnozil Brass concert is almost impossible to describe in words. If you want to know what to expect, expect the unexpected, and if you get the chance to see them, seize it. Guaranteed is an evening of superlative entertainment blended with great humour."



Mnozil Brass incorporated some hip dance moves into their performance on March 20th.

The concert was a truly sensational combination of slapstick comedy, singing, and virtuosic brass playing that brought together many local brass professionals, high school and college students, as well as regular museum patrons. Mnozil fittingly performed "Bohemian Rhapsody" as an encore to close their portion of the concert, followed by the concert band and Mnozil combining forces to perform Staff Sgt. Scott Wise's special arrangement of "America the Beautiful."

Many band members had visceral reactions to Mnozil's performance. Comments such as "that was the best concert I will ever see and be a part of!" and "Amazing!" can still be heard. Charles Pagnard, principal trumpet with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, attended and said, "People are still talking about the concert. It was phenomenal!"

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George R. Finley, Maj. USAF Retired, wrote to us and said, “I want to state my appreciation of the concert you had with the Mnozil Brass. They were one of the most outstanding groups I have ever heard. My wife and I try to attend all of your performances we can. As musicians, we really appreciate the quality of music you provide. I was in what is now the Air Force Reserve Band [sic] in Warner Robins when I originally joined the Air Force. After my commissioning, I served in the personnel, administration, and missile fields. I know the bandsmen work very hard to prepare for such wonderful concerts.”

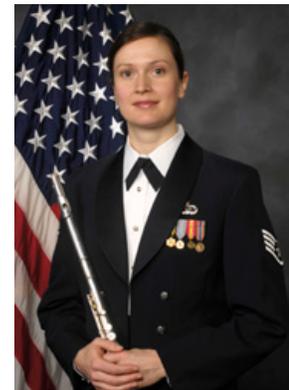
As impressed as we were with Mnozil, they were equally, if not more so, impressed with the talent on display in the Band of Flight. All in all, it was an international musical collaboration that those in attendance will always treasure as one of their most special concert experiences.

Band members strive for musical excellence

Staff Sgt. David Diamond

During the course of their regular duties, Band of Flight members maintain a high level of musical excellence through hours of individual practice, instrument-specific conference attendance, and private study with master music teachers. This hard work and dedication serves mainly to ensure quality Band of Flight performances. At times, however, band members excel on their own, garnering recognition for musical achievements outside the group’s domain. Recently, three individuals have attained such goals: Staff Sgt. Julia Taylor won the flute audition to join the USAF Academy Band, Senior Airman Kaz Kruszewski advanced to the final round of several major orchestral auditions, and Senior Airman Renée Parcell finished the requirements for her Doctoral degree.

In late 2009, Sergeant Taylor learned of the USAF Academy Band’s flute vacancy from the Band of Flight’s enlisted leader, Chief Master Sgt. Eric Strohecker. The Academy Band has historically been an elite Air Force ensemble with a national touring mission—it offered an automatic promotion to Tech. Sgt. to audition winners. After deciding to take the February audition, Sergeant Taylor began intense musical preparation. “I went back to the basics of flute playing to make sure my fundamentals were sound,” recalls Sergeant Taylor. “Flute lessons with Dr. Christopher Chaffee of Wright State University were very helpful, as was all the support of my peers in the Band of Flight.” Several Band of Flight members, including Deputy Commander/Assistant Conductor 2nd Lt. Daniel Boothe, gathered for a mock audition in January to give Sergeant Taylor a trial run at the required music.



Staff Sgt. Julia Taylor

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When she arrived at the audition, Sergeant Taylor recalls feeling “very nervous. The Academy Band ran everything very professionally. It was intimidating because I was competing against two other flutists from Air Force bands, and I know that Air Force musicians are high-caliber.” Although the audition was over by noon, the intense experience seemed like a full day to Sergeant Taylor. When she looks back on her musical experiences, Sergeant Taylor attributes her success to the consistency she’s learned to bring onstage at Air Force performances; besides the Band of Flight, she has also served in the US Air Forces in Europe Band, Sembach Air Base, Germany. “You perform in everything from barns to beautiful concert halls, and you always have to play your best, even under the worst conditions,” says Sergeant Taylor.

Like Sergeant Taylor, Senior Airman Kaz Kruszewski is no stranger to difficult playing conditions. He performed in poverty-stricken villages in Djibouti, Africa, as part of the Band of Flight’s deployment group in 2007. “Africa was interesting,” remembers Airman Kruszewski. “We accompanied Marines who had built a school in Djibouti to try to prevent extremism from creeping in.” Recently, Airman Kruszewski played in a plusher environment: Boston’s historic Symphony Hall, where he held his own against the country’s best trombonists in an audition for the Boston Symphony. After being one of only 15 players selected to audition out of more than 100 who submitted recordings, Airman Kruszewski squared off against 40 musicians for the audition’s first round. “I didn’t grasp the significance of playing in such a famous hall with the world’s greatest players behind the curtain because I didn’t want to,” he recalls.



Senior Airman Kaz
Kruszewski

After being told he was among seven semifinalists, Airman Kruszewski returned the following week to play for another committee—this time, one that included world famous Boston Symphony Music Director James Levine. Although he didn’t win the audition, advancing so far in such a prestigious audition is a tremendous honor. And it’s only one of several successes he’s enjoyed recently. In January, he was one of two trombonists out of 50 auditionees invited for a trial weekend with the New York Ballet Orchestra. “I’ve studied with great teachers at the University of Indiana and elsewhere,” explains Airman Kruszewski. “I like to take these auditions because it helps me pursue excellence, but I already have a great job here in the Air Force.”

Many ambitious members of the Air Force’s enlisted corps pursue excellence by studying for a college degree. Even in the Air Force bands, however, where many members have a Master’s degree, few advance as far educationally as Senior Airman Renée Parcell. After passing her final recital and oral exam in March at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Airman Parcell has completed all requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Horn Performance.

Graduating this May will be the culmination of years of study for Airman Parcell. She began in 2003, and says, “I had to do 45 hours of coursework, a 50-page analysis paper, and four 60-minute recitals to advance, including one lecture recital where professors had 15 minutes to question me on my recital music. After

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that, there were two more recitals and the two-hour comprehensive orals, which covered horn literature, history, instrument making, and music theory.”

Airman Parcell credits her excellent college professors and experiences for her success. During her college years, she had the opportunity to perform in several music festivals throughout the U.S. and Europe. But, she notes, “having this job also helped. In the Band of Flight, when you’re performing on a regular basis in public, you have to maintain a consistent high standard.” She also believes the Air Force has helped her improve her “time management. Since our job in the band involves a lot more than just playing the instrument, I have to budget my time so I can maintain a high level of playing but also accomplish my administrative work. As an Operations Representative, I’ve been making cold calls to find performance sites, developing a tour schedule, booking hotels, and working with tour sponsors to coordinate logistics.” Like her colleagues in the Band of Flight, Airman Parcell demonstrates what amazing things can be accomplished with dedication and determination.



Senior Airman Renée
Parcell

New!

Please come find your USAF Band of Flight on Facebook.

The mission of the United States Air Force Bands and Music Program is to support the Air Force in war and peace by fostering our national heritage and by providing professional musical products and services for official military, recruiting, and community relations events.

Welcome to Our Newest Member



Airman 1st Class Jesus Delgado
Percussion

Hometown: Defiance, OH
Education: attended University of Toledo
Air National Guard Service: 5 years

Best Wishes to Departing Member



Staff Sgt. Shane Spanier
Piano

Band of Flight Service: 2 years
New Assignment: USAF Band of the Pacific - Alaska



- May 1 Systems Go - Clark County Fairgrounds, Springfield, OH 8:00PM
- May 2 Wright Brass - High St. United Methodist Church, Springfield, OH 3:00PM
- May 10 Huffman Prairie Winds - Fairhaven Church, Centerville, OH 11:00AM
- May 11 Huffman Prairie Winds - Maple Knoll Village - Cincinnati, OH 2:00PM
- May 14 New Harmony - Courthouse Square, Dayton, OH 5:00PM
- May 15 Night Flight - National Museum of the United States Air Force 6:00PM
- May 16 Wright Brass - College of Wooster, Wooster, OH 3:00PM
- May 17 Huffman Prairie Winds - Anchor Bay HS, Fair Haven, MI 7:00PM
- May 18 Wright Brass - Christ Church Episcopal, Hudson, OH 7:00PM
- May 19 Huffman Prairie Winds - Whitehall HS, Whitehall, MI 7:00PM
- May 19 Wright Brass - Canfield High School, Canfield, OH 7:00PM
- May 20 Wright Brass - Canfield High School, Canfield, OH 7:00PM
- May 22 New Harmony - Library Park, Miamisburg, OH 12:00PM
- June 5 Systems Go - Genesis Charter School, Williamsburg, OH 4:00PM
- June 12 New Harmony - Otterbein Cridersville, Cridersville, OH 1200PM
- June 22 New Harmony - Veterans Park Amphitheater, Springfield, OH 8:00PM
- June 25 Tattoo, National Museum of the United States Air Force 8:00PM
- June 30 Concert Band - Frazee Pavilion, Kettering, OH 7:00PM
- July 2 Concert Band - Towne Square, Blue Ash, OH 8:00PM
- July 3 Systems Go - Vandalia Sports Complex, Vandalia, OH 8:00PM
- July 3 Concert Band - Audubon Mill Park, Henderson, KY 7:30PM
- July 4 Systems Go - Butler County Courthouse, Hamilton, OH 7:30PM
- July 4 Concert Band - Kentucky Dam Village, Gilbertsville, KY 6:30PM
- July 5 Systems Go - Centerville HS, Centerville, OH 8:00PM
- July 5 Concert Band - Downtown, Mayslick, KY 1:00PM
- July 6 Concert Band - Eastern Kentucky University Ravine, Richmond, KY 7:00PM
- July 7 Concert Band - Capitol Building, Frankfort, KY 5:00PM
- July 9 Systems Go - Downtown, Covington, OH 12:30PM
- July 10 Systems Go - Main Street, Mechanicsburg, OH 3:00PM
- July 11 Systems Go - Greenwood Amphitheater, Greenwood, IN 7:00PM

Concerts are tentative and subject to change; go to our website, www.bandofflight.af.mil, for current information.