



WRIGHT NOTES



News from the USAF Band of Flight

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Staff Sgt. Scott Wise and Staff Sgt. Doug Kost perform recently in Haiti as part of Continuing Promise 2010.



Deputy Commander's Corner
2nd Lt. Daniel Boothe

As Deputy Commander and Associate Conductor, I'd like to welcome you to another fine edition of our *Wright Notes* newsletter! As our quarterly update, it offers a unique glimpse into our mission with insightful details of every major event we are supporting in the coming months.

In this issue, Tech. Sgt. David Diamond offers a bright "spotlight" on one of the Air Force's truly exceptional performers, our own Tech. Sgt. Grant Koeller! You will almost feel the waves as Staff Sgt. Felita Rowe chronicles the planning for Continuing Promise 2010, our joint deployment mission with the U.S. Navy in South America. And in case you missed it, Staff Sgt. Jennifer Kost gives the behind-the-scene details on this year's special tribute to our Korean War heroes in *Freedom's Call Tattoo 2010*. Some "history in the making" was discovered when Airman 1st Class Andrew Duncan researched our August tour to Chautauqua, N.Y., and Senior Airman Reneé Parcell lifts the curtain on our very special collaboration with Maestro Neal

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**Year of the Air Force
Family**



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Gittleman and the Dayton Philharmonic this September. These events are exciting to read about but truly come to life on stage! We hope you will be able to join us along the way!

Also, this summer we will bid farewell to two amazing Airmen. Staff Sgt. Julia Taylor joined the Band of Flight in 2000, spent four years in Germany with the USAFE Band, and recently returned in 2008. This spring she won a coveted position with one of our premier-level ensembles, the USAF Academy Band at Peterson AFB, Colo. Senior Master Sgt. Jonathan Levy, having recently served as First Sergeant for the Band of Flight, will continue his career at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas with the Band of the West. His musicianship and breadth of experience will be truly missed by all of us. We thank both Staff Sgt. Taylor and Senior Master Sgt. Levy for their outstanding service and contributions.



As you read this issue, our 10-member deployment team is settling in on the USS Iwo Jima. We surely miss them and will be doing all we can to help look after their families. Meanwhile, the show must go on at home! Thank you for your continued support and have a safe and enjoyable summer!

2nd Lt. Daniel W. Boothe

“On the Ocean”

Staff Sgt. Felita Rowe

In 2008, an R&B artist named K’Jon released a song called “On the Ocean” that reached no. 12 on the Billboard charts. I absolutely fell in love with this song, since I love cruising and the water...but I can’t swim. In the summer of 2009, our Commander, Maj. R. Michael Mench announced that a small group would be chosen to make up a new deployment team to embark upon a naval vessel for the humanitarian mission “Continuing Promise 2010.” I remember how quiet it was that day. After almost 16 years in the Air Force, and as one who has deployed before, I know that feeling of leaving your family behind for months never gets any easier.

Initially, I was tasked as one of two vocalists for this team known as New Harmony. However, the original concept of 18 members was condensed down to eight musicians, with only one vocalist (Senior Airman Andrew Jones) deploying. Maj. Mench would serve as Commander and Audio Engineer, and Master Sgt. Tyler Selden would serve as Director of Operations for a total of 10. Budget cuts were in full effect. But if there is one thing Air Force members are trained to do, it’s to look adversity in the eye and quickly adjust to plan B, C or D if necessary and press on!

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In speaking with the members of New Harmony, I asked Maj. Mench how this mission arrived at our doorstep. Typically, we deploy to the sandy parts of Iraq and Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Qatar. Why are we going on a ship? Our commander provided his insight as to how it all came to be and this is what he had to say: “The overseas military is divided into geographic regions: Central Command (Afghanistan and Iraq), European Command, Pacific Command and Southern Command. ‘Continuing Promise’ is a mission of the Navy’s Contingent to Southern Command. Air Force South helps support Navy South, which in turn is supporting Southern Command.”

Maj. Mench continued, “Up until 2008, the Navy band has always supported its own mission. But in 2009, they were not able to support their mission of ‘Continuing Promise.’ Soon thereafter, word was sent to the other branches of service looking for volunteers to step up to the plate and help the humanitarian mission.

“For a number of years the Pentagon and the Air Force band career field have been creating a deployment product that would reach into Central and South American regions.



Band of Flight’s newest ensemble, New Harmony, is supporting the Navy throughout Central and South America.

“So when the word went out,” proclaimed Maj. Mench, “the Air Force said yes! In 2009, the bands from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, and from Scott Air Force Base, Ill., combined their groups and set off to support the AF Band’s first four-month mission to SOUTHCOM [Southern Command].” The mission was such a success that the leadership requested Air Force musical support again. Thus, the USAF Band of Flight is deployed during the summer and fall of 2010.

So for those of you who have been wondering how we got the “gig,” now you know. Earlier in the story, I mentioned Maj. Mench carried an additional duty title as Audio Engineer. I asked him if he had any previous training or education in audio engineering and his reply was an adamant, “Zip! But I’ve learned from some amazing engineers throughout my 12 years in the Air Force.” Keep that sound balanced, sir!

Maj. Mench is one of 10 members I interviewed. Please continue to read upcoming articles on Facebook as we hear from the New Harmony members themselves. I’d like to leave you with the words of famous rock guitarist, Carlos Santana, who is best known for his salsa and fusion jazz, “...we humans are capable of transmuting emotion into music.” We love our gig! Godspeed, gentlemen.

Deployment Update: Just before this newsletter was sent out, New Harmony arrived in Haiti along with the Navy and Marines aboard the USS Iwo Jima. The band has played for thousands of Haitians and has been very enthusiastically received. The Band of Flight asks all our friends to keep the members of New Harmony, along with the entire joint service team of Continuing Promise 2010, in your thoughts and prayers.

Band of Flight to close 137th Chautauqua Season

Airman 1st Class Andrew Duncan

The summer of 2010 will provide a number of exciting performances by your United States Air Force Band of Flight, but of special note will be the concert band's upcoming August trip to upstate New York. In addition to performances in Valley City, Ohio, and Bradford, Penn., the two-time recipient of the *Colonel George S. Howard Citation of Musical Excellence for Military Concert Bands* has been selected to perform the closing concert of the prestigious Chautauqua Institution's 137th season, continuing a long-standing tradition of Air Force bands as the festival's final act. The concert band will perform at the historic 5,000-seat Chautauqua Institution Amphitheater, which is the home of the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra and the ceremonial home of the festival itself.

Founded in 1874 as a training camp for Sunday school teachers, the Chautauqua Institution has blossomed into one of America's most celebrated summer centers. Attracted to its dramatic lakeside setting and the beauty of its National Historic Landmark architecture, more than 142,000 people attend the Institution's summer events, which represent a kaleidoscope of interests such as art, music, dance, theater, poetry, education, religion, and recreation. It is a forum removed from the day-to-day world where some of the leading thinkers of our time can gather and engage with the attendants in cogent discourse on the concerns and issues of today.



The concert band will present a show entitled "The American Dream!" at the prestigious Chautauqua Institution in August.

Music is an integral part of the Chautauqua Institution's mission; a symphony orchestra season became part of the regular program in 1920, and the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra has been in residence at the Institution since the 1929 season. Additionally, the Chautauqua Music Festival summer program has become one of the premier international summer music training schools. In 2010, the Institution's staff will produce 205 musical events, culminating in the concert band's performance.

What can concert goers expect from the Band of Flight for this unique performance? "The American Dream!' will celebrate various American achievements," remarks 2nd Lt. Daniel Boothe, Deputy Commander and Associate Conductor of the Band of Flight. "The program will feature tributes to the Olympics, the Super Bowl, and the World Series, as well as tributes to our veterans and personal stories of America." The performance will feature guest artist appearances by prominent New York playwright Susan Laubach and nine-year-old trumpet prodigy Geoffrey Gallante. Also featured will be Lieutenant Boothe's original composition "Fireworks!" which was commissioned and premiered by the Chautauqua Community Band in 2009. The Wright Brass Quintet and Systems Go will be featured performers, as well as special volunteers from the audience!

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The Band of Flight musicians are not the only ones thrilled to be a part of such a unique performance. “Chautauqua wouldn’t be the same without the Air Force bands,” remarks Mr. Marty Merkley, Vice President and Director of Programming for the Chautauqua Institution. “Chautauqua is a very patriotic place – John Philip Sousa’s “Stars and Stripes” is played at least twice a day on the Institution grounds, and the military bands are an integral part of the American culture that Chautauqua presents.” Military bands perform nearly every Sunday throughout the summer season when available, and an Air Force band always closes the Chautauqua season on its final day.

There is another strong connection between the Band of Flight and the Chautauqua Institution. Lieutenant Boothe attended the Chautauqua Institution in 2007 as a recipient of the esteemed David Effron Conducting Fellowship. There, he had the opportunity to conduct the Institution’s Opera, Ballet, and Symphony Orchestras. “When I arrived, I realized that I was among world class musicians in a breathtaking landscape and surrounded by one of the most supportive communities one could ever find within the arts,” remembers Lieutenant Boothe. Furthermore, the Band of Flight performance will represent a history-making moment for the Chautauqua Institution – it will be the first time that a Fellowship recipient has returned at the helm of a professional performing ensemble.

President Theodore Roosevelt once described the Chautauqua Institution as “the most American thing in America,” so it’s only fitting that your United States Air Force Band of Flight will close out the season in patriotic splendor. Be sure to join us for our concert, “The American Dream!” on Sunday, August 29, at 2:30 p.m. in the Chautauqua Amphitheater for the last official public concert of the Chautauqua Institution 2010 season!

Band of Flight, Dayton Philharmonic to collaborate on Patriot Day

Staff Sgt. Renée Parcell

What happens when two world-class musical ensembles get together to celebrate America? You get an exciting night of excellent music and rousing patriotism. This coming September 11, the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra will once again join forces with the United States Air Force Band of Flight for their annual combined concert at 7:30 p.m. in the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

According to 2nd Lt. Daniel Boothe, the two ensembles will perform a “Patriot Day”



The Band of Flight continues its longstanding partnership with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra with a “Patriot Day” concert on September 11.

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concert that will “pay tribute to a wide range of public service contributions made on behalf of making our country better, safer, and more prosperous.” In addition, the concert will honor the victims and heroes of that important day, and will give the audience an opportunity to reflect on the significance of September 11 in their own lives.

Lieutenant Boothe remarked, “The concert will journey from a singular, introspective view on the significance of September 11 to the broader, optimistic, and patriotic vision that has not only guided us through adversity, but will lead us towards triumph and prosperity.” The program will include a mix of fanfares and large symphonic rhapsodies that will feature the groups separately, as well as jointly.

As many people in the greater Dayton area know, this is not the first time that the Band of Flight and the Philharmonic have performed together. In previous years, the two ensembles have collaborated on concerts celebrating various holidays, the Centennial of Flight, as well as other performances.

The partnership between these two organizations also exists on an individual level. Recently, Tech. Sgt. Eric Knorr performed as a civilian with the Philharmonic for their Dayton Heritage Festival Concert in Carillon Historical Park. Sergeant Knorr, a Band of Flight trumpeter, relates, “Playing with the Dayton Philharmonic has significantly enhanced my professional life with the Band of Flight. Not only has it impacted my trumpet playing in a positive way, it has also helped to build a synergistic relationship between the musicians of the two ensembles.”

The free “Patriot Day” concert will continue both groups’ tradition of community involvement. By providing an opportunity for the public to participate in an evening of patriotic music, the two organizations continue to serve the military as well as civilians.

As Tech. Sgt. David Diamond, another Band of Flight trumpeter, mentioned, “The members of the Band of Flight have a unique job. We are lucky that we are given the opportunity to collaborate with the civilians of the Dayton Philharmonic, because ultimately, music is about uniting people through its universal language.”

Band of Flight honors Korean War heroes with music at Tattoo

Staff Sgt. Jennifer Kost

The United States Air Force Band of Flight joined many other organizations June 25 as it paid tribute to military heroes, tactics, and technology at Air Force Materiel Command *Freedom’s Call Tattoo 2010*. The theme of this year’s Tattoo was ‘Reflections on 60 Years’ and commemorated and honored veterans from the Korean War. In support of this theme, the Band of Flight presented a one-hour musical reflection of the Korean War with aircraft flyovers, narration and original music by composer Rick DeJonge.



Vocalists Staff Sgt. Felita Rowe (left) and Staff Sgt. Terra Mason sing during last year’s Air Force Materiel Command Freedom’s Call Tattoo.

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According to Maj. R. Michael Mench, commander of the Band of Flight, “Our hour long presentation reflects nearly an entire year of collaboration between sound contractors, base agencies, guest musicians as well as other key players.” He continues, “The Band of Flight is proud to be involved in this exciting event that showcases Wright-Patt’s excellence and strengthens our bond with the local community.”

The band’s presentation opened with a precision military music ceremony. This reverent military tradition consisted of the marching-on of troops by a solo drummer, bringing the colors forward, and the playing of the national anthem. The opening ceremony culminated in a presentation of the Distinguished Flying Cross by AFMC Commander Gen. Donald J. Hoffman to World War II veteran Ralph Hoehn.



After the opening ceremony, the band performed music by noted film and video game music composer Mr. DeJonge. Maj. R. Michael Mench, commander of the Band of Flight, commissioned Mr. DeJonge’s work for the second

year in a row to provide a musical medium for the band to tell the Korean War story. This portion of the show included narration that painted the scenes of early morning June 25, 1950, up to the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953.

Mr. DeJonge said his musical contribution to this year’s Tattoo is a “hybrid score with the sounds of the war represented by traditional instrumentation, as well as the percussive electronics of a prelay.” Prelay is film music terminology meaning pre-recorded, percussive sound effects.

Mr. DeJonge said his composition portrayed the “wall-to-wall action of the conflict of the actual Korean War instead of incorporating music that was popular in that era of history.” He said he enjoyed writing for this year’s Tattoo because he feels that it is more effective to write original music for the celebration, as opposed to using a “hodge-podge of works and songs.”

The Air Force Band of Flight closed its portion of the Tattoo by returning to the traditional military ceremony. After five local Korean War veterans were recognized, General Hoffman gave the Oath of Enlistment to several incoming Airmen. The band then presented “The Armed Forces Salute” in recognition of all the veterans and their families throughout United States history.

The Band of Flight concluded its story of the Korean War by performing the song, “The Last Full Measure of Devotion,” featuring vocalist Staff Sgt. Terra Mason. Maj. Mench said this work “served as a reminder of the ‘Forgotten War’ and of the hope that our nations will continue to work hand-in-hand in order to answer Freedom’s Call.”

New!

Please come find your USAF Band of Flight on Facebook.

Band saxophonist shares musical gifts

Tech. Sgt. David Diamond

“We’re constantly seeking musical perfection...a goal that we’ll never reach, and probably shouldn’t.” These words describe a philosophy and way of life for Tech. Sgt. Grant Koeller, the Band of Flight’s alto saxophone soloist. Over the course of his 20-year career, Sergeant Koeller has performed clarinet and on all the saxophones for the bands at Yokota Air Base, Japan, Chanute Air Force Base, Ill., and Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., as well as the Band of Flight. His musical life, however, began long before he joined the Air Force and will continue after retirement. Musical improvement and performance are a lifelong journey for him.

“I’m a third-generation professional military musician,” explains Sergeant Koeller. “My great uncle Al Koeller was a bass player in Europe’s Aleutian Islands for the Army Air Corps in World War II, and my father, Bill Koeller, was an organist stationed at Eielson Air Force Base, Fairbanks, Alaska. My mother, Mary Ellen, has been a piano teacher for over 50 years and still has 90 students a week! I grew up listening to jazz records at home and performed with my father in local clubs as soon as I was old enough.”

Sergeant Koeller’s career first took off during his senior year in high school, when he won a chair in the McDonald’s All-American High School Band and performed with jazz great Lionel Hampton at Carnegie Hall. Sergeant Koeller spins an amusing anecdote about what happened when that group opened for legendary drummer Buddy Rich on Jerry Lewis’ telethon: “I stood up to play my big solo, but had to concentrate extra hard to overcome some distracting noises. It turns out that Jerry Lewis chose that moment to grab a trumpet and begin simulating elephant calls!”

After musical training at Augustana College and the University of North Texas, Sergeant Koeller played with Street Corner Talkin’, a Wisconsin-based rock band. Eventually, his father convinced him to audition for the Air Force by touting the stability that comes with military service. Since then, Sergeant Koeller’s scintillating solos have been warmly received by military and civilian audiences all over the world, impressing millions of audience members. Along the way, he’s helped the Air Force with his versatility; he once spent an entire year playing bass guitar for the USAF Band of Liberty, Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass.



Tech. Sgt. Grant
Koeller

Wherever he’s been stationed, Sergeant Koeller has quickly made inroads in the local music scene. He’s shared the stage with jazz and blues greats like Louis Bellson, Buddy Guy, Buddy DeFranco, and Walter Davis Jr., and even played on a recording session which was later used for an MTV music video. “In order to maintain a high level of playing, I like to perform every day,” he explains. Since joining the Band of Flight, he’s come very close to achieving that goal, playing professionally throughout the Midwest in civilian clothes as well as an Air Force uniform.

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Those outside the Wright-Patterson community know him as “King” Koeller, a nickname which has stayed with him from his rock band days in Wisconsin. A list of performers and groups Sergeant Koeller has appeared with locally includes the Dayton Jazz Orchestra, the Kim Kelly Orchestra, the Johnny Mack Big Band, the Tom Daugherty Orchestra, the Jimmy Baker Blues Band, This Side Up, Jon Slate, Broad Street Breakdown, Michael Locke and Repeat Offenders, the Dayton Blues Society, Blues at RiverScape, and fellow Band of Flight member Master Sgt. Shawn Stanley. Two recent highlights include performing with the Band of Flight saxophone section, the Dayton Philharmonic, and renowned jazz clarinetist Ken Peplowski in October 2009, and playing with Tom Daugherty at the 2009 Glenn Miller Festival in Clarinda, Iowa.

Sergeant Koeller takes particular pride in his regular “jam session” appearances at the BRD House in Kettering and Jazz Central in Dayton. “All ages of players come and take part, from senior citizens to middle school kids,” he relates. “One of our jobs, as experienced musicians, is to pass knowledge down to the next generation.”

Best Wishes to Departing Members



Senior Master Sergeant Jon Levy
Bass

Band of Flight Service: 4 years
New Assignment: USAF Band of the West
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas



Staff Sergeant Julia Taylor
Flute

Band of Flight Service: 6 years
New Assignment: USAF Academy Band
Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado



Come Enjoy a Concert with your Band of Flight!

August 7	Systems Go - Coshocton Airport Amphitheater, Coshocton, OH 7:00 p.m.
August 7	Wright Brass - Dorothy Love Retirement Community, Sidney, OH 7:00 p.m.
August 8	Wright Brass - Brown Park, Bellefontaine, OH 7:00 p.m.
August 12	Wright Brass - Guy C. Myers Memorial Band Shell, Ashland, OH 8:00 p.m.
August 13	Systems Go - Anna Village Community Park, Anna, OH 7:00 p.m.
August 13	Wright Brass - Koenig Park, Reading, OH 7:00 p.m.
August 14	Systems Go - Sharon Woods Park, Sharonville, OH 7:00 p.m.
August 15	Systems Go - Stubbs Park Amphitheater, Centerville, OH 7:00 p.m.
August 27	Concert Band - Mill Stream Park, Valley City, OH 7:00 p.m.
August 28	Concert Band - Bradford Area High School, Bradford, PA 7:30 p.m.
August 29	Concert Band - Chautauqua Amphitheater, Chautauqua, NY 2:30 p.m.
September 11	Concert Band with Dayton Philharmonic - NMUSAF, OH 7:00 p.m.
September 12	Systems Go - Popcorn Festival Main Stage, Beavercreek, OH 1:30 p.m.
October 17	Wright Brass - Aladdin Shrine Center, Columbus, OH 2:30 p.m.
October 19	Wright Brass - Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI TBD
October 21	Wright Brass - W.K. Kellogg Auditorium, Battle Creek, MI TBD
October 22	Wright Brass - Van Singel Fine Arts Center, Byron Center, MI 7:30 p.m.
October 23	Wright Brass - Montague High School, Montague, MI 7:00 p.m.

All concerts are tentative and subject to change; please check our website, www.bandofflight.af.mil for up-to-date information.