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Air Force Outstanding Unit

2009 Distinguished Flying Unit



COYOTE LOG

Flashback: 190th crew featured in Reader's Digest

Editor's note: The following story is reprinted with permission from Reader's Digest. The article was originally published in the September 1992 Reader's Digest feature, "Drama in Real Life." March 14, 2011 marks the 20th anniversary of the 190th's return from Desert Storm.

The KC-135 air-refueling tanker leveled off at 25,000 feet. Tonight's mission: a rendezvous with an AWACS surveillance plane. "They'll be happy to see us," Aircraft Commander Maj. Kevin Sweeney told the three man crew.

The men had been flying refueling missions for Operation Desert Storm almost every night for three weeks. The threat of MiGs and anti-aircraft missiles had faded, but each refueling still required intense concentration. So, with an hour and a half of flying time still ahead, Sweeney tried to relax.

Suddenly, the plane began to wallow from side to side. Sweeney and co-pilot Capt. Jay Selanders exchanged puzzled looks. Then the plane went into a steep counterclockwise roll. Crew members hung on as the aircraft's wings swung rapidly from horizontal to vertical.

Banked at 110 degrees, the plan hesitated, then began snapping back in the opposite direction. Sweeney now assumed they'd gone into a Dutch roll. He had experienced it only on a flight simulator. With a fighter plane, the exaggerated seesaw motion is a crowd thriller at air shows. But on a four engine tanker loaded with 175,000 pounds of fuel, it signaled disaster.

This thing isn't built to take such stress! Sweeney thought. The aircraft creaked and groaned. It was flipping back and forth faster than a KC-135E should be able to go without breaking apart. We've only got a second to get this under control. What do I do? Sweeney wondered.

The crew was part of the Kansas Air National Guard's 190th Air Refueling Group, based at Forbes Field outside Topeka. Like nearly a quarter of a million other ordinary Americans, they'd left jobs and families to go to war.

Maj. Kevin Sweeney, 42, an IBM marketing manager, had en-

listed in the Air Force after college and flown tankers in Vietnam. Discharged from active duty, he became a weekend warrior with the 190th. Capt. Jay Selanders, 33, a Kansas City attorney, had taken small-plane flying lessons while in college and joined the 190th to learn big jets. Capt. Greg Mermis, 32, served as navigator. A lawyer and C.P.A., he had enrolled in the Guard to indulge his hankering for guiding large planes. The only full-time Guardsman on board was Senior Master Sgt. Steve Stucky, 43, who operated the tanker's fuel boom.

On base the four men were inseparable, sharing interests in business, sports and flying. In the air Sweeney demanded discipline and focus. "We're totally dependent on one another," he would remind them. "So stay alert and we'll make it home safely."

The crew knew it could be risky flying a tanker, but they never thought they'd take the plane into combat. Then came Desert Storm. Virtually every aircraft used in the war needed a refill on its mission. So the tankers went into action.

On January 2, 1991, two weeks after the 190th was activated, Sweeney, his crew and their families had gathered at Forbes Field. Brenda Sweeney watched as the other wives and children tearfully said good-bye to their men. Sweeney read the concern on his wife's face. "Don't worry," he reassured her, "we'll be back. They're the best crew in the air."

"Just make sure you bring them home at all costs," she told her husband, hugging him. "Four wives and eight children will be waiting."

Now, on the night of February 6, Sweeney's plane began another sickening roll. The crew felt helpless. Powerful centrifugal forces pushed Sweeney and Selanders deep into their seats, pulled Mermis away from his navigator's console and pushed Stucky against a side of the plane. A blizzard of papers, clothing and equipment filled the cabin.

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— Commander's perspective on the use of resources

By Maj. Jamie Wehrli

Commander, Comptroller Flight



What is integrity? Doing the right thing when no one is looking. Anymore, EVERYONE IS LOOKING, especially when it deals with money!

The unit commander is ultimately responsible for ensuring all members are trained to the degree and in the manner required to accomplish the assigned mission. It is the job of all commanders to ensure that the unit attains the prescribed readiness status and maintains individual proficiency to successfully execute missions in peacetime and in war. The added challenge is that we no longer operate in an environment where budgets and workdays are bountiful. Instead, it's an environment that is forcing us to do more with less, to look at all facets of our Wing for financial inefficiencies, and to understand that outside agencies are required to ensure the best use of taxpayer money.

With limited resources, growing budget cuts and demanding fiscal challenges in the DoD, commanders are in a position to manage limited resources to meet growing mission requirements. As stated by General McKinley, "America's military represents a balance between what this country needs to guarantee its security and what this country can afford."

Resource management, internal controls and documentation are hot topics in a highly scrutinized fiscal environment. Commanders are tasked with ensuring appropriate internal controls are in place to monitor authorization, certification and documentation in the execution of all resources and, in particular, the workday program.

As Air National Guard members, we use workdays to represent military pay for the duty we perform. Currently the workday program includes annual training (AT), special training (ST), active duty for operational sup-

port (ADOS), military personnel appropriation (MPA) and formal school training (FST) days that are a minimum of 8 hours of active service. We also receive inactive duty for training resources to include UTAs, proficiency training (PT), training period preparation assemblies (TPPA) and additional flying training periods (AFTP) that are a minimum of 4 hours for active service. These resources combined are managed to meet bona fide training requirements for our unit.

We are allocated days based on assigned unit strength. This allocation includes only AT, PT, and TPPA days. All other workdays are received for specific purposes. You are entitled to fifteen active duty (AD) days by law. AD days can come from all resources mentioned in the paragraph above. The 190th receives twelve AT days per member each year, not fifteen, and eleven are pushed out to the Groups for use. Commanders work diligently to ensure 15 AD days are received by members requiring the resources to meet training and mission needs with only 11 AT days per member. They must consider the impact of each workday used. Is this the best use of this resource for my organization?

This is a daunting program to manage. There are inspections, training requirements, and TDYs. Some members anxiously perform AT and some are able to meet training requirements at UTAs alone or through their technician duties. This is why a mid-year review of all workdays is conducted in March. Any additional require-

ments identified through this review are requested through our MAJCOM who potentially distributes additional resources, as it fits into their budget.

The workday program is managed on an annual basis and the goal is 100% execution. An end of year committee is established in June to make certain we meet mission needs and fully execute our workdays. In order to do this, AT days are centralized in FM during this time. Proper documentation must be accomplished for any member electing not to perform 15 AD days.

The next time you perform an annual training day, think, "Is this the best use of tax payer dollars? How am I benefiting my unit, my community, my state and my country?" It is everyone's responsibility to do the right thing!

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On the cover:

Col. Mick Baier is greeted by family and friends as he emerges from a 190th KC-135 upon returning from Desert Storm on March 14, 1991.

(Photo submitted)

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The Coyote Den Needs You!

Are you looking for a new organization to get involved with? How about The Coyote Den! The Coyote Den is the organization on base who coordinates the purchase and sale of items with the official Coyote logo. If you are interested in joining please contact Col Tony DeJesus, TSgt Gordon Cole or MSgt Tina Perkins.

Crew featured in Reader's Digest cont.

Sweeney was aware that another KC-135E was two to three miles ahead of them, a distance generally considered safe. What he didn't know was that turbulence rolling off the other plane's wing tips had created a powerful horizontal tornado. Sweeney's plane had flown right into its vortex.

Using all their strength, Sweeney and Selanders wrestled with the controls, trying to break out of the 90- to 110-degree banks. But no amount of pushing, tugging and twisting could stop the runaway seesaw effect. The plane flipped from side to side like a crazed bird. How long before she disintegrates? Selanders wondered.

Then Sweeney remembered how he'd broken the Dutch roll on the flight simulator. He'd used the air brakes, the metal plates on wing surfaces that pop up to disturb airflow and slow the aircraft—employed most often during landings. Ordinarily, air brakes are not used at 550 m.p.h. Maybe they'll work now, he thought.

He pulled the air-brake lever. Immediately the violent swaying slowed. Fighting the controls together, Sweeney and Selanders succeeded in dampening the rolls until the plane returned to level flight.

"They're Gone!" The instrument panel showed more trouble, however. The altimeter revealed they'd already dropped from 25,000 feet to 21,000 feet and were still heading down. For some reason they didn't have enough power to maintain altitude and speed. The only option was to lighten the load. "I'm dumping fuel!" Sweeney shouted, activating the pumps.

More alarming, two red lights on the console indicated fires in the left-wing engines. When Sweeney told Stucky to check them from an overlooking window, the boom operator shouted back, "They're not on fire, Major! They're gone!"

The left engines had been torn off during the rolls, leaving only the sheets of metal, and hydraulic and electrical lines flapping under the wing. "Let's see if we can fly this thing on two engines," Sweeney said.

Selanders radioed the AWACS plane monitoring them. "We have a problem,"

he reported with some understatement. "We've lost our two left engines. Can you give us a clear path home?"

The Air Force's support system delayed other aircraft and alerted search-and-rescue units.

Then the crew noticed another problem: hydraulic fluid was streaming out of the broken lines dangling from the engine scars. Some of the plane's hydraulically operated systems were going dead.

Without full hydraulic power, Sweeney had only two of the four pumps he could normally employ to dump fuel. Thus, much of the jet fuel was still on board, an impossibly heavy load for just two engines. The plane continued losing altitude at about 800 feet a minute.

They might have to bail out. But the parachutes, along with everything else that hadn't been tied down, had been flung somewhere out of reach. Mermis realized they would never have a chance to get out if the aircraft started to breakup. What a terrible thing to do to my family, he thought.

Gradually, though, fuel was being forced out of the refueling boom. Sweeney's eyes flitted from the altimeter to fuel gauges. "We've dumped 100,000 pounds and are down to 10,000 feet," he reported to Selanders.

A minute later they felt the plane flatten out and pick up speed. At last, the right-side engines were holding their own. "Okay, gentleman," Sweeney said over the intercom, "let's head home."

Lurching Back. Sweeney's boast to his wife about "the best crew" hadn't been just idle reassurance. Sweeney had 3322 hours of tanker flight time; Stucky also had more than 3000 hours, while Mermis and Selanders had each logged over a thousand. They'd flown together almost every



Members of the 1709th review the damage to the KC-135 that the 190th crew of Sweeney, Selanders, Mermis and Stucky successfully returned home following the loss of both engines on the left side of the jet.

week during the past 2 ½ years. Now their intensive training was being put to a life-or-death test.

For Mermis and Stucky, the first priority was to bring order out of the chaos. Most of the loose equipment had settled in a heap at the rear of the cabin. Digging through it, they located the parachutes, helmets and emergency manuals.

Suddenly the tail began whipping from side to side. Both men lost their footing and had to hold on with all their strength. Selanders's calm voice over the intercom reassured them. With no left-side engines, the pilots had to constantly make steering corrections to counter the right engines' thrust. This was causing the plane to lurch through the sky.

We'll have to bail out sooner or later, Stucky thought. He and Mermis had donned their parachutes and now lugged survival gear up front for Sweeney and Selanders. Sweeney, however, had only one objective in mind: Get this craft and crew home in one piece. He'd made a promise to do that, and he meant to keep it.

At the moment, they were somewhere over the Saudi Arabian desert. They sometimes returned from refueling missions over the Red Sea, skirting Jiddah with a long, low approach to the airport at the far

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Crew featured in Reader's Digest cont.

edge of the city. But tonight, Sweeney had doubts about that route. Flying over the sea would pose an extra hazard if they had to bail out. With two engines gone, they had to come in over the city.

"Give me a heading that'll take us in via the back door," he told Mermis. When the navigator read off the new numbers, Sweeney made a wide turn to the left and headed southwest.

Now, with an hour's flight to Jiddah,



Sweeney reviewed evacuation and landing procedures. Without hydraulic power for the landing gear, they'd have to get it down by hand. Each wheel has a crank for just such an emergency. Timing would be critical. If they lowered the wheels too soon, they might create too much drag and bring the plane down short of the runway. It was the boom operator's job to crank the wheels down one by one.

Once on the ground, their primary objective would be to get away from the plane as fast as possible, in case of fire. They'd use the hatch behind the pilot's seat to leave the plane, sliding down a rope that Stucky would uncoil. "We'll all meet 200 feet to the left side," Sweeney said.

A glow on the horizon signaled the approach of Jiddah. Mermis calculated 38 miles to touchdown. At this point Sweeney gave the order to start lowering the wheels. Stucky moved quickly and efficiently – first the nose, then the right side and finally the left. They were now committed to a landing, one way or another.

At the airport, dozens of vehicles with flashing lights stood by. In the control tower, all eyes focused on the loudspeaker as Sweeney's voice crackled over the emer-

gency frequency. In an even voice he requested use of their longest runway.

"Runway 34-Left will give you a six-mile final straight in," the air controller replied.

The tanker was at 750 feet and maintaining 210 knots. Too fast for landing, Sweeney thought, but we have no choice. With only two engines, they might not have enough power to pull up and try a second landing if something went wrong

with the first attempt. Once the plane touched down, they'd have to depend heavily on wheel brakes and the inboard engine's thrust reverser. "Let's hope they still work," Sweeney told Selanders.

The wheels hit the runway within feet of its beginning. Sweeney pulled back slightly on the lever controlling the No. 2 engine thrust reverser. It seemed to be working. He gave it a bit more. Suddenly, the left wing started to come up.

"Not now!" he shouted, slamming the lever into the "off" position. They would have to rely on wheel brakes alone.

With all their strength, Sweeney and Selanders slammed on the brakes. The tires squealed and screamed and blew out one after another. Somehow the plane stayed on the center line and finally came to a halt.

Immediately, Mermis tore open the hatch and Stucky dropped the rope. The crew slid out, and in seconds they were at the meeting place, congratulating one another.

The moment would be etched in Kevin Sweeney's memory. Best crew in the air, he thought. Cool and professional.

An Air Force investigation team later found that four of the six bolts that held the tanker's right side engines were bent or cracked. It was sheer skill and remarkably calm performance that kept the plane flying that night.

Last May, Sweeney, Selanders, Mermis and Stucky were presented with the U.S. Air Force Distinguished Flying Cross "for extraordinary achievement."

"How did you manage to do it?" a reporter asked Sweeney.

"We stayed calm, practiced basic air-manship and did what we had to," he replied. But to Brenda earlier, he had given a simpler explanation: "I promised we'd come back at all costs, and we did."

PACK 2011

The 2011 PACK reunion will be held on April 29th from 6:00 - 10:30 p.m. at the Kansas Historical Museum at 6245 SW 6th Street. The annual banquet will take place on April 30th from 6:00 - 10:30 p.m. at the Topeka Holidome Inn.

This organization is, as its name implies (Past & Active Coyotes of Kansas), a group of men and women associated with the 190th. We invite anyone who is connected with the 190th to come and join in the fun.

Membership cost for PACK is \$3.00 per year. The membership dues are included in the cost for those who attend the weekend activities.

The weekend's activities include a

Friday night mixer and a Saturday night banquet.

For information about PACK or to be placed on the mailing list, please contact Sharon Schroeder at 785-862-0289.



	Single	Couple
<i>Entire weekend</i>	\$35.00	\$60.00
<i>Friday night only</i>	\$20.00	\$25.00
<i>Saturday night only</i>	\$30.00	\$50.00

190TH ARW WING & FAMILY READINESS

First Lady pledges support for military families

First Lady Michelle Obama said she became an admirer of military families during her husband's campaign for the presidency.

Part of the challenge of getting the message out about military families "is that they never ask for help," she continued. "You don't do that when you're in the military. You get it done. That's how you're trained. That's what you're taught."

President Barack Obama recently announced an initiative that commits agencies across the government to improve conditions for service members, their spouses and children.

The document outlining the federal effort, "Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment," pledges government agencies to enhance the well-being and psychological health of the military family; ensure excellence in military children's education and their development; develop career and educational opportunities for military spouses; and increase child care availability and quality for the armed

forces.

Examples of these efforts include a Health and Human Services partnership with the Defense Department to confront suicide trends, treat military family psychological needs, and expand access to, and improve the quality of, child care.

Housing and Urban Development, VA, Labor and HHS have joined in the goal of unqualified elimination of homelessness among veterans by 2015.

The departments of Defense, Labor and Commerce, and the Small Business Administration have pledged a collaborative commitment to engage American corporations in expanding career opportunities for military spouses.

The First Lady said there are plenty of opportunities for a similar commitment, on a smaller scale, from communities and citizens.

She and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, will launch their own initiative in March aimed at energizing that grass-roots commitment across the nation, Obama said.

"We're going to ask the country to get ourselves together and be a part of reconnecting these families to be a part of the broader community," she said.

Obama said the "help and support" she's asking the country to give can be as simple as a counselor offering free sessions, an accountant helping a military family prepare their taxes, or small businesses offering a night out or a manicure to a military spouse -- most of whom are women.

"A lot of these women can use a break," she said. "There are things we can do as a nation, big and small."



Upcoming AFRC & FRG events

MARCH

Maintenance meet-and-greet breakfast with Key Volunteer

APRIL

9th - Easter egg hunt

MAY

Spouse day out, (date TBD)

JUNE

2nd - Dinner out (details TBD)

4th - Bowling night

JULY

13th - Dinner out (details TBD)

SEPTEMBER

16th - Golf Tourney (details TBD)



future fundraising activities. They are a lot of fun and help a great organization.

Thank you to all who joined us at the 190th Family Readiness Group Texas Hold 'em Poker Tournament at the Celtic Fox last month. It was an extremely successful event that raised more than \$500 for the Family Readiness Group.

A big kudos go out to all the volunteers who helped organize and run this great event. We hope more volunteers and unit members will join us in

—Portrait of an Airman

Airman 1st Class Tyler Hultgren



Organization: 190th MXS/Inspection Section

Job Title: Aircraft mechanic

Main Responsibilities: Inspect aircraft

Education: I graduated from Osage City High School and am currently attending Johnson County Community College majoring in dental hygiene.

Military Experience: Recently enlisted with the 190th ARW and completed basic training and tech school in 2010.

Hobbies/Activities: I like to play disk golf and do woodworking.

Goals/Ambitions: Become a dentist, get my commission and make my dad salute me.

Most Memorable Moments: I enjoy training on maintenance of the KC-135 aircraft.

—Dining out 2011 to celebrate Desert Storm 20-year anniversary

Mark your calendars for the 2011 Dining Out: Saturday 5 March 2011! The theme for this year's event will be the celebration of the 20-year anniversary of Operation Desert Storm.

The Dining Out committee is happy to announce that this year's guest speaker will be Lt. Gen. (Ret) Patrick Caruana. The General served as the director of strategic forces in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, during Operation Desert Storm. In addition, former 190th Wing Commander Col. (Ret) Mick Baier will share his perspectives on Desert Storm. Baier commanded 6,000 troops and 110 KC-135s during Operation Desert Storm. In addition to our speakers we will also be showing a special video commemorating the role the 190th had in the conflict.

More information will be forth coming on the details of this year's event.

Rules of the Mess Reminders:

1. Post themselves in front of the Grog Bowl facing the head table and then salute the head table.
2. Do an about face, grab a cup, and fill to the level of prescribed punishment with Grog.
3. Do another about face, raise cup and toast "TO THE MESS," then drink the entire contents.
4. Then turn the cup upside-down above your head in full view of the Mess.
5. Do an about face and return the cup to the table.
6. Do another about face, salute the head table and return in silence to your seat.



Uniform / Dress

Mess Dress
or
Semi-Formal
(Service coat, white shirt, blue tie/tab, no nametag, no hat)

For Your Information

Promotions

AIRMAN 1st CLASS

Jeni D. Douglas, MDG



SENIOR AIRMAN

Joshua D. Kohn, CES
Zachary A. Kinsey, 127 WF



STAFF SERGEANT

Waylon E. Jones, 117 ARS
Jarrod A. Brunkow, CES
Rudy J. Belew, 127 WF



TECHNICAL SERGEANT

Paul S. Harper, CES



Appointments/Enlistments

AB Enrico P. Gosselaar, AMXS
Enlistment/Assignment Date: 29 Dec 2010

AB Micah R. Harman, FSS
Enlistment/Assignment Date: 13 Jan 2011

A1C Marcus R. Womer, SFS
Enlistment/Assignment Date: 8 Jan 2011

A1C Maria F. Settanni, LRS
Enlistment/Assignment Date: 13 Jan 2011

A1C Courtney N. McClammy, FSS
Enlistment/Assignment Date: 4 Jan 2011

SSG Julie A. Hoefler, LRS
Enlistment/Assignment Date: 28 Dec 2010

Dining Facility Schedule

The following list is the Dining Facility meal schedule for units assigned to the 190th ARW & JFHQ:

1100 - Wing HQ, SFS, MSG
1120 - MXG(A), JFHQ
1140 - LRS, FSS
1200 - MXG(B), MDG
1240 - OG, WF



Coyote Grill March 2011 Menu

Saturday, 5 March

Sweedish Meatballs, Chicken Parmasain, Egg Noodles, Mashed Potatoes, Assorted Vegetables, Rolls, Chicken Rice Soup, Beef Gravy, Hamburgers, Soyburgers, Hot Dogs, Salad Bar, Cake, Cookies

Sunday, 6 March

Hamburgers, Soyburgers, Hot Dogs, Chicken Sandwich, Grilled Cheese, French Fries, Onion Rings, Chicken Rice, Soup, Salad Bar, Cake, Cookies, Fresh Fruit

Operation:
KID'S CAMP
July 11-15, 2011
Open to all Kansas National Guard youth ages 8-12yrs old

For an application, or to learn about volunteer opportunities, please contact Darcy L. Seitz at darcy.l.seitz.ctr@us.army.mil



190th Outstanding Performers

CDCs

MSgt Brian Wockenfuss 2R171 91%



Wear it or Walk!

Please wear your seat belts at all times! It is not only an Air Force and DOD directive – it's Kansas law.



Coyote Heritage



Four of the ten tankers bringing the 190th home from Desert Storm are shown as they cross above the Capital of Kansas on March 14, 1991. Col. Mick Baier had promised that they would be there at 3:00 p.m., but no one thought that he would be able to pull it off because of the great distance and the time difference. But there they were, all ten, just a few minutes apart, right on time. The crowd waiting at Forbes got word that they had just passed over the Capital building, and the excitement began to grow, and grow. When the first person to sight the jets sang out "There they are!" a tremendous cheer went thru the

crowd and Forbes Field was about to experience a day like no other.

The tankers passed over the crowd and circled around to the east, flew back north one at a time, and made their final approach and landed. They then disappeared over the slight rise to the south of the ramp, and when they reappeared, it was one after another after another until they were marshaled into their parking spots. It was all the Security Police could do to keep the crowd back until the engines were safely shut down. And then the rush was on. Families had been given the tail number of the jet that their loved ones were on, and before the hatch was opened, the crowd engulfed the area under the hatch waiting for it to open. It was a magical moment.



Please record your story and send it to the historian's office at: 190th Historian, 5920 SE Coyote Dr., Topeka, KS 66619-5370.



The Coyote Log
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5920 SE Coyote Drive
Forbes Field (ANG)
Topeka, KS 66619-5370
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reflect on your log.**

To The Coyote Family of:

