

GUARDSMEN: remembering local National Guardsmen killed in SD

From page 1A

National Guard C-130 crew who were killed or injured in a crash in the Southern Black Hills last July 1.

"I want to tell you that your family members will always be remembered. I really want you to remember this place and that we, the people of South Dakota, love you. This site was built to honor them and to comfort

you," Michels said.

Michels and other dignitaries spoke at an Interpretive Site Dedication Ceremony held a year to the date after the crash last year that killed four of the six crew members and critically injured two others.

Guard members from both states, along with local dignitaries, attended the 11 a.m. ceremony which was held at the site. The list of

those invited was limited to 100 because of the small size of the area.

Two impressive interpretive signs were unveiled at the ceremony, one telling the story of the C-130 firefighting crew and the other telling about the White Draw Fire itself.

From the site, it is possible to see the area where the plane went down about two miles to the west.

The 6:30 p.m. accident that day reportedly was the result of a severe downdraft in the area that caused the low-flying aircraft to crash.

Killed were pilot Lt. Col. Paul K. Mikeal, Mooresville, N.C.; pilot Maj. Joseph M. McCormick, Belmont, N.C.; navigator Maj. Ryan S. David, Boone, N.C.; and flight engineer Senior MSgt. Robert S. Cannon, Charlotte, N.C. whose wife's family lives in Kings Mountain.

MSgt. Josh Marlowe, Boiling Springs, N.C., was flown by helicopter to nearby Rapid City Regional Hospital with unspecified injuries, as was Chief MSgt. Andy Huneycutt, who was present at the ceremony. He was then flown to the Jaycee Burn Center Memorial Hospital at Chapel Hill, N.C.

The two survivors were in the rear of the four-engine aircraft operating a U.S. Forest Service-owned Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) when the plane went down fighting the White Draw Fire about five miles north of Edgemont. The fire ended up burning 9,000 acres of dry pine timber.

All of the airmen were members of the N.C. Air National Guard 145th Airlift Wing, based in Charlotte.

Huneycutt, a 33-year Guard member, was accompanied by his brother, Col. Newt Huneycutt and Col. Huneycutt's two sons, Jeremy and Jesse, all members of the 145th Airlift Wing, the latter two being third gener-



Sgt. Robert Cannon

ation Guard members.

Andy Huneycutt said the crew had been all over the world together. It was important for him to be at the emotional ceremony because "this is where my friends died."

Marlo Mikeal, widow of Lt. Col. Paul Mikeal, was there with her mother and two children, Liam and Amanda.

"It means the world to me that they are being remembered," Marlo said. "Paul was an incredible man all the way around. I was very

lucky to have him in my life," she said.

Melanie Cannon, widow of Senior MSgt. Robert Cannon, a 29 year Guard veteran, said, "It's

overwhelming. It means so much to us that people would contribute to this (interpretive site)." She was there with her children Alex and Madeline, along with her in-laws, James and Sandy Russ of Kings Mountain, NC.

Jenny Elerbe, wife of Maj. Ryan David, said her husband always looked forward to flying missions, especially those in this country that benefited Americans.

Maj. McCormick was represented by his mother, Sharon Hardee, and step-father Audie Hardee, Conway, S.C.

All of the crew members had been on several lengthy deployments to either Iraq or Afghanistan, or both.

Maj. Gen. Gregory Lusk, N.C. Guard Adjutant General, said the crew "volunteered to serve their fellow Americans." He continued, "None took off that day thinking they were heroes."

Lusk thanked the state of South Dakota and its National Guard for what they did to build the interpretive site in remembrance of the North Carolina Guard crew members.

"The citizens of North Carolina and South Dakota will forever share a sacred bond," Lusk said.

The interpretive site is a pullout area along the west side of Highway 18 in southwestern South Dakota, about six miles north of Edgemont.

A White Draw Memorial Fund was established at a nearby Custer bank to fund construction material expenses and for future site maintenance. The site property and signs were procured by the U.S. Forest Service. Work on the site itself was done by S.D. Army National Guard engineer units in the Black Hills.

Nearly \$3,900 in donations thus far range from \$10 to \$2,300, the latter check written by a retired Custer Air Force officer, Hank Whitney, who flew on C-130s near the Russian border.

"Life-long bond" formed in SD

Chief MSgt. Andy Huneycutt of the N.C. Air National Guard's 145th Airlift Wing in Charlotte doesn't remember much after the C-130 Hercules he was flying in crashed last July 1.

Huneycutt, of Lancaster, S.C., and MSgt. Josh Marlowe, of Boiling Springs N.C., were in the rear of the aircraft operating a U.S. Forest Service-owned Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS), while fighting a 9,000-acre wildfire in the Southern Black Hills of South Dakota. (See related story).

The two were the only surviving members of the six-man crew from the N.C. Air National Guard 145th Airlift Wing, Charlotte.

The huge four-engine aircraft reportedly was caught in a severe downdraft on its second run of dropping fire retardant chemical about 6:30 p.m. that day.

"I remember being in the aircraft and then out of the aircraft," Huneycutt said. He doesn't remember what happened in between or how he got out of the aircraft.

Luckily, he did still have his cell phone with him and immediately dialed 911.

Becky Sotherland, Fall River County 911 dispatcher in Hot Springs, about 20 miles away from the crash site, was on the receiving end of that call.

"He said he was in a plane that crashed. At first I thought it was a small plane," Sotherland said.

"Then he said it was a C-130. I knew they were flying in the area fighting the fire," she said.

"When a 911 call comes in, we can pinpoint where it is coming from. I lost him on the phone a couple of times, but finally did locate him," she said.

A helicopter was dispatched to the area and managed to find a spot to sit down near the crash site and pick up both Huneycutt and Marlowe.

Both were flown to Rapid City Regional Hospital. Huneycutt was flown on to a burn hospital in Chapel Hill, N.C., where he spent the next several weeks in treatment.

Huneycutt met Sotherland for the first time at an Interpretive Site Dedication Ceremony held last Monday, July 1, about two miles to the east of the crash site along Highway 18, six miles north of Edgemont.

"We absolutely have a life-long bond," said Huneycutt.

"She's awesome. She saved our lives."

JULY 4: to feature re-enactors, fireworks

From page 1A

Revolutionary War and the importance of the Declaration of Independence.

"The encampment will be like stepping back in time, a time when the decisive battle was fought just seven miles south of town, turning the tide of the Revolutionary War," stated Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey.

Sponsors for the event, in addition to the City of Kings Mountain, are historic Kings Mountain Tourism & Development Authority, 238 Cherokee Grill, Bojangles, Gaston Realtors Inc., Kings Mountain Herald and AM 1450 WGNC.

Revolutionary Fourth July 4th Schedule of Events

5 p.m.-9 p.m. - Music at 6 p.m. by Chris Marks Band, food, vendors, musket and cannon demonstrations, colonial craft making at the Kings Mountain Walking Track on Cleveland Avenue. Opening of the historic Colonial encampment next to the T-Ball field at the Children's Playground next to the city walking track on Cleveland Avenue.

9 p.m. - Parade of Patriots and patriotic opening at the city's walking track
Welcome- Mayor Rick Murphrey
Presentation of Colors - KMPD Explorer Post
Invocation - Erica Carpenter, Teen Miss Cleveland County
"National Anthem" - Sophia Kellstrom, Junior Teen Miss North Carolina
Pledge of Allegiance - Kings Mountain Boy Scouts
4th of July Message - Mayor Rick Murphrey
Patriotic Medley - Loch Norman Pipe Band
"God Bless America" - Molora
Retrieval of Colors - KMPD Explorer Post
Closing Comments - Mayor Rick Murphy
Cannon Battle for the City of Kings Mountain

9:30 p.m. Fireworks Show conducted by Scott Neisler and pyrotechnic crew

In the event of rain the fireworks show will be held Saturday at 9:30pm

THE SAVVY SENIOR

By JIM MILLER
Editor



Summer Heat Poses Special Risks to Seniors

Dear Savvy Senior,

Can you write a column alerting seniors to the dangers of summertime heat? I manage a number of urgent care clinics, and last summer we had more than 200 cases of heat-related illnesses, most of who were seniors. I would like to reduce that this year.

Concerned Citizen

Dear Concerned,

I certainly can. Most people don't realize that extreme summer heat causes thousands of heat-related illnesses in the U.S. each year, and kills more people than hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes combined, and seniors are among the most vulnerable.

The reasons behind this are because of the body's ability to regulate temperature through blood circulation and sweat glands tends to decline with age. Bodies of older adults also contain far less water than a younger person, and older brains don't recognize thirst as easily, making them more likely to get dehydrated.

In addition, many seniors have certain health problems that can in-

crease their risk of hyperthermia (when the body overheats). These include:

- Underlying diseases like congestive heart failure, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD.
- Trouble walking or moving around.
- Being overweight.
- Having dementia or other problems with thinking skills.

Medications that some seniors take, like diuretics and other high blood pressure drugs, can also cause dehydration or affect the ability of their heart, blood vessels or sweat glands to respond to the heat.

Signs of Danger

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. The signs to watch for include a body temperature above 103 degrees Fahrenheit, a rapid pulse rate, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, and hot, dry skin with the absence of sweating. If you, or someone you know is experiencing these symptoms, call 911 immediately because heat stroke is a medical emergency.

Heat exhaustion is milder and can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures. The warning signs are heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, fainting, dizziness, headache, and nausea or vomiting.

What to Do

If you think you may be suffering from a heat-related condition, cool yourself down by going indoors into air conditioning, remove or loosen any tight-fitting or heavy clothing, drink plenty of water (but avoid alcohol and caffeine), take a cool bath or shower, or apply cold water, ice packs or cold compresses to your skin.

And when you do go out in the heat, be sure to dress in lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, avoid extended periods of sun exposure and drink plenty of water even if you don't feel thirsty.

Seniors who live without air conditioning should go to public places that have it like shopping malls, senior centers or public libraries. Your local health department can also refer

you to an air-conditioned shelter in your area.

For those who can't afford to run their air conditioning at home, there's the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), along with many utility companies and charitable organizations that may be able to help you with your utility costs. To find out about the programs available to you, along with their eligibility requirements and how to apply, call the National Energy Assistance Referral project at 866-674-6327 or visit energynear.org.

For more extreme heat-related safety tips, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website at cdc.gov/extremeheat.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

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