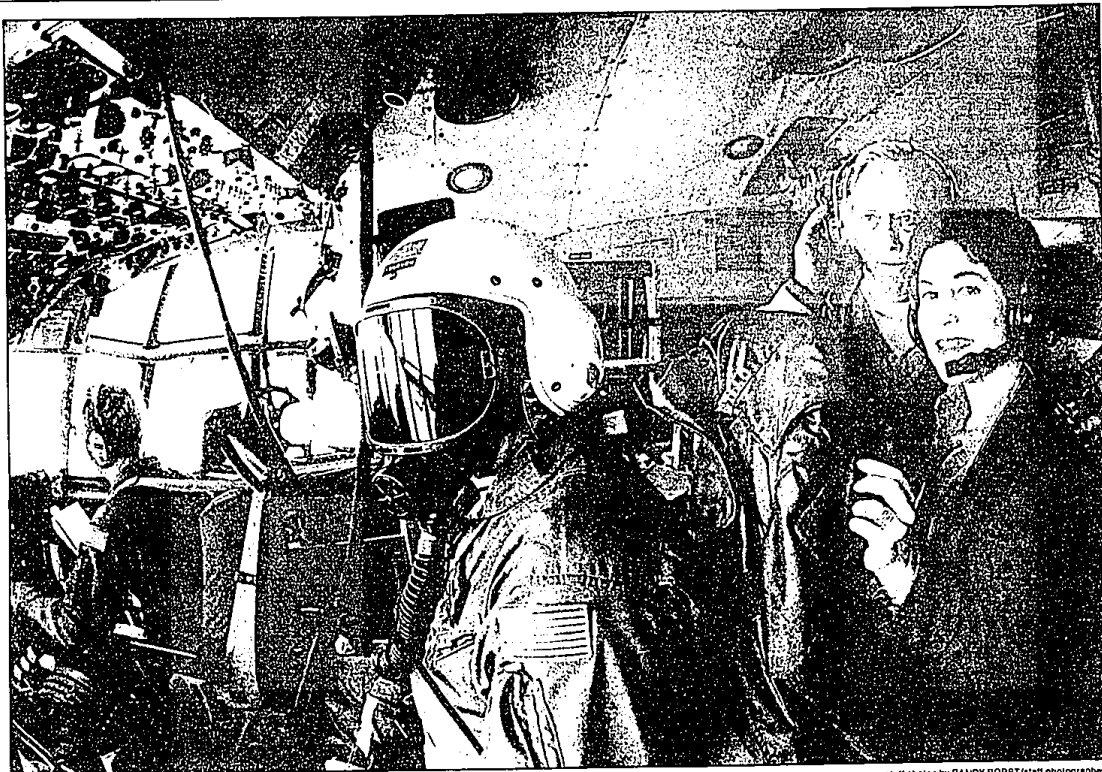




staff photos by RANDY BOST/Staff photographer

Farmington Hills Mayor Ben Marks and chief code enforcement officer Lee Blizman watch over the shoulder of flight engineer Tech. Sgt. Robert Norrie as they fly over the Detroit River in a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft. Norrie is dressed in chemical warfare training gear. Visible at left is Capt. Robert Bertz, co-pilot on the flight. Lt. Col. Richard Bussboom piloted the craft.

Bosses get to see what reservists do

By Chris Rizk
staff writer

IT LOOKED like war games: men in green fatigues and military uniforms, cargo planes designed to airlift supplies, munitions dotting the runway and jeeps scattered all over the field.

For more than 100 men and women, it was more than a game. It was their chance to show their employers what they do during their weekend stints in the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

Gathered at Selfridge Air National Guard Base near Mount Clemens, reservists in the 927th Tactical Airlift Group performed their duties at the base during the daylong event Nov. 7. Their job that day was to familiarize their bosses with the Air Force Reserve.

They were quick to point out two facts during the lunch and the tour that followed: don't call them "extra" Air Force personnel and don't underestimate their abilities as reservists.

"The trouble with being reservists," Col. Warren Synder, commander of the 927th Tactical Airlift Group, told the audience, "is that you get saddled with the image that you don't need a reserve force. Just because we're reservists doesn't mean we're not needed."

'Bob (Boschma) and I have worked together for years. I've always wondered what he did here and I've heard Bob talk about it a lot.'
— Lee Blizman
Farmington Hills

Farmington Hills mayor Ben Marks and the city's chief code enforcement officer, Lee Blizman, walk on the flight line as they prepare to board the four-engine C-130 Hercules.



Staff Sgt. Dave Elonen explains how each of the aircraft belonging to the 927th Tactical Airlift Group is kept in flying condition from the maintenance control room.

time in. As reserves, we've been doing this for years."

Part of the battle reservists have to face is getting time off from their jobs to participate in the one-weekend-per-month and two-week summer camp requirement.

For Boschma, 46, the task comes easy.

An employee in the code enforcement

ment department for the city of Farmington Hills during the week and a loadmaster in charge of loading cargo two weekends per month and one night a week, Boschma receives more than enough support from his employer.

IN FACT, when the time came to invite his boss to the appreciation luncheon and tour, Boschma chose both his immediate supervisor and the mayor.

Lee Blizman, Farmington Hills' chief code enforcement officer, was invited because she "always expressed an interest in what I do here," Boschma said.

Ben Marks, the mayor of Farmington Hills, was invited because "I'm an old World War II man," he said.

The three Farmington Hills residents, along with other employers and reservists, walked and flew over territory familiar to the 927th Tactical Airlift Group.

"Bob and I have worked together for years," Blizman said. "I've always wondered what he did here, and I've heard Bob talk about it a lot. This was my chance to see what he does."

'The trouble with being reservists is that you get saddled with the image that you don't need a reserve force.'
— Col. Warren Synder
group commander

Farmington Hills mayor Ben Marks and the city's chief code enforcement officer, Lee Blizman, walk on the flight line as they prepare to board the four-engine C-130 Hercules.



A tour of the maintenance hanger was on the itinerary as technical Sgt. Bob Boschma (left) explains how the C-130 Hercules is serviced. They are standing next to one of the four propellers from the aircraft.