

Man helps 'Provide Promise' in relief effort

When a group of C-130 cargo planes lumbered off the ground at a U.S. air base in central Germany nearly a year and a half ago, few of the pilots and crews that day realized what an impact they were to make.

Not since the Berlin Airlift 44 years ago has the United States undertaken such a large-scale effort of humanitarian aid through daily airdrops of food, blankets and medical supplies to the war-ravaged areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael J. Matthews, son of Patrick and Carol Matthews, Farmington Hills, is an airborne radio operator who is involved with the effort dubbed "Provide Promise."

Created to help the United Nations High Commission for Refugees provide emergency assistance in isolated enclaves and inaccessible areas, where humanitarian operations have been hindered by warring factions.

Matthews, 25, is a graduate of Catholic Central High School in Bedford Township. Before that he attended Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School in Farmington.

Providing assistance for more than half a million people takes an immense amount of effort on the part of thousands of people, from United Nations observers to pilots and crew to the support of men and women on the flight line.

"I provide continuous communications support between the command and control headquarters and the air crews that are flying the humanitarian missions," said Matthews, who has flown 81 missions. "I think this mission is very important because we are providing these relief supplies to the suffering people of the former Yugoslavia, particularly the innocent victims of this tragic war."

The U.N. operation consists of both air-to-land and airdrop missions. The air-to-land operation, which began on July 3, 1992, is made up of U.S. C-130 cargo planes flying up to three missions a day into the former Yugoslavian republics delivering food, supplies and equipment.

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*Michael J. Matthews
Air Force staff sergeant*

For those areas the U.N. commission identifies in need of food and supplies, but that can't be created by air-to-land routes or truck convoys, supplies are dropped by C-130s from the United States and C-160 Transall cargo planes from Germany and France.

Airdrops began in February and, while the drops are made by U.S. German and French planes, the food and supplies are donated by a smorgasbord of U.N. countries including Japan, Austria, New Zealand, Turkey, Norway, Great Britain, Pakistan and Canada, as well as Germany, France and the United States.

When not working with the mission of Provide Promise, Matthews, a member of the 435th Communications Squadron, Rhein-Main, says he basically does the same job but is not on flying status.

Rhein-Main, known as the "Gateway to Europe," for military service members entering and leaving the region, is near the German financial center of Frankfurt.

"Since arriving here, I have concentrated hard and learned the language. Germany is wonderful and I love the people, food and the beer that this country has to offer. I also love how convenient traveling is here."

Matthews' parents visited him and his wife, Popi, in November 1992. "We went to six countries and it was great," said Carol Matthews.

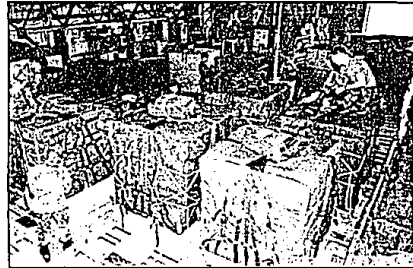


Radio operator: Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Matthews, whose parents Patrick and Carol Matthews live in Farmington Hills, operates equipment in Germany.

Staff Sgt. Matthews recently signed up for another six-year tour of duty, according to his mother.

"He likes it and he's progressing. He's going to college, and he really enjoys getting around and seeing the world," she said.

The Matthews family has lived in Farmington Hills for the past 19 years. Michael is one of four children. A brother, Patrick is a doctor of chiropractic in Maryville, Tenn. His sister, Mary Ann Cooper, lives in West Bloomfield. A younger brother, Shawn, is a senior at Michigan State University.



Loading up: Soldiers and airmen at Rhein-Main Air Base in Germany load food, blankets and medical supplies onto C-130 cargo aircraft.

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

AUTO THEFT
A red 1992 GMC Jimmy wagon worth \$20,000 was stolen from the Holiday Inn on 10 Mile in Farmington Hills Dec. 20-21.

VANDALISM
A BB pellet was fired through a window at the Ponderosa restaurant on 10 Mile in Farmington Hills Dec. 20-21, causing \$200 in damage.

A beer bottle was thrown through the windows of a red 1989 Ford Escort GT parked at the Rain's Horn restaurant on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills Dec. 22.

Dec. 19, causing \$500 in damage to the windshield and \$200 in damage to the passenger window.

The passenger window of a yellow 1991 Cadillac DeVille parked at the Green Hill Apartments on Green Hill in Farmington Hills was shot out with a BB gun Dec. 21-22, causing \$200 in damage.

The windshield of a red 1987 Toyota Camry parked in a carport at the Green Hill Apartments was shot out with a BB gun Dec. 21-22, causing \$250 in damage. A BB gun was also used to shoot out the driver's side window of a red 1993 Chevy pickup parked at the Green Hill Apartments, causing \$300 in damage Dec. 22.

BREAK-INS
A \$1,000 camcorder and a \$50

telephone were stolen from the Windemere Apartments on Independence in Farmington Hills. A screen was broken out, causing \$30 in damage.

A 4-by-7-foot metal door was forced open, causing \$150 in damage, and \$399 in rolled coins were stolen from a residence on Parker in Farmington Hills Dec. 22.

THEFT
A Farmington woman reported her \$200 Motorola cellular phone stolen Dec. 19 from her Eagle Talon, parked at Gill and Cortland.

Two envelopes containing \$1,046 in cash and checks were stolen from the Radisson Hotel on Grand River in Farmington Hills Dec. 20-22.

OBITUARIES

RICHARD RIZZO
Mr. Rizzo, 34, formerly of Farmington and Plymouth died Dec. 17 in Western Pennsylvania Hospital, Pittsburgh.

Born in Minneapolis, Minn., Mr. Rizzo was vice president of Inco Beverage Co. and a member of Pennsylvania Beer Wholesale. He was a graduate of Pittsburgh University and California at Los Angeles University.

Survivors include his parents, Raymond and Nancy Rizzo; brothers, Robert and Ryan; sister, Teresa.

A private burial service was at Glen Eden Cemetery in Livonia. Arrangements were made by the Schrader-Howell Funeral Home, Plymouth.

RICHARD L. ABLETT
Mr. Ablett, 68, of Southfield died Dec. 21 in Botsford Hospital, Farmington Hills.

Born in Central Lake, Mich., Mr. Ablett worked for 25 years for Evans Products. He retired in

1978 when Evans closed the Plymouth plant. Survivors include his sisters, Laura Gray and Bessie Dawson; brother, Albert; many nieces and nephews.

Services were at the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Alfred Gould of Ward Presbyterian Church officiating. Burial was in Oakwood Cemetery, Farmington.

Memorials may be made to the Salvation Army, 16130 Northland Dr., Southfield 48075.

Needy get Rotary help

Livonia Clarenceville Rotary Club members were busy last week distributing food baskets to needy families in Livonia, Redford and Farmington Hills.

Randy Klein, who chaired the project with fellow Rotarian John Houle, said: "These baskets will fill a pantry and maybe last for a couple of months."

Each basket, said Klein, contained 20 boxes of cereal. He estimated the total value of the food collected at about \$2,000.

Merchants from local and surrounding communities, as far away as Flint, helped to make the project a success with the generous contributions of food and toys. Gabby's Family Recreation

Merchants from local and surrounding communities helped to make the project a success.

Center on Joy west of Inkster Road donated space where the baskets could be assembled.

Each basket contained a turkey, fresh vegetables and fruits, bread, canned goods (vegetables, pasta, beans), eggs, flour, sugar as well as toys for the children and even household cleaning supplies. Cynthia Klein and Peggy Houle made wreaths and mini-trees for a finishing touch.

Library meeting set

The city councils of Farmington and Farmington Hills will meet Saturday, Feb. 12, to discuss the library's five-year capital improvement program.

The meeting will be the morning of Feb. 12 at the Farmington Hills branch on 12 Mile. The time will be announced.

Beverly Papai, Farmington library director, requested the meeting.

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