

"ONE MORE HOOAH LEFT IN ME" by Airman 1st Class Joe McFadden, 1st Special Operations Wing Public Affairs

May 12, 2010 - HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. -- Just as no one can anticipate a natural disaster, who honestly goes to work expecting to be named one of TIME magazine's 100 most influential people in the world?



==== Chief Master Sgt. Antonio Travis conducts an interview for AF.mil and the Pentagon Channel May 4, 2010, at Times Square in New York City. Chief Travis was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by the editors of TIME magazine for his efforts following the Haiti earthquake. Chief Travis is the chief enlisted manager of the Air Force Special Operations Training Center at Hurlburt Field, Fla. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III)

Chief Master Sgt. Antonio Travis, Air Force Special Operations Training Center chief enlisted manager, certainly wasn't prepared when he received an e-mail notifying him he had been selected for this year's list.

"I'm glad I didn't tick that in the spam folder," Chief Travis said.

The editors of TIME magazine recognized him for his leadership of a team of special tactics Airmen that re-established operations at the Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 13-27.

He and his wife Andrea attended a red carpet gala event for the 2010 TIME 100 at the Lincoln Center in New York City May 4.

Chief Master Sgt. Antonio Travis and his wife, Andrea, walk the red carpet during the 2010 TIME 100 gala event May, 4, 2010, at the Lincoln Center in New York City. Chief Travis was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by the editors of TIME magazine for his efforts following the Haiti earthquake. Chief Travis is the chief enlisted manager of the Air Force Special Operations Training Center at Hurlburt Field, Fla. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III)



NOTE: This online-only information was added to the CCT history after publication of *The Eye of the Storm – A history of Combat Control Teams.*

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"I was there with the most beautiful woman at the event," he said. "And according to everyone we met, we were the best dressed, too."

At the reception, Chief and Mrs. Travis got to rub elbows with the likes of Sarah Palin, former governor of Alaska, billionaire T. Boone Pickens, actor Ben Stiller and singer Taylor Swift.

But even amidst the adoration and support for his leadership during a humanitarian mission, Chief Travis was adamant that the recognition did not belong to him alone.

"I'm grateful that I can accept this recognition in honor of the men and women down there supporting this effort," Chief Travis said. "The entire [Air Force Special Operations Command] team did phenomenal things out there, and I was fortunate enough to be part of it. I'd like to think I did my part well, but it was the people out there in the hot sun, working 12 to 18 hours a day and not quitting that made the relief effort successful."

As an added honor, Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, the pilot who landed a damaged passenger plane safely in the Hudson River in 2009, penned Chief Travis' segment, saying: "his dedication and service represent the best of humanity."

"I was pretty excited to read that, and I'm grateful he took the time to write the article," Chief Travis said.

Perhaps most ironic about Chief Travis' selection is that he almost didn't get to go to Haiti. Originally scheduled to leave his original job at the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron for AFSOTC Jan. 15, Chief Travis got a temporary leave of absence after Col. Bradley Thompson, 720th Special Tactics Group commander, made a special request to his soon-to-be boss Col. Mark Alsid, AFSOTC commandant.

"Colonel Thompson asked Colonel Alsid if he could go a month or so without me, and he graciously allowed me to participate," Chief Travis said. "They told me to go to Haiti for one last hooah before I got stuck behind a desk."

After seven years as a Marine, Chief Travis cross-trained into the Air Force in 1993, where he spent many years as a combat air traffic controller directly serving with his Airmen on the ground. He said he relished the chance to do so again.

"My frame is designed for a rucksack, a rifle and a radio, so I'm very comfortable in that environment," he said. "Before my going-away dinner from the 23rd STS, I wondered if the closest I'd ever get to a deployment would be shaking the hands of Airmen while wishing them the best before they went downrange."

Within minutes of landing on the island Jan. 13, the 224 Airmen under Chief Travis' leadership conducted what became the largest single-runway operation in history.

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"No other organization in the world outside of AFSOC could have pulled off a mission of that magnitude in that short amount of time with that much success," Chief Travis said. "That's the great thing about AFSOC: we're always prepared for the unexpected with exceptional training and resources. If you give us a challenge, we'll be ready."

Chief Travis attributed the success of the airport restoration and overall humanitarian relief effort to the giving character of the Airmen he worked with in Haiti who were tasked with the general objective of doing good.

"There is absolutely no doubt in my mind the team leaders I had for each section would have succeeded without me," he said. "I gave direction and guidance, but they were fully capable of running that field all by themselves. I can thump my chest and pat myself on the back all I want; the truth of the matter is, if I didn't have the men down there like I did, it would have been catastrophic."

And as he returned from New York City and resumed work at AFSOTC, Chief Travis said he appreciated the opportunity given to him to sport a rucksack and radio while doing good once again.

"The best going away present I could have gotten was to lead the men down there," Chief Travis said. "I'm very grateful to the leadership for giving me an opportunity to do that, and I will always remember working with the boys and making it happen. But I haven't hung up my spurs just yet. I keep telling the powers that be that I've still got one more hooah left in me."