

## *CCT @ The Eye of the Storm*

**AIRMEN FINISH 860-MILE TREK FOR FALLEN COMRADES** by Airman 1st Class Joe W. McFadden, Air Force Special Operations Command Public Affairs

**October 26, 2010 - Hurlburt Field, FL (AFNS)** -- Hundreds of people gathered here Oct. 21 to welcome the marchers from the Tim Davis Special Tactics Memorial March.

They had just completed an 860-mile march across five states that started October 9th at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.



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*Surviving family members, a few wounded Airmen and members of the Air Force Special Operations Command, join fifteen Special Tactics Airmen Oct. 21, 2010, on the final stretch of an 860-mile memorial march from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field, Fla. (U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Russell E. Cooley IV)*

Each of the marching Airmen carried one or more wooden batons, each decorated with a small plate bearing the name of a fallen special tactics Airman.

"For those who understand, no explanation is necessary," said Chief Master Sgt. Antonio Travis, the Air Force Special Operations Training Center chief enlisted manager and one of the participants in the march. "And for those who don't understand, no explanation will suffice.

"I will try to explain for those who don't: Love. Family is love. Love for family is why the men volunteer to do this."



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*Another view of surviving family members, a few wounded Airmen and members of the Air Force Special Operations Command, who joined fifteen Special Tactics Airmen Oct. 21, 2010, on the final stretch of an 860-mile memorial march from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field, Fla. This photo was taken on the final approach to Hurlburt. (U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Russell E. Cooley IV)*

Chief Travis carried a baton for Senior Airman Adam Servais, of the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron, who was killed Aug. 19, 2006 in Afghanistan. His baton, like others, represented a special tactics Airman killed in action.

One of the Airmen being remembered was Staff Sgt. Tim Davis, of the 23rd STS, who was killed Feb. 20, 2009.

The march, an idea set forth by Capt. Sam Schindler and Master Sgt. Kenneth Huhman, both of whom are special tactics Airmen, was named in honor of Sergeant Davis after he was killed in Afghanistan.

The carrying of the batons symbolized the passage through the special tactics training pipeline after Basic Military Training at Lackland AFB, until the day they earned their scarlet berets at Hurlburt Field.

*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 didn't have the honor of knowing two of the names called out, but I knew each and every other one," Chief Travis said. "Some of them were dear friends, my leaders and my Airmen. There's not a single fiber of my being that could imagine not stepping up and saying 'yes' for my family."

He then completed his speech with a variation of the Airmen's Creed, beginning with "These are America's finest Airmen," and dedicated to those the march memorialized.



"They never left an Airman behind," Chief Travis said. They did not falter, and they never failed, and God willing, we will never fail in remembering them."

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*Special tactics Airmen conduct memorial pushups Oct. 21, 2010, at the completion of the Tim Davis Special Tactics Memorial March from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field, Fla. Fifteen special tactics Airmen completed the 860-mile trek to honor the memories of their fallen comrades. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Airman 1st Class Joe W. McFadden)*

The recent passing of Senior Airmen Daniel Sanchez, of the 23rd STS, and Mark Forester, of the 21st STS, who were both killed in action in support of Operation Enduring Freedom Sept. 16 and 29, respectively, left a fresh reminder in the minds of the marchers of how their own lives could be on the line in combat.



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*Lt. Gen. Donald C. Wurster speaks to the audience Oct. 21, 2010, during a ceremony after the completion of the Tim Davis Special Tactics Memorial March from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field, Fla. Fifteen special tactics Airmen completed the 860-mile trek to honor the memories of their fallen comrades. General Wurster is the commander of Air Force Special Operations Command. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Joe W. McFadden)*

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"If you look over the course of our nation's history, there has been a very small segment of our population that has been asked to do the types of things we are doing today," said Lt. Gen. Donald C. Wurster, the commander of Air Force Special Operations Command. "One percent of the U.S. serves in the armed forces. Of that group, an incredibly small fraction performs the duty of close combat and engaging the enemy, and a large portion of that force (in the Air Force) is in AFSOC, particularly in special tactics. And look around: kids are going to school, people are going to work and our nation is secure, thanks to the people who do this."

Kristy Jefferson is the widow of Tech. Sgt. Will Jefferson, a 21st Special Tactics Squadron combat controller who was killed March 22, 2008. She marched for the last five miles of the route with Sergeant Huhman, the chief of the combat control selection course at Lackland AFB, who carried her husband's baton.

"It just fills my heart up," Mrs. Jefferson said. "This is just one more thing to make sure they're never forgotten."

After completing the march, the marchers said they would have selflessly repeated it countless times over so that none of their comrades' memories will ever be forgotten.

"No word can really sum up the feeling," Sergeant Huhman said. "But seeing the family members -- this is what it's all about. It makes the rest of the walk seem like nothing."