

“LAND THAT I LOVE”



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Comm chief helps to create mural display for wounded vets transiting the base

By Karen Petitt

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SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. — When Chief Master Sgt. Jesse Davis isn't responding to the nation's call to define guidance for terrestrial and space enterprise network capabilities, he's answering the call to help bring a little of hometown America to a hospital unit on base.

Two months ago a team of artists came together to create a 25-panel mural portraying U.S. scenic landmarks for Scott's Aeromedical Staging Facility. The ASF is one of the first air evac staging stops for patients who were wounded while serving in the Afghanistan and Iraqi theater of operations. Last year 1,300 patients moved through the ASF and 600 of those stayed overnight before being transferred closer to their home stations. When the chief heard that they were short a couple of panels, he volunteered to help, and in three days produced a woodworking piece depicting Mount Rushmore and South Dakota heritage.

“Since I haven't painted in years, I decided to do some scroll work and then just mount it. I chose a Spirit of the Horse pattern because South Dakota is known for its Native American heritage. The mountains remind me of the Black Hills as well as teepees. Deer tracks are symbols of prosperity, safety, shelter, and also of the proximity to prey. They are also used as directional indicators, and as a clan symbol. I depicted pheasant tracks because the ring-necked pheasant is South Dakota's state bird. I used gold paint for the tracks as a reference to Black Hills gold. And of course I added the Mount Rushmore cut, which is made from walnut.”

He said he's been a woodworker all his life (his father was a master carpenter), and for the first nine years of his enlistment, he worked in civil engineering as a carpenter.

“I'm also a semi-professional photographer which comes in quite handy integrating photography, computers, pattern making, and wood-

working,” he said. His photo skills also came in handy as he went above and beyond by taking photos of each of the panels with the artists and hosting them on his personal Web site as a way to pay homage to the effort.

“I like to see our Comm and Info professionals get involved in base projects and showcase their art talents (regardless if you think you might have any or not!). Many of the artists involved in this project either had no previous art experience or very little. They stepped up and made a difference for the patients in the ASF and brought a feeling of home to the facility. Whatever your talents may be, get involved in your base and community and help make a difference!”

Since this effort, Chief Davis was selected as the Scott Artist and Crafters Guild's Artist of the Quarter for April - June '07 and has his art on display in the base library through June. “Volunteering can open the door for many other rewarding experiences,” he added.



Chief Master Sgt. Jesse Davis and his Mount Rushmore/South Dakota artwork.