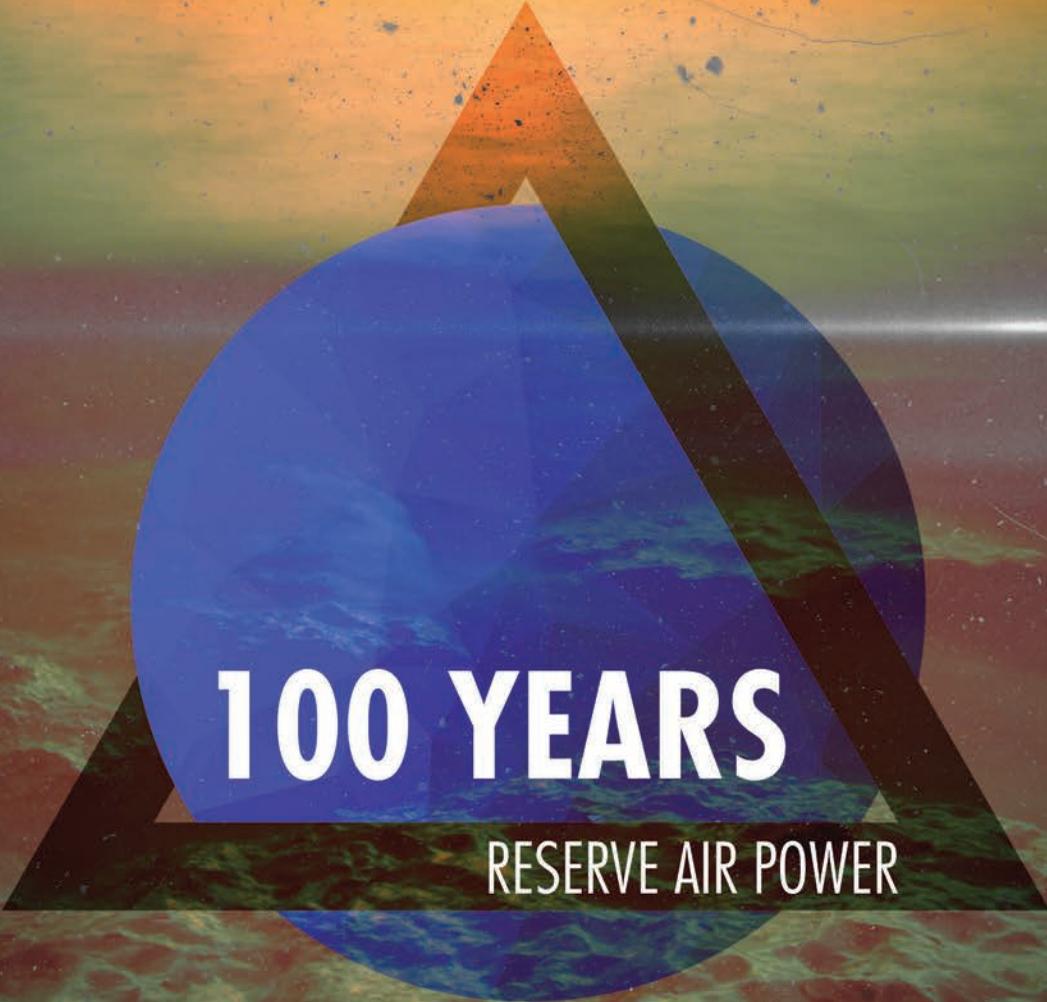


Volume 68 No. 3

CITIZEN AIRMAN

June 2016

—+ Air Force Reserve: Celebrating 100 Years of Reserve Air Power +—



100 YEARS

RESERVE AIR POWER



citamn.afrc.af.mil

In this Issue: **TREASURE IN THE NORTH SEA**
*A World War II B-17 traces its way back to
Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. John Gorse*



The Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve



Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson



Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly

From the Top Passing the Torch

The ending of any assignment is bittersweet, and the end of this one is no different. As I prepare to transition into the next phase with my family, I am excited but also a bit sad. We have accomplished so much together over the last four years, and it will be hard to leave the incredible people and families in our Air Force Reserve. However, I am leaving our Citizen Airmen in the hands of an amazing leadership team. Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller, Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly and I envision only greater accomplishments in your future.

First, I want to say thank you for the hard work, dedication and professionalism you have displayed throughout my tenure to provide combat-ready Citizen Airmen for our mission. I know without a doubt that I have had the opportunity to lead some of the most capable and innovative Airmen this country has ever seen. I am particularly proud of the progress we have made as part of the total force team. The work you have done to forge relationships and build capacity has helped us gain the confidence and trust of our Air Force senior leaders and has secured our place as a critical partner on our three-component team today and into the future.

The last few years have taught us the demand for combat-ready Citizen Airmen is not likely to decline. It is through your efforts that we will continue to rise to this challenge. I am exceedingly proud of our more than 5,000 Reservists who are mobilized on any given day

supporting combatant commander requirements. I am also impressed by the work you have done in ushering in new technology and capabilities that make the Air Force Reserve strong. Your efforts bringing in new platforms like the F-35 and KC-46 as well as developing and growing our role in career fields like space, cyberspace, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance have increased our ability to fill critical capability and warfighting gaps.

As I pass the torch to your new leadership team, I challenge all of you to continue to focus on our Airmen and their families. Our force would not be strong or combat-ready without the men and women who put on the uniform and the home team that supports them. We must continue to focus on strengthening relationships and advocate for the tools, programs and resources our Air Force Reserve needs to remain strong and resilient. We also need your help to continue to bring up issues and challenges you are facing in the field so the new leadership team can address them.

Next month I will pass the torch officially and end my tour as chief of Air Force Reserve and commander, Air Force Reserve Command. However, Barb and I will always consider the Air Force Reserve as part of our extended family. It has been an honor and privilege to serve alongside each of you. Once again, thanks for all you've done and for all you continue to do!

As I pass the torch to your new leadership team, I challenge all of you to continue to focus on our Airmen and their families.

Chief's View

Own Your Career; Own Your Path.

I believe it is absolutely critical for you to know what I value as your chief and what we are doing at the headquarters to help our Airmen succeed. My job is to provide you the tools, training and support you need to have a successful Air Force career, but to do that, you need to be proactive and own your own path. I want to take this opportunity to highlight my thoughts about career development, diversity in our workforce and taking care of our Airmen.

First, I want us to focus on developing the team. We have a good start, but there is still lots of work to do. My priority is to support each of you in choosing the career path that is right for you. One of the biggest complaints I have already heard from the field is about having to relocate to pursue development opportunities. I am here to tell you that it's about looking at your life and knowing what the values and priorities are for you and your family.

One of my goals as chief is to ensure I am grooming the next generation of enlisted leaders. To do that, we not only need to develop our troops but also to empower them to manage their own career. We are working on developing educational and placement opportunities for our enlisted force as well as opportunities for our Airmen to gain experience as first-shirts, career advisors and wing or numbered air force chiefs. In many cases, these opportunities require members to relocate, but they are available to anyone willing to make the trade-offs required. Some of you have career and family obligations that make it challenging to relocate, and if these types of jobs aren't your goal, that's OK. But understand that to be competitive for these opportunities you have to start managing your career early.

One of the best things about our force is its heritage and culture. They make our force strong, and we must continue to honor those things as we embrace diversity in our force. Diversity not necessarily in terms of

gender, ethnicity and religious backgrounds, although those are important, but rather diversity in terms of education, background and experiences that can add to our culture and heritage. As a diverse force, we are able to see problems from new vantage points and come up with more creative solutions to the challenges we face. I encourage you to bring the education and experience you have from your civilian career to the Air Force Reserve. This is what makes our force strong and innovative. Use this diversity to start honest and open discussions, which I believe we need to create a strong enlisted force.

My final priority is creating a supportive environment that fosters resilient and capable Airmen who have the tools and guidance necessary to take care of their own families and careers. To accomplish this, we need to consider the safety and well-being of our Airmen. I am excited about the implementation of the Green Dot program, which is designed to foster a healthy environment free from domestic violence, sexual assault and self-defeating behavior. I will also be highlighting the work of the Profession of Arms Center of Excellence as it continues to help create an environment where our men and women can develop the skills they need to be strong and resilient leaders and mentors. You are a valued part of our team, and I believe we can make great strides in making our Air Force Reserve a supportive and safe environment for all our Airmen.

I will be sharing more about my vision over the next few months, but I wanted to get us started on the same page. I am going to be proactive in getting things done, but I need your help. Make sure you are providing honest and constructive feedback about what is working and what isn't. Together we will make it possible for you to chart your own path.

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Gen. Mark A. Welsh III **Chief of Staff, United States Air Force**
Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson **Commander, Air Force Reserve Command**
Col. Bruce M. Bender **Director of Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command**
Cliff Tyler **Managing Editor, Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command**
Adam Butterick **Graphic Designer, Multimedia, Air Force Reserve Command**

A C-17 Globemaster III from March Air Reserve Base, California, sits on the flight line at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, after delivering the Air Force Reserve Command's first HH-60 helicopter to go through Korean Air Lines depot maintenance.

(Senior Airman Christopher Drzazgowski)

Citizen Airman magazine (ISSN No. 0887-9680) is published bi-monthly by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command Office of Public Affairs for the commander of Air Force Reserve Command. Periodical postage paid at Warner Robins, Georgia, and additional mailing offices. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to the homes of all Reservists. Content is normally news articles and features developed for release to commercial media as part of the Air Force Reserve's continuing public affairs program. Opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force Reserve. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. Readers-per-copy ratio: 4-1.

Send inquiries and submissions to HQ AFRC/PAOM, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661.

Or, email them to hqafrc.pa.citizenairman@us.af.mil.

For questions about the magazine or its contents, you can call (478) 327-1770 or DSN 497-1770.

Moving? PLEASE DO NOT SEND CHANGES OF ADDRESS TO CITIZEN AIRMAN. To continue receiving the magazine, unit Reservists, as well as people serving a statutory tour of duty, should send a change of address to their military personnel flight or unit orderly room.

Individual mobilization augmentees should call the Total Force Service Center-Denver toll free at 800-525-0102 or DSN 847-3294.

POSTMASTER: Please send all Forms 3579 to Citizen Airman, HQ AFRC/PAOM, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661.

06 Reserve in Focus

Command images

10 Round the Reserve

Stories from around the Air Force Reserve

14 Centennial Celebration

100 years of Reserve air power

16 Treasure in the North Sea

A sunken WW II aircraft brings about interesting family ties

20 Fight of a Lifetime

Reservist and his wife bravely battle terminal cancer

22 The Search is On

The Air Force Reserve is looking for YOUR innovative ideas

23 Remembering Odie

914th SFS lets former comrade live on in a personal way

24 The 'Belle' that Keeps Ringing

Celebrating 50 years of civil service – here's to 51

28 Flexibility

Changing status allows Reservist to pursue his dream

30 Opportunities, Not Obstacles

Senior enlisted leader, wife making a difference in community

Airborne Operations

U.S. Army paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team based in Vicenza, Italy, and members of the British Army's 16th Air Assault Brigade jump from a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft piloted by Reservists from the 315th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, during large-scale airborne operations at Exercise Saber Junction 16 near Hohenfels, Germany. More than 1,000 paratroopers and multiple container delivery system bundles were deployed to provide initial logistical support for follow-on missions. The purpose of Saber Junction 16 was to evaluate and assess the readiness of the 173rd Airborne Brigade to conduct land operations in a joint, combined environment and to promote interoperability with participating allied and partner nations.

(U.S. Army photo by Visual Information Specialist Gertrud Zach)



Opening Ceremony

An HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from the Air Force Reserve's 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, delivers Staff Sgt. August O'Neill to the opening ceremony of the Invictus Games May 8 in Orlando, Florida. O'Neill, who was joined on the ground by his German shepherd named Kai, carried with him the Invictus Games flag.

(Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie)



Staying on Target

Tech. Sgt. Carolina Rodriguez, a loadmaster from the 709th Airlift Squadron, fires a 9mm pistol down the firing range at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, as part of her deployment training. Reservists from Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, conducted an off-station training exercise March 29 to April 3 to ensure they are current in all of their deployment requirements.

(Capt. Bernie Kale)

Defenders of the Flame

Teams of firefighters from the 919th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron battle a blaze during a live-fire training exercise at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The Reserve Airmen teamed up with active-duty special operations firefighters to complete their annual live-fire training during the March unit training assembly.

(Tech. Sgt. Sam King)



RESERVE IN FOCUS

X Marks the Spot

Senior Airman Cody Burdette, an aircraft mechanic with the 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, prepares to marshal a C-17 Globemaster III getting ready to leave its spot on the ramp for a local flight. The clouds over the C-17 formed an X in the sky, matching the Airman's marshalling wands as he stands ready to guide the aircraft.

(Tech. Sgt. Frank Oliver)



Combat Training

Four F-35 Lightning II aircraft prepare for takeoff at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. Hill's active-duty and Air Force Reserve F-35 pilots recently began flying routine four-ship configurations, just as they would in combat. This marks a key milestone in getting the Air Force's newest fighter jet to reach initial operational capability later this year, at which time it will be combat-ready.

(Paul Holcomb)



Engine Maintenance

Senior Airmen Natalie Beal and Ryan Nalepa, 919th Special Operations Maintenance Group, perform maintenance on an aircraft engine at Duke Field, Florida. The Airmen are part of the engine shop within the maintenance group.

(Tech. Sgt. Sam King)



Practice Makes Perfect

Members of the 59th Medical Wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, practice medical procedures on a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft during a presidential support mission to Havana, Cuba. The diplomatic mission was the first time a sitting U.S. president has visited the communist nation in 88 years.

(Maj. Wayne Capps)





Four Bases in Running for Reserve-led F-35A Lightning II Unit

Four bases are in the running to be the home of the first Air Force Reserve-led F-35A Lightning II unit. Air Force officials announced April 12 that Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona; Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida; Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas; and Whiteman AFB, Missouri, are the bases up for consideration.

The preferred and reasonable alternative locations are expected to be selected in the fall, and the aircraft are slated to begin arriving at the first Reserve-led F-35A location by the summer of 2023.

At the same time, the Air Force also released basing criteria that will be used to select candidate bases for two Air National Guard squadrons, which are planned to receive their first aircraft in the summer of 2022.

"The Air Force is committed to a deliberate and open process to address F-35 basing," said Jennifer A. Miller, deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for installations. "As we progress through the basing process, we will share information so interested communities are aware of what to expect."

The basing criteria for the ANG bases include mission requirements (weather, airspace and training range availability), capacity (sufficient hanger and ramp space, and facility considerations), environmental requirements and cost factors.

The Air Force will evaluate Guard installations with runways of at least 8,000 feet and operational A-10 Thunderbolt IIs, F-16 Fighting Falcons or F-15 Eagles against the approved criteria to identify candidate bases for the F-35A.

After identifying candidate bases, the Air Combat Command and ANG will conduct site surveys at each location as applicable. Site survey teams will assess each location against operational requirements, potential impacts to existing missions, infrastructure and manpower, and then develop cost estimates to bed down the F-35A.

Based on the results of these efforts, the Air Force plans to identify candidate installations for the ANG

locations this summer before selecting the preferred and reasonable alternatives and beginning the environmental impact analysis process later this year.

(Secretary of the Air Force public affairs)

Barksdale Reservists Team Up With Active-Duty Airmen on Deployment

Citizen Airmen from the 307th Bomb Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, joined their active-duty counterparts from the 2nd BW on a deployment to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, in April to support Operation Inherent Resolve.

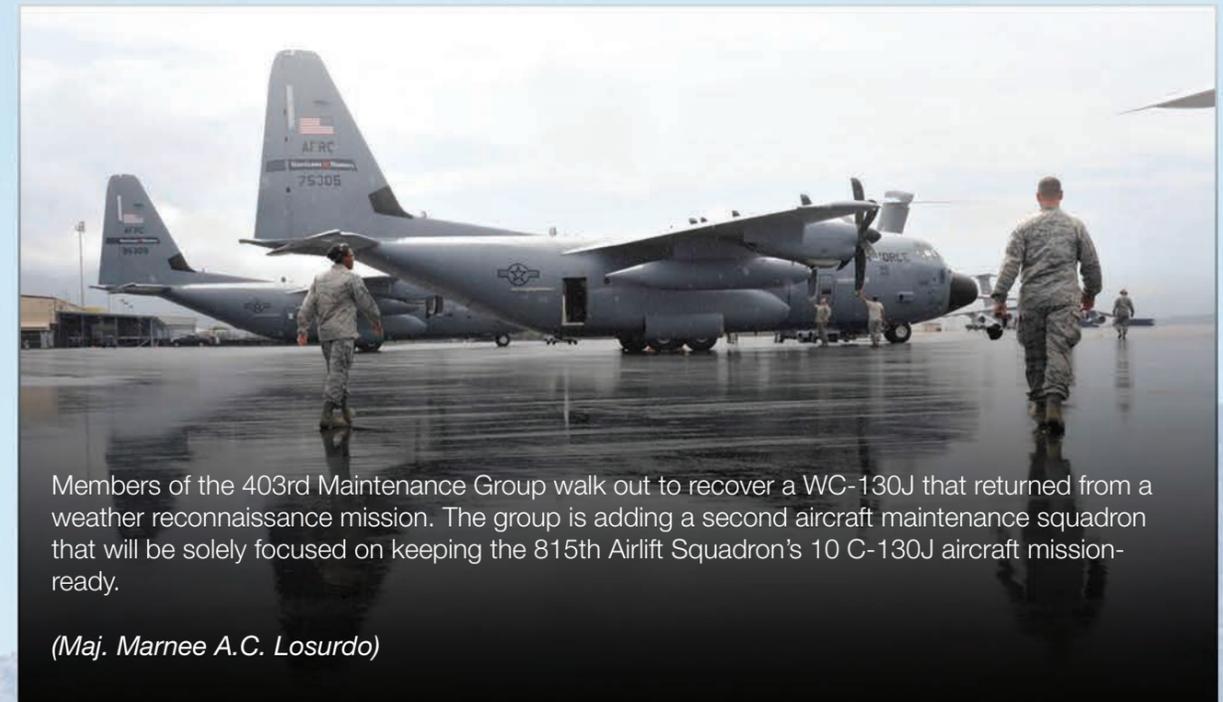
"Reservists from the 307th Bomb Wing are proud mission partners with the 2nd Bomb Wing," Col. James Morriss, vice commander of the 307th, said. "Shoulder to shoulder with active-duty Airmen, our Citizen Airmen stand at the ready to project on-time, on-target air power."

This is not the first time that members of the two units have deployed together as a team. In 2001, they joined forces to deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. In the first three months of that deployment, the two wings' B-52 Stratofortress aircraft dropped more than 7,000 tons of munitions in combat missions.

"Currently, total force 307th Bomb Wing (Airmen) are once more deployed, providing immense air power for our nation and allies," said Col. Bruce Cox, wing commander. "With heritage dating back to groundbreaking long-range missions just after Pearl Harbor, the 307th became known as the Long Rangers. Today, once more fighting for freedom, the Long Rangers ride again!"

The Barksdale Airmen are part of a multi-national coalition that is conducting anti-terrorist missions in the region.

(Master Sgt. Dachele Melville, 307th BW public affairs)



Members of the 403rd Maintenance Group walk out to recover a WC-130J that returned from a weather reconnaissance mission. The group is adding a second aircraft maintenance squadron that will be solely focused on keeping the 815th Airlift Squadron's 10 C-130J aircraft mission-ready.

(Maj. Marnee A.C. Losurdo)

Mississippi Wing Adds Second Maintenance Squadron

By Master Sgt. Brian Lamar

The 403rd Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, is going through a period of growth with the activation of an additional aircraft maintenance squadron solely focused on keeping the 815th Airlift Squadron's 10 C-130Js healthy and in the air.

With the approval of a new manning document, the total number of authorized positions for the unit, currently being called Detachment 1, is scheduled to be approximately 145. This is roughly the same size as an active-duty C-130 squadron.

"About 55 of the new employees will be full-time air reserve technicians," said Col. Jay Johnson, 403rd Maintenance Group commander. "The rest will be traditional Reservists."

The current aircraft maintenance squadron will shift its attention to the mission of the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron Hurricane Hunters.

Air Force leaders came to the decision to add the new squadron to the 403rd WG after it was determined that the 815th AS "Flying Jennies" would stay at Keesler, but the active-duty association with the 345th AS had been dismantled.

"The unit wasn't needed in the past. The active component with the 345th filled a lot of the maintenance roles before they left," Johnson said.

Once it was determined that the 10 C-130Js were staying at Keesler, differentiating the two distinct flying missions simply made sense.

This new construct ensures the maintenance group can fully support both flying missions simultaneously.

Johnson believes adding the new maintenance squadron will both help the professional development of maintenance Airmen in the wing and increase the overall morale of the unit.

"The more experiences, the more hands, the more eyes I have on target, the better it is for the overall aircraft and success of the mission as well as the maintenance activities, too," he said. "This is great news from a maintenance standpoint. We are truly going to be a hub of activity."

To handle the added mentoring and leadership of a larger mission, Air Force Reserve Command has authorized a full-time air reserve technician 403rd Maintenance Group deputy commander position.

Johnson believes that the safety, efficiency and effectiveness of the unit are strong and will only continue to improve.

"Anytime you have more hands doing the work, you are going to get a lot healthier fleet of aircraft," he said. "Instead of stretching your workforce thinner, we will have more technical proficiency spread across the force."

(Lamar is assigned to the 403rd WG public affairs office at Keesler.)



Newport News Honors Reservist for Helping Woman in Distress

City officials in Newport News, Virginia, honored an Air Force Reservist who intervened in a dispute that resulted in the stabbing of a local woman.

In a ceremony May 5, Capt. Erick of the 718th Intelligence Squadron at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, received the Newport News Police Department's Citizen Service Award. *(NOTE: Due to security concerns, Citizen Airmen who are directly involved in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions are only identified by rank and first name.)*

While on his way home after a unit training assembly on April 12, 2015, Erick saw a man and woman running through traffic. The man, later identified as Michael Andre Warren, grabbed the woman and began punching her head and face.

Upon seeing the assault occurring in the middle of the street, Erick immediately stopped his car, got out and started running toward the two.

"As I closed in on the two individuals, they reached the sidewalk and fell together on the ground," he wrote in a memorandum that provided details of the incident. When he got within 15 to 20 feet, "the male jumped back up and began to run. I chased after him. While fleeing, the male began removing the shirt he was wearing. In the last 15 feet of the chase, the male attacker fell on the ground from running, and four other males came running from behind me to help catch and secure him."

Erick said while the four men held the attacker down, he ran back to help the female. When he arrived at her side, two other women had stopped to provide help. When they tried to stand the woman up, the victim fell to the ground. They saw that she was bleeding and realized she had been stabbed in the lower back

area. Erick then called 911 to request police assistance and an ambulance. The victim was later transported to a local hospital where she received treatment for life-threatening injuries.

Erick stayed behind and identified the man who police had arrested as the person who attacked the female. He later learned that the man attempted to use the shirt that he removed to dispose of a switchblade knife.

The attacker was later convicted and is now serving a 20-year prison sentence.

In addition to the recognition Erick received from Newport News officials, his unit has submitted an application to award him the Air Force Commendation Medal.

"I couldn't be prouder for Captain Erick," said Lt. Col. Joshua Redden, 718th IS commander. "His selfless dedication to a lady in distress demonstrated what it truly means to be a Citizen Airman. By putting his health and well-being on the line, he ultimately saved this woman's life, and his actions proved that there are good and courageous officers serving in the Air Force Reserve."

"From day one, he has been a mainstay of my officer corps and was also recognized at the Air Force level as the 2015 Reserve Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Company Grade Officer of the Year," Redden said. "I can't wait to see what he does next. 718th ... eyes in the sky!"

(Air Force Reserve Command public affairs)

Air Control Group Breaks Ground on New Ops Facility

Officials from the 513th Air Control Group at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, participated in a ceremony April 14 to break ground on a new operations facility.

The groundbreaking date coincided with the 68th birthday of the Air Force Reserve.

At the ceremony, Airmen from the 513th ACG discussed the new facility's role in future Air Force Reserve command and control operations.

"It is meaningful to go from being eliminated two short years ago to being written back into the budget and getting a new building as well," said Col. David Robertson, commander of the 513th ACG. "It emphasizes the importance and the legacy that the 513th has when it comes to supporting the command and control mission for our country."

The 32,000-square-foot facility will allow three units — the consolidated air control group headquarters, operations support flight and airborne air control squadron — that are currently physically separated from each other to be located in the same facility. The building is scheduled to be completed by January 2018.

Lt. Col. Ralph Hawkins, 513th ACG executive officer, said combining the units within the 513th under one roof to get them closer to their associated active-duty unit, the 552nd Air Control Wing, is a step in the right direction.

The 513th ACG is an associate Reserve unit, which augments the 552nd with crews and maintenance personnel for the E-3 Sentry airborne warning and control system aircraft.

(Tech. Sgt. Lauren Gleason, 507th Air Refueling Wing public affairs, Tinker AFB)

Free Online College Tutoring Program Available

Full- and part-time Air Force Reservists are eligible for free online college tutoring services through a new pilot program sponsored by the Department of Defense Voluntary Education Program and the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support.

"If a service member is struggling with a college course or simply needs help with a homework assignment, this DOD-funded tool offers a place to go to get answers," said Jeff Allen, DANTES director.

Allen said the program provides around-the-clock, online tutoring services for active-duty service members, Coast Guard members, and full- and part-time reserve component members. Some family members are also eligible to use the tutoring services.

The program is available online at www.tutor.com/military and provides students with one-on-one tutoring with educators able to help with more than 40 college subjects. The tutors provide help with all types of homework assignments and test preparation.

Tutors and students communicate in a secure online classroom using text chat and by drawing on an interactive whiteboard. There are no webcams or telephones used, and no personal information is shared between the tutor and student.

Students can access the online service using any internet-enabled device, including smartphones and tablets. If it's just a quick question, tutors are available on-demand. Also, students can schedule tutoring sessions or upload papers for offline review.

(Erin Roberts, Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support public affairs)

Beale Unit Returns to Refueling Mission

The 940th Wing at Beale Air Force Base, California, is returning to a familiar mission with the announcement April 29 that it is officially being re-designated as the 940th Air Refueling Wing.

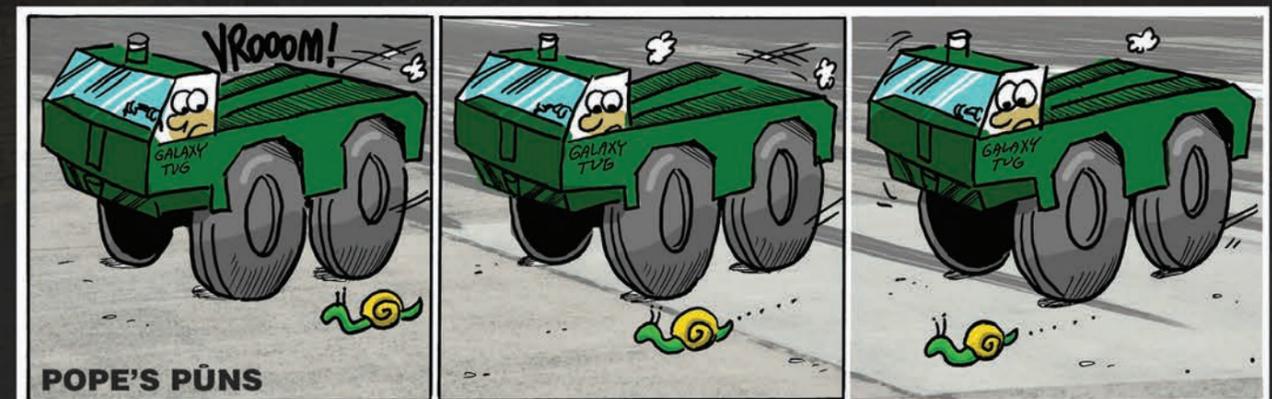
The wing is changing from the command, control, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission to the air refueling mission and will fly the KC-135 Stratotanker, which has provided aerial refueling capability for the Air Force for more than 50 years.

With the unit re-designation and mission change, the 940th will also become part of a different numbered air force, moving from the 10th Air Force, located at Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas, to 4th Air Force at March Air Reserve Base, California.

The 940th first began flying Stratotankers in 1977 at Mather AFB, California. It moved to McClellan AFB, California, in 1993 and then to Beale AFB in 1998. Both Mather and McClellan have since closed.

An official ceremony to celebrate the mission re-designation was scheduled for June 4.

(940th ARW public affairs)





100 YEARS

RESERVE AIR POWER

The Centennial Celebration

By Bo Joyner

Editor's note: On June 3, 1916, Congress signed the National Defense Act of 1916, which created the nation's first air reserve program. In honor of this historic event, the Air Force Reserve is celebrating 100 years of reserve air power throughout the month of June. The following story looks at the National Defense Act of 1916 and how it set the wheels in motion for the organization that would become today's Air Force Reserve. Most of the information for this story was taken from "The First Wings of War: Air Force Reserve in World War I," a special study written by Air Force Reserve historians Paul H. Larson, Kevin I. Burge and Keith L. Barr.

Throughout history, military leaders have always searched for the "high ground," the place where they could see everything around them, take the surprise out of surprise attacks, and effectively and accurately put ammunition on targets.

When daring men started taking to the skies in gas-filled balloons during the 19th and early 20th centuries, it didn't take long for some military men of the day to realize the sky could be the ultimate "high ground" and give them an incredible strategic advantage over their adversaries.

During the Civil War, between June 1861 and June 1863, the U.S. Army and the Confederate States Army successfully operated a balloon corps for observation

purposes, and the idea of using objects in the air to help win battles on the ground started taking off.

A few forward-thinking military leaders paid close attention when word started to spread that Wilbur and Orville Wright had achieved the first self-powered flight in the history of the world on Dec. 17, 1903, on the outer banks of North Carolina near the town of Kitty Hawk. After the Wright Brothers' historic flight, as the fledgling aviation industry began to take off, military leaders across the globe started incorporating aviation into their armies.

When World War I, the "Great War," started on Aug. 4, 1914, countries throughout Europe scrambled to rapidly build up their air forces by manufacturing airplanes and training air crews. The top military brass from the countries fighting in this conflict quickly learned that one aviator could be worth a whole battalion of infantry soldiers. Unfortunately, things didn't progress quite as quickly on this side of the Atlantic.

On July 18, 1914, "the Aviation Section (of the U.S. Signal Corps) had 19 officers and 101 enlisted men," Air Force Reserve Command historians wrote in "The First Wings of War: Air Force Reserve in World War I." By December 1914, the Aviation Section had grown to 44 officers, 224 enlisted men and 23 aircraft. Still, those numbers "paled in comparison to the size of the air forces fielded by Germany, Great Britain, France, Russia and other powers fighting in Europe. Worse yet, the Aviation Section had no Reserve or National Guard officers or enlisted men who could quickly enter the fight," the historians wrote.

That all changed with the signing of the National Defense Act of 1916, which created the nation's first air reserve program. The comprehensive legislation defined the roles and missions of the active-duty U.S. Army, the National Guard and the Reserve. Also, it solidified the concept of the Reserve Officer Training Corps.

Brig. Gen. Hal C. Pattison, who served as the Army's chief of military history from 1962 to 1970, said, "The National Defense Act of 1916 is viewed as providing for the immediate ancestor of our reserve system in its present form."

"The War Department knew it would be impossible to maintain sufficient strength in aviators and skilled technicians in the peacetime Army," the AFRC historians wrote about the National Defense Act of 1916. "The air reserve program provided the needed hedge in case of war. The Signal Officers Reserve Corps and the Signal Enlisted Reserve Corps added more than 2,200 officer and enlisted positions to the Signal Corps' Aviation Section.

"Flying training schools were established in Florida, Virginia, Illinois and Tennessee. However, they were unable to keep up with the rapidly expanding Aviation Section. In June 1916, the First Reserve Aero Squadron, which still exists today (at Schriever Air Force Base,

Colorado) as the 26th Space Aggressor Squadron, had 26 officer pilots and 12 flying sergeants trained and volunteering for the punitive campaign against Pancho Villa in Mexico."

When Congress declared war on Germany in April 1917, the total number of military aviators was less than 200. By November, that number had jumped to 9,000, and it continued to increase as the war went on. Of course, with that substantial of an increase in aviators came lots of growing pains. A number of early Air Force Reservists played key roles in helping the United States manage these growing pains.

Maj. Raynal Bolling, who led the "Bolling Mission" to Europe, played an instrumental part in procuring the aircraft and equipment U.S. aviators used during the war.

Maj. Hiram Bingham, who rediscovered the Incan city of Machu Picchu, Peru, in 1911, helped establish the training curriculum that U.S. aviators followed throughout the conflict.

Capt. Phillip Carroll played a key role in building up the first U.S. training bases in France.

Capt. Douglas Campbell, Lt. Frank Luke and Lt. Charles D'Olive earned the coveted title of "ace" as a result of their daring exploits in the cockpits of some of the world's most advanced aircraft of the day.

"The U.S. military entered World War I mostly unprepared for the enormity of the task it faced," the AFRC historians wrote. "The U.S. Army did not have the active-duty, National Guard or Reserve aviation forces it needed to accomplish the immense task before it. Fortunately, many talented and ingenious men stepped forward to do their part to win the war in the air.

"Commissioned into the Signal Officers Reserve Corps and enlisted into the Signal Enlisted Reserve Corps, men such as Maj. Raynal Bolling, Maj. Hiram Bingham, Capt. Phillip Carroll, Capt. Douglas Campbell, Lt. Frank Luke and Lt. Charles d'Olive proved that talented civilians could do great things in uniform. Their important contributions paved the way for future generations of U.S. military aviators."

(Joyner is assigned to the Headquarters AFRC public affairs office at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.)

Treasure in the North Sea : A Ghost Beneath the Waves

By 1st Lt. Justin Clark



The recent discovery of a crashed World War II aircraft at the bottom of the North Sea may have gone unnoticed by most people, but not Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. John Gorse, 440th Operations Group commander at Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina.

The B-17 Flying Fortress bomber was co-piloted by Gorse's uncle, then-19-year-old 2nd Lt. Norville Gorse, who flew the aircraft as a member of the U.S. Army Air Forces. Divers located the B-17 last fall off the coast of Norfolk, United Kingdom.

The discovery came as a big surprise to Gorse when he happened to check his spam email folder and found a message from Lucy May Maxwell of the American Air Museum in Duxford, England. Gorse had signed up on the museum's website years earlier while researching his uncle's military history. Maxwell had been contacted by Alex Hurrell of the Eastern Daily Press, who, in turn, was contacted by Paul Hennessey of the North Norfolk Divers Club when the organization found an undersea wreck believed to be a B-17. A check of the tail number confirmed that it was the aircraft flown by Gorse's uncle, Norville.

"This comes as a big surprise," Gorse said upon being reached for comment on the discovery. "To find the aircraft so many years later and then to be able to have it lead back to me is unbelievable."

Upon receiving news of the discovery, Gorse, a C-130 pilot, came forward to tell his uncle's account of the crash that had been written in 1989.

Family separation meant that Gorse was unaware of his uncle Norville's existence until he began researching his family history as a young man. Gorse first met his war-hero uncle at his pilot training graduation in Texas, having invited him to the ceremony.

The B-17 aircraft, tail number 42-29752, belonged to the 96th Bomb Group. The plane was on its way to bomb a target in St. Omer, France, after having taken off from Royal Air Force Grafton Underwood, United Kingdom, when the crew had to ditch it in the North Sea on May 13, 1943.

Disaster struck the bomber when a machine gun went off without warning, hitting two of the nine crewmembers and shooting off the plane's right stabilizer.

Gorse's uncle, along with the aircraft's pilot, Capt. Derrol Rogers, heroically managed to keep the crippled plane flying for two hours. They jettisoned the aircraft's bombs into the Wash, an estuary on the east coast of Britain, and allowed their seven crewmates to bail out safely.

Once all the other crewmembers had jumped out, Gorse and Rogers kept flying the B-17 until they reached the North Sea, by which time the aircraft's engines were starting to fail, and the battered bomber was fast losing altitude.



Second Lt. Norville Gorse, whose nephew is Lt. Col. John Gorse, 440th Operations Group commander at Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina, was the co-pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress that crashed in the North Sea off the coast of the United Kingdom in 1943.

(Courtesy photo)

Part 2: Coming in the August Issue

In his account, Gorse wrote about his experience of bailing out of the B-17: "Rogers told me to jump. ... The engines began misfiring as I left my seat, so I sped back to the bomb bay and dropped out."

He estimated that the plane, at that time, was just 400 feet above the water's surface.

"I dropped into the water from about 20 feet above the choppy sea," Gorse wrote. "After entering the water, the shoreline undertow took hold. I didn't stop sinking until I could pull off my boots (about 20 feet below the surface) and swim with full strength toward the surface. I was just able to hold my breath long enough to reach it."

Gorse was in the sea for more than an hour before the crew of a rescue boat pulled him out using a pole with a large hook on the end. The 19-year-old aviator was quickly returned to duty, while Rogers sadly died of exposure shortly thereafter.

However, the war for the young Gorse was nowhere near over, because only months later a similar aircraft incident ended much differently.

(Clark is assigned to the 440th AW public affairs office at Pope Army Airfield. Gorse's story will continue with part two in the August issue.)



Gorse and the B-17's pilot, Capt. Derrol Rogers, managed to keep the aircraft airborne after it was damaged by a machine gun malfunction until they reached the North Sea. The photo on the far right shows part of the aircraft that was discovered underwater.

(Courtesy photos)



Fight of a Lifetime

Westover Reservist and his wife bravely battle terminal cancer
By Capt. Andre Bowser

Months before Senior Master Sgt. Lee Henry boarded a plane to visit a sick Airman who had suffered a major heart attack, doctors had diagnosed him with terminal cancer.

Leaving his home on the West Coast and flying across the country to visit the Airman who was recuperating, even while he was in the fight of his life, might be considered by some to be extraordinary. But not for the people who know Henry.

His wife, Stacey, said even though she and her husband are fighting a cancer that could kill him in months, he'd never let the disease kill his spirit to serve a fellow Airman.

"He is the type of person who always puts others before himself," she said. "And that's why I fell in love with him."

Resiliency = Fight

For months, Henry, who is a member of the 58th Aerial Port Squadron at Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, said he's been praying that his cancer fight would turn in his favor. He'd fought it and won before, but the stakes have never been so high.

Henry has traveled with his wife to Westover to attend nearly every drill weekend since 2014, when he returned from the Inactive Ready Reserve after his first bout with the life-threatening disease.

"The first time I went through cancer, I leaned heavily on my faith," said Henry. He said he's never prayed harder than he has in the last few months. "I pray all the time that we make the right decisions."

In early March, one of those decisions involved the type

of treatment — chemotherapy or alternative medicine — to pursue. He decided on a blend of the two, hoping for the best results.

From all accounts, his prayers have been answered, and his doctors are baffled by a steep reduction in the cancer that had been wracking his body just weeks prior to starting the treatment. That dramatic change came just weeks after the March drill weekend, when the senior master sergeant said that, according to medical professionals, his days were literally numbered.

Prior to the March drill weekend, Henry said he had a straight-talk session with his doctor.

"I needed a sense of time," he said. "The doctor said four to six months. I'm like, 'How do you come up with a number like that?'"

Henry said his doctor recommended that he start a regimented course of chemotherapy immediately, but the senior NCO wanted to know all his options before he made such an important decision.

"I asked, 'What happens if I fight?' He (the doctor) said eight to 10 months."

Traditional thinking dictated that he start the regimen right away. But he sought out a second opinion first.

"You're going to make me sick for eight to 10 months with chemo? Where's the quality of life versus the quantity of life?"

Henry said he focused on the question of what he wanted out of life.

And it was in plain sight.

Family = Strength

Henry said he leans more than ever on his high school sweetheart, his wife Stacey, who not only travels with him across country to every drill weekend, but also accompanies him to every doctors' appointment.

In March, he flew from his home in Washington state to see world-renowned alternative medicine doctors in Nevada, and that was just days after flying home from Westover after a drill weekend.

"A lot of the traditional medicine doctors told us that no alternatives will work," Henry said.

After talking to the doctors in Nevada, he and his wife decided on blending the traditional and alternative treatments together. They became experts at researching the resources available for his treatment. He said one of the best-kept secrets he learned is that service members diagnosed with a terminal disease are eligible to take out half of their Servicemember's Group Life Insurance policy. He said the rule on usage is not limited to medical treatment, either.

"It can be used for anything," he said.

In between drill weekends and medical visits, Henry makes sure to spend as much time as possible just being with his wife, four grown children and two granddaughters. He said lengthening and enriching that time requires a regimen of chemotherapy, among other acts in defiance of the cancer that started in his lungs and then spread to the rest of his body. He is not even a smoker, he said.

"These tumors are painless except for the tumor on my right lung," Henry said. "We only found the cancer because of my colonoscopy test, when I turned 50, and I listened to my doctors and followed their instructions to have one performed."

In Washington, Henry works with his doctors and undergoes chemotherapy treatment. He receives alternative treatments through the mail from the Nevada clinic, he said.

"We know people who have gone to this clinic and were successful," Henry said.

His wife said no course of treatment is off the table.

"They take treatments from around the world that have been successful and integrate those treatments with a traditional medicine approach," Stacey said. "So, it's all about making your body healthy and putting your body in a position to win the fight."

The difference between the traditional and alternative doctors is the former focus on a large regimen of chemotherapy — to poison the cancer — and in so doing poison the patient, while the latter use a much lower dosage of chemotherapy, coupled with alternative medicines that boost the immune system, which he and his wife said they prefer.

Henry described the after-effect of chemotherapy as feeling raw, dry, turned inside out and with your stomach in knots.

"Our hope is that the combination of treatments will give me the biggest and best chance for remission," he said. "We know that ultimate and total healing will only come from a miracle, but getting the cancer into remission would be a huge win for us as well."

In mid-May, Stacey provided an update on Henry's condition.

"We are being told that Lee will have another nine weeks of the chemo regimen that he is currently following," she said. "After that, he will undergo a scan, which will confirm if the cancer is dead. This is when he will be classified as in remission. It will be at that point that we will lean heavily on the alternative treatments to keep the cancer at bay while they put him on an immune booster regimen."

"All pain that Lee had from the cancer is gone, and we have begun a walking program that will begin to get Lee back into shape physically. His goal is sometime in the next few months to take and pass the 'fit to fight' test at Westover. This is only possible because of the huge reduction of the tumor in his lung. He is able to take deep breaths, and the medical team is able to hear both lobes inflating."

Stacey said her husband's medical team fully believes Lee will be in remission at the end of the treatment cycle.

"They have laughed, cried and prayed with us," she said. "More importantly, they have had such a positive outlook on everything we are going through. Amazingly, their attitudes match ours. We could not have asked for a better team for this battle."

(Bowser is assigned to the 439th Airlift Wing public affairs office at Westover ARB.)



Together with his wife, Stacey, Senior Master Sgt. Lee Henry is combining traditional with alternative treatment methods in his battle against cancer.

(Courtesy photos)





THE SEARCH IS ON

RESERVE COMMAND SEEKING INNOVATIVE IDEAS

Air Force Reserve Command launched an innovation page on its public website in April, providing Airmen with all the tools needed to submit or share ideas, or discover existing initiatives around the military.

"Innovation has been at the forefront of our Air Force since the Wright Brothers took that first leap of 120 feet," said Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, Air Force Reserve Command commander. "Our Citizen Airmen of today are unrivaled in their ability to apply lessons learned from their civilian experiences into best practices for our military."

Innovation is defined as an actionable plan, method or device that is new or novel and results in a validated improvement that is capable of significantly increasing effectiveness or efficiency in Air Force Reserve operations. Innovative ideas, when implemented and replicated, typically generate significant systemic time and cost savings or cost avoidance.

Airmen are encouraged to submit their ideas through one of two programs: the Air Force's Airmen Powered by Innovation or AFRC's Replicating Proven Innovations. RPI aims to capture ideas, smartly implement them, and make them available for the betterment of the Air Force Reserve, the Air Force and the Department of Defense.

Ideas that have been implemented at any level can be submitted, but they should go through the submitters' chain of command. Innovations can originate from a best practice, a process improvement event, a conference, research or a special study, lessons learned from an inspection, an exercise or contingency, or an open forum such as social media.

A unique feature of the command's new web page is a forum that showcases innovations of Reservists and allows wings to upload videos illustrating their ideas.

Jackson said it's important for leadership to support innovation.

"We must infuse a culture of innovation at all levels," he said. "Input from all our Airmen is critical, and it is equally critical that we encourage our Airmen to offer their innovations."

"In today's rapidly shifting security environment, it is imperative that we continue to look to the future to determine how to build the future force, develop the team and recapitalize our fleet," Jackson said. "As we continue to leverage our innovation, experience and strengths, I am confident we will remain ready for the next 70 years."

Innovation page: afrc.af.mil/AboutUs/Innovation.aspx

Remembering 'Odie'

By Staff Sgt. Richard D. Mekkri

It's 7:15 a.m. and Staff Sgt. Brandon Smith from the 914th Security Forces Squadron at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York, is sitting down for breakfast in the dining facility at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia. With him are two hats: one a standard Airman battle uniform patrol cap and the other a bright red, sweat-salt stained combat arms baseball cap with "Odie" embroidered on the back. Odie, however, isn't Smith's nickname.

Staff Sgt. Michael "Odie" O'Dierno should be on the deployment with Smith and other members of the squadron, albeit wearing an ABU patrol cap and not his red combat arms cap.

But Odie tragically and unexpectedly passed away Jan. 3, right before he was due to deploy. He was 32 when he suffered a ruptured aorta and died at home. A happy young noncommissioned officer with a bright future, Odie left behind a wife, Amanda, and two children: Michela, 3, and Giovanni, 11.

Smith is the current custodian of Odie's cap. After breakfast, he continues on to the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron's main building and, as he does daily, hangs the red cap on a plaque at the armory where Odie should have been the NCO in charge. The plaque simply reads, "Odie's Place."

Before his death, Odie had attended the nearly month-long pre-deployment training at the Desert Defender schoolhouse at Fort Bliss, Texas. When he died, he was home on a three-day pass for the New Year's holiday prior to the six-month deployment.

His security forces teammates, who were in shock, quickly put together a memorial service and funeral. The team soon discovered that Odie's service dress coat was not perfectly serviceable and could not be worn during his funeral. Niagara Falls did not have any coats available that fit.

A series of phone calls to the 911th SFS at Pittsburgh ARS, Pennsylvania, produced a new coat that made the 180-mile journey to New York in the back of a Pennsylvania state trooper's car. The coat crossed state lines to a waiting New York state trooper's cruiser and was

delivered to the funeral home in time for a viewing.

This, along with a police-escorted hearse, highlight the bond that security forces members have with one another and with outside law enforcement officers. This bond enabled Odie to be laid to rest with full military honors in appropriate attire.

All combat arms training and maintenance personnel are issued red caps to wear on the firing line as a safety measure so that range officials can differentiate safety officials and instructors from students.

The 914th SFS CATM section presented Odie's cap to his widow, but she requested that members of the squadron take it with them on the deployment.

Smith and Staff Sgt. Michael Moore honored the request and carry the cap with them in all aspects of the deployment, bringing it to various events and locations. They have taken photos with the hat and posted them on Facebook, tagging Odie's wife in them so she can see where her husband's memory has traveled.

During the trip to the deployment location, several members of the team discussed the tragic loss and how they were still in

mourning and trying to heal. Since Odie was slated to be the NCOIC of the 332nd armory, one of the deployers suggested dedicating the armory to him.

Because Odie was not killed in the line of duty, an official building dedication was not possible. But this fact did not deter Odie's teammates. They tweaked the original idea, and the team nicknamed the armory for the duration of its 180-day deployment.

At the end of the deployment, the plaque and Odie's well-traveled hat will be presented to his widow and two children, along with lots of stories and photographs of where Odie's hat and memory have gone.

(Mekkri is assigned to the 914th Airlift Wing public affairs office at Niagara Falls ARS.)



Staff Sgt. Michael "Odie" O'Dierno (foreground) during pre-deployment training in Texas.

(Courtesy photo)



Still Going Strong: Recruiting's 'Ms. Belle' surpasses 50 years of civil service and has no plans of retiring any time soon.

THE 'BELLE' THAT KEEPS RINGING

by Bo Joyner

"Temporary Appointment – Not to Exceed Six Months."

That is what was written on the in-processing paperwork that awaited a young girl named Theota "Belle" Batchelor when she first reported for duty at the Warner Robins Air Materiel Area at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, on her 19th birthday. The date was Jan. 26, 1966.

With a diploma from nearby Fort Valley High School in her hand and a love for typing and spelling, young Belle eagerly accepted a GS-2, Step 1 clerk-typist position in the cost accounting office. Her annual pay? A grand total of \$3,814.

Little did she know at the time, but that "temporary appointment" would turn into a distinguished civil service career that has spanned more than half a century. "Ms. Belle" Fisher, as she is more commonly known these days throughout Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command at Robins AFB, celebrated 50 years of government service earlier this year.

And at the age of 69, she has no plans of retiring any time soon.

"I remember a few years ago when (former AFRC Recruiting Service commander) Col. Mike Mungavin retired, and I asked him how he knew it was time to go. He told me, 'If you're asking me that question, you're not ready. You will know when it's time. There will be no doubt.' Well, I still have doubt, so I guess it's not time yet," Ms. Belle said during a recent interview from the AFRC Recruiting Service office where she has worked since January 1997.

"I joke with Col. Christopher Nick (the current AFRC Recruiting Service commander) that it's his fault I'm still here," she said. "If he would just give me one bad boss, I would be gone. But he keeps giving me wonderful bosses."

Miss Belle's civil service career has taken her from WRAMA to Yokota Air Base in Japan, then to Seymour Johnson AFB in North Carolina, followed by Misawa AB, Japan, and back to Robins. She went from being a clerk-typist to an accounting technician to the head cashier in an accounting and finance office to a secretary to an editorial assistant, and, finally, to a marketing specialist.

There have been a lot of highlights in Ms. Belle's long career, and most of those revolve around helping other people. During the Vietnam War and the years that followed, she was a fixture at American Red Cross blood drives on base.

"I donated every time they let me," she said. "I figured if I couldn't go over there and help, I wanted to do everything I could here."

In all, she gave more than five gallons of blood.

While she was working at Seymour Johnson in the early 1990s, her husband was deployed with the local civil engineer squadron in support of Operation Desert Shield.

"There were a lot of young CE troops who deployed, leaving behind young wives and little babies," she said. "The CE commander asked if I could help out the wives." Of course, she said yes.

And she did everything she could to support and encourage a group of young wives and mothers who were separated from their husbands for the first time.

Over the years, Ms. Belle has worked her way from GS-2 all the way to GS-11. ... and she has loved every minute of it.

"I don't enjoy getting up at 4:40 every morning (it takes Ms. Belle about 40 minutes to get to work from her home outside of Perry each day), but once I get here, I'm in hog heaven," she said. "I love what I do and love all the people I get to work with."

The feeling is mutual for Ms. Belle's co-workers.

"It is an honor and pleasure to work with Ms. Belle," said Larry Lee, AFRC Recruiting Service executive officer. "She is as conscientious as anyone I've ever worked with and is very committed to her work. She has compassion for all others and is always looking for the good in people.

"Whenever she is not at work, which is rare, it is as if something is amiss," he said. "The Air Force and Air Force Reserve have gotten their money's worth with this employee for 50-plus years of superior service. ... and she isn't done yet. She's a woman of great integrity and character."

"I've had the opportunity to work side by side with Ms. Belle during my time in the Advertising Division of the Recruiting Service, and she was the first person to introduce herself and offer up any assistance I needed in order to get settled into the position," said Senior Master Sgt. Garrett Martin, the Recruiting Service chief of training. "I knew from that initial meeting that she would become more than a co-worker or a casual acquaintance but a good friend.



"Ms. Belle is a Recruiting Service icon who is loved and respected by all past and present Recruiting Service members."

Right: Theota "Belle" Fisher has worked for the Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service since January 1997. As part of her job, she got to meet country music star Josh Turner, who performed at the 2012 Independence Day concert in Warner Robins, Georgia.

(Courtesy photos)



"Ms. Belle's life experiences draw people to her," Martin said. "She has that big-hearted, kind-natured personality that attracts people to confide in her and look to her for advice. She is always willing to take the time to sit down and listen without passing judgement, and she provides sound, honest advice — maybe not exactly what you want to hear but what you need to hear. Ms. Belle exudes the Air Force core values of integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do."

"Ms. Belle is a Recruiting Service icon who is loved and respected by all past and present Recruiting Service members," said Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Zwelling, Recruiting Service superintendent. "She is so respected within recruiting that the Recruiting Service Chiefs Group unanimously made her an honorary chief. This honor has only been bestowed upon one other member of Recruiting Service."

About the only thing more important to Ms. Belle than her job is her family. She lives on a piece of land that has been in the Batchelor family for more than 110 years. Her mother, Vonda Batchelor, who will turn 90 this year, lives right up the road. Her son, Allen Engle, and brother, Alan Batchelor, have houses on the same road, as do a couple of cousins. Her daughter, Tammy LeBarre, lives 2 miles down the road. Ms. Belle has three grandchildren — Heather Benefield, Michael LeBarre and Mason Engle — who she adores.

"We love riding four-wheelers in the country and swimming, and I love cutting grass," Ms. Belle said. She also loves vacationing in Helen, Georgia, each Memorial Day and Labor Day.

"I've been going there for 34 years," she said. "I stay in the same hotel every year, and they still give me the same rate — the old-timer's rate they call it."

Over the past half century, this "old-timer" has reported to work for almost 13,000 days. She has been on the clock for about 104,000 hours. If she doesn't feel well and needs to take a day off, she has about 3,500 hours of sick leave sitting in the bank.

A lot of people joke with Ms. Belle that when she does finally retire, Robins AFB will have to shut down. While that might not be quite true, it is safe to say that the people who work with Ms. Belle hope her retirement is not coming any time soon. And when she does finally call it quits, Robins AFB will not be the same place without her.

(Joyner is assigned to the HQ AFRC public affairs office at Robins AFB. Master Sgt. Chance Babin, AFRC Recruiting Service, contributed to this story.)

Changing Status Allows Reservist to Pursue His Dream

Flexibility

By Bo Joyner



Lt. Col. Brian Biggs displays all of the medals he has received from participating in various running events throughout the country. (Matt Ebarb)

When Lt. Col. Brian Biggs' part-time hobby of operating a not-for-profit virtual running club raising money for a host of different charities turned into a full-time job, the active Guard and Reserve Reservist knew something had to give.

As a full-time AGR member, he was working eight to 10 hours a day as the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command section commander at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. Most days he would get home in the afternoon around 5:30 or 6:00. He would then work until around 1 a.m. on his "second" job. The next morning, he would get up and do it all over again.

Working 18 hours a day Monday through Friday and having more work to do on the weekends was taking its toll on the 40-year-old lieutenant colonel.

"I am tired," he said with a smile during a recent interview at his AFRC office.

Biggs said everything came to a head late one night in November when he and his wife got involved in a very emotional conversation about everything that was going on.

"I finally looked at her and said, 'Honey, it's not like I can just

quit my job.' But then I thought to myself, 'Wait a minute. I'm an Air Force Reservist. As a matter of fact, I can quit my job. I absolutely can do that.'

"My life had changed. I had this amazing opportunity to run my own nonprofit organization, and the Air Force Reserve has the flexibility to afford me the opportunity to change my life. I can continue to serve. I can quit being an AGR and become a traditional Reservist."

That's just what he did. Biggs has accepted a job at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, to be the deputy commander for the 315th Mission Support Group as a traditional Reservist. He will relinquish his current command on June 22 and plans on moving his family to their new home in Connecticut in July. His first unit training assembly at Charleston will be in September.

"I am ridiculously excited about my next job," he said. "From where I sit right now in a squadron command-equivalent job to being an MSG deputy commander is exactly the path I should be on. Hopefully, I'll be an MSG commander in a few years, or I could go and be a mobilization assistant somewhere.

"I can continue to serve for another 10 to 15 years. That's something I couldn't do as an AGR, but it's something I can do as a TR."

Biggs said that when he told Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson about his plans, the AFRC commander was thrilled.

"I thought he was going to start turning cartwheels," he said. "That is exactly what he wants his people to do. He wants them to be part time for a while and then full time for a while. He wants the Reserve to flex to meet the needs of the member, not the other way around. That's the beauty the Reserve provides — flexibility."

Becoming a traditional Reservist will give Biggs the time he needs to devote to what will soon be his full-time civilian job: operating Hogwarts Running Club, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that has experienced tremendous growth since Biggs started it in 2014.

The seed for the club was planted in 2013 when Biggs's wife, Dawn, ran her first half-marathon and piqued her husband's curiosity in running.

"I was at the finish line when she ran her first half-marathon in Florida in November 2013, and I saw the energy and excitement and all the people cheering," he said. "I also saw the big medal she got at the end, and I was bright green with envy."

Biggs started running, too, and completed his first half-marathon in January 2014. He has now completed 25 half marathons and two full marathons in just over two years. As he started running in more 13.1-mile events, he thought it would be a good idea to use his newfound hobby to raise money for charity. He started asking friends and family members to sponsor him, and Biggs donated the money that he raised to the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

"I was doing a lot of races, so pretty soon, my friends and family stopped answering my phone calls," he said. "So I started looking for another way to raise money."

It was at about this time that a college friend showed Biggs a Star Wars-themed medal she had gotten from a virtual running group. Biggs and his wife are big Harry Potter fans (he threw the seventh book across the room when Harry's pet owl, Hedwig, died), so they decided to start their own virtual running club with a theme based on the J.K. Rowling series of books and movies.

"The great thing about a virtual run is that it's your race, your pace, your place," Biggs said. "You pay your registration fee of \$25 and complete the run on or around the suggested date at your own location. You complete the distance, we send you your medal for finishing the distance."

No proof of completion is required as the club operates on the honor system.

Biggs launched the Hogwarts Running Club Facebook page and the club's first event, the Sorcerer's Stone 5K, on March 6, 2014. Thirty-two people signed up, completed the virtual run and received a medal.

More races followed every other month or so.

"Our first year, we raised \$10,670 for the Dana Farber Cancer Institute," Biggs said.

In 2015, the club conducted six runs and an additional "time turner" event and donated \$406,171 to several different charities, including Miles for Cystic Fibrosis, Dogs on Deployment, Achilles International and Noah's Light Foundation.

"This year we are on track to donate \$1 million to charities," he said.

Now, instead of having 32 people sign up to participate in a run, Hogwarts Running Club has nearly 6,000 people from all over the world take part in each event. The club has more than 35,000 members from all 50 states and 42 different countries sorted into four houses, each with its own Facebook community. It even has its own online store, called HorizontAlley, that sells HRC merchandise to raise more money for charity.

Biggs said a lot of people take part in the virtual runs to get the medals.

"Our medals aren't like anything else you've ever seen," he said. "They are intricate, unusual and totally spectacular. But that's not the only reason people take part. We've created a community where people can get together and talk about their love for running and their love for Harry Potter. They can geek out about their fandom. They cheer each other on. They encourage each other. We are a place of acceptance and tolerance, and we're helping people improve their lives.

"We have ultramarathon runners who run 200 miles a week giving advice to people who are 200 pounds overweight, trying to get off the couch for the first time.

"We've really tapped into something. We knew there were a lot of Harry Potter geeks out there, but now we realize that geeks make the best philanthropists because they believe a better world is possible. It's the world they've read about in these books."

The club has branched out into other areas of giving. When the club recently held its Molly Weasley scarf drive in conjunction with its Molly Weasley Ugly Jumper Run, Biggs said he was hoping to receive 2,000 scarves that he could redistribute to different charities. He received nearly 18,000 that he was able to pass on through the One Warm Coat organization.

Biggs has big plans for HRC in the years to come.

"We're just going to keep growing," he said, carrying out the club's mission of "Changing the Muggle world, one mile at a time." But there is no way he could keep up with that growth without the flexibility offered by the Air Force Reserve.

"Going from AGR to TR is a heck of a process," he said. "It's not as easy as it should be, but it is definitely doable. I am going to leave this summer with 15 active-duty years. I'm giving up career status, and a lot of people have told me that I'm insane for doing that. I'm going to willingly give it up because if I didn't, Hogwarts Running Club would probably wither and die. It is doing so much good that I can't let that happen."

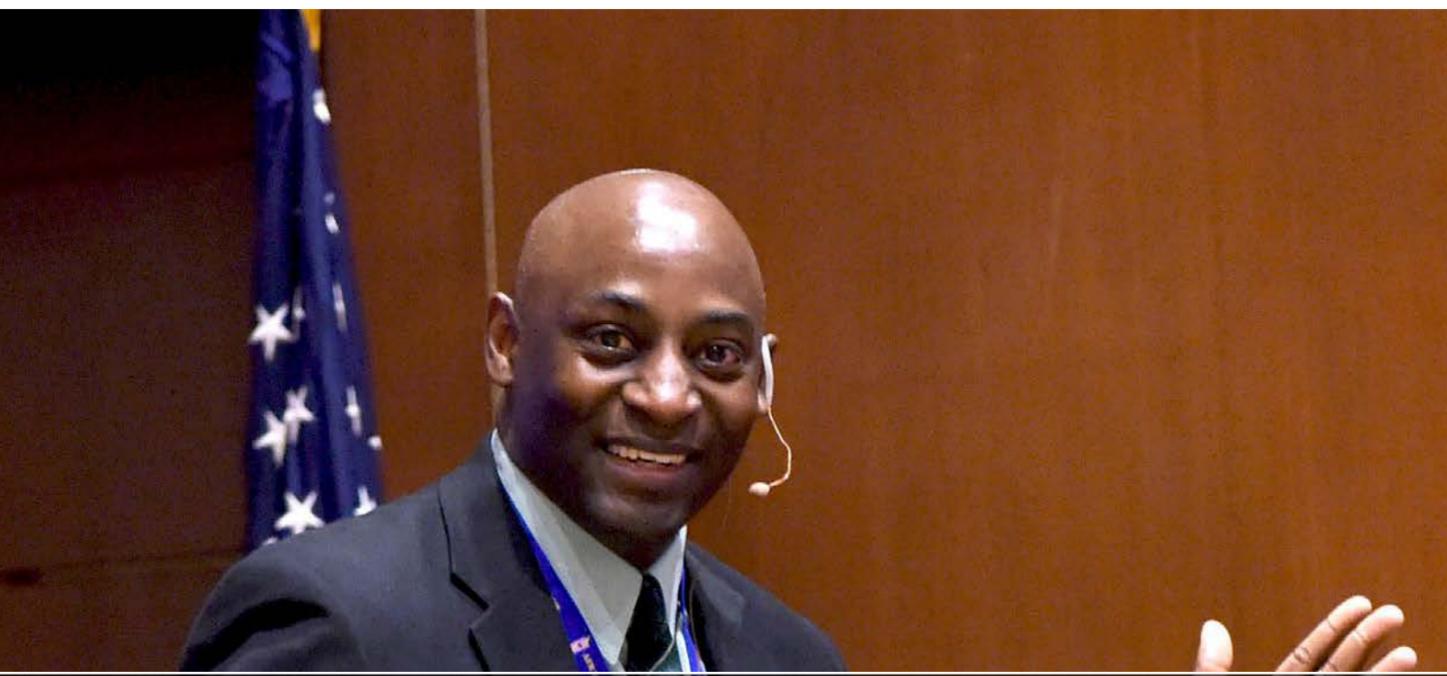
More information about the club is available online at www.hogwartsrunningclub.org.

(Joyner is assigned to the HQ AFRC public affairs office at Robins AFB.)



Biggs shows off one of the Hogwarts Running Club medals. (Matt Ebarb)

Opportunities, Not Obstacles By Staff Sgt. Sarah Hanson



At least two days a week, an Air Force senior enlisted leader walks into his office and prepares himself for anything and everything the day might offer.

Senior Master Sgt. Eric Smith, 340th Flying Training Group first sergeant at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, is a traditional Reservist among other things, including a husband, professor, talk show host and volunteer.

Smith joined the Air Force in May 1984. His father, a former military police officer, inspired him to sign up.

"He would always talk about the places he travelled and the people he met," Smith said. "He spoke about how great the Air Force bases were, so I wanted to follow in his footsteps."

As an active-duty vehicle operator and dispatcher, Smith traveled the world just like his father. He went from Loring Air Force Base in Maine to Lakenheath Air Base in England, and then he landed in Washington, D.C.

While stationed in the nation's capital, Smith decided to join the Air Force Reserve. His first duty station as a Reservist was at Shaw AFB, South Carolina.

"I didn't want to get out and throw away 5 1/2 years of active-duty time," Smith said. "I decided to become an individual mobilization augmentee because the flexibility of this program appealed to me."

When Smith wasn't serving time as a Reservist, he was out in the community protecting and serving as a South Carolina state trooper.

In May 2001, Smith was selected to become a military training instructor, and he earned his campaign hat in August 2001. He served as a MTI at the 433rd Training Squadron at Lackland AFB, Texas.

As the years went by, Smith advanced from instructing to supervising to managing, and he also went from Reserve to active-duty back to Reserve status. He deployed several times in support of Operations El Dorado Canyon, Desert

Shield, Desert Storm, Allied Force and Enduring Freedom.

Smith has many accomplishments, but the one that sticks out the most in the Reserve community is his contribution to the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. Yellow Ribbon promotes the well-being of Reservists and their families by connecting them with resources before and after deployments.

In 2014, the chief of the Yellow Ribbon program, Mary Hill, added Smith as a breakout speaker who talked about resilience. He created three courses for all levels of deployment and reintegration. Smith participated in 19 Yellow Ribbon events and taught 76 resiliency courses to more than 10,000 Airmen and family members. He became part of a cadre of keynote speakers in 2015.

"We get comments about how people enjoyed his class and that it hit the target and gave them some ideas on how to handle separation and reintegration," Hill said. "It's just a real positive experience for everyone who attends one of his classes. We enjoy having him there (at Yellow Ribbon events)."

After being involved in Yellow Ribbon for a while, Smith decided to turn his attention toward helping people in his local community of San Antonio, specifically jail inmates.

"If you look at the incarceration rate of young people, it's climbing, and it's because they're not being taught conflict resolution or how to actively look for jobs and to set themselves up for success to get jobs," Smith said.

Smith and his wife, Jennifer, who is a staff chaplain at a San Antonio area hospital, created a job resume and life transition program to try and help male and female inmates prepare for life on the outside. They have talked to and helped more than 2,000 inmates.

"We wanted to try and set them up for success because my wife and I strongly believe in going out into the community and making a difference."

"When these people get out, they shouldn't have to keep paying for their crimes," Smith said. "Some don't know how to interview successfully for jobs, which is why most end up returning to jail or prison."

"We wanted to try and set them up for success because my wife and I strongly believe in going out into the community and making a difference."

In addition to his involvement in the military and all his volunteer work, Smith has earned eight academic degrees in a variety of subjects including a doctorate in management.

His passion for education dates back to a very early age.

"I grew up in Harlem, New York, in a disadvantaged neighborhood," Smith said. "Going to school was the most important step in getting out of my situation."

Smith, a former university dean, loves the learning environment so much that he teaches at two universities and a community college in his spare time as a college professor. He teaches government, business, management, leadership, criminology and organizational psychology courses to more than 8,000 students.

He has authored two books and published groundbreaking research exploring the relationship between interpersonal workplace violence from supervisors and co-workers and domestic violence from intimate partners. Numerous organizational leaders around the world have used Smith's research to improve their work environments. Smith's efforts in and out of the military haven't gone

unnoticed. In 2014, he received the Air Force First Sergeant of the Year award.

"To me it was a victory for the Reserve, because I competed against every first sergeant in the Air Force," he said. "It was a moment I'll never forget as long as I live."

"This would not have been possible without the support from my wife, Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, 4th Air Force, the 433rd Air Wing, the 433rd Mission Support Group and the 433rd Security Forces Squadron."

Smith transferred to the 340th Flying Training Group in February 2015, and he said the 340th and 22nd Air Force are great places to work and grow.

For more than 30 years, Smith has served the Air Force and has seen it go through good times and bad times. However, no matter how bad times get, he always has a positive outlook.

"I know we live in uncertain times with the budget and the Air Force transitioning, but I encourage everyone to see opportunities, not obstacles," he said. "If we all could see things that way, our future would be much brighter."

(When she wrote this article, Hanson was assigned to the HQ AFRC public affairs office at Robins AFB, Georgia. She left the Air Force in April.)



Among his many pursuits, Senior Master Sgt. Eric Smith of the 340th Flying Training Group at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, is a college professor, Yellow Ribbon keynote speaker, radio talk show host and author. (Far left) Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson (left), Air Force Reserve Command commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Cameron B. Kirksey (right), former AFRC command chief, honor Smith and other command award winners.

(Courtesy photos)



Airman Category
Staff Sgt. Aaron M. Tobler
50th Intelligence Squadron
Beale Air Force Base, California



First Sergeant Category
Senior Master Sgt. Matthew L. Mason
419th Fighter Wing
Hill Air Force Base, Utah

AIR FORCE RESERVE COMMAND 2015 OUTSTANDING AIRMEN OF THE YEAR



Senior Noncommissioned Officer Category
Master Sgt. James J. Guldjard
18th Air Refueling Squadron
McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas



Noncommissioned Officer Category
Tech. Sgt. Gilberto P. Hernandez
340th Flying Training Group
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas