

# Air Citizen AIRMAN

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Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve



Colorado Reservists wrap up busy

# WILDFIRE

Season

# FROM THE TOP



By Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson  
Commander,  
Air Force Reserve Command

## Lucky to lead and ready to serve

I am one lucky guy.

I am lucky, and humbled, to have the trust placed in me to serve as chief of the Air Force Reserve and commander, Air Force Reserve Command. During my active and Reserve career, I have had the opportunity to see the inner workings of many commands and organizations, and you won't find a better outfit than the Air Force Reserve.

It is appropriate that the name of this magazine is *Citizen Airman*, because the vast majority of the success of Air Force Reserve Command can be attributed to you, the Citizen Airmen. You are the heart and soul of this command. I am confident that with your support and dedication, we will continue to build upon our past accomplishments to attain even higher levels of success.

A few days after I took command, Gen. Mark E. Welsh III assumed responsibilities as the 20th chief of staff of the Air Force. In his speech, Welsh said, "I believe the Air Force remains the model of total force integration. In battlespaces all over the world, active duty, Guard and Reserve Airmen today operate seamlessly to get the job done, and they expect us to do the same back here. I commit myself to doing exactly that. ... I believe every member of our Air Force family is critically important to our success, and each of them deserves to be treated that way."

We are very fortunate to have a leader who recognizes the importance of the total force and the contribution of Air Force Reservists around the world.

This is an uncertain time for both our nation and our Air Force. We face the real possibility of additional changes to force structure, and difficult decisions are still to be made. However, one thing is certain — the Air Force Reserve is a strong and critical component of our nation's defense.

I look forward to visiting with you over the coming years. I want to hear your ideas and recommendations as I connect Air Force priorities to our Reserve capabilities. I am committed to ensuring we are always prepared to accomplish our mission. We will continue to strengthen our AFR team and stand ready to meet new security challenges in the future.

We will focus on our strengths, the greatest of which is you — our Airmen.

Thanks for all you do.

# CHIEF'S VIEW



By Chief Master Kathleen R. Buckner  
Command Chief Master Sergeant,  
Air Force Reserve Command

## Thank those who make your service possible

As Citizen Airmen, we face many challenges: ensuring our family members are happy and healthy, and their needs are met; maintaining our commitment to be combat-ready 24/7; and ensuring our civilian career is on track. As we do our best in each of these areas, we are pulled in so many different directions that we can lose sight of the big picture and the important things in life. Remember that one day our uniform will come off and we WILL retire. Take care of the ones you love, and remember to say "thank you" for their support.

As Citizen Airmen, we also understand the importance of having the support of our civilian employers in the private and government sectors. They, too, make sacrifices so that we can maintain the balance, and without them our ability to be Citizen Airmen would not be possible. Don't miss the opportunity to thank them for their understanding, contribution and support.

It takes our individual support systems and our own personal commitment, strength, pride and courage to be combat-ready Airmen 24/7. Every time I am out on the road, I hear how difficult it is to maintain technical proficiency when all your time seems to be wrapped up accomplishing ancillary training, professional military education, immunizations, physicals, dental exams, tier two training, career development courses and fitness testing. I hear it, I live it, and I get it.

Ancillary training plays a critical role in every individual's preparedness and ability to help each other in both war and peacetime; makes us stronger warriors, leaders and allies; and, when combined with appropriate PME, prepares us in critical ways our technical training cannot. As I say that, I also want to assure you that your senior leadership is working to find ways to increase the amount of "hands-on" work time that you get during unit training assemblies and annual tours and keep the additive ancillary training requirements to a minimum.

The strength of the Air Force Reserve will forever be our members and the three-legged stool of family, military and civilian employment. This is a concept/relationship we've all heard preached many times. My friend and mentor Chief Master Sgt. Karen Krause commented the other day that we do not and could not do this job on our own. She also reminded me that I had "better be practicing what I am preaching."

So, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of you who ARE combat ready and thank you to all of the "support staff." Help and support come from many directions so that we can enjoy the privilege of wearing this uniform, reaching our goals and contributing to our nation as only Citizen Airmen can. You, your family and civilian employers are making daily sacrifices. It is noticeable and greatly appreciated. Thank you!

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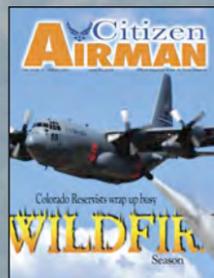
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On the cover: It has been an extremely busy year for Department of Defense organizations involved in the airborne firefighting mission, including the 302nd Airlift Wing at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. C-130s equipped with the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System began battling wildfires throughout the Western United States in late June. As of Sept. 14, MAFFS aircraft and crews had performed 1,011 drops, releasing close to 2.5 million gallons of retardant. The total makes this season the second busiest in MAFFS history in terms of gallons dropped, surpassed only by the 1994 MAFFS season when approximately 5 million gallons were dropped. (Tech. Sgt. Daniel Butterfield)



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Senior Airman Kris Tomes, a pararescue jumper with the 308th Rescue Squadron, does a free-fall dive from a Canadian CC-115 Buffalo aircraft over Comox, Canada, as part of training with Canadian search-and-rescue personnel. The 308th RQS, part of the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., participates in three exercises each year with Canadian search-and-rescue personnel. (Staff Sgt. Anna-Marie Wyant)

**Gen. Mark A. Welsh III** *Chief of Staff, United States Air Force*  
**Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson** *Commander, Air Force Reserve Command*  
**Col. Robert P. Palmer** *Director of Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command*  
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# RESERVE SNAPSHOT

Robert Jacobs, a firefighter assigned to the 434th Air Refueling Wing at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind., rappels down the base radar tower. He is testing new harnesses used for rescue operations.



Staff Sgt. James Godar, assigned to the 433rd Training Squadron, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, conducts an open ranks inspection on a Junior ROTC student during Drill Leadership Camp at Middle Georgia College in Cochran, Ga. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)



Camden Rubin, son of Tech. Sgt. Camille Rubin of the 94th Communications Squadron, takes his turn in the C-130 flight simulator during Bring Your Kids to Work Day at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga. (Don Peek)



Team Travis practices the combat capability of safely and swiftly launching a large number of aircraft in a matter of minutes. The mass launch's close-interval procession of 12 taxiing aircraft is called an "elephant walk," a World War II Army Air Corps term evoking a parade of pachyderms. The launch of six KC-10A Extenders, three C-17 Globemaster IIIs and three C-5 Galaxies provided essential training across the spectrum of mobility capabilities, including flight operations, operations support, aircraft maintenance, fuels and air traffic control. (Lt. Col. Robert Couse-Baker)



# RESERVE SNAPSHOT

Staff Sgt. Hector Gonzalez, a fire team leader with the 927th Security Forces Squadron at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., prepares to lay down covering fire for his teammate behind him. Gonzalez and other members of the 927th SFS were participants in a training course that taught them how to accurately engage targets while moving as a team and squad. The training used non-lethal rounds for safety purposes. (Staff Sgt. Shawn Rhodes)



Senior Airman Jennie Estrella, 452nd Aeromedical Staging Squadron, participates in ability to survive and operate training at March Air Reserve Base, Calif. The ATSO training prepared Airmen for an upcoming operational readiness exercise. (Staff Sgt. Matthew Smith)

Senior Airman Antonio Ortega (left), Master Sgt. Nelson Rodriguez (center) and Senior Airman Christian Marrero-Santana load a GBU-54 bomb onto an F-16 during the 482nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron's quarterly Load Crew Competition at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. The winning load crews for each quarter will compete against each other at the end of the year for Homestead's Best Load Crew of the Year title.



During Arctic Thunder Open House 2012 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, an F-22 takes off and flies past the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds. (Tech. Sgt. Dana Rosso)



# ROUND THE RESERVE

## New AFSC Merges Certain Gunners, Engineers, Loadmasters

Approximately 925 enlisted aviators will find themselves with a new Air Force specialty code Oct. 31.

The new career field, 1A9X1 special missions aviation, will merge aerial gunners, flight engineers on vertical lift aircraft, such as the HH-60 Blackhawk and CV-22 Osprey, and loadmasters on AC-130 gunships and other non-standard aircraft used by special operations forces.

"The new career field was created to balance and sustain the career enlisted aviator force and create a larger pool of qualified personnel to perform the duties required to meet the needs of current and future Air Force missions," said Chief Master Sgt. Douglas Massingill, the career field manager for career enlisted aviators.

Master Sgt. Matthew Ardis, career enlisted aviator-in-service recruiter, expanded on that point.

He said merging the career field of aerial gunners, which typically overflows with new applicants, and the career field of certain loadmasters and flight engineers, which often suffers from manning shortages, results in the sustainable balance of which Massingill referred.

The merger won't be too drastic for most of the affected Airmen, Ardis said, since many gunner duties already overlap with those of engineers and loadmasters.

"Flight engineers have been working guns since the guns have been on the aircraft," Ardis said.

The learning curve might be slightly steeper for loadmasters, but Ardis said he expects them to catch on quickly because, while they may not typically fire aircraft guns, they still have familiarity with their basic function and operation.

The requirements for Airmen or new recruits interested in joining the special missions aviation career field include the ability to:

- pass a class III flight physical;
- score at least 60 on the mechanical portion or 57 on the general portion of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test;
- lift 70 pounds; and
- obtain a secret security clearance. (*Air Force News Service*)

## New Civilian Pay System on the Way

All Air Force civilian employees are slated to be using a new, standardized Air Force pay system by June 2013.

The Automated Time Attendance and Production System will standardize the pay method across the service. The system has already been implemented at Air Force Global Strike Command and Air National Guard bases.

According to Doug Bennett, associate deputy assistant secretary for Air Force financial opera-

tions, the system will be implemented service-wide in eight waves during the next year and is meant to save time so personnel can focus on accomplishing the Air Force mission.

"It allows folks to focus on the mission and allows the secretary of the Air Force and chief of staff of the Air Force to make informed decisions about where we need to spend our money," Bennett said.

Along with better accountability and efficiency, the system also eliminates paper use. Currently, many Air Force civilians manually report their hours using a paper-based system, Bennett said. ATAAPS will allow a user to enter his or her time and have the supervisor approve it electronically, providing an audit trail while increasing the accuracy of financial statements.

"It's a lot easier to trace timecards when they are centrally located," said Benjamin Yarish, Air Force financial management information technology portfolio manager.

According to an Air Force study, 50 percent of Air Force civilian timecards were not properly approved by supervisors or entered into the Defense Civilian Personnel System in a timely manner. These inaccuracies have resulted in overpayments, underpayments or, in some cases, no payments, according to the study.

"This standardized system will provide transparency and auditability," said John Koski, director of Air Force information systems and technology.

"When your boss spends two hours every other week signing timecards, that's time that person isn't making sure that aircraft are being repaired or ready to fly," Bennett said.

The Air Force is not the first service branch to use the system.

"This system has been around for about 10 years," Yarish said. "Army is already using it. Navy is looking to use it. Therefore, its track record provides confidence to use the system Air Force-wide." (*Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo, Air Force Public Affairs Agency*)

## Reservists May Apply to Attend Academy, Prep School

Air Force Reserve enlisted Airmen who are interested in earning a commission by attending the Air Force Academy or Air Force Academy Preparatory School may apply through the Leaders Encouraging Airmen Development program.

Each year, a total of 170 slots for direct entry to the academy and prep school are split evenly between the active and reserve components. This year, 50 Airmen were offered appointments. Airmen have until Dec. 31 to submit an application for entry next fall.

Applicants must be under age 23 by July 1, 2013, for entry into the academy or under age 22 by the same date for entry into the prep school; single; U.S. citizens (or able to obtain citizenship prior to entry); and have no dependents.

Anyone wanting to apply must submit an Air Force Form 1786. The form, along with a commander's endorsement, must be mailed to HQ USAFA/RRS, 2304 Cadet Drive Suite 2300, USAF Academy, CO 80840-5025.

For information, check out the academy's admissions website at [www.academyadmissions.com](http://www.academyadmissions.com), the admissions Android/iPhone app or the academy's admissions Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/academy/admissions](http://www.facebook.com/academy/admissions)). Also, interested enlisted members may contact Capt. Christopher Goshorn at 719-333-2233 or via email at [usafa\\_lead@usafa.edu](mailto:usafa_lead@usafa.edu). (*Staff reports*)

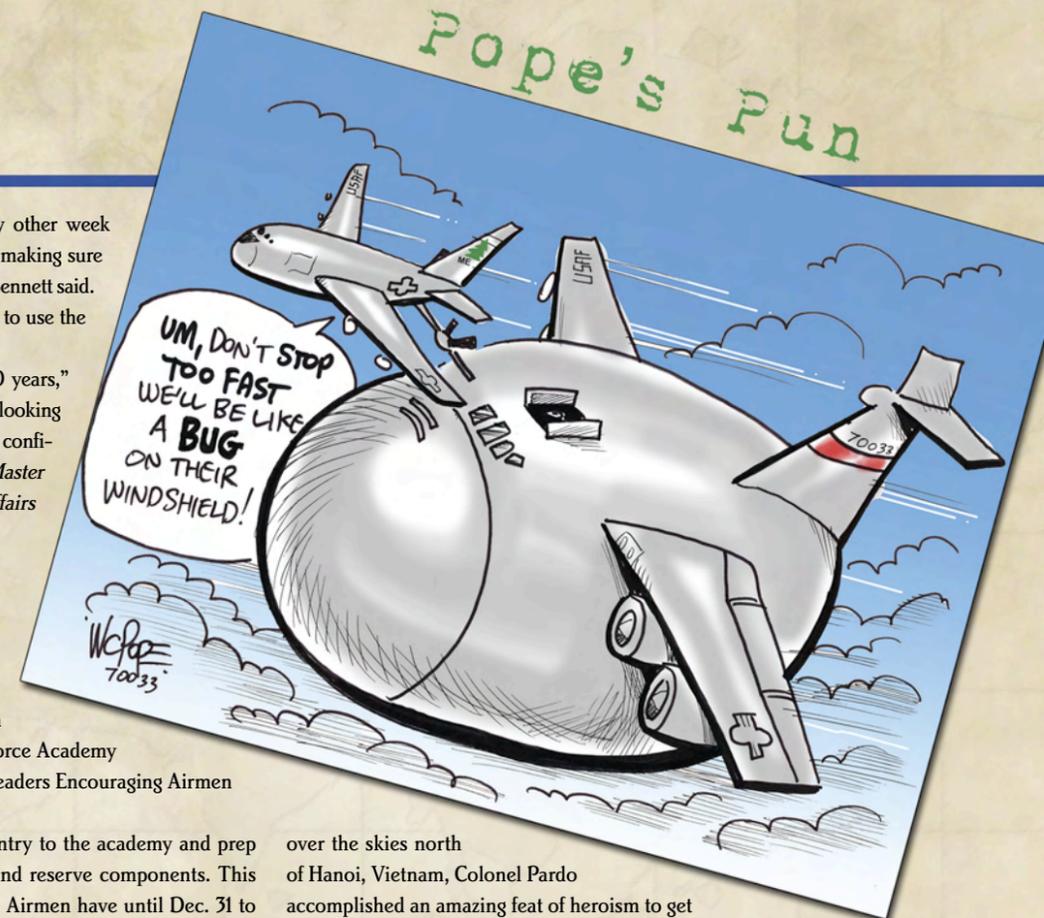
## Wingman Toolkit Website Up and Running

The new Air Force Reserve Wingman Toolkit website is up and running. The site has a new look and new tools but the same mission as the old Wingman Project website: to provide Citizen Airmen and their families with everything they need to be resilient wingmen.

"The Wingman Toolkit is your training center for being a more resilient wingman," said Lt. Col. David Ubelhor, chief mental health consultant to the Air Force Reserve Command command surgeon. "The newly designed website features loads of local, category-specific resources centered around the four pillars of comprehensive Airman fitness: physical, mental, social and spiritual."

Also featured on the website is an interactive ACE training guide, where Reservists can learn the suicide-intervention method to ask, care and escort. In addition, there is a Pardo Push section on the site.

"We've chosen the Pardo Push to exemplify what it means to be a good wingman," Ubelhor said. "And we're fortunate to have on our AFR team retired Air Force Col. Bob Pardo. In March of 1967 during a combat mission



over the skies north of Hanoi, Vietnam, Colonel Pardo accomplished an amazing feat of heroism to get his wingman to a safer place."

Ubelhor said he is excited about the new Wingman Toolkit website and is eager to see it grow in the future.

"We are always looking for input from Citizen Airmen around the country, and there's a place on the Toolkit for Reservists and their family members to submit articles, recommendations, stories and ideas on being a good wingman."

The colonel said people who want to submit something can simply click on the "Add to the Toolkit" binder in the bottom right corner of the website.

The new website is accessible to all Airmen as well as their friends and families. Check it out today at [www.AFRC.WingmanToolkit.org](http://www.AFRC.WingmanToolkit.org). (*Staff reports*)

## Hotel Tax Exemptions Could Help Save Millions

During a time of increasing Department of Defense budget constraints, the Air Force continuously looks for innovative solutions that save money and positively impact the mission.

Air Education and Training Command's financial management office said Air Force travelers could help save millions of dollars by taking advantage of tax exemptions while using the government traveler's card at hotels in select states.

Those traveling to Alaska, Delaware, Florida, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas or Wisconsin and staying in off-base lodging are exempt from paying state sales tax for the hotel room. Visit <https://smartpay.gsa.gov/about-gsa-smartpay/tax-information/state-response-letter> for a list of states hyperlinked to more information about the tax exemptions.

Temporary duty budgets are shrinking throughout the Air Force. As a result, the demand for online meeting capabilities, such as Defense Connect Online and video teleconferences, is increasing to save money. However, there are times when using web-based capabilities or video teleconferences

**CHANGE OF COMMAND** — Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson (right) became chief of Air Force Reserve and assumed command of Air Force Reserve Command in a ceremony July 30 at Robins Air Force Base, Ga. He replaced Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner Jr., who retired from the Air Force with 39 years of military service after the change of command. Stenner had served as chief and commander since June 2008. Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Larry O. Spencer officiated the ceremony. Jackson is a 1978 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He completed more than 14 years on active duty, including flying tours in Europe and the Pacific, before joining the Air Force Reserve in 1992. The general has held numerous wing leadership and command positions, as well as staff assignments at Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, Headquarters U.S. Pacific Command and Headquarters U.S. Air Force.



SSGT. ALEX SALTEROFF

are not the best methods for conducting a meeting.

"When that's the case and TDYs are required to fulfill the mission, we can do more to stretch our dollars," said Judy Griffis, a financial specialist with AETC.

For a TDY to San Antonio, there are three taxes that are added on to room rates: 6 percent room state tax, 9 percent room city tax and 1.75 percent county tax. Since the lodging rate for San Antonio is \$106 per day, travelers are potentially unnecessarily paying \$17.76 in taxes daily for their hotel room. Those kinds of expenditures can add up quickly.

Griffis gave a few tips on how to save money when staying in off-base lodging in the states mentioned above:

- When going to a location that offers the state tax exemption, use it.
- Print out the form from the website or, better yet, embed the form into your orders, just like you embed your receipts into your voucher. This will give you access to the form from anywhere.

• Give the tax-exempt form to the hotel clerk when you check in.

• Last but not least, support a cost-conscious culture. (Staff Sgt. Clinton Atkins, Air Education and Training Command public affairs, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas)

## Civil Engineers Help Rebuild Tennessee School

Members of an Alaska Reserve civil engineer squadron traveled to Tennessee in August to help rebuild a school that was destroyed by a tornado in 2011.

The Reservists installed lighting units, rewired the facility to meet code, hung sheet rock and painted the interior of the Riverside Christian Academy's field house in Fayetteville.

This service project was part of Air Force Reserve Command's Innovative Readiness Training program that provides an opportunity for unit members to get hands-on training in their career field.

"As a CE unit with a deployment mission, we

don't get many opportunities to actually do our jobs," said Senior Master Sgt. Mary Beth Eassa, operations management superintendent for the 477th Civil Engineer Squadron at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. "Projects like these help us stay proficient in our jobs."

Of the 19 CES Airmen who participated in the project, all were traditional Reservists.

"We appreciate the precious time that employers allow our members to serve our country," said Lt. Col. Michael Forcht, 477th CES commander. "In return, employers gain a more experienced technician, and some deserving organization gets a helping hand and an opportunity to see our professionals at work."

While the IRT projects provide Airmen with a way to hone skills and give back to the community, they also offer an opportunity to improve unit cohesion.

"(These projects allow our Airmen to) work as a team in and out of their career fields and often with personnel from different bases," Forcht said. "Gaining this team experience devel-

ops trust among squadron members, leverages experience and training opportunities from other units, and allows noncommissioned officers and officers an opportunity to develop leadership and management skills. These skills then can be utilized to their fullest during our deployments." (Capt. Ashley Conner, 477th Fighter Group public affairs, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson)

## Defense Department Implements New Policy for TDY and PCS Cancellations

Effective Oct. 1, any travel authorization that includes air travel must be approved and ticketed at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled flight departure to prevent airline reservations from being cancelled. This is due to a new policy instituted by the airlines under the fiscal year 2013 General Services Administration City Pair contract.

Under the new policy, if an authorizing official does not approve an authorization within 72 hours of departure, the airline reservation will be cancelled and the traveler will arrive at the airport without a ticket or a reservation in the airline's system. This applies to all city pair and non-contract government flights that are either booked through the Defense Travel System or a commercial travel office.

Those travelers making travel plans within 72 hours of departure must have their authorization approved and tickets issued within 24 hours of creation to avoid cancellation. If making plans within 24 hours of departure, authorizations must be approved and ticketed at least six hours prior to flight departure time to avoid cancellation.

If airline reservations are cancelled, a traveler will be notified via email or phone by their commercial travel office.

Arriving at the airport without a ticket can impact mission and travel funds, and put unnecessary stress on travelers. If this occurs, travelers are not advised to re-book at the airline counter. Often, counter agents are not familiar with GSA's City Pair Program and may book travelers on a full-priced fare at a much higher cost.

To re-book a flight, travelers should follow their normal ticketing process. Travelers should take their travel itinerary with them to the airport. If a reservation has been cancelled, the itinerary will provide contact information for the commercial travel office as well as reservation details to aid in re-booking.

In the current fiscal environment where it is necessary to be conservative with travel budgets, monitoring the status of travel documents and ensuring travel authorizations are approved is the best way to avoid unnecessary costs and stress associated with re-booking travel.

Following are some tips for travelers:

- Monitor the status of your travel authorization. If your trip is approaching and your authorization has not been approved, contact your authorizing official immediately. If your AO is unavailable, contact your defense travel administrator.
- Ensure your DTS profile is current. Often, travelers forget to update their profile with the government travel charge card expiration date if they received a new card. Without a current card in your profile, a reservation cannot be purchased.
- Take your travel itinerary with you to the airport. If your reservation has been cancelled, the itinerary will provide contact information for your CTO as well as reservation details to help you re-book. (Air Force News Service) ★

## Tuskegee Airmen donates medal to Alaska fighter squadron

By Capt. Ashley Conner

The 302nd Fighter Squadron at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, is now home to a Congressional Gold Medal in Aviation.

Tuskegee Airman retired Col. Charles McGee presented his personal medal to Col. Bryan Radliff, 477th Fighter Group commander, during the 41st Annual Tuskegee Airmen Convention in Las Vegas, Nev., Aug. 2.

During World War II, McGee was a member of the 302nd FS. The unit painted the tails of its airplanes red, which led to the Tuskegee Airmen famously being known as the Red Tails.

The 302nd FS today flies the F-22 Raptor and falls under the 477th FG. The 477th and 302nd were reactivated at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in October 2007, becoming Air Force Reserve Command's first F-22 Raptor unit.

"Finish what I started," said

McGee, who holds an Air Force record of 409 fighter combat missions flown in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, after shaking hands with a few members of the 477th who attended the convention.

"It is a humbling experience to be in the presence of such aviation greatness as Colonel McGee and the other Tuskegee Airmen," said Senior Airman Marren Clay, a crew chief who attended the medal presentation. "The Tuskegee Airmen began a tradition of greatness that I hope to carry on."

President George W. Bush presented McGee and the other Tuskegee Airmen the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007 for their long-ago heroism. Individual Airmen received bronze replicas, while the original gold medal resides at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. ★

(Conner is chief of public affairs for the 477th FG.)



Tuskegee Airman retired Col. Charles McGee donated his replica of the Congressional Gold Medal for display in the 302nd Fighter Squadron at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. President George W. Bush presented McGee and other Tuskegee Airmen with the medal in 2007 for their long-ago heroism.

CAPT. ASHLEY CONNER

# It's Your Money

By Ralph Lunt

## Anything change?

No doubt, as a result of a promotion, marriage, birth of a child, loss of a loved one, inheritance, etc., many of our lives are different than they were a year ago. Keeping up with changes in your world is vital to your financial mission success! Here are some abbreviated checklist items to run through.



• Life insurance: Confirm beneficiaries and buy or cancel policies. Full disclosure, I cancelled a term policy I bought 10 years ago. And if I were to die tomorrow, my remaining insurance covers our family need.

• Property insurance: Make sure home improvements are covered, and review your deductibles. If you have built up your savings, you may want to consider "self insuring" the first few thousand dollars and raise your deductibles to reduce your premium. Consider a liability umbrella.

• Debt: Am I doing the right things to achieve financial power by reducing or eliminating "bad debt" with high interest rates?

• Civilian employer flexible spending accounts: If you are in a use-or-lose situation, you know what to do.

• Update/create your will: It can be done for free! Here's a web site to get you started: <https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil/lass/lass.html>.

• Thrift Savings Plan: Confirm your beneficiaries and investment allocation, and determine if and how much you wish to allocate to the soon-to-be-available Roth TSP. Over 50? Look into the catch-up provision.

• Children's college fund: Research 529 plans/Roth Individual Retirement Accounts as a way to fund higher education. For those with the resources, these accounts can be an excellent tool to assist family or friends. Consult an adviser.

• Powers of attorney: If needed, would you be able to handle the financial affairs of a sick family member, such as a parent?

Understand, this information is far from all-inclusive, but I hope it gets you thinking and drives some action. I'll assure you this, as in the aviation world, not making appropriate corrections in changing conditions can certainly lead to undesirable results. Fly safe!

(Editor's note: This feature is designed to provide financial advice and information of a general nature. Individuals should conduct their own research and consult a financial adviser before making any financial decisions. Based in Cleveland, Ohio, Mr. Lunt is a certified financial planner and vice president of a financial planning and consulting firm. He is also a colonel in the Air Force Reserve, serving as the reserve forces director of the Great Lakes Region of the Civil Air Patrol adviser's program.)

# MAFFS 2012

## Busy year for 302nd includes battling fires in own 'backyard'

By Ann Skarban

2012 will go down as one of the busiest in history for members of the 302nd Airlift Wing at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., involved in the aerial firefighting mission. In addition to the heavy work load, the Reservists will remember 2012 as a year they were called on to battle raging wildfires in their own backyard.

Just after noon on June 23, residents of Colorado Springs couldn't help but notice a massive plume of smoke billowing from the foothills of the mountains on the city's west side. A wildland fire had started and appeared to be growing rapidly.

As local television and radio stations interrupted their scheduled programming to alert the public of the looming danger, Reservists who support the wing's modular airborne fire fighting, or MAFFS, mission were also keeping a close eye on the smoke plume as it continued to grow higher and spread farther. Many of them knew this fire, located just miles away from Peterson AFB, could be the start of the 2012 MAFFS season.

"I was doing yard work and just happened to look up and saw the smoke plume. I knew immediately it was a big fire because I've seen so many in other parts of the country," said Senior Master Sgt. Dave Carey, a 22-year MAFFS-qualified C-130 flight engineer.

As he watched the plume grow, Carey said he had a funny feeling about it.

"We have all heard, it's not a matter of if but when, and this is the when," he said, referring to a wildland fire threatening the Colorado Springs area. "You just knew it would be serious because of the rate at which it grew. It went from a tiny little plume to something huge in hours. My family and I were waiting for the phone to ring (for the 302nd MAFFS capability to be activated)."

That evening, as the fire continued to grow and the smell of smoke permeated throughout Colorado Springs, Lt. Col. Luke Thompson, chief of aerial firefighting for the 302nd AW and a 16-year MAFFS-qualified C-130 aircraft commander, received the official request for the wing's assistance from the U.S. Forest Service. Together with the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing, they would be providing aerial firefighting support for the Forest Service's Rocky Mountain area.

Less than 24 hours after the start of the fire, now named the Waldo Canyon fire, the wing's aerial porters were alerted. During the early morning hours of June 24, in 90-plus degree heat, they began loading the large Forest Service MAFFS II tank systems into the cargo bay of the two MAFFS-designated 302nd C-130s

within view of the fire's

advancing smoke and flames. The aircrews who earlier were on standby for MAFFS support were now on full alert.

"The response of everyone in the wing was outstanding," Thompson said. "When we were initially activated, we had more volunteers than we needed. Maintenance and aerial port came out on a non-flying weekend to load systems and get the planes ready. They (the MAFFS-equipped C-130s and crews) were ready by noon, just hours after getting the official request for assistance from the U.S. Forest Service."

On June 25 two of the Reserve wing's MAFFS-equipped C-130s, along with one from the 153rd AW, received their first launch orders for 2012 and began to fly fire suppression missions on what would become the costliest wildland fire in Colorado's history. This was also the closest fire in the history of MAFFS to the Reservists' homes, and those of their families and friends, as well as Peterson AFB itself.

"Having this in town gave us a different sense of urgency about it," Carey said. "It was our backyard."

The aircraft and crews dropped more than 8,000 gallons of retardant on the first day of MAFFS missions.

The second day of aerial firefighting missions required support from all four MAFFS aircraft: two from the 302nd AW and two from the 153rd AW. The four C-130s, each with their large orange MAFFS designation numbers painted on the side of the fuselage and tail, began a pattern of taking off from the Peterson AFB flight line, dropping retardant on the fire and returning to refill their tanks, similar to the rotation of a NASCAR pit operation. C-130s could be seen delivering the bright orange retardant along the edges of the nearby fire and returning to Peterson to reload the MAFFS system with retardant throughout the day.

"I had minimal time to finish the after-take off checklist and start the drop checklist," said Carey, who flew 15 missions on the Waldo Canyon fire. "It was so compressed. It was the most compressed ever, due to the short distance from the airfield to



the fire. I was task saturated to get the airplane configured to drop. It was about three minutes from liftoff to the fire. Usually it takes 20 minutes, which is plenty of time."

Just as the C-130s were hitting their stride and had delivered more than 50,000 gallons of retardant, the fire, later characterized as "a firestorm of epic proportions" by Rich Brown, chief of the Colorado Springs Fire Department, began to accelerate, driven by 65 mph winds. The MAFFS C-130s were placed on operational hold due to high winds and severely decreased visibility.

"I'll never forget that feeling of helplessness as we stood on the flight line and saw the excessive winds blowing the fire into the city," Carey said. "There was a blanket of smoke over the whole city. You knew it was coming into town, you just didn't know how far it would go. I called Heidi (Carey's wife) and asked her to prepare our family for evacuation — when I saw my neighborhood disappear in smoke, I didn't want to take any chances."

Unlike other fires that the Reserve wing has responded to, this one was the first in the unit's own backyard. The wing quickly established an Emergency Evacuation Control Center for the Waldo Canyon fire. Through accountability recalls, senior leaders learned 80 Reservists assigned to the 302nd AW were direct-

ly affected by the fire, and some were in immediate evacuation areas. One Reservist's home was lost in the firestorm.

"The members of

the 302nd worked quickly to meet every new challenge presented by the fire," said Col. Jay Pittman, wing commander. "Our force support squadron worked to establish an evacuation control center to help those who were suddenly in need. The fire had affected many of our members personally. Everyone in the wing pulled together and made sure our Airmen and their families were safe and cared for."

The next day, after the firestorm's wrath, the violent winds calmed and the smoke cleared somewhat, allowing the Guard and Reserve MAFFS aircraft and crews to continue their suppression missions. They continued their work through June 29, making a total of 50 drops and delivering 133,554 gallons of retardant on the Waldo Canyon fire.

Beginning June 30, with the Waldo Canyon fire 25 percent contained, the Forest Service turned its attention to wildland fires in Wyoming and South Dakota. With the increase in fire activity in the region, the Forest Service determined four additional MAFFS aircraft were needed. This would be the first time since the California fires of 2008 that all eight MAFFS aircraft were activated at the same time. All eight were based at Peterson.

MAFFS crew members had a good feeling about their contributions to the fire in their hometown and were ready to continue helping others.

"It was very gratifying," Carey said. "Everyone wants to do something for their community, and a lot of people did a lot of things. I felt like MAFFS was my way to doing something. I love this community; I am a native here."

On July 1, all eight MAFFS aircraft were flying in support of the Arapaho and Oil Creek fires in Wyoming and the White Draw fire in South Dakota.

"We were going to Billings for slurry and gas and then flying to the White Draw fire in South Dakota," Carey said.

"We were enroute to South Dakota when we didn't hear seven (MAFFS 7) on the radios anymore."

MAFFS 7 was an aircraft assigned to the 145th AW from the North Carolina Air National Guard.

At about 7 p.m. local time, MAFFS operations were abruptly halted. All aircraft were

**A Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System C-130 from the Air Force Reserve Command's 302nd Airlift Wing makes a retardant drop on the Springs fire near Banks, Idaho. On Aug. 9, MAFFS 5, assigned to the 302nd at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., made the 500th retardant drop for this year's MAFFS operations. A MAFFS-equipped C-130 assigned to the wing also dropped the one millionth gallon of retardant since MAFFS began flying aerial firefighting missions in support of the U.S. Forest Service on June 25. (Master Sgt. Dave Buttner)**

parked, and operations were placed on hold. It was then that the crews learned MAFFS 7 had crashed near Edgemont, S.D., while supporting the White Draw fire. The news devastated the entire MAFFS community.

"You could see it in everyone's faces; it's a tight-knit group — small, relative to the Air Force," Carey said.

Four Guardsmen were killed and two severely injured in the crash.

This was the first fatal accident in the 40-year history of the MAFFS program. As a result, MAFFS would be on operational

hold for the next day to allow crews to re-set.

"Having this happen to a MAFFS crew just a month after losing a commercial tanker crew really knocked the wind out of us," Thompson said. "We sat down for a day, checked what we could, asked people if they would be willing to go back out again (and they all were), and we then went back at it the next day."

On July 3, after MAFFS leadership ensured aircraft and aircrews were ready to resume flying, the mission continued with C-130s operating out of both

Peterson AFB and Wyoming. As fires in the central United States began to reach greater containment levels, the Forest Service relocated MAFFS operations to Boise Air Terminal in Boise, Idaho.

Describing the move to the fires in Idaho, Carey said, "This was more toward normal for us, but we still worked with a sense of urgency for the people of Sun Valley and Featherville, where the entire village was threatened. We worked around Boise, just north, east and south."

Reflecting on the unprecedented events

of this year's MAFFS season, Thompson said, "We've suffered loss on our (MAFFS) side, and people have lost homes and property. The thing that strikes me most this season is what we don't usually hear in the news. Dozens if not hundreds of fires didn't make the news because we (MAFFS), along with other air and ground firefighters, were able to help contain them while they were small, so they never became a catastrophe. That's the goal.

"And we were able to do it more efficiently this year by reloading at more civilian tanker bases because the new MAFFS

system is able to operate nearly anywhere without a specific MAFFS support base. It makes us quicker to get to the fire, allows us to make more drops on a given fire in less time and makes us much more agile so we can be closer to where they need us."

On Sept. 14, the Forest Service deactivated the MAFFS-equipped military C-130s due to favorable fire conditions. However, the aircraft can still be reactivated well into the fall.

At the time of the deactivation, the MAFFS crews had performed 1,011 drops, releasing a total of almost 2.5 million gal-

lons of retardant. The total makes this season the second busiest in MAFFS history in terms of gallons dropped, surpassed only by the 1994 season when C-130s dropped about 5 million gallons of retardant.

"This has been one of our busiest MAFFS seasons in recent years," Thompson said. "We have extremely committed aircrews, aircraft maintainers and support personnel. We will continue our support of wildland firefighting efforts as long as the Forest Service needs us." ★

(Skarban is chief of public affairs for the 302nd AW at Peterson AFB.)

## The other side of the fire: Reservist loses home

By Staff Sgt. Stephen J. Collier

As Colorado's windswept Waldo Canyon fire flared up to historic proportions June 26, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard aerial firefighting C-130s had been taking to the skies for more than 24 hours, helping to contain the growing menace.

Just yards from the C-130's fire retardant drops, residents of Colorado Springs' Mountain Shadows neighborhood watched as the fire crested the ridge south of Blodgett Peak. The powerful winds began to shift, and smoke, soot and ash were now blanketing the community. The time to go had come, and local resident and Air Force Reservist Senior Airman Jason Williamson, whose Reserve unit's C-130s were part of the aerial firefighting response, was leaving his childhood home behind — forever.

Williamson, a food service specialist with the 302nd Force Support Squadron at nearby Peterson Air Force Base, and his family were a part of the more than 32,000 residents evacuated from the northwest side of Colorado Springs during the Waldo Canyon fire. The fire, which began June 23, quickly

overwhelmed a number of established lines of defense, and the Mountain Shadows community was engulfed by flames. It was a sight Williamson remembers vividly.

"My mom and cousin were watching TV for more information on the fire, so they had no clue the fire was picking up steam and moving down the ridge," he said. "My dad was outside watering some plants when he saw the fire coming down (the ridge) and getting into the (Flying W) Ranch. That's when we received the reverse 911 call, but we had already made the decision to leave 15 minutes before. It happened so suddenly with the huge gusts of wind."

The Flying W Ranch, a popular tourist site since 1953, was about 100 feet from Williamson's home. It, too, would become a casualty of the fire.

With the reverse 911 notification on one of his parent's cell phones, Williamson and his family finished packing their two vehicles with as many family heirlooms and other important items as possible. In addition, they helped their neighbors prepare for their own evacuation. Williamson recounted how he, his brother and cousin rang their neighbors' doorbells, passing along the message they were dreading: It was time to go.

"Our next-door neighbors actually didn't know anything about (the growing fire)," he said. "After that, they started packing right away. Our neighbors really came together."

With their neighbors tended to, Williamson and his family left the neighborhood and began driving east, navigating their way through thick, dark smoke that had turned day into night. As the 65-mph winds shifted in their direction, smoke and ash rained down, even getting into Williamson's eyes. As more residents heeded the mandatory evacuation call, the two-lane roads heading toward Interstate 25 were quickly backing up with more vehicles escaping the encroaching blaze.

Despite the chaos, Williamson said he and his family maintained a positive demeanor.

"We were pretty calm because we had gone through practice procedures for some different things when we were younger," he said. "Growing up, we'd go through drills on little emergency procedures. I didn't want to stress out too much because stressing about something you don't know is wasting

a lot of energy."

As the Williamson family faced the hardship of leaving their home behind, a few miles away members of his Reserve unit at Peterson AFB were fighting back against the wildfire. Flying two C-130s equipped with the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System, aircrews and ground personnel began performing aerial firefighting missions the day before, June 25. The Reserve aircraft, together with two more MAFFS-equipped C-130s from the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd AW, had made more than 20 drops along the canyon's ridgelines, helping to contain the fire with an estimated 52,000 gallons of retardant.

But as the afternoon of June 26 wore on, MAFFS missions were abruptly halted as heavy winds shifted the fire's direction, creating dangerous flying conditions.

C-130 aircrews and maintenance personnel watched as the fire's smoke plumes grew to nearly 36,000 feet high. Emergency radio broadcasts revealed the unthinkable: The fire had jumped not one but two critical containment lines. The raging fire was beginning to destroy structures and was setting its sights on the U.S. Air Force Academy. As the fire's ferocity grew, mandatory evacuations in northwest Colorado Springs were expanded from the Mountain Shadows area to include military housing on the academy itself.

Describing the day's turn of events, Air Force Reservist Maj. Greg Berry, MAFFS mission commander, said the Airmen looking west to the mountains were "all concerned."

"This (fire) is getting very personal and very close to home," Berry said on the evening of the firestorm. "It's a whole new ball game, and we want to do everything we can. People who are doing the mission are now being affected."

As fires lit up the night skies, weather conditions began to change. The next morning, the U.S. Forest Service requested MAFFS missions in support of the Waldo Canyon fire to continue. By June 29, the Reserve and Guard had performed a total of 50 MAFFS drop missions, discharging 133,554 gallons of retardant.

The Williamson family had escaped the fire and was now staying at Jason's grandmother's house. A week after Williamson and his family left their home, city officials started to update homeowners on the condition of their evacuated homes. Once firefighters and aerial firefighting aircraft contained the fire, the evacuation order was lifted, allowing the

families to return to their homes — or their charred remains. Williamson and his brother drove back to their home on Linger Way to see firsthand the destruction the fire had unleashed.

"We prepared ourselves for the worst driving through our neighborhood," he said. "You have that feeling inside that maybe it's not so bad. But once we saw it, we knew that it was definitely gone. The house had burned all the way down to the foundation. Even the beams inside the house were warped and melted. Nothing survived. Once that reality hit, other thoughts started racing in my head: I should have grabbed this, and I should have grabbed that."

Williamson partially attributed his relatively calm reaction to the crisis to his military training.

"The day we saw the fire over the ridge, I told my parents that there were things we really needed, like documentation and things that were hard to replace," he said. "I'm sure I learned these basics through military training."

Williamson's story was shared by many Colorado Springs residents who resided in the northwest corner of the city. In all, nearly 350 homes throughout the area burned to the ground. When it was finally over, the Waldo Canyon Fire would be the costliest wildfire in Colorado history, totaling more than \$352 million in damages.

Looking back, Williamson said his family never thought they would be faced with the prospect of fleeing their home.

"It's still kind of hard to believe and think about," he said. "You go out to the property and it hits you: Wow, it really did happen."

As for where the Williamsons plan to make their new home, the future is uncertain.

"We are still deciding whether to rebuild or move on," he said. "For my mom, I know it's hard for her to give out her address when someone asks for it. ... she kind of breaks down a little bit. My dad, he doesn't really express emotion, but you can see it in his face. When everything is fine and I hear a siren or see a fire, it's easy to get a little bit of that post-traumatic stress where your heart sinks down a little bit. It's still kind of hard to believe and think about." ★

(Collier is assigned to the 302nd AW public affairs office at Peterson AFB. Ann Skarban, 302nd chief of public affairs, contributed to this story.)



SENIOR AIRMAN JASON WILLIAMSON

Looking from the front of the house to the canyon beyond, Senior Airman Jason Williamson captures the complete destruction of his family's home, located in the Mountain Shadows neighborhood of northwest Colorado Springs.

# Ready to Help

## New rules mobilize Air Force Reservists for national emergencies

Officials are putting new policies and programs in place to mobilize Air Force Reservists in response to national disasters and emergencies.

This is the first time Title 10, or federal reserve forces, from all services have been planned and funded to be mobilized, like their National Guard counterparts, to assist the state governors during a crisis in the United States.

"This is a significant change for us and a tremendous benefit for American citizens," said Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, chief of Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command. "Being able to mobilize our people will save lives and mitigate suffering and damage during disasters here at home."

In the past, Citizen Airmen have voluntarily stepped forward to assist with events such as Hurricane Katrina, the gulf oil spill and wildfires. However, by planning mobilization call-ups, officials expect to quicken federal response times and have more capability ready for when states call for help.

AFRC has more than 70,000 Reservists who train and are ready immediately for active-duty missions. They are activated to provide forces when more manpower is needed than is available in the active components. This surge capability has been used extensively in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"For more than 20 years, Air Force Reservists have been serving in combat

non-stop," Jackson said. "We've expanded from strategic surges to supporting daily operations for the active duty. This new mobilization authority for national disasters here at home is just another example of how our military is leveraging the expertise and cost-effectiveness of the Air Force Reserve for Americans everywhere — even at home."

The fiscal year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act changed the way the military can be used at home and authorized the secretary of defense to mobilize federal reserve forces to support major disaster relief and national emergencies. The Department of Defense and AFRC have been working together to build the appropriate policies and procedures to implement this change.

"In the event a disaster does occur and Reservists are needed, they will be contacted by Air Force Reserve leadership and given specific reporting instructions," said Col. Nancy C. Zbyszinski, director of personnel, Office of Air Force Reserve at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

A key issue is how to track who is subject to mobilization. DOD has developed categories for emergency responders such as transportation, communications, firefighting, public health and medical services, search and rescue, etc. The reserve component has significant expertise in all of these areas as well as unique capabilities in aerial spray, aerial firefighting and weather reconnaissance.

Currently, Air Force Reservists are inserted into the Air Force's rotation system for combat mobilization and deployments. Officials must accommodate those requirements with the challenge of quick responses to unforeseen national disasters.

"If local authorities need our assistance, we will be ready to support them," said Col. Dawn Brotherton, special assistant for reserve force integration, Office of Air Force Reserve. "As a disaster moves into the recovery phase, our Reservists will step aside and let the civilian agencies and commercial partners take over — potentially as quick as 14 days or less."

To gain federal help, the state governors must request assistance, and the president has to declare the situation as a national disaster. After these two critical steps, the secretary of defense is authorized to direct the mobilization of federal reserve forces.

For now, Air Force Reserve officials are continuing to work on a policy that will allow members to plan ahead, coordinate with their civilian employers and prepare their families.

"We are working the last of the policy implementation issues," Jackson said. "Once the Department of Defense and our Force Generation Center finalize their system changes, we'll get our units and Reservists ready for this new opportunity to help Americans in need." ★

# Sexual Assault

## DOD changes way initial disposition of cases is handled

By Bo Joyner

The Department of Defense has made a key change in the way the military services handle certain sexual assault cases. As of June 28, only colonels or above who possess at least special court-martial convening authority can make an initial disposition in cases where the following offenses are alleged: rape, sexual assault, forcible sodomy or any attempt to commit such an offense.

For Air Force Reserve Command, this change in policy means that initial disposition in these cases can only be made by the AFRC commander, numbered air force commanders or the commander of the Air Reserve Personnel Center. As the name implies, "initial disposition" is the preliminary handling of a case that can lead to further action.

"In these cases, initial disposition can be a full range of actions, including: taking no action, forwarding the case to a superior or subordinate commander, taking administrative action, initiating nonjudicial punishment, or making a referral to court-martial," said Maj. William Vernon, chief of adverse actions in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at AFRC headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

"Traditionally, the military services have had a policy of letting commanders at the lowest level possible take care of a situation before it is elevated to a higher level," Vernon said. "This directive from the Department of Defense says that in certain sexual assault cases, the initial disposition will automatically be elevated to a higher level."

"Sexual assault is an extremely serious offense, and it is not tolerated within Air Force Reserve Command," said Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, AFRC commander. "Elevating the initial disposition authority will assure all allegations of sexual assault are taken seriously and receive the careful attention they deserve from the very beginning."

Vernon said that in some cases involving Reservists, the initial disposition authority could be an active-duty commander.

"For Reservists serving in a unit that is a tenant on an active-duty base, the initial disposition authority would more than likely be the local active-duty installation commander. For Reservists on an air reserve base, matters not proceeding to courts-martial will likely have the NAF commander as the initial disposition authority," he said, explaining that AFRC does not conduct its own courts-martial.

"Each case is different, but the bottom line is that only O-6s or above with special court-martial convening authority will be making the initial disposition on these types of sexual assault cases," Vernon said.

Vernon said the policy change includes the authority to address the misconduct of victims related in any way to the matter being investigated.

"Some examples are underage drinking, DUI, drug use or

making false official statements," he said.

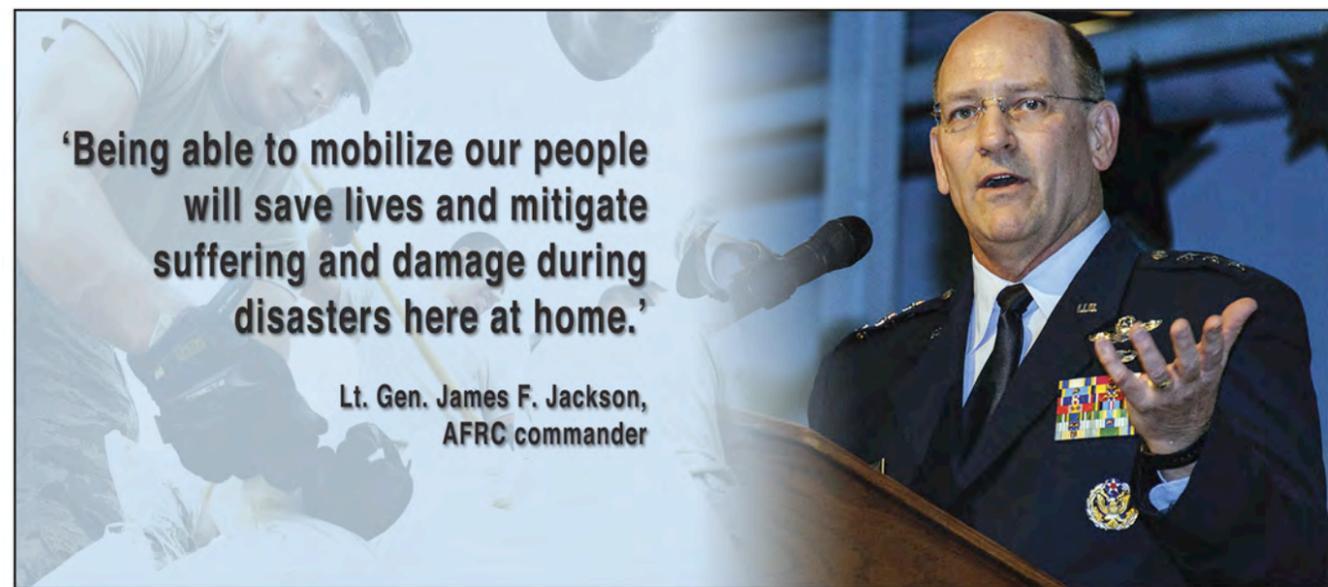
Those offenses, on their own, would not normally require initial disposition at such a high level.

This DOD-directed initial disposition authority change comes on the heels of a letter from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commandant of the Coast Guard to all DOD commanders and leaders titled "Strategic Direction to the Joint Force on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response."

The letter says that despite years of concerted effort, the chiefs are dissatisfied with progress made in reducing sexual assault in the military and spells out a strategic direction to increase the emphasis on combating the crime. In the past two years, service members have reported 6,350 cases of sexual assault.

"Sexual assaults endanger our own, violate our professional culture and core values, erode readiness and team cohesion, and violate the sacred trust and faith of those who serve and whom we serve," the document's introduction says.

"As military professionals we must fully understand the destructive nature of these acts, lead our focused efforts to prevent them, and promote positive command climates and environments that reinforce mutual respect, trust and confidence." ★



'Being able to mobilize our people will save lives and mitigate suffering and damage during disasters here at home.'

Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, AFRC commander

# RED HORSE

**Reserve construction units are free-spirited, undaunted and dominant**

**By Gene Van Deventer**

With the United States entering World War II in 1941, the military quickly identified the need to establish naval/maritime construction battalions in order to build bare-base field installations around the globe.

Members assigned to these U.S. Navy mobile construction units became known as "Seabees," the name taken from the first letters of the words "construction battalion." Under austere combat conditions, these engineering Sailors built and repaired airfields, landing docks, roadways and encampments, significantly improving the country's power projection and sustainment in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters of operations.

But they did so at a price. More than 275 Seabees, armed and fighting to defend what they built, were killed in combat during World War II.

In the 1960s, the Air Force faced similar expeditionary engineering challenges, lacking power projection capabilities that could reach anywhere in the world that required U.S. presence. In mid-1965, with the United States deeply involved in the Vietnam War, the secretary of defense and the secretary of the Air Force sought to establish mobile engineering units — manned, trained and equipped to perform facility and airfield construction and heavy repair as hot spots developed.

With the activation of two unique organizations, the 554th and 555th Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers, and their ultimate initial deployment to Southeast Asia in 1966, the Air Force acquired a service power projection capability that until then did not exist.

Each RED HORSE squadron was organized as a mobile, rapid-response, self-contained unit possessing 404 Airmen being able to perform a wide range of construction and heavy repair functions that exceeded normal civil engineer unit capabilities. Performing as a stand-alone operation, the squadrons' organic capabilities included medical, food service, vehicle and equipment maintenance, logistics, and other specialties. Their range of duties encompassed major projects such as water-well drilling, explosive demolition, facility erection, concrete and asphalt paving, mine clearing, and quarry operations. RED HORSE squadrons possessed not only the heavy equipment needed to clear woodlands and wilderness terrain but the skilled operators to match.

Today, the total Air Force maintains 14 RED HORSE units. The active duty has four units, the Air National Guard five and the Air Force Reserve Command five. AFRC units are the 307th at Barksdale Air Force Base, La.; 555th at Nellis AFB, Nev.; 556th at Hurlburt Field, Fla.; 560th at Joint Base Charleston, S.C.; and 567th at Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C. Within AFRC, the average RED HORSE squadron comprises 209 positions, encompassing many of the specialties that were in the original 1960s configuration.

With the latest AFRC reorganization that calls for the inactivation of regional support groups, a new civil engineer group was activated with all command RED HORSE squadrons falling under its command and control. The 622nd CEG will operate from Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga.,

Clyde Wilkins of Headquarters AFRC's Installations and Mission Support Directorate at Robins AFB, Ga., describes the new CEG organization as being a direct reporting unit to the 22nd Air Force commander.

"In addition to the RED HORSE squadrons, three civil engineer flights will also fall under the auspices of the group," Wilkins said. "These senior staff augmentation flights (also referred to as S-teams) are typically composed of approximately 35 experienced members prepared to support headquarters staffs for contingency operations worldwide."

The Air Force's Total Force Initiative has successfully paired active-duty and air reserve component organizations across many functional lines. RED HORSE is no exception. Today, at deployed sites around the globe, there are Air Force units consisting of all Air Force personnel segments and statuses, and a person would be hard-pressed to identify who is who based on their skills and performance capability.

Through the summer months of 2011, the 555th and the 556th RED HORSE units rotationally deployed in support of the New Horizons exercise in Suriname. The active-duty 820th RED HORSE at Nellis AFB was the overall lead for this deployment, with the two AFRC units being instrumental in the construction of a 3,360-square-foot schoolhouse and a 1,680-square-foot clinic.

All five AFRC RED HORSE squadrons are on tap this year for deployment duties at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., to assist the 633rd Civil Engineer Squadron in the construction of a new state-of-the-art operational readiness inspection site. The Reserve portion of this venture involves the construction of two 1,664-square-foot shower/shave/latrine facilities, two 5,000-square-foot warehouse buildings, and approximately 2,100 linear feet of asphalt roads.

By the end of this year, approximately 300 AFRC Airmen, working in two-week rotations, will have the site finished, which will immensely aid the readiness inspection evaluations that will take place there.

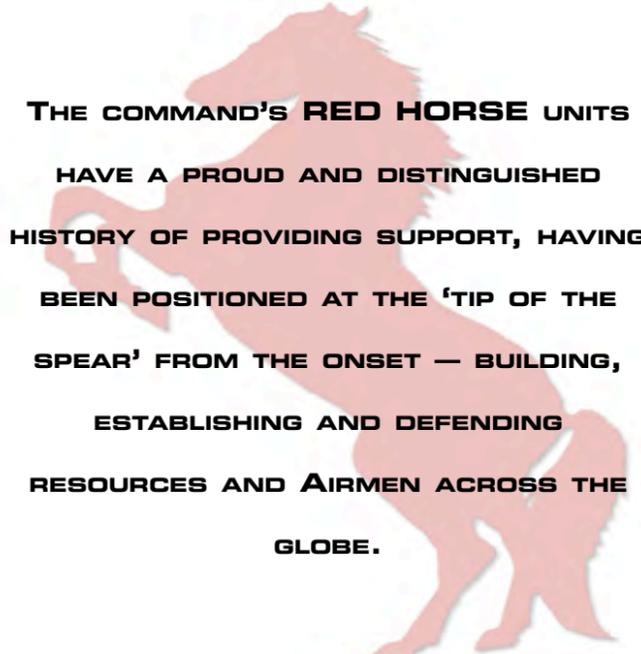
In early May of this year, at Hurlburt Field, a memorial park designed and built by members of both the active-duty 823rd and AFRC's 556th RED HORSE units was dedicated as a truly outward and visible sign of a successful total force relationship. RED HORSE Unity Park, located next to the 823rd RED HORSE headquarters, was built to reflect the strong working

relationship of these two Air Force units while paying homage to the units' fallen in the service to their nation. The memorial, built in the shape of a horseshoe, surrounds a flagpole and gleaming red horse reared on its hind legs prepared to defend its turf. ... a symbol of strength, mobility and speed.

The two squadrons' collaborative efforts provided training for nearly 90 RED HORSE personnel from 12 career fields, affecting 291 core tasks accomplished in 6,500 man-hours. As a lasting tribute, the names of nine of the units' fallen comrades from the Vietnam time period to present are now displayed on a remembrance wall within the park.

AFRC RED HORSE units are fully engaged in the joint environment, having for years now successfully supported coalition forces across Southwest Asia and other deployment locations worldwide. Partnering with the U.S. Navy Seabees and the U.S. Army's Corps of Engineers, these units help present the very best heavy-duty and specialized engineering skills in support of U.S. military personnel and missions.

Evidence of this Total Force Initiative engagement was the



**THE COMMAND'S RED HORSE UNITS  
HAVE A PROUD AND DISTINGUISHED  
HISTORY OF PROVIDING SUPPORT, HAVING  
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SPEAR' FROM THE ONSET — BUILDING,  
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RESOURCES AND AIRMEN ACROSS THE  
GLOBE.**



Reserve RED HORSE workers pour a concrete pad to support a large pre-engineered building at the Raptor Village training site at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

567th RED HORSE unit's recent deployment to U.S. Central Command. Col. Timothy Lamb, commander of the 567th, said nearly 100 members of the unit teamed up with the active-duty's 820th on this deployment. The unit supplemented both the 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group and the 557th and 809th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadrons performing successfully in leadership and tactical support positions throughout the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

The command's RED HORSE units have a proud and distinguished history of providing support, having been positioned at the "tip of the spear" from the onset — building, establishing and defending resources and Airmen across the globe. The "HORSE" epitomizes persistence, quality and dominance; ready then, ready now and ready always. ★

(A frequent contributor to *Citizen Airman* magazine, Van Deventer is assigned to the Expeditionary Combat Support Division of the Installation and Mission Support Directorate at HQ AFRC.)



RED HORSE troops work on an environmental control unit at a deployed location.

# Employer Support

## It's flying high at Delta Air Lines and a host of other companies

By Bo Joyner

Before retiring as a lieutenant colonel a few months ago, Tom Timberlake served his country for 23 years in the Marine Corps, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. For 11 of those years he did so with a great deal of support from the people at Delta Air Lines.

That's why Timberlake, a first officer flying Boeing 737s out of Atlanta, led a host of other Reservists and Guardsmen who work for Delta in nominating the company for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Freedom Award this year.

"The people of Delta have supported me and my fellow military colleagues unwaveringly in the past," said Timberlake, who was an individual mobilization augmentee assigned to Readiness Management Group Det. 3 at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., when he retired. "We all know it is a challenge for Guard and Reserve service members to wear the 'two hats' of military and civilian occupations, but it is also a challenge for employers as well. Delta consistently met and exceeded this challenge supporting me and my family when I was deployed and welcoming me back upon return."

Timberlake said Delta supported him during overseas deployments by ensuring travel, health care and retirement benefits were available to him upon his return.

More than 25 percent of Delta's pilots are veterans or people currently serving in the Guard or Reserve, and the company has pledged to hire more veterans by 2020 as part of the 100,000 Jobs Mission. A number of leading U.S. companies launched the 100,000 Jobs Mission in March 2011 with a goal of collectively hiring 100,000 transitioning service members and military veterans by 2020.

Timberlake said he was very pleased when he heard that Delta was one of 15 companies chosen to receive the Freedom Award this year.

"My fellow military colleagues and I who are employed by Delta have nominated the company in years past, but to find out that Delta has actually won the award is very satisfying," he said. "All the people at Delta are very deserving of this award."

Delta is one of 15 companies selected to receive the

Freedom Award. Representatives from each of these companies were scheduled to be honored at the 17th annual Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award Ceremony in Washington, D.C., Sept. 20.

"The Freedom Award is the DOD's highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of Guard and Reserve employees," according to an ESGR press release. "These employers distinguished themselves from the 3,236 nominations received from Guardsmen and Reservists or family members acting on their behalf."

"The Freedom Award is a great honor and even more special because Delta was nominated by a co-worker and Air Force Reservist," Delta CEO Richard Anderson said in a press release. "Supporting the 3,000 Delta people who serve our nation has long been part of our culture and is one of many ways we strive to make Delta a great place to work. Our commitment extends to the millions of servicemen and women who fly with us throughout the year and to our veterans. Delta will always be there to support you."



"On behalf of the Secretary of Defense, I thank the 2012 Freedom Award recipients for taking such exceptional care of the Guard and Reserve members they employ," said Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Jessica L. Wright. "Our military could not meet today's national security demands without the Guard and Reserve, who in turn could not provide such dedicated service without the cooperation of their employers at home. These Freedom Award recipients have distinguished themselves nationally for their remarkable efforts, and we greatly appreciate their unwavering support."

In addition to Delta, the other recipients of the 2012

- Freedom Award are:
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative
  - Caterpillar Inc.
  - Citi
  - Crystal Springs United Methodist Church
  - Gary Jet Center
  - Iostudio
  - Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety
  - L-3
  - Communications
  - Nyemaster Goode
  - Port of Seattle
  - Siemens Corp.
  - Tennessee Valley Authority
  - Uniform Color Co.
  - Verizon Wireless.

For more information about the Freedom Award, including information on how you can nominate your employer, visit [www.FreedomAward.mil](http://www.FreedomAward.mil). ★



Delta pilot and recently retired Reserve Lt. Col. Tom Timberlake nominated Delta for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Freedom Award for the company's unwavering support of its employees who are members of the Guard and Reserve. Shown here with Timberlake at the award presentation are Steve Dickson, Delta's senior vice president of flight operations, (left) and James Rebholz, ESGR's national chairman.

# AFI 1-1

## Instruction is the go-to source for fundamental standards

By Tech. Sgt. Shawn J. Jones

When referencing fundamental standards, Airmen now have a single source: Air Force Instruction 1-1, *Air Force Standards*.

As one of the capstone acts of his 39-year career, former Air Force Chief of Staff retired Gen. Norton Schwartz put his signature on the brand-new instruction, which communicates in one document the required standards of conduct, performance and discipline expected of every uniformed Airman.

The instruction — the first and only to be signed and certified by the chief of staff — was preceded by Air Force Policy Directive 1, *Air Force Culture*, in which the secretary of the Air Force directed the chief of staff to develop and execute policy related to standards.

The new instruction is particularly noteworthy not because it offers many new standards, but because it consolidates many of the standards that had been spread among separate instructions, officials said. In a single document, the instruction conveniently summarizes the expected standards of conduct for uniformed Airmen.

The instruction is intended to serve as a compass, providing a convenient overview of standards while directing Airmen to other instructions where more detailed information may be found, officials said.

Having a one-stop shop for standards-related

guidelines, while not unprecedented, has long been absent in the Air Force. In fact, the vast majority of the new instruction's initial content and structure were borrowed from the now outdated Air Force Regulation 30-1, *Air Force Standards*, which was not replaced in the early 1990s when Air Force instructions replaced Air Force regulations.

In December 2011, Schwartz directed the Air Staff to develop the new instruction. Much of the heavy lifting related to coordinating and drafting the instruction was performed by Scott Martin, a legal advisor on Schwartz's senior air staff counsel.

"We needed to capture and consolidate the existing Air Force standards," said Martin, a 23-year veteran who retired as a colonel in 2010.

From cover to cover, the instruction comprises 27 pages, broken into three chapters.

The first chapter focuses on topics such as core values, customs and courtesies, force structure, and diversity. According to the chapter overview, the Air Force environment "encompasses the actions, values and standards we live by each and every day."

The second chapter focuses on standards of conduct, including sections on professional relationships, ethics, drug and alcohol abuse, and government neutrality regarding religion. The instruction's final chapter addresses standards related to dress and appearance, physical fitness and government housing.

Martin said that while he borrowed a lot from the old regulation, it was incomplete for today's Air Force since so much had changed in the past two decades.

"We updated it and brought it up to the 21st century to address contemporary challenges that Airmen face," he said.

Some of those 21st century updates include standards related to relationships on social media, the wingman concept, resiliency, sexual assault prevention and response, tattoos and body piercing, and the Joint Ethics Regulation.

Martin said he expected the instruction to become a valuable resource for educating today's Airmen.

"If you have a young Airman who's not quite getting it, this will be a great tool for a mentoring session," he said.

"Every Airman should periodically review these standards of conduct to assure he is living up to what the Air Force expects of him every day." ★

(Jones is assigned to the Air Force Public Affairs Agency at the Pentagon.)



Maj. Gen. Craig N. Gourley, Air Force Reserve Command vice commander, speaks to a class at the AFRC Professional Development Center. The PDC is seeking accreditation to become a premier Center of Excellence.

## Center of Excellence

### Professional Development Center seeking accreditation

Over the years, the Air Force Reserve Command Professional Development Center has established a strong reputation for providing world-class leadership and training opportunities for the command's more than 70,000 officer and enlisted Reservists.

Through its various courses, the PDC schoolhouse teaches newly appointed squadron, group and wing commanders what they need know to be successful in their new assignments. In addition, it's a place where members of the enlisted corps learn theories and concepts of leadership and management to be the very best they can be.

With that reputation solidly in place, the PDC is embarking on a plan to formally solidify its position as an Air Force Reserve premiere Center of Excellence. The goal is to work in collaboration and partnership with key Air Force agencies, the Department of Defense and other accreditation bodies to become an accredited institution. With a professional and seasoned faculty, facilitators and support staff, accreditation will establish the PDC as a higher learning institute positioned and primed to meet AFRC's shifting needs.

"Our leadership strongly believes in our impact and capability to teach the future of this command," said Col. James Kerr, chief of the PDC. "The strategic plan is to be the one source for Reserve-centric education and professional development focusing on all levels of leadership and management. The mission is to provide a continuum of educational opportunities to develop 21st century Air Force Airmen and leaders."

Kerr said the PDC has a staff that is passionate about taking care of Airmen from "cradle to grave." As the center's chief, it is his responsibility to make sure the organization grows, develops and matures in preparation for this new credential.

In addition to pursuing accreditation, the PDC is also in the

beginning stages of developing an Air Force Reserve Leadership Academy.

Kerr said the goal of the Leadership Academy will be to develop personnel skills and capabilities to produce well-prepared, capable managers and leaders to fulfill the Air Force Reserve's evolving mission. It will provide an active approach to promoting operational readiness through leadership and team efficiency.

"We are really good at orientations, but when you talk about building a Leadership Academy, we have a lot of work to do; but we are ready," Kerr said. "This is an exciting time for the PDC and for the future of our Airmen."

"The vision is to establish a system of training and development activities focused on team building, effective self-development, communication methods, change management techniques, resource procurement processes and individual assessment measurement tools," he said. "Rather than simply being a one-time training session, the Leadership Academy will build upon existing Air Education and Training Command career progression modules, providing access to leadership training on development tracks."

"In short, AFRC's Professional Development Center has begun navigating a vision to become a 'premiere Center of Excellence' providing a world-class academic and training experience," the colonel said.

For more information on the PDC, visit the center's site on the Air Force Portal (<https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/community/views/home.aspx?Filter=OO-ED-RC-17>) or "like" the center's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ProfessionalDevelopmentCenterpdc?ref=ts>. ★

(Information for this article provided by Mickey McGalliard, program manager for junior officer courses at the PDC.)



# ighting the (Relation) Ship

## Couple gets marriage back on track at Yellow Ribbon event

*(Editor's note: Maj. John Homrig is chief of the Strategy Plans Team for the 310th Space Wing's 9th Space Operations Squadron at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. He and his wife, Elizabeth, ran into some relationship problems when he was deployed just a few weeks after their wedding. Following is Homrig's account of the problems he and his wife were having and how a Yellow Ribbon event helped them right their relationship.)*

I met my wife Nov. 14, 2008, during Air Force Week activities in Beverly Hills, Calif. Over the next 2 1/2 years, we grew increasingly close, and on July 1, 2011, I asked her to marry me. She accepted, and we were married the following Monday — the Fourth of July — in Las Vegas.

At the time of our marriage, I was scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in less than a month. This proved to be a bigger challenge to our relationship than I would have ever expected.

Both of our families have long-standing ties to the military — both Army and Air Force on my side and Army on hers. While I am a traditional Reservist in the Air Force Reserve, she is a traditional Guardsman in the Air National Guard. In addition, we both work full-time for the Department of the Air Force as civil servants.

We are strongly patriotic, and we decided to get married on the Fourth of July in Las Vegas because we felt there could be nothing more American than starting our new life together on Independence Day in the uniquely American “wedding capi-

tal of the world” at the World Famous Little White Chapel. It was an awesome experience that we were able to share with people of all backgrounds and walks of life visiting the Las Vegas Strip. Las Vegas is an amazing example of how anyone from anywhere can fit in and have a good time.

About three weeks later, on July 26, it came time for me to depart for Afghanistan. We did everything we could to mentally prepare ourselves for the time I would be gone, and I think we did a good job. Determined to keep herself busy while I was away, Liz decided to enroll in multiple college courses, get involved in volunteer activities and hire a personal trainer to help her work on her fitness. By ensuring she did not have a moment to herself, she felt that she could better cope with me being in Afghanistan.

Liz was always independent, but focusing all of her efforts on her educational, professional and volunteer goals created a wall between us. I did my best to stay in contact, and there were stretches when we spoke on a daily basis. However, our conversations rarely lasted more than three minutes. They typically went something like this: “Hi. How are you? Everything is great. I love you. Take care. Bye.” Then the call was over.

I did not want to burden her with issues I was facing, and she did not want to burden me with issues she was facing. We did not want to unduly burden each other with stressors that

we could do nothing about. However, this attitude caused us to interact in a way that destroyed the level of communication we had prior to my deployment.

This went on for four months straight. While I was able to focus on my job and she was able to focus on her pursuits while not feeling alone, we were no longer communicating on anything more than a very superficial level.

I returned from Afghanistan on Dec. 9. We were both very excited to see each other, but we were both exhausted — me from the long trip home and time zone difference, and her from working so hard on her job, education and fitness. We went out to eat a couple of times during the weekend, but I mostly slept.

The next week, I started my post-deployment leave, and Liz went right back to work. She was highly engaged in her activities, and I had next to nothing to do. This mostly suited me, because I was fried from working 12 hours a day, seven days a week for 124 continuous days. While I needed time to decompress, I did not understand why she apparently had no interest in so much as even talking to me. She was glad I was home but was busy with all the activities she began while I was away.

Things came to a head when we attended a Yellow Ribbon event Jan. 27-29 in Santa Fe, N.M. This was the seminal event that righted our relationship.

During the six weeks prior to the event, it seemed like Liz was persistently upset over everything imaginable, but she would not talk to me about anything. Because we were both busy managing our professional lives and performing military orders away from home, the time we spent together was brief. When we were together, we were so tired that neither one of us had the energy to press anything. It seemed like all of the vitality and joy in our relationship from before I went to Afghanistan was gone.

The Yellow Ribbon event forced us into a position where we were stuck with each other for approximately 72 hours straight, and we had to deal with it. At the outset, this was highly unpleasant for both of us, but it forced us to confront a serious problem in our relationship. She was angry and would not talk to me, and I was extremely frustrated over our inability to communicate. By the end of the first evening, I told her, “If we can't even talk to each other, then we don't have a relationship, and I don't want to be married anymore.” Liz cried. We talked a little and then fell asleep.

The next morning was a bit rough, but our military discipline carried us to breakfast, and we attended our sessions. I don't exactly remember the sessions we attended, but we ran into 310th Space Wing Chaplain (Col.) Bob Leivers, who



COURTESY OF HAPPY PHOTOS

**Elizabeth and John Homrig got their marriage back on a healthy track at a recent Yellow Ribbon event. With the help of some on-site chaplains, they were able to confront some unresolved issues and renew their commitment to each other.**

talked to us at the end of the scheduled lunch period. He recommended that we take some time off and just get away together, and he gave us strong encouragement.

During an afternoon session with Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ralph Devaul of Air Force Reserve Command headquarters, Liz opened up about how she felt and why. She resented that I left her behind so soon after getting married, and she felt that she had to keep herself extremely busy to keep from feeling sad while I was gone. She grew accustomed to this lifestyle to the point that she did not know what to do with me when I got back. She felt she had to remind herself that she had a husband.

When I said I would leave her if we couldn't communicate, it forced her to re-evaluate the situation. By having the resources available at the Yellow Ribbon event in an environment isolated from distractions, we were able to confront the unresolved issues concerning my return from deployment, get counseling from several on-site chaplains and renew our commitment to each other.

Since then, our relationship continues to improve, and it's never been better. That Yellow Ribbon event back in January was what gave us the opportunity to put our marriage back on a healthy track, and we are grateful to have attended. ★

### Help is available

Deployments can be hard on any relationship, but help is always available. That's the message from Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ralph Devaul, assigned to Air Force Reserve Command's Yellow Ribbon Office at Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

“No matter what you are going through, you are not alone,” Devaul said. “AFRC has chaplains and others who are trained to help Reservists and their spouses deal with the hardships brought on by deployments.

“If you are facing a deployment or are just returning from a deployment of 90 days or more, I encourage you to contact your Yellow Ribbon Program wing representative to find out what Yellow Ribbon is all about. Help is always available for those who serve and those who support.” For more information, check out [www.afrc.af.mil/library/yellowribbon](http://www.afrc.af.mil/library/yellowribbon).

# MARATHONER WITH A MISSION

Reservist guides nearly blind runner across the finish line

By Master Sgt. Steve Staedler

Have you ever had one of those “ah-ha” moments where in just a matter of seconds everything suddenly becomes crystal clear, and your life instantly takes on a new purpose and direction? It doesn’t really matter when or where it happens, but, rather, that it happens.

Such a moment happened to Lt. Col. Kelli Molter. It occurred while she was on duty at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. Molter, a senior duty officer in the Force Generation Center, was working a late-night Battle Watch shift earlier this year when an episode of *Dr. Drew’s Lifechangers* came on the television set.

Dr. Drew, whose full name is Drew Pinsky, is a popular radio and television personality who often counsels people through various medical and addiction issues. In this particular episode, Dr. Drew was interviewing a person who was nearly blind but was planning to run 12 marathons in 2012 — one a month — to raise money and awareness of choroideremia, the disease that was causing his blindness.

“It seemed as if the stars and moon aligned, and everything just connected,” Molter said. “I thought, ‘This was my guy; this is him.’”

An Internet search turned up a website for The Choroideremia Research Foundation. Molter immediately called it, figuring she’d leave a message with her contact information in hopes of reaching the individual on the Dr. Drew show. To her surprise, someone answered the phone. ... at 10:30 p.m. A few days later, she was talking to him.

## Vision Fading Away

EJ Scott had always thought he was just a clumsy kid. He would occasionally take a corner too sharp and clip a wall or knock something off a table. In reality, he wasn’t clumsy at all; the problem was with his vision.

He began noticing problems with his vision — things such as flashes of light similar to fireworks in his eyes and trouble seeing in dimly lit places — when he was a teen. Doctors told him his vision was fine, and so he accepted their diagnosis and moved on.

Hoping that whatever was causing these issues would eventually just go away, Scott learned to live and adapt his life to them. Unfortunately, his vision continued to get worse. It wasn’t until 2003, when Scott was 27, that he learned the true cause of his vision problems.

“I had never heard of choroideremia before; it was a scary moment in my life because I didn’t understand what was happening,” Scott said, adding that he was in denial about his dete-



With each person holding one end of a towel, Lt. Col. Kelli Molter and EJ Scott run in the Air Force Marathon at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Sept. 15. Scott had a goal of running the race in under five hours. He finished in four hours, 59 minutes and 25 seconds.

riorating vision for about a year.

Choroideremia is a rare inherited disorder that causes progressive loss of vision due to degeneration of the choroid and retina. It is caused by a lack of RAB Escort Protein 1 (REP-1). The disease occurs almost exclusively in males. There is no known cure for choroideremia, and people with the disease will eventually lose their sight completely. About 6,000 people in the United States suffer from the disease.

Scott said people with choroideremia often don’t talk about it, which was the case in his family. His grandfather was blind, but no one in his family talked about the disease or the possibility that Scott and his brother could be carriers of the defective gene. Shortly before Scott’s 2003 diagnosis, his brother (who was 16 at the time) was also experiencing vision problems and was diagnosed with the disease. That prompted Scott to get tested as well.

Scott said if he had known about the disease earlier in life he could have taken steps to slow down the progression.

“I have a real problem with people being quiet about it; that’s a real issue for me,” he said. “It’s the responsibility of people who have it to speak up about it more than they are. I know it’s a hard thing to do, but nothing happens when you’re being quiet.”

## On a Mission

Being quiet about choroideremia is the last thing on Scott’s mind. About a year after his diagnosis, he decided to use his love of improvisational comedy to start hosting fund-raisers. These events raised thousands of dollars for research and in the process allowed him to hone his comedy and acting skills.

But in the ensuing years he began putting on weight, and his overall health suffered. So he began taking a more proactive approach to his health by becoming more active, watching what he ate and quitting smoking. The effort paid off as he started to gradually shed those extra pounds.

In the process of losing weight, Scott met Jeff Benelli, a marathon runner who also has choroideremia. Getting to know Benelli inspired Scott to start training to run the Chicago Marathon in 2010. Successfully running in Chicago gave him the idea to run 12 marathons this year as a way to raise awareness and money for research. Running one marathon, not to mention 12, in a year is a tall challenge in itself. But the fact that Scott is now 85 percent blind makes his goal even more remarkable.

“My goal is to not hurt myself of course, but ultimately I want to bring awareness to this disease that I have that most people have never heard of and shine a spotlight on it,” he said.



Scott, with the help of guides like Molter, has dedicated himself to running 12 marathons in 2012 to raise money and awareness of choroideremia, the disease that is causing his blindness.

Scott began training by running on a treadmill, keeping his diet in check and working out with a personal trainer. Since his eyes are extremely sensitive to sunlight, and bright light can accelerate his blindness, he runs while wearing a blindfold.

“I don’t like running with a blindfold, as it’s a constant reminder of what’s happening to me,” he said. “Taking a step and not knowing where my foot is going to land is scary. Mentally, it’s been more challenging than I thought it would be.”

When Molter contacted Scott and asked him to run with her in the Air Force Marathon Sept. 15, he already had a marathon on his calendar for September. But Scott said the thought of running with her at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, sounded “pretty neat,” so he decided to do it.

## Making it Happen

Running a 26.2-mile marathon blindfolded is a tricky process. Scott said he completed his first few events while running alongside, and holding onto the arm of, his guide. But that technique was causing him bad shoulder pain from the constant limited motion.

He and his guide are now connected by each holding one end of a towel, giving him more room to run freely. He also wears a sign on his back indicating that he’s a blind runner so others know to give him a bit more space out on the course.

Molter, an accomplished marathoner, triathlete and Ironman competitor, had previously trained and guided four blind athletes through triathlons, 10-kilometer races and half Ironman competitions. She’s also encouraged friends to serve as guides for blind runners.

“Runners like EJ are truly exceptional athletes, certainly more exceptional than I am for sure,” she said. “I’m just so grateful to help EJ in his quest to raise awareness, and I’m very happy to give something back by serving as his guide. Everyone has something to give, and even the littlest things can make a big difference to others.”

His last marathon this year is scheduled for Dec. 2 in Las Vegas. It takes Scott an average of between 5 and 5 1/2 hours to cover the 26.2-mile distance. He figures it will be dark when he crosses the finish line, so he hopes to finish the marathon with his blindfold off.

“When I cross the finish line, it feels so great — it’s the best feeling in the world,” Scott said. “I hope my story not only brings awareness to choroideremia, but also encourage others to volunteer as a guide for blind runners.”

To follow EJ Scott on his journey to run 12 marathons in 2012 or to make a donation, visit <http://www.crowdrise.com/givetorunfree/fundraiser/kellimolter>. Or follow him on Twitter: @ejscott and @12marathons2012. ★

(Staedler is assigned to the 440th Airlift Wing public affairs office at Pope Field, N.C. He wrote this article while on a temporary duty assignment supporting Citizen Airman.)

# From the TRICARE Advisor



## Taking a closer look at Tricare retiree benefits

By Lt. Col. Alexander Alex

As my retirement from the Air Force Reserve approached, I began thinking about all of the things I needed to take care of before I left the service. Of course, health care is a big issue, and I will continue to have coverage under Tricare. However, the cost of this benefit will change due to my change in status, as it does for every military member who retires. In this, my final, article, I thought it fitting to summarize Tricare retiree benefits.

### Health Benefit Eligibility Rule

If you are retiring from an active Guard and Reserve or active-duty position with a minimum 20 years of service (based on total accumulated points), you are eligible for full health benefits upon retirement, regardless of age.

Those who earn a reserve retirement do not become eligible for Tricare until they reach age 60. Even if you are eligible to receive retired pay before reaching age 60, based upon participation, your eligibility for Tricare does not change. It remains at age 60.

The Tricare Retiree Dental Benefit is available to all retiring active-duty and Reserve members upon the first day of retirement. Therefore, it is not contingent upon age.

### Programs and Services

Following is a list of programs and services military members and their families can access upon retirement:

#### General Programs

- Tricare Prime
- Tricare Standard and Extra
- Tricare Plus
- Tricare Retired Reserve
- Tricare Young Adult
- Tricare for Life
- Tricare Pharmacy
- Tricare Delta Dental
- Tricare Overseas Program Standard

#### General Services

- Outpatient visits
- Clinical preventive services
- DME/prosthetics/orthotics
- Hospitalization/emergency services
- Ambulatory surgery
- Inpatient/outpatient behavioral health
- Inpatient skilled nursing

### Tricare Prime

To obtain Tricare Prime coverage when you retire, you must enroll as a retiree and enroll eligible family members as retiree dependents and pay the appropriate single or family enrollment fee. If your retirement date is on the first of the month, you must submit your enrollment application to your regional

contractor before that date. If you retire on another day of the month, you must submit your enrollment application within 30 days after that date. However, don't panic. From day one of your retirement, you and your eligible family members are covered by Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra (if your status is accurately reflected in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System) until your Tricare Prime coverage resumes.

Please note that Tricare Prime is not available everywhere. Contact the regional contractor for your location. And if you are moving, contact the Tricare regional provider for that area and ask about Tricare Prime availability.

Tricare Prime Remote coverage options are not available after retirement. If you are enrolled in either of these options, you will be covered by Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra after retirement. Tricare Overseas Program Prime is not available to retirees. However, if you plan to live overseas, Tricare Overseas Standard will be your choice of coverage.

If enrolled in Tricare Prime, your primary care manager will handle routine care and provide specialty care referrals. You may select a PCM at a military treatment facility when space permits (active-duty service members and their families have priority). If there is no space for retirees and retiree dependents to enroll in Tricare Prime at an MTF, you may need to change to a Tricare civilian network PCM. Enrollees in the Tricare Prime civilian network who live within an MTF prime service area may be referred to an MTF for specialty care based on the MTF's "right of first refusal" to deliver Tricare Prime specialty care within the prime service area.

### Costs

If you were on active duty and used the Prime benefit, you and your family did not experience any additional fees. However, Retiree Prime benefits are different relative to cost. There is an annual Tricare Prime enrollment fee, and copayments will apply for civilian Tricare network provider care. Point-of-service fees will apply if you receive care from a network or non-network Tricare-authorized provider without a referral from your PCM or prior authorization from your regional contractor.

Additionally, if you have other health insurance, it is considered your primary insurance and pays before Tricare. For details, visit [www.tricare.mil/costs](http://www.tricare.mil/costs), as these premiums and copay amounts can change from year to year.

### Enrollment Portability

Tricare Prime enrollment is portable, meaning you can transfer your coverage to another region if you move, if Prime is available. Retirees traveling for extended periods of time should transfer their Tricare Prime enrollment when they will

be out of the area for more than 60 days. Your regional contractor can help you make this transition. You should not disenroll from Tricare before you move or leave your area for 60 days or more until you consult with your regional contractor. Retirees and their dependents are limited to two enrollment transfers each enrollment year.

### Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra

When not enrolled in Tricare Prime, you are automatically covered by Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra, if DEERS shows you as eligible. Enrollment and referrals are not required, but some services may require prior authorization. Military treatment facility care is on a space-available basis only. You may see any Tricare-authorized provider, but the provider's Tricare network status determines your out-of-pocket costs. With Tricare Extra, you use a Tricare network provider, which reduces your costs. Under Tricare Standard, you may see any non-network Tricare-authorized provider, but your costs will be higher. For more details on costs under Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra, visit [www.tricare.mil/costs](http://www.tricare.mil/costs).

### Tricare Plus

Tricare Plus is a program that allows beneficiaries who normally are only able to get military treatment facility care on a space-available basis to enroll and receive primary care appointments at the MTF within the same primary care access standards as beneficiaries enrolled in a Tricare Prime option. Beneficiaries should contact their local MTFs to determine if they may participate in Tricare Plus.

Enrollment in Tricare Plus at one MTF does not automatically extend Tricare Plus enrollment to another facility. The treatment facility is not responsible for any costs when a Tricare Plus enrollee is referred outside the MTF for additional civilian care.

### Tricare Retired Reserve

Tricare Retired Reserve is a premium-based health plan that members of the Retired Reserve may qualify to purchase until reaching age 60. TRR provides comprehensive health care coverage and patient cost-shares and deductibles similar to Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra, but TRR beneficiaries must pay monthly premiums. TRR beneficiaries may access care from any Tricare-authorized provider, unless overseas restrictions apply. Retiree cost-shares and annual deductibles apply. For TRR details, visit [www.tricare.mil/trr](http://www.tricare.mil/trr).

### U.S. Family Health Plan

The U.S. Family Health Plan is a Tricare Prime option available through networks of community-based, not-for-profit health care systems in six areas of the United States. When you enroll in the USFHP, you receive care through the health care systems offering the program, and you may not use services within the military health system, including military treatment facility care, except in emergencies. Additionally, your prescription drug coverage is offered through your USFHP provider, not the Tricare Pharmacy Program. For USFHP details and service areas, visit [www.usfhp.com](http://www.usfhp.com).

### Tricare Pharmacy Program

The Tricare Pharmacy Program is available to Tricare Prime, Tricare Standard, Tricare Extra, Tricare for Life and Tricare Retired Reserve beneficiaries. Prescriptions may be filled through a military treatment facility pharmacy, Tricare Pharmacy Home Delivery, a Tricare retail network pharmacy or

a non-network pharmacy. For Tricare Pharmacy Program details and cost information, visit [www.tricare.mil/pharmacy](http://www.tricare.mil/pharmacy).

USFHP enrollees are not eligible for benefits through the Tricare Pharmacy Program and must use their USFHP provider for prescription drug coverage.

### Tricare For Life

Tricare for Life serves as Medicare-wraparound coverage for Tricare beneficiaries who are entitled to Medicare Part A and have purchased Medicare Part B coverage. If you or a family member has only Medicare Part A, enroll in Medicare Part B before you retire to avoid a lapse in coverage. You must enroll within eight months of your retirement date to avoid a Medicare Part B surcharge. The surcharge is a 10 percent premium increase for each 12-month period that you could have enrolled but did not.

In the United States and its territories, Tricare pays last for services covered by both Tricare and Medicare. Medicare does not pay for services received overseas. For overseas care, Tricare pays first, and you pay the applicable Tricare Standard cost-shares and annual deductible. For Medicare details, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov); for Medicare enrollment information, visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov); and for TFL details, visit [www.tricare.mil/tfl](http://www.tricare.mil/tfl).

### Tricare Overseas Program Standard

If living overseas, you may be eligible to use TOP Standard and receive military treatment facility care on a space-available basis. TOP Standard is available to retired service members, their families and others living or traveling overseas, and is similar to Tricare Standard, including cost-shares and annual deductibles.

As you can see, there is a lot to sort through when it comes to health care after retirement. To make the best decision for you and your family, you will need to consider your individual situation and take a close look at each available option. Like retirement planning, you need to integrate health care and health care expenses into an overall plan. Don't discount the robustness of Tricare health services and how they figure into your retirement financial plans. ★

## Tricare Advisor Says Farewell

For the last 11 years, Lt. Col. Alexander Alex has served as Air Force Reserve Command's Reserve health benefits consultant and Tricare advisor. On Oct. 5, he retired from military service, ending his career with 30 years of service.

"In my most recent position, I reached nearly everyone in the command through some means, whether it was articles, briefings, Professional Development Center classes, special events, face-to-face meetings, personal email or telephone calls," Alex said. "We have achieved many lasting results through your communication and the leadership AFRC took in this specialized area of Reserve health benefits."

"I have in my professional career never treasured anything more than my association with AFRC. It has been my profound pleasure and privilege to have served each of you. I retire with the hope and feeling we have succeeded in our endeavor and leave a lasting marker for ongoing achievement. I bid you all a fond farewell."



# DEPLOYING?

## WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK

Air Force Reserve Command's Yellow Ribbon Program was designed to help Air Force Reservists and their family members better handle all phases of a deployment — pre-, during and post-. If you are deploying for 90 days or more, contact your Yellow Ribbon Program wing representative to find out what Yellow Ribbon is all about.

**For those who serve and those who support**

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