

Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Vol. 66 No. 3 June 2014

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The wait is over.

Reservists start new F-35 mission at Luke.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL
James F. Jackson



FROM THE TOP



There are two
“basic elements
to being a good
wingman:
knowing and”
doing.



ARE YOU A GOOD WINGMAN?

Every year we ask units to conduct a Wingman Day. This is the Air Force's opportunity to pause and focus on our most important resource, our people. Many times during the small group discussions, we talk about what it means to be a good wingman. There are many positive traits one can use to describe an effective wingman. I want to offer you my own perspective on a couple of these traits.

In my view, there are two basic elements to being a good wingman: knowing and doing. To be a good wingman requires looking in the mirror and asking how you can be a better you! Knowing how to achieve an optimum balance in your life helps you be a healthier Airman and, in turn, a more capable wingman. I encourage you to use the four pillars of comprehensive Airman fitness — physical, mental, spiritual and social — as a guide toward developing a better version of you.

“Knowing” also involves cultivating relationships with others. Get to know your fellow Airmen and learn what motivates them. Know their good days, so you can recognize the bad ones. Every one of our Citizen Airmen has a story, so be a good listener. By knowing ourselves and each other, you will be better positioned to assist those in need.

The other basic element to being a good wingman is “doing.”

Doing is about taking action. A good adage that applies here is, “It's not purely what you know; it's what you do with what you know.” Lead with your actions by asking for help when you need it.

Develop goals based on the four pillars and pursue them for individual improvement. Look out for others, especially in light of the recent uptick in suicides. If you see someone in a crisis, have the courage to ask about his or her well-being. We should be mindful of how others are doing around us. ... not just on Wingman Day, but all year long.

This year, the theme for Wingman Day is “Finding the Good.” Many times, to find the good, you may need to view particular circumstances differently. Look for the good, especially during difficult personal situations. Always remember the good things in your life. We all have things that are special and meaningful to us.

Additionally, by helping others find the good, you may help people bounce back from hardships they may encounter. To see more on this topic, I invite you to read the stories that begin on Page 18.

Our team is made stronger through unity and strengthening of our members. Wingman Day is our chance to do just that!

Thanks for all you do!

TEAM WELLNESS ENHANCES TEAM PERFORMANCE

In my February and April commentaries, I described my first two focus areas: team unity and team opportunities. This issue, I want to again draw attention to my focus areas and discuss the third one — team wellness. Team wellness is all about our team: America's Citizen Airmen.

In my opinion, there are five keys that encapsulate team wellness. The first key is having a shared purpose. As I also addressed in my team unity discussion, having a shared vision helps the team come together and perform. We should inspire those around us to achieve a common goal.

The second key to team wellness involves focusing on relationships within the team. As Lt. Gen. Jackson mentions in his commentary, knowing people is fundamental to our business. Building rapport with people can directly improve mission effectiveness through strong bonds.

The third key is building an environment where people look forward to coming to work. We should foster professionalism and respect for one another. We all volunteered to serve this great nation as members of a professional force, so our local culture should be a reflection of our values, while balanced with camaraderie.

The fourth key is strengthening the wingman culture by proactively looking out for each other. Sexual assaults and suicides are affecting our Airmen at an alarming rate. Each of you plays an essential role in stopping these tragedies in your units. Noticing when someone needs help and taking appropriate action could make the difference in saving an Airman's life.

Getting people resources to help is the fifth key to team well-

ness. Programs such as Yellow Ribbon for our deployers and websites like the Wingman Toolkit (afrc.wingmantoolkit.org) are only a couple of programs and resources essential to all Airmen, built around the four pillars of comprehensive Airman fitness. Another valuable resource is the Psychological Health Advocacy Program, available 24/7, which assists our members and their families by locating appropriate resources through free and confidential regional teams.

For more information on team wellness, Yellow Ribbon and PHAP, please see the series of articles in this issue beginning on Page 18.

As a final thought, team wellness enhances team unity and team opportunities. Team wellness helps ensure our Airmen are ready to carry out the mission and take on development opportunities when they arise. Every Airman is a valued member of our team. Be cognizant of your own individual wellness, and keep a watchful eye out for your wingmen.

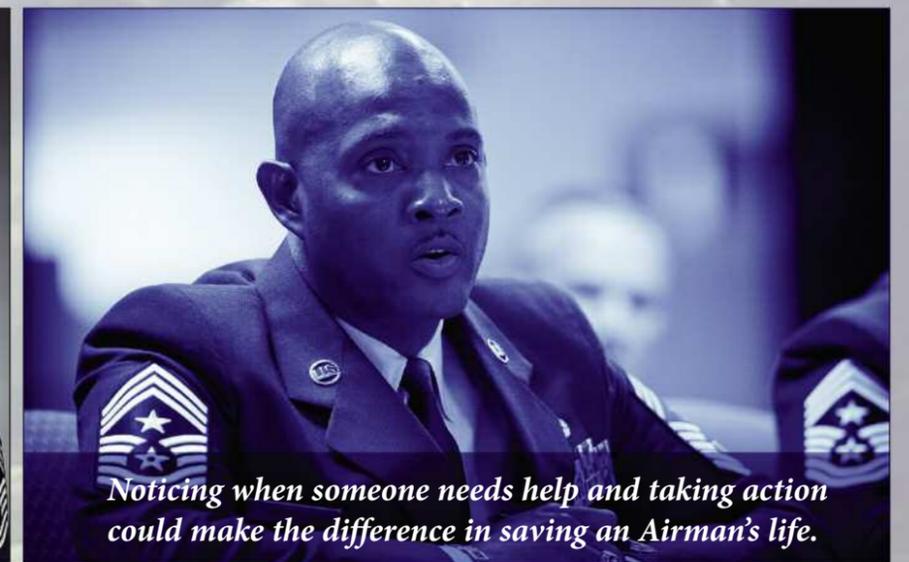
I'm here for you!

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT

Cameron B. Kirksey



CHIEF'S VIEW



Noticing when someone needs help and taking action
could make the difference in saving an Airman's life.

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Reserve pilots fly most experienced F-22 sortie ever



On the cover: The arrival of the F-35 Lightning II at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, marked the beginning of the 69th Fighter Squadron's involvement in an effort to train future pilots of America's newest fifth-generation fighter. The base will serve as the F-35 pilot training center for seven partner nations, making it the world's largest fighter pilot training facility. See the full story beginning on Page 14. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)

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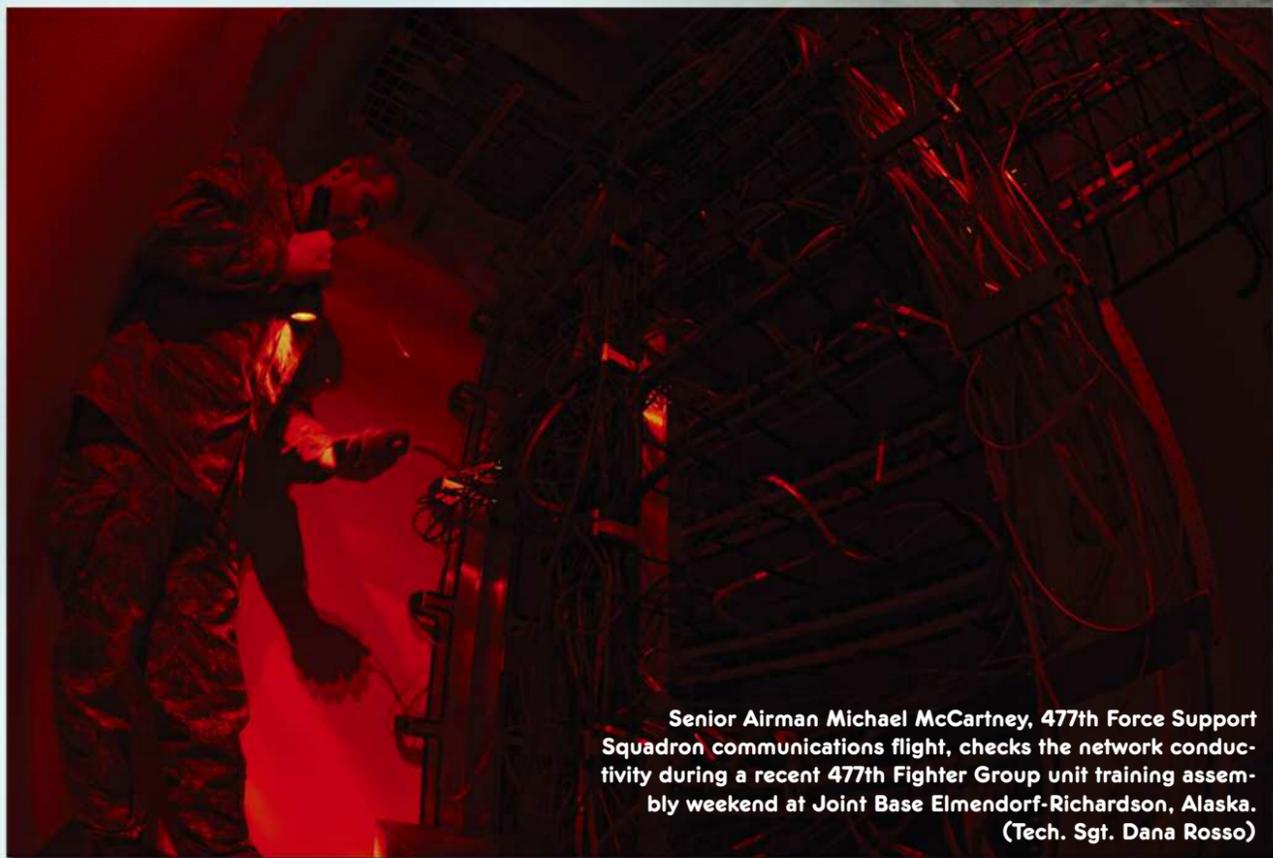
Camouflaged and positioned, Tech. Sgt. Kelly Carney focuses on an anticipated enemy ambush at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Members of the 710th and 310th Security Forces Squadrons participated in a six-day combat leaders course while living in field conditions. Each day's mission was designed around the main objective of the day's classroom instruction, placing practical application of combat maneuvers into complex mission environments. The 710th SFS is out of Buckley Air Force Base, while the 310th SFS is located at Schriever AFB. Both bases are in Colorado. (Tech. Sgt. Nicholas B. Ontiveros)



Zack Brady of the 96th Aerospace Medicine Squadron rests after the Color Me Aware fun run at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. The event highlighted the start of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. (Tech. Sgt. Jasmin Taylor)



A maintainer works on a transient A-10 Thunderbolt II during a stopover at Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, for routine maintenance and fuel. (W.C. Pope)



Senior Airman Michael McCartney, 477th Force Support Squadron communications flight, checks the network conductivity during a recent 477th Fighter Group unit training assembly weekend at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. (Tech. Sgt. Dana Rosso)



Senior Airman Brandon Price, an 815th Airlift Squadron loadmaster, prepares for a simulated cargo drop while participating in Operation Surge Capacity. Sixteen aircraft from the 403rd Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, took part in the large-scale training exercise designed to test the 403rd's ability to launch and recover a large formation of aircraft and execute airdrops. (Senior Airman Nicholas Monteleone)



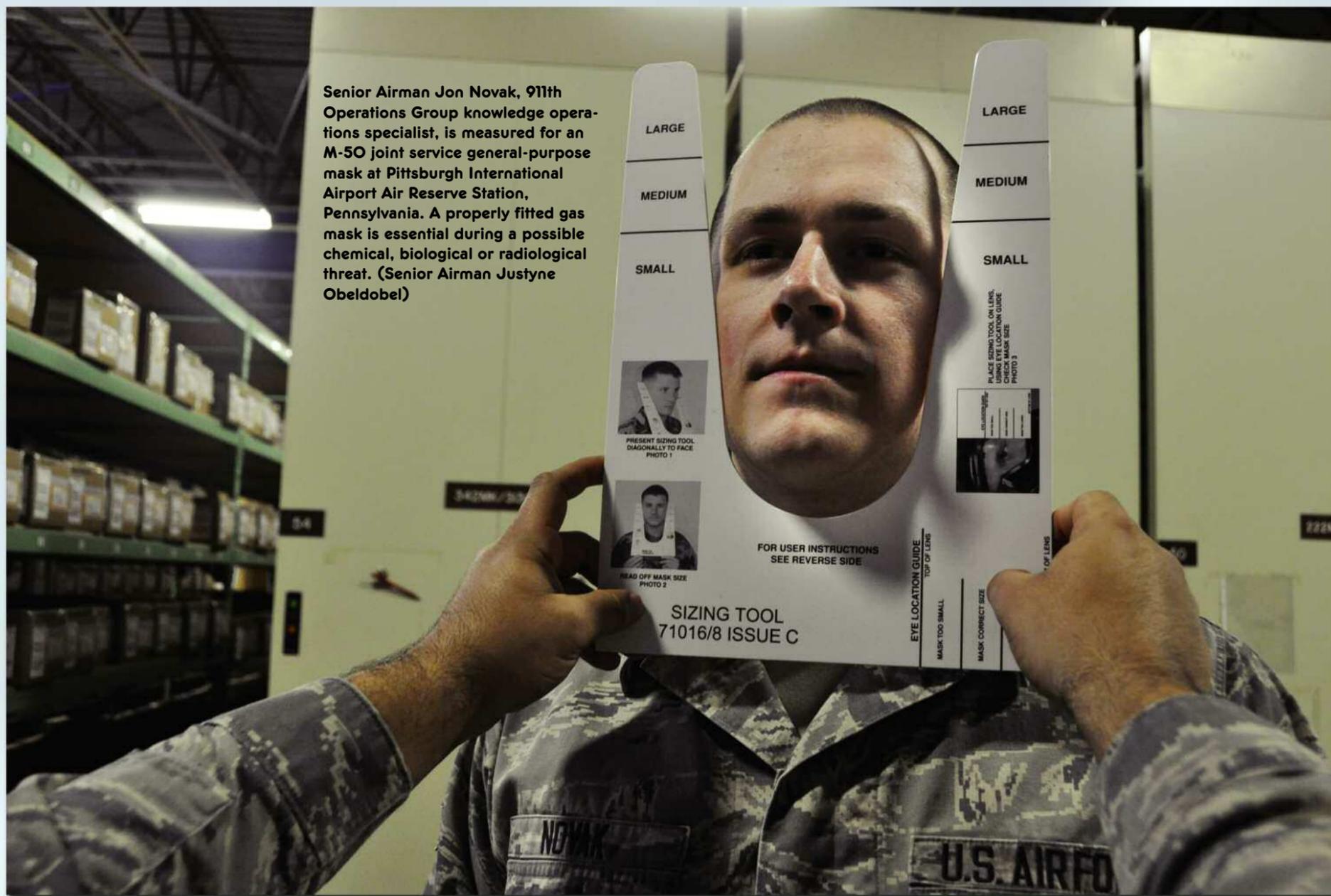
Senior Airman Nicholas Livingston of the 445th Security Forces Squadron at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, practices maneuvering techniques during his squadron's recent "shoot, move, communicate" training event. (Tech. Sgt. Anthony Springer)



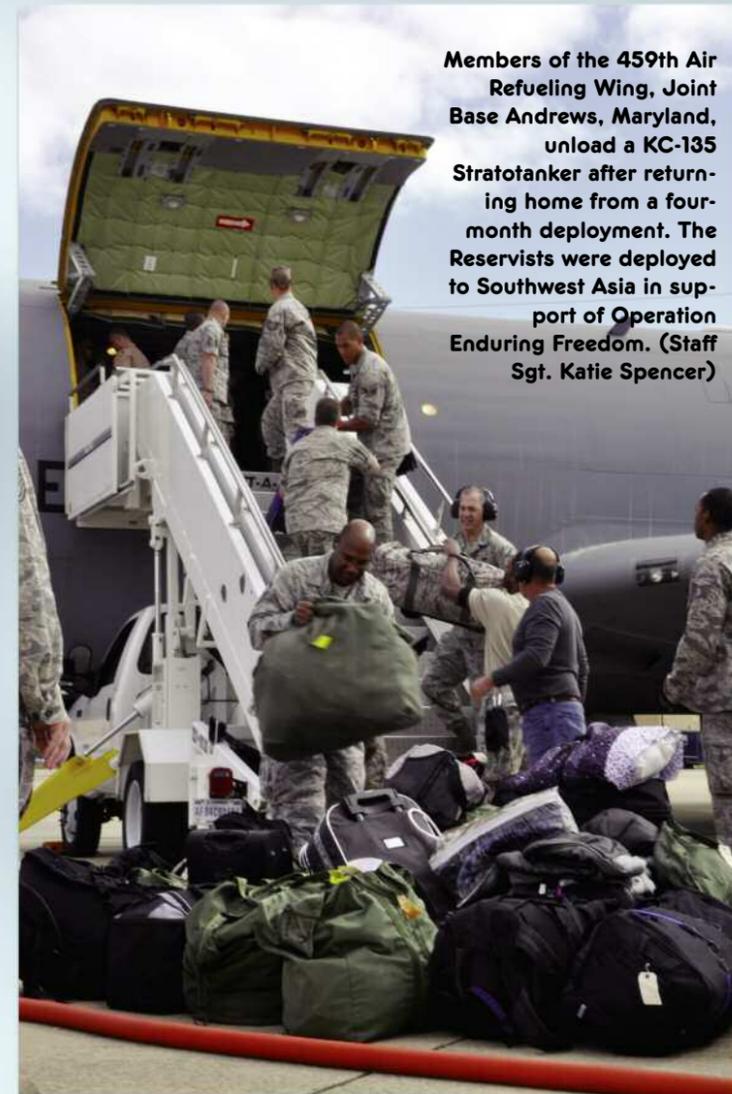
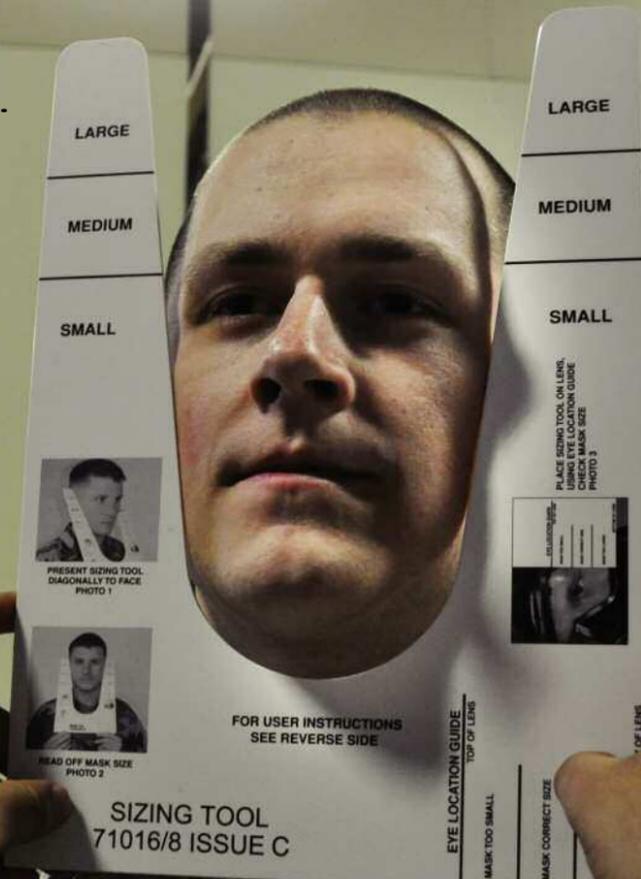
Tech. Sgt. Earl W. Tubbs, Lt. Col. Mark C. Ryals and Maj. Gregory J. Castro receive radio communication from their land navigation students at Ute Valley Park in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The students participated in a global positioning system exercise that was part of the two-week Space Operations Course designed for non-space military members and civilians and taught by the Reserve National Security Space Institute. (Tech. Sgt. Nicholas B. Ontiveros)



Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Newton, 507th Force Support Squadron, Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, stops during a run to do a set of pushups. She uses a global positioning system watch that tracks distance and pace while also monitoring her heart rate. This tool is just one of many that Reservists with full-time jobs and families can utilize to stay on top of their fitness goals. (Senior Airman Mark Hybers)



Senior Airman Jon Novak, 911th Operations Group knowledge operations specialist, is measured for an M-50 joint service general-purpose mask at Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania. A properly fitted gas mask is essential during a possible chemical, biological or radiological threat. (Senior Airman Justyne Obeldobel)



Members of the 459th Air Refueling Wing, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, unload a KC-135 Stratotanker after returning home from a four-month deployment. The Reservists were deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Staff Sgt. Katie Spencer)

Grissom Temporarily Closes Runway

The runway at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, is closed to allow the installation of expansion joints in the pavement.

Because of the heat, "the pavement heaves up during the summer-time," said John Robison, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron chief engineer. "We are putting in expansion joints that allow the pavement to move around and prevent buckling due to thermal expansion."

Robison said the project, which began June 1, is estimated to cost \$3.2 million and is projected to keep the runway closed for 45 days.

"When we initially looked at these repairs, the projects were spread out over some length of time," said Col. Bryan Reinhart, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander. "We've worked really hard to consolidate these as much as possible so we limit the time our runway is closed."

The repairs will allow the 12,500-foot runway to continue to be used by both military and civilian aircraft for many years to come, Robison said.

The last time Grissom's runway was closed for repair was in 2004.

During the construction, the 434th ARW's 16 KC-135R Stratotankers will operate from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. (Tech. Sgt. Mark R.W. Orders-Woempner, 434th Air Refueling Wing public affairs, Grissom ARB)

Cyber Operations Group Adds Squadron

Air Force Reserve Command deactivated the 960th Cyberspace Operations Group, Detachment 1 and re-designated the unit as the 854th Combat Operations Squadron in a ceremony April 5 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

The unit, formerly one of two detachments designed to house cyber defense Citizen Airmen and grow to squadron strength, joins the 960th CYOG, which runs cyberspace command and control operations for the entire Air Force.

"When we first began, I was an Air Force of one," said Col. Mark Melcher, 854th COS commander. "We had our first unit training assembly January 2013 with only a handful of folks, and we're growing from there."

Melcher is charged with ramping up the squadron, whose mission is to integrate Citizen Airmen into the active-duty's 624th Operations Center cyberspace command and control mission.

"Our main focus now is hiring qualified people and getting them mission-ready as soon as possible," Melcher said. "This is how we can most quickly provide support to our active-duty counterparts."

The commander, who formerly ran strategy for Air Education and Training Command, is proud of the accomplishments his Reservists have made so far and is eager to attract and retain more top talent to ensure mobilization readiness.

Recently, the unit sent some of its members to the Intermediate Network Warfare Training course at Hurlburt Field, Florida. This course serves as initial qualification training for personnel actively defending global Air Force networks. Culminating the course is a capstone exercise that involves simulated war-fighting scenarios.

"This is the first team in the history of the course to beat the aggressors," Melcher said. "We have pretty sharp people. ... we're world class in what we do (here)."

The "Scorpions" join an elite group of nearly 800 people working in cyberspace operations throughout AFRC.

"The unique part of our unit is that we've been fully integrated with the (active-duty) mission since day one," said Lt. Col. Samuel McGlynn, 854th COS director of operations. "Our operations tempo is always high. We're not training for a future mission. ... our mission is now."

Those interested in joining the cyber team should contact Chief Master Sgt. William Fountas at 210-925-7224 or via email at william.fountas@us.af.mil. Also, check out www.usajobs.gov for a listing of current air reserve technician positions available. (1st Lt. Lori Fiorello, 960th CYOG public affairs)

910th Airlift Wing Deactivates Long-Time Squadron

After serving as part of the 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, for almost 20 years, the 773rd Airlift Squadron was deactivated March 31.

The 773rd was activated as a unit of the 910th in 1995. It was deactivated as a result of Air Force structure changes, which reduced the wing's C-130 Hercules aircraft fleet to eight primary assigned aircraft and one back-up inventory aircraft.

"This squadron has been, since World War II, in the middle of making our military the strongest and best in the world," said U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan of Ohio's 13th Congressional District. "(And) just because this squadron will be inactive doesn't mean that we are not going to try to increase the mission capability and readiness right here in Youngstown, Ohio."

Nicknamed "The Quiet Professionals," members of the 773rd have deployed to locations around the world supporting various contingency and humanitarian operations. Since 2001, members of the squadron have mobilized and operated out of bases in Southwest Asia including isolated airfields in Iraq and Afghanistan to provide airlift and airdrop capability of much-needed equipment and personnel. Just prior to the squadron's deactivation, the unit commander reflected on the performance of his Airmen.

"From its beginning, our squadron helped make our nation stronger," said Lt. Col. John A. Bocchieri. "The dedication, commitment and sacrifice that made our success possible is owed to some of the finest Airmen in the country, who serve our nation only because they were asked." (Tech. Sgt. Jim Brock, 910th AW public affairs)

TSA Expands Expedited Screening to Include Civilian Employees

Defense Department and Coast Guard civilian employees are now able to take advantage of the Transportation Security Administration pre-check expedited screening program at more than 115 airports across the country.

"We've worked closely with TSA over the past few months to expand the pre-check program to include the department's 800,000 civilian employees," said Mary Snavelly-Dixon, director of the Defense Manpower Data Center. "Our civilian employees play vital roles in our nation's defense each and every day. Expanding TSA's program to include them is great news."

Civilian employees became eligible for the program April 15. All military and Coast Guard personnel, including those in the various reserve



components, were already eligible for the program, which began in March 2012.

A secure and reliable data-sharing agreement between the Defense Department and TSA provides verification of eligibility, officials said. Participating members can keep their shoes or boots, light outerwear and belts on during preflight screening, and can keep their laptop com-

Utah Guard, Reserve forces team up for pilot rescue exercise

By Bryan Magana

Air Force Reservists, active-duty members and National Guardsmen from Utah put their search and rescue skills to the test during a recent training exercise dubbed Operation Lone Survivor in the rocky terrain of Utah's west desert.

Members of the 419th Fighter Wing, the 388th FW, the Air National Guard's 151st Air Refueling Wing and the Army National Guard's 211th Aviation Group joined forces in the rescue exercise involving two "downed" F-16 pilots near the Utah Test and Training Range.

"This exercise is important because we never know what situation we're going to find ourselves in during combat," said Col. Bryan Radliff, 419th FW commander. "Training like this is an opportunity to test our skills together."

On the ground, the stranded pilots had a chance to sharpen their survival, evasion, resistance and escape skills until help arrived from the air.

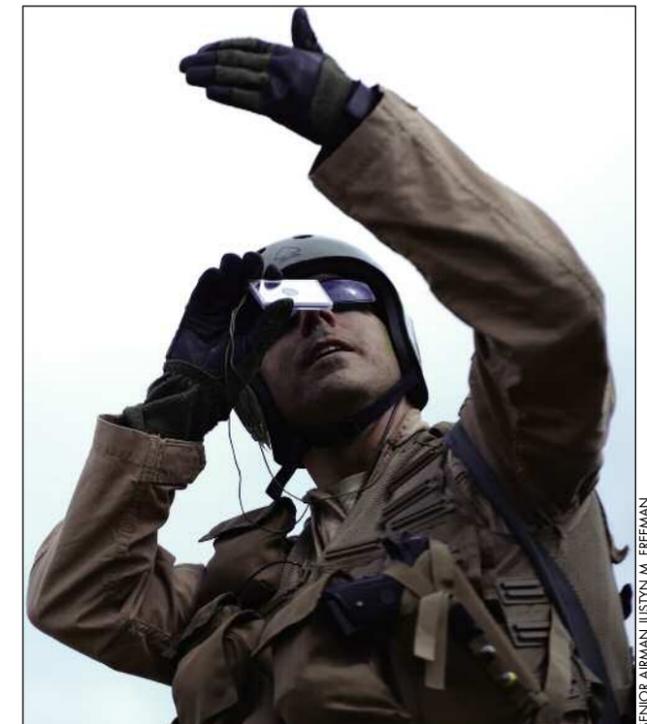
AH-64 Apaches from the 211th AG circled the vast landscape to locate the pilots and take out "enemies" on the ground before UH-60 Black Hawks touched down to rescue the pilots. Two F-16 Fighting Falcons, flown by 419th FW Reservists, provided cover, and a KC-135 Stratotanker from the 151st ARW was on hand to refuel the jets.

Maj. Gen. Jefferson Burton, Utah National Guard adjutant general, flew in the backseat of one of the F-16s for a firsthand look at the integrated training effort.

"Exercises such as this one are essential to our ability to function efficiently as a military," Burton said. "We train hard as a multi-service force so that when the fateful moment comes, we are ready to perform, to fight and to win our nation's conflicts."

Reservists from the 419th Security Forces Squadron also had a key role in the exercise, protecting the pilots on the ground until the helicopters arrived. Some SFS Airmen also played the part of enemy soldiers who were racing to find the downed pilots.

"This operation shows that Utah's Guard and Reserve forces have the experience and capability to execute this mission in combat," said



"Downed" F-16 pilot Lt. Col. Thomas Wolfe, 388th Fighter Wing, signals to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during the Lone Survivor exercise. The exercise provided an opportunity for active-duty members, Reservists and Guardsmen to train together in a realistic environment.

Maj. Bart Wilbanks, 419th FW pilot who helped plan the exercise. "Our part-time military personnel are a pretty impressive force."

(Magana is assigned to the 419th FW public affairs office at Hill AFB.)

Pope's Pun



puter in its case. They also may have a 3-1-1 compliant liquids and gels bag in a carry-on bag in select screening lanes.

To participate in the pre-check program, military personnel and DOD and Coast Guard civilian employees must provide their DOD identification number — the 10-digit number on the back of their Common Access Card — when making travel reservations. This can be done through the Defense Travel System, through a travel management center, or when booking leisure travel through airline or travel websites. The DOD ID number is to be used in place of the “Known Traveler Number.”

It’s important to note, officials said, that DOD and Coast Guard civilian employees first must “opt in” to the TSA pre-check program by visiting the “milConnect” website at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect>. After logging into the website and selecting the “My Profile” menu tab, users will be guided through the opt-in process. Civilian employees need to opt in only once, officials said. Military members already are eligible and do not need to opt in.

Another major change to the TSA pre-check program is the phase-out of service members having their CACs scanned at 10 domestic airports. With the transition to using the DOD ID number in making airline reservations, officials said, scanning of ID cards is no longer required and will be eliminated soon. Those who have been used to

scanning their CACs should begin following the new process now to have uninterrupted participation in the TSA pre-check program, officials said.

TSA always will incorporate random and unpredictable security measures throughout airports, officials said, and no one is guaranteed expedited screening. (*American Forces Press Service*)

Reservists Have Until Oct. 31 to Revalidate Dependents

All Air Force Reservists who are receiving the basic allowance for housing (with dependent rate) have until Oct. 31 to provide their servicing finance office with documentation for all of their dependents as part of Air Force audit readiness efforts.

This one-time, Air Force-wide recertification process will allow the Air Force to validate Airmen’s basic allowance for housing entitlements, ensuring every dollar of the \$5.4 billion the Air Force spends annually on BAH is fully auditable.

For those Reservists receiving BAH (without dependent rate), no action is required.

Reservists affected by this requirement must provide the document — marriage license and birth certificate(s) — that is the basis for their BAH entitlement. In addition, they must complete an Air Force Form

594, Application and Authorization to Start, Stop or Change Basic Allowance for Quarters or Dependency Redetermination. This form must be printed and signed. A digital signature is not acceptable.

Supporting documentation and the signed form must be either hand-carried or mailed to the appropriate servicing Reserve pay office.

The push for revalidation of dependent documentation comes as the Air Force prepares to meet financial improvement and audit readiness requirements laid out in the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act. The Air Force currently retains dependent documentation for six years, which is insufficient to meet audit readiness requirements. This one-time revalidation will ensure Air Force compliance with audit requirements.

“America entrusts the Air Force not only to spend taxpayer dollars wisely and efficiently, but also to account and justify that expenditure,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III in a recent memo. “Preparation for this important and legislatively mandated effort rests in the hands of every Airman, not just the financial community.”

Although revalidation of Airmen’s dependents will be a one-time recertification, Airmen will continue to play a vital role in the Air Force’s audit readiness. Starting in 2015, independent auditors will visit workstations for Airmen to review processes, procedures and transactions that directly impact the Air Force’s financial statements. (*Capt. Erika Yepsen, secretary of the Air Force public affairs, and staff reports*)

Patrick Implements Innovative Approach to Weight Management

Changing bad eating habits and maintaining the discipline and motivation to work out on a regular basis is a daily battle for some people. Helping them win that battle is the focus of a unique and innovative program at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida.

Uncle Sam’s Weight Warriors is the Department of Defense’s first-ever support group designed specifically to help people overcome the frustrations they encounter in trying to lose weight and keep it off.

“We started this group because the number of people who are overweight or obese is increasing in the nation and in the Air Force,” said Candace Croft, 45th Aerospace Medical Squadron dietitian. “We all know people who try to lose weight and keep it off but get frustrated with their efforts.”

Lt. Col. Glenn Donnelly, 45th AMDS commander, said another reason the group was introduced is losing weight is a struggle, a daily and hourly battle.

“That’s why we have keyed in on the warrior motif for our DOD populations (including members of the Air Force Reserve’s 920th Rescue Wing),” Donnelly said. “Even for those who are able to make winning choices, nutrition as we understand it today has many competing theories. Uncle Sam’s Weight Warriors focuses on sharing nutritional facts that are relevant and providing ongoing motivation and support. The support group model lends itself to collaborative successes where the will of the individual may fail.”

Croft said weight loss and maintenance can help reduce the burden of chronic disease and help people be healthier in their daily lives.

“It also improves mission readiness,” she said.

Prior to the formation of the weight management support group, people in the DOD community who are having trouble with weight loss and maintenance issues could make an individual appointment with a health professional or join a group class. This new program provides key missing elements to the mix of existing health and fitness resources, including peer support, motivation and problem-solving, Croft said.

“A support group is an approach that produces good results in other settings,” she said. (*Heidi Hunt, 45th Space Wing public affairs, Patrick*)



Establish, Communicate Your Goals

By Ralph Lunt

I recently had an elderly client of mine call me and schedule a meeting. Turns out she, and her lawyer, had negotiated a mineral rights deal that will result in a \$500,000 check and was looking for my advice as to what I thought would be her best options for what to do with the money.

Investment decisions are tough, as for the most part there is very little to see or touch. In this case, the first thing that needed to be done was set aside \$125,000 for taxes before making any decisions about what to do with the rest of the money.

In the April issue of *Citizen Airman*, I wrote about working with qualified financial advisers. Now, I’d like to talk about knowing what we want our money to do. In the case of this client, I presented different financial products, each with its own unique features, benefits, risks, etc. The next thing was for the client to decide the dollar amounts she wanted to allocate to each of these products. Then we discussed in depth the years in which equity markets saw major declines in value and spoke about goals for money that, per my client’s direction, is to be passed on to her children.

I’d really like to see all of our military members be great savers with no debt. That way they, too, would be making decisions about six-figure Thrift Savings Plan accounts, inheritances, etc. My advice is to have money goals, know what it is you want your money to do and communicate that to whomever you work with.

Given that this windfall was unexpected and this woman had never dealt with such a large sum of money, I encouraged her to ask questions about liquidity, risks, fees, online access, penalties, etc. Knowing what you want to do, who you or your spouse will work with and how to adjust are critical to the success of your financial plan.

Best wishes for a great summer. Fly and be 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, 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.*)

New simulator provides efficient training for boom operators

By Staff Sgt. Alan Abernethy

Boom operators at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, now have an aerial refueling simulator that provides real training in a virtual environment.

The simulator, called a boom operator weapons system trainer, or BOWST, utilizes new technology and allows boom operators to maintain training requirements more easily, said Mark Moore, BOWST contracting representative.

“They (boom operators) can now log flying hours for training in the simulator the same way they would in the actual airplane,” Moore said. “The BOWST provides KC-135 boom operators their first opportunity to train this way.”

The look, feel and operation of the simulator are modeled exactly after the actual aircraft, said Jeff Ledoux, boom operator instructor. Since the boom operator controls the physical connection between two aircraft during the refueling process, it’s very important that the simulation is accurate.

The BOWST is also very valuable when it comes to running flight checklists and procedures, said Tech. Sgt. Bruce Berglund, 911th Air Refueling Squadron chief boom operator.

Although several other BOWST systems are operational throughout the Air Force, the 916th Air Refueling Wing at Seymour Johnson is only the second unit in Air Force



Tech. Sgt. Bruce Berglund, 911th Air Refueling Squadron chief boom operator, prepares to use the new boom operator weapons system trainer at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina.

Reserve Command to receive the trainer. The first was the 434th ARW at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana.

Operators from several units are scheduled to travel to Seymour Johnson to train using the BOWST, including Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey; Joint Base Andrews, Maryland; Pease Air National Guard Base, New Hampshire; and Birmingham ANGB, Alabama.

Plans include teleconferenced simulations between geographically separated units, Moore said, which will allow joint training with pilot and refueling simulators.

“Pilots using simulators at any location will be able to sync-up with the BOWST here; they will then interact in real-time, as with any other mission,” Moore said.

(*Abernethy is assigned to the 916th ARW public affairs office at Seymour Johnson.*)



When officials at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, celebrated the arrival of the base's first F-35 Lightning II aircraft with an unveiling ceremony March 14, the occasion signified the beginning of the 69th Fighter Squadron's involvement in an effort to train future pilots of America's newest fifth-generation fighter.

Eventually, 144 F-35s are scheduled to be assigned to Luke in six squadrons, all part of the active-duty 56th Fighter Wing. The base will serve as the F-35 pilot training center for seven partner nations, making it the world's largest fighter pilot training facility.

Air Force Reserve Command's 944th FW, of which the 69th FS is a part, is right in the thick of things, already being involved with the F-16 training mission.

"It's new, it's historic and it's representative of what's going to happen for years to come," Col. Kurt Gallegos, 944th FW commander, said in reference to the F-35. "It's going to be our next-generation fighter, and to be part of it here at the 944th FW is symbolic. A lot of growing pains are going to come along with that, but we've got the personnel and are ready for that new mission, and I'm excited."

With the welcoming of a new aircraft and the beginning of a new training mission also came the arrival of the 69th FS's first F-35 instructor pilot: Maj. Justin "Tang" Robinson. He, along with additional instructor pilots and other Reservists,

will work alongside active-duty counterparts in the 56th FW in a classic associate unit situation. The aircraft will belong to the active duty, while the Reserve will provide people to fly and maintain the aircraft.

"It (being selected as the 69th's first instructor pilot) is an honor," Robinson said. "The significance of it is not lost on me. I'm humbled that they would entrust me with being the first one to represent the unit. I'm just hoping I live up to the expectations that the Reserve has of me and represent the Reserve in a favorable light with all the active-duty guys."

For leaders of the 944th FW and 69th FS, picking the first F-35 instructor pilot was a tough decision, considering the vast number of experienced pilots within the squadron. A selection board was formed to consider all of the candidates who volunteered.

"We have a massively talented and experienced F-16 instructor pilot cadre here at Luke," said Lt. Col. Gerry Brown, 69th FS commander. "The average IP has about 2,000 F-16 hours. Every guy who put in for the first IP position, from a talent and ability standpoint, can go fly the F-35 tomorrow."

"What tipped the scale in Robinson's favor was his experience as an operational test pilot up at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. That operational test experience, we felt, was an additional qualification on his resume that helped push him over the edge as the first guy."

RESERVISTS START NEW MISSION AT LUKE

BY MASTER SERGEANT CHANCE BABIN

THE F-35

Before joining the Reserve, Robinson served on active duty for 11 years. During that time, he had the opportunity to work with the 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron at Nellis, where he was exposed to the F-35 program.

"When I moved here, it was kind of a natural fit being one of the guys who knew a little bit about the program and what was happening," Robinson said. "I was able to move right in and just kind of keep working with the same people I knew at Nellis, Edwards AFB, California, and Eglin AFB, Florida."

"I have about 60 pilots who work here for me, and they are all superstars — great IPs," Gallegos said. "Tang was hand-picked: one for his work, two for his personality and three for his background. He's done a great job. He's a Fighter Weapons School graduate. He's very well-respected above and beyond his peers. We are obviously going to pick our top 1 percent to send off to school initially with our active-duty counterparts. So your first cadre of pilots is always going to be your best and brightest, and that's exactly what Tang

brings to the table."

Robinson is appreciative of the opportunity and said he will have ample time to give back and contribute to the development of the F-35 program.

"I'm young for a Reserve dude, so I've got time for them to get their money's worth out of me in this new airframe," he said. "I'm excited. I think it's an awesome opportunity. A lot of guys only stay in one airframe their entire career. That's awesome, too, but I think going out and learning a new airframe and helping to bring it online offers the kind of challenge that is really appropriate for me at this point."

Having AFRC involved in the F-35 pilot training mission from the very beginning is important, Robinson said.

"I think it shows a commitment to TFI (total force integration) in general and, also, some wisdom on their (the active-duty's) part," he said. "I was on active duty for 11 years, and I had a different job every year and would move from one thing to the next to the next. There really wasn't much continuity. It

was great for broadening my experience base, but in terms of the shop and the job I was doing, a place like this would really benefit from continuity within the organization."

Active-duty instructor pilots generally cycle through every three years. With that level of turnover, along with deployments being mixed in, oftentimes knowledge is not passed down, and the next guy starts at ground zero, he said.

"With Reservists providing more stability and continuity, we don't have that problem," Robinson said. "The knowledge continues to grow."

Brown said that regardless of their current airframe, Reserve F-16 instructor pilots will prove to be valuable assets because many of the lessons they learned in the Fighting Falcon will apply to the new airframe.

"A lot of those lessons and that ability to teach somebody a new skill in a fighter aircraft, they will carry forward in the F-35," he said. "So instead of those people leaving for a different assignment or getting out of the Air Force completely, we are actually able to keep them for several more years, building upon that experience base and maintaining continuity."

Gaining the F-35 mission will lead to growth for the 944th FW

and bring back many jobs that were lost as a result of the 2007 base realignment and closure actions, when the 302nd FS was deactivated. The 302nd was later reactivated at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

"We lost the airplanes and a lot of people," Gallegos said. "Right now, we are starting to bring in maintainers. We are probably going to start off with 132 in the next year or year and a half. Then, from there, we are looking to shoot up to 200 to 250 Reserve maintainers. They will start working on the F-16s initially and then transfer to the F-35 down the road. We'll have close to 250 billets in the next four or five years."

While things begin to build up, Robinson is preparing for his school date later this year as many of his fellow Reservists anxiously anticipate seeing him fly the F-35.

"I can't wait to walk out and shake his hand when he climbs out of an F-35 for his first flight here at Luke," Brown said. "That will be a momentous occasion for the 69th FS. That's the next game-changer. He'll be wearing a 944th patch as he climbs out of an F-35, and he's based here. It'll be pretty special."

(Babin is assigned to the Headquarters AFRC public affairs office at Robins AFB, Georgia.)



Maj. Justin Robinson is the 69th Fighter Squadron's first F-35 instructor pilot. He, along with additional instructor pilots and other Reservists, will work alongside active-duty counterparts in the 56th FW in a classic associate unit situation. The aircraft will belong to the active duty, while the Reserve will provide people to fly and maintain the aircraft. Below, Robinson pilots an F-16 as it escorts the first F-35 to Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, in March.



“MANY TIMES TO FIND THE GOOD YOU MAY NEED TO VIEW PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES DIFFERENTLY.”

-LT GEN JAMES F. JACKSON

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE THRIVE IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES WHILE OTHERS MAY FALL SHORT?

By KRISTAL SHIVER

The Air Force has worked hard over the years dedicating time, funding and resources to help Airmen and families understand the term “resilience.” Senior leaders believe in it so strongly that they set aside valuable time every year to stand down and talk about resilience and how to be a good wingman. By being a good wingman, we’re not talking about adhering to the “bro code” at the bar (high five to those of you who watched “How I Met Your Mother”). We’re talking about being there for someone, to help him become stronger, healthier or successful again.

Ask people on the street what the word resilience means to them — as researchers have done — and most would say something along the lines of “the ability to bounce back.” A more formal definition, put together by the RAND Corporation’s review of resilience programs across the Department of Defense, defines resilience as the ability to withstand, recover and/or grow in the face of stressors and changing demands. Both definitions are right.

Research shows that we can learn resilience skills and that by practicing we can increase our resilience. With useful strategies and techniques, we can be ready to help ourselves and help empower our wingmen to find support.

Sometimes we want to help but don’t know how. Here are some small steps to get you started.

First, try to “find the good,” “count your blessings” or “hunt for the good stuff.” Call it whatever fits you best; the goal is the same. Thinking about the positive (good/blessings) causes the body to respond and counter negativity — helping you cope and improve your quality of life.

Second, think about your thinking. That might sound funny, but our mindset makes all the difference and can generally be defined in two categories: fixed or growth. Which mindset do you think provides a better way to face life’s challenges and be able to find the good? Let’s take a closer look.

People with a fixed mindset believe their talents and abilities can’t be improved. They tend to think that being adaptable can be considered inconsistent or weak, or that giving up their way of thinking is the same as giving in. On a positive note, these are people who know the rules and regulations and hold themselves and others accountable.

Issues can develop when a fixed mindset starts to inhibit coping skills or limit the way people see the world around them. Their thoughts can often be rigid and pre-set. They might try to apply that rigidity to every situation, whether it fits or not. When it doesn’t fit, this can cause a variety of negative emotions/feelings, stress or even despair.

On the other hand, people with a growth mindset are open to new perspectives and believe that challenges are an opportunity for personal growth. People with a growth mindset do not limit the way they see things. They are more flexible and adaptable to change, and they tend to be open to the possibility of finding the good in a situation, person or event.

Having a growth mindset also:

- Promotes optimism and positive thinking;
- Increases self-worth and self-esteem;
- Helps you cope with daily hassles, stress and trauma;
- Improves health and sleep;
- Contributes to progress on goals;
- Helps build relationships with others; and
- Decreases likelihood of depression, anxiety and loneliness.

In short, having a growth mindset is critical for learning

resilience skills.

All of this is great in theory, but people who don’t have a growth mindset aren’t suddenly going to be able to flip a switch that allows them to find the good. It takes practice.

Here are a couple of tips to help you get started toward a growth mindset. First, each day, tell someone or write down at least three things that went well that day — things for which you are grateful. These can be events that happened, skills or strengths you were able to use, goals you achieved, or good news about the people in your life. If you can’t think of three, start with one.

Next, reflect on each item. Why did it go well? How did you or others in your life contribute to the good thing that happened?

Finding the good may not be obvious or easy. We all make excuses as to why we do or don’t do something. As Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson said in his commentary (See Page 2), “Many times, to find the good, you may need to view particular circumstances differently.”

Saying someone should have eternal optimism is not realistic. Remember, “being happy” is not a definition of resilience. Instead, resilience is about having the willingness to keep trying, which often separates success from failure.

Take the time to read the stories on the next few pages of *Citizen Airman*. They focus on what it means to be a good wingman, what it means to be resilient and what it means to always keep searching to find the good. Hopefully, they will provide you with motivation, inspiration and hope.

I would also encourage you to check out the following websites to find out more about resilience and being a good wingman:

- The Wingman Toolkit : afrc.wingmantoolkit.org.
- The Psychological Health Advocacy Program: www.afrc.af.mil/library/phap/index.asp.
- Military One Source: www.militaryonesource.mil.

(Shiver is the director of community programs at Air Force Reserve Command headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.)

Jennifer Wedel sprang into action when she received a concerning email from a deployed Airman she had met previously in her job as a case facilitator with the Air Force Reserve's Psychological Health Advocacy Program.

"He basically said, 'Hey, I'm not doing well,'" said Wedel, a registered nurse on a team that oversees the PHAP needs of 13 Reserve units in a 22-state northern region from an office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Wedel obtained the NCO's permission for her to talk to his deployed supervisors. She reached a local chaplain who got in touch with a counterpart at the sergeant's location. This officer immediately went to offer help in person and, after receiving some follow-on assistance, the sergeant today remains a contributing member of his home unit.

"We really do advocate for people," said Wedel, who is also a traditional Reservist, serving in the 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron at Wright-Patterson.

She was working fulltime at a local hospital when she succeeded another nurse from her unit in the PHAP job, expecting to cover for four months while the program's managers found a permanent case facilitator. That was five years ago.

PHAP also maintains a western regional team at Travis AFB, California, and a southern office at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia. Registered nurses serve as case facilitators at each location. They do not treat, counsel or diagnose. Instead, they assess the needs of clients and direct them to help.

"Nurses are among the most trusted professionals and are good at determining the level of help (people) need," Wedel said. "Sometimes they reach out to us with a question or concern. And as you talk, you find out that there may be more under the surface. People may have emotional, legal and family (or) relationship issues."

Each case facilitator works with an administrative assistant and outreach professionals. The latter publicize the program by visiting Reserve units and participating in training weekends hosted by the Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Program, which promotes the well-being of Reservists and their families by connecting them with resources before, during and after deployments.

PHAP has been part of Yellow Ribbon since its earliest days in 2008 and is now run primarily by contracted workers. One exception is Capt. Allyson Dossman at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins AFB, Georgia, who tracks the program's effectiveness by reviewing weekly, monthly and quarterly reports prepared by the contractor that runs it. Dossman, too, is a registered nurse and a traditional Reservist, working in the 413th ASTS at Robins.

Deployments are stressful to everyone involved, Wedel said. Those at home may find themselves struggling with the demands of daily life. PHAP can assist parents by locating a childcare provider or arranging for someone to clean the house.

"We get really specific with people to determine their needs," Wedel said. "Men deploy when their wives are pregnant and babies are born while the men are away, so I'll call to check on them. A Reservist comes home after being away six months and things are different in the house. They want to

know, 'Is this normal or not?'"

Pamela D. Boyd, an outreach specialist on the Ohio-based PHAP team, said it's impossible to predict what her day will be like when she shows up for work.

"When people come to us for help, they need it right now," Boyd said. "Most of (my) days are filled with researching. There are so many hidden programs out there that want to help but aren't well publicized, so it's our job to go digging to find them."

A simple phrase on Boyd's email signature block — "I Care. ..." — communicates the compassionate atmosphere the PHAP staff tries to project. The northern region staff participates in the Community Action Information Board, which is run by senior active-duty leaders at Wright-Patterson and provides a forum for them to discuss a wide variety of individual, family and community issues.

"The name of our program can intimidate people. Members of the military tend to stay away from anything that sounds like it might hurt their career," said Boyd, a Reservist with the 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron at Wright-Patterson. "The last thing we want to do is jeopardize someone's military career. In fact, what we try to get through to members is to get help with a situation before it starts snowballing into a big mess and affects other areas of their life."

At a Yellow Ribbon Program training weekend in California this spring, Boyd and fellow outreach specialist Jon Mueller from the PHAP western region office chatted with people who stopped by a table set up adjacent to other service providers, including the American Red Cross, the Department of Veterans Affairs and financial management staffers.

"We're like a big toolbox," said Mueller, a traditional Reservist in the 349th Air Mobility Wing at Travis AFB, California, in addition to his work with PHAP.

"We aren't clinical counselors," Boyd said. "For us to get them what they need, they have to open up to us. PHAP is confidential. We can get you the assistance you need with whatever is going on in your life, and you can trust that it will be kept in confidence."

Some people who stop by the table are interested in obtaining more information about the program. Others visit solely to register for a chance at winning a prize in a drawing sponsored by PHAP. No matter. By Monday, a nurse case facilitator will contact everyone who fills out a form to offer help or simply educate them in case they or someone they know needs help from PHAP in the future.

The first step Wedel takes with those looking for assistance is to help them fill out an intake assessment form. Through it she learns about their health, deployment record and whether or not they have medical insurance.

"There are so many gaps" when Reservists transition between active service and civilian status, she said. Access to the military's TRICARE medical coverage system may be affected. Wedel's staff helped a military family receive a grant through an active-duty program to pay its insurance bill after a Reservist returned to civilian life following an active-duty stint.

To receive assistance, those who call a PHAP office should have the ZIP code where the qualifying Reservist resides.

Psychological Health Advocates are always ...

There to Lend a Helping Hand

By Chief Master Sgt. Matt Proietti

The Ultimate Gift



Jennifer Wedel and her two fellow Psychological Health Advocacy Program case facilitators are ready to help Air Force Reservists find the help they need when facing a crisis or hardship.

STAFF SGT. KELLY GOONAN

Boyd said the staff also helps county veterans' service offices and other resource providers find an audience. PHAP staffers do background research on them to ensure they are military-friendly and trustworthy.

"So many resources want to help," Boyd said. "They just don't know how."

Once the case facilitator learns of a need, the outreach specialists "fade into the background," Boyd said. "The nurse handles everything confidentially, even within our own office. The nurse facilitates care of the members and contacts them regularly to follow up with them to make sure their needs are being met."

They sometimes help commanders prepare assessments of Reservists to see if they are fit for duty or help leaders in other ways. PHAP offered assistance to the 445th Maintenance Group commander when an air reserve technician assigned to the 445th Maintenance Squadron committed suicide in March.

"It's never easy," said Col. Brett A. Newman, who had experienced a similar loss at a previous assignment. "People always question themselves as to what sign they missed or what they could've been more in tune with to help their fellow Airman. My folks were under stress from the suicide."

Additionally, the wing was just two days away from being scrutinized under the new Air Force Inspection System when the death occurred. The Airmen got through the assessment, "but there were signs that all cylinders weren't firing in sequence," said Newman, who sought help from PHAP.

Wedel, the case facilitator, immediately called the base's active-duty resiliency trainer, Dana Plewe. Newman requested, and was granted, a "maintenance pause" for the following day. Plewe, Wedel and other PHAP staff members led an open forum in an aircraft hangar. Members of the 88th Medical Group Traumatic Stress Response Team and military family life consultants joined them afterward to lead small group meetings.

PHAP Case Facilitators

North Region: Jennifer Wedel, RN, 937-656-1709
South Region: David Rodberg, RN, 678-655-2464
West Region: Karen Orcutt, RN, 707-424-2704

PHAP Website: www.afrc.af.mil/library/phap/index.asp

"I couldn't have asked for better support during this very trying and stressful time," Newman said. PHAP continued to support the maintenance group through the spring and coordinated with military family life consultants, who made themselves available for subsequent unit training assemblies.

Boyd, the outreach specialist, said follow-through is critical to PHAP's success.

"We strive so hard to not drop the ball," she said. "We want people to know we are here to support them. Sometimes the most important thing in the world is to have someone be with you all of the way through something."

Wedel predicts any future reduction in deployments will not necessarily result in less need for PHAP due to stricter requirements existing for military service now, such as regular physical fitness assessments.

"I don't see mental health support needs of Airmen declining (because) being in the military is more challenging now," Wedel said, adding that she has to work on her own resiliency, as do all service members. "It's a rewarding job. I make serious phone calls for people, trying to get them the help they need. (That) can be demanding and stressful, sure, but it's well worth it."

(Proietti is an individual mobilization augmentee with the Air Force Public Affairs Agency in San Antonio, Texas, and public affairs manager for the Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Program.)

Charleston Reservist donates a kidney, saves the life of a complete stranger

By Michael Dukes

A Reserve Airman with the 315th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, did something to start her New Year that she never imagined she'd be in a position to do: She saved someone's life.

By an interesting series of events, Master Sgt. Stephanie Kimbrell, a logistics plans craftsman with the 315th Logistics Readiness Squadron, donated one of her kidneys to David Harvill, a public health specialist with the 628th Medical Group at Charleston. Harvill was suffering from stage 5 kidney disease.

Kimbrell, a full-time air reserve technician, said she was watching an episode of a television show in which one of the characters experienced a kidney injury. The character had to have one of her kidneys removed and was placed on dialysis.

"The fact that she could not get a friend or family member to donate broke my heart," Kimbrell said. "I had no idea how difficult it was for people with kidney disease.

"I got up from watching the show with tears running down my face and through a stuffy nose told God that if he needed my kidney I would give it up in his name and that I wasn't afraid of donating it to someone who I knew could use it."

Several months later, Kimbrell called the Medical University of South Carolina Transplant Center, but there was no answer. Frustrated, she said she walked into the office of her boss, Lt. Col. Bobby Degregorio, 315th LRS commander, to talk. He asked what was on her mind, and Kimbrell told him she felt like she needed to donate her kidney to someone.

She said Degregorio asked her if she was serious. He then told her about a friend of his who worked in the medical group on base and had just found out that day he was dying and needed a kidney transplant.

Without hesitation Kimbrell replied, "Let's do it."

Degregorio told his friend, Harvill, about the potentially good news, and the process of determining if her kidney was a match, and whether or not she was healthy enough to be a donor, was set in motion.

"Periodically, Stephanie would email me updating where she was in the process," Harvill said.

Although doctors told Kimbrell the chances were one in a million for a perfect match, she remained confident.

Harvill said he got a message to call Degregorio who told him excitedly, "Super Dave, you're not going to believe this! Stephanie is a match. You are getting your kidney."

"I was so overcome by emotions I was speechless and broke down," Harvill said. "All I wanted to do was call Stephanie; however, I had no phone number, as we had always emailed (each other)."

Anxious to know when the procedure would take place, Kimbrell called the transplant center and found out it was scheduled for Jan. 22. Kimbrell and Harvill decided to have a family get-together for dinner the night before surgery.

At dinner that night they talked about how this all came about.

"I shared my story with them about how I felt God wanted me to donate to someone, and when I knew Mr. Harvill was the one I was at complete peace about how this was going to go," Kimbrell said.

"We all cried, and Mr. Harvill shared how difficult his life had been being on dialysis and knowing eventually he would succumb to this disease if he didn't find a kidney," she said.

When she heard him talk and cry about his ordeal, Kimbrell was deeply moved.

"Then it suddenly hit me: 'Oh, man, I am actually saving this man's life!'"

"I often thought about Stephanie and how special a person she was — willing to donate a kidney to a complete stranger," Harvill said. "In talking with the living donor transplant coordinator, this doesn't occur as often as one might think. Most people receive a cadaver kidney or know their donor."

The transplant surgery was a complete success. During the recovery process at the hospital, Kimbrell and Harvill visited each other daily. To date, Harvill said both he and Kimbrell are doing well, and their families are in contact with each other regularly.

"I don't really think what I did was heroic. I kind of feel like I was just being obedient to God and what he wanted," Kimbrell said. "I see how I have changed Mr. Harvill's life. But what people don't see is that he really changed my life for the better, too. He is a wonderful person who I now have the privilege of calling family."

"To this day, neither I nor my family can do enough to repay Stephanie for her unselfish act of giving me, a complete stranger, a new kidney and the gift of life," Harvill said. "How many of you could do what she has done? Could you actually give a complete stranger a kidney?"

(Dukes is assigned to the 315th AW public affairs office at Charleston.)



MICHAEL DUKES

Reserve Master Sgt. Stephanie Kimbrell donated one of her kidneys to David Harvill. He was a complete stranger at the time, but now they are family.

Chief Master Sgt. Rich Lutz and his wife, Michelle, had a difficult time dealing with the chief's latest deployment; but they got the help they needed at a recent Yellow Ribbon event.

Deployment drove couple to the edge; Yellow Ribbon helped them find their way back

Pushed to the Brink

Story by Master Sgt. Linda Welz; Photos by Jake Chappelle

Michelle Lutz's world stopped revolving the day her husband and best friend, Chief Master Sgt. Rich Lutz, left for a deployment. "I didn't want him gone for six months," Michelle said. "It's very difficult being a single parent."

The two met nearly 15 years ago when she saw Lutz playing pool at a Vashon Island, Wash., club where she worked as a waitress. "My heart went, 'Oh my God! That's the man I'm gonna marry!' I knew I was in love with him," Michelle said. "We just became best friends and were married six months after that."

Already in the Air Force when they met, Lutz, a full-time air reserve technician, is chief loadmaster and resource manager with the 728th Airlift Squadron, a C-17 Globemaster unit at McChord Field, Washington. He was used to being gone for up to three weeks at a time in his job as a flying crewmember but had never been on a deployment lasting six months.

So, when the short-notice request to fill a deployment position came up, Lutz and Michelle talked about it with their three sons: Andrew, 18; Esme, 15; and Aric, 13. They all agreed to the deployment because having a secondary source of dental insurance as well as a pay increase was something that would be beneficial to them at the time. In addition, Lutz wanted the experience he would gain being a full-time group superintendent.

Prior to his departure, the couple attended a training event through the Air Force Reserve Command Yellow Ribbon Program, which promotes the well-being of Reservists and their families by connecting them with resources before, during and after deployments. Michelle picked up some information from Military OneSource as well as some other sources, not knowing how much she would really need it while her husband was gone.

While Lutz was gone, the refrigerator broke, the septic system backed up into the house, the car had issues that nearly caused a crash and Michelle had surgery. When one of the family dogs threw up all over the house, the carpet cleaner didn't work.

Despite all of those issues, nothing compared to the tragedy that occurred the day Lutz left when Michelle learned her

younger brother, Carl, had taken his own life.

"I really tried to get a hold of him (her husband). I was completely spacing out," Michelle said. "The first thing I did was call his work number. Then I called his cell phone (leaving numerous messages)."

Lutz, by then in Norfolk, Virginia, awaiting his next flight, had turned off his phone and gone to bed. When he finally got the messages and called his wife, he asked if she wanted him to come home. Knowing that he would just have to leave again, she told him no.

"Honestly, getting to a deployment is so exhausting in itself that I didn't want to have to go through it (twice)," Michelle said. "It's very hard to deal with."

"I know she was very emotional, and I kind of understood that it wouldn't be good for me to come home and then have to turn around and leave again," Lutz said. "She was very convincing."

Looking back on it, Michelle said she completely shut down and should have asked her husband to return.

"I went to bed and didn't get up," she said. "It was bad. I didn't work. I spent a week in the dark in my room. My 18-year-old had to take over. I would get up and make the kids something to eat and then go back to bed. I made sure they were cared for, but I was not there emotionally at all. And then I got angry because he (Rich) wasn't there."

Michelle said she blamed her husband and was resentful and angry that he "didn't just drop the rest of the universe and come hold me." But, she never told him.

Lutz learned of his wife's true feelings after he returned from the deployment, in late February, during another Yellow Ribbon Program training weekend in Carlsbad, California. A relationship breakout session gave couples the opportunity to share hurts and angers and discuss how those can damage relationships.

"We've come as close to anyone else — with all my flying over the years and this deployment — to ending the marriage," Lutz said. "What we learned (at the Yellow Ribbon event) was that we have to actually walk to that brink and take a good hard look at the precipice and of ourselves. When she told me she was angry with me, I felt like I was a piece of that precipice. I'm glad she shared it with me, and I'm glad we faced it."

By not sharing her feelings with her husband, Michelle said she was trying to spare him from having to put himself out for her but would advise others to handle it differently.

"It's OK to be selfish for a little bit of time," she said. "I said I didn't want him to come home, but I needed him home. Don't

try to do it all by yourself."

The Yellow Ribbon Program exists so Reservists and their loved ones won't have to deal with all of the issues caused by deployments all by themselves.

"There is certainly a variety of opportunities for individuals attending the program to find out about preventive resources, obtain individual support and to learn relevant coping skills if faced with crisis," said Frank Pavone, a Yellow Ribbon resource provider.

Representatives from Military OneSource, the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans' centers and the AFRC Psychological Health Advocacy Program, as well as Air Force Reserve behavioral health support coordinators, attend the Yellow Ribbon events and are available to provide details on the services they can provide.

Since they attended the California Yellow Ribbon event, the Lutzes have met with a counselor they found through the PHAP, which Lutz said has helped his wife face some of her bottled-up emotions. They advise families who have been through some type of tragedy to talk to each other.

"Talk and listen to the other person," Michelle said. "The tendency is for both parties, when they are first deployed, to feel the need to protect the other person from what is going on. We didn't do a very good job at talking."

Before a deployment, talk about how you are going to communicate during the separation caused by military service, she advised.

"I think when you are facing a deployment, someone dying is the furthest thing from your mind," Michelle said. "You don't expect to have this kind of a tragedy."

(Welz is assigned to the 452nd Air Mobility Wing public affairs office at March Air Reserve Base, California. Chappelle works in the 446th Airlift Wing public affairs office at McChord Field.)



Going to the Dogs

Veterans turn to canines to help them cope with PTSD, trauma

Mary McGriff travels to Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon events to let people know that if they have post-traumatic stress disorder they have an option besides medication. With the help of her service dog, Courage, she said she has been able to get off two daily PTSD meds.

By Tech Sgt. Peter R. Miller

Though she was home, Capt. Mary McGriff felt no comfort. She was alone but anxious, quiet but uneasy. She felt no safety behind locked doors. The doctor's words rang fresh in her mind, behind splintered memories of her 2005 deployment to Iraq.

"I thought being diagnosed with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) was a kiss of death," McGriff said. "I thought, 'Well, I am just going to have to deal with this on my own, because I have a career and aspirations, and I am not going to be judged based upon my condition.'"

A 2012 Blue Star Families survey reported that of the 26 percent of military spouses who responded that their service member showed signs of PTSD, 62 percent did not seek help. Blue Star Families is a non-profit organization that surveys service members and reports its findings to civilian and military leaders. The most common reason service members gave for postponing treatment was lack of confidentiality and fear that being diagnosed with the condition would hurt their careers, the same trepidation that McGriff felt.

When McGriff, an active-duty Air Force officer, returned from Iraq, she knew she had changed, and so did her husband. She secretly sought mental health services from a civilian provider when she was unable to control her depression. The doctor diagnosed her with PTSD. With the diagnosis came prescriptions for everything from sleeplessness to anxiety.

The medications covered her symptoms and made her public facade easier to maintain, she said. As a sexual assault response coordinator at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, McGriff worked in a small office with only one co-worker. If she had a panic attack or flashback, she could shut the door to her office and endure it. She wiped away the tears, and nobody knew. For six years, McGriff kept everything bottled up inside, but her veneer faded shortly after she gained a supervisory position over 20 Airmen. She broke down a few months later.

"Until I fell apart in front of my colonel, he had no idea," McGriff said.

McGriff, now retired from the military, travels along the East Coast to discuss her career, disability and service dog, Courage, at Yellow Ribbon events sponsored by the Air Force Reserve, including two earlier this winter in South Carolina.

The program promotes the well-being of Reservists and their families by connecting them with resources before, during and after deployments. It began in 2008 after a congressional mandate for the Department of Defense to assist reservists and National Guard members in maintaining resiliency as they transition between their military and civilian roles.

Her service dog, Courage, stays with McGriff 24 hours a day and provides immediate help whenever she needs him.

"By having him, I don't have to take anxiety meds on the spot when I have an attack," she said. "Instead of focusing on a pill, I focus on him. He feels like nothing I had during deployment, and he looks like nothing I saw, so looking at him keeps me grounded. I focus on him, and he represents peace."

Capt. Allyson Dossman, a nurse who is chief of the Yellow Ribbon Psychological Health Advocacy Program at Air Force Reserve Command headquarters, Robins AFB, Georgia, said research has shown that petting a dog reduces people's blood pressure, lowers their heart rate and provides an increased sense of well-being. McGriff agrees.

"With the help of the Yellow Ribbon Program, I can let people know, 'Hey, if you have PTSD, you have an option besides medication,'" McGriff said. "[Courage] helps a lot as far as the intensity and duration of my panic attacks and flashbacks."

Dossman's program offers psychological health services to Yellow Ribbon Program attendees, a passion she enjoys partly due to her own deployment experience, she said. During a 2012-2013 deployment to Afghanistan as a member of a surgical team at Forward Operating Base Lagman, she treated coalition and enemy troops, civilians, and children. Due to its proximity to Kandahar Air Field, the team stayed busy. A working dog handler and friend, Tony Villalobos, brought Basco, a German shepherd, by the hospital after rough days. She said these visits were therapeutic and became a highlight of her deployment.

Capt. Sarah Batzer, an active-duty intensive care nurse from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, recalled an experience from a deployment to Forward Operating Base Orgun-E on Afghanistan's mountainous Pakistani border. Like at FOB Lagman where her friend Dossman worked, there were a few working dogs on base that visited the medical staff.

"It was snowing, and this dog walked up to me, looked at me and put his head on my knee," she said. "It was one of those moments when you could forget you were deployed and play with a dog for a minute."

A month after Dossman's deployment ended, she returned to her nursing position at Boston Medical Center. It was not long before she was treating shrapnel wounds again. The trauma center was inundated with patients after the Boston Marathon bombing April 15, 2013. That week was difficult, a joyless time for hospital staff, until an employee brought in a puppy that was a therapy dog in training.

"This random boxer came out of nowhere," Dossman said. "I was like, 'What are you doing here, buddy?' Everybody swarmed this poor dog."

Kathy Miller, a therapy dog handler from the Butler-Mercer County Chapter of the American Red Cross in Western Pennsylvania, has traveled to Yellow Ribbon events with her golden retriever-poodle mix named Gus, a personal service dog who has helped her battle multiple sclerosis, both physically and emotionally.

"Sometimes it's just easier to communicate with a dog than a person," Miller said. "Dogs don't judge you. They just listen. I love watching the difference that Gus makes. That's why I do what I do."

(Miller is assigned to the 440th AW public affairs office at Pope Field, North Carolina.)

Following the Tune of Hope

Love of music leads Airman from Honduras to the Air Force Reserve

By Tech. Sgt. Ryan Labadens

Hope. It's a key virtue that can give people the drive to help them push through troubled times. Hope can propel people to strive to excel and achieve goals that may feel like nothing more than dreams.

Many of these dreams became a reality for one young Airman who, through hope, overcame many difficulties in her homeland to make a life for herself in the United States.

Life wasn't easy for Senior Airman Kelly Andino, an intelligence analyst for the 403rd Operations Support Squadron/Intelligence at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., who grew up in the outskirts of San Pedro Sula, one of three major cities in the Central American country of Honduras.

Her father worked as an electrician for a major construction company, while her mother took odd jobs to bring in extra income. When Andino was 9 years old, her father was injured in an accident on the job and laid off from work. There were no laws that required businesses to provide benefits or compensation to injured workers, so her family struggled to make ends meet.

Despite their hardships, her parents insisted Andino continue her schooling rather than seek employment.

"My dad thought it was important for me to get an education so I could take care of myself once I was older," Andino said.

The school Andino attended placed a strong emphasis on music education, and it was her parents' vision and hope to cultivate a love for music in her.

"This was something special that not a lot of people get to pursue, so they were hoping this would be a gateway for me to get out of our situation," Andino said. "But, fortunately, I happened to love it, too."

In addition to her regular academic studies, Andino learned basic music theory, how to read music and also how to play basic instruments like the recorder. But it wasn't until fourth grade that she was allowed to pick out a specific instrument to learn.

"We had our choice of instruments, but I was small, so the violin was probably the best option for me to learn how to play," Andino said. "I just kept up with it, and luckily I liked it."

Andino kept playing through elementary school until she transferred to high school, which began in the seventh grade in San Pedro Sula. By this time, she had to attend two separate schools: one that focused on basic academics and one on music education. The latter was a very strict school with high standards.

"I basically lived off of scholarships in order to attend the school," Andino said. "We had to maintain excellent grades to have our monthly fees reimbursed. There was a lot of pressure and competition between students, but it was mostly friendly."

Her schooling was not only academically challenging but physically challenging as well. Andino left home early in the morning to walk across town to her high school and then crossed to another part of town to the music school, which

wasn't always very safe.

During the nineties, gang members were being deported from other Central American countries back into Honduras, which drastically increased crime in the city of San Pedro Sula. This made going to and from school a hazard.

"One time, going from my regular high school to the music school, one of my classmates and I were getting off the bus when we were chased by a gang — what they called 'maras,'" Andino said. "We had to run, and nobody would help us. There were guards who saw we were being chased, but nobody wanted to get involved. So, we finally ran into a grocery store and hid there until it was safe to leave."

Due to the increasing dangers in the country, Andino's parents wanted her to continue her education so that hopefully one day she could have a better opportunity elsewhere.

"That's why my parents put so much work and dedication into having me go to that school, so I could get out of that situation instead of having to run for my life a lot of times," she said.

Andino worked hard to perfect her skills at playing the violin, practicing up to 10 hours a day.

"I learned at a very young age that you had to excel in order to achieve something great, something beyond what you could ever dream of," she said.

Her hard work and that of her classmates finally paid off. The school's orchestra performed at various public functions over the years, raising awareness for the arts and helping to bring in donations to the school, which helped keep it funded. Music students from the United States would often visit during the year, bringing with them extra supplies and instruments for the school.

During her senior year, as a result of an immense tragedy in her homeland, Andino had her first exposure to the U.S. military. Less than two weeks before Andino graduated from high school, Hurricane Mitch, the most powerful storm of the 1998 Atlantic hurricane season, sloshed its way across Central America, dropping historic amounts of rainfall on Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua. At the time, Mitch was the second deadliest Atlantic hurricane in history, resulting in nearly 11,000 deaths and more than 11,000 people missing. In all, the storm left nearly 2.7 million people homeless.

"We couldn't sleep because we didn't know how quickly the water would rise or if one of the dams would break, so (my family and I) all took turns staying alert," Andino said.

Her family was fortunate. Their house didn't suffer much damage. After the storm, the local government enlisted her and other members of the community to work at the international airport near San Pedro Sula to help with relief efforts.

"When I got there, I remember seeing aircraft and uniforms from different places, and all these people (including U.S. service members) were working really hard," Andino said. "It was almost like a magical moment to see all these people working so diligently to help, because we were so used to life being so hard. But when you get a little bit of help, you don't know how much of an impact that can have on your life."

She recalled how the donations she received, even seemingly inconsequential things, helped make a difference.

"You don't know how much something very small, like strings for instruments, can mean when we can't even afford them for ourselves," Andino said. "Had I not had those instruments and supplies donated, then I would not have been able to play."

When she was finally able to return to school, she entered a music contest to compete for scholarships from various institutions. One of the judges on the panel happened to be a music professor from Southeastern Louisiana University. The school offered Andino a scholarship, which finally allowed her to travel to the United States for her studies.

Coming to the United States permitted Andino to pursue other interests, some of which allowed her to make friends in the military and work around others in a military environment. While working for a physical therapy equipment company in Maryland in 2010, she and other employees visited the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and were able to interact with many of the patients there.

Seeing these Soldiers and realizing the sacrifices they made led her to wonder if there was more she could do to serve and to show her appreciation for the opportunities she had been given.

"Once I realized I had that freedom to dream, the freedom to choose, that's when I realized I could join the military myself," she said. "I have so much to be grateful for — to this country — so I thought, 'Why not? Why shouldn't I join?'"

Before enlisting in the Air Force Reserve, Andino returned to college to complete her bachelor's degree in music performance, which she earned in May 2012.

Later that year, during the interview process for joining the 403rd Wing at Keesler, Andino made a startling discovery. While looking online at the history of the 403rd, she learned that one of the missions supported by the 815th Airlift Squadron was a humanitarian relief effort to Honduras during the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

Andino was shocked.

"To see how it was all coming back full circle, from that critical year in my life to this new phase of my life starting with the military — it just left me speechless," Andino said.

Andino said she is grateful that playing the violin gave her the opportunity to come to the United States and pursue her hopes and dreams — one of which was joining the military.

"Had I not met people in the military or had I not visited with those troops in Walter Reed, I wouldn't be here in the Air Force today," she said. "A young girl from a Third World country may never dream of seeing herself in this uniform — that just doesn't happen. What this all taught me is to stay hopeful and stay flexible with life so that, if everything is in tune and all of your tools and skills are in place, you can take on whatever battles may come your way."

(Labadens is assigned to the 403rd Wing public affairs office at Keesler AFB.)

Senior Airman Kelly Andino had a rough life growing up in Honduras, but she followed her dreams and a music scholarship to the United States, where she currently serves as a Reserve intelligence analyst with the 403rd Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss.



TECH. SGT. RYAN LABADENS

Joint Qualification

Office works hard to ensure officers receive credit they deserve

By Master Sgt. Christian Michael

Joint credit or qualification is an increasingly important element for Reserve officers to achieve in their official records, particularly those who are interested in competing for certain senior leadership positions.

To obtain joint credit for qualifying experience, officers must submit a package to a panel for review. This sounds like a relatively simple process, but nothing is ever as easy as it seems. Many officers have submitted a package only to have their request for joint qualification denied.

An office at the Air Reserve Personnel Center, Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado, is working hard to keep that from happening by making sure the packages officers submit to receive joint qualification meet all requirements.

"We make it a point to send up the best packages possible to Joint Staff Joint Officer Management for our officers," said Sara Simms, service manager in the ARPC Joint Officer Management office. "That means we do a lot of work to make sure the packages are as good as we can get them."

That work often means sending packages back to their submitters for changes or additional information.

"We won't just forward packages up to Joint Staff JOM," Simms said. "We prescreen all packages. If they don't meet the qualifications for joint credit, we deny them on the spot. If they do meet qualifications but just aren't quite strong enough, we'll contact the submitters and help them work their packages so they have the best chance of getting credit."

That emphasis on quality means a higher percentage of packages are being returned than in years past. However, it also means that Reservists who are deserving of credit receive it.

"I read each package, validate what the officer inputs in the Joint Manpower Information System, and then I determine if the preponderance of the duties meets the definition of joint matters," Simms said. "If, after my research and validation using the provided support documents, I don't see strategic work, I deny the package at the service manager level. If I see something that sounds like it should go forward, I work with the officer on better wording choices or to provide the proper documents so the JOM panel can vote on the package. It is back and forth communication with the officer until we feel the package is sufficient to go forward."

Working with Reservists who submit joint credit packages isn't part of Simms' job description. Rather, it's something she chose to do to help officers, their careers and the Air Force Reserve.

"It is the right thing to do," Simms said. "If General Jackson (Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, Air Force Reserve Command commander) is saying that joint experience is one of the four leadership pillars, it is my responsibility to make sure officers have the best chance possible to have their package approved by the Joint Staff JOM panel."

Simms' diligence in helping officers prepare their packages isn't merely ideological, it's pragmatic, too.

"By having joint-qualified officers in the Air Force Reserve, we are able to deploy or work in joint environments without a lot of spin-up time," she said. "Officers can report for duty ready to go and not have to learn the language of the other services prior to accomplishing the mission."

Officers must submit a package for evaluation within one year of performing the duty they believe qualifies them for joint credit. In order to have the best chance of receiving credit, submitters should:

- Clearly write what and how the work they did led to a unified action.
 - Ensure most of their duties were performed at the strategic level. Operational- and tactical-level work, such as duties in line with care and feeding of troops, do not qualify for joint credit.
 - Review and follow the JOM Handbook, which is available on the myPers JOM page.
 - Provide all required support documents. Such documents might include relevant orders, a reconciled travel voucher, an award citation, officer personnel record or letter of evaluation.
 - Ensure they understand the definition of "joint matters."
- Many Reservists mistakenly believe that simply serving in a joint environment or receiving a joint award qualifies them for joint credit. However, the definition of joint matters is "matters related to the achievement of unified action by integrated forces," Simms said.

"When evaluating a submitted package for joint experience credit, panel members at Joint Staff JOM must directly link what the officer did and how it affected the mission in a strategic way," she said.

Simms said defining "joint matters" is the biggest problem applicants face in trying to get joint credit. Educating applicants in this area helps them better prepare their packages for review, reduces the number of packages denied at the ARPC level as well as the time it takes for review, and helps Simms and her staff submit more easily up the chain.

Simms said people who occupy one of the limited number of positions on the Joint Duty Assignment List automatically qualify for and receive joint credit. Everybody else must submit a package to the JOM panel at the Pentagon to receive joint credit.

For more information on JOM, qualification for credit and prerequisites to submit, visit the Total Force Joint Officer Management page on myPers, which can be accessed via the ARPC main website at www.arpc.afrc.af.mil. Or, call the Total Force Service Center at commercial (210) 565-0102, DSN 665-0102 or toll free (800) 525-0102.

(Michael is an individual mobilization augmentee assigned to the ARPC public affairs office at Buckley AFB.)

(Left to right) With a combined total of 4,000 flight hours Col. David Piffarerio, Maj. Chad Newkirk, Maj. Jonathan Gration and Maj. Ryan Pelkola flew the most experienced four-ship sortie in the history of the F-22 Raptor in May.



MAKING HISTORY

Reserve pilots fly most experienced F-22 sortie ever

By Capt. Ashley Conner

Four F-22 Raptor pilots from the 477th Fighter Group, Alaska's only Air Force Reserve unit, made history during the unit training assembly weekend May 3.

With a combined total of 4,000 flight hours, Col. David Piffarerio, and Maj. Jonathan Gration, Ryan Pelkola and Chad Newkirk flew the most experienced four-ship sortie in the history of the F-22.

"This is a milestone because it is the first time that pilots with this much flight time have flown together, making it a significant event for the maturation of the F-22 program," said Piffarerio, 477th FG deputy commander. "It is also a testament to the role the Air Force Reserve plays in defense of our country."

Typically, active-duty pilots serve one or two assignments in a flying squadron before going to a non-flying assignment. In contrast, the Reserve is organized to allow Airmen to remain in place to train and bank experience while also maintaining civilian careers.

"The Air Force Reserve afforded me the opportunity to stay in Alaska and continue to fly the F-22," Pelkola said. "It really is the best of both worlds."

During the sortie, the four pilots flew as "blue air" or good guys against four other "red air" or bad guys to defend the airspace. The eight-strong sortie wouldn't have been possible without the meticulous oversight and dedication of the maintainers.

"Despite being at a base where the weather conditions can be harsh and create maintenance challenges, the F-22s at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson have one of the best sortie generation rates in the combat air forces," said Lt. Col. Aaron Heick, 477th FG deputy commander for maintenance.

"The Reserve maintainers are a big piece of that. Many of them have been taking care of the same plane since the unit stood up in 2007."

"It is an exciting time to see a weapon system mature to the point that we see the level of experience found in the pilots of the 477th Fighter Group," said Col. Tyler Otten, group commander. "The Raptor plays a crucial role in our national interests. The 477th Fighter Group stands ready in our partnership with the active-duty's 3rd Wing to defend those interests."

Conner is director of public affairs for the 477th FG at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.)

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