

Citizen AIRMAN

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Air Force Reserve



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From the Top

By Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner Jr.
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command



New commander excited to lead during a challenging time for all

I am deeply humbled and honored to serve as your chief and commander. I am grateful to Lt. Gen. (John) Bradley for leaving me a command anyone would be envious to have: a highly capable and highly motivated force; a vision of where we need to go; and a good vector for getting us there. And I am most excited to have been given the opportunity to lead you — the men and women of our Air Force Reserve.

This is a challenging time for all of us. We have become highly operational; we have been engaged in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan for several years; and we are serving on five continents. The Air Force has relied on you for your volunteer service and the support of your families as well as your employers. Each of you has, no doubt, struggled to maintain a balance among your military service, family, civilian career and community.

Yet, for all of our operational contributions, we must not lose sight of the fact that we — along with our Air National Guard brothers and sisters — are also a strategic reserve that must be available to surge in times of national emergency. For us to serve as both an operational and strategic reserve, it is critical that we find the right balance between the two.

Too few Airmen held in reserve means a higher operational tempo for all Airmen — regular and reserve; less capacity to surge in times of national emergency; and exhausting our people and jeopardizing the cornerstone of Air Force Reserve service. Your volunteerism is vital to the overall capability of the Air Force.

I believe your voluntary participation is encouraged when you are able to serve in the way you desire. To this end, I will advocate for initiatives and legislation that allow you to serve more flexibly in peace and war with minimum impact to your civilian career and employer. I will work to eliminate barriers to service, so that you can more easily serve in the status that meets your needs and those of the Air Force. And I will work to create more opportunities to serve by expanding Air Force Reserve service into all mission areas, to include cyberspace; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; unmanned aerial systems; and space, as well as traditional flying missions.

To be effective in any mission area, we must ensure we have the right people with the right skills at the right time to meet Air Force needs. To that end, it is incumbent upon senior leadership to provide you a clear road map: what the expectations are for any given career field and what requirements there are to move along a given career path. We owe you that. Your responsibility is to determine the path you want to take and commit to the education, training and experience you need to stay on that path, thereby fulfilling our expectations.

For 40 years we have successfully utilized associations — whereby a unit of one component is the primary operator and a unit of another component also trains on that equipment — with the regular Air Force. These associations generate efficiencies, improve our combat effectiveness by increasing the cross-flow of ideas among components and help foster mutual respect. Moreover, they allow the Air Force to leverage the vast experience and expertise of the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard.

We will continue to explore more associations with the regular Air Force and the Air National Guard. To make these associations work, each of us has the responsibility of reaching out and breaking down barriers between the components. Our collective efforts will increase the total capability of the Air Force.

We have not yet realized the true potential of the Air Force Reserve, but we have a vision and a way to get there. It will require a sustained commitment from all of us. Through your dedication, you have proven that we are a highly capable, highly effective, highly motivated partner — an unrivaled wingman — prepared to lead when required and necessary. I ask that you continue to dedicate yourselves to your service and your nation in the outstanding fashion you have thus far demonstrated.

For my part, I will endeavor to ensure you have the opportunities and resources you need to continue to serve as desired. Together, the Air Force Reserve will lead the way in making the U.S. Air Force a more sustainable, more capable, more effective fighting force. ★



Chief's View

By Chief Master Sgt. Troy J. McIntosh
Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Force Reserve Command

My fellow Airmen: America is proud of you

Recently, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Mosley granted us the authority to travel in either the Airman battle uniform or battle dress uniform, in addition to our blues. To some, traveling in any uniform may seem like more of a discomfort than an opportunity to show their service to this country.

I have to tell you we should all be proud of wearing our uniform. As Citizen Airmen, we have answered the call to service, and we should not take this service to our country and our military lightly.

Some may question if members of the public even care about the men and women in uniform. I would like to share something that happened to me that proves people indeed do care.

I was in the Atlanta airport, wearing my ABU for the first time since the new travel policy was implemented. I have to admit I was a little uncomfortable at first, but soon I noticed that those weary travelers who just wanted to get to their gate were all paying attention to me. They acknowledged me and let me know they cared with a quick glance or a flash of a smile.

At first, I thought that maybe I was putting too much meaning into their reactions and unspoken gestures. However, the looks soon turned into words as many people stopped to thank me for my service.

Finding myself at a loss for words, I simply said, "You're welcome." Inside, I was overwhelmed with pride at being an Airman.

As I entered the plane, my fellow passengers offered me a seat in first class, free drinks and, yes, many acknowledgments of my service. It culminated with the pilot recognizing me over

the public address system and the passengers giving me a round of applause.

My fellow Airmen, America is proud of you, and we should be proud as well. Our accomplishments have been many!

If the above story isn't enough to convince you, let me share this. After my flight was over, as I waited for my luggage, a man and woman approached me, and the woman extended her hand and said she wanted to thank me for my service. I thanked her in return. She replied back with tears in her eyes that I didn't understand. She said every day she watches television and sees the news about the people who are wounded and killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and she couldn't believe there are Americans out there who are willing to sacrifice their lives for her safety. She said this was a kind of sacrifice she didn't deserve.

The woman gave me a kiss on the cheek, hugged my neck and whispered in my ear thank you. As you can imagine, I was taken aback by this person's level of gratitude,

and the tears rolled down my cheeks as well. At that moment, I was thinking of those 4,000 warriors who have paid the ultimate price for our country: for me, for you, for her.

I'm so proud of each of you, and your country is proud of you as well. Hold your head high and be proud of yourself, for you are the defenders of this great country. You are the guardians of our freedom.

Each and every day I'm in awe of your accomplishments and commitment to our Air Force Reserve and your country. Thank you again for the honor of representing you, our most valuable asset — our Airmen! ★

I'M SO PROUD OF EACH OF YOU, AND YOUR COUNTRY IS PROUD OF YOU AS WELL. HOLD YOUR HEAD HIGH AND BE PROUD OF YOURSELF, FOR YOU ARE THE DEFENDERS OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY. YOU ARE THE GUARDIANS OF OUR FREEDOM.

What a view

A C-130 from the 440th Airlift Wing cruises over the Biltmore House, America's largest privately owned home located in Asheville, N.C. Built by George and Edith Vanderbilt in 1895, the home features 250 rooms, including a library with 10,000 volumes, a banquet hall, 65 fireplaces, an indoor pool and a bowling alley. The 440th AW operates out of nearby Pope Air Force Base, where it relocated last year after spending more than 50 years in Milwaukee, Wis. (Joe Oliva)

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On the front cover: (Top) Department of Veterans Affairs officials estimate more than 100,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines will require long-term mental health care to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their participation in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Read about a Reserve doctor's work in the area of PTSD treatment on Page 10. (Bottom left) Maj. Jennifer West leads a life of high-flying adventure, both on and off the job. See story, Page 18. (Bottom right) First Lt. Devon Hubbard, 307th RED HORSE Squadron, Barksdale Air Force Base, La., is welcomed home by his wife, Arielle, and sons, Turner (left) and Daniel after an eight-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For more on what AFRC is doing to improve its deployment support program, see the story on page 14. (Tech. Sgt. Laura K. Smith)

Gen. T. Michael Moseley *Chief of Staff, United States Air Force (retiring Aug. 1)*

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Round the Reserve

A brief look at what's happening throughout Air Force Reserve Command

Junior ROTC Instructor Duty Opens to 'Gray Area' Reservists

The Air Force Junior ROTC program is now hiring retired traditional Reservists who are not drawing retirement pay.

In the past, only retired active-duty Airmen could apply for Junior ROTC instructor positions, but that changed with the passage of the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act. Now, "gray area" Reservists — retirees who are not age 60 and not drawing retirement pay — can apply for instructor duty.

"We are looking for retired

Guard/Reserve officers and NCOs who want to continue serving their communities by teaching the next generation of leaders," said Col. Richard J. Ragaller, director of Air Force Junior ROTC at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

AFJROTC currently has numerous officer and NCO instructor positions open at locations throughout the United States. The program has 869 units worldwide, and 10 new ones will open in the coming school year.

More than 101,000 students are enrolled in AFJROTC.

"It's exciting to have the chance to add these outstanding Airmen to the AFJROTC family," Colonel Ragaller said.

"As instructors, they exemplify the Air Force's core values and set the highest standards of conduct and appearance for themselves and their students."

Applicants must have been retired from the Air Force Reserve within the past five years and have 20 "good years" of service. In addition, they must have a Defense Department Form 214, U.S. Air Force Reserve Point Credit Summary, showing at least 3,600 retirement points.

More details are available online at <http://www.afoats.af.mil/AFJROTC/grayarea.asp>.

Officers must have a bachelor's degree or higher, and NCOs must have at least a high school diploma and must obtain an associ-

Homestead pilot first Reservist to fly for Thunderbirds

By Staff Sgt. Erik Hofmeyer

An F-16 pilot at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., made Air Force Reserve history when he was chosen as the first Reservist to fly on the Thunderbirds air demonstration team since its inception in 1953.

Maj. Sean Gustafson, 93rd Fighter Squadron, learned May 29 he will fly the No. 4 slot aircraft in the six-person demonstration team during the 2009 and 2010 seasons. In civilian life, Major Gustafson is a Delta Airlines pilot.

"Flying with the Thunderbirds has been a dream of mine since I first saw them when I was a kid and when I was on active duty," Major Gustafson said.

In November, the major will begin practicing for perfection during the Thunderbirds' four-month training period at their home station of Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., where he'll undergo a grueling regimen preparing for the March-November show season.

"The training will be really intense," Major Gustafson said. "I'll be flying twice each day to make sure the maneuvers are perfect because safety is paramount. It's a lot of work, but my family is completely supportive. My wife is an incredible woman."

The Thunderbirds' mission isn't just about performing aerial acrobatics. It involves much more.

"The Thunderbirds have an awesome mission," Major Gustafson said. "They make an impact every day by recruiting and inspiring our young men and women to stay in the Air Force and continue to serve. It's phenomenal seeing everybody's faces when they're watching the Thunderbirds."

"Representing America's Air Force is the best part of the whole thing. It's not about the pilots, it's about the more than 500,000 Air Force members stationed worldwide. I'm proud to take on this mission, and I'm going to carry this out to the best of my ability."



Maj. Sean Gustafson of the 93rd Fighter Squadron at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., is the first Reservist chosen to fly as a member of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds air demonstration team.

Being a member of the Thunderbirds will require Major Gustafson to take leave from his civilian career as a commercial pilot with Delta Airlines.

"My employer is a great supporter of military life," he said. "We Reservists couldn't do what we do without the support of our civilian employers. The employer-employee relationship is huge and a very large part of how we can continue to serve in the Reserve." ★

(Sergeant Hofmeyer is assigned to the 482nd FW public affairs office at Homestead ARB.)

ate's degree within five years of employment. Additional education degrees and teacher certification are an advantage. Some school districts may require them.

Instructors wear the Air Force uniform and must meet the Air Force appearance and weight/body fat standards. They must also have high standards of military bearing and moral character.

AFJROTC provides temporary-duty funding for new instructors to complete Air University's two-week Aerospace Science Instructor Course at Maxwell AFB before receiving certification duty.

For more information about instructor opportunities, call toll free (866) 235-7682, ext. 35112 or 32535. The DSN number is 493-5112 or 2535.

People can go to <http://www.afoats.af.mil/AFJROTC/instructors.asp> to complete the instructor requirements and obtain application information. (Air Force Reserve Command News Service from an AFJROTC news release)

Command Works to Streamline Travel Voucher Processing

Specialists from Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command traveled to Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., to help the Air Force Financial Services Center "speed up" processing Reservists' travel vouchers.

Mike Oringdorff and Ed Cimmino went to Ellsworth May 18 for a two-day assistance visit.

"The team traveled to Ellsworth to possibly streamline travel computation processes taking more time than it should," said Jerriane Werner, chief of AFRC's Financial Services Division.

Travel vouchers sent to the new Ellsworth AFB facility are transmitted in one of two ways: electronically on a new automated system called Enterprise Information Management System or through a shared folder using remote access drive.

"The plan is for everyone to use the electronic EIM System, but a few bugs have to be worked out before every base makes the switch," Ms. Werner said. "The goal is to have all units using the EIM System by the end of the fiscal year."

The major advantage that EIM offers is the time it saves by tracking the docu-

Pope's Puns



CARTOON BY MASTER SGT. W.C. POPE, WESTOVER AIR RESERVE BASE, MASS.

mentation throughout the entire process. With the older RAD system, visibility is lost to base-level finance offices, and the vouchers have to be copied and moved manually for processing. As a result, voucher processing takes longer.

"Our team has been able to answer questions and help in the training process at Ellsworth," Ms. Werner said. "And they have already made some changes that are going to help speed up the process. Ellsworth has doubled its bandwidth to accommodate everything that is coming in. That in itself will help with the time it takes."

The Air Force standard for processing travel vouchers is within five days. The Financial Services Center is working to establish meaningful metrics for management purposes. It processes vouchers as quickly as possible, and the recent changes should expedite the process.

"There is no reason why people should not be able to make their government travel card payment on time because their voucher hasn't been processed," Ms. Werner said. "They should follow up if they do not receive payment within 10 working days and notify the financial services office of nonpayment."

Ms. Werner said if travelers do not receive the support needed from their host finance office, they can go to the Reserve finance office, which will assist or elevate

the problem to headquarters. Reserve finance offices have the expertise necessary to help answer questions even if they do not process the actual paperwork, Ms. Werner said. (Staff Sgt. Jeff Kelly, AFRC public affairs, Robins AFB, Ga.)

Reserve Getting Second F-22 Associate Unit

Air Force Reserve Command is getting a new F-22 associate unit at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley announced June 6 the establishment of two active-duty F-22 Raptor squadrons at Holloman. The announcement also included news that the Air Force Reserve's 301st Fighter Squadron designation will relocate from Luke AFB, Ariz., to Holloman.

The squadron will keep its unit designation and form a classic association with the active-duty 7th and 9th Fighter Squadrons under the 49th Fighter Wing. Under this arrangement, Reservists will help fly and maintain F-22 Raptors that belong to the active duty.

"I am proud that the Air Force Reserve has been invited to participate in so many new mission areas and that we are here today, and included from the beginning, during the stand-up of the F-22 here at Holloman," said Lt. Gen. John A.

Bradley, AFRC commander when the announcement was made.

The integration of Reservists into the 49th FW will be phased in over a two-year period beginning in late 2009. The integration is being timed to coincide with the arrival of F-22A aircraft at Holloman and pilot and maintenance school availability.

Once up and running, the 301st will be the Reserve's second F-22 associate unit. The 302nd FS flies and maintains the Raptor with the 90th and 525th FS's as part of the 3rd Wing at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. As the first Reserve unit to fly the F-22, the 302nd began operations in October 2007.

"I believe that associate units, such as we have here at Holloman, are the best way forward to maximize the Air Force's combat effectiveness and harness the inherent synergies we share between the active and reserve forces," General Bradley said.

Like its sister squadron, the 302nd FS, the 301st traces its history back to the 332nd Fighter Group and the famed Tuskegee Airmen of World War II. During the war, the squadron was active in both the European and Mediterranean theaters of operation. (From an Air Force public affairs news release)

IMAs Integral to Materiel Command's Exercise Response

Air Force Materiel Command took a Total Force approach to its participation in the Department of Homeland Defense's national exercise May 1-8.

The command, headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, used a mix of regular Air Force, civilian and Air Force Reserve people to provide expert responses to the various exercise scenarios, which included terrorist attacks and a major hurricane striking the East Coast.

Integral to HQ AFMC's response were 12 individual mobilization augmentees and two Reserve senior leaders. Col. Brian Dominguez, mobilization assistant to the director of air, space and information operations, chaired HQ AFMC battle staff briefings representing the commander, Gen. Bruce Carlson.

"It was an exciting experience to represent General Carlson during the exercise battle staff briefings," Colonel Dominguez said. "It was also great to witness the



Senior Master Sgt. Rene Rubiella developed the Operation Not on Our Watch program to teach high school students about the dangers and consequences of distractions while driving a vehicle after his daughter was killed in an automobile accident.

Patrick Reservist reaps reward for dedicated service to others

By Capt. Cathleen Snow

A Brevard County, Fla., resident was honored for his volunteer service to the community during a special ceremony at the White House May 16 when he was presented with the President's Volunteer Service Award.

Senior Master Sgt. Rene Rubiella is an Air Force Reservist in the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. He was one of seven military members from across America honored at the ceremony hosted by the USA Freedom Corps.

The 28-year military veteran has donated almost 20,000 hours of his time to a variety of community projects including Habitat for Humanity, the Melbourne Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, his local church and the Airman Leadership School at Patrick AFB. He also created Operation Not on Our Watch, an annual program that has taught more than 20,000 high school students about the dangers of careless driving.

Sergeant Rubiella said he experiences a rush of positive emotions when he's helping someone out.

"Giving someone a hand up, not a hand out" is how the senior NCO describes his volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit organization that uses volunteer labor and donations to build houses for those who can't afford them. Since 1992,

Sergeant Rubiella has personally participated in the building of more than 30 homes.

Every Wednesday, the sergeant can be found at the Melbourne Daily Bread Soup Kitchen where he helps serve about 260 meals. He also volunteers as an instructor in a church ministry, serves as director of his local homeowners association and helps younger Airmen at the leadership school at Patrick AFB.

One of the programs that led to his volunteer service award was born out of personal tragedy. In April 2005, Sergeant Rubiella lost his only child in an automobile accident. In the aftermath of his tragic loss, the sergeant developed an annual event called Operation Not on Our Watch. Since then, he has devoted countless hours teaching thousands of high school students about the dangers and consequences of distractions while driving a vehicle.

Presenting the volunteer service award to Sergeant Rubiella were Gen. James Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Henry Lozano, deputy assistant to the president and director of USA Freedom Corps; and Mary Jo Myers and actor Stephen Baldwin, both members of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. ★

(Captain Snow is director of public affairs, 920th RQW at Patrick AFB.)

tremendous work being done by so many IMAs helping AFMC support its crisis and contingency operations."

Col. Joel Morin, Air Force Reserve advisor to the commander, led AFMC's crisis response as one of six crisis action team directors. He directed the relocation of the HQ AFMC crisis action team to its alternate site in response to an exercise input. His team then re-established connectivity with all of the command's installations to continue directing exercise responses.

"This amazing group of professionals was able to evacuate the primary facility, move to our alternate location and get the HQ AFMC CAT fully operational again in about 30 minutes," Colonel Morin said. "Our entire CAT staff did a great job. Great teamwork by the entire team with outstanding support from the 88th Air Base Wing made it happen."

The exercise also provided an opportunity for AFMC to enhance its reputation as the Air Force leader in technological advances. The command tested new capabilities to improve command and control processes, conducting its first-ever AFMC-wide battle staff video teleconference.

"General Carlson expressed his confidence that AFMC has developed dependable and effective processes to efficiently handle crisis and contingency responses," said Col. Steve Wilkerson, senior IMA of the Operational Plans Division and CAT director. "Bringing the command together as an integrated response team, interacting in real-time with the commander, was a significant first for AFMC. It is definitely an extremely effective capability that we successfully demonstrated."

The command also trial tested a Web-based situational reporting tool. Prior to this development, generating the SITREP was a labor-intensive effort that involved "cutting and pasting" the various SITREPs from field installations into the command's SITREP, which was then forwarded up the chain to Air Force level.

This new SITREP tool prototype allows installations to submit their required reports and have them consolidated automatically into a command summary.

Lt. Col. Greg Green, an IMA, served as overall exercise director. He led the training and oversight of the CAT leadership teams.

"Our IMAs are fully engaged in all areas of CAT operations, and that helps take a tremendous burden off the active duty and DOD civilian staffs," Colonel Green said.

"We are a cost-effective force multiplier, offering great bang for the buck. Our IMAs provide a level of continuity and experience that is invaluable in helping our command meet its crisis and contingency responses." (Staff reports) ★

It's Your Money

By Ralph Lunt

Repeat after me: No deal

Hi, it's me, the ad in the back of your favorite military publication. Have I got a deal for you!

Really? I love deals. Tell me more.

Well, this deal is the opportunity to get that new computer you deserve. I mean that new computer you need. Oh, and get this. It's only \$40 a pay period. We're practically giving 'em away.

It's simple. Just fill out our on-line application, tell us a little bit about yourself, and send us a copy of your leave and earnings statement. Then sit back and wait for our helpful staff to issue your credit. Once you're approved, we'll be happy to automatically take the \$40 directly from your next 48 paychecks. Sounds easy, doesn't it?

I'm sorry, what's that? Well, yes, \$40 x 48 does equal \$1,920. And, yes, you could buy the same computer direct from the manufacturer for about \$500. But with our convenient financing, you won't have to drain your bank account or, heaven forbid, delay your purchase while you save up your money.

Live the dream today. You deserve it! Besides, didn't you notice we use the words "military" and "veteran" in our name? Well, no, that doesn't really mean anything. But, we keep getting orders, so people must be buying it. ...

Stop! Enough already. No deal!

Here's another one. This one was mailed to me from my mortgage company. Wow! I'm pre-approved for decreasing accidental death term insurance, and it's only \$21.70 per month. How can I pass this one up?

Well, let's see. My death benefit goes down every year, it costs more than Service Member's Group Life Insurance, and it doesn't pay if I'm piloting a plane, or if I get cancer or if I die in the line of duty.

Are you kidding me? No deal!

No doubt many of you are bombarded with similar "opportunities," military affiliation "benefits" or financing "special offers" from companies you already have a relationship with. Quite frankly, most of these are only a good deal for the sponsoring company.

Who's to blame for all of this? It's not the companies. The beauty of our capitalist system is that we, as consumers, have the power. We just have to exercise it. We're the ones who can make the offers disappear by saying "no deal" to 20-percent financing, lousy insurance and payday loans. We've long been envied as a fighting force. It's high time we were envied as an intelligent financial force as well. ★

(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 lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserve, serving as the reserve forces director for the Great Lakes region of the Civil Air Patrol adviser's program.)



Coping with the Horrors of War

**Doctor believes neurofeedback
may provide relief for service
members suffering ill
effects from combat**

By Bo Joyner



Dr. David Tharp is one of a growing number of mental health professionals who think neurofeedback could provide significant relief to many men and women suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

(Editor's note: The following story presents information on a new treatment for people diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. This is but one of several options available for PTSD victims. Although an Air Force Reservist, through his civilian work with the Federal Bureau of Prisons and private practice as a clinical psychologist, has been involved in utilizing this treatment, the Air Force Reserve does not officially endorse it in any way. In addition, the Reservist does not stand to benefit financially from this article. Reservists who are diagnosed with PTSD should consult their doctors regarding a course of treatment that is appropriate for them. By publishing this article, the Citizen Airman staff seeks only to provide information that educates and informs its readership about a serious medical issue affecting a large segment of the military population.)

Having been exposed to horrible and often life-threatening experiences, it's not surprising that many American service members returning from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan are experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Department of Veterans Affairs' National Center for PTSD estimates that up to 11 percent of veterans of the Afghanistan war and up to 20 percent of veterans of the Iraq war suffer from the disorder. With the total number of American service members who have deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom totaling more than 1 million, officials estimate more than 100,000 Soldiers, Marines, Sailors and Airmen will require long-term mental health care to deal with PTSD in the years to come.

While most of these service members will be treated in traditional ways — with medications and/or cognitive behavioral therapy — there are some new and innovative PTSD treatment options available. Dr. David Tharp, a clinical psychologist, is one of a growing number of mental health professionals who think neurofeedback could provide significant relief to many men and women suffering from PTSD.

"Neurofeedback is not an 'end-all, be-all' by any means, and more research definitely needs to be conducted," said Dr. Tharp, who is a major in the Air Force Reserve. "But, there are people around the country who are seeing amazing results after just a few neurofeedback sessions."

As a Reservist, Dr. Tharp is a staff psychologist assigned to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. In civilian life, he works as a home-based primary care psychologist for the Veterans Administration in Alexandria, La.

Before assuming his position with the VA in January, he worked for seven years as a psychologist at the Federal Prison Camp in Bryan, Texas, where he successfully used neurofeedback to treat inmates suffering from a variety of mental illnesses. In addition, he founded the Texas Neurofeedback Center in College

Station, Texas, where he successfully treated patients with brain dysfunctions, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, sleep disorders and PTSD. (Full disclosure: Dr. Tharp is no longer associated with the Texas Neurofeedback Center or any other private practice.)

What is PTSD?

The Netwellness Web site defines PTSD as "a psychiatric disorder that may occur following a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, terrorist incident, military combat, violent personal assault or serious accident."

"People suffering from PTSD may experience nightmares or flashbacks, have trouble sleeping, or feel detached from life in general," according to the Web site. "Left untreated, PTSD can lead to further problems, including depression, alcohol or drug abuse, or marital and other personal relationship problems, as well as possible job loss."

It's likely that people have been suffering from PTSD for centuries. Historical medical literature mentions PTSD-like symptoms dating back to the Civil War. Also, combat veterans from World War II and Holocaust survivors were documented as having suffered from PTSD-like symptoms.

The term post-traumatic stress disorder was coined in 1980 as a result of research into the condition after the Vietnam War. While it is generally thought of in connection with military combat, PTSD is not limited to war veterans. It affects men and women, adults and children, from all social and economic backgrounds.

Mental health professionals estimate about 8 percent of Americans will experience PTSD at some point in their lives. During any given year, it is estimated that about 5.2 million people age 18-54 suffer from PTSD.

Women are twice as likely as men to develop PTSD, and people who have spent time in a war zone are at a greater risk of experiencing the disorder.

For years, one-on-one or group therapy was the primary means of treating PTSD. More recently, mental health professionals began prescribing medications to help people suffering from the disorder. Now, researchers are looking at different treatments, including neurofeedback.

What is neurofeedback?

"Neurofeedback is essentially the process of giving the brain feedback or information about how to better respond to stimuli," Dr. Tharp said. "People under intense traumatic experiences or under long-term stress will actually alter their brain waves. These altered brain waves can be beneficial during combat or in other stressful situations. However, they also produce elevated baselines that appear to create the symptoms we are

trying to alleviate: depression, anxiety, startle reflex, etc.”

Take a soldier going door to door in Baghdad, for example. “Naturally, this person is going to have an enhanced startle reflex and hyperarousal,” Dr. Tharp said. “If you are on point and your life depends on you being able to detect an insurgent before he detects you, hyperarousal can save your life.”

Over time, brain wave patterns of a person in this type of situation can change. But they may not change back to a more normal state when the person returns home. Dr. Tharp believes neurofeedback can help the electrical activity in the brain return to normal.

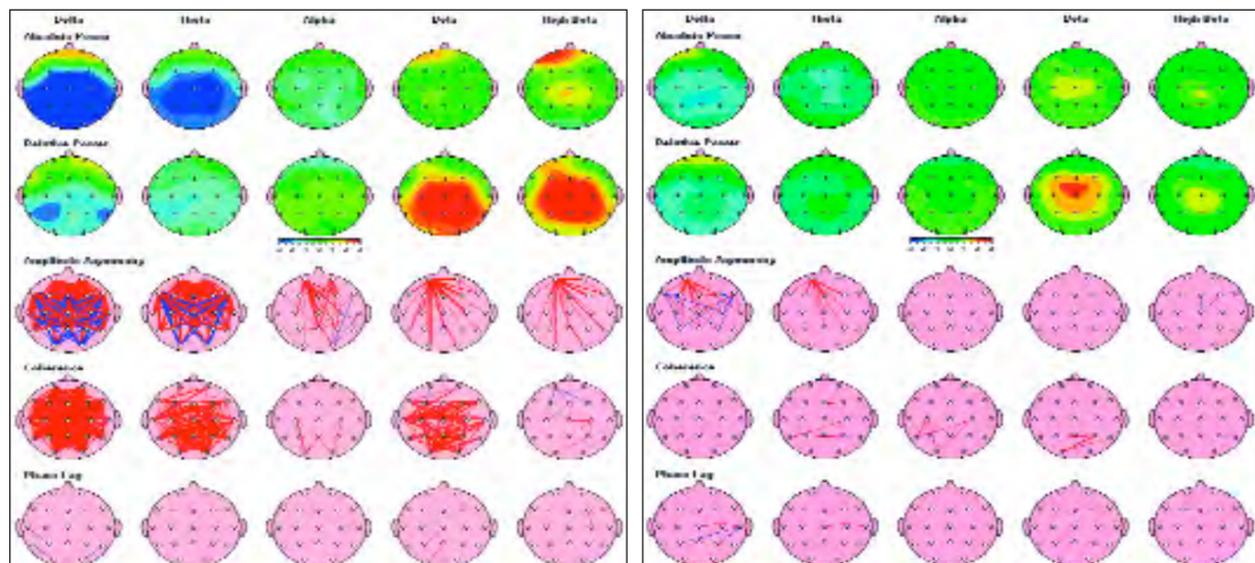
“Neurofeedback gives feedback to the neuronal network,” Dr. Tharp said. “It tells the brain it is not functioning correctly. Similar to how trial and error is involved in learning to ride a bike, once the brain ‘gets it,’ the neuronal network puts you on autopilot, and you just respond normally.”

So, how does neurofeedback get the brain back to “autopilot”? Using sensors on the scalp and advanced computer technology, the patient’s brain wave activity is compared to what is considered normal brain wave activity. Instant feedback is provided when the brain is not operating efficiently. While the patient watches a TV screen, the sensors drive simple video imagery to engage and focus the brain, gently nudging it to increase or decrease specific bands of brain wave activity.

“We can do this with a movie or a video game,” Dr. Tharp said. “As the patient plays the game or watches the movie, we monitor his brain wave activity. When the brain activity stays within the normal range, the person is rewarded (the game continues to operate normally, for example). When the brain wave activity falls outside normal ranges, the brain gets instant feedback that it is not operating efficiently.”

To provide this feedback, the video game or movie may pause or slow down, or the sound may go off, for example.

Soon, the brain “learns” to operate within the normal brain wave activity ranges, and the patient often shows marked improvement.



Before- and after-brain wave scans of a woman suffering from depression and anxiety show the possible benefits of neurofeedback. In very general terms, green indicates normal brain wave activity, blue indicates brain wave activity that is too low, and red indicates activity that is too high.

In a case study, the Neurofeedback Center of Virginia, located in Falls Church, detailed the case of a 30-year-old woman diagnosed with PTSD who was unwilling to take medications and reported that talk therapy had only been “somewhat helpful.” Her symptoms included hyper-vigilance, sleep disruption, nightmares, extreme muscle tension, residual depression and growing agoraphobia — fear of leaving her home.

After several neurofeedback sessions, the patient reported her sleep had improved, and her tension had “melted away.” Overall, she was “feeling calmer.” The woman was eventually able to return to the workplace and reported she was “adjusting well” at work.

Neurofeedback traces its roots back to 1954, when scientist W.R. Hess identified states of arousal in brain waves and noted the waves’ impact on humans. In the late 1960s, lab researcher Barry Sterman measured brain waves in cats and found that he could train the animals to relax by providing a reward when they produced more brain wave activity in a certain range.

In continued experiments, it was revealed these same cats were more resistant to seizures than cats that had not been trained. Mr. Sterman’s research was subsequently applied to humans, leading to the discovery that the brain can “train” itself to improve many conditions.

“When some people hear the word ‘neurofeedback,’ they think of something like shock therapy, but, actually, it’s the opposite,” Dr. Tharp said. “The sessions are painless. The sensors we use simply monitor brain wave activity; they are not used to send any kind of signal to the brain. We use outside stimuli to let the brain know when it is not operating efficiently.

“Over time, we are able to get the person’s brain waves back into a more normal range, and we find their problematic symptoms are either greatly reduced or eliminated altogether.”

The doctor said he has seen neurofeedback provide relief for a wide range of mental problems. The two print-outs below show “before” and “after” brain wave scans of a woman suffering from depression and anxiety. In very general terms, green indicates

Alternative treatments for PTSD show promise

By Bo Joyner

Neurofeedback is just one of a host of new treatment options being looked at to help people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. From yoga to hypnosis to acupuncture, researchers throughout the United States are looking beyond the conventional therapies in an effort to help service members and others deal with traumatic experiences.

At the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, doctors have been incorporating yoga into their treatment of soldiers diagnosed with PTSD as part of the center’s specialized care program since 2006. The specialized care program also includes individual and group therapy as well as physical therapy. Soldiers who have participated in the specialized care program have reported that yoga helped them feel more relaxed and less angry.

While many alternative treatment methods, including neurofeedback, have shown promising results across a number of settings and with different trauma populations, there is very little empirical literature on which to base comparisons of alternative treatment methods.

“More research is definitely needed in all of these treatment areas,” said Dr. David Tharp, a clinical psychologist who has successfully used neurofeedback over the past few years through his work as an employee with the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Texas and a private practice he founded. Dr. Tharp is also a major in the Air Force Reserve.

Because the trauma treatment research field is still so young, service members suffering from PTSD might find it difficult to decide on a treatment method. Col. William Martin, Air Force Reserve Command’s chief of mental health, hopes this doesn’t keep service members from seeking help.

“What our people need to remember is help is available, and we are committed to getting Air Force Reservists who are suffering from PTSD or other mental health problems the best care available and giv-

ing them an adequate time to heal,” he said.

Colonel Martin said he also hopes the stigma associated with seeking mental health care doesn’t keep Reservists from asking for help.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates recently reported that the Department of Defense is tackling two issues associated with PTSD. The first is the task of developing care and treatment.

“The second, and in some ways perhaps equally challenging, is to remove the stigma that is associated with PTSD and to encourage Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen who encounter these problems to seek help,” he said.

Government and private studies estimate that only about half of U.S. service members who might need help dealing with mental health problems actually seek help. Many are concerned that seeking treatment could harm their military career. DOD officials believe seeking help as soon as possible is actually the best way to deal with this concern.

“Failure to seek care actually increases the likelihood that psychological distress could escalate to a more serious mental condition that could preclude an individual from performing sensitive duties,” James Clapper and David Chu, undersecretaries of defense for intelligence and personnel, respectively, recently said in a letter regarding DOD’s position on seeking treatment.

The decision to seek help for a mental health problem is a matter of priorities, said Col. William Klein, AFRC’s Chief of Aerospace Medicine and Professional Services Division at Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

“It is in the member’s best interest to protect himself from further harm by getting profiled appropriately so he isn’t re-exposed to harm.” Colonel Klein said. “It’s in his best interest to seek help so he can minimize the impact of the condition on himself and his family and improve the chances he will be allowed to continue serving in the military.” ★

normal brain wave activity, blue indicates brain wave activity that is too low, and red indicates activity that is too high.

“This woman was barely able to function,” Dr. Tharp said. “She was really in bad shape.”

After about 40 30-minute neurofeedback sessions, the woman’s brain wave activity was back to a more normal state, as shown in the “after” print-out, and she reported a significant decrease in both her depression and anxiety.

“One of the great things about neurofeedback is that the research shows its effects are long lasting,” Dr. Tharp said. “Once we train the patient’s brain, it tends to remain trained.

“There may be a need for occasional booster sessions, but the results may last longer than current medications, which help alleviate some symptoms but need to be taken repeatedly because as the medications wear off, the symptoms return.”

The most common medications currently used to treat PTSD are antidepressants known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors that raise the level of serotonin in the brain and generally help people feel less sad and worried. While these medications act on the chemical activity in the brain, neurofeedback attempts to make corrections to the electrical activity.

Cognitive behavioral therapy, another common current treatment for PTSD, aims at helping a patient change the way he thinks about trauma and its aftermath. A therapist helps the patient identify thoughts about the world and himself that are making him feel afraid or upset. The therapist tries to help the patient replace these thoughts with more accurate and less distressing thoughts.

“The problem here is people often are reluctant to talk about the situation that is causing their problems,” Dr. Tharp said. “Also, CBT focuses on cognition or think-

ing as it relates to behavior, but the trauma that results in PTSD is seeded at a more emotional level. You can tell a person to think about not reacting to a stimulus in a certain way, but when emotions are involved, it’s not always easy to do.”

Another benefit of neurofeedback is there are no known side effects, Dr. Tharp said. Also, neurofeedback may help mental health professionals identify people who are not being truthful about their PTSD symptoms.

“You can’t fake a brain wave,” Dr. Tharp said.

But, more importantly, neurofeedback may provide critical help for people who have put their lives on the line for their country.

“PTSD can be a debilitating condition, but help is available, and there are some exciting new treatment options out there,” Dr. Tharp said. “For many, neurofeedback may hold the key to returning to a happy and more fulfilling life.” ★



DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Members of the 914th Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, N.Y., leave the base for a recent Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment. Air Force Reserve Command officials are working on several fronts to improve the way it supports Reservists and their families before, during and after deployments. (Master Sgt. Peter Borys)

Command strives for continuous improvement in helping Reservists and their families deal with separations

By Bo Joyner

Thousands of Air Force Reservists have deployed all over the world in recent years to support the ongoing Global War on Terrorism, leaving husbands, wives, children and other loved ones behind to manage while they are gone. Such separations, often lasting for months at a time, can be extremely difficult for everyone involved. In an effort to provide better assistance to families, Air Force Reserve Command officials are working on several fronts to improve the command's deployment support process.

"Deployments are always going to be stressful, trying times for both the person who deploys and for the family members left behind," said Ray Nishikawa, AFRC's Airman and Family Readiness chief. "But they can be especially difficult for the families of Reservists because our families don't always have easy access to the counseling and care that are available at all Air Force bases. Still, we owe it to our Air Force Reservists to try and make the deployment process as painless as possible, both for them and their family members."

To that end, AFRC headquarters officials at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., have conducted two AFSO21 events within the past few months to address deployment support issues. AFSO21, short for Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century, is the tool AFRC is using to help its people strive for continuous process improvement in everything they do.

In addition to looking at standardizing deployment checklists and a host of other deployment-related items, the two AFSO21 teams started looking at how the command is going to implement the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program — a congressional directive that specifies "deployment support and reintegration programs shall be provided for National Guard and Reserve members and their families. ... to minimize to the extent practicable the stresses of military service, particularly the stress of deployment and family separation."

Yellow Ribbon, passed into public law in January and based on the Minnesota National Guard's Beyond the Yellow Ribbon reintegration program, dictates that deployment support and reintegration programs shall be provided in all phases of deployment: pre-deployment, deployment, demobilization, and post-deployment and reconstitution.

The law stipulates that deployment support and reinte-

gration programs shall, as a minimum, include sufficient information, services, referrals and proactive outreach opportunities across the United States and its territories throughout the deployment cycle.

"Our bases already do much of what is spelled out in the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, but there are some things in the law that are going to be a little more difficult to implement," Mr. Nishikawa said.

Chief among these is a provision of the law that states that National Guard and Reserve commands shall conduct reintegration activities at approximately 30-, 60- and 90-day intervals after a demobilization or the end of a deployment for all members who are mobilized or deployed for 90 days or more. The law goes on to state that Reserve members must receive appropriate pay and allowances for attending these deployment support and reintegration activities and that family members should also attend the events.

"Because of our confidence in the skills and abilities of the support agencies at our wings, we are exploring various options for the reintegration programs to include having some at the wings and others at regional locations," Mr. Nishikawa said. "Our Reservists and their families are spread out all over the country, and several don't live in close proximity to their unit, so the logistics pose big challenges for us.

"Other challenges include how we deploy people — in small packages of one or two and not always in large numbers from a specific unit — and the fact that there are spouses who can't take time off to attend an event. We have to figure out how to schedule these people into our reintegration activity schedule. This is a particular concern for all of our IMAs (individual mobilization augmentees) who are deployed, but regional reintegration activities may be a way to reach this target group.

"The challenges can be overcome, and I'm confident the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program will take Reserve family readiness to a whole new level," Mr. Nishikawa said.

In the meantime, Reserve Airman and Family Readiness Centers will continue to help Reservists and their families deal with the hardships of deployment.

"The Airman and Family Readiness Centers at all of our Reserve-owned bases do a great job of helping our members and their families deal with the difficulties of a

deployment; and at the bases where our units are tenants, the active duty-run Airman and Family Readiness Centers are there to support Reservists and their families as well," Mr. Nishikawa said.

The Airman and Family Readiness Center at the 934th Airlift Wing, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minn., is one example of a Reserve center that is doing great things to help its members and their families deal with deployments.

In addition to offering a host of pre-deployment and during-deployment support activities, the 934th Airman and Family Readiness Center teams up with the clinic, chapel and other base agencies to provide a comprehensive reunion and reintegration program. Upon their return from deployment, 934th members are encouraged to participate, either individually or as a unit, in any or all of the programs offered. Among these programs are:

- Minnesota National Guard reunion events and family reintegration events;
- A one-on-one briefing with an Airman and Family Readiness Center official concerning benefits Reservists are eligible for and issues they may be dealing with;
- A two-hour session with chapel, clinic, and Airman and Family Readiness Center officials that covers state, Defense Department and Veterans Affairs benefits as well as a review of issues and behaviors that may occur after exposure to combat or a combat-supported deployment;

• A second session 30 to 60 days after the initial personal contact that deals with specific behaviors and responses covered by mental health experts; and

• A third session 30 to 60 days after the second session that addresses post-traumatic stress disorder issues.

"We've had this program in place for reunion and reintegration jointly with clinic, chapel and other agency personnel for over a year now, and it's worked out great," said Vicki Lokken, director of Airman and Family Readiness for the 934th. "I just received a report from one of our air and space expeditionary force-deployed units on life one year after return, and it was fantastic. This unit had 20 percent of its deployers show PTSD/combat stress behaviors immediately after they returned. But one year later, with our reintegration program and the willingness of wing leaders to refer problems, the Airmen report being much better off than before."

At Whiteman AFB, Mo., the 442nd Fighter Wing has instituted the Warrior Reintegration program to help its members make a smooth transition from the battlefield to the home front.

Established by Col. Steve Arthur, 442nd FW commander, the Warrior Reintegration team comprises Maj. Edward Cullumber, a clinical social worker; wing Chaplain (Capt.) James Buckman; and Master Sgt. Vicki Chambers, chief of the wing's Airman and Family Readiness Center. The team works to educate Reservists before they deploy, stay in close contact with Reservists and their families during deployment, and conduct interviews and assessments when Reservists return home.

"(Warrior Reintegration) is an attempt on the front end to prevent any kind of problems with negative stress reactions," Major Cullumber said in a recent news story. "On post-deployment, when people return, it's to help them reintegrate back into civilian life and identify any kind of problems they might be having that they need to seek additional help for."

"All of us who deploy into battle will face issues with stress-related problems," Colonel Arthur said. "If we don't deal with this now, what we are going to see is a decrease in the combat capability of this wing. My responsibility is the combat capability of this wing. I need to do something now that is going to allow the unbelievably high levels of combat capability that we have in this wing to continue."

While Reserve units are working hard to help their members and families deal with deployments, IMAs may have a harder time finding the help they need. That's why one Reserve organization has taken it upon itself to help bolster deployment support for its IMAs.

In December 2007, The Judge Advocate General Corps Reserve established the Warrior Liaison Officer program to support deployed IMAs and their families.

Here's how the program works: Every time a member of the Reserve JA team deploys, he or she is assigned an individual non-deploying WLO from the same major command as the deploying Reservist. The WLO is responsible for coordinating and obtaining assistance to help take care of whatever the deploying IMA and his or her family needs to ease the deploy-

ment process. This includes virtually shadowing the deploying Reservist to facilitate the pre-deployment process; maintaining a regular link with the Reservist while deployed; maintaining continual communication with the deployed Reservist's family to assist with resolution of issues that arise during deployment; ensuring a direct link between the deployed Reservist's family and the local installation for inclusion in Air Force events and news; and arranging for individual reception and assistance for the Reservist upon redeployment.

"Assigned on a one-on-one basis, WLOs serve as the personal and direct link between the deploying Reservist and his or her family, the rest of the Air Force, and, in some cases, the world beyond. It's an important wingman measure designed to ensure we look out for our own folks and their families as they answer the nation's call," said Col. Harris Kline, the mobilization assistant to the Air Force Materiel Command staff judge advocate and overall point of contact for the WLO Program.

"WLO is a great example of a wingman program that can help us take care of individual Reservists who deploy and often fall through the cracks," Mr. Nishikawa said. "We have a host of programs in place to support our deployed Reservists and their families, but there is always more we can do. Deployment support is definitely an area where we are always striving for continuous improvement." ★

Homecomings, like those shown below, are usually joyous times for Reservists and their family members, but deployments and reintegration can be very stressful for everyone involved.



A Thirst for Adventure

Maintenance officer/helicopter pilot loves her high-flying life

By Master Sgt. Chance C. Babin

Leading aerial mountain and glacier tours out of Juneau, Alaska, in the summer and working the oil rigs of south Louisiana the rest of the year, Maj. Jennifer West leads a life of high-flying adventure, both on and off the job.

Major West, 920th Maintenance Operations Flight commander, moved to Florida in 2003 to be part of the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, near Cocoa Beach, having served a six-year stint on active duty.

"When I got off active duty, I wanted to be in the 920th," the Colorado native said. "I moved to Florida for that reason only."

It also helped that Florida has many flight schools inside its borders and Major West's goal was to become a helicopter pilot.

She initially wanted to fly in the military, but at the time her vision was not good enough to meet military requirements. Major West had her vision corrected, but by then she had eclipsed the age limitation, so flying in the military was out.

Despite being disappointed at the time, the major now views the situation as a positive. She is better able to control her career as a pilot in the civilian world and still enjoy her role as a maintenance officer in the 920th, where her pilot experience helps her better understand the relationship between operations and maintenance.

"It gives me a pilot's perspective," she said. "I can see things from both sides. There is often a wall between mainte-

As a Reservist, Maj. Jennifer West is the commander of the 920th Maintenance Operations Flight, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. As a civilian helicopter pilot, she leads aerial mountain and glacier tours out of Juneau, Alaska, and flies people and supplies out to oil rigs off the coast of Louisiana. Above are some photos of Major West's Alaskan adventures.

nance and operations, and I now have a better perspective. My two careers complement each other, and each has helped the other."

Her career as a pilot has taken her on adventures from Florida to Louisiana to Alaska.

She began her career doing aerial photography flights for real estate and construction firms, flying from Orlando to the Florida Keys, a job she performed for a year. Major West said one of the highlights of this job was getting to "buzz big buildings in downtown Miami."

From there she moved on to the Gulf Coast, going to work in the oil industry, primarily in south Louisiana, arriving there shortly after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita had devastated the region.

Ironically, the company she began working for used its helicopters to perform rescues in the aftermath of both storms, a mission the 920th RQW performed admirably, racking up a total of 1,043 saves. Major West arrived in Louisiana shortly after the rescues, though, and did not participate.

"It was very interesting (moving to Louisiana)," she said. "I got to see a lot of people still rebuilding their homes and lives."

Major West said she experienced quite a culture shock moving from Florida to Louisiana, but has since gained a great appreciation for the food, music and people of the region.

She also had the opportunity to help with some Habitat for Humanity projects in Lake Charles, La., which was hit hard by Hurricane Rita.

In her job, she flies oil workers and, occasionally, equipment out to oil rigs and vessels located off shore, as far as 200 miles, in an Agusta A119 helicopter, which can carry up to seven passengers. She flies up to 13 times a day.

Major West plans to go to Alaska this summer for the second year to work out of Juneau, flying tourists out to the glaciers.

Last summer was her first time going to Alaska, and she went there in style, flying a helicopter for four days from Lake Charles, La. Along the way, she made a quick detour.

"I stopped in my hometown (in Colorado) and landed on the football field at my little brother's high school and picked him up," Major West said.

She took him with her the rest of the way to Alaska as a graduation gift and paid for his commercial flight back home after a brief visit.

While in Alaska, Major West flew groups of up to six tourists in an AS-350 A-Star out to glaciers and walked them around for 20 minutes.

"I loved it," she said. "It was my first time flying in the mountains and landing on glaciers. It's really interesting dealing with the winds, mountains and ice."



In addition to her pilot duties, the major also served as a tour guide.

"After two or three months, you go a bit insane hearing yourself say the same thing over and over," she said.

Once the cruise ships stop coming, near the end of September, the helicopter season is over, too. Major West said most the people she met in Alaska were seasonal workers, and she didn't get to meet a lot of true Alaskans. However, she did get to do some mushing, or dog sledding, which she said was a great experience.

While working in Louisiana, Major West works two weeks on and two weeks off, so she has plenty of time to enjoy one of her many hobbies: traveling. Her job in Alaska is also very "travel friendly." During the tourist season, she works almost every day, unless the weather is bad. At the end, she is rewarded with a five-month paid vacation.

To make traveling easier, Major West moved all of her possessions into storage and hits the road packed lightly. Her travels have taken her to destinations in Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Canada, and all over Europe and the United States.

"When I travel, I try to understand the local culture and develop an understanding of how we live together and share this world," she said. "Life is long, and the world is small."

Major West said she tries to go to small towns, off the beaten path, and makes sure she attempts to learn at least a little bit of the language, "which endears you to the people and opens up communication."

Traveling gives the major the opportunity to engage in some of her other hobbies: surfing, mountain climbing, snow boarding and scuba diving.

Major West does most of her traveling solo, as few of her friends have such a flexible schedule. But she likes it that way, as she gets to make many friends along the way.

Ultimately, her goal is to work in the firefighting business, helping with natural disaster relief. She has accumulated about 2,000 flying hours. Once the major gets 1,000 more, she said she will make the move and pursue her dream.

Until she reaches that milestone, Major West will continue living her life of adventure, flying choppers and serving the Reserve. ★

(Sergeant Babin is assigned to the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command public affairs office at Robins AFB, Ga.)



Col. Reinhard Schmidt (left), 914th Airlift Wing commander, and Col. Patrick Ginavan, 107th AW commander, unveil the new tail flash design that will be on all Niagara C-130H2 aircraft. (Mike Harvey)



One Team, One Fight

By Liz Stoeckmann

In an area of western New York known as the “Honeymoon Capital of the World,” the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard are laying a solid foundation for a historic union of a slightly different kind. Air Force Reserve Command’s 914th Airlift Wing and the New York Air National Guard’s 107th Airlift Wing officially joined together May 2 at Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station to form the first-ever C-130 association between units of the two organizations.

Both the 914th and 107th will fly C-130H2 model Hercules aircraft while consolidating aircraft maintenance and other expeditionary combat support functions to form a lean, effective combat force. This “new look” will capitalize on and utilize the vast experience of both organizations while offering excess space to other federal and state agencies eager for the security an air reserve station has to offer.

This partnership, mandated by the last Base Realignment and Closure Commission, required the 914th AW to transfer its eight C-130H3 aircraft to other units while accepting 12 C-130H2 models. The 107th AW has begun converting from an air refueling wing to a tactical airlift wing while transferring its KC-135 Stratotankers to other bases.

Seizing on an opportunity to save taxpayer money, both wings have formed a team to study ways to consolidate functions and eliminate unneeded infrastructure. When the dust settles, both units will fly and maintain the 12 C-130s, working side by side, both in and out of the cockpit, to form this historic team.

Col. Reinhard L. Schmidt, Niagara Falls ARS installation commander and the 914th AW commander, along with Col. Patrick D. Ginavan, 107th AW commander, cemented the first-ever Reserve and Guard C-130 association May 2 with the arrival and acceptance of the first two C-130H2s. One aircraft was transferred from the 934th Airlift Wing at Minneapolis-St. Paul IAP ARS, Minn., while the other one came from the ANG’s 118th

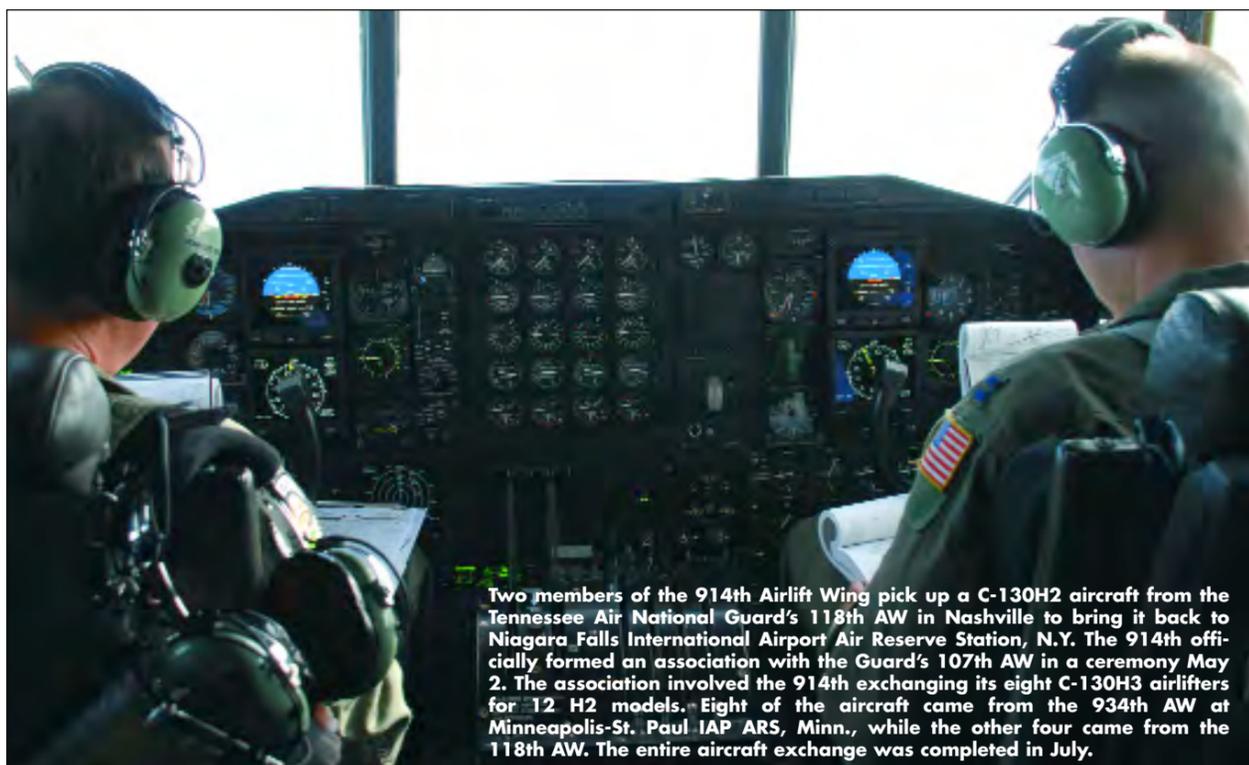
AW in Nashville, Tenn. In the end, the transfer of planes gives the base a full fleet of 12 C-130H2 aircraft two years ahead of schedule.

During the acceptance ceremony, attended by military and elected officials, Colonels Schmidt and Ginavan accepted the two aircraft from the arrival crews and unveiled a new tail flash and poster that illustrates this historic partnership.

Sens. Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer, along with U.S. Reps. Louise Slaughter and Tom Reynolds, all of New York, were instrumental in obtaining the aircraft earlier than originally planned. Additionally, Niagara’s congressional delegation secured language in the fiscal year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act that provides funding for modernization of the base’s infrastructure.

Representative Slaughter said she and her staff plan on working to make Niagara Falls ARS a “flagship” military installation and an example of efficiency to be emulated around the country. Echoing her sentiments, Maj. Gen. Robert A. Knauff, NY ANG commander, said the Guard is excited about the opportunities posed by this new association.

“This is a new thing that no one has actually done before in the mobility community,” General Knauff said. “For the C-130 world, both Reserve and Guard, this is the first time ever associating, so we’re essentially making it up but doing it really well where each partner has an opportunity for their voices to be heard and



Two members of the 914th Airlift Wing pick up a C-130H2 aircraft from the Tennessee Air National Guard's 118th AW in Nashville to bring it back to Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, N.Y. The 914th officially formed an association with the Guard's 107th AW in a ceremony May 2. The association involved the 914th exchanging its eight C-130H3 airlifters for 12 H2 models. Eight of the aircraft came from the 934th AW at Minneapolis-St. Paul IAP ARS, Minn., while the other four came from the 118th AW. The entire aircraft exchange was completed in July.

maximizing whatever they can bring to this association. It's a great opportunity."

With money for operations being tight and the costs of training people and maintaining aircraft and infrastructure rising, consolidating functions, while sharing resources and expertise, is a sure way to increase the combat power of air units, the general said. Nothing is ever easy when old established ways of doing business are threatened, he said.

"Although there may be initial challenges with the association, I see this as a great partnership, and I fully anticipate we will be associated ahead of the BRAC commission timeline scheduled for September 2010," Colonel Schmidt said.

"The benefits of an associate wing will be of value to both units by sharing resources and reducing duplication of effort," Colonel Ginavan said.

Today, under the Total Force Initiative, regular Air Force, Reserve and Guard units deploy, work and fight side by side, often making it impossible to determine which organization a military member represents. At Niagara, the goal is for everybody to do things the same as they will when called upon to deploy overseas.

"There are huge gains with this association, creating a synergy for the nation in combining two maintenance groups that

are both professional in maintaining 12 C-130H2s," said Col. Sharon Johnson, 914th Maintenance Group commander. "We are going to have incredible availability for aircraft after the transfer is complete this July."

Guardsmen, who once worked on KC-135 air refuelers, are now training with seasoned members of the 914th AW to learn how to maintain the C-130 fleet. It's an enormous job for both units.

"Essentially what we've done is set up the largest field training team here at Niagara to help train personnel as soon as possible," said Col. Jim Atkinson, 107th MXG commander.

The maintainers aren't the only ones who require training. Crews from the 914th are transitioning from the H-3 to the H-2 which has some mission-related differences.

"Training is on track, and the majority of the 914th crews will be converted by the end of July," said Col. Terry Lawrence, 914th Operations Group commander. "Our crews are aggressively getting checked out in the H-2 and looking forward to lending their expertise to members of the 107th as they learn not only a new aircraft but a completely new mission."

"The first of the 107th pilots have returned from formal school training,

and the 914th has lent instructors and various crewmembers to aid in their seasoning. We have worked closely with the 107th to help them make a safe and effective transition to the C-130 community."

To foster the "Team Niagara" concept, Staff Sgt. Dan Lanphear, public affairs craftsman, designed the associate unit's new tail flash. The artist took his creativity to the next level by hand-sketching artwork that portrays the unity between the Reserve and Guard at Niagara. The portrait reflects a Frontiersman on one side, representing the 914th AW, and a Minuteman on the other side, representing the 107th AW. Sergeant Lanphear said the two characters symbolize Citizen Airmen united in defense of the United States. A C-130 in the background represents the units' combined combat flying mission.

"Niagara is clearly the paramount example of unity of efforts between the Reserve and Guard," Colonel Schmidt said. "Niagara is now the proud leader within AFRC to form an associate wing and make history of what may have been unknown to most but is now the way of the future Total Force." ★

(Ms. Stoeckmann is assigned to the 914th AW public affairs office at Niagara Falls IAP ARS.)

Reservists Fight Wildfires

Heat wave, need for aircraft keep 302nd AW busy

Members of the 302nd Airlift Wing at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., deployed to California in late June with three C-130 aircraft to help fight raging wildfires.

The aircraft are equipped with the modular airborne firefighting system, which is capable of dropping up to 3,000 gallons of fire retardant per mission.

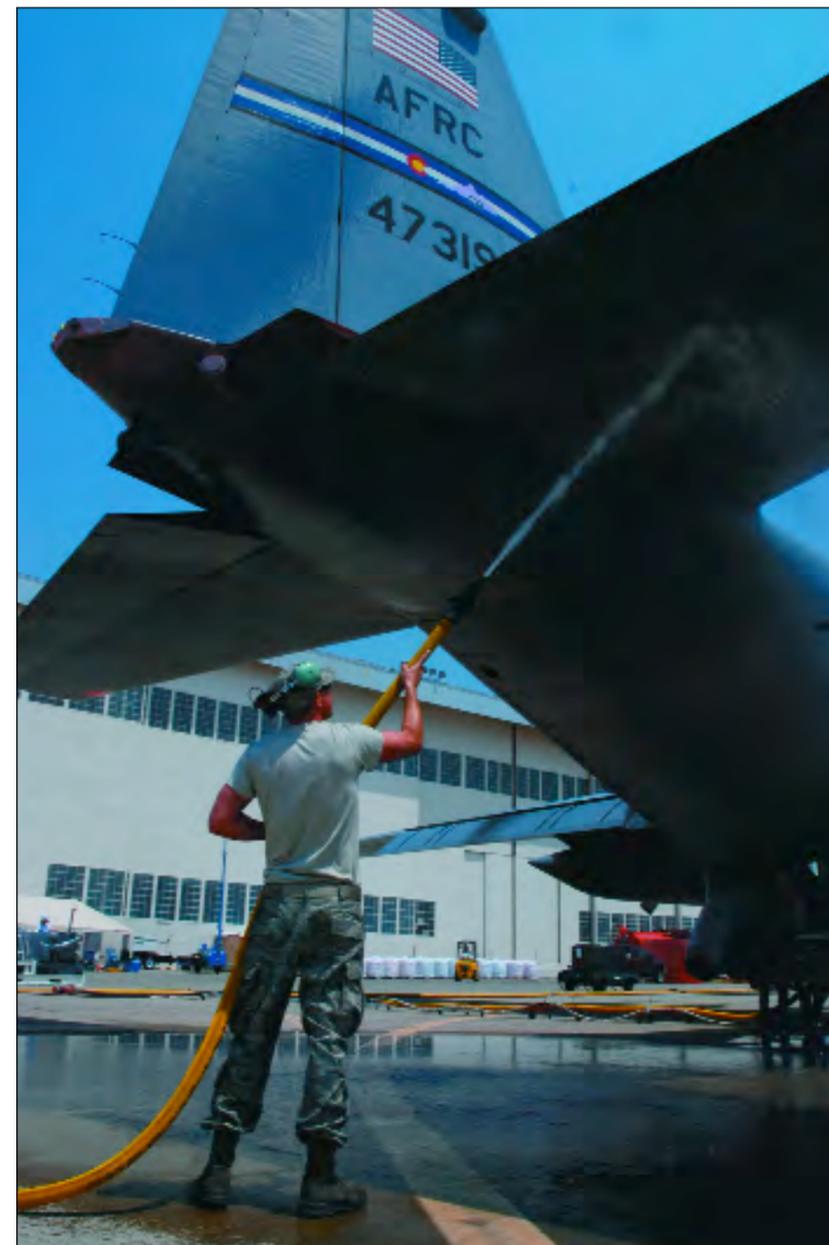
As of July 9, the three Air Force Reserve aircraft, along with five other MAFFS-equipped C-130s from the Air National Guard, had flown more than 300 sorties, dropping nearly 850,000 gallons of retardant.

Air tankers are part of a coordinated air-ground effort. Retardant is used to lower flames and fire intensity in support of ground firefighters.

The aircraft, crews and support personnel are based at McClellan Airfield in Sacramento and form the 302nd Air Expeditionary Group. McClellan is far enough away from the fires in the north so they don't get smoked in, said Air National Guard Lt. Col. Jerry Champlin, a director of operations with the 302nd AEG.

A reload base was later established farther south at Channel Islands ANG Station to increase mission efficiency, Colonel Champlin said.

A continuing heat wave and an ongoing need for aircraft will likely keep the Reserve C-130s very busy for the foreseeable future in support of the national wildland firefighting effort, said Col. Gary Stanley, U.S. Army officer in charge of coordinating that support. ★



(Above) Staff Sgt. Josh Crooks of the 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., washes down the ramp of a C-130H prior to a firefighting mission June 29 at McClellan Airfield in Sacramento, Calif. Sergeant Crooks is among a group of Reservists and three aircraft from the 302nd who are assigned to the 302nd Air Expeditionary Group fighting the Corral and Piute wildfires near the California capital. The 302nd AEG includes the 302nd AW and two Air National Guard units: the 153rd AW from Cheyenne, Wyo., and 145th AW from Charlotte, N.C. (Left) C-130s equipped with the modular airborne firefighting system can drop 3,000 gallons of fire retardant at a time to help battle the wildfires.

A GREAT DAY FOR A SPACEWALK

Astronaut and Air Force Reservist Col. Mike Fossum takes part in the first of three spacewalks during Space Shuttle Discovery's recent visit to the international space station. The mission was the second of three flights planned to launch components to complete the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's Kibo laboratory. As an individual mobilization augmentee, Colonel Fossum is assigned to the F-16 System Program Office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. (Photo courtesy of NASA)

