

# Air Citizen AIRMAN

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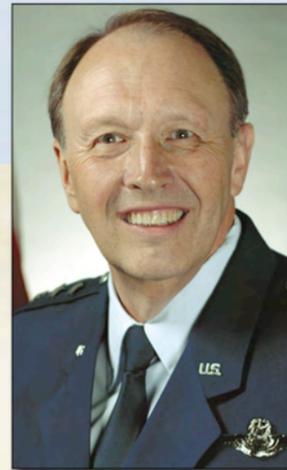
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Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve



# FROM THE TOP

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



## Variety of programs can help Reservists cope with life's hurdles

2012 is shaping up to be a dynamic year as our nation works to balance available resources with national defense priorities. A critical piece will be finding the right mix of active, Guard and Reserve Airmen that will provide the most efficient and effective combat capability. Without a doubt, the Air Force Reserve will see some changes, and we'll continue to provide a strategic reserve while remaining operationally engaged. Though our military mission in Iraq has officially ended, our efforts in Afghanistan will continue, and you can anticipate that the Air Force Reserve will stay busy for the foreseeable future at home and abroad.

With this in mind, it is important to realize that this sustained level of effort may create challenges for our Airmen and their families. To some degree, the stresses we all face have an impact on our mental, physical, social and spiritual health.

A wide variety of programs, services and benefits — including the Yellow Ribbon Program, Wingman Project, and Airman and Family Readiness Program — are available to help Reservists and their families cope with life's hurdles. Other programs, like chaplain services, may be available at your location. Your local leadership will be able to provide details, but it's important that you know these resources are available before they are needed.

Our mental, physical, social and spiritual well-being is important for a healthy quality of life and for ensuring we're ready for the mission. It's imperative that we maintain focus on those areas, and the Department of Veterans Affairs is just one organization that provides a system of such assistance to veterans, including those who served in the reserve components.

This issue of *Citizen Airman* includes information on some of the many programs, services and benefits available through the VA beginning on Page 10. Though it's tough to summarize everything the VA offers in a single article, you'll get a good idea of what's available along with insights on where you can find more detailed information. Thanks once again for your dedication to the Air Force and our great nation. I'm proud to serve alongside each of you.

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**On the cover: A jet fuel hose for refueling is shown after a hot-pit refuel for a 442nd Fighter Wing A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. Hot-pit refueling is a procedure usually performed in a combat situation to rapidly refuel aircraft while their engines are running to thrust pilots back into the fight. For more on how Air Force Reservists are working behind the scenes to fuel the total force, see the story on Page 18. (Senior Airman Kenny Holston)**

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# RESERVE SNAPSHOT



Chris Daughtry, lead singer for the band Daughtry, performs for service members at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia. Daughtry, comedian Gabriel Iglesias and members of the Band of the U.S. Air Force Reserve entertained service members Nov. 28 through Dec. 10 during Operation Season's Greetings Tour for the Troops. (Senior Airman Paul Labbe)



Members of the 908th Security Forces Squadron at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., recently received extensive use-of-force training. Here, Airman Marquis Jackson takes a direct shot of pepper spray.

Senior Master Sgt. Neil Sherman, 403rd Wing senior recruiter, Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., salutes officials in the grandstand during the Veterans Day parade in D'Iberville, Miss. (Capt. J. Justin Pearce)



Airman Andy, also known as Master Sgt. Jack Tonkay, 512th Mission Support Group, Dover Air Force Base, Del., interacts with students from Welch Elementary School. (Roland Balik)



Airmen from the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., perform a search-and-rescue demonstration in nearby Cocoa Beach, Fla. The demonstration was part of the Cocoa Beach Air Show. (Staff Sgt. Anna-Marie Wyant)



Tech. Sgt. Mark Ling services the oil in an F-22 upon its return from Alaska's Aviation Trade Show. Members of the Air Force Reserve's 477th Fighter Group, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, took the jet to be a part of the show that included more than 275 vendors and was attended by more than 21,000 visitors. (Maj. Lisa Reaver)



# ROUND THE RESERVE

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

## Mom Writes Award-Winning Blog

Readers of a national parenting magazine recognized an Air Force Reservist stationed in Ohio for producing one of the nation's best blogs.

More than 33,900 people voted in the contest sponsored by *Parents* magazine. Tech. Sgt. Julie Weckerlein of the 445th Airlift Wing at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base received the award for producing the Best All-Around Mom Blog. She writes the blog, [www.julieandmartin.com](http://www.julieandmartin.com), with the help of her husband, Martin.

These days, the influence of a blog, especially a blog written by and for parents, is undeniable, according to the editors of *Parents* magazine in a statement about the contest.

A total of 1,213 blogs were nominated in 12 parenting-related categories. Once nominated, blogs competed for Readers' Choice and Editors'

Pick awards in each category. Winners of the Readers' Choice awards were those blogs that received the most votes from fans, friends and family members, while the Editors' Pick winning blogs were chosen by the editors of *Parents* magazine and the editors and bloggers of *Parents.com*.

"We were really amazed by the outpouring of support that came in for our blog, especially from our Air Force family," Weckerlein said.

She started the blog in June 2001 while stationed in Germany as a way for her stateside family to follow her wedding plans.

"When we learned we were nominated, I posted a note about it online, and word spread fast, especially within our Air Force network," Weckerlein said.

At the time she started the blog, Weckerlein was an airman stationed at Ramstein Air Base,

Germany, while Martin was a tank commander in the German Army. Initially, she only posted about wedding-related content, but after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, she started writing in-depth about her and Martin's role in the military response. She has continued writing for the past decade, gathering a loyal following along the way.

While she regularly posts about life with her family just outside Washington D.C., Weckerlein said the blog really proved its worth during her deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan in 2007. During that time, she wrote about her experiences in the Middle East, while Martin posted about life at home with their daughter. She said it was the best way to stay involved in each other's lives.

"For our readers, I think people really gained an interesting perspective about what a deployment is like for a family," Weckerlein said. "Only

a small percentage of Americans ever serve in the military, and I think it's fair to say most don't realize that moms deploy, too, and that dads are totally capable of holding down the home front by themselves. So our blog was able to offer a glimpse as to what that's like." (445th AW public affairs)

## Duke Reservist First to Complete Marine Course

Among a sea of gunnery sergeants, a senior master sergeant from Duke Field, Fla., became the first Air Force Reservist to complete the advanced course at the Marine Corps Staff NCO Academy.

Senior Master Sgt. Bruce Tims received his graduation certificate Oct. 14. In addition to being the first Reservist, he was just the seventh Airman to ever graduate from the seven-week course at Camp Lejeune, N.C. The course is similar to the Air Force's Senior NCO Academy but focuses on Marine-specific topics such as combat operations, close air support, professional briefings, physical training and joint doctrine in a deployed environment.

"It was such a great experience," said Tims, who received his senior stripe via the Promotion Enhancement Program while completing the course. "The physical training helped tremendously, and the lessons I learned could be taken and integrated back at my unit."

Tims admitted to being a little hesitant and intimidated about attending the Marine academy at first. When he applied, he had hoped to get chosen for the Coast Guard course.

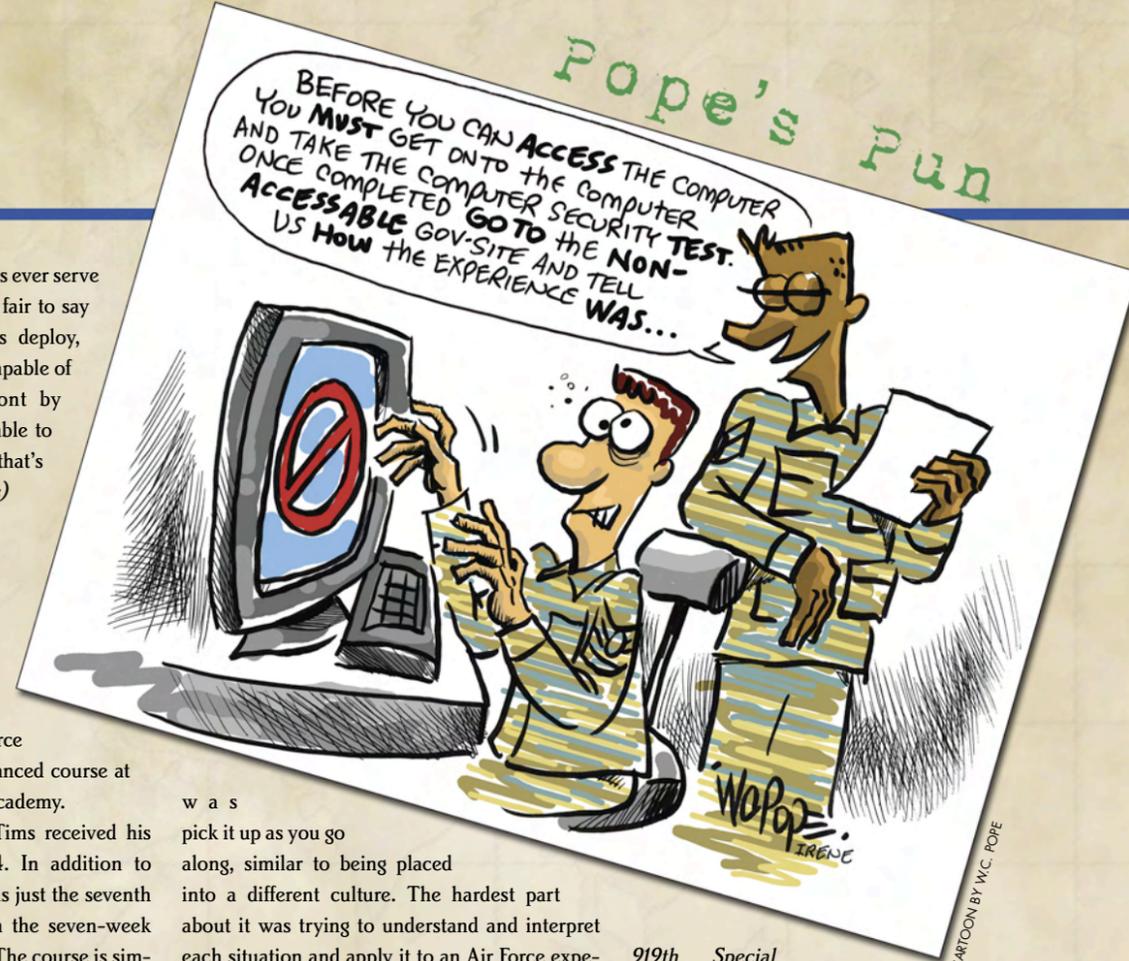
"Senior Tims came off a little quiet at first, but after hanging out with us, that changed real quick," said Gunnery Sgt. Douglas Haynesworth of the 4th Marine Corps District, who attended the course with Tims.

Tims' attendance at the course said a lot about him, according to former Marine NCO Academy instructor retired Sgt. Maj. Scott Standfast.

"The fact that the Air Force would trust the Marine Corps in his professional training and development as a leader is a compliment," Standfast said.

Tims said he had to learn the Marine Corps' customs and way of life on the fly.

"There was no easing into it," Tims said. "It



919th Special Operations Wing public affairs)

## New Defense Law Includes Pay, Mobilization Provisions

When President Barack Obama signed the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act Dec. 31, he enacted new laws on military pay and mobilization.

These laws started the new year with the Defense Appropriation Bill that the president signed Dec. 23, which provides \$5.2 billion for the Air Force Reserve budget in fiscal year 2012.

The bill increases both regular and Reserve Airmen's pay by 1.6 percent and includes several programs that affect Reservists, retirees and their families.

The new budget funds Air Force Reserve operations and the training of 34 wings, funds 117,769 flying hours, and maintains 344 aircraft.

Air Force Reserve manning levels increase from 70,200 to 71,400 Reservists, and the new budget funds 4,157 civilian employees.

The Air Force Reserve budget is about 4 percent of the total Air Force budget and includes \$3.27 billion for operations and maintenance for air operations, service support and civilian pay; \$1.7 billion for military personnel; and \$33.6 million for military construction.

The Reserve's construction budget includes \$16.3 million for a new airfield control tower and

## Commander selects Travis chief for top enlisted position

Chief Master Sgt. Kathleen R. Buckner was selected for the Air Force Reserve Command's top enlisted position. Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner Jr., chief of Air Force Reserve and AFRC commander, made the selection Dec. 23.

"We're looking forward to Chief Buckner coming on board and sharing her distinctive wealth of experience," Stenner said. "She'll play a crucial leadership role through a historical period in this command."

Before being selected for her new position, Buckner served as the command chief master sergeant for the 349th Air Mobility Wing at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. She replaces Chief Master Sgt. Dwight Badgett, who was recently selected as the senior enlisted advisor for Joint Task Force North, Fort Bliss, Texas. Stenner said Chief Badgett's new assignment at Joint Task Force North is "a resounding testament to his service and leadership."

Buckner will advise Stenner on readiness, training, utilization, morale, professional development and quality of life for all enlisted members in the Air Force Reserve. She will also be the functional manager for all Reserve first sergeants, the senior non-commissioned officers responsible for the morale, welfare and conduct of enlisted members at the squadron level throughout the command.

She has been the command chief for the Travis Reserve wing since May 2009. A native of Gary, Ind., Buckner enlisted in the Air Force in 1987. While on active duty, she served at various levels in the operations resource management field and was an Airman Leadership School instructor. Her assignments included positions in California, Utah, Spain and the Netherlands.

Since leaving active duty in 1997, Buckner has served as both a



Chief Master Sgt. Kathleen R. Buckner is the new command chief master sergeant for Air Force Reserve Command.

traditional Reservist and a full-time air reserve technician. In 2007 she deployed to Southwest Asia in support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. ★

base operations building at March Air Reserve Base, Calif., and \$9.5 million for a RED HORSE civil engineering readiness and training facility at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C.

The new laws authorize the secretary of defense to mobilize reserve components for national disasters or emergencies. This mobilization is restricted to no more than 120 days and must be in response to a governor's request. Although each state's National Guardsmen have been called up in the past, this is a new mobilization role for Title 10 or federal military forces.

In another unprecedented act, the service secretaries are now authorized to mobilize reserve components as part of preplanned missions included in the defense budget. No more than 60,000 Reservists may be mobilized by the

service secretaries at any one time and not for more than 365 consecutive days.

Also, one-year extensions are authorized for certain bonuses and special pay. This includes reimbursement for inactive-duty training outside of normal commuting distances for qualified individuals.

Reservists mobilized frequently for extended periods may draw income replacement pay until Dec. 31, 2012. Hostile fire and imminent danger pay have been modified and will now be prorated to daily rather than a monthly rate.

Health-care professionals who qualify, as well as Reservists who are assigned to certain high-priority units or re-enlistment categories, may receive bonuses and special pay in 2012.

The new law clarifies the rules for Reservists' eli-

gibility for 180 days of medical care at the end of extended active-duty tours. Also, the law defines the authority of the Army and Air Force secretaries to retain military technicians to age 60.

Retirees may see an increase in enrollment fees for Tricare Prime health insurance. As of Oct. 1, 2012, retiree premiums may increase by the same percentage as their annual cost-of-living raises, according to the new law.

Although not directly affecting Air Force Reserve members, another historic "first" was included in the new law when it added the chief of the National Guard Bureau to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The new post has specific responsibilities addressing matters involving Guardsmen, homeland defense and civil support missions.

Also, Reserve and National Guard officers will

now be considered for appointments to command Army Northern Command and Air Force Northern Command for the first time. (Col. Bob Thompson, Air Force Reserve public affairs, Washington, D.C.)

### New Capability Provides Email Updates to Deployers

Airmen getting ready to deploy have a new capability to help them prepare for their tasking. A recent change to the Air Force Reporting Instruction Tool now allows users to sign-up for instant email notifications when they occur.

Prior to the change, members had to check the website often to ensure they had current information.

"Reporting instructions change frequently," said Kathy Keane, an operations assessment specialist with the Air and Space Expeditionary Force and Personnel Operations at the Air Force Personnel Center. "There were occasions when units did not have the updated version, and that could have resulted in the individual not being prepared for the deployment."

The new change also helps out installation deployment officers and unit deployment managers as well. By signing up for the instant notifications, users will receive an email as soon as changes occur to reporting instructions.

Customers wanting to sign-up for AFRIT email notifications should log on to AEF Online at <https://aef.afpc.randolph.af.mil> and click the AFRIT button at the top of the page. Users can then select which reporting instructions they would like to receive notifications on. (Jon Hanson, Air Force Personnel, Services and Manpower public affairs, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas)

### Dietary Supplements Removed From Exchanges

The Department of Defense has implemented a temporary moratorium on the sale of products containing DMAA within military facilities.

The moratorium will remain in effect pending further review of relevant scientific evidence and reported events, officials said.

Recent reports show that two Soldier deaths and additional adverse health effects in other service members may be related to the use of dietary supplements containing DMAA, which is also known as dimethylamylamine.

DMAA is sold as a single supplement and in combination with multiple other ingredients. In particular, it is often combined with caffeine, a legal, natural stimulant. Stimulants may accelerate metabolism, heart rate and blood pressure, which may increase the body's production of heat, especially in hot and humid conditions.

"We are concerned about reports of heat illness, kidney (and) liver damage, and sudden death in service members who reportedly used products containing DMAA," said Dr. Michael Kilpatrick, deputy director of force health protection and readiness programs with the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Health Protection and Readiness.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Jonathan Woodson asked the surgeons general of the military services to conduct a review of available scientific evidence and adverse event reports to better understand any potential relationship between DMAA and these events. Recommendations from this review will guide further decisions.

"We take the health of our service members and families very seriously and believe this action is necessary as a precautionary measure until we can learn more," said Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho, the Army surgeon general. (Courtesy of U.S. Army Medical Command public affairs.) ★

## Reconnaissance squadron switches back to original Disney patch

By Staff Sgt. Charles Zarza

The 13th Reconnaissance Squadron at Beale Air Force Base, Calif., is re-implementing its original patch created by Walt Disney Studios in 1944.

"The uniqueness of the patch is fitting for a squadron that's also unique as the Air Force Reserve Command's only Global Hawk unit," said Master Sgt. Christopher Van Slyk, unit historian.

In 1942, the 13th RS was activated as a photographic reconnaissance squadron. The unit saw combat in Europe during World War II, flying P-38 Lightnings and P-51 Mustangs. It was during this time that the first squadron patch was designed and approved.

Walt Disney Productions created approximately 1,200 designs during the war for both American and Allied military units. A special six-person team of animators was named to work on the insignia requests. Designs were also created for other organizations such as civil defense and war industries. Disney's work was done for free as a donation to the war effort.

After the war, the 13th RS returned to the United States where the unit was inactivated in 1949. For a brief period, from 1952 to 1953, the unit was reactivated as the 13th Troop Carrier Squadron flying the C-46 Commando.

The unit was reactivated again in 1987 as the 13th Military Airlift Squadron and was redesignated the 13th Airlift Squadron in 1992. During this period, the squadron flew C-12 Hurons and C-141 Starlifters. After 23 years in the airlift business, the 13th was deactivated once again in 2000.

In 2005, the 13th RS was reactivated to fly the RQ-4 Global Hawk unmanned aircraft. Having returned to its original intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission, the squadron decided to pay homage to its roots by reverting to the original squadron patch.

Air Force Instruction 84-105, Organizational Lineage, Honors and History, allows an organization to return to its historical unit emblem, generally the oldest registered emblem of the unit.

The historical unit patch of the 13th RS required special permission, however, to exceed the maximum six colors allowed by



current Air Force policy. Since the 1944 emblem is a copyrighted Disney design, no design changes could be made, including color.

"Squadron members are excited about going back to the heritage patch," Van Slyk said. "They think the one-of-a-kind Walt Disney production aspect is cool. The style of the cat on the original emblem is really feisty, and they like that, too."

According to Van Slyk, Air Force Reserve Command has approved the request to return to the original design, including the proposed motto, "Lucky Thirteen." The final step is to submit the package to the Army Institute of Heraldry for a formal rendering.

Once that final hurdle is cleared, squadron members will be able to sport the emblem on their uniforms.

"History and traditions are important aspects of the military," said Lt. Col. David Lineback, 13th RS commander. "The patches we all wear on our uniforms are significant reminders of our heritage. The 13th RS will wear this patch with pride." ★

(Zarza is the 940th Wing historian at Beale AFB.)

# It's Your Money

By Ralph Lunt

## The Simple Truth

For years now, I've opined about serious and important financial decisions involving insurance, the Thrift Savings Plan, Roth individual retirement accounts, wills and investment diversification.



That said, I recently had a young, dedicated troop in my office who was simply financially frustrated. He wanted both the increased responsibility and pay that come with promotion. And he, respectfully, wanted it now. Sound familiar?

I'll bet this drive for more fits and still applies to pretty much everyone reading this, no matter what your rank. In the role as the "old man" in this conversation, I took full advantage of my ability to lean back in my chair and in my wisest voice ask, "What would you do with more money?"

"Sir, are you serious? Lots of stuff," he said.

I smiled, knowing my answer wouldn't have been anything different 25 years ago. Then, I went on to explain to him this simple truth, no matter your income: It's not what you make, it's what you keep!

Sure, this approach sounds easy, simplistic and totally void of any "secret" about getting rich and famous. However, if it's so easy, maybe you can tell me why the Department of Defense spends millions of dollars each year on financial education programs for troops up to their eyeballs in debt?

I ask and challenge you to live the truth! Go ahead, have money left over every month. I dare you! Be the money miser with no debt, a six-month emergency fund and investments to boot. I know you can do this. Prove me right and make 2012 the year you go without — while living the truth. ★

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

# You and the VA

## Organization has lots to offer America's veterans

*(Editor's note: The Department of Veterans Affairs offers veterans — both active duty and reserve component — a wide variety of programs, services and benefits. The following information, provided by the VA communications office, is offered to give Air Force Reservists an idea of all of the different types of assistance that is available. For more detailed information or to determine your individual eligibility for VA programs, services and benefits, contact your local VA office or visit the agency's website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). A list of toll-free telephone numbers is available online at [https://iris.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1703](https://iris.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1703).)*

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides three distinct services: health care, benefits such as educational assistance and home loans, and burial and memorial benefits. To deliver these services most effectively, the department is divided into three "houses" or administrations: the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration and the National Cemetery Administration. To learn more about the benefits and services provided by each of these, go online to [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) and click on the "Veteran Services" link.

### Veterans Health Administration

VA's health-care system includes 152 medical centers, with at least one being located in every state, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. VA operates more than 1,600 sites of care, including 965 outpatient clinics, 133 community living centers and 293 veteran centers. VA health-care facilities provide a broad spectrum of medical, surgical and rehabilitative care.

The Veterans Health Administration employs 244,000 people, including 20,000 physicians and 53,000 nurses. In 2010, VHA facilities provided treatment to approximately 6 million patients, including a steadily growing number of women veterans.

Health-care services available from VHA include the following:

- \* Primary care
- \* Hospital and community living center care
- \* Dental care
- \* Pharmacy and prescriptions
- \* Mental health care (counseling, addiction therapy, post-traumatic stress disorder treatment and more)
- \* Sexual trauma counseling
- \* Readjustment counseling
- \* Alcohol and drug dependency treatment
- \* Prosthetic services



Health-care services available from the Veterans Health Administration include pharmacy and prescriptions.

- \* Specialized health care for women veterans
- \* Outreach programs for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness
- \* Medical evaluation for military service exposure, including Gulf War-specific exposures
- \* Agent Orange, ionizing radiation and certain other environmental hazards.

### VA Liaisons for Health Care

Key components of transitioning injured and ill service members are the VA liaisons for health care, either licensed social workers or registered nurses, strategically placed in military treatment facilities with concentrations of recovering service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Having started with one VA liaison at two military treatment facilities, VA now has 33 liaisons for health care stationed at 18 military treatment facilities to transition severely ill and injured service members from the Department of Defense to the VA system of care. VA liaisons facilitate the transfer of service members from the military treatment facility to a VA health-care facility closest to their home or most appropriate location for the specialized services their medical condition requires.

Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom service members who have questions about VA benefits or need assistance in filing a VA claim or accessing services can contact the nearest VA office or call 1-866-606-8216.

### Care Management Teams

Each VA medical center has a highly experienced and specially trained care management team to coordinate care and services for veterans injured in Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn, as well as those returning from combat theaters needing additional support as they reintegrate into the community. OEF/OIF/OND case managers are experts at identifying and accessing resources within their health-care system as well as in the local community to help veterans recover from their injuries and readjust to civilian life.

### Readjustment Counseling

Since 1979, VA's Readjustment Counseling Service has operated veteran centers, which provide psychological counseling, community outreach, case management and referral activities, and supportive social services to veterans and family members. In addition, the centers provide trauma counseling to veterans who were sexually assaulted or harassed while on active duty and bereavement counseling to the families of service members who die on active duty.

Since the first veteran center opened, more than 2 million vet-

erans have been helped. Every year, veteran centers serve more than 130,000 veterans and accommodate more than a million visits by veterans and family members.

Vet centers are open to any veteran who served in the military in a combat theater during wartime or anywhere during a period of armed hostilities.

### Women Veterans

To meet the needs of the growing population of women veterans, VA is expanding women's services and making these services more convenient and easier to access. Today, nearly one out of every 14 enrollees is female. In the next 15 years, the VA expects one in every nine enrollees to be female.

Indeed, the number of female veterans using VA health care has doubled in the past decade, from 160,000 in 2000 to 315,000 in 2010. And based on the upward trend of women in all branches of service, coupled with the drawdown of forces under way, the number of women using VA health care will keep climbing.

Women veterans — and their families — have made tremendous sacrifices. They deserve the very best in support and services this nation can offer. Across the country, VA has been pushing hard to offer new and improved services for women veterans. For example, it has hired full-time women veteran program managers for each VA medical center across the country. Their job is to coordinate health care for women veterans.

### Health Benefits Website

VHA's Health Eligibility Center recently redesigned its health benefits website. The site, which is located at [www.va.gov/healthbenefits](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits), is more user-friendly and easier to navigate than the previous version.

The updated site provides timely information for veterans, family members, caregivers and other beneficiaries to learn about eligibility, enrollment, access, applicable co-pays and health benefits offered by VA. Features of the new site include:

- \* Simple, easy instructions on how to obtain and access health benefits
- \* Organized informational flow
- \* Health benefits package and priority group information
- \* Income threshold determination calculator

### Veterans Benefits Administration

The Veterans Benefits Administration administers a variety of benefits and services that provide financial, educational and other forms of assistance to veterans, their dependents and survivors. Major benefits include veterans' compensation, veterans' pension, survivors' benefits, rehabilitation and employment assistance, education assistance, home loan guaranties, and life insurance coverage.

VA benefits and services are not necessarily limited to veterans. Those who are still in the military may be entitled to a variety of VA benefits. Following are a few examples:

### Life Insurance

Service members are eligible for up to a maximum of \$400,000 in life insurance under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance. Spousal coverage is available up to a maximum of



The VA offers a wide variety of counseling services to qualified veterans.

\$100,000, while children are automatically covered for \$10,000 at no cost. Any member of the uniformed services covered by SGLI is eligible for a traumatic injury protection rider that provides payments between \$25,000 and \$100,000 to members who have a traumatic injury and suffer losses such as amputations, blindness or paraplegia.

In November 2011, VA announced that the maximum amount of veterans' mortgage life insurance increased from \$90,000 to \$150,000 under the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010. Effective Jan. 1, maximum coverage increased again, from \$150,000 to \$200,000.

Veterans' mortgage life insurance is issued to those severely disabled veterans and service members who have received grants for specially adapted housing from VA. These grants are issued to veterans and service members whose movement or vision is substantially impaired because of their disabilities. For more information about VA's insurance program or other VA benefits, go to [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or call 1-800-827-1000.

### Education Benefits

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for veterans with at least 90 days of aggregate service or 30 days of continuous service, if discharged for a service-connected disability, after September 10, 2001. The Post-9/11 GI Bill assists veterans by providing tuition and fee payment directly to the educational institution, a monthly housing allowance to offset living expenses, and up to \$1,000 a year for books and supplies.

Service members may transfer entitlement to a spouse and/or children after serving a minimum of six years and agreeing to serve four more. Non-college degree training including vocational/trade training, on-the-job training and apprenticeships are also eligible for reimbursement. The Gunnery Sergeant John D. Fry Scholarship also provides education benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill to dependent children of service members who were killed in the line of duty after September 10, 2001.

Educational assistance is also available to active-duty and reserve component members through the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty program, MGIB-Selected Reserve program and the Reserve Educational Assistance Program. MGIB-AD requires service members to contribute \$1,200 to the program, while those enrolled in MGIB-SR must be in an active drilling status to receive the benefit. Both programs pay a monthly benefit to the individual based on the number of hours he or she is enrolled in school.

Visit the GI Bill website at <http://www.gibill.va.gov> for detailed information.

### Home Loan Benefits

People are eligible for a VA home loan guaranty after serving on continuous active duty for 90 days.

### Survivor Benefits

As one of VA's most recent additions, the Office of Survivors Assistance serves as a resource regarding all benefits and services furnished by VA to survivors and dependents of deceased veterans and members of the armed forces. More information about OSA is available by visiting [www.va.gov/survivors/](http://www.va.gov/survivors/) or calling 1-202-461-1077.

### Filing for Benefits Prior to Separation

Service members may file disability claims prior to separation from active or full-time duty through the Benefits Delivery at Discharge or Quick Start programs.

Service members may file claims for disability compensation, pension, vocational rehabilitation, automobile allowance and special adapted housing prior to separation.

VA employees will assist in the filing and preparation of the claim as well as adjudicate the claim as quickly as possible after separation. Additionally, VA offers counseling and claims assistance to separating service members throughout the United States and around the world through the Transition Assistance Program and Disabled Transition Assistance Program.

### eBenefits

The eBenefits portal ([www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)) is a joint DOD and VA service that provides resources and self-service capabilities to service members, veterans, their families and caregivers with a single secure sign on. Using the portal, Reservists and National Guard members can access Tricare online, update their civilian employer information, transfer their Post-9/11 GI Bill entitlement to eligible dependents and review their Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance elections. Other portal features include the ability to download the DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, check the status of a disability compensation claim or appeal, view payments, generate letters that verify civil service preference, update direct deposit information for certain benefits, and obtain a VA guaranteed home loan Certificate of Eligibility.

### National Cemetery Administration

The National Cemetery Administration honors veterans with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice.

Burial in a national cemetery is open to all members of the armed forces and veterans who have met minimum active-duty service requirements and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Spouses, widows or widowers, minor children and, under certain conditions, unmarried adult children with disabilities may also be eligible for burial. Eligible family members may be buried even if they die before the veteran.

Members of the reserve components of the armed forces who



**Educational assistance is available through the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the Montgomery GI Bill.**

die while on active duty or while performing training duty, or were eligible for retired pay, may also be eligible for burial.

VA will provide, at no cost to the veteran's family, a gravesite, headstone or marker, Presidential Memorial Certificate, U.S. flag and perpetual care of the gravesite. Fees for services provided by funeral directors and other related costs must be paid for by the veteran's family.

The National Cemetery Administration currently maintains more than 3.1 million gravesites at 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, as well as in 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites.

Upon request and at no charge to the applicant, VA will provide a headstone, marker or medallion for the grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any private cemetery in the world. For deaths occurring before Nov. 1, 1990, VA may furnish a headstone or marker only for graves that are not marked with a private headstone.

The VA provides a medallion, by request, to be affixed to an existing privately purchased headstone or marker to signify the deceased's status as a veteran. This device is furnished in lieu of a traditional government headstone or grave marker for those veterans whose death occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. The medallion is available in three sizes: 5 inches, 3 inches and 1.5 inches. Each medallion is inscribed with the word "VETERAN" across the top and the branch of service at the bottom.

VA estimates that 651,000 veterans in the U.S. and Puerto Rico died in 2010. Forty-two percent of those deceased veterans were either buried in a national or state veterans' cemetery or received a VA-furnished headstone, marker or medallion in a private cemetery.

In the midst of the largest expansion since the Civil War, VA has established 17 new national cemeteries in 13 states since 1997. In addition, VA has awarded grants totaling more than \$483 million to establish, expand or improve 82 state cemeteries in 39 states, Guam and Saipan, with nine under construction.

### Other Programs, Services and Benefits

The Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Labor re-launched a new and improved website for wounded warriors in February 2010 — the National Resource Directory. This directory ([www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov](http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov)) provides access to thousands of services and resources at the national, state and

local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. The NRD is a comprehensive online tool available nationwide for wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, and their families.

At any given time, VA has thousands of jobs posted that are only open to veterans and other status candidates. To search for a job with VA, go to the organization's recruitment website at [www.va.gov/jobs](http://www.va.gov/jobs). You can also search and apply for VA jobs at [www.vacareers.va.gov](http://www.vacareers.va.gov).

To receive hands-on assistance with landing a job at VA, visit the Veterans Employment Coordination Service website at [www.va.gov/VECS](http://www.va.gov/VECS)

VA's newest hiring program is called VA for Vets ([www.VAforVets.va.gov](http://www.VAforVets.va.gov)). Launched on Veterans Day, VA for Vets is a program that facilitates the reintegration, retention and hiring of veteran employees at VA. It offers career-search tools for veterans seeking employment at VA, career development services for VA's current veteran employees, and coaching and reintegration support for military service members.

VA for Vets is high-tech because it leverages the best of existing technology to help veterans translate their military skills and experience to the civilian job market, take online skills assessments, build a federal resume and apply for a job at VA. It offers coaches who provide guidance and counseling to veteran applicants and military service members throughout their entire employment lifecycle.

Veterans now have on-demand access and can download official data about their military training and experience, which can be used to help them find jobs and continue their careers. Their service data can be uploaded to job search and networking sites to help identify employment opportunities. Effective Dec. 3, veterans can use VA's online My HealtheVet Personal Health Record ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)) to see official information about their military service, including deployment data, in-uniform experience, and military occupational specialty codes that define the types of work performed and skills learned during their tour of duty.

With access to key portions of the DOD military service information, eligible veterans who are VA patients with a My HealtheVet account can download that information to their personal computers using the updated VA Blue Button function. Veterans can get access to military service information through My HealtheVet by enrolling for care in a VA health-care facility or community outpatient clinic, registering for a My HealtheVet account, and completing a one-time identity-verification process to help assure data privacy.

In fiscal year 2011, VA spent approximately \$3.4 billion to provide health care to homeless veterans and \$800 million in specialized homeless programs. According to a supplemental report to the 2010 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, about 76,000 veterans are homeless on a typical night, and about 144,000 spend at least one night a year in a homeless shelter.

Recently, VA has transformed its efforts in the fight against homelessness. It is changing its focus from temporary, shelter-based services and focusing more on prevention, employment, permanent housing, and providing help to veterans, as well as families, at risk of becoming homeless.

As part of its drive to end homelessness among veterans by 2015, VA has launched a nationwide outreach initiative known as Make the Call. Since March 2010, VA has offered a toll-free telephone number, staffed around the clock by trained professionals, to help veterans who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness, as well as their families. The number to the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans is 1-877-424-3838.

More information about VA's programs for homeless veterans, at-risk veterans and their families is available at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless).

VA operates a 24/7 Veterans Crisis Line. Veterans, active-duty military personnel and reserve component members can call the national suicide prevention hotline number, 1-800-273-TALK, and then push "1" to reach a trained VA professional who can deal with any immediate crisis. More than half a million people have called the Crisis Line since it was established in 2007.

VA has long recognized the crucial role that family caregivers play in helping veterans recover from injury and illness and in providing for their daily care at home, surrounded by those they love. VA values the sacrifices caregivers make to enable veterans to remain at home.

On Feb. 1, 2011, the National VA Caregiver Support Program, Care Management and Social Work Service and Office of Patient Care Services launched a new toll-free National VA Caregiver Support Line. The National VA Caregiver Support Line serves as an important resource for caregivers, veterans and community members associated with caring for veterans. The support line is staffed by licensed independent social workers who receive extensive training and education to provide the highest quality of care to callers.

Since its opening, the National Caregiver Support Line has responded to more than 22,000 calls and has connected more than 7,500 callers to the caregiver support coordinator at their local VA facility.

To reach the VA Caregiver Support Line, call toll free 1-855-260-3274. Operating hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. (EST) and Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (EST).

### Don't Delay: Enroll With VA

It's important to remember one thing: If you've already been discharged or if you've separated from active duty and are now back on reserve status, you can't get VA health-care services and certain other benefits unless you enroll. You can get enrollment information and assistance at any Veterans Service Center or at any VA medical center or clinic.

Veterans will find it easier and faster to apply for health-care benefits now that VA has enhanced and streamlined its online Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits. This revised online application now features a chat function that allows veterans to receive live assistance while they are filling out the form.

You may complete or download the 10-10EZ form at the VA health eligibility website at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez).

Veterans may also contact VA at 1-877-222-8387, visit the VA health eligibility website at <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits> or apply for health-care benefits at any VA medical center at <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp> with the help of a VA health-care eligibility specialist. ★

# THE MANAGEMENT INTERNAL CONTROL TOOLSET

Take a closer look at the program that is helping AFRC improve compliance, productivity, efficiency and communication

By Maj. Heather Morgenstern

In 2009, Air Force Reserve Command implemented an automated program designed to give people a way to manage the organization's valuable resources more efficiently. Since that time, use of the Management Internal Control Toolset has grown tremendously as it has continuously developed. And there are some big changes for the program on the horizon.

MICT assists organizations in their quest to boost unit health and performance by improving compliance, productivity, efficiency and communication. The information in MICT assists leaders with fact-based resource allocation and decision-making by identifying process problems and shortfalls in recorded deficiencies.

Using MICT to identify where subordinates are making positive changes by resolving deficiencies they identify themselves can be a valuable tool for leadership. But leaders must embrace the responsibility for creating a "culture of compliance" at their unit.

"A key component for fitting unit self-assessment into the greater Air Force goal of continuous improvement and 'smart operations' is fostering a culture of compliance throughout all levels of the enterprise," said Lt. Col. Lisa Craig, self-inspection program functional manager in Air Force Reserve Command's inspector general office. "Most units are fully embracing this cultural shift, opening their books and sharing information across the spectrum."

In order for MICT to produce meaningful information for leadership, those people who are responsible for administering checklists must answer compliance questions honestly, Craig said. Self-identification and resolution of deficiencies should be rewarded by leadership. The goal is for assessors to answer questions honestly and accurately, without fear of punishment for finding a deficiency.

"Gone are the days of fearing the wrist-slapping IG or hiding deficiencies in order to get a good 'score' on an inspection," Craig said. "Units now focus on self-identifying deficiencies, applying the right resources and corrective actions, and focusing on mission accomplishment. Inspections can move to validate unit-identified findings and mission successes."

It is important for units to understand that AFRC inspectors do not have access to the information in MICT, unless they are



(Left to right) Frank Valerio, Bryan Walde, Thomas Noel and Jerry Harrison work development and customer support issues for the Management Internal Control Toolset in the inspector general's office at Air Force Reserve Command headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

given access by unit leadership. Craig said it is the IG's intent that formal compliance inspectors conduct an independent assessment of a unit. Seeing a self-assessment may taint an inspector's evaluation.

In addition, units have the option of allowing outsiders access to their self-inspection information.

One of the changes on the way for MICT involves virtual inspections. This involves conducting parts of an inspection using online tools, without having to physically go to the unit being inspected. Craig said virtual inspections could reduce the overall inspection footprint if supporting documentation is captured while conducting a self-inspection.

Inspectors can use MICT to determine compliance by reviewing documentation or proof of compliance associated with specific checklist items. For example, if a checklist item asks if quarterly meetings were held on a particular topic, the checklist assessor could attach or link the dated and signed meeting minutes to the checklist item.

Virtual inspections were initially tested during the May 2011 compliance inspection event at the 349th Air Mobility Wing at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., and further refined during the October comprehensive unit inspection at the 482nd Fighter Wing, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla.

Inspectors conducting a virtual inspection are only able to see the documents that are provided for their review. They do not see if units assess themselves as compliant, nor do they see any related deficiency information in MICT. Inspectors only see the supporting documents, enabling a determination of compliance independently.

Brig. Gen. Derek Rydholm, AFRC inspector general, said he expects virtual inspections to be a win-win for the unit and the IG.

"With limited resources and increased expectations, managing the work load at the unit level is more challenging than ever," said Rydholm, who in mid-February is scheduled to become director of air, space and information operations at AFRC headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. "We are sensitive to this issue and looked for better ways to conduct our inspections when we realized the impact they were having on our units. Therefore, we set about to evolve our program, look-

ing for ways to inspect in a less obstructive manner that will benefit both the unit and the inspectors.

"Because of the virtual work that can now be done in the days prior to our arrival, an inspector's time with that unit can be more focused and efficient, the goal being less boots-on-ground time."

The AFRC IG office is seeing units use MICT in other ways to foster a culture of compliance. For example, one wing is using a deficiency report pulled from MICT to conduct a regular wing-level status of deficiencies meeting. Wing functional program owners and squadron commanders attend and are held accountable for the status of deficiency closure.

"Our total force and associated unit structure was devised to capitalize on efficiencies," Craig said. "Through its inherent information-sharing capabilities, MICT gives these units and commanders one more tool in their toolbox to cooperate and make the most of these relationships."

In another example of finding innovative ways to use MICT, several units are using the system as an electronic continuity book. The ability to load or link documents to checklist items allows users the flexibility to put as much supporting documentation into the tool as they want. The result can be a thorough description of activities where a newly assigned Airman conducting a checklist assessment can find all the background he needs to start running a program in the tool. One unit that is doing this is the 914th Airlift Wing at Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, N.Y.

A third example involves the 944th Fighter Wing at Luke AFB, Ariz., where process managers are using MICT to conduct Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century events on deficiencies. A complex deficiency is an ideal topic for an AFSO21 event. Process managers are uniquely equipped to identify deficiencies, as they are the compliance and AFSO21 subject matter experts at their organization.

The AFRC inspector general ensures units that need MICT training receive it.

"We provide administrator training at Robins AFB every month, and we also send our trainers out into the field on a regular basis," said Lt. Col. Rebecca Groover, MICT customer support director. "They train the unit administrators, who are then expected to train the rest of their folks. Since we are such a small team, this 'train the trainer' concept allows us to efficiently and effectively train the field with minimal resources."

In addition to the monthly MICT unit administrator classes, the IG just added functional checklist manager training. This training is done once a month, also at Robins AFB. The new

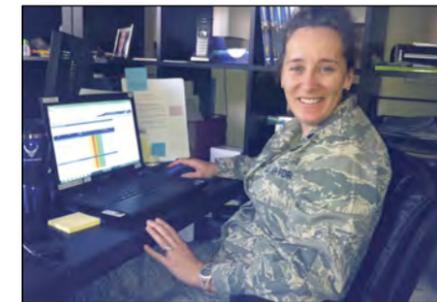


classes teach checklist owners how to load and manage checklists in MICT. Individuals can sign up for the training sessions at the MICT customer support community of practice site at <https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/community/views/home.aspx?Filter=25432>. Training materials are also available on the site.

In addition to the new training, there are a few other new, high-interest items happening with the AFRC MICT program. MICT is currently shifting its focus from the unit-level user to

the functional checklist manager community in an effort to bring that community into the tool.

"The next major MICT release is focused around features that make it easier for all Headquarters Air Force and major command-level checklist managers to maintain checklists, with the least amount of impact to the unit-level user," said Aaron Carta, MICT software architect. "These improvements include reducing checklist and question redundancy, support for long-term trending, and allowing functionals to monitor the unit's self-assessment of



"Gone are the days of fearing the wrist-slapping IG or hiding deficiencies in order to get a good 'score' on an inspection," according to Lt. Col. Lisa Craig, self-inspection program functional manager in the IG's office.

their programs. We are also upgrading to new web technologies that will allow us to keep our current easy-to-use design, while dramatically improving the performance and usability of the MICT interface."

Some big changes are occurring with ownership of MICT. The AFRC MICT program will be transitioning to an Air Force MICT program throughout fiscal year 2012. AFRC, Air Force Materiel Command and the Air Force Inspection Agency are working closely together to transition the program to the Air Force level. Once the transition occurs, AFIA will represent the user requirements as the lead command for the program, and AFMC will conduct program management.

"Eventually AFRC will have a seat at the MICT requirements table just like every other MAJCOM," Rydholm said. "The AFRC MICT representative will collect and prioritize the command's MICT requirements to present at the Air Force level for consideration. It will be a big switch for us, but that is how an Air Force-level program should be run." ★

(Morgenstern is MICT program manager in the inspector general's office at HQ AFRC.)

# HERITAGE HALL

Headquarters exhibit brings Air Force Reserve history to life

Story by Don Boyd, photos by Phil Rhodes

**W**alking through the Air Force Reserve Command headquarters building at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., is now like taking a walk through Air Force Reserve history.

On Dec. 15, Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner Jr., AFRC commander, cut a ribbon to officially open the AFRC Heritage Hall. The ceremony marked the completion of the design and development of the historical exhibit that includes artifacts and artwork depicting the heritage of the Air Force Reserve.

In his opening remarks, Stenner emphasized the importance of understanding Air Force Reserve history.

"Air Force Reservists have served with honor and courage and have a distinguished and proud history," he said.

Among the visitors who attended the Heritage Hall opening ceremony were retired Maj. Gen. Cornelius Nugteren, a former commander of the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center at Robins AFB; retired Maj. Gen. Hanferd Moen, former director of air, space and information operations for AFRC; retired Brig. Gen. Richard Severson, former AFRC assistant vice commander; Col. Richard Folks, vice com-



Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner Jr., commander of Air Force Reserve Command, unveils the first of several exhibits during the inauguration of the AFRC Heritage Hall in the command headquarters building on Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

mander of the 689th Combat Communications Wing at Robins; and Georgia State Rep. Buddy Hardin. A short reception fol-

lowed the ribbon-cutting ceremony, and guests had the opportunity to view the displays and artwork.

Two years ago, Stenner chartered the Historical Services Directorate to establish the AFRC Heritage Hall.

"This is one of the really few heritage halls sanctioned by the Air Force," he said.

The Historical Services Directorate will serve as the command's functional manager and provide oversight for the collection, which is officially a historical holding that is part of the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.

Covering Air Force Reserve history from 1916 to the present, the Air Force Reserve Command Heritage Hall collection is located in three separate areas of the headquarters building and can be rotated on a regular basis. Artwork on loan from the Air Force Art Program represents Air Force Reserve heritage from

the Korean War to the post-Vietnam era. The AFRC art collection will also be rotated to present a variety of historical artwork stressing the accomplishments of Reserve Airmen and missions.

In describing the collection of artifacts, Stenner said, "They all have meaning; there are real people behind them." Visitors come face-to-face with the people and events that portray the heritage of the Air Force Reserve.

Represented in the collection is a World War II bomber jacket worn by an Airman of the 506th Squadron of the 44th Bombardment Group, which is now the 44th Fighter Group at Holloman AFB, N.M. Other artifacts include several uniform items from different periods of Air Force Reserve history. Medal ribbons that belonged to Air Force Reservist Lt. Col. Robert H. Morris, who was recalled to active duty and became a fighter ace, are also on display.

A plaque signed by former prisoners of war collected on their "Freedom Flight" from Vietnam during Operation Homecoming is displayed to highlight the broad scope of missions performed by Air Force Reserve members during the Southeast Asia experience.

One signatory of the plaque was Capt. Robert G. Certain, who served as a B-52 navigator and was shot down and captured on the first day of Operation Linebacker II. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and later served as an Air Force Reserve chaplain at the Air Force Academy.

A DH-4 propeller signifies the service of Reserve aviators in World War I and the interwar years when Reservists had to bum active-duty airplanes and fly on the weekends to maintain currency.

Stenner said each artifact in the Heritage Hall represents the resiliency and professionalism of "remarkable Air Force Reserve heroes."

"This is just a start," he said.

After the ribbon cutting and the unveiling of the displays, visitors and staff viewed the artifacts and artwork. Many guests voiced great appreciation for the historical significance and informative nature of each display. It was both a celebratory and solemn moment as they remembered the service and accomplishments of those who served in the past.

Current and former Air Force Reservists who are interested in permanently donating artifacts relating to significant events or accomplishments as gifts to the National Museum of the United States Air Force may contact Betty Kennedy, director of historical services, at 478-327-1481. ★

(Boyd serves as AFRC senior historian at Robins AFB, while Rhodes works in the HQ AFRC public affairs office.)



"Evading the Missile" by Jack Lutzow

## Artwork highlights Reserve humanitarian, combat operations

**T**he Air Force Reserve Command Heritage Hall features a collection from the Air Force Art Program depicting a timeline of Air Force Reserve humanitarian and combat operations from the Korean War through the Global War on Terrorism.

Additional artwork is presented alongside displays that coincide with the various time periods.

Notable works of art include Jack Lutzow's "Evading the Missile" that illustrates the 711th Special Operations Squadron's MC-130 highest risk mission — seizure of Maqar-al-Tharthar Palace — on April 2, 2003, inside Iraq. Lutzow's painting received the Maj. Gen. Tom E. Marchbanks Jr. Memorial Award. "Peak Performance" by William Lacey is a tribute to the Air Force Reserve rescue mission and portrays the 939th Rescue Wing. David Rose's "Baby Lift" and Neil Boyle's depiction of an air rescue portrays Air Force Reserve operations in Vietnam.

More than 70 pieces of Air Force Reserve specific art comprise the AFRC Heritage Hall artwork display, which is on loan from the Air Force Art Program.



"Peak Performance" by William Lacey



Lt. Col. Harold Linnean looks at the World War II bomber jacket worn by an Airman with the 506th Squadron of the 44th Bombardment Group, which is now the 44th Fighter Group, an Air Force Reserve unit at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M.



# Fueling the Total Force

Fuels specialists work behind the scenes to keep aircraft flying

By Gene Van Deventer

**W**hile the pilots and aircrews who fly the daily missions carrying out Air Force Reserve Command's wartime operations and steady-state requirements garner a lot of the headlines, an unsung group of combat support Airmen on the ground work hard behind the scenes to make all of their accomplishments possible.

Throughout good weather and bad, in all kinds of environments and conditions, AFRC's cadre of fuels specialists safely, professionally and enthusiastically top off thousands of aircraft each year. In 2011, they dispensed more than 55 million gallons of jet fuel, directly contributing to the mission of flying, fighting and winning.

Once organizationally structured under supply squadrons, today fuels specialists are assigned to logistics readiness squadrons under the auspices of mission support groups. Airmen enter the career field by attending a six-week apprentice course at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. Here future fuels specialists acquire and develop skills necessary to perform duties in receipt, storage, transfer, issue, and quality control/inspection of petroleum, ground fuel and cryogenic products. Fuels specialists learn all the intricacies associated with static electricity, proper grounding/bonding techniques, R-11/12 fuel truck operation/maintenance and petroleum product volatility.

Handling combustible liquids is definitely a risky business. When the jet engine was first developed, early fuel supplies consisted mainly of aviation gasoline fuel. Variations of the fuel supply were created to provide the most efficient products for specific engines. With the advancement of high-altitude aerial flight and the sophistication of advanced engine hardware, kerosene-based fuel was supplemented with special additives to ensure its ability to burn sufficiently down to temperatures as low as minus 60 degrees Celsius.

During the 1940s, petroleum products went through a metamorphosis as jet petroleum advanced from the basic JP-1 to JP-2, JP-3 and then, in the early 1950s, JP-4. Today, JP-8 is the most common fuel used by the U.S. military.

AFRC's approximately 470 fuels professionals, located at 32 installations, including 10 host operating locations, support the total force effort meeting global combatant commander requirements. The command's contract and government fuel operations support the issue of more than 60 million gallons of fuel, cryogenics, missile propellants and deicing fluids with sales exceeding a quarter billion dollars annually.

Before a single gallon of fuel is dispensed, there are many important behind-the-scenes processes that occur to ensure aircraft are safely refueled with clean, dry fuel. When handling such large quantities



AIRMAN FIST CLASS JOSHUA GREEN

**An A-10 Thunderbolt II is refueled on the flight line at Moody Air Force Base, Ga. More than 60 million gallons of fuel is dispensed annually throughout Air Force Reserve Command.**

of combustible products, quality control and safety compliance practices are strictly enforced. Every gallon of fuel in the supply chain is off-loaded and stored at a fuels storage facility and then transferred into an operational hydrant system or directly into a mobile refueling unit before final issue to an awaiting aircraft.

“When one considers more than 60 million gallons of fuel is dispensed annually throughout the command, that actually equates to the pipeline movement of more than 180 million gallons once received, transferred and issued,” said Senior Master Sgt. Steven C. George, Headquarters AFRC fuels operations manager.

Fuel expenditures are the Department of Defense’s second highest budgetary item, trailing only personnel costs. Equating to billions of dollars annually, fuel consumption requires sound accountability processes from every delivery point. In order to ensure fiscal responsibility and adequate on-hand inventory for peace and wartime fuel requirements, AFRC host operations closely monitor and maintain inventory objectives as prescribed by the Defense Logistics Agency.

At every step along the supply chain, constant quality surveillance is maintained over fuel and cryogenics before they are issued. DLA energy quality assurance representatives ensure contract suppliers meet quality fuel specifications. Once received at AFRC host locations, these products are sampled and tested by AFRC fuels specialists using laboratory equipment to ensure quality exactness. Before a single drop of fuel or other petroleum, oil and lubrication assets are inserted into an aircraft, aggressive test measures validate product compliance.

The most visible step of the fuel pipeline process, from a customer’s perspective, is when the POL operator dispenses the

product into an aircraft. Normally, the R-11 mobile refueler, with a 6,000-gallon storage capacity, is used for this task; however, some AFRC bases supporting large-sized aircraft use a hydrant fueling system. This fueling system dispenses fuels through outlets located at aircraft parking areas utilizing a system of underground pipes that transfer petroleum from nearby storage facilities directly to the flight line. Specially designed equipment is then connected to the hydrant outlet to complete the fueling process. The hydrant fueling system is ideal when servicing C-5 and KC-135 aircraft that normally require fuel loads that exceed a single R-11 storage capacity.

Air Force fuel pumping procedures and strategies have changed over the years in an effort to minimize turn-around times to get aircraft back in the air as quickly as possible. During peacetime operations, units employ “hot-pit” operations to train for combat situations. When an aircraft comes in for a hot-pit refueling, one engine continues to run while others are shut down.

“When an aircraft has to park and shut down completely to refuel, additional steps are required to regenerate the sortie,” George said. “Hot-pitting saves considerable time — perhaps one to two hours of ground time per sortie.

“In recent operations in Southwest Asia, fuels personnel have performed hot-pit operations on coalition helicopters, fighters and cargo aircraft to minimize ground times where time is of the essence.”

AFRC has also been directly involved in several cost-saving fuel initiatives. In 2009, the Air Force Petroleum Agency initiated an Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century analysis

with an overall goal to reduce aviation fuel costs. A test plan was devised whereby the Air Force would utilize commercial Jet A fuel and introduce the military specification additives at fill-stand/bulk storage facilities or, in one test case at the Air Force Reserve’s 934th Airlift Wing, Minneapolis International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minn., at the final dispensing point on the flight line.

Under this initiative, fuel additives are introduced via specially designed injectors located on the R-11 refuelers directly into awaiting aircraft. Initial assessments indicate that increasing the number of fuel suppliers and eliminating the transportation costs from far away production centers will save the Air Force nearly \$40 million a year.

“The Jet A initiative is a fantastic opportunity for the Air Force and Department of Defense,” said John Campbell, chief of the fuels management section at HQ AFRC. “We have to look at new ways to save money yet keep our focus on our ever-changing mission. The Jet A initiative is a great example of this. By opening up the competition to commercial Jet A suppliers instead of just a small segment of JP-8 suppliers, we can realize a dramatic reduction in cost, yet increase fuel availability. The Air Force is taking the lead on this conversion, and we hope the other services will follow suit.”

In 2010, AFRC responded to a request from the Alternative Fuels Certification Office at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, to provide a suitable F-16 operating location for synthetic jet fuel testing. More than 100,000 gallons of synthetic-grade aviation fuel stored at Sheppard AFB, Texas, were successfully transported to nearby Carswell Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth.

“The 301st Fighter Wing’s fuels specialists did a superb job during this challenging undertaking,” Campbell said. “They resourcefully worked around several operational limiting factors to make this effort a total success.”

AFRC fuels personnel have directly supported numerous operations around the globe. When a devastating earthquake struck the nation of Haiti in January 2010, fuels personnel assigned to Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., went straight to work refueling relief flights staged from the base. Eleven fuels spe-

cialists from the 482nd Fighter Wing were activated on orders to support the issue of 1.7 million gallons of fuel for more than 1,100 relief flights.

For the past several years, AFRC fuels personnel have also supported en route Air Mobility Command operations staged out of Bangor International Airport, Maine, one of the busiest en route air corridors in the continental United States.

In addition, AFRC Airmen have been engaged supporting ongoing overseas contingency operations.

“Command fuels personnel have been tasked in every aerospace expeditionary force cycle to virtually every contingency location around the globe,” George said.

Of particular note was a recent recognition for Senior Airman Matthew Ronan of the 512th Airlift Wing at Dover AFB, Del.

During his deployment to Southwest Asia, while assigned to the 379th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, he was personally involved in dispensing more than 5 million gallons of JP-8 jet fuel. His performance earned him the title of “Servicing King of the Rotation” and induction into the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Hall of Fame.

“Our command’s fuels professionals have been proudly and successfully fueling the total force from years past to today’s ongoing military missions,” George said. “Their professional achievements remain critical to our successful aerial flight and to the Air Force motto, ‘Aim High ... Fly, Fight and Win.’” ★

(Van Deventer is assigned to the Expeditionary Combat Support Division of the Installations and Mission Support Directorate, HQ AFRC.)



CAPT. MARNEE A. C. LOSURDO

**Senior Airman Matthew Ronan, a fuels distribution operator assigned to the 512th Airlift Wing at Dover AFB, Del., pumped 5.5 million gallons of JP-8 gas to coalition aircraft during a recent deployment, earning him the title of “Servicing King of the Rotation.”**



# From the TRICARE Advisor

Lt. Col. Alexander Alex



## Is Tricare Reserve Select Right for You and Your Family?

**T**ricare Reserve Select is a premium-based health plan available worldwide to Selected Reserve members of the Ready Reserve (and their families) who are not eligible for or enrolled in the Federal Employee Health Benefits program or currently covered under FEHB, either under their own eligibility or through a family member. Additionally, only unit Reservists or individual mobilization augmentees qualify for TRS.

work providers, the outpatient cost-share is 15 percent of the negotiated rate, while the inpatient cost-share is \$16.85 per day (\$25 minimum charge). For non-network providers, the outpatient cost-share is 20 percent of the Tricare allowable charge, and the inpatient cost-share is \$16.85 per day (\$25 minimum charge).

Monthly premiums for TRS are established annually on a calendar year basis. For 2012, the monthly premium for member-only coverage is \$54.35, while the monthly premium for member and family coverage is \$192.89.

### Overview

TRS uses Tricare Standard coverage. Beneficiaries may visit any Tricare-authorized provider, either network or non-network. Care at military treatment facilities is on a space-available basis only. With medical resources at military treatment facilities stretched thin and the priority placed on supporting active-duty members, Reservists may be better served by seeking care from a civilian provider. However, ancillary services such as pharmacy, lab or immunizations can be easily accessed.

TRS beneficiaries do not need a referral for any type of care, but some services may require prior authorization. The type of provider seen determines how much patients pay out of their pocket.

Beneficiaries who visit network providers will pay less out of their pocket than those who visit non-network providers. Also, network providers will file claims on behalf of their patients.

TRS coverage includes annual deductibles. For E-4s and below, the deductible is \$50 for an individual and \$100 for a family. For E-5s and above, the annual deductible is \$150 for an individual and \$300 for a family.

Under the plan, beneficiaries are responsible for paying a cost-share or percentage of the charge for each visit. For net-

### Purchasing Tricare Reserve Select

Purchasing TRS is a two-step process that must be completed online.

Step 1 involves qualifying. Log on to the Defense Manpower Data Center Reserve Component Purchased Tricare Application at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/trs/>. To do so requires a Department of Defense Common Access Card, Defense Accounting and Finance Service myPay account or a DOD self logon account.

In Step 2, beneficiaries purchase the plan they want. Purchases can be made at any time throughout the year. There are no open seasons. Simply fill out, print and then mail or fax a DD Form 2896-1, Reserve Component Health Coverage Request Form, to the appropriate regional contractor. Be sure to include the first month's premium payment with the form.

Here's a tip. Those who fax their application should keep a record of the fax log. Those who mail their application should consider sending it via certified mail with a signed return receipt. Occasionally, the contractor may not receive the enrollment request. The fax log or mail receipt will provide some

documented proof in the event there is a problem. Although it isn't recommended to use the benefit until confirming enrollment into TRS, there may be a reason to use the benefit under an urgent or emergency situation.

Finally, about 10 days after sending in your application, it's a good idea to call the regional contractor to confirm enrollment. If given the option, don't drop any current health-care coverage until confirming enrollment in TRS.

### Is TRS Right for You?

This is a difficult question because everyone's situation is different. The plan provides comprehensive health-care coverage for Reservists when they aren't activated. It provides flexibility, allowing beneficiaries to see any provider (network or non-network) they want. Beneficiaries don't have to change providers if they are already Tricare authorized.

If you currently have another health-care plan, compare its benefits with those offered under TRS. The Tricare website ([www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil)) will give you more information than you need to make this comparison. If you live near a military treatment facility, visit the Tricare Service Center and talk to a benefits counselor.

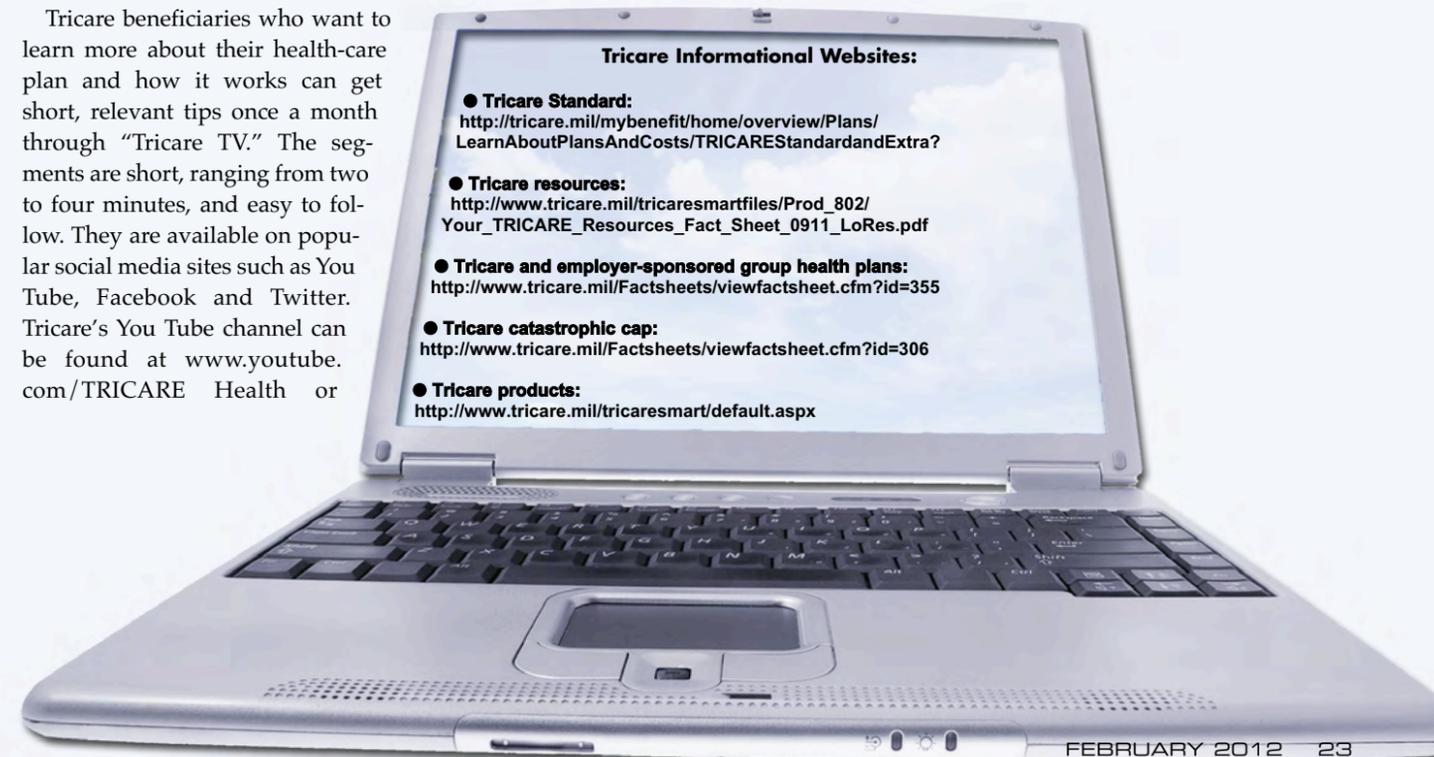
Tricare beneficiaries who want to learn more about their health-care plan and how it works can get short, relevant tips once a month through "Tricare TV." The segments are short, ranging from two to four minutes, and easy to follow. They are available on popular social media sites such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Tricare's YouTube channel can be found at [www.youtube.com/TRICARE\\_Health](http://www.youtube.com/TRICARE_Health) or



[www.tricare.mil/mediacenter](http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter). Subscribe to get e-alerts when new episodes are posted at [www.tricare.mil/subscriptions](http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions) or through the Tricare media center.

When evaluating whether TRS is the plan for you, keep one final point in mind: There is no pre-existing medical conditions clause in TRS. What does this mean to you? Civilian health insurance plans "by law" may exclude any chronic illness, disease or medical condition you had or are receiving treatment for when entering their plan (between 12 and 24 months). With TRS, you and your eligible family members are fully covered for all medical conditions beginning on day one. ★

*(Anyone who has a question regarding a benefit as it relates to a Reserve member or family beneficiary member may email the Tricare advisor at [Alexander.Alex@us.af.mil](mailto:Alexander.Alex@us.af.mil).)*



- Tricare Informational Websites:**
- **Tricare Standard:**  
<http://tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/overview/Plans/LearnAboutPlansAndCosts/TRICAREStandardandExtra?>
  - **Tricare resources:**  
[http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmartfiles/Prod\\_802/Your\\_TRICARE\\_Resources\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_0911\\_LoRes.pdf](http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmartfiles/Prod_802/Your_TRICARE_Resources_Fact_Sheet_0911_LoRes.pdf)
  - **Tricare and employer-sponsored group health plans:**  
<http://www.tricare.mil/Factsheets/viewfactsheet.cfm?id=355>
  - **Tricare catastrophic cap:**  
<http://www.tricare.mil/Factsheets/viewfactsheet.cfm?id=306>
  - **Tricare products:**  
<http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmart/default.aspx>

**ATTENTION AFR/ANG TEENS!**

**TAP INTO YOUR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL  
WHILE DISCOVERING YOUR HIDDEN STRENGTHS...**



[www.afrc.af.mil/library/4rfamilies](http://www.afrc.af.mil/library/4rfamilies)

**Classic Summit:** 17-22 Jun - Dahlenega, GA  
**Adventure Summit:** 7-12 Aug - Estes Park, CO

**EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP & ADVENTURE,  
WHILE MAKING NEW FRIENDS...**

These week long residential camps for AFR/ANG dependent teens (ages 15-18) combine high adventure activities and hands-on leadership workshops with an opportunity to meet other military teens from across the country. Sound fun? What are you waiting for? Transportation and camp costs are funded by AF! Apply today!

**Application Submissions: 16 Jan - 13 Apr 2012**



"No Federal Endorsement of Sponsor Intended"

