

# CITIZEN AIRMAN

Volume 68 No. 4

August 2016



[citamn.afrc.af.mil](http://citamn.afrc.af.mil)

*In this Issue:* **CHANGE OF COMMAND**  
*Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson passes the torch of leadership to Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller*

*The Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve*



**Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller**

## *From the Top* *Getting to Know the New Commander*

*(Editor's note: In lieu of a traditional commentary, following is a series of questions and answers designed to introduce Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller to members of the Air Force Reserve and provide a little personal information about the new Air Force Reserve Command commander and chief of Air Force Reserve.)*

**Q:** What is your hometown?

**A:** I am from the Buckeye state, and my hometown is Hilliard, Ohio, located just 13 miles northwest of Columbus. And, yes, I am an alumni of The Ohio State University.

**Q:** How long have you served in the Air Force?

**A:** As of July, I have 35 years of service in the United States Air Force.

**Q:** Why did you join the Air Force Reserve?

**A:** I joined the Air Force Reserve after 7½ years of active service so I could continue to serve as I transitioned to fly float planes for the Washington State Department of Fisheries.

**Q:** What do you like most about being a Citizen Airman?

**A:** I enjoy many aspects about being a Citizen Airman, but I cherish most the ability to serve my country while still being able to pursue my volunteer work with the community.

**Q:** What is your favorite food?

**A:** I used to own a restaurant, and it was not uncommon for me to eat shrimp pad thai and mango sticky rice more than once a week.

**Q:** What are your favorite travel destinations?

**A:** For leisure, my parents and I would sail the Caribbean, particularly the British Virgin Islands. My favorite mission trip destination was to Calcutta, India.

**Q:** Anything else you'd like to share?

**A:** I am from a big family that loves to spend time together, so family is very important to me. I believe in hard work and doing the best I can. I believe we all have gifts to give for the betterment of others. I believe in being active in our families, in our communities and in our friendships. I enjoy a smile much better than a frown, but I also get that life's challenges can weigh on us all. I believe we are all not put here to do great things but to do what we can with great compassion.

**“Our strength as an Air Force Reserve is our unique calling. As citizens, we are fully vested in our communities raising our families. We are immersed in our civilian careers, yet intimately feel the profound calling to do more.”**



Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly

## Chief's View

### Question and Answer Session with the Command Chief

*(Editor's note: In lieu of a traditional commentary, following is a series of questions and answers designed to introduce Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly to members of the Air Force Reserve and provide a little personal information about the new command chief master sergeant of Air Force Reserve Command.)*

**Q:** What advice would you give to someone who is interested in joining the Air Force Reserve?

**A:** One of the best things about the Air Force Reserve is that we all join for different reasons. Some want to serve their country, some are looking for education benefits, and some want to be part of something bigger. For me, the Air Force Reserve gave me a second chance in life — the opportunity to develop myself and get leadership experience.

**Q:** Since physical fitness is a priority, how do you stay active?

**A:** Physical fitness has always been an important aspect of my life, not only for the physical benefits but also as a great way to cope with stress and relax. I started out doing Muay Thai, a form of martial arts from Thailand. I loved this discipline because it was physically and mentally engaging. I also participated in powerlifting during my younger years. However, as I have gotten older I have shifted to long-distance running. I have a goal of running an ultra-marathon and one day competing in a Half Ironman triathlon competition, once I master swimming! Physical fitness is part of how I de-stress and cope with the challenges I face in life and has become a great outlet for me.

**Q:** What was your civilian employment when you were a part-time Citizen Airman?

**A:** I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities I have had working with Homeland Security and Customs and Border Patrol. I love my civilian job, and I am thankful my employer has given me the opportunity to pursue my Reserve career, while still serving as an agent. One of the great things about being a Reservist is being able to pursue a meaningful civilian career while still serving in the military. We bring a lot of great experience and training from our military careers into our civilian jobs and vice versa. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a great program to ensure our rights as Citizen Airmen are protected under the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act.

**Q:** What are some of your hobbies and interests?

**A:** I firmly believe in taking downtime when not at work. I love spending time watching television with my sons, which seems to always include mixed martial arts fighting and shows like "Supernatural." This is a great time for us to talk and connect. I also love reading and simply just recharging. I find there are times when I just need to relax in a cool, clean environment and enjoy silence. My hobbies and interests support the relationship with my family and my mental health.

**“For me, the Air Force Reserve gave me a second chance in life — the opportunity to develop myself and get leadership experience.”**

**Gen. David L. Goldfein Chief of Staff, United States Air Force**  
**Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller Commander, Air Force Reserve Command**  
**Col. Bruce M. Bender Director of Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command**  
**Cliff Tyler Managing Editor, Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command**  
**Adam Butterick Graphic Designer, Multimedia, Air Force Reserve Command**

*Col. Karl Schmitkons taxis a C-130H Hercules through a rainbow May 3 after completing his final scheduled flight as commander of the 440th Airlift Wing at Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina. On hand to greet him upon his return were family members and fellow Citizen Airmen from the wing. Schmitkons, who will soon be moving on to another assignment, has served a total of 32 years in the Air Force and Air Force Reserve, almost five of which have been spent with the 440th.*

*(Allison Janssen)*

*(On the cover: Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller, Air Force Reserve Command commander and chief of Air Force Reserve, conducts a press conference after her change of command ceremony July 15 at the Museum of Aviation, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. See the story on Page 10.)*

*Tech. Sgt. Stephen Schester*

Citizen Airman magazine (ISSN No. 0887-9680) is published bi-monthly by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command Office of Public Affairs for the commander of Air Force Reserve Command. Periodical postage paid at Warner Robins, Georgia, and additional mailing offices. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to the homes of all Reservists. Content is normally news articles and features developed for release to commercial media as part of the Air Force Reserve's continuing public affairs program.

Opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force Reserve. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. Readers-per-copy ratio: 4-1.

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

Or, email them to [hqafrc.pa.citizenairman@us.af.mil](mailto:hqafrc.pa.citizenairman@us.af.mil).

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

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

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## Tinker KC-135 Stratotankers First in Command to Receive Flight Deck Upgrade

The 507th Air Refueling Wing at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, is the first Air Force Reserve Command unit to have one of its KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft receive the new Block 45 upgrade.

The upgrade includes an improvement to the flight deck that provides flight crews with an updated autopilot and digital panels that eliminate analog instrument gauges by consolidating the outdated controls onto one large liquid crystal display screen.

The 465th Air Refueling Squadron took the newly upgraded jet on its first flight in April.

Four of the eight jets in the wing's fleet are scheduled to receive the upgrade by Sept. 30, according to Capt. Anthony Konakowitz, Block 45 program manager at the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Tinker AFB.

"The average upgrade takes 50 to 55 days to complete, but some aircraft have been upgraded in as few as 43 days," Konakowitz said.

Staff Sgt. Daniel Swinehart, a guidance and control technician with the 507th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, said eliminating the older technology saves maintenance hours by cutting down on troubleshooting time and provides a highly reliable system by reducing the amount of avionics components that can potentially fail.

"Rather than us trying to troubleshoot and figure out what's wrong with the system, the system is now better able to tell us exactly what's wrong with it and what we need to replace," Swinehart said. "Instead of analog gauges trying to talk with digital signals, it's all digital now, so we don't have to convert from one to the other."

Maj. Michael Waters, a pilot with the 465th ARS, said the new autopilot is comparable to what is used on commercial aircraft and should alleviate stress during flight and increase performance.

"Our flight deck workload should decrease with a more

conventional automation," Waters said, "It will just take some time to adjust to the new layout and procedural changes."

*(Tech. Sgt. Lauren Gleason, 507th ARW public affairs, Tinker AFB.)*



*Lt. Col. Eric Wilks (left) and Lt. Col. Marvin Ashbaker, pilots with the 465th Air Refueling Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, conduct pre-flight checks aboard the Air Force Reserve Command's first KC-135 Stratotanker to receive the Block 45 upgrade. The upgrade provides a digital display of engine controls, an updated autopilot, a new altimeter and software improvements, all of which will help ensure the KC-135 can perform well into the future as the workhorse of the air refueling fleet.*

*(Tech. Sgt. Lauren Gleason)*

## Air Refueling Mission Returns to Beale AFB

The 940th Wing at Beale Air Force Base, California, officially converted back to an air refueling wing and ushered in new leadership during a ceremony June 4.

Col. Craig Peters assumed command of the 940th ARW, while Col. Richard Heaslip and Col. Aaron Heick took command of the 940th Operations and Maintenance Groups, respectively.

Maj. Gen. John C. Flournoy Jr., 4th Air Force commander, officiated over the ceremony.

“To the men and women of the 940th Air Refueling Wing, what a great opportunity,” Flournoy said. “You’ve gone through significant changes over the years, but life is about change, the military is about change. It’s how we adapt to change that matters, and you never cease to amaze me.”

The 940th was a refueling wing from 1977 to 2005 when a Base Realignment and Closure Commission decision changed the unit’s mission. The last tanker left in 2008 when the 940th WG gained the RQ-4 Global Hawk high-altitude intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance mission.

During the June ceremony, the 940th officially switched back to the KC-135 Stratotanker mission, although the RQ-4 mission will still physically remain at Beale under the Air Force Reserve’s 13th Reconnaissance Squadron and active-duty’s 12th RS.

The renewed KC-135 Stratotanker mission ushers in new opportunities, as well as challenges, for the wing and its new leaders.

The tanker mission brings room for growth including a slight increase in the number of people working at Beale – from approximately 900 to an estimated 1,200 once all allotted jobs are filled and the mission is fully underway.

*(Tech. Sgt. Kenneth McCann, 940th ARW public affairs, Beale AFB.)*

## Reservist Helps Improve F-35 Tire Process

For years, the wheel shop at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, has disassembled, inspected, repaired, built and delivered reliable tires and wheels for F-16 Fighting Falcons. That level of support will remain intact as the base’s operational mission transitions to the F-35A Lightning II aircraft.

The F-35 tire change process has become more efficient thanks to an innovation devised by the shop’s Airmen, which includes three active-duty members from the 388th Fighter Wing and a Reservist from the 419th FW.

“We have been building tires for the F-16 for decades, which means that the tools and processes used to accomplish this task are proven,” said Tech. Sgt. Astolfo Mercado Cruz, the shop’s noncommissioned officer in charge. “For the F-35, things are getting started, so we have to use our hands-on knowledge and experience to ensure the

process is streamlined and efficient.”

In conjunction with the first F-35s arriving at Hill last year, the wheel shop received a new tire-changing machine — a hydraulic tool used to separate tires from rims — to be used exclusively on the Lightning. Although the tool is adequate, the shop’s Airmen immediately recognized inefficiencies.

Four workers are required to lift an F-35 wheel onto the new machine, while only one worker is needed to roll a wheel into the shop’s legacy tire-changing machine and another to operate the tool. Additionally, the new machine employs a hand-operated pump as opposed to the automatic pump used on the legacy machine.

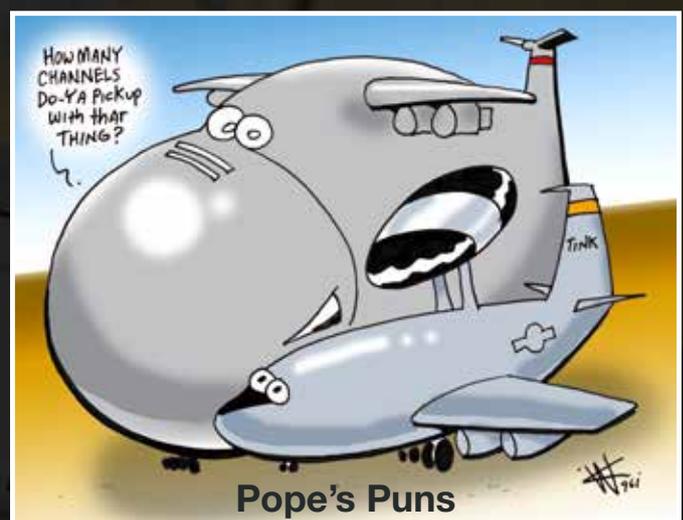
Drawing on years of experience changing F-16 tires, the shop’s Airmen felt they could make the process of changing F-35 tires better if the legacy tire-changing machine could be used. After studying the legacy machine, it was determined the tool would work with F-35 wheels if its bead breaker — a compressing component that pushes on the tire, separating it from the rim via hydraulic pressure — could be adapted for use.

After coming up with a solution, they provided their design modification proposal to the 388th Maintenance Squadron’s metals technology shop. There, Airmen fabricated a ring-shaped compressing component and the braces necessary for adapting it to the legacy tire-changing machine.

“Using the legacy machine means that we can load the F-35 tires by rolling them on instead of lifting them on as we have to do on the newer, manual machine,” Mercado Cruz said. “This saves a lot of time because only two personnel are involved, not four. By using the automated process, it takes half the time, which allows us to provide assets to the warfighter a lot quicker.”

Aircraft engineers recently verified the modified bead breaker for use on the legacy tire-changing machine, and joint technical data is being updated so that the setup can be used on all F-35 variants.

*(Todd Cromar, 75th Air Base Wing public affairs, Hill AFB)*





## Idaho Deployment Pushes F-35 to its Limits

Seven F-35A aircraft and 160 people from Hill Air Force Base, Utah, traveled to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, for two weeks in June, marking the first time Hill's operational F-35s traveled out of state for training.

The F-35A pilots and maintainers from Hill's active-duty 388th Fighter Wing and Air Force Reserve 419th FW pushed the aircraft to their limits to simulate deployed operations and ensure the Air Force's newest fighter performed as expected.

"Mountain Home is an ideal location for our first off-base exercise because it allows us to fully test the deployment capability of the unit and the aircraft while remaining close enough to Hill for home station support if needed," said Lt. Col. Curtis Pitts, commander of the 419th Operations Group, Detachment 1.

The Airmen did their best to stress their entire system, said Maj. Luke Harris, deployment project officer and F-35 pilot with the 34th Fighter Squadron. He said they focused on the number of sorties they could generate, the number of sorties they weren't able to accomplish, loading and employing weapons, and finding any unique issues with the F-35A.

The Air Force's first operational F-35A arrived at the 388th FW's 34th FS in September 2015. The 419th OG detachment is a contingent of Reserve F-35 pilots who fly in partnership with the 34th FS.

During roughly eight sorties a day, three key F-35A mission sets were tested: suppression and destruction of enemy air defenses, air interdiction, and basic close-air support to include alert launches. Each mission set is required to reach initial operational capability, Harris said.

A declaration of IOC means the Air Force has deemed the F-35A combat-capable. Right now, all indications point to the aircraft reaching IOC at Hill later this year.

"Since the aircraft's arrival last fall, there have been too many milestones to count, and we're making great progress,"

said Lt. Col. George Watkins, 34th FS commander. "The Mountain Home deployment marks another significant milestone in validating the F-35A's capabilities as we pursue IOC."

In February, Hill F-35 pilots dropped laser-guided bombs at the Utah Test and Training Range, marking the first time these weapons were employed by a combat-coded unit. In May, Hill's F-35 pilots began flying routine four-ship configurations.

In addition to its advanced stealth capability, the F-35A is designed to gather, fuse and distribute more information than any fighter in history.

The base will be home to three operational F-35 fighter squadrons with a total of 78 aircraft by the end of 2019. The 388th and 419th FWs fly and maintain the Air Force's newest fighter aircraft in a total force partnership, which capitalizes on the strength of both components.

*(Kari Tilton, 419th FW public affairs, Hill AFB)*

## Personnel Information Available Through eBenefits Website

Once military members retire or separate from duty, they often have to access information contained in their master personnel file, which includes the Defense Department Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty; the National Guard Bureau Form 22, Statement of Separation and Record of Service; and evaluation reports.

This personnel file is available through a Department of Veterans Affairs website called eBenefits. The website (<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov>) is accessible without a Common Access Card.

First-time users are required to register by clicking on the "Register" button. Users should make sure they register for the "premium" account. Once the account is established, users have continuous access to the website to retrieve information contained in their master personnel file.

Assistance is available from the eBenefits Help Desk at 1-800-983-0937.

In addition to the DD Form 214, NGB 22 and evaluation reports, the master personnel file includes anything that is in a member's Automated Records Management System or Personnel Records Display Application record. All of these documents are available via the eBenefits website.

Registration is especially important for members of the Air Force Reserve because the Air Reserve Personnel Center, located at Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado, does not provide them with documents from their personnel files.

One thing the eBenefits website does not provide access to is medical records. These are maintained through the Department of Veterans Affairs Record Management Center in St. Louis, which is available by calling 1-888-533-4558.

Reservists who have questions about their master personnel file may contact ARPC at DSN 665-0102 or commercial 210-565-0102.

*(ARPC public affairs)*

## **301st FW Successfully Conducts Major F-16 Deployment**

Under ordinary circumstances, successfully launching 18 F-16 Fighting Falcons for a deployment is a major challenge. Doing so during a major two-day air show, with more than 120,000 people in attendance, is almost beyond comprehension.

But that's exactly what happened at Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas, in late April. One member of the base's 301st Fighter Wing security team likened the accomplishment to trying to clear a pathway through a mall parking lot during a Thanksgiving Black Friday sale.

"This record-setting launch (involving aircraft from the 301st as well as the 482nd Fighter Wing from Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida), a first for the Air Force Reserve, set the stage for a successful combat deployment," said Col. John Breazeale, 301st FW commander. He said it was one of the smoothest and largest deployments in wing history.

Actually, the Reservists launched a total of 24 aircraft over the two-day period. Six of the F-16s were spares, meaning they were available to replace any of the primary Fighting Falcons that encountered serious problems that prevented them from deploying. As it turned out, the spare aircraft weren't needed.

With more than 120,000 people on base watching the U.S. Navy's Blue Angels air demonstration team perform, deploying the aircraft and personnel while maintaining operational security proved to be tricky.

"Amid the chaos of people and 35,000 cars all attempting to depart simultaneously, we had to clear and control an area sufficient for an F-16 to taxi," said Malone Smith, 301st

FW antiterrorism officer. "From a security perspective, it was picture perfect."

Despite all of the challenges involved, the aircraft deployment went off without any significant problems.

"This is the first deployment that I recall having so few issues during the launch," Breazeale said. "The fact that we launched 18 aircraft with zero maintenance issues is amazing and a testament to the hard work and dedication of the Carswell and Homestead maintenance teams."

This deployment aviation package was the largest Air Force Reserve-centric fighter tasking to date. In addition to the 301st and 482nd, two other units — the 926th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron from Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, and the 944th FW from Luke AFB, Arizona — were also involved.

Prior to the aircraft launch, more than 300 pilots and maintainers deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, which aims to maintain security and stability in the area. Freedom's Sentinel followed Operation Enduring Freedom, which officially concluded in 2014. The deployment is scheduled to last until October.

*(Capt. Candice Allen, 301st FW public affairs, NAS Fort Worth JRB.)*



*During a major two-day air show, the 301st Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas, successfully launched 18 F-16 Fighting Falcons for a deployment to Afghanistan.*

*Capt. Korey Fratini*



# MAKING HISTORY

## MILLER BECOMES FIRST FEMALE COMMANDER, CHIEF OF AIR FORCE RESERVE



*(Above) Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller's family members — her father, Theodore; brothers, Mike, Ted and Tim; and sister, Peg — were on hand for the promotion ceremony and helped pin on her third star. (Below) Goldfein, Miller and Jackson lead the crowd in singing the "Air Force Song."*



As the new leader of the Air Force Reserve, Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller plans on making a lot of trips — about one per week — to Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, home of Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, over the next four years. But none of those trips will have the historical significance of the one she made in July.

During a promotion ceremony at the base's Museum of Aviation July 15, Miller became the first female Citizen Airman to achieve the rank of lieutenant general. In addition, she became the first female chief of Air Force Reserve and first female commander of AFRC during a change of command ceremony later that same day, also at the museum.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein was on hand to preside over both of the historic ceremonies. Goldfein was sworn in as the Air Force's 21st chief of staff by Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James during a ceremony at the Pentagon July 1.

Miller assumed both the chief of Air Force Reserve and AFRC commander positions from Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, who retired. She previously served as deputy to the chief of Air Force Reserve, a position she had occupied since October 2013. Jackson had occupied the Reserve's top positions since June 2012.

Addressing the Citizen Airmen in the audience, Miller said, "Today I take the flag of the Air Force Reserve Command and, just like you, continue to answer the call to serve our great nation. Since the Gulf War, we have stood shoulder to shoulder with our active, Guard and joint partners taking the fight to the enemy. As one Air Force, we are all bound together as Airmen, citizens and Americans. As one team, we have fought harder, and your families have sacrificed more than most will ever know.

"Our strength as an Air Force Reserve is our unique calling. As citizens, we are fully vested in our communities raising our families. We are immersed in our civilian careers, yet intimately feel the profound calling to do more."

During her 26-year Air Force career, Miller said she has served in every status that a Reservist can serve.

“I have been full time, part time and even a small business owner,” she said. “I have been in your shoes and know how hard it is to balance your life as a citizen and as an Airman.”

That 26-year career almost didn’t happen. Miller said that just prior to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, she was seriously thinking about retiring from the Reserve.

“At the time, I was a successful restaurateur and felt I had a successful Air Force career as a pilot,” Miller said. “But as I watched on TV the second tower crashing down, I knew retirement was not the right answer. Four months from that day I was back flying full time again, and one year later my squadron was mobilized.”

The general said her emphasis for the next four years as AFRC commander and chief of Air Force Reserve will be to “ensure that we protect our strengths as a reserve component, that we build on our capabilities for the fight today and that we shape the force for the fight of the future.”

Miller’s chief of Air Force Reserve position requires her to work out of the Pentagon. After the change of command ceremony, the general said she plans to spend Monday and Tuesday of each week in Washington, D.C., then will travel to Robins AFB.

Goldfein said Miller was the right choice for the job.

“General Miller brings a combination of a quietly intense warrior spirit, a passion for the mission, her Airmen and their families, and a truly pure servant’s heart,” he said.

Miller is a command pilot with more than 4,800 flying hours in a variety of aircraft, including the C-141B/C Starlifter, C-5A/B Galaxy, C-40C Clipper, KC-10 Extender and C-17 Globemaster III.

She earned her Air Force commission in 1981 as a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program at The Ohio State University. During her 35-year career, Miller has commanded two wings — the 932nd Airlift Wing at Scott AFB, Illinois, and 349th Air Mobility Wing at Travis AFB, California — and held numerous staff positions at the unit, Air Staff and Joint Staff levels.

*(Staff reports)*



Miller replaced Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, who retired, as Air Force Reserve Command commander and chief of Air Force Reserve.

*(Photos by Tech. Sgt. Stephen Schester)*



*(Above) Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein passes the Air Force Reserve Command guidon to Miller as Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly, AFRC command chief, looks on. (Below) Miller answers questions from members of the media.*



# ORDER *of the* SWORD

*Enlisted force honors Jackson with induction ceremony*

Two days before Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson relinquished command of Air Force Reserve Command to Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller and retired from the Air Force, AFRC enlisted Citizen Airmen paid homage to the general by presenting him with the highest honor they can bestow on an individual.

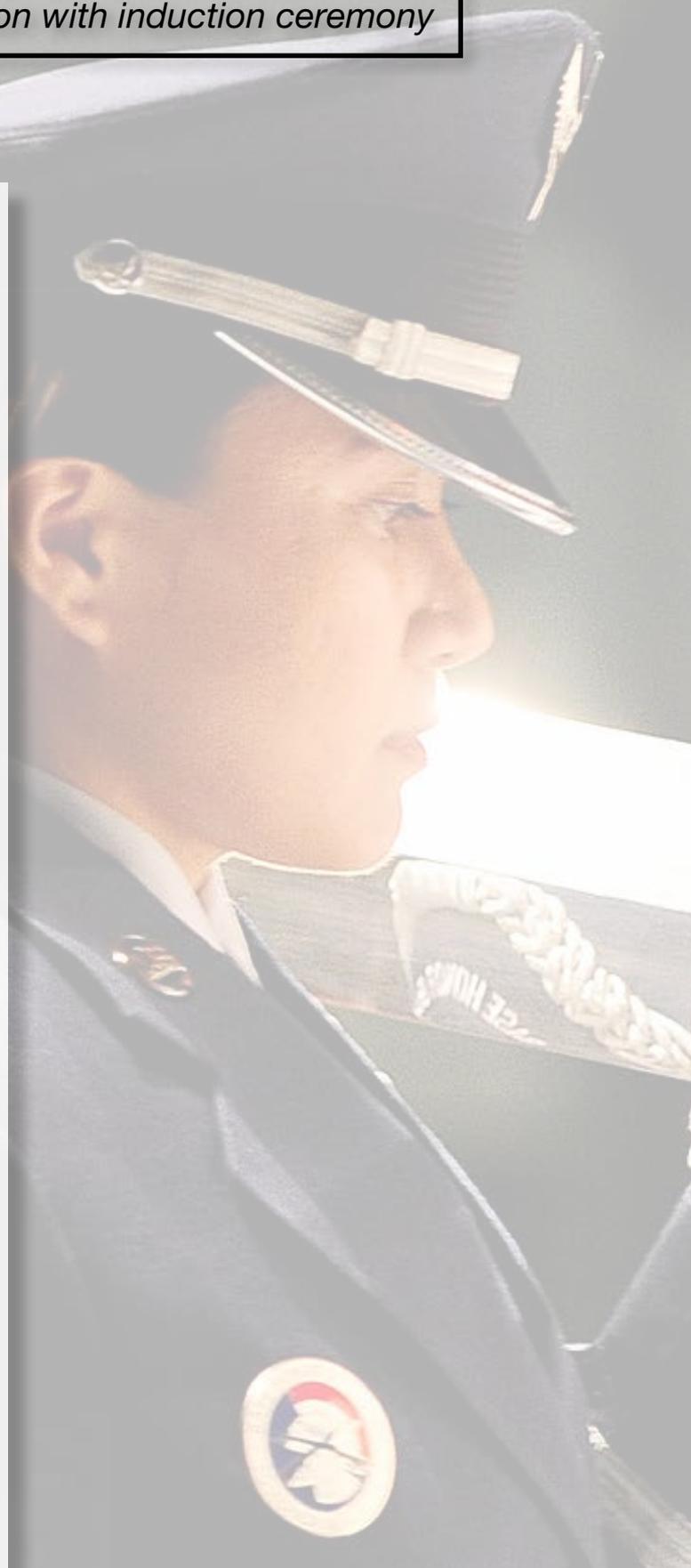
During a ceremony July 13 at the Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, the enlisted force inducted Jackson into the AFRC Order of the Sword. The general is the 16th person to receive the honor. The last person to be inducted into the AFRC Order of the Sword — Oct. 24, 2008 — was Col. Frances M. Mungavin, commander of the Air Force Reserve Recruiting Service.

In an Order of the Sword Proclamation presented by Chief Master Sgt. Ruthe Flores, command chief, Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center, Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado, members of the enlisted corps provided their justification for honoring Jackson. The proclamation stated that Jackson was “a leader among leaders who established new standards of leadership.”

“Through your dynamic leadership, your personal concern for the well-being of all Airmen and your continuous adherence to the highest standards of personal integrity, service before self and excellence in all your endeavors, you have led the enlisted corps to new and greater magnitudes of duty, honor and country,” said Flores, who served as duty sergeant of the mess during the Order of the Sword ceremony.

“Your personal and professional character, dignity and principles, accompanied by your superior performance as an unequalled spokesman for national defense, have strengthened and inspired the enlisted corps to set and maintain the highest goals for excellence,” she said. “Under your inspirational leadership, the Reserve mission has reached new heights of performance, combat readiness and devotion to a cause to which your enlisted force is willing to swear total dedication and loyalty.”

Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly, AFRC command chief who served as the ceremony’s chief master sergeant of the mess, paid special tribute to Jackson’s family — his wife, Barbara, and two children, Tyler and Kelly — for the support they’ve provided to the general, a point Jackson himself emphasized when he addressed the audience.





“Twenty-five years together with this beautiful lady (Barbara),” he said. “Every single promotion, every single star, every single award that was given to me tonight was because of her and, of course, Ty and Kelly.

“We’ve tried to do the very best we could for you – all 56,000 enlisted Airmen of the Air Force Reserve Command. And we are so honored and proud to be here this evening.”

Jackson told members of the audience to “go home and give a hug to your wife or your husband or your partner and your kids because they are the ones who let you put this uniform on every single day.”

According to Air Force Instruction 36-2824, the Air Force enlisted force established the Order of the Sword to “recognize and honor military senior officers, colonel and above, and civilian equivalents, for conspicuous and significant contributions to the welfare and prestige of the Air Force enlisted force, mission effectiveness as well as the overall military establishment.”

Chief Master Sgt. Brian Wong, 4th Air Force command chief who served as first sergeant of the mess for the ceremony, explained the program traces its history back to the Middle Ages.

“In 1522, King Gustavus I (of Sweden) enjoined the noblemen commissioned by him to appoint officers to serve him,” Wong said. “Those appointed were the accountants, builders, craftsmen, teachers, scribes and others responsible for conducting the ordinary daily affairs of the kingdom.”

According to the AFI, the system worked so well that the Swedish army incorporated it as a way to establish and maintain a cohesive, disciplined, well-trained force for protection of lives and property in the kingdom.

“These NCOs would honor their leader and pledge their loyalty by ceremoniously presenting him with a sword,” Wong said. “The sword, a symbol of truth, justice and power rightfully used, served as a token for all to see and know that here was a ‘leader among leaders.’ This ceremony became known as the Royal Order of the Sword.

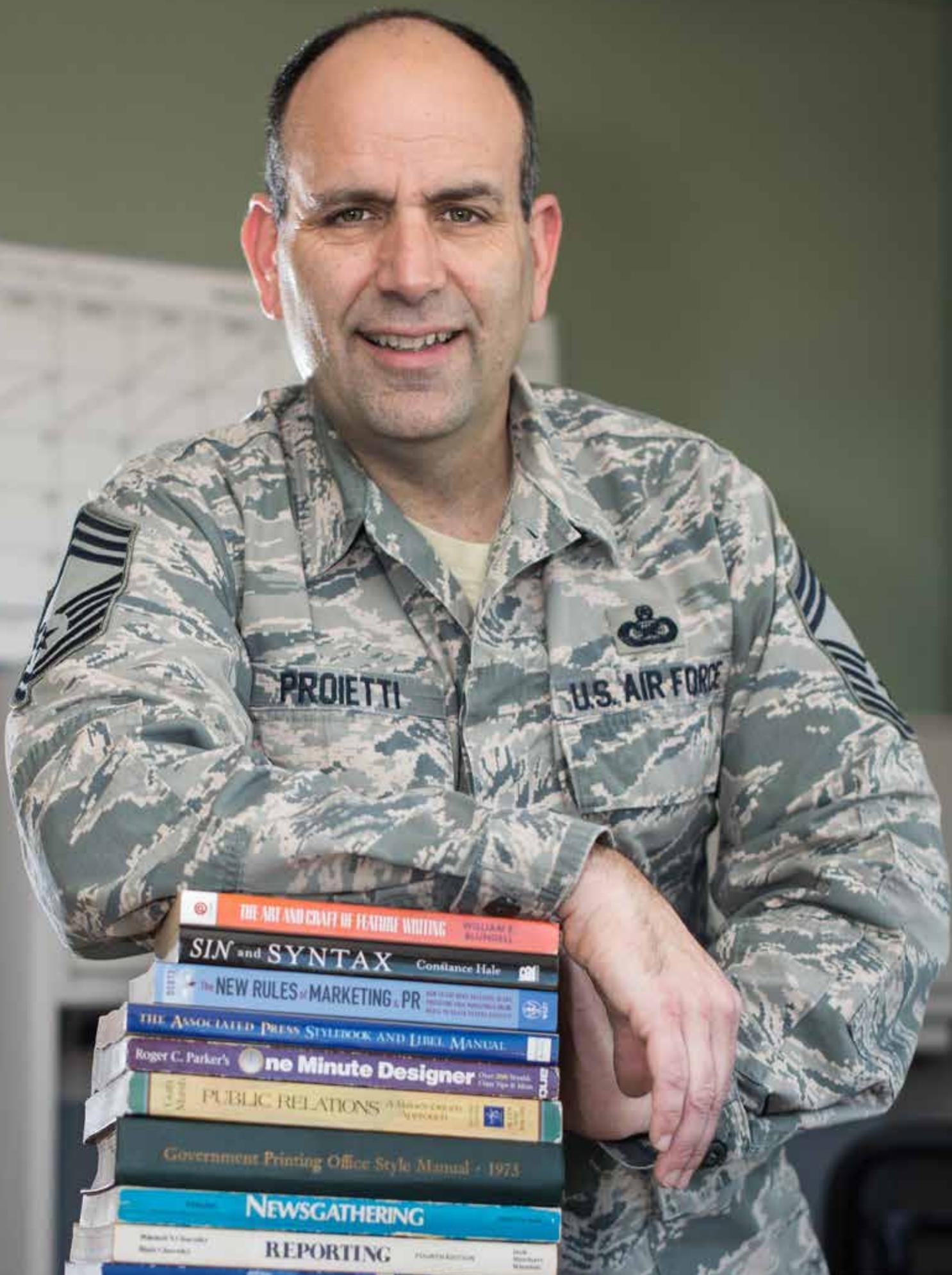
“The first record of use in the United States was in the 1860s when Gen. Robert E. Lee was presented a sword by his command. The Royal Order of the Sword ceremony was revised, updated and adopted by the NCOs of the United States Air Force in 1967.”

The chief master sergeant of the Air Force serves as the keeper of the Air Force Master Sword, which is displayed at Headquarters U.S. Air Force in the Pentagon. Each major command maintains its own Master Sword displayed appropriately at the MAJCOM headquarters, with the command chief master sergeant serving as keeper of the command’s Master Sword. AFRC’s Master Sword is on display at Robins AFB.

*(Staff reports)*

*Staff Sgt. Annzen Salvador of the 78th Force Support Squadron and Robins Air Force Base Honor Guard brings the Air Force Reserve Command Master Sword for the Order of the Sword presentation to Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson.*

*(Tech. Sgt. Stephen Schester)*



PROIETTI

U.S. AIR FORCE

THE ART AND CRAFT OF FEATURE WRITING WILLIAM F. BUCHHEIT

SIN and SYNTAX Constance Hale

THE NEW RULES OF MARKETING & PR

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS STYLEBOOK AND LIBEL MANUAL

Roger C. Parker's One Minute Designer

PUBLIC RELATIONS A Handbook for Students

Government Printing Office Style Manual - 1973

NEWSGATHERING

REPORTING

# ‘At All Costs’

## Chief’s First Book Makes CSAF Reading List

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*By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman*

Former Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III selected a biography written by an Air Force Reservist for inclusion on his 2016 reading list.

“At All Costs” by Chief Master Sgt. Matt Proietti tells the life-and-death story of Medal of Honor recipient Chief Master Sgt. Richard L. “Dick” Etchberger. It’s Proietti’s first book and has a narrative fit for Hollywood.

Etchberger was a ground radar superintendent during the Vietnam War and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2010, 42 years after he was killed in March 1968. He was shot while riding in a rescue helicopter following an overnight battle on a mountaintop in Laos, where he helped maintain a secret radar site that aided the U.S. bombing campaign in North Vietnam.

Gen. Ronald Fogleman created the CSAF Professional Reading Program in 1996 to develop a common frame of reference among Air Force members — officers, enlisted members and civilians — to help every Airman become better, more effective advocates of air and space power. Each chief of staff since then has enhanced the professional reading program. Welsh’s full reading list is available online at <http://static.dma.mil/usaf/csafreadinglist/>.

Proietti, who is an individual mobilization augmentee in the Air Force Reserve, began his journey to write “At All Costs” in 2008 while he was filling in as chief of the Air Force news team in Washington, D.C. The staff heard rumblings that Etchberger might be nominated for the Medal of Honor. Proietti asked his team of junior writers if anyone was interested in researching and preparing an article on the Vietnam War hero. Knowing their supervisor was a history buff, they suggested he take it on himself.

As Proietti began learning more about Etchberger, he became intrigued with the life and career of the man who was credited with saving the lives of two fellow Airmen during the battle for Lima Site 85, a dirt airstrip maintained by the Central Intelligence Agency as part of its Air America network.

He started his research by traveling to Etchberger’s hometown of Hamburg, Pennsylvania, where he talked to the Airman’s high school friends and family members. What he learned was that the future Medal of Honor recipient led a life focused on helping others long before his actions earned him the nation’s highest honor for military valor.

“I got really excited about the story, and I knew one (article) just wouldn’t be enough,” Proietti said.

From his initial research, the chief crafted a three-part series on his own time after his Washington duty orders ended. He would have been done with the story at that point except Cory Etchberger, one of the late chief’s three sons, reached out to Proietti to ask if he was interested in working with him to write a book about his father. Cory said he contacted Proietti after reading his articles.

“Lots of people have written articles about dad, but Matt is the only one who got every detail right,” he said.

Cory, a 25-year veteran of the college lectern, started work on a book in 2006 and had done research, gathered a contact list and developed an outline. However, because he lacked a strong writing background, he knew he would need some help. He talked to his brother, Richard, and they agreed that Proietti was the man for the job.

Despite his rookie status as an author, Proietti had plenty of writing chops to qualify him for the job. He is a 31-year veteran of the public affairs career field who has won the

Department of Defense's coveted Thomas Jefferson Award for communications four times. He began writing in grade school, and when the Air Force gave him the opportunity to write professionally, he couldn't believe it.

"Not a week goes by that I'm not thankful to the Air Force for giving me the opportunity to write," Proietti said.

After transitioning to the Air Force Reserve in 1988, he spent a decade working as a community newspaper editor in Southern California. Since becoming a traditional Reservist and later an IMA, Proietti has served in a variety of roles as a writer, editor and mentor to young writers. Until recently, he was the Reserve assistant to the public affairs career field manager at the Pentagon. He is now assigned to the 3rd Combat Camera Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, and is serving on extended active duty as public affairs manager for the Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

Proietti said his role as a chief master sergeant gave him a unique understanding of the responsibilities Etchberger would have had as an enlisted leader.

Proietti first met Cory in 2009 at his then-home in Switzerland. They went through Etchberger's old service records and what unfolded, as Proietti interpreted the information for the late chief's son, was a clearer picture of the career of an outstanding Airman. The biographer said he became fascinated by the narrative because so many Medal of Honor stories are about young Airmen who made a split decision to do something heroic, while Etchberger's story revealed the full career of a man who lived the Air Force core values, was a good wingman, and was loved and respected by superiors and subordinates alike.

Two years after Proietti began his research, President Barack Obama approved the Medal of Honor for Etchberger, presenting it to his sons during a White House ceremony Sept. 21, 2010. (A video of the ceremony is available on YouTube at [https://youtu.be/HrQCVCWT\\_HQ](https://youtu.be/HrQCVCWT_HQ).)

The initial plan was for Proietti and Cory to co-write the book, but as the project progressed, they decided it would be best for the Air Force Reserve writer to take over the pen. He spent the next several years doing research, spending hours at the Lyndon B. Johnson presidential library in Austin, Texas, and interviewing and exchanging letters with Etchberger's former supervisors and the men whose lives he saved, including retired Tech. Sgt. John G. Daniel of La Junta, Colorado.

"He (Etchberger) should have a 55-gallon drum full of medals. I wouldn't be alive without him," Daniel said.

In the hours preceding his death, Etchberger defended the Lima Site 85 radar camp against an attack from North Vietnamese special forces operators. Etchberger used a handheld radio to call for a rescue and air strikes. According to Daniel, they basically had to call air strikes in on themselves, figuring they were dead anyway.

Etchberger, Daniel and Capt. Stan Sliz survived the night by returning small arms fire and exchanging grenades with the enemy. When the light of day finally brought a CIA rescue chopper, Etchberger repeatedly exposed himself to heavy fire while helping Daniel and Sliz, both of whom had suffered serious injuries, onto the helicopter. Daniel lost consciousness as soon as he was aboard.

After ensuring his men were safely loaded, Etchberger joined them. As the helicopter peeled away, an enemy round pierced the floor and hit Etchberger, resulting in serious internal injuries and bleeding. He died by the time the aircraft reached safety.

Daniel, who was unconscious until the next day, was confused by the news of Etchberger's death.

"It didn't make sense to me," Daniel said. "He was the only one who wasn't injured (that night). I thought, 'What the hell?' He told me, 'I'll be right up. I'll see you in a minute.'"

Proietti, who has traveled on military business a good deal over the last five years, said he worked on the story everywhere he went. The biography was written on airplanes, in hotel rooms and on weekends at his home in the hills outside of Sacramento, California.

Finally, on Dec. 1, 2014, Proietti said he officially finished writing and began proofreading. Fellow public affairs IMA Senior Master Sgt. Ray Sarracino created the cover illustration, which features a full-length photograph of Etchberger in his uniform, the Medal of Honor, and a map of Laos and North Vietnam.

The book went to press in early 2015, and 5,000 copies paid for by the Etchberger Foundation, which will receive half the profits from the sale of the books, were printed. The foundation will use the proceeds to educate others about the life and sacrifice of its namesake, provide leadership and service awards to ROTC students, and assist Air Force families in financial need.

Cory said he's pleased with the book and credits Proietti's ability to ask the right questions and build historical context with creating an accurate portrayal of his father. He hopes those who read "At All Costs" come away inspired to continue his father's legacy of helping others.

With the first edition of the book in print, Proietti is now working on a screen adaptation. He also hopes to write more books in the future, including works of fiction.

*(Huffman is assigned to the Headquarters Individual Reservist Readiness and Integration Organization public affairs office at Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado.)*



Matt Proietti (far right) signs copies of his book during its official release event April 21, 2015, at the Air Force Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy in Montgomery, Alabama. Proietti was accompanied at the event by (left to right) Cory and Rich Etchberger, Chief Master Sgt. Richard L. Etchberger's sons, and retired Col. Joe Panza, who was co-pilot on an Air Force helicopter that rescued one of Etchberger's comrades.

(Courtesy photo)

A bust of Etchberger shines onstage at the Air Force Senior NCO Academy during its March 26, 2012, dedication. Sculpted by artist John Lajbe, the bust is part of a permanent exhibit at the academy.

(Melanie Rodgers Cox)



This photo of Etchberger was taken at Udorn Air Base, Thailand, in March 1968, shortly before he was killed during a battle at a secret U.S. radar site on a mountain peak in Laos.

(Courtesy photo)



# Treasure in the North Sea

## *After crash, WW II B-17 pilot went right back to flying*

### Part II

#### By 1st Lt. Justin Clark

*(Editor's note: This is the second of a three-part series of articles. The third and final article will appear in the October issue.)*

After bailing out of a crashing airplane and being rescued from the waters of the North Sea off the coast of Great Britain, World War II was far from over for 19-year-old 2nd Lt. Norville Gorse.

The full story of Gorse, uncle of Lt. Col. John Gorse, an Air Force Reserve C-130 Hercules pilot and commander of the 440th Operations Group at Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina, emerged when the wreck of his B-17 Flying Fortress bomber was discovered at the bottom of the North Sea last fall.

"There's a lot more to my uncle's story than finding his crashed plane," John said regarding his uncle's service during the war. "He went right back to flying bombing missions."

John said if he learned anything from his uncle's actions, it was that humans have the capability to live through a lot.

In May 1943, Gorse, a member of the U.S. Army Air Force's 96th Bomb Group, was co-pilot of the B-17, tail number 42-29752, during its final flight. The aircraft was forced to abort its bombing mission and make a controlled crash into the sea after a malfunctioning machine gun shot off one of the plane's horizontal stabilizers and severed control lines. Gunners had primed the defensive guns before takeoff in anticipation of heavy fighter attacks. Because the aircraft's controls were damaged, there was no way to safely land. The pilot, Capt. Derrol Rogers, perished in the controlled crash, but Gorse and the seven other crewmembers survived.

The young aviator was quickly returned to flying service in the USAAF, again as a B-17 bomber co-pilot.

Two months after that ditching incident, Gorse was in the cockpit flying his 12th bombing mission when yet another emergency forced him to ditch his aircraft. However, this incident ended much differently.

On July 28, Gorse was piloting a B-17 nicknamed Dallas Rebel, tail number 42-30355. The bomber, which was part of a flight of four planes within a larger wave of 300, had taken off from Royal Air Force Snetterton Heath in the United Kingdom to strike the Focke-Wulf warplane assembly plant in Oschersleben, Germany.

As the planes approached Germany's northern coast, approximately 30 miles west of the islands of Heligoland,

German fighters intercepted and attacked the flight of bombers. One by one, the fighters knocked out the three other aircraft in the formation, leaving Dallas Rebel alone to defend itself.

In an effort to protect his aircraft, Gorse flew the B-17 into a larger formation of bombers. But shortly thereafter three enemy fighters singled his aircraft out, and 20mm cannon fire from the German aircraft punched holes in Dallas Rebel from its left wing across to its right.

Later, Gorse wrote of the attack: "I started evasive action and slid under the lead ship for protection, but not quickly enough to avoid cannon fire through the radio room and out the right wing. [Ball turret gunner] Maxwell had time to blow up the lead fighter, but the other two got away."

As the bomber started to descend from its damage, its gunners continued to defend the Flying Fortress and managed to shoot down two more of the attacking German fighters.

"Three more followed us down; Maxwell saw Youngers, the tail-gunner, blow up one, and he got another," Gorse wrote.

The attack set fire to the bomb bay and disabled the bomber's intercom system. In an effort to extinguish the fire, Gorse put the aircraft into a dive, and the crewmen saw that the left wing had been partly burned away, its internal structure — including fuel tanks — exposed. Shortly thereafter, the fire spread.

"Suddenly, large quantities of fuel poured out of the left wing tanks; we felt a large bump when the fuel ignited, and all four engines stopped," Gorse said.

Gorse and his co-pilot, Lt. Nance, had to quickly decide whether to bail out by parachute or try and ditch the crashing plane into the sea below.

"I grabbed Nance and Maxwell and talked Nance into staying with the ship by showing him that the fuel coming out of the wing was burning about three feet behind it, not the wing. Our survival chances in enemy waters were non-existent without a dinghy."

Gorse and his crewmen controlled the diving plane as he set it up to ditch.

"I continued in a red-lined airspeed indicator dive, with the flames slowing due to lack of fuel, and asked Nance if he wanted the ditching honor. He said, 'No, you're in the pilot's seat,' and I continued down my flight path."

While the aircraft was headed for a controlled crash into the North Sea, four of its crewmembers — two of which had also survived the May accident — chose to bail out by parachute and were never recovered. When the aircraft was nearing the water's surface, Gorse leveled out to burn off speed and set the aircraft up for a smooth water landing.

"I opened my side window and propped it with my elbow to keep it from jamming during the landing so I had an escape path," Gorse wrote. "The warm air outside rushed in, condensed on the cold windshield and turned to frost. I scraped it with my cap and the emblem on its front, then proceeded to set the plane on the water while checking height and water conditions."

Gorse carefully laid the aircraft into the sea, and its survival dinghies were deployed.

"The water was calm with a slight swell, and I landed smoothly," Gorse wrote. "Most of the flames were out when the dinghies were released, but the left dinghy fell into the flaming fuel, which burned a hole in it. Nance, Maxwell and the rest of the crew escaped through the radio hatch, while I squeezed out the pilot's window."

After escaping the sinking plane, the six men crammed onto their one small survival raft. As they righted themselves in their dinghy, the sinking plane exploded in the water beneath them. They had paddles, a flare gun, a hand-powered radio, two parachutes, and a small survival kit with chocolate bars and fresh water. They resourcefully used parachutes and oxygen bottles that floated up from the plane to make a rudimentary sea anchor and measure their drift.

The six men floated in the cramped rubber dinghy, hoping for another rescue. They decided to paddle and crank their radio in two-hour shifts.

Their first afternoon adrift, the men spotted a large predatory shark that had taken an interest in them. The downed Airmen helplessly watched the shark as it approached their raft.

"We clearly saw his mouth, fin, and that he was 10 to 12 feet long," Gorse wrote. "He swam in a wide circle around the raft, coming to within a few feet of the boat, but not touching it. We were still, and he swam away after circling only once."

The men keenly watched for any sign of rescue. The next day, while adrift, they spotted a German fighter plane in the distance, and then a storm brought 15-foot waves that threatened to capsize the dinghy. The men were drenched by rain and sea spray, which lasted all day and all night.

That first evening, they saw several British aircraft and hoped that someone would spot them and call for a rescue.

"British fighters, which had bombed Jutland, dove down close to us on their way home but didn't see us. ... That night, a stream of British bombers flew over. ... One was shot down in flames overhead, broke

into two parts and fell close to our raft," Gorse wrote.

Nance accidentally punched a hole in the bottom of the rubber raft with the heel of his boot, and the men were subsequently forced to constantly bail water to stay afloat.

The following morning, July 30, nearly 72 hours after the crash, the men awoke to the sound of explosions along Germany's northern coast.

"Three [Luftwaffe] Ju-52s, each with a mine detector ring under it, were exploding mines with machine gun fire," Gorse wrote. "When one noticed us, it left the formation to return to its base, while the others dropped green and yellow sea markers around us."

The men knew they had been marked and that they likely faced capture. Half an hour later, a German plane showed up.

"A DO-24 twin-engine seaplane soon returned and landed close to the raft," Gorse wrote. "Two guards stood on the pontoons with machine guns and motioned us to board the plane. After we boarded, one guard watched with his gun pointed at us while the other cut up the dinghy and threw it back into the water."

Gorse and the others were taken into captivity, interrogated and put on a train to the prison camp Stalag Luft III in what is now Poland. This was the same camp featured in the 1963 film "The Great Escape."

Gorse was later transferred to another prisoner of war camp, Stalag VII-A, near Munich, where he stayed until his liberation when the war ended in 1945. He and his fellow prisoners were flown back to the United States, and he left the military shortly thereafter.

In the years following the war, Gorse went to work as a NASA engineer, helping to design rockets used in the space program. Later, he worked for General Electric Corp.

Family separation meant that Gorse's nephew, John, didn't learn of his uncle's wartime experience until he began researching his family history. John first met his war-hero uncle at his pilot training graduation in 1991 at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, having invited him to the ceremony.

John remembers his uncle as a disciplined man who would do 50 sit-ups and pushups daily, even into his 70s. He passed away in 2003 at the age of 79.

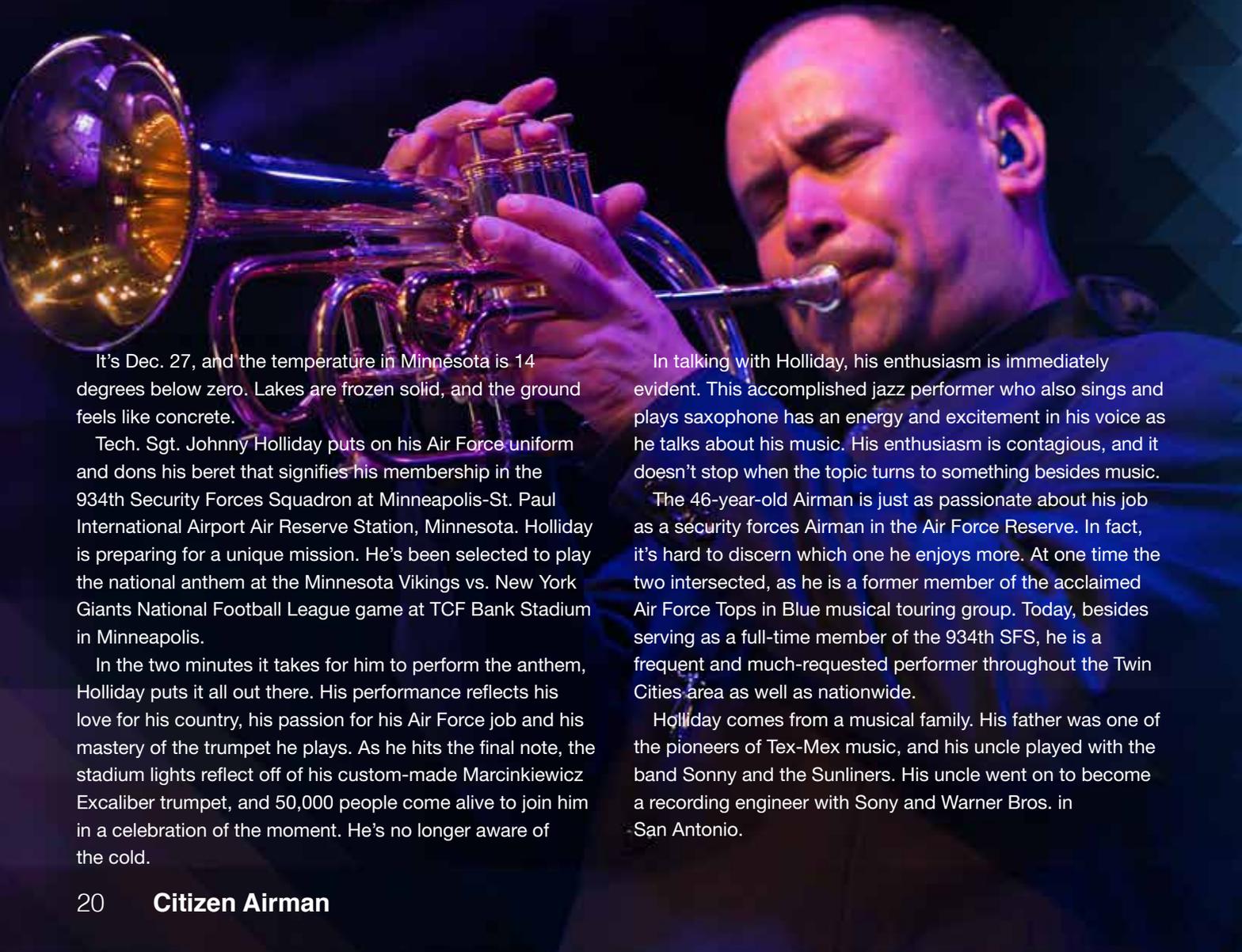
*(Clark is assigned to the 440th AW public affairs office at Pope Army Airfield.)*





# Playing for Keeps

By Paul Zedeck



It's Dec. 27, and the temperature in Minnesota is 14 degrees below zero. Lakes are frozen solid, and the ground feels like concrete.

Tech. Sgt. Johnny Holliday puts on his Air Force uniform and dons his beret that signifies his membership in the 934th Security Forces Squadron at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minnesota. Holliday is preparing for a unique mission. He's been selected to play the national anthem at the Minnesota Vikings vs. New York Giants National Football League game at TCF Bank Stadium in Minneapolis.

In the two minutes it takes for him to perform the anthem, Holliday puts it all out there. His performance reflects his love for his country, his passion for his Air Force job and his mastery of the trumpet he plays. As he hits the final note, the stadium lights reflect off of his custom-made Marcinkiewicz Excaliber trumpet, and 50,000 people come alive to join him in a celebration of the moment. He's no longer aware of the cold.

In talking with Holliday, his enthusiasm is immediately evident. This accomplished jazz performer who also sings and plays saxophone has an energy and excitement in his voice as he talks about his music. His enthusiasm is contagious, and it doesn't stop when the topic turns to something besides music.

The 46-year-old Airman is just as passionate about his job as a security forces Airman in the Air Force Reserve. In fact, it's hard to discern which one he enjoys more. At one time the two intersected, as he is a former member of the acclaimed Air Force Tops in Blue musical touring group. Today, besides serving as a full-time member of the 934th SFS, he is a frequent and much-requested performer throughout the Twin Cities area as well as nationwide.

Holliday comes from a musical family. His father was one of the pioneers of Tex-Mex music, and his uncle played with the band Sonny and the Sunliners. His uncle went on to become a recording engineer with Sony and Warner Bros. in San Antonio.

Holliday first picked up the trumpet when he was in fourth grade after hearing his older brother, Albert, play.

“When I first tried it, I said, ‘Wow, mine doesn’t sound like my brother’s,’ so I decided I better start practicing,” he said.

His brother went on to serve as a combat medic. Holliday played in his high school and junior college bands and also studied musical performance on both the trumpet and saxophone with private instructors.

While performing throughout the U.S., both solo and with Christian ministries, thoughts of serving his country were never far from his mind. He had been looking at attending Air Force pararescue school when he became acquainted with a now retired command chief named Martin Klukas.

“Chief Klukas really became a mentor for me in steering me toward the Air Force where he said there would be more opportunities to pursue my music while serving in the military,” Holliday said. “And he was right.”

Holliday said he still keeps in touch with Klukas today, and he played at his retirement ceremony.

Among his many memorable experiences of playing for deployed troops, at national sporting events and at jazz festivals, Holliday said one that stands out is his tour with Tops in Blue in 1992.

“Playing with Tops in Blue was where you learn what separates the men from the boys,” he said. “I probably learned more about how to take care of myself as a musician, combined with my security forces background, than I did with any group of people.”

What really stands out for him now is when he goes to play for veterans groups.

“Anybody can play in front of thousands of people. That’s nothing. It’s not that hard,” he said. “I like the intimate scenes, with the vets, and the way they look at you. I’ll play a song like ‘In the Mood,’ and you can see them reminiscing. You can see it in their eyes that it (the music) is taking them back, and that really has an effect on me. It’s almost like I’m going back in time with them.”

With a wife, three sons and a daughter, Holliday said it’s a challenge maintaining balance in his life, something everyone in the Reserve can identify with.

“Touring with musical groups and participating in military deployments are definitely tough on the family,” he said. “My family is very supportive, and we have a great network of friends in the military and at our church who are there to help.”

Holliday said he is grateful for all the support he receives from the 934th SFS.

“I have never worked with a unit as supportive as this one,” he said. “There are not just a few individuals but groups of people from the 934th that come out to see me play. It’s amazing. I’m not used to that level of camaraderie and support.”

“The security forces leadership allows me to play as much as possible, but the mission always comes first. And if that means missing an opportunity to play, that’s fine. There will be other opportunities in the future.”

“Tech. Sgt. Johnny Holliday is first an outstanding Airman and security forces member,” said Lt. Col. Gregory Peterson, 934th SFS commander. “As an AGR (member of the active Guard and Reserve), he is part of our squadron’s full-time defender force providing security and police services on the base. In his off-duty time, he is an amazing jazz musician who avails himself to support a myriad of events including military retirement ceremonies and pro sporting events. His efforts bring positive attention to the Air Force, the 934th Airlift Wing and the security forces squadron.”

Holliday has released three albums and is putting together a fourth, which will feature Latin-themed Christmas music.

“I’m really excited about the new album,” he said. “It will showcase a lot of different Latin styles, and I’ve been lucky to recruit some of the finest musicians around to play on it. It’s a project I’ve been working on for a long time. I hope to have it out this fall.”

*(Zadach is assigned to the 934th AW public affairs office at Minneapolis-St. Paul IAP ARS.)*



*Tech. Sgt. Johnny Holliday (third from left) plays the role of an opposition force during an exercise with the 934th Security Forces Squadron and members of the Minnesota Air and Army National Guard.*

*(Paul Zadach)*



*Holliday performs the national anthem on the field at TCF Bank Stadium before the National Football League game between the Minnesota Vikings and New York Giants.*

# World-Class Intelligence

Individual Reservist Takes Great Pride in Helping Maintain Peace on Korean Peninsula

By Gene Van Deventer



Since 1953, when the armistice ending hostilities on the Korean peninsula was signed, the United States has had a contingent of Airmen supporting the defense of the Republic of Korea. Now, 63 years after the signing, both North and South Korea continue to exist within a tenuous peace that could be easily ignited into a full-scale war if provocations turned into a real-world confrontation.

The August 2015 incident involving a North Korean-emplaced land mine within the demilitarized zone that left two ROK soldiers seriously injured is one indicator of how volatile the peace is between the two countries. Events in recent months, including North Korean claims of an underground nuclear test and its long-range ballistic missile launch, have created an even higher level of uncertainty.

North Korea has the world's fourth largest military with 70 percent to 75 percent of the force deployed within 60 miles of the DMZ. Since coming into power in 2011, Kim Jong Un has placed a strong emphasis on developing and strengthening asymmetric capabilities like ballistic missiles, the world's largest special operations forces, cyber warfare and chemical weapons, all of which increase the indications and warnings challenge for U.S. decision-makers.

To maintain the peace, the U.S. Forces Korea Command relies heavily on Air Force-provided intelligence information that is planned, collected, processed, analyzed and disseminated by a combined team of U.S. and ROK Airmen.

The 694th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group, commanded by Col. James C. Mock, carries out this critically important mission providing around-the-clock support at Osan Air Base, ROK.

The group is one of five primary sites for the global Air Force Distributed Common Ground System, operated by the 480th ISR Wing, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia. This incredibly complex worldwide system is powered by innovative Airmen who integrate data from numerous ISR platforms and then distribute real-time and near-real-time critical and actionable intelligence to U.S. military and civilian leaders and their allies.

Maj. Alison Hamel is newly assigned to the 694th as its first individual mobilization augmentee. The establishment of this IMA position at Osan is in line with Air Force Reserve Command commander's guidance to increase execution of intelligence IMA billets at major commands and combatant commands and effectively recruit and place qualified Airmen to support intelligence missions around the globe.

According to command leadership, Hamel was selected for the position based on her record of excellence throughout her career. She was named the 2013 Headquarters Pacific Air Forces Reserve/Guard ISR Officer of the Year as well as PACAF's Reserve/Guard Officer of the Year during her previous assignment with the 713th Combat Operations Squadron, Detachment 1, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

Lt. Col. William Bernhard, the group's deputy commander and Hamel's active-duty supervisor, said she has quickly acquired specific training and learned techniques and processes needed for her mission deployments to Korea.

"Major Hamel is quickly becoming familiar with our USFK operations plans and associated workings in the gathering and interpreting of intelligence matters in this theater of operations," Bernhard said. "She brings a strong intelligence foundation of knowledge and is now applying that knowledge to the threat issues that face the Republic of Korea, our USFK forces and allied partners."

He said Hamel is also tasked to help improve processes and share best practices between the Korea and Hawaii distributed ground sites to maximize limited ISR assets in the Pacific Command area of operations.

Getting up to speed and qualified as a mission operations commander was a significant leadership training objective for Hamel.

"Getting ops floor qualified as an MOC is a major component of Major Hamel's mission contributions to the group," Bernhard said. "Being a mission-ready MOC keeps her aware and focused on the needs and concerns of the Airmen executing the DCGS mission, while working on projects to improve execution and collaboration between DCGS sites."

He said Hamel recently successfully coordinated a process change for the Hawaii DGS that improves intelligence collection and multiple-intelligence fusion opportunities both there and in Korea.

Now that she is a qualified MOC, Hamel is concentrating on building relationships with all of the group's on-peninsula partners, synchronizing the intelligence efforts that encompass U.S. Air Force, Army and national communities to include ROK-associated capabilities.

"I'm quickly learning the connecting links between the intelligence provider and the tip-of-the-spear warfighter," Hamel said. "The lives of more than 51 million ROK citizens depend on the assurance that the military professionals get it right."

This is especially true considering intelligence is distributed between military partners who speak two distinct languages from two distinct cultures.

"The excellent language skills and efforts of both Korean and American linguists who constantly interact in the intelligence arena are critical to ensuring shared understanding," Hamel said.

The skills she has developed with the group will support steady-state, real-world scenarios as well as preparation for annual peninsula exercises involving the South Korean air force, U.S. Seventh Air Force, USFK, PACAF and other service components.

"Our mission is simple: to provide world-class intelligence so that peace can be maintained in the Northeast Asia theater of operations and, if need be, to provide the right intelligence to the right warfighters at the right time to meet their contingency requirements," Hamel said. "I take immense pride in being part of this extremely important and rewarding mission and in working alongside some very 'intelligent' Airmen, who perform around the clock, 365 days a year for a cause much larger than themselves. Doing this job as a Reservist and being the first IMA assigned to the 694th ISR Group makes me even prouder."

*(Van Deventer, a long-time contributor to Citizen Airman, is a program analyst in the Directorate of Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection's Installation Support Branch at Headquarters AFRC, Robins AFB, Georgia. He just completed a tour with the 694th ISRG at Osan AB.)*



*Maj. Alison Hamel is the first individual mobilization augmentee to be assigned to the 694th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group at Osan Air Base, Korea. The group's mission is to provide world-class intelligence so that peace can be maintained between the Republic of Korea and North Korea, which has the world's fourth largest military.*

*(Courtesy photos)*

# ‘Apples to Oranges’

*Team Awarded for Modeling Tool that Compares Reserve, Active-Duty Manpower Costs*

*By Bo Joyner*

In 2011, then-Air Force Reserve Command Commander Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner approached his Directorate of Analyses, Assessments, Lessons Learned and Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century with what seemed like a pretty simple question: “What is the cost of an Air Force Reservist versus an active-duty Airman?”

In a quest to answer this not-as-simple-as-it-first-seemed question, members of the A9 directorate developed the Individual Cost Assessment Model, a simulation tool that has made it easier to analyze and compare manpower costs across the Air Force Reserve and active-duty components.

For its efforts, the ICAM development team was recognized with an honorable mention for the 2015 Air Force Analytic Innovation Award.

“There are more than 60 organizations in the Air Force analytic community, so this was a great accomplishment for our ICAM team,” said Col. Hal Linnean, A9 director at AFRC headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. “I would like to thank Dave Gillespie and his ICAM team for their excellent work on this project and our senior leaders who have championed and powered ICAM development over the past few years.”

“The ICAM development team, consisting of the best analysts across the Air Force, pulled off what many said could not be done,” said Gillespie, A9 chief analyst and ICAM development team leader.

In addition to Gillespie, other ICAM development team members are Lt. Col. Terence Kudo, Lt. Col. Julia Phillips, Dan O’Neal, Ron Sweat and Mark Mercier from AFRC/A9; Lt. Col. Andrew Wallen, Joseph Murphy and Misita Nicole from the secretary of the Air Force Financial Management Directorate; and Lara Infosino from Air Force/A9.

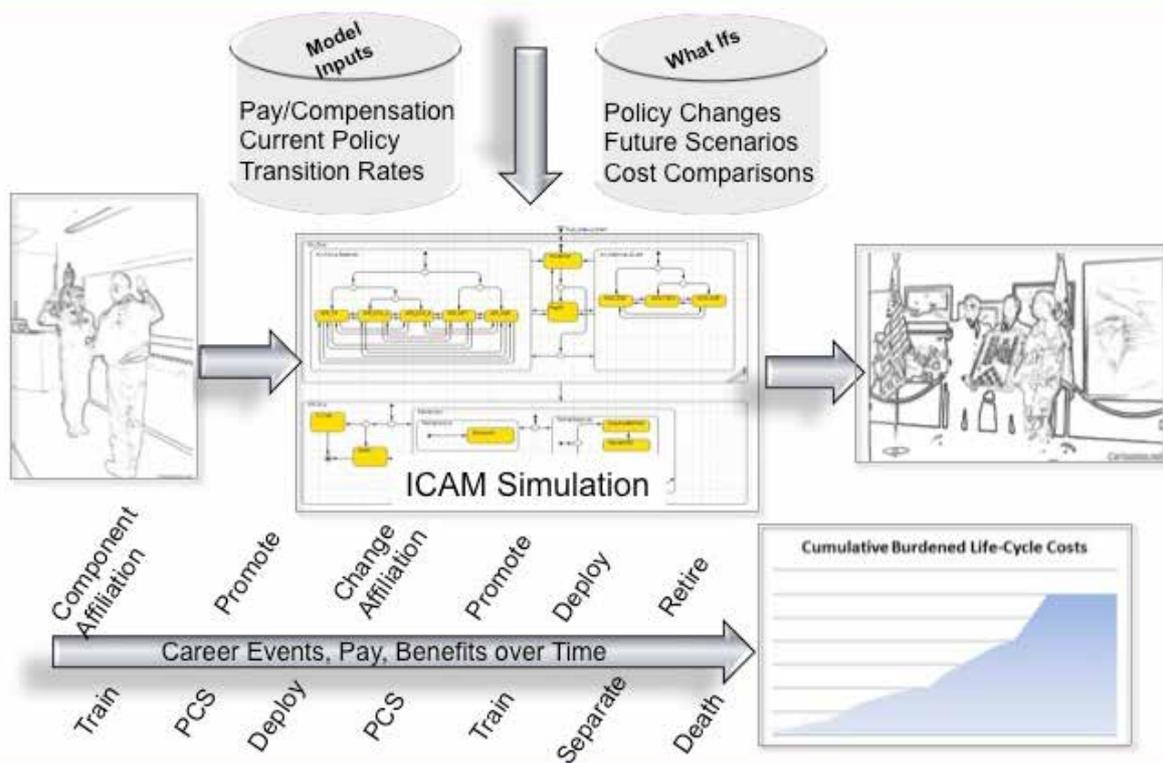
Kudo has been working with ICAM since 2012 and has seen the model improve over time.

“We had a traditional Reservist, Lt. Col. Todd Combs, who first developed ICAM in 2011,” he said. “In his civilian job, he was working at the (Department of Energy) National Labs, and he was an expert in modeling and simulation. So he was able to bring that expertise over to us and create ICAM. I came on-board in 2012 as a full-timer and started working with Colonel Combs as a part-timer to grow ICAM.”

Kudo said early on the team found that “costing” an active-duty Airman is pretty easy; but “costing” an Air Force Reservist is more challenging.

“The active-duty side is pretty straightforward,” he said. “An active-duty Airman is 24/7. I can pretty much figure out where he is going to be in his career based on time in service,

**ACCESSION**



**RETIREMENT**

rank, et cetera. When you look at a Reservist, it's not that straightforward: Is he part-time or full-time? If he's a part-timer, is he just doing the minimum requirements? What if he does a 180-day activation? What if this Reservist is a pilot who has to add some short training periods in there? Did this Reservist previously serve on active duty? All of that, and a lot more, affects the 'cost' of a Reservist."

ICAM is designed to bridge the gaps in Air Force understanding of manpower costs, not only on an annual basis, but also in terms of burdened life-cycle costs — things like retirement payments and TRICARE for Life, for example.

Comparing costs between active-duty Airmen and Reservists "is not an apples-to-apples comparison," Kudo said. "It's more of an apples-to-oranges comparison. But it's still a comparison that needs to be made, and ICAM can help our decision-makers see that comparison a little better."

Early in 2015, ICAM was added to the Air Force Standard Analytical Toolkit, a foundational set of Air Force analytical community-accepted modeling and simulation tools designed to improve the consistency and quality of Air Force analyses.

"Being accepted into the AFSAT was an important milestone for us," Kudo said. "It shows that we've put the model through a thorough vetting process, and our tool is now available for use throughout the Air Force analytical community."

The lieutenant colonel said the team is constantly looking at ways to improve ICAM.

"We started out five years ago looking at what is the comparative cost of a Reservist versus an active-duty Airman, and I think we've been able to give our bosses and the AFRC community some great information on what those costs are; but there are always other factors we need to look at," Kudo said.

"For example, there is a new retirement system that will be implemented starting in 2018. The model we have now, of course, uses the current retirement system," he said. "We are going to have to look at the cost implications of the new system compared to the old system. Those are the kinds of things that General Miller (Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller, AFRC commander) is going to be very interested in."

"ICAM is important because it provides an unprecedented capability to understand what Airmen cost, not only on an annual basis, but across the life cycle," Gillespie said. "ICAM looks ahead, assessing not only today's costs, but also future costs under different pays, compensation policies and conditions. Understanding of costs is obviously important as we make decisions to shape the future Air Force under increasing budget pressures."

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

# *Healing from Within*

## *Chaplains turn to their own for spiritual, physical assistance*

*By Robert Helton*

Military chaplains do a great job of helping to heal the deepest and innermost scars afflicting service members. But as caregivers, chaplains are not immune from those wounds that cut deep into the mind and spirit. To find strength in times of spiritual need, chaplains turn to within – within the team that is.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) William Wiecher and Master Sgt. Adam Swift make up one such team — a Religious Support Team. While their current duties are the staff of the Office of the Command Chaplain at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, both have been assigned in the past as RSTs at the wing level to extend a healing hand to all Citizen Airmen.

To accomplish this goal, Religious Support Teams are precisely structured with at least one chaplain, an officer, and one chaplain's assistant, an enlisted member.

"You can't have two chaplains and call it a Religious Support Team or have two chaplain assistants and call it a Religious Support Team. An RST has at least one chaplain and one chaplain assistant," said Swift, who has been a chaplain's assistant his entire 19-year military career.

It is a construct that allows for RST members to look out for the well-being of one another while also providing care to fellow caregivers. It is a self-healing mechanism of sort. And for Swift, caring for fellow caregivers is not about applying a special healing technique or method of care. It's about applying the fundamentals.

"You can put whatever training category or name or title you want on it, but it really boils down to knowing that individual," Swift said. "So as far as caring for the caregiver goes, Chaplain Wiecher is my RST. I need to know who he is. I need to know what makes him tick, what makes him happy and what kind of jokes I can tell if he's having a bad day to lift

his spirit. I need to know all of that, so as a team, we can be effective in taking care of our Airmen."

It's that personal attention and compassion that chaplains and chaplain assistants provide to one another that energize their mind and spirit, which in turn enable them to become better servants of Airmen.

"When I deployed and was out in various areas, my RST was my check a lot of times," Wiecher said. "They would say, 'Hey, you need to take care of yourself, because if you don't take care of yourself, you can't take care of anybody else.'"

At the wing and squadron levels, leadership also plays a tremendous role in caring for the caregivers. Wiecher likes to remind commanders to follow up with their chaplains to see how they are doing because they are susceptible to overwork.

"We have no check on how many people we can see in a day, and the way we are by nature, as clergy people, we're always going to go above and beyond, because we just love those we serve and taking care of them," he said. "And it's especially important for the wing chaplains to be aware and wing commanders and squadron commanders to be aware. If you're seeing that chaplain out there 24/7 nonstop, you might also want to say, 'Hey chaps, who's taking care of you? Are you getting some rest?'"

Another dimension to caring for the caregivers is the training and development opportunities provided by the Office of the Command Chaplain to squadron and wing chaplains. During a training conference in Chicago in April, two subject-matter experts spoke to more than 270 Air Force Reserve chaplains and chaplain assistants on the subject of moral injury and soul care.

Dr. Rita Brock, director of the Soul Repair Center, and Dr. Jonathan Shay, a psychiatrist with more than 20 years of experience helping veterans and the author of "Achilles

in Vietnam,” a book about Vietnam veterans suffering from psychological trauma, say moral injury occurs when a leader betrays the moral principles of his or her subordinate in a life or death situation, ultimately changing the personal character of that subordinate.

According to the doctors, moral injury occurs when the worldview or beliefs of an individual have been shaken, particularly in the belief that our team or family will cause us harm. The military prides itself on being a family. Traumatic events such as death, sexual assault or perceived breakdowns in leadership can cause moral injury.

The resulting psychological injury leaves a deep scar, affecting the innermost self — a situation that can leave the moral compass in disarray, in much the same way a compass is affected by the magnetic field, rendering the navigational aid directionless.

Training events such as the conference in Chicago equip the chaplains and chaplain assistants to stay on course to keep one another guided on the same path. And the training does not always focus on the application of sophisticated techniques and training to start the healing process.

Both Shay and Brock point out in their research that healing from moral injuries takes place in the community and is aided by a listening and caring group. Brock has stated that “because the injury occurred when the trust in others was broken, it can only be healed by the rebuilding of that trust.” This cannot be done in isolation.

“Healing from trauma depends upon communalization of the trauma — being able to safely tell the story to someone who is listening and who can be trusted to retell it truthfully to others in the community,” Shay said. “So before analyzing, before classifying, before thinking, before trying to do anything — we should listen.”

While applying simple methods (listening, getting enough sleep and extending a caring hand) is an important start in the healing process, Reserve chaplains and chaplain assistants also bring a combination of ministerial and professional skills from their civilian occupation to enhance their ability to care for fellow caregivers and the larger Citizen Airmen community — religious and non-religious.

“We ask our chaplains and chaplain candidates about their plan for pastoral ministry,” Wiecher said. “We want pastoral ministry. We want people who are preaching, doing weddings, doing crisis counseling, holding hands with someone who’s dying. That whole skillset comes in, and I don’t want to begrudge anybody, but the Reserve has some of the most talented chaplains and chaplain assistants because of the dual nature of our calling.”

“We have chaplain assistants with doctorate degrees, who are vice presidents of large companies as well as counselors and social workers, Swift said. “So they are able to use those skills when they wear their uniform and become a real asset. If someone is a counselor or social worker, they may not perform those same duties, but they can certainly use those same skills that make them better chaplain assistants.”

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



*More than 270 Reserve chaplains and chaplain assistants attended the 2016 Air Force Reserve Chaplain Corps Conference in Chicago in April. Guest speakers provided attendees with more than 20 hours of training on how to recognize the signs of someone struggling and help heal wounds from within.*

*(Tech. Sgt. Kelly Goonan)*



*Master Sgt. Adam Swift (left) and Chaplain (Lt. Col.) William Wiecher of the Office of the Command Chaplain at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, work together as members of one of AFRC’s Religious Support Teams to extend a healing hand to other caregivers.*

*(Matt Ebarb)*

# 1 Block Away

## IMMIGRANT WHO WITNESSED 9/11 ATTACKS NOW SERVES HIS NEW CITY, COUNTRY

By Matthew A. Ebarb



Staff Sgt. Edgar Aguilar (who at the time was a senior airman) shows off the diploma he received for completing Airman Leadership School. Master Sgt. Lora Pogue was one of his instructors.

Fifteen years ago, a young man boarded a train in New York City bound for his Tuesday morning college class. When he emerged from the station, he walked out into an unfamiliar scene. Smoke and dust filled the streets. Glass, paper and other debris was raining down from above. Unknowingly, Edgar Aguilar suddenly found himself a mere block away from the fallout of United Airlines Flight 175 colliding with 2 World Trade Center.

Aguilar, now 38, serves as a medical logistics specialist with the 514th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. What may be more intriguing than the scene he walked into on Sept. 11, 2001, is the road that got him there and eventually led to him joining the Air Force Reserve.

Aguilar was born and raised in Mexico City, Mexico. At the age of 17, he decided to join his two brothers in New York and finish high school in the United States.

“My brothers lived in New York,” he said. “I liked coming to see them, but I eventually got to the point that I liked New York. I told my mother that the next time I go back to New York, I’m going to stay.”

With his mother’s permission, Aguilar made the bold move to Manhattan. Although he was not fluent in English, his brothers worked hard to make his transition as smooth as possible.

“They didn’t want me to have to go through the same things they went through to get adjusted,” Aguilar said. “They told me, ‘We’re going to do something different with you. You’re not going to be doing the regular jobs that we had to do. You’re going to school and getting an education.’ They gave me a lot of support learning to live in a different country where I didn’t know the culture or the language.”

With his brothers’ and sister-in-law’s help, Aguilar graduated from Martin Luther King Jr. High School in Manhattan. Afterward, he enrolled at the Borough of Manhattan Community College to pursue an associate’s degree in business administration. He was headed to a class

at the college when the 9/11 terrorist attack occurred. After exiting the train station, Aguilar didn't fully understand what was going on.

"I got off at the No. 1 line down from Manhattan," he said. "When I saw everything, I asked this guy next to me what was going on, and he said maybe they were just filming a movie at the towers. We were used to seeing people filming in the streets of New York. So I walked on to school. When I got there, I was in class for 30 minutes before the teacher told us this was something real and that we all needed to get out of the building."

Instead of going home, Aguilar remained and volunteered to help. He observed members of the New York Police Department and firefighters rushing to the scene. He overheard a call for military members to step forward to help. Despite remaining on the scene to help for several hours, Aguilar was limited in what he could do without military or police status. Eventually, he had to walk home, as all public transportation was shut down. However, seeing military members stepping forward while off duty planted a seed of curiosity about the armed forces.

After finishing his bachelor's degree at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Aguilar attempted to join the Navy and Air Force as an active-duty member. However, age restrictions — he was in his early 30's — and citizenship status issues blocked his path.

"I was trying to go into the Navy in 2007," Aguilar said. "At that time, I was married and had a daughter. It didn't work out. In 2009, I checked with the Air Force recruiter. We went through the process but couldn't continue because I wasn't a citizen. He said it would minimize obstacles if I got my citizenship and to call him back after I got it."

A year later, Aguilar became a U.S. citizen and re-contacted the recruiter. On Sept. 27, 2011, more than 10 years after his first encounter with the U.S. armed forces, Aguilar enlisted in the Air Force Reserve and reported to basic training in May 2012.

While seeing service members step forward to help in the aftermath of 9/11 inspired him, Aguilar also mentioned the culture of camaraderie drew him to service.

"I wanted to learn more about the military lifestyle," he said. "I always heard people talking about the unity, the brotherhood and the culture. I wanted to take a look into it for myself. Coming from another country and hearing that the U.S. military is great because of that ... it gets your attention, and it was something I wanted to learn from."

Aguilar would go on to use the brotherhood he found in the military to give back to its veterans. In his civilian job, he serves as an intake coordinator for Services for the Underserved, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping homeless veterans with housing and medical needs.

"The proudest moments of my civilian and military careers involves using my understanding of the military lifestyle to help veterans in the civilian world," Aguilar said. "When you

are a vet and you meet another, you have that immediate connection. We understand the same language and behaviors. When you have that understanding, you can jump into helping these people. It has given me a lot opportunities to do good things, and I feel proud about it."

Aguilar, who was recently promoted to staff sergeant, says he intends to make a full career in the Air Force Reserve and keep the brotherhood he has built in the military. He expressed his gratitude to members of his unit for the opportunity and support, saying they felt like a second family. As for his biological brothers, Aguilar said they couldn't be more proud of him, and their pride reinforces his desire to serve.

"I always send them pictures and tell them about what I do," Aguilar said. "It makes them really happy. I'm grateful for the support they have given me from day one. This is how I pay them back for that. I'm the only one in the family so far to get a full college education. I have a civilian career in social work. I have taken advantage of the change they gave me. I will continue to do it for myself, but I'll also do it to continue to make them proud."

*(Ebarb is assigned to the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command public affairs office at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.)*



**In Remembrance**

Join Services for the UnderServed for a special event in observance of Memorial Day.

**WHEN:**  
Thursday, May 26, 2016 at 4 PM  
Program followed by dinner.

**WHERE:**  
SUS' Knickerbocker Residence  
832 Knickerbocker Ave.  
(between Schaefer and Covent Streets)  
Brooklyn, NY.

**Come celebrate the lives of our fallen.**

**S:US**  
SERVICES FOR THE UNDERSERVED

*Aguilar and Marine Sgt. Jason Nunez were featured in a flyer promoting a Memorial Day event.*

# 'Tanker Toads'

**Three Generations Dedicated to KC-135 and its Mission**

*By Maj. Jolene Bottor-Ortina*



*Lt. Col. Randy Brink, a member of the 931st Air Refueling Wing at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, followed his father, Ronald, as a KC-135 pilot. Now, his son, David, plans on applying to be a KC-135 boom operator. If he likes it, David will apply for pilot training.*

*(Courtesy photo)*

"Around our house, passing gas is a family tradition," joked retired Lt. Col. Ronald Brink.

All jokes aside, what Brink said is an accurate statement. A member of the Brink family has been flying KC-135 Stratotanker aerial refueling aircraft almost continuously since 1964. And the baton is about to be passed to the third generation.

Brink fell in love with the idea of flying as a boy. He said the P-38 Lightning twin-engine fighter was the prettiest thing he had ever seen, and he dreamed about flying it one day. That particular dream didn't come true, but Brink joined the Air Force where he completed pilot training and was assigned to fly the KC-97 Stratofreighter tanker aircraft at Schilling Air Force Base in Salina, Kansas, in 1961.

In 1964, his entire squadron was sent to Castle AFB, California, to train in the brand-new KC-135A. His active-duty career took the family all over the country until his retirement in 1984.

It was while he was serving at Bunker Hill AFB, now Grissom Air Reserve Base, in Indiana that his son, Randy, fell in love with the idea of flying.

"I knew I wanted to be a pilot when I was little, living at Bunker and listening to the B-58 Hustler and KC-135s flying in," Randy said. "I knew I wanted to be a part of it (the Air Force flying community)."

Randy, who is now a lieutenant colonel, graduated from the University of Kansas and earned his officer commission through the school's ROTC program. He went on to complete pilot training and, upon graduation, was selected to fly the KC-135.

His father pinned on his flying wings when Randy graduated pilot training at Vance, AFB, Oklahoma, in 1986.

"He used an old set of his wings, and I still have them framed along with his first set of wings," Randy said. "Maybe one day we will be adding a third set in there."

Meanwhile, after his retirement from active duty and while his son was in pilot training, Brink found his way back into the KC-135 cockpit. One day he saw a Stratotanker on a runway with U.S. Navy markings on it and had to know what the airplane was doing for a sister service. He talked his way onto the aircraft and right into a contractor position.

The McDonell Douglas Corp. had a contract with the Navy, which had retrofitted the NKC-135 with electronic countermeasures and radar equipment.

"We would go out and 'attack' the fleet. It was great fun," Brink said.

There was a period of time when father and son were simultaneously flying the KC-135 at the same time for separate services.

Randy left active duty after eight years and joined the Air Force Reserve's 931st Air Refueling Group at McConnell, AFB, Kansas, when it formed in 1995. He is still a Citizen Airman in the unit, which was re-designated as a wing in March.

Father and son share a love for the KC-135 airframe.

"I love it and have for many years," Randy said. "Being as old as it is, it doesn't have the same automation as the newer aircraft, and you have to actually fly this aircraft. You have to feel a part of it, and I enjoy it. I have been doing it a really long time. It feels so comfortable to climb in and take off."

In addition to enjoying the airframe, Randy also loves the mission.

"The mission is so critical and so central to everything the Air Force does," he said. "Giving fuel in the middle of a fight is basically the key to our success. Every time I climb in, I realize how amazing it is and how wonderful it is to have the privilege to do this mission."

Brink feels just as strongly about his long-time association with the Stratotanker.

"When you make your living doing what you dreamed of as a child, you are a success," he said.

This father/son duo is having an influence on the family's next generation. Randy's son, David, 21, an exercise science major in college, is interested in pursuing a career as a boom operator in the same airframe.

"I didn't want to put pressure on any of my kids," Randy said. "But he came to me and started asking questions, and he told me he wanted to do it."

David plans on applying to be a boom operator at the 931st and, if he likes it, will apply for pilot training after graduation.

The commander of the 931st, Col. Mark S. Larson, would be happy to have another Brink under his command.

"The Air Force Reserve is an extended family, and Lieutenant Colonel Brink and his family are some of its best and brightest relatives," Larson said.

"It's always been something I wanted to do," David said. "I have been exploring other opportunities, and nothing else does it. This is it; it's the dream."

While he will be a boom operator in the same aircraft his father and grandfather fly, he may never get the chance to fly the KC-135 himself, as the 931st is in the process of converting to the KC-46A Pegasus, the Air Force's next-generation tanker aircraft. McConnell will be the first base to get the KC-46, with the first crews beginning training in 2017.

Randy said it will be bittersweet to see the KC-135 go.

"It's time. The 135 has been at it for a long time," he said. "Being a 'tanker toad' has been an incredible life. It has been a great privilege. Replacing it is necessary. It will have to happen, but seeing it leave McConnell will be a sad day."

*(Bottor-Ortione is a traditional Reservist assigned to the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command public affairs office at Robins AFB, Georgia)*

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