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CITIZEN SOLDIER

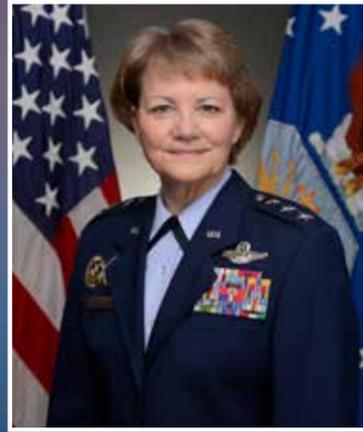
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In this Issue: **CIVIL RIGHTS** and the 1960s
Retired general found himself a seat in history during the civil rights movement

The Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve



Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller
f /AFRCCOMMANDER



Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly
f /AFRC.CCC

From the Top

“If serving is beneath you, then leadership is beyond you.” — Anonymous

Q: What does leadership mean to you?

A: As we begin 2017, I would like to share a few thoughts about leading people. The bottom line: Leadership is about influence. You influence by serving others.

Leo Tolstoy, a Russian novelist known for “War and Peace,” wrote a story called, “What Men Live By.” In this story, a poor shoemaker came upon a naked man freezing to death on a winter night. The shoemaker gave the man his coat and boots and took him home. His wife pitied the stranger, accepted him into their home, clothed, fed and housed him, and gave him a job. The stranger was an angel who had disobeyed God. The angel was ordered to take the soul of a woman who lost her husband and just had twins. The angel could not carry out God’s will, but God sent him back to take her soul anyway. His disobedience banished him from heaven until he could find answers to three questions: What dwells in a man? What is not given to men? What do men live by?

Through the empathy of the shoemaker’s wife, the angel learned that love is given to all people and dwells in their hearts. While working, he learned that it is not given to man to know his own needs. The last question is the most intriguing because it is at the heart of everything we do. It is central to every human being: What do people live by? What brings us meaning? What makes us live a life that matters? The angel realized all men live not by care for themselves but by love. In this story, love for others is shown by serving others.

Think about this story and how it relates to leading people. Most leaders are called to their positions of power and have automatic authority by that position. Given this POWER and AUTHORITY, what does it mean to lead and serve?

Reflect on the following questions and see how you respond. As a leader:

- ☛ Are you going to break down walls and invite others in, or are you going to put up a wall and enforce boundaries to keep others out?
- ☛ Are you going to have empathy for the feelings of others, or are you going to point fingers to preserve your own feelings?
- ☛ Are you going to allow others to dream freely, or are you going to wake them up to “how things really work around here?”
- ☛ Are you going to let others set the course and share the wheel, or are you going to jealously guard the compass and helm?
- ☛ Are you going to allow individual greatness to emerge and benefit all, or are you going to shout the voice of authority?
- ☛ Are you going to attach everyone to a larger purpose and acknowledge group achievement, or are you going to pursue self-glorification?

Stay tuned for the next article on what leadership means to me.

Chief’s View

Q: What is your greatest failure, and what did you learn from it?

A: No one likes to talk about failure. Everyone has been unsuccessful at some time in his or her life. What matters most is how you deal with that failure. First, I won’t say it’s my greatest failure, but I learned the most from my experiences as a young girl. Growing up I was given negative labels and was told by some very influential people in my life that I was not good enough. This started becoming my truth and affected my self-confidence. I was told, “You are not good enough” and, “You’ll never get it.” I started to believe those statements, and THAT was the failure!

Eventually, I began to fight back. I started listening to my own positive self-talk. I was no longer quiet and chose to prove I WAS “good enough” and that I could “get it!” I learned that my thoughts can control my success. Now, as I go through life, I recognize those failures are part of my story. They’ve made me stronger. I deal with letdowns and disappointments differently. I see them as a challenge to grow stronger and an opportunity to help others.

Q: What is your personal mission statement and why?

A: I have two. My first is “bring it.” Saying “bring it” is my mechanism to face fear. I use it to think back to my life lessons and use that foundation as a shield to be prepared and ready for any challenge. We all have the potential to achieve great things in life. It is important that we aim at trying new things, even if it means facing our fears. If you have the drive, intellect and skills, I say “bring it” to the table. Embrace the challenge.

My second is “make every day count.” This originates from fully comprehending the daily sacrifice it takes to serve in the military. This sacrifice is not one I make alone but with my family and civilian employer as well. Every day we put this uniform on translates into us not being with our family or co-workers. So make it count! Otherwise, why do it?

Q: If you could choose a superhero power, who or what would it be and why?

A: There are several different superheroes who have pretty cool powers. Trying to choose between those who are out of this world and those who have superhuman powers is difficult. I feel supernatural heroes come with their own special capabilities that allow them to save the world on a daily basis, whereas human-like superheroes use their skills, talents and technical knowledge to save the day.

Knowing this, I would choose a superhuman power that knows and understands technology. I am not much of a “techy” person; thus, superpowers in technology would be a welcomed gift. Out of all the superhero powers out there, I would love to have the same technological knowledge and power as Iron Man. On the other hand, the Powerpuff girls and Thor are pretty cool, too!

Gen. David L. Goldfein **Chief of Staff, United States Air Force**
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CITIZEN AIRMAN



Master Sgt. Todd Owens, a loadmaster with the 700th Airlift Squadron, part of the 94th Airlift Wing at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, keeps watch from a C-130 Hercules for a Polish F-16 during a fighter evasion training flight over Poland Oct. 25. The 94th trained jointly with members of the Polish air force during Aviation Detachment 17-1 in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve Oct. 3-28. (Staff Sgt. Alan Abernethy)

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(Front cover) Retired Maj. Gen. Joseph McNeil visits the 1960s-era Woolworth's lunch counter where he and three college classmates staged a peaceful sit-down protest that ignited a youth-led movement to challenge racial inequality throughout the South. Read the full story beginning on Page 6. (Tech. Sgt. Stephen Schester) (Back cover) Phoenix Ravens are specialized security forces members who support Air Mobility Command and Air Force Reserve Command missions to international hotspots around the globe. Ravens assigned to the 94th Airlift Wing, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, are (left to right) Master Sgt. Darrien Thornton, Staff Sgt. Christian Cuevas, Staff Sgt. Brandon Dendy, Senior Airman Marlo Bolles and Tech. Sgt. Devontay Williams. See the story on Page 20. (Don Peek)

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'Why Not Us?'

GREENSBORO FOUR MEMBER RECALLS MOTIVATION FOR HISTORIC SIT-IN

BY BO JOYNER

(Editor's note: On Feb. 1, 1960, four African-American college students sat down at a lunch counter in Woolworth's Department Store in Greensboro, North Carolina, and asked to be served. Their request was denied. The students were asked to leave, but they remained seated. Thus began a peaceful sit-down protest that ignited a youth-led movement to challenge racial inequality throughout the South.

One of the four students involved in this peaceful protest was Joe McNeil, who retired from the Air Force Reserve on Feb. 21, 2001, at the rank of major general. A graduate of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University, a historically black college and university in Greensboro, McNeil was commissioned as a second lieutenant through the school's ROTC program in 1963. He served on active duty as a KC-135 Stratotanker navigator at Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, until switching to the Reserve in 1969. During his 32-year Reserve career, he held numerous positions of leadership, ultimately retiring as the mobilization assistant to the Air Force Reserve Command commander. Following is the story of McNeil's involvement in the civil rights movement during his freshman year at North Carolina A&T.)



The Greensboro Four sit-in protest over the "whites only" policy at the Woolworth's Department Store lunch counter sparked similar actions throughout the South. (Top and middle photos courtesy of Greensboro News and Record. Photo of retired Maj. Gen. Joseph McNeil on the adjacent page by Tech. Sgt. Stephen Schester.)

It's kind of ironic, but they don't let just anybody sit down at the 1960s-era Woolworth's lunch counter that is now the centerpiece of the International Civil Rights Center and Museum at 134 South Elm Street in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina.

Museum ropes keep visitors several feet away from the historic L-shaped counter and numerous teal- and orange-upholstered stools to preserve them for current and future generations to see. It would be great if everybody could sit at the counter and feel a part of the history that was made there 57 years ago, but museum officials are determined to keep this iconic piece of Americana in as pristine condition as possible. They owe that to the people who will be visiting the historic facility 25, 50 or even 100 years from now.

However, they make an exception for Joe McNeil.

He earned the right to sit at the lunch counter now because he sat there then — on that chilly first day of February in 1960, when prejudice and hate, not museum ropes, kept people of color from sitting down and ordering a cup of coffee or a hamburger at this "Whites Only" lunch counter.

A sign above the counter advertising apple pie for 15 cents a slice catches McNeil's eye as he settles into a seat for an interview on an unseasonably warm morning in late October.

"That piece of pie would hit the spot right about now," the charming 74-year-old McNeil said as he points to the sign, one of dozens that line the wall behind the counter. "Come to think of it, if it only costs 15 cents, it probably wouldn't be very good," he joked.

It's safe to say that nobody was joking when McNeil and three of his college classmates from nearby North Carolina A&T University boldly walked up to the counter in the winter of 1960, sat down and asked for a cup of coffee. The Greensboro Four — as they would come to be known — were deadly serious that day. They knew what they were planning on doing could land them in jail. Or worse.

"We were just fed up, and we felt like we had to do something," McNeil said. "Segregation was an evil, and somebody had to do something about it. Why not us?"

McNeil, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair Jr. and David Richmond had seen way too many "Whites Only" signs in their young lives — on water fountains, restrooms, swimming pools and lunch counters. Inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the fledgling civil rights movement that was starting to take hold at the time, the four college freshmen met on several occasions to talk about what they could do to make "Whites Only" a thing of the past in Greensboro and throughout the South.

"We decided on the Woolworth's store because it was a national chain," McNeil said. "There was a Woolworth's in every town in 1960, and we thought that if we were successful at the Woolworth's here in Greensboro, it could possibly have an impact in other cities."

They had a friend contact a photographer from the local newspaper to let him know what was going to be happening so he could be there with his camera. They knew publicity would be vital to achieving their ultimate goal.

These four young men were not only brave, but they were also very smart. They had a good plan, and they stuck to it. Dressed neatly, they quietly and respectfully purchased a few small items in other parts of the store and kept their receipts. Then, at about 4:30 p.m., they ignored those “Whites Only” signs, proudly sat down at the lunch counter and politely asked to be served. Following store policy, the employees working at the counter refused to serve the black men. When they were denied service (like they knew they would be), they pulled out their receipts and asked why their money was good everywhere else in the store but not at the lunch counter.

“Because this counter is for whites only,” they were told.

On Feb. 1, 1960, that answer was not good enough for the Greensboro Four. They kept their seats. Despite being asked by store manager Clarence Harris to leave, they kept their seats. Despite being urged by blacks working in the kitchen to leave, they kept their seats. Despite threatening comments from whites on both sides of the counter, they kept their seats. Until the store closed that night, they kept their seats.

McNeil said he was a little surprised they weren’t arrested on that first day, but he was glad he made it back safely to the North Carolina A&T campus that night.

“We really didn’t know what was going to happen, but we were prepared for whatever the consequences might be,” he said. “If they threw us in the back of a police car and took us to jail, we were mentally prepared to go to jail.”

In fact, McNeil remembers calling his mother after that first day and telling her there was a good chance he would be incarcerated in the coming days as the sit-in continued.

“That’s an interesting conversation to have with your mother: ‘By the way, mom, I might be going to jail tomorrow,’” he said.

Luckily, McNeil had the support of his parents, and after he told them what he was doing, they were totally behind his actions.

The next day, more than 20 black students took seats at the lunch counter. The third day, there were more than 60. On day four, more than 300 people, both blacks and whites, joined the sit-in. Woolworth’s issued a statement saying that the company would “abide by local custom” and maintain its segregation policy.

Days, weeks and months went by. Protesters showed up every day and asked to be served at the Greensboro Woolworth’s lunch counter. Every day, they were denied. Finally, on July 25, 1960, Harris asked three black employees to change out of their work clothes and order a meal at the counter. They were the first blacks ever to be served at the Greensboro Woolworth’s lunch counter. McNeil and the rest of the Greensboro Four had achieved their objective of desegregating the local store.

But they had done so much more.

Within a couple of days of the beginning of the Greensboro sit-ins, young black students in other North Carolina towns, like Winston-Salem, Durham, Raleigh and Charlotte, launched their own peaceful protests, leading countless stores to take down their “Whites Only” signs. Soon, sit-ins were taking place in cities throughout the South, from Richmond, Virginia, to Jackson, Mississippi. They even spread to northern states like Ohio and west all the way to Nevada. In addition to lunch counters, protestors “held sit-ins” at museums, libraries, swimming pools, beaches, parks and other locations.

Within three months, the sit-in movement spread to more than 55 cities in 13 states. It is estimated that more than 70,000 people took part.

By peacefully sitting down and only asking for what white people could already get, the Greensboro Four helped pave the way for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which mandated desegregation in all public accommodations.

McNeil gets a little emotional whenever he comes back and visits the Woolworth’s-turned Civil Rights Museum in Greensboro. In October, he was back in Greensboro for his alma mater’s homecoming football game against Florida A&M. His beloved Aggies won big on this day, easily taking care of the Rattlers, 42-17.

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more than 55 cities in 13 states.
It is estimated that more than
70,000 people took part.**

“I’m proud of what we did here,” the retired general said as he looked around the lunch counter before heading out to watch the Aggies take the football field. “I think a lot of the time people sit back and wait for someone else to take the risk if there is a wrong that needs to be made right.

Sometimes, you just have to ask yourself, ‘Why not us?’”

(Editor’s note: Joyner is assigned to the Headquarters AFRC public affairs office at Robins AFB, Georgia. McNeil and his wife, Ina, have raised five children, and they taught all of them the value of asking the question, “Why not us?” Not long before the interview for this story took place, McNeil got a call that one of his sons and his wife had been arrested for demonstrating against a controversial oil pipeline that is planned to run within a half-mile of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota and across the Missouri River, the main source of drinking water for those living on the reservation.)

INTRODUCING FORD STEVENS

Reservist pens aviation thriller with Citizen Airman as the hero

By Bo Joyner

About a year and a half ago, an Air Force Reserve colonel with a passion for reading started looking for a good work of fiction that featured a Citizen Airman as the hero. When he couldn’t find a book that fit the bill, he decided to do something about it: He wrote his own.

Col. Larry Colby, whose call sign is Cheese, recently completed writing “The Devil Dragon Pilot,” a military-aviation thriller that introduces the world to Ford Stevens, an Air Force Reserve B-1 pilot and world-class action hero.

Here’s a brief look at what to expect from “The Devil Dragon Pilot,” taken from Colby’s website, colbyaviationthrillers.com: “Concealed deep within China’s inland borders is one of the most secretive airplanes ever flown, known as Devil Dragon. She’s sleek, unbelievably fast and mysterious. Her test pilots have one mission in mind: make her test flights successful for operational use as soon as possible. Or sooner.

“But when strange transmissions of pilots are recorded without an aircraft appearing on radar and bizarre cell phone signals are detected at towers hundreds of miles apart, the intelligence community team is set in motion, and U.S. Air Force Reserve pilot Ford Stevens is asked to take on the most dangerous assignment of his life. . . .”

The book was released in electronic, print and audio formats in December.

“I had never written a book before, but I thought, ‘What the heck, let’s give it a shot,’” Colby said.

For about a year, the colonel got up early every morning and wrote a page or two of his novel before heading to work at the National Defense University’s Eisenhower School. There, Colby, who is on an active Guard and Reserve tour, is a faculty member in the Strategic Leadership Department and co-leader of the Health Care Industry Study Program.

“I found early mornings were the best time to grab a few minutes to write,” he said. “It’s amazing what you can get done in a year just writing a page or two at a time.”

Colby said he drew a lot from his own military experience in writing “The Devil Dragon Pilot.” He earned his commission from the Marine Corps in 1992 through the platoon leaders course in Quantico, Virginia, and served as an AH-1W Cobra helicopter pilot. He later completed an inter-service transfer to the Air Force Reserve and flight training as a C-130H3 Hercules pilot. While flying C-130s, he was assigned to the 914th Airlift Wing at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York, a wing that is featured prominently in his book. (The 914th is in the process of converting from C-130 Hercules to KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft.)

After leaving Niagara, Colby served at the Pentagon in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) and Reserve Affairs, serving as a military assistant to the undersecretary and assistant secretary. He was also in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air



Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) as an executive officer and staff officer in Force Management Integration.

The colonel said one of the best things about writing the book was the support he received from his family throughout the process.

“My wife was extremely supportive,” he said, “and I have two young sons who are self-proclaimed action-movie experts, and they were a big help. They would act out the fight scenes for me so I could get all of the details right. They also helped me come up with the ending for the book.”

He said one of the hardest things about writing the book was finding a good stopping point each morning when it was time to get ready for work or head out for a morning run.

“It was tough because I would get on a roll and want to keep writing,” said Colby, an avid marathoner who was training for races a majority of the time he was working on his first novel. “But I knew I had things to do, so I would have to shut it down for the morning.”

Another tough part of the process was the Department of Defense prepublication review required of all employees who want to try their hand at writing.

“The DOD review is very in-depth and extensive, so it took about six months to complete,” Colby said. “But I’m proud to say that the review has been completed, and the book is aligned with the DOD for fiction publications.”

Colby is also proud of the fact that a portion of the proceeds from his book will go to a trio of veteran-related charities: Birdies for the Brave, Team Rubicon Global and the Headstrong Project.

For people who check out “The Devil Dragon Pilot” and enjoy the book, there’s good news: Colby is still getting up at about 3:30 each morning and turning out a couple of pages before heading to work. He’s already well into writing the second Ford Stevens novel.

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

TWENTY YEARS & COUNTING

RESERVE CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY AS AIR FORCE MAJOR COMMAND
BY BO JOYNER



The Air Force Reserve is celebrating 20 years as a major command this month. On Feb. 17, 1997, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman presided over a ceremony in Washington, D.C., that established Air Force Reserve Command as the Air Force's ninth major command. Prior to that date, the Reserve functioned as a field operating agency or a separate operating agency.

Dr. James Malachowski, Air Force Reserve Command's historian, said elevating the Reserve from a field operating agency to a major command was a key milestone in the organization's history.

"Becoming a major command was huge for the Reserve, but if you want to talk about why we became a MAJCOM, you really have to go back to the Gulf War," he said. "The Gulf War fundamentally changed the way the Reserve operated."

Malachowski said that before the Gulf War in 1991, the Reserve was primarily focused on organizing, training and equipping its people and units for possible contingencies. With the start of the war, the Reserve began providing combat-ready forces to fly, fight and win directly to the warfighter while still paying close attention to its responsibility of organizing, training and equipping.

"By the mid-1990s, Congress started to see the difference in the way the Reserve was operating and understand that the Air Force needed more reliable access to the Air Force Reserve," he said.

On Sept. 23, 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the fiscal year 1997 National Defense Authorization Act into law. This act included language that directed each of the military services to establish reserve commands. The act further directed the secretary of the Air Force to "assign to the Air Force Reserve Command all forces of the Air Force Reserve stationed in the continental United States" other than those assigned to the unified Special Operations Command.

U.S. Rep. Greg Laughlin of Texas led the call for Congress to grant major command status to the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine reserve components. And while Laughlin lost his seat before this idea became law, it was largely his concept and terminology that appeared in the FY 1997 NDAA.

Since the Reserve had been acting as an operational force for several years before achieving major command status, the transition to a major command had very little effect on the internal organization or the day-to-day operation of the headquarters, located at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. In fact, Maj. Gen. Robert A. McIntosh, AFRC commander in 1997, said most people wouldn't notice any changes.

"The Air Force has always, in effect, treated the Reserve as a command," he said. "However, this action formalizes in law our role as a proud partner in the total force."

The law did require realignment of the Air Reserve Personnel Center in the command's structure. ARPC was realigned from the Office of Air Force Reserve in the Pentagon to AFRC and, in the process, the status of ARPC was changed from an Air Force field operating agency to a major

command direct reporting unit.

AFRC did get a new emblem when it became a major command, but the change was minor. The wording on the emblem changed from "Air Force Reserve" to "Air Force Reserve Command," but the basic design stayed the same.

Before AFRC became a major command, Reservists wore the patch of their gaining major command on their flight suits and battle dress uniforms. Some people hoped that the new AFRC patch would replace those gaining major command patches. McIntosh said no.

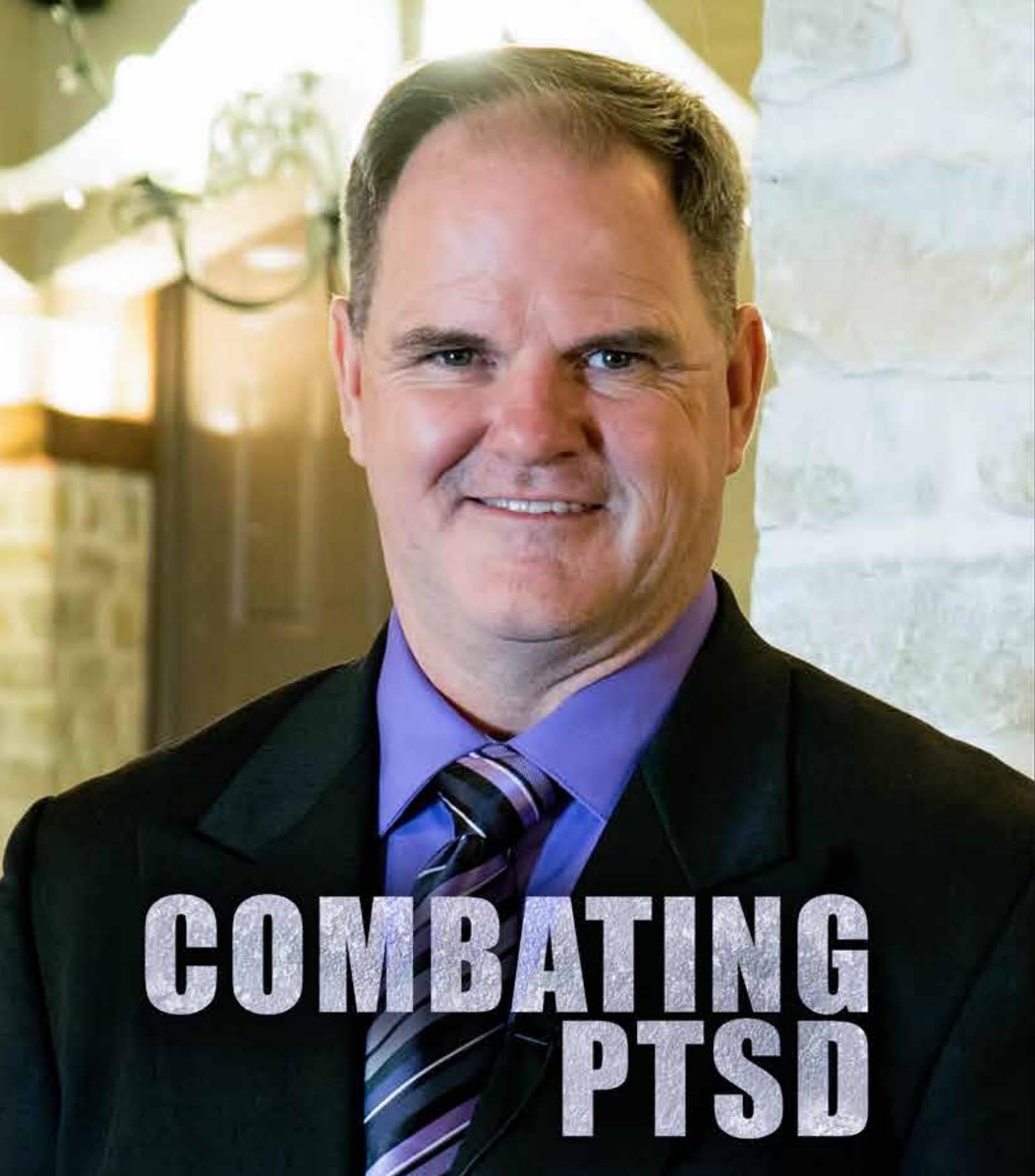
"We will continue to wear the gaining major command patch on the front of flight suits and fatigues," he said. "If we stop wearing the patches of the gaining commands, there will be a perception that the seamless daily operations enjoyed today have somehow changed. Our reputation as unquestionable team players is extremely important as we compete for resources into the next century."

While the elevation to major command status didn't have much of an impact on the day-to-day operation of the Air Force Reserve, Malachowski said he believes Feb. 17, 1997 is a seminal moment in Reserve history.

"The whole way of American warfare from Colonial times was to have a small standing army and volunteers ready to fill the ranks during times of need," he said. "That all changed with the first Gulf War when we became a Reserve force that was operational as well as strategic. We've continued to operate that way to this very day. By elevating the Air Force Reserve to major command status, the National Defense Act of 1997 cemented a major change in the way the Reserve operates."

(Editor's note: Information for this article was taken from the 1997 Annual History produced by the AFRC history office. Joyner is assigned to the command's public affairs office at Robins AFB.)





COMBATING PTSD

Reserve couple teams with Army psychiatrist to create nonprofit
By Bo Joyner

An Air Force Reserve couple, one a psychologist and the other a psychiatrist, along with an Army psychiatrist — all with extensive experience in helping people with post-traumatic stress disorder — have teamed up to create a nonprofit organization to help combat veterans ease back into society after returning from deployment.

Lt. Col. David Tharp, an Air Force Reserve individual mobilization augmentee psychologist assigned to the Air Force Academy who, as a civilian, is a PTSD program manager for the third largest Veterans Administration PTSD clinic in the country; Capt. Daniel Williams, who serves in the Texas Army National Guard as the 36th Infantry Division's psychiatrist for more than 13,000 troops; and Capt. Katherine Tharp, an Air Force Reserve psychiatrist currently in her second year of residency at Baylor Scott and White Hospital in Temple, Texas, created CombatPTSD.org with the idea of providing "warrior-style" training for people leaving a combat zone and returning to civilian life.

"The armed forces do a great job of training people before they deploy to a combat zone, but I don't think they do as good a job of training people to reintegrate back into society," David Tharp said. "What we have tried to do with CombatPTSD.org is provide warriors with reintegration training in a way they will understand and that makes sense to them."

He said it's important to realize that CombatPTSD.org is not intended to replace therapy in any way.

"We strongly encourage combat veterans to reach out to mental health providers and share with them their intent to get healthy and regain their life," Tharp said. "Our intent is to provide training, through workbooks, videos and conferences, to help warriors integrate back into life after combat."

Tharp said he also encourages Air Force Reservists to take advantage of Air Force Reserve Command's Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, which helps Reservists and their family members before, during and after a deployment. He said CombatPTSD.org is available at no charge to service members who might need more assistance in returning to life after combat.

Tharp said he began to see the need for an organization like CombatPTSD.org when he returned from a six-month deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan as a NATO commander and medical director in 2011. After suffering a spinal cord illness that caused him to lose most of the function below his C2/T3 vertebrae and having to identify more than 100 people killed in action, including a close friend, he said he returned from his deployment very different from the person he was when he had left. Suffering from significant physical challenges and diagnosed with PTSD, Tharp went to the Air Force and the VA for help.

"What I found is that we try to force warriors into a certain mold we call trauma therapy," he said. "I believe that combat trauma is not the same as female sexual trauma, which

is what the current PTSD treatments used in many of the military services and VA are based on. After experiencing war, I realized many researchers just don't get it, because they haven't been there. I believe it makes sense to work from the warrior framework already etched in the minds of the warrior. We teach military concepts to face military challenges."

One of the first things the Tharps and Williams do in their training is to help people suffering from PTSD symptoms understand that what they are going through is normal given what they have experienced in war.

"If civilians were to experience the same thing our warriors go through, they, too, would have the same reactions, responses and symptoms that combat veterans experience," Tharp said.

"People come to our conferences thinking there is something wrong with them or that they are broken and what they are experiencing can't be changed. We try to give them a future and a hope and let them know that what they are experiencing is often normal based on what they have been through and that it can be changed."

He said combat veterans often feel overwhelmed and can become despondent as their symptoms, such as sleep deprivation, irritability, anger and depression, begin to manifest in their lives.

"This results in emotional withdrawal and social avoidance, which can, in turn, compound the problem," Tharp said. "We call this resilience deficiency. In order to deal with these resiliency challenges, we created resiliency formation training."

RFT is the backbone of CombatPTSD.org.

"Our RFT trauma themes are broader in scope than the two leading evidence-based psychotherapies in the field today: cognitive processing therapy and prolonged exposure therapy," Tharp said. "CPT and PE have helped a lot of people, but they were both initially created to treat female rape victims, and that's a different research population than most warriors. The standard course of CPT does not include survivor guilt, moral injury or grief work as part of therapy for veterans, yet these are three of the most common issues facing war veterans. Up until now, there has not been a program specifically created to address combat veterans using combat training. That's why we came up with RFT."

To find out more about what the Tharps and Williams are doing to help combat PTSD, check out CombatPTSD.org.

(Joyner is assigned to the Headquarters AFRC public affairs office at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.)

Lt. Col. David Tharpe, an individual mobilization augmentee psychologist assigned to the Air Force Academy, said he began to see the need for an support organization like CombatPTSD.org when he returned from a six-month deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)



INDIVIDUAL RESERVE

By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman



When Tech. Sgt. Mark Parker first enlisted in the Air Force as a security forces Airman in 2001, he already knew his long-term goal was to become a civilian law enforcement officer. After serving four years on active duty, which included a deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he was ready to pursue his civilian goals but didn't want to entirely let go of the military.

"The individual mobilization augmentee program gave me the opportunity to have both," said Parker, who is assigned to the 673rd Security Forces Squadron at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

The IMA program provides Air Force Reservists some unique opportunities. It is actually part of a larger category called the Individual Reserve, which consists of IMAs and members of the Participating Individual Ready Reserve. The program dates back to the beginning of the Air Force Reserve. In 1947, Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, the first commander of Continental Air Command, a predecessor of today's Air Force Reserve Command, called for establishing a category of Reservists to support the active duty during times of crisis. Stratemeyer established the mobilization assignee program, and the Individual Reserve was born.

Today, the IR program is managed by the Headquarters Individual Reservist Readiness and Integration Organization, or HQ RIO, located at Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado. It consists of approximately 7,200 Reservists, representing nearly every Air Force specialty code and rank, who augment more than 50 major commands, combatant commands and government agencies.

To oversee this diverse population of individuals, HQ RIO comprises seven geographically separated detachments and eight operating locations. These locations manage assigned IRs on a daily basis to meet Air Force and combatant commander requirements.

Unlike traditional Reservists, who serve their minimum requirement of one weekend a month and two weeks a year with their assigned Reserve unit, IMAs are assigned to active-duty units and have flexible schedules. IMAs coordinate with their unit of assignment to create a training schedule that meets the needs of both them and the organization. In some cases, IMAs complete all of their annual participation requirements in consecutive days. Or, they can do so in smaller increments dispersed throughout the year, typically during the week versus weekends.

(Left to right)

Maj. Robert C. Rogers, an individual mobilization augmentee currently serving as the branch chief for the Air Force Civil Engineering Center's airfield pavements evaluation team, buys gasoline in glass jars from a local gas station in Liberia. (Master Sgt. James Dixon)

Chief Master Sgt. Timothy Lehane, a security forces IMA, said the Individual Reserve program provides him with the flexibility he needs to balance his military schedule with his civilian job. Without that flexibility, Lehane said it would be difficult to continue his Air Force career.

Col. Elizabeth Chamberlain, the IMA to the director of intelligence at 7th Air Force, brings a broad perspective on Air Force life and a specific knowledge of planned targeting to her intelligence community.

Tech. Sgt. Mark Parker, an IMA with the 673rd Security Forces Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, is also a police officer with the Prescott, Arizona, Police Department. (Courtesy photo)

Maj. Kyle Johnson took advantage of opportunities within the Individual Reserve to deploy to West Africa and support the fight against the Ebola virus.

IRs support both the peacetime and wartime missions of their active-duty organization. Their primary role is to provide backfill support for their unit when needed, but they can also volunteer their services to support exercises, contingencies, deployments, and other needs throughout the Air Force and Department of Defense.

IMAs are assigned to funded positions and participate with their active-duty unit for 24 to 36 days each year, depending on their career field. They receive standard pay, benefits and points toward retirement. On the other hand, members of the PIRR are assigned to unfunded billets and participate for retirement points only. These Reservists often serve as Air Force Academy liaison officers or with the Civil Air Patrol.

One aspect of the IR program that Parker cited as being important to him is the flexibility afforded when balancing his military schedule with his civilian job. Unlike traditional Reservists, IRs work closely with their active-duty supervisors to create a customized duty schedule. Parker said the set monthly unit training assembly schedule TRs must adhere to wouldn't work with his civilian career as a law enforcement officer.

"If it weren't for the program, I don't think I would be able to stay in the military," he said.

Chief Master Sgt. Timothy Lehane, another security forces IMA, echoed Parker's sentiments.

"I became an IMA because my state police duty schedule did not line up with the weekend drill schedule, and it was difficult getting time off," said Lehane, a 15-year veteran of the Connecticut state police. "I continue to stay because of the flexibility, and I can still contribute to the Air Force mission."

Of course, there are other reasons Airmen make the transition to the IR program. Col. Elizabeth Chamberlain, IMA to the intelligence director at 7th Air Force, Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, has spent time on active duty and as a full-time air reserve technician. She said the IR program has helped expand the possibilities for her career.

"I became an individual mobilization augmentee to seek broader intelligence and leadership opportunities," Chamberlain said. "The opportunity to move between the unit and IMA programs has really helped me cultivate insight into many aspects of (Air Force) Reserve Command."

In addition to expanding her personal horizons, Chamberlain enjoys supporting the active-duty mission. She said it's a great opportunity to influence Air Force policy and programming.

While she is currently assigned to Air Force Special Operations Command, Chamberlain previously worked for U.S. Pacific Command as the IMA to the intelligence director. In that role, she helped the Air Force prepare for future conflicts by improving advanced target development, the process of pre-determining strategic targets in the event of conflict.

During her time with PACOM, Chamberlain was also involved in planning two of the Department of Defense's largest readiness exercises: Key Resolve and Ulchi Focus

Guardian. She said the exacting and thorough nature of those exercises is what make the U.S. military such an effective fighting force. During her 20-plus years of service, the colonel has had the opportunity to work on more than 10 exercises at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

“It is challenging and very rewarding to throw yourself into these experiences and learn as much as you can while working to improve our doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures,” Chamberlain said.

There are a wide variety of opportunities for IRs in today’s Air Force. In addition to augmenting positions around the globe, real-world missions and deployments are frequently available. Maj. Robert C. Rogers and Kyle Johnson both had opportunities to support the fight against the Ebola virus in West Africa.

In 2015, Johnson, who was serving on active-duty orders as a communications squadron detachment commander, deployed to the Barclay Training Center in Monrovia, Republic of Liberia. He led his team of more than 30 civilian and military command-and-control specialists to establish a deployed communications system to serve as the nerve center for Operation United Assistance.

He and his team set up some of the most sophisticated tactical communications equipment available, forward-deployed equipment, and provided network support and help desk functions.

Rogers played an entirely different role at the tail end of Operation United Assistance. He was serving as branch chief of the airfield pavement evaluation team at the Air Force Civil Engineering Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, when his small, elite unit of engineers was called to evaluate the tarmac at the Roberts International Airport in Liberia during the drawdown of Department of Defense operations there.

“Our mission was to document the end condition of the runway following operations,” Rogers said. “We found out that the Air Force did not cause additional damage to the airfield. Our structural testing showed that the underlying layers are stronger than previously reported and don’t need a full overhaul.”

Rogers was able to present his findings directly to the U.S. ambassador to Liberia. He felt it was the most fulfilling mission of his career.

Along with the opportunity to continue serving, IRs also receive the same benefits available to traditional Reservists, including TRICARE Reserve Select, tuition assistance and the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Of course, the Air Force also gains a valuable asset in the IR, whose members bring a diverse wealth of corporate civilian knowledge to the table.

Parker, the security forces IMA at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, is a civilian police officer in Prescott, Arizona. He specializes in impaired driver enforcement and is a certified traffic crash reconstructionist. He lends these skills to the security forces Airmen at Elmendorf. During his annual training, he conducts different educational events for his Airmen, instructing them

on how to utilize speed-measuring devices and identify impaired drivers. He also teaches a course that certifies Elmendorf’s patrolmen to administer field sobriety tests to possibly impaired drivers.

“I really enjoy teaching and interacting with the new Airmen,” Parker said. “It’s very rewarding knowing that I am able to provide the Air Force with no-cost training, and the patrolmen are always so motivated to go out and apply what they have just learned. It reminds me of myself when I was on active duty.”

Second Lt. Brandon J. Kyle was an enlisted intelligence analyst and traditional Reservist for five years before he heard about a commissioning opportunity in the IR. He was supporting the 24th Air Force Joint Intelligence Operations Center on active-duty orders when he responded to an all-call for the Deserving Airman Commissioning Program. He was selected and accepted into a position as an IMA with the PACOM JIOC.

Along with the opportunity to continue serving, IRs also receive the same benefits available to traditional Reservists, including TRICARE Reserve Select, tuition assistance and the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

With Officer Training School completed and an IMA position lined up with an active-duty unit, Kyle said he is excited about his new career path. Since the intelligence career field is critically undermanned, he anticipates many chances to serve on active duty and wear the uniform every day.

“I’m looking forward to something different. This is another stage in life, another stone unturned, and I’m excited to augment the active duty,” Kyle said.

The IR program has positions available to members coming off active duty, TRs and troops from sister services. Airmen can use the Reserve Vacancy tool in AFPC (Air Force Personnel Center) Secure (available through the Air Force Portal) to find IR positions. Others who are interested in the IR program can contact an Air Force Reserve recruiter for information on current openings. Visit www.afreserve.com to find a recruiter.

Additional information about the IR program is available at www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/hqrio.aspx.

(Huffman is assigned to the HQ RIO public affairs office at Buckley AFB.)

OUTSTANDING YOUNG AMERICAN

Reservist honored for supporting deployers, families

A Reservist who runs a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing military members who have deployed, along with their families, with free vacations received national recognition for his efforts.

The United States Junior Chamber International (Jaycees) honored Staff Sgt. Ryan Charrier as one of its 2016 10 Outstanding Young Americans for his involvement in Operation ReConnect. The Junior Chamber International is a nonprofit organization of young people between 18 and 40 years old. Founded in St. Louis in 1915, JCI encourages young people to become responsible citizens and participate in efforts that promote economic development, international cooperation, goodwill and understanding.

Charrier, an A-10 Thunderbolt II crew chief with the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, received the award during the organization’s national conference in Detroit in September.

Maj. Daniel Posch, 442nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander, nominated Charrier for the award.

In his nomination, Posch wrote that Charrier “exemplifies the Air Force’s core value of service before self. He has dedicated his life to helping those who sacrifice so much. Through Operation ReConnect, he provides an outlet for military families to bond and reinvigorate what’s most important: love, friendship and peace of mind.”

Charrier started Operation ReConnect in 2015 after one of his co-workers, Tech. Sgt. Ken Campbell, who he was deployed with to Afghanistan in 2014, told him that he’d been in the Air Force 28 years and had never been on a vacation. Charrier, who knew several families with beach houses on the Gulf of Mexico, made some phone calls from Afghanistan and found a beach house in Gulf Shores, Alabama, that Campbell and his family could use for free for a week after returning from the deployment.

A few months later, during the 442nd AW’s Christmas party, Campbell’s wife found Charrier and broke into tears as she thanked him for his kindness.

“At that moment, I knew that was my purpose in life,” Charrier said.

In 2015, Charrier decided to leave his civilian job and move from his home in Missouri to Gulf Shores to scale up his operation and form the nonprofit organization. From August of that year until this past November, a period of about 15 months, he said Operation ReConnect “has been able to serve just under 100 families, providing more than \$200,000 worth of accommodations, meals and activities at no cost to them.”

“Starting off with virtually zero resources, I would say things have progressed as expected,” Charrier said. “2017 will be very interesting, to say the least.”

Charrier said the property donations his organization receives are not limited to the Gulf Shores/Orange Beach area.

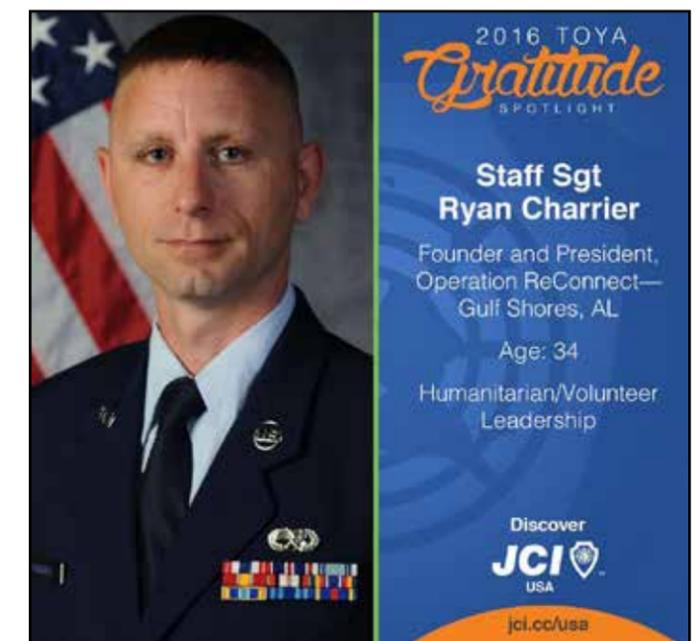
“We have received property donations all across the country and even several outside of the United States,” he said. “We had our first international ReConnect trip in October. We were able to provide free accommodations to a combat veteran and spouse in Belize.”

Charrier said people who are interested in registering for Operation ReConnect can do so on the program’s website at www.operationreconnect.org.

“The selection process is simple,” he said. “Once registered, our team will match a donated property to a specific week requested by a veteran. In a scenario where multiple veterans register for the same week, we simply select the family based on the date returned from deployment. The most recent returning deployers — within 12 months — have priority. People from all branches and ranks — active duty, guard and reserve — are encouraged to apply. We serve all warriors.”

Operation ReConnect can also be found on Facebook (www.facebook.com/operationreconnectgulfcoast).

(Staff reports)



The United States Junior Chamber International (Jaycees) recognized Staff Sgt. Ryan Charrier as one of its 2016 10 Outstanding Young Americans.

BE THERE

What is a wingman's role in preventing suicide?

By Lt. Col. Mario Tommasi

As members of the Air Force family, we've all had training in suicide prevention. Still, many people are uncomfortable with the topic and remain unsure of how to aid a friend or co-worker in distress. In this article, we'll look into some of the common reasons for this uneasiness and encourage wingmen to embrace their Air Force training in suicide prevention.

One common reason people feel uncomfortable with the topic of suicide prevention is they are not experts in mental health. So, it is only natural to feel like they lack the competencies to deal with a suicidal Airman. This feeling is understandable since gaining expertise in mental health typically requires advanced coursework in counseling. Most experts in the field have a master's or doctorate degree with licenses to practice in the counseling profession.

But, as we shall see, wingmen do not need to be licensed counselors to perform effectively when dealing with someone in distress.

Another reason for the uneasiness stems from the way we think about our perceived inability to influence other people's behaviors. This sort of thinking has the following train of thought: "If someone really wants to kill himself, he is going to do it. So there is nothing I can do to prevent it." This thought process limits our effectiveness when dealing with a member who is in distress because we conclude, falsely, that we are not able to help.

To reverse this thinking pattern and reveal a way we can effectively perform our duties as wingmen, take a moment to consider the following two questions: Does a suicidal Airman want to die? Does a suicidal Airman want his or her pain to go away?

Correctly, almost everyone would choose the second question, because we intuitively know the distressed person is in some sort of unwanted emotional pain. Reducing the extreme emotional pain that an Airman is feeling is a primary factor in lessening the likelihood of suicidal behavior.

The pain people feel stems from factors in their lives that are causing severe disruptions. No two people are the same, but there are similar risk factors among people with suicidal ideations. Untreated mental health problems, relationship issues, extreme professional stressors and substance abuse issues are some of the more common risk factors.

Airmen who are thinking about suicide likely have many risk factors that combine in a way that feels hopeless and overwhelming. Moreover, people suffering from this hopeless, overwhelming feeling are desperate to maintain some sense of control.

But with everything in their lives going wrong, being in control feels impossible. Suicide becomes the only part of their otherwise chaotic lives for which they feel like they have control.

As high-performing wingmen, we can learn the competencies and skills needed to reduce the emotional pain of a distressed member and help him or her regain control of his or her life.

So, how can you help a suicidal Airman's pain go away? The most important thing you can do is follow the steps you learned in Air Force suicide prevention training. The training emphasizes what actions you can take when someone communicates suicidal thinking. The acronym ACE reminds us to "ask, care and escort."

We should directly ask an Airman in distress whether he or she is suicidal, and we should always take his or her comments and actions seriously. We should care for the distressed member and demonstrate that we are there to help him or her. Finally, we should act decisively and rely on our training to get the suicidal person immediate help by physically taking him or her to a helping resource.

An important aspect of ACE is being a good "reflective" listener. Reflective listening is a two-step process. The first step teaches us to face the speaker and simply listen to the content and feelings the speaker is communicating. The second part of reflective listening involves letting the speaker know that you understand him or her by repeating or paraphrasing what you heard.

When you practice reflective listening, it demonstrates to distressed Airmen that you care and want to help them resolve some of their problems and thus lessen their pain.

Another important tool a wingman can use when dealing with a distressed Airman is presence — simply spending time with the Airman. People in distress often feel like they are a

burden to others and thus tend to withdraw from their social networks.

As a result, their social support shrinks, opportunities to have enjoyable activities lessen, and the person becomes increasingly isolated and alone. When you spend time with a distressed Airman, you help reverse this process by getting the person involved in pro-social activities and letting him or her know that someone is there to help with his or her problems. Always keep in mind that you should practice "ACE" and escort your wingman to help immediately if he or she is making suicidal statements or exhibiting suicidal behavior.

Another tool a wingman can use to help an Airman in distress is to teach basic problem-solving skills. When people are in distress, they often experience a psychological process called "cognitive narrowing." This process acts to limit distressed people's ability to see past their pain and reduces their ability to devise solutions to their problems.

The problem-solving process includes defining the problem, brainstorming a variety of alternatives and then choosing the best solution. Sometimes, all you need to do is help the distressed Airman take each of his or her problems one by one rather than trying to solve all of them at one time.

When you help people in this way, their emotional pain can be reduced as they cope more effectively with problems that previously seemed unresolvable. Again, remember your Air Force training and ACE. Never hesitate to escort an Airman to professional help if he or she is suicidal.

Suicide is a topic that raises many uneasy feelings. But these feelings do not need to limit our ability to perform at our best as wingmen and help an Airman in distress. Instead, we can use this feeling to remind us of ACE and that a suicidal person does not want to die but wants his or her emotional pain to go away.

As a wingman, you can help reduce the pain that a distressed Airman is experiencing by recognizing your own discomforts and relying on your training in suicide prevention.

For more information, contact your local chaplain's office or your director of psychological health, or check out Military One Source (<http://www.militaryonesource.mil>) or the Psychological Health Advocacy Program. There is also an array of helping resources outside the military, including the Veterans Administration's telephone helpline (1-800-273-8255) and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (www.sprc.org).

(Tommasi, an individual mobilization augmentee, is the consultant for psychology to the chief of aerospace medicine in the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command surgeon general's office at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, and the senior leader for AFRC psychologists.)

Phoenix Ravens

SPECIALIZED SECURITY FORCES AIRMEN DEDICATED TO PROVIDING PROTECTION BEYOND OUR BORDERS

By Gene Van Deventer



(Left to right) Staff Sgt. Christian Cuevas, Senior Airman Marlo Bolles, Master Sgt. Darrien Thornton, Tech. Sgt. Devontay Williams and Staff Sgt. Brandon Dendy serve as Phoenix Ravens with the 94th Airlift Wing at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia. (Don Peek)

(Editor's note: Air Force Reserve Command and Air Mobility Command have enjoyed a close working relationship since 1968. Following is one in a series of stories designed to focus on current successful AFRC/AMC partnerships and how the commands are planning to maintain and expand that relationship into the future.)

Twenty years ago, the Air Mobility Command commander, Gen. Walter Kross, instituted the creation of a specialized element of trained security forces members dedicated to providing close-in protection for strategic airlift assets and personnel. The unit was named the Phoenix Ravens, and today this special subset of security forces, which includes Air Force Reserve Citizen Airmen, continues to support AMC and Air Force Reserve Command airlift missions transiting into international hotspots around the globe.

The birth of this security element came in the aftermath of terrorist events around the world such as the 1996 Khobar

Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia that left 19 U.S. military members dead and nearly 500 coalition forces injured. Airmen serving in-country at the time were there in support of Operation Southern Watch, the coalition flying activity dedicated to enforcing a no-fly zone in southern Iraq. The Khobar Towers bombing prompted military decision-makers to identify threat risks in areas where the U.S. presence was expanding without the protective ground support that it was accustomed to when operating out of secured locations.

Raven teams are usually small in number, consisting of two to five specially trained and equipped security forces personnel who deploy as aircrew members on special missions. The AMC Threat Working Group determines when Raven teams are required. Raven teams help detect, deter and counter threats to aircraft and personnel. In addition, they advise aircrews on force protection measures and specifics concerning the assessment of airfield conditions.

AFRC wing commanders may also direct Phoenix Raven teams to accompany home-station airlift missions to high-threat areas outside the continental United States.

Recently, an Air Force Reserve 94th Security Forces Squadron Raven team from Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, was called upon to conduct an AMC special assigned airlift mission in support of Operation Resolute in the U.S. Central Command theater of operations. Master Sgt. Darrien Thornton led this three-person detail that also included Tech. Sgt. Devontay Williams and Staff Sgt. Christian Cuevas.

For this particular mission, the Raven team provided security support for members of the 437th Airlift Wing, an active-duty AMC unit at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, assisting them in the delivery of mission-essential command and control equipment. During this short-notice, six-day Raven mission, Thornton's team provided ground security while Islamic State enemy forces were known to be operating in close proximity to the designated airfield. The mission covered more than 12,000 miles and was completed successfully without any security incidents.

The Phoenix Raven training course is conducted by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. According to the center, the course is an intensive three-week, 12-hour-a-day experience that covers subjects involving cross-cultural awareness, legal considerations, embassy operations, airfield survey techniques, explosive ordnance awareness, aircraft searches and unarmed self-defense techniques. Students are exposed to more than 70 use-of-force scenarios where stress is simulated using role players.

Training includes instruction and realistic practical exercises in antiterrorism/force protection, weapon system security, verbal judo, combative sessions, tactical baton employment and advanced firearms proficiency. Phoenix Raven candidates are also instructed on anti-hijacking duty in cooperation with the federal air marshal program.

Using the latest in proven technologies and methods from lessons-learned and from other agencies, the qualification course is constantly updated to provide the best training possible.

Phoenix Raven training is designed to provide security forces members with the skills required for their unique mission and builds on basic security forces skills. AFRC is allotted four course slots per class for a total of 16 seats a year. The course is physically and mentally strenuous with a class pass rate that fluctuates between 55 percent and 85 percent.

"Getting successfully through the course is not a cakewalk," Thornton said. "When I initially volunteered to attend the training, I was of the mindset that the course wouldn't be that tasking. I was convinced otherwise very quickly because of the level of physicality required of the students and the non-stop, around-the-clock conditioning drills.

"I've been a Raven since 2008, when I completed the course, but my graduation didn't come easy. It took me three tries. In 2003, I suffered a broken thumb during a 'hit man' drill and was released from the course because of that injury. In 2004, I got my second chance to become a Raven, but, unfortunately, during a contact kicking drill with one of my classmates I fractured my left femur and spent five days in the hospital.

"I was thinking about giving up hope on trying to achieve that elusive Raven patch and number, but after some intense physical therapy, which led to my full recovery, I decided to give it another try. The third time was the charm, and in 2008, I successfully completed the course, a significant highlight in my Air Force career."

AFRC has identified security forces members at specific locations who are Raven qualified. Upon graduation, Ravens are issued a lifetime numeric identifier and receive a special experience identifier as well.

To maintain Raven currency, security forces personnel have to complete annual refresher training and conduct two actual missions that are graded as "proficient" by a qualified team leader. Earning and maintaining Raven currency entitles Airmen to wear a round Phoenix Raven patch (worn on the right shoulder of a Raven's green flight suit when in flying status) and a small tab identifier patch inscribed "Raven" (worn on the left shoulder of Airman battle uniforms).

Within AFRC there are no unit type codes for this specialty. Once a request is received at the command headquarters, usually the requirement is for a future flying mission within a 60-day period. Once advertised, AFRC Ravens can volunteer through the HQ AFRC Raven program manager for those positions and do so in strong numbers. There are times, however, when short-notice requirements necessitate immediate 72-hour fill actions.

According to Master Sgt. Rob Holland, HQ AFRC Raven program manager, those requests do happen frequently. However, if they result from missions originating at active-duty locations where AFRC has assigned Ravens, the command has a very good track record of filling those requests with volunteers.

Typically, Raven missions last from two to five days. Raven elements are spread across the CONUS at airlift locations featuring C-5 Galaxy, C-17 Globemaster III, and C-130 Hercules aircraft platforms.

"Participation in the program provides AFRC Ravens with the opportunity to experience a total force partnership concept with a direct linkage to Headquarters Air Force-level strategy on a world stage," Holland said. "The AFRC Ravens take great pride in being a vital part of our nation's defense, and I am proud to be supporting them in answering their call to duty."

(Van Deventer is a program analyst in the Directorate of Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection's Installation Support Branch at Headquarters AFRC, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.)

STRENGTH Through Diversity

By Lt. Col. Denise Kerr

At a hangar on Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, 55 cadets from ROTC Det. 130 assembled for Howard University's Combat Dining-In. A buffet table was set up with an array of Afro-Cuban food: black beans and rice, brown chicken and salad. Some cadets were adorned in Airman battle uniforms, while others were dressed in physical training gear – all ready for battle.



Cadet Dontae Bell, a member of ROTC Det. 30 at Howard University, is studying economics and said he is interested in Air Force intelligence and cyber operations.

The guest speaker for the event was Maj. Gen. Bruce Miller, deputy chief of the Air Force Reserve. Miller was there, primarily, to promote the benefits of serving in the Air Force Reserve to students of historically black colleges. Secondly, he looked forward to participating in a water gun fight.

The cadets attentively listened to Miller describe his philosophy on maintaining balance, agility and readiness along with personal anecdotes.

Although Howard is one of the nation's oldest historically black colleges, Detachment 130 also includes students from Georgetown University, American University, Catholic University, George Washington University, Marymount University, Trinity University and the University of District Columbia.

"I love my detachment because we are such a diverse detachment," said Lt. Col. Garner Joyner, the organization's commander. "We have about 40 percent African-Americans and 60 percent other, and with that my cadets get a unique perspective that most detachments do not get."

Joyner said he tells his students that the high ratio of African-Americans who make up the detachment is not representative of the active-duty Air Force. According to the Air Force demographics website, African-Americans represent 14 percent of active-duty Airmen and 17 percent in the Air Force Reserve. In March 2015, Air Force senior officials launched initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion in order to "retain talent from an increasingly diverse population," according to the memorandum.

Last summer, Maj. Tiana Jackson, an African-American Reservist, became an assistant professor of aerospace studies at Howard through the Voluntary Limited Period of Active Duty program.

"It's nice to see someone who looks like you in a position that you are trying to get to," Jackson said. "It is really hard to see yourself there if you do not have any examples."



Cadet Acacia Robinson, a junior from Inglewood, California, is interested in pursuing healthcare administration in either the Air Force Reserve or active-duty Air Force.

Jackson sees her role as a mentor, counselor and demystifier. "I let the cadets know that they do not have to do the traditional route in the military. They can go into the Reserve and return to active duty if they want."

Being on campus with a myriad of student groups, Joyner said he has to tackle the barrier of educating reluctant parents on the benefits of the organization.

"You can get the students interested, but it is sometimes the parents who will drive them away from ROTC because they do not understand the benefits of being in the military," he said. "It sometimes can be very difficult to get students to even join."

After Miller made his remarks, a hastily decorated toilet, which functioned as the "grog," was placed in front of the head table. A cadet ceremoniously described the terrible concoction of salad dressing, Red Bull, tomato sauce, vanilla and broth that he mixed into the bowl. One by one, singled-out cadets low-crawled while being assaulted with water guns to drink from the grog.

When the toilet bowl was emptied, cadets performed several skits that revolved around falling in formation, including one that resembled a Monty Python movie. Even Joyner was parodied by a senior cadet in a high-pitched voice, chirping, "Complacency is aggression cadets!"

The event ended with a rousing water gun fight, a free-wheeling game that involved buckets of water and folding chairs used as shields. There was no clear winner, as all of the cadets were soaking wet while the cadre and guests remained dry.

Miller topped off the evening by shouting "aim high," and the cadets answered with "fly, fight and win," a cheer they repeated three times.

Although the cadets were happily wet, they organized into teams and cleaned up the hangar.

"I tell everybody that the military has made me a better person," Joyner said. "The Air Force has pushed me to get better or get out. It has given me educational opportunities that I would have never even thought of and opportunities to grow and just to learn."

(Kerr is assigned to the Reserve Policy Integration Directorate in the Office of Air Force Reserve at the Pentagon.)

Air Force provides opportunities for ROTC cadets to serve in Reserve

For the first time ever, Air Education and Training Command has been tasked with producing 100 officers from Air Force ROTC detachments for selected Reserve assignments beginning in fiscal year 2018. ROTC is a program offered at more than 1,100 college campuses across the country. Historically, AFROTC officers received active-duty assignments or requested Selected Reserve assignments on a case-by-case basis.

In 2016, the Air Force launched a Voluntary Limited Period of Active Duty program, which filled a variety of ROTC positions with qualified reserve component Airmen.

"Out of the over 60 Citizen Airmen who were selected, five are now detachment commanders, and many more were selected by a recent total force board for command starting in 2017," said Maj. Leonard Sobieski, chief of Reserve accessions and training. "With nearly half of the AFROTC detachments having air reserve component officers, we are truly on a path to AFROTC producing total force officers."

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Phoenix Ravens

Specialized security forces Airmen provide protection beyond our borders

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