

Citizen AIRMAN

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Air Force Reserve



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From the Top

By Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command



No better time to be a Reservist

The year 2006 has been a time of significant accomplishment for us in all areas of the Air Force Reserve. We should remember those things that provided exciting opportunities, those things that challenged us and the missions we accomplished despite the challenges. In addition, we should pause and give thanks for the support we've received from our families, neighbors and employers this year, to remember and to honor those who have lost their lives in this long war, and to be excited about what lies ahead in 2007.

This year we continued to exceed our professional standard of excellence — providing the world's best mutual support to the Air Force and our joint partners — flying and fighting as an unrivaled wingman. At Balad Air Base, Iraq, the 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron mirrors where our Air Force is going. The squadron features an active-duty commander, an Air National Guardsman as operations officer and a Reservist as first sergeant.

I recently returned from Afghanistan where I had the good fortune to meet with the men and women of the 384th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. The number 384 was designated by adding the Reservists from the 303rd Fighter Squadron and the regular component 81st FS. This team decided to do more than just put Total Force into practice. It created unity at a level the individual members will remember for the rest of their careers.

No one does this — working and flying together with the regular component — better than the Air Force Reserve. We have done it for almost 40 years. The collective efforts of regular, Guard and Reserve forces continue to yield tremendous successes for the joint team and our nation.

Since the holiday season is often a time for reflection, I will briefly share some of our command highlights. We activated a new space unit; the 482nd, 419th, 301st and 944th Fighter Wings returned from Balad; we dedicated the Spirit of Ronald Reagan, a new C-17 at March Air Reserve Base, Calif; we are flying weekly channel missions in support of Combined Joint Task Force — Horn of Africa; we accelerated the Base Realignment and Closure action in New Orleans due to Hurricane Katrina; the 624th Civil Engineer Squadron construction project at Camp Navarro, Phillipines, built a basketball court for hundreds of children; we provided medical assistance to the people of El Salvador; our Patriotic World Tour joined the Band of the Air Force Reserve with Lee Greenwood on a round-the-world trip; Reservists

from Willow Grove, Niagara Falls and Peterson deployed to the Southwest Asia area of responsibility; the 303rd FS won the A-10 Hawgsmoke competition; we selected the initial cadre for our new F-22 associate unit in Alaska; the 442nd FW deployed to Bagram; the 93rd Bomb Squadron participated in Valiant Shield; security forces deployed to Bagram; our B-52s were the first to be Litening ready; Portland and Milwaukee began their drawdowns; the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron began a fourth four-month rotation of duty moving patients around the continental United States; the 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown participated in a significant oil spill response exercise with first responders; and our recruiters topped their goal again — for the sixth consecutive year! We saw the first flight of a C-130 Avionics Modernization Program aircraft. During the dedication of the Air Force Memorial, Air Force Reservists played an integral part from wearing vintage uniforms to participating in a mass enlistment on stage to offering information about the Air Force Reserve to the thousands of people in attendance.

These contributions are, in fact, only a few of this year's highlights. I would certainly need a book to cover the depths of your great accomplishments and dedication to duty. Dedication to duty is your gift to this nation. This precious gift doesn't come easy. It's hard to be away from home, family and loved ones, especially during the holidays. It's also hard on families that are left behind. The important job you do has earned a special place in the hearts and minds of Americans. They find strength in your courage and inspiration in your sacrifices.

Whenever I wear the Air Force uniform, I am always awed by the number of community members who are compelled to approach me and ask questions or, in the case of war veterans, just share a war story or two. They never allow me to leave without thanking me for my service. However, I tell them that I work at a desk in the Pentagon; our Airmen do all the work in some tough places.

The Total Force is constantly redefined through the innovation that comes from unity of thought. We are one team, same fight ... an unrivaled wingman, with a shared, disciplined combat focus. I look forward to serving with and seeing all of you in the year ahead. Jan and I wish you a happy holiday season and New Year filled with opportunity and blessings. Be safe, fly safe and thank you for all you do! ★

Chief's View

By Chief Master Sgt. Jackson A. Winsett
Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Force Reserve Command



This holiday season, let's not forget those still fighting for freedom

Another year comes to an end, and we enter the holiday season. Now is the perfect time for all of us to reflect upon our numerous blessings and accomplishments.

In August, our commander, Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, and I toured the Southwest Asia area of responsibility and saw many members of Air Force Reserve Command standing shoulder to shoulder with our active-duty and Air National Guard counterparts in support of the Global War on Terrorism. What a rewarding trip.

Be assured that you have proven that today's Air Force and its new steady state, mission changes and immediate need for recapitalization can and will be handled by the most professional Citizen Airmen America has to offer. I applaud your attitude, efforts and success. You truly are the best!

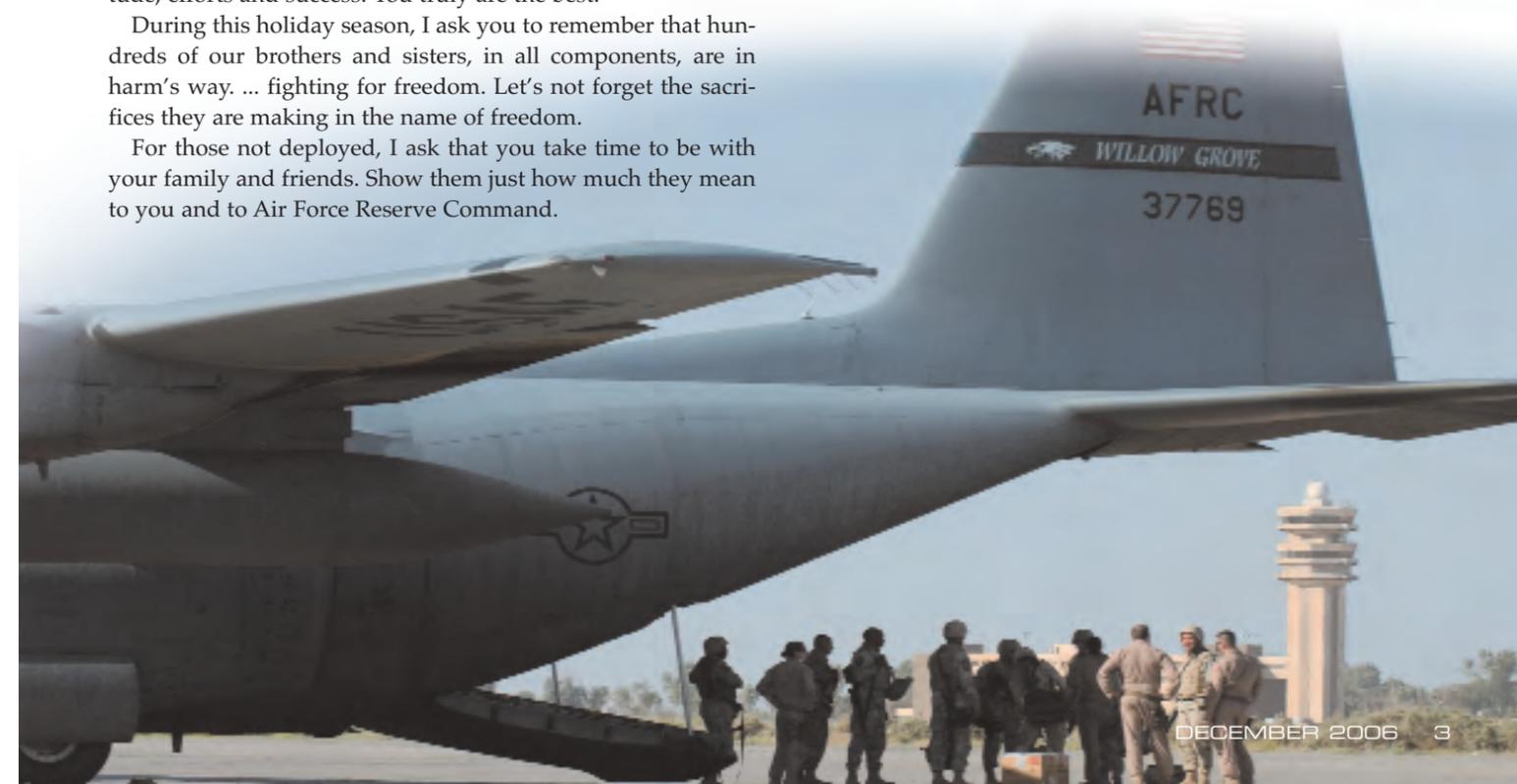
During this holiday season, I ask you to remember that hundreds of our brothers and sisters, in all components, are in harm's way. ... fighting for freedom. Let's not forget the sacrifices they are making in the name of freedom.

For those not deployed, I ask that you take time to be with your family and friends. Show them just how much they mean to you and to Air Force Reserve Command.

Should you know some fellow Reservists who are deployed, and their families live near you, stop by and share the holiday spirit with them. Remember, it could have been you who was deployed rather than them.

The year 2006 was absolutely astounding for the command in every respect. Your performance was, without exception, noteworthy. As you prepare for 2007 and the vast number of changes that are on the horizon, I ask you to be even more vigilant than before. Awareness of your "wingman" and our mission requirements and responsibilities, along with our ability to meet the mission, is critical. Preparation is the key. Please accept my sincere thanks for all that you did and accomplished.

On behalf of the Winsett family, "Happy Holidays," and I look forward to serving with you in 2007. ★



Mission Accomplished

Astronaut (and Air Force Reservist) Michael E. Fossum works in Space Shuttle Discovery's cargo bay during a mission this summer. The astronaut, who is an individual mobilization augmentee colonel assigned to the F-16 Program Office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, performed three spacewalks during Discovery's 13-day, 5-million-mile journey. Colonel Fossum and his crewmates were able to accomplish all of the main objectives of their mission: flying an improved external tank, testing on-orbit shuttle repair procedures and preparing the International Space Station for future assembly. (Photo courtesy of NASA)



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Front cover: The 926th Fighter Wing, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La., is the first unit in Air Force Reserve Command to be closed by the latest Base Realignment and Closure Commission actions. For the story, see page 16. (Master Sgt. Chance C. Babin)

Gen. T. Michael Moseley *Chief of Staff, United States Air Force*

Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley *Commander, Air Force Reserve Command*

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Red Tail Tribute

The 944th Fighter Wing at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., honored the Tuskegee Airmen Aug. 2 with the dedication of an airpark in front of the wing's headquarters building. More than 50 original Tuskegee Airmen attended the ceremony. The airpark features an F-16 static aircraft painted in World War II Tuskegee colors in recognition of the "Red Tail" warriors. Sixty-five years ago, the United States launched a program to train the first black military pilots at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Tuskegee, Ala. From 1942 to 1946, 994 pilots received their commissions and pilot wings. Black navigators, bombardiers and gunnery crews trained at selected military bases elsewhere in the United States. Tuskegee pilots were assigned to the 301st and 302nd Fighter Squadrons, which are now part of the 944th FW at Luke. "The Tuskegee Airmen are deeply grateful for the honor that the 944th Fighter Wing has bestowed upon us by the dedication of the memorial park with the beautiful red-tail aircraft," said retired Lt. Col. Robert Ashby, an original Tuskegee Airman. "But more important is that the Air Force has people caring and carrying on the legacy that was started years ago." (Tech. Sgt. Bradley Smith)





Fancy Flying

Maj. Ed Hamill puts the Air Force Reserve aerobatic biplane to the test over Lake Michigan while practicing for the 2006 Chicago Air and Water Show along with the Red Baron Pizza Squadron. As a member of the Reserve, Major Hamill teaches other pilots to fly F-16s at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. As a civilian air show performer at events around the country, he takes viewers on a tour of the last 100 years of flight with his Living the Dream air show. After the show, spectators can talk to Major Hamill and an Air Force Reserve recruiter about how the Reserve can help them live their dream. (Maj. Ed Hamill)

Round the Reserve

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

OSI Recruiting Special Agents for IMA Program

The Air Force Office of Special Investigations is recruiting staff sergeants and technical sergeants to serve as special agents in the Air Force Reserve's individual mobilization augmentee program.

Current Reservists or Airmen leaving active duty may apply for the duty.

Accepted applicants will attend the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and the Air Force Special Investigations Academy, both in Glynco, Ga.

"This is an excellent opportunity for junior NCOs to enter the exciting special agent career field," said Lt. Col. Matthew

Killoran, OSI Reserve Affairs Program manager. "Not only will they receive world-class training, but the wealth of experience they will obtain with OSI is invaluable."

Recruits begin their training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center with an 11-week course called the Criminal Investigator Training Program.

Other federal investigative agencies also send recruits to the training.

The program provides basic investigative training in law, interviewing, informants, defensive tactics, emergency driving, evidence processing, firearms, search and seizure, arrest techniques, report writing, testifying, and surveillance. Students participate in physical

training several times a week.

After this program, students receive eight weeks of training in OSI-specific coursework, such as organization and mission, forensics, interrogations, military law, ethics, computer and environmental crimes, and fraud investigations.

Other topics include:

- Investigative responsibility and jurisdiction;
- Crimes against property and persons (physical and sexual);
- Role of investigative experts;
- Counterintelligence collections and investigations; and
- Force-protection programs.

More information about OSI Reserve Affairs is available by calling 240-857-

Combat rescue officer goes full speed on the job, racetrack

By Master Sgt. Raymond F. Padgett

It's about 120 degrees as Gregory Lowdermilk pulls on his gloves, checks his communications system and adjusts his helmet visor.

But today, the combat rescue officer with the 920th Operations Support Flight at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., won't be heading out on another pararescue mission in some far-away place. Instead, the Air Force Reserve captain will be rounding the curves of a racetrack at speeds up to 130 mph.

Captain Lowdermilk is a driver of the No. 83 car in the U.S. Endurance Racing Association. He got involved in racing in 1990 at a track in nearby Sebring, Fla., driving Porsches.

His current car is a modified 1990 Mazda Miata. The car is not street legal, Captain Lowdermilk said. It's equipped with an array of safety equipment, including a full roll-cage, window safety nets and a fire suppression system.

With up to 110 cars in a race, the safety gear sometimes gets a workout. Although he hasn't been in a major wreck, "thank goodness fenders are cheap," he said.

The captain said his pararescue skills and experience, particularly situational awareness, help him on the racetrack.

"Being able to concentrate in a stressful situation and a strong sense of teamwork are integral to racing," Captain Lowdermilk said. "It's not a sport you can do by yourself."

In addition, he said, the physical conditioning requirements of the pararescue program pay huge dividends in endurance races that sometimes last up to six hours.

Captain Lowdermilk's involvement in racing extends beyond the U.S. Endurance Racing Association. He is the only non-full-time professional race car driver at the Panoz



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREGORY LOWDERMILK

Gregory Lowdermilk uses his skills and experiences as a combat rescue officer to help him on the track as a driver in the U.S. Endurance Racing Association.

Racing School, a job that allows him to represent the Air Force Reserve pararescue program to a target audience of "adrenaline junkies" in every class.

His love of racing has led directly to at least one person joining the Reserve. In 2004, he was doing some crew work for actor Paul Newman's racing team. One of the team's engineers asked Captain Lowdermilk about his experience in the Reserve. That engineer is now a lieutenant serving in the 301st Rescue Squadron at Patrick AFB. ★

(Sergeant Padgett is assigned to the 920th Rescue Wing public affairs office at Patrick AFB.)

0866 or DSN 857-0866, sending an e-mail to mary.mesa@ogn.af.mil or going online at <http://public.afosi.amc.af.mil/> and following the link to "Joining OST" or "Reserve Affairs." (AFRC News Service)

New Procedures Improve Personnel Accountability

If a national emergency occurs, Air Force Reserve Command has improved procedures in place for keeping track of its military people and their families.

AFRC developed the procedures to prepare for future disasters after hurricanes devastated the Gulf Coast last year.

"Our goal is to educate each individual on the importance of timely personnel accountability after any devastating event," said David Holly, AFRC Personnel Readiness Operations Branch chief.

Under the new procedures, commanders use a two-phase approach to account for their people. Each phase — pre-event and post-event — will be completed within 48 hours of notification to begin the accountability process.

People assigned to or living in an affected area must check in with the unit. They should check in at the first available opportunity but no later than 48 hours after the start of the crisis. People on temporary assignment or on leave in a disaster area should report their location and status to their unit of assignment.

"In the event of a disaster, we need timely accountability of our people," Mr. Holly said. "Since we must always be prepared to accomplish our mission, we need to know their status and availability."

Reporting instructions are available on the command's restricted Web site at <https://wwwmil.afrc.af.mil/>. Reservists can link to the instructions by selecting the "Hot & New Items" icon, going to the drop-down menu and selecting "Personnel Accountability." (AFRC News Service)

Colorado Aircrew Aids Fight Against Taliban

Far above the rugged mountainous terrain of eastern Afghanistan, members of an Air Force Reserve C-130 crew peer through their night-vision goggles at battles raging beneath them, knowing that their airlift mission is



GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY NOSE ART — In recognition of the KC-135 Stratotanker's 50th year of service in the Air Force, the 507th Air Refueling Wing at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., painted special nose art on one of its aircraft. Master Sgt. Darby Perrin, one of the wing's boom operators and a nationally known aviation artist in civilian life, painted the nose art illustration on aircraft No. 58-0063. In addition to celebrating the KC-135's 50th anniversary, the nose art pays tribute to the Airmen, civil service employees and civilian contractors who have helped fly and maintain the aircraft during the past half century.

playing a key role in an operation against the Taliban.

"The supplies we delivered helped people survive and fight the enemy," said Master Sgt. John Eichenberg, a C-130 loadmaster with the 746th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron. When not deployed, the sergeant is a member of the 302nd Airlift Wing at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

"You could tell it when we dropped off the ammo," he said. "They were almost out, and they were fighting the Taliban hard."

The 746th EAS is one of several 379th Air Expeditionary Wing units involved in a surge of operations supporting Operation Mountain Fury. The operation is part of a coordinated effort to put continuous pressure on the Taliban across multiple regions of Afghanistan. The operation's goal is to provide security to the civilian population, extend the government to the people and facilitate reconstruction of the war-torn country.

The 746th got directly involved in the operation when tasked to deliver ammunition, food and supplies to Army

Special Forces units on the ground at two forward operating bases. The Reserve crew supported the operation over a four-day period.

On this particular night, the Reservists delivered cargo to a forward operating base known as Farah.

"When we landed at Farah, the forklift axle was broken, so we formed a human chain to off-load the cargo," said Master Sgt. Ken Day, flight engineer.

The crew was able to off-load dozens of boxes, each weighing 20 to 30 pounds, and empty two pallets in a matter of minutes.

Two other pallets, containing meals, ready-to-eat, potable water and other essential staples, flew out the back of the aircraft through inertia once the pilot applied take-off power to the engines and released the brakes.

"We cranked up the power to 5,000 inch-pounds of torque and released the brakes, and the two pallets slid off the back," said Lt. Col. Kevin White, aircraft commander. "Simultaneously, the loadmasters released the pallet locks."

When the Reservists returned to Farah the next day, they recognized the impact their contributions were making in the war against terror.

"The Special Forces were still running really low on ammo, even with what we had just delivered the day before," Sergeant Day said. "They thanked us over and over again."

Throughout their four-day mission, the crew flew multiple sorties into combat areas.

"We were definitely in 'bad guy country,'" Colonel White said. "When you combine this with the austere field conditions and confined, unimproved landing strips, flying becomes a real challenge."

While the combat off-loads added one more level of complexity to the mission, the Reservists didn't mind. In fact, they welcomed it.

"The Operation Mountain Fury mission was meaningful and timely; we made a difference to our guys fighting on the ground," said Maj. Chris Kornmesser, copilot. "And that left us with an awesome feeling." (Maj. Ann P. Knabe, 379th AEW public affairs)

Replacement Income Available for Eligible Reservists

Reservists involuntarily called to active duty whose military pay is less than their civilian pay are eligible for a new income replacement program.

Congress ordered the Department of Defense to develop the Reserve Income Replacement Program for all members of the National Guard and Reserve. The program, which went into effect Sept. 1, helps

people who on average receive at least \$50 less a month than their civilian pay.

The difference in pay is the average monthly civilian income before a person is mobilized and the person's total monthly military compensation after mobilization.

To get the money, Reservists must be serving involuntarily on active duty. Also, they must have served 18 consecutive months on active duty, completed 24 months of active duty during the previous 60 months, or been involuntarily mobilized for 180 days or more within six months of the previous involuntary period of active duty of more than 180 days.

The first payment started in September for duty performed in August, the first full month following the 180-day period after enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2006.

B-52 squadron achieves new operational capability

By 1st Lt. Torri White

The 917th Wing's 93rd Bomb Squadron at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., is the first B-52 squadron in the entire Air Force to complete the necessary training requirements to use the Litening AT targeting pod in combat.

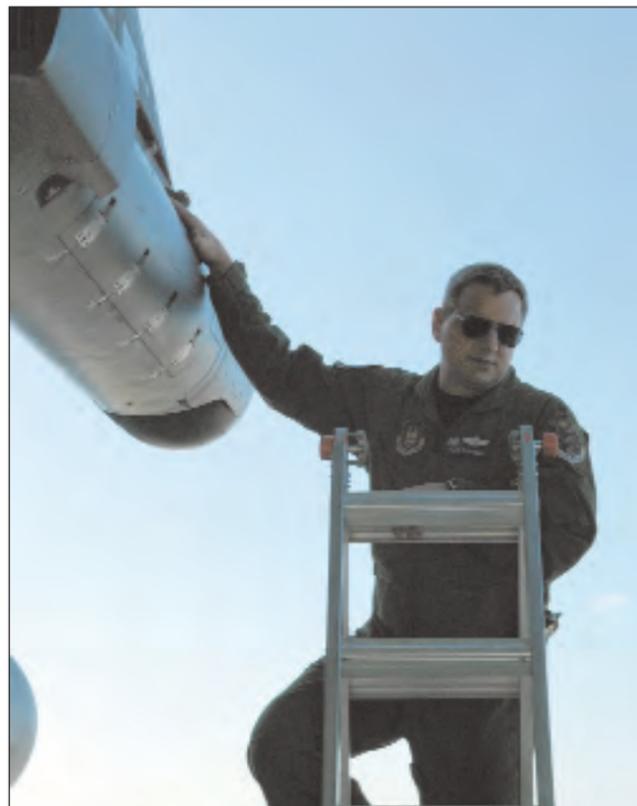
The squadron achieved this status July 13.

The Litening AT uses high-definition electro-optical sensors and airborne lasers to help the aircrew detect and identify targets and guide weapons more accurately. Although new to the B-52, this type of targeting pod is also used on other combat aircraft and was first approved for testing on the Stratofortress in 2002. In 2003, another test led to follow-on development and testing of training and tactics techniques and procedures.

"This is a major milestone for the B-52 and the 93rd Bomb Squadron," said Lt. Col. William Floyd, Weapons and Tactics Flight commander. "This unit has invested over 10 years of effort, dedication and persistence to achieve probably the most combat-relevant enhancement to the current B-52 mission. The B-52 targeting pod integration program is a perfect example of a total-force effort that involved every facet of the B-52 community."

"This new mission capability is a first for the B-52 and gives the combatant commander another weapon in his arsenal in the Global War on Terrorism," said Brig. Gen. Bob Tarter, 917th WG commander. "This precision capability will give the theater commander the capability to have a precision weapon platform airborne in the battle area for long periods of time, which will help in attacking targets that are time sensitive and fleeting." ★

(Lieutenant White is assigned to the 917th WG public affairs office at Barksdale AFB.)



Lt. Col. Al Teauseau, 93rd Bomb Squadron commander, manually checks the latches on a Litening AT targeting pod to verify they are properly engaged in preparation for the last flight needed to achieve combat-capable status for the system. The 93rd is the Air Force's first B-52 squadron to achieve this status.

FIRST LT. TORRI WHITE

Reservists will receive the pay for every full month of involuntary active-duty service they perform from August 2006 through December 2008. Payments are capped at \$3,000 per month.

People can learn more about the program and get help verifying eligibility by calling the Air Reserve Personnel Center's Reserve Personnel Contact Center at 1-800-525-0102. (Air Force Reserve Command News Service from an ARPC news release)

Training Seminars Target Command's Junior Officers

Air Force Reserve Command's Professional Development Center at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., provides a variety of training seminars for junior officers throughout the fiscal year.

One program is the Junior Officer Leadership Development seminar, which focuses on company grade officers and the leadership challenges they face. Capt. Michael Martini, JOLD director, said that with the Air Force Reserve playing a pivotal role in the U.S. Central Command theater of operations and the Global War on Terror, the seminar now incorporates operational themes into the curriculum.

This is also an area where the captain can personally make a contribution to JOLD, thanks to his deployment to Iraq in 2005 and involvement in providing intelligence and targeting assistance to special operations forces and the hostage recovery task force.

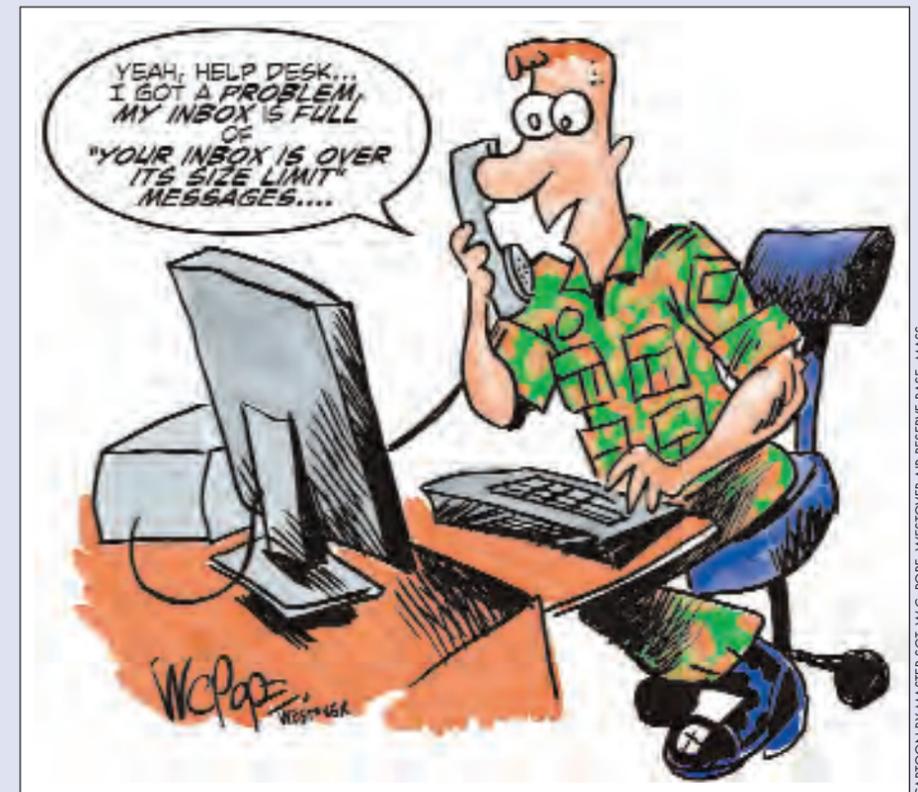
"All of the curriculum topics address the role of company grade officers, their leadership impact on the mission and the support they can provide to the warfighter," Captain Martini said.

Following is a list of training opportunities available in fiscal year 2007:

- JOLD: Jan. 4-7, Langley Air Force Base, Va.; May 10-13, Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, N.Y.; June, Dover AFB, Del.; and September at a place to be determined.

- Reserve Component Joint Officer Professional Development seminar and Leadership Today and Tomorrow: Washington, D.C. The three-day RCJOPD, for company grade officers, will run Feb. 5-7, while the four-day LTT, for majors and lieutenant colonels, will

Pope's Puns



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

run Feb. 3-6. Both will meet concurrently with the Reserve Officers Association mid-winter conference.

- International-JOLD: Some time in July in Sweden. This seven-day seminar for company grade officers is sponsored by a foreign partner and features officers from several nations.

Reservists who have questions or who want to attend may contact Captain Martini at DSN 497-0265 or CMCL 478-327-0265, or Mickey Crawford, DSN 497-0933 or CMCL 478-327-0933. Their e-mail addresses are michael.martini@afrc.af.mil and mickey.crawford@afrc.af.mil. Also, information is available on the Web, via a military computer, at <https://wwwmil.a1.afrc.af.mil/pdc/home/pdc.htm>. (Staff reports)

Retirement Application Process Goes Online

Air Force Reservists now have to submit retirement applications electronically via the virtual Personnel Center Guard and Reserve, a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week customer service Web

portal operated by the Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver.

The change in how retirement applications are submitted took place July 31. Previously, Reservists had to visit their local military personnel flight, complete the required retirement application package, submit it to their supervisor or commander and send it to ARPC.

The new Web-based service is available at any time from anywhere in the world and gives Airmen the ability to monitor the status of their application from start to finish. Reservists can log on to the vPC-GR at <http://arpc.af.mil/support/default.asp> to begin the process.

When the submission is received, the customer is e-mailed a tracking number. After the member's commander — or program manager for individual mobilization augmentees — has electronically endorsed the application, the Reserve Personnel Contact Center at ARPC verifies eligibility and finalizes the application.

Once approved, the vPC-GR sends e-mail notifications to the member and his or her commander or manager.

ARPC and the National Guard Bureau are working to expand this capability to

Air National Guard members.

In the future, centralized services should account for nearly every aspect of every Reservist's personnel actions, from initial enlistment to far beyond retirement and everything in between. (Tech. Sgt. Rob Mims, ARPC public affairs)

Seminar Provides Officers Third Option for Completing PME

As students in the first-ever Air Reserve Component Seminar were completing their requirements for Air Command and Staff College, the second class was just beginning the year-long program.

The seminar provides Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard majors with a new option for completing ACSC, the professional military education course required for them to move up to lieutenant colonel.

Previously, they had to complete the course either in residence at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., a process that takes 10 months, or by correspondence, which is very time-consuming and difficult to accomplish given all of the other things going on in their lives on a daily basis.

"ARCS is designed to help Guard and Reserve officers complete their official PME through a coordinated, pre-determined time frame of study and testing over the course of one year," said Lt. Col. Joyce Guthrie, the seminar coordinator for ACSC at Maxwell AFB.

Initially, students attend a two-week course in June at Maxwell, during which they study and complete the first two blocks of instruction in a student-led seminar format, Colonel Guthrie said. Upon leaving, students receive a follow-on calendar of dates that maps out expectations for completing the next two blocks of instruction on their own at home. After completing the assigned blocks, students return to Maxwell the following June to study, test and complete the remaining requirements in seminar format.

Colonel Guthrie said Guard and Reserve officials requested the two-week periods of instruction at Maxwell to help officers deal with the pressures of high operations tempos, civilian job requirements and family obligations. Both periods are funded by students' units.

A similar seminar, featuring its own individual format, is available for lieutenant colonels to complete Air War College, the PME requirement for consideration for promotion to colonel.

Information on both of these programs is available on the Internet at <http://www.wacsc.maxwell.af.mil/distance-learning.asp>. The link is located on the left side of the page. (Staff reports) ★

It's Your Money

By Lt. Col. Ralph Lunt

Faced with funding higher education?

Take a close look at a 529 plan

I don't have a college fund for my children's education. That's right. But I do have an investment program for my two daughters' higher education.

Quite frankly, I'm seeing too many folks going into debt or robbing from their retirement to pay for education, and I don't think that makes sense. It happens harmlessly enough. You have a few kids. You put some money aside. It's not enough. You want to be a "good parent," so you do whatever it takes to send them to a school that you can't afford. Bingo, you're broke!

I suggest that people start "buying" higher education, just like we do a new car. If at the end of the day you can get a year's worth of education at an in-state institution for \$5,000 or a year at an out-of-state institution for \$40,000.00, which would you buy? Which do you need? This is personal stuff. Whatever you decide is right for you, from this day forward I urge you to consider college as an investment in your children/grandchildren — something that you or they "buy" for future use and opportunity.

Here's what I've done so far and why. First, I took my original college funds, which were in custodial accounts, and converted them to 529 plans. I'll explain why after I say a bit more about custodial accounts. A typical custodial account is registered under a minor's Social Security number, owned by the minor and managed in the minor's best interests by the custodian, typically the parent.

Depending on their size, custodial accounts may have income tax implications. Oh, and one last thing, custodial accounts are the property of the minor. Once children reach the state age of majority, they can do whatever they want with the money, even buy a Harley. Ouch!

Enter the 529 plan, a terrific tool for investing in higher education. I converted my daughters' custodial accounts to 529 plans and contribute monthly to non-custodial 529's because I maintain ownership and get tremendous tax advantages. I have monthly after-tax contributions taken from my checking account and deposited into the 529 plans. I maintain ownership of the accounts. Earnings and gains are tax deferred. And if I use the account for qualified college education costs, earnings are tax free. If we don't use or need all the money, I get the Harley.

If college expenses are in your family's future, I recommend you look at the 529 plan offered by your state of residence. Next to spending wisely on higher education, they might be one of the best decisions you make. ★

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

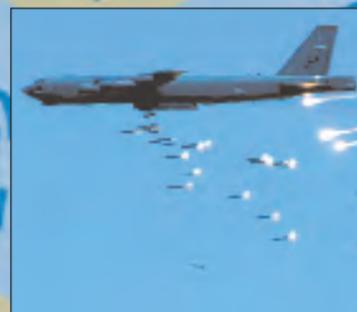


Reserve Reflections

Moments in time captured by the HQ AFRC History Office

40s • 1950s • 1960s • 1970s • 1980s • 1990s • 2000s

December



1

Public Law 90-168, The Reserve Forces Bill of Rights and Vitalization Act, directed establishment of the Office of Air Force Reserve under a general officer. (1967)

A C-5 from the 439th Military Airlift Wing leaves Dover Air Force Base, Del., carrying 139,530 pounds of cargo to Moscow. (1991)

A C-130 aircrew from the 94th Airlift Wing, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., airlifts 8,000 pounds of clothing, textbooks, beds, a refrigerator and Plexiglass to Albania to assist orphanages in Tirana and Skoda. (1994)

Continental Air Command is established with a primary mission of training and administering the Air Reserve Forces. (1948)

7

The 917th Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., becomes the first Reserve unit equipped with B-52 Stratofortresses when the first of eight aircraft arrive. (1993)

11

Lt. Col. John Breeden assumes command of the 11th Reconnaissance Squadron, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., becoming first Reservist to command a permanent active-duty unit. (2004)

30

Crews from 920th Rescue Group, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., participate with the Coast Guard in a mission to evacuate 28 people from a disabled cargo ship in Atlantic Ocean. The crews pull six people out of the water. (1997)

January



1

The Office of Air Force Reserve is organized. Maj. Gen. Tom E. Marchbanks, a Reservist, is recalled a few weeks later as the first chief. (1968)

The Reserve enters the space program with the activation of the 7th Space Operations Squadron at Falcon Air Force Base, Colo. (1993)

10

The air reserve technician program is initiated, providing a permanent cadre of civilian technicians ready for instant mobilization. (1958)

11

A volunteer C-141C Reserve aircrew from the 445th Airlift Wing, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, delivers the first Taliban and al-Qaida detainees to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. (2002)

17

Brig. Gen. Joseph McNeil is appointed commander of 22nd Air Force, making him the first African-American to serve as numbered air force commander in the Air Force Reserve. (1995)

19

The Air Force announces plans to begin assigning B-1 and B-52 bombers to the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard. (1993)

February

1

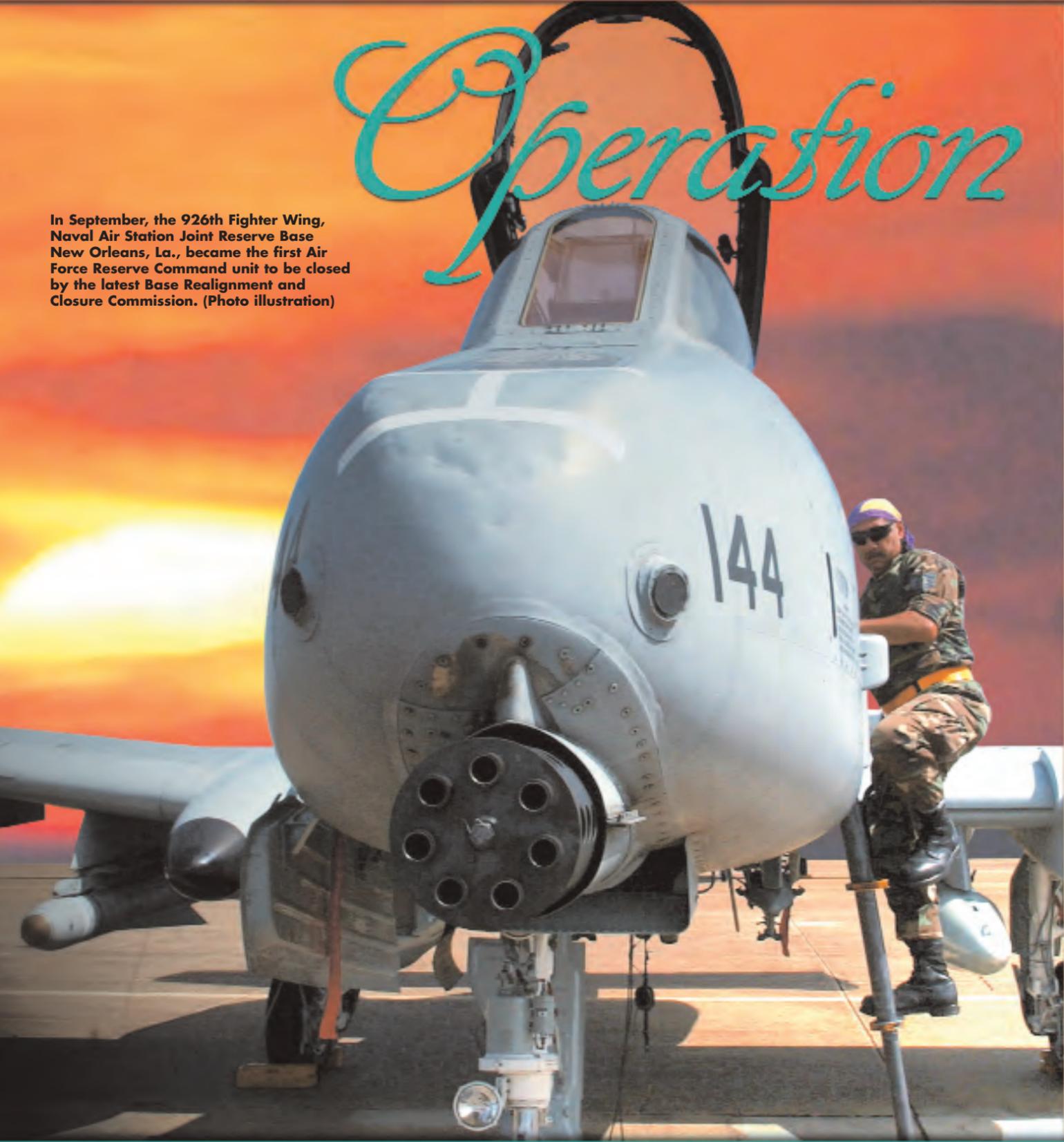
Reserve tanker units deploy to Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia, in support of Operation Southern Watch. (1998)

The 301st Rescue Squadron, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., assumes primary responsibility for Eastern Test Range surveillance during space shuttle and unmanned missile launches. (1994)

8

A Reserve-owned C-5 Galaxy from the 439th Airlift Wing, Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass., carries tons of food and life-sustaining supplies to emerging nations in the Commonwealth of Independent States. (1992)

40s • 1950s • 1960s • 1970s • 1980s • 1990s • 2000s



Operation

In September, the 926th Fighter Wing, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La., became the first Air Force Reserve Command unit to be closed by the latest Base Realignment and Closure Commission. (Photo illustration)

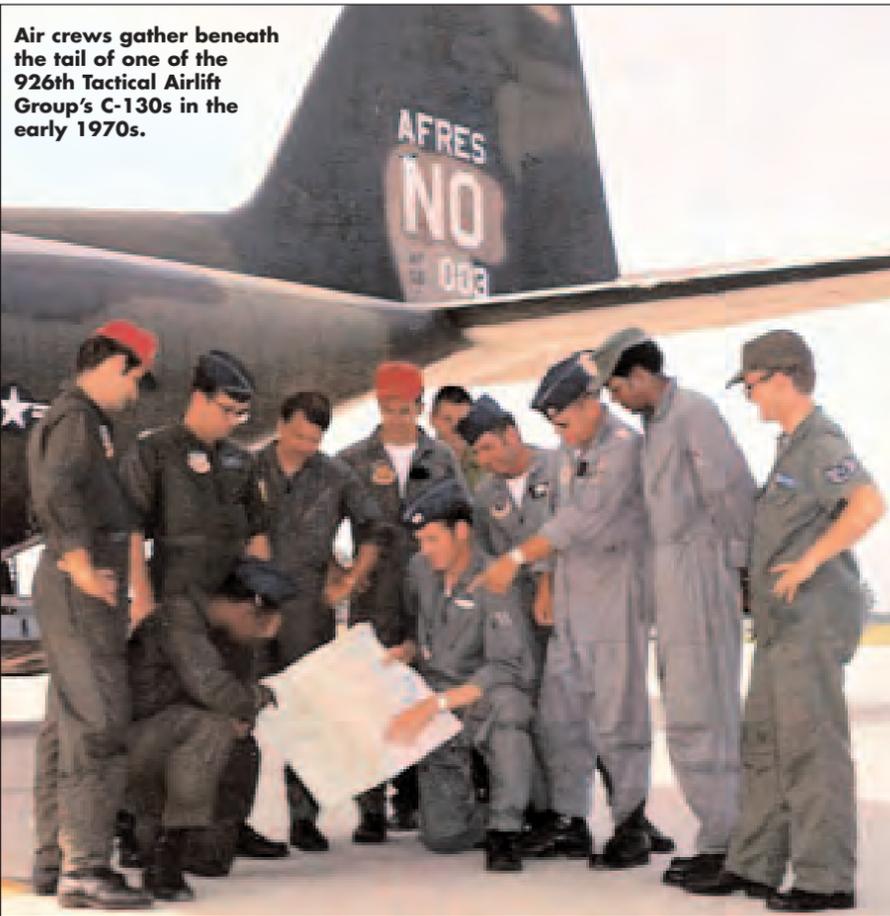
Cajun Sunsets

**New Orleans bids farewell
to 926th Fighter Wing**
By Master Sgt. Chance C. Babin

In 1755, British troops, with the help of New England militia, forcibly removed 8,000 Acadians from their land and homes in what was known as the Great Expulsion, le Grand Dérangement. The area in Canada, once known as Acadia, became Nova Scotia. Their homes burned and their lands confiscated, the French-speaking Acadians were forced to pick up their lives and families and start anew elsewhere. A resilient group, the Acadians established new lives, predominantly in south Louisiana, where they became known as Cajuns.

Some 251 years later, members of the 926th Fighter Wing, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La., a unit known as the "Fighting Cajuns," faced their own version of expulsion, this time at the hands of the latest Base Realignment and Closure Commission. In September, the 926th became the first Air Force Reserve Command unit to be closed by the latest BRAC.

Although not as tragic as the Great Expulsion, the closure is nevertheless forcing people, who proudly embody the spirit of the Cajuns, to once again pick up their lives and start anew. For many, their lives were just getting back to normal after the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina.



Air crews gather beneath the tail of one of the 926th Tactical Airlift Group's C-130s in the early 1970s.

While the original Cajuns brought their skills for farming and fishing to Louisiana, 926th FW Airmen will bring their vast skills and experiences, along with a piece of the unit's rich heritage — a heritage that stretched from World War II to the Global War on Terrorism, with a presence in New Orleans since 1958 — to other Reserve units throughout the country.

To commemorate the closing of the unit, in the true spirit of New Orleans, the 926th FW hosted a farewell banquet and deactivation party Aug. 12, 2006, at the downtown Sheraton. The party, held a month before the unit's official closure,

was named Operation Cajun Sunset.

A distinguished aspect of New Orleans culture is the jazz funeral. In 1819, architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe said New Orleans jazz funerals were "peculiar to New Orleans alone among all American cities." In his book "Bourbon Street Black," the late jazzman Danny Barker noted the funeral is seen as "a major celebration." The roots of the jazz funeral date back to Africa.

And it was with a similar approach that the Cajuns bid farewell. Although the unit was closing, the Reservists treated the occasion as a celebration of the past as well as the present.

"This party is a way to bring closure," said Col. Larry Merington, 926th FW commander. "It's a celebration, not a funeral, that goes back to the people we've worked with and for, who helped make a difference on this planet; a celebration of members who served over the last 50 years in this wing. We are closing a chapter of this book, so someone else will open a new chapter in our history."

"The significance really for tonight is to relish the relationships and friendships we've made over the years and to highlight the history of this unit, which goes a long way back," said Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, AFRC commander. "We've got a lot of folks from many decades ago who are here with us tonight. This unit has had a long and proud history, and I'm just glad we've put together a first-class event so that people currently in the unit and those who were in the unit before can come together and celebrate the 926th Fighter Wing."

A year ago, far from being in a celebratory mood, members of the 926th were trying to get through the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, all the while dealing with the upcoming BRAC.

Of the slightly more than 1,000 people in the wing, 66 percent were negatively impacted by Katrina, with 34 percent either completely losing or being displaced from their homes, Colonel Merington said. While recovering from that terrible blow to their personal lives, they were faced with turmoil in their professional lives created by the wing's closure.

"All of these life-changing events in 12 months," Colonel Merington said. "Most people don't go through that much in 20 years. These are some resilient people, as courageous as any people I've seen."

No matter how resilient or courageous the folks of the 926th FW appeared to be

on the outside, Colonel Merington said the wing's leadership was concerned about the members' mental state. The unit was recommended for closure before Katrina, but after the natural disaster, the process was expedited, causing increased stress.

"After Katrina hit, we went from (a closure timeline of) 2 1/2 years to nine months," Colonel Merington said. "It was a unique situation. People suffered disparaging harm from the hurricane, and then they had to go through BRAC. We became very concerned about what to do."

Wing leadership tapped into available Air Force and AFRC programs and brought in some counselors to help members cope with all the issues going on in their lives.

"We decided to go above and beyond to conduct what many called 'feel-good sessions,'" Colonel Merington said. "It was to let people know we cared about them deeply, never forgetting our obligation to take care of the physical and mental health of our people. We wanted them to know there was a lifeline."

Part of the stress came from the fact that the unit closure was sped up due to the hurricane. There are varying opinions of whether this was a good or bad thing. For Col. Steve Arthur, who was 926th FW commander at the time of the BRAC announcement and during Hurricane Katrina, speeding up the closure was a good thing. The colonel knows something about base closures as he was at Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas, when it was closed in the early 1990s.

"Having been through one before, you know where the pitfalls are," Colonel Arthur said. "I knew two of the things that would be good about closing sooner rather than later would be the availability



Medical technicians practice their skills during an exercise at New Orleans in the early 1980s.

of lots of jobs and lots of money. These really helped us out and proved to be an advantage."

Once the A-10s left New Orleans for Whiteman AFB, Mo., and Barksdale AFB, La., Colonel Arthur moved on to Whiteman as commander, and Colonel Merington took the reigns in July for the wing's final months.

"There will be debates about how fast you should close a unit under BRAC," Colonel Merington said. "From my seat, the faster the better. No lingering death, and no hacking off bits and pieces. The acceleration was a blessing as far as helping our people out was concerned."

Not everyone shares the two commanders' opinions about closing the wing early.

"Had we closed a year later, it would have been easier on everybody because so many people's houses were not back in order from Katrina, which made BRAC much harder," said Tech. Sgt. Richard Smith. "Everyone was just getting their lives back in order, and then they had to sell their houses due to BRAC."

Sergeant Smith, an air reserve technician and New Orleans native, took a job at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla.

"I'm glad to have a job," Sergeant Smith said, "but I hate leaving my family and friends and uprooting my kids from their school, friends and family. But we are in the Air Force, and we know situations like this can happen. We make the best of it. It's not the end of the world, just a major inconvenience."

For units on the closure list, AFRC set up several programs, including a BRAC guide, member tracking codes, two clearinghouses, e-mail boxes and an archive, all designed to assist those affected.

"For me being a DOD (Department of Defense) civilian employee, placement was good," said Master Sgt. Norman Bailey, a member of the 926th Security Forces Squadron. "I was glad we were the first ones in the system. I applied the first week we could and had a hit in the first week."

"As far as my Reserve job was concerned, I wasn't as fortunate. I went through the clearinghouse, which showed me some hits, but there were



The 926th FW can trace its origins to the latter years of World War II, when the 706th Bomb Squadron flew its first bomber air missions Dec. 16, 1943, in B-24 bombers as part of the first Air Force bomber/fighter group.



The 706th Troop Carrier Squadron, flying C-119 transport aircraft, moved to Naval Air Station New Orleans from Barksdale Air Force Base, La., in 1961. In 1963, the 706th TCS was assigned to the newly created 926th Troop Carrier Group.



In 1967, the unit designation was changed to the 926th Tactical Airlift Group, reflecting broader airlift capabilities. In 1969, the 926th said goodbye to the C-119 and welcomed the C-130 Hercules.



In 1977, the 926th TAG converted to the A-37 Dragonfly fighter aircraft, bringing with the conversion a combat mission and a new designation — the 926th Tactical Fighter Group. The 926th continued to fly the A-37 until 1982 when it converted to the A-10 Thunderbolt II.



In 1992, the 926th TFG was redesignated the 926th Fighter Group. Two years later, the unit officially became the 926th Fighter Wing. The 926th converted to the F-16 Fighting Falcon in 1992.



In 1995, the Pentagon announced another conversion — the 926th would convert to the A/OA-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft. The conversion was completed and the unit became combat-ready in September 1997.

some problems. We were told the units had to take us, but they said they didn't."

Another person who experienced some difficulties with the clearinghouse was Chief Master Sgt. Gary Hornosky, 926th FW command chief master sergeant. He ended up retiring in August.

"They made it sound like the clearinghouse was the answer, which was not the case for everyone," Chief Hornosky said. "I put my name in the clearinghouse and got no response whatsoever. I don't know if they received it or not. We started having supervisors call other units to help find jobs. That proved to be the most effective way."

Despite the problems, Colonel Merington said AFRC should maintain the clearinghouse.

"We are the first unit to use the traditional Reservist clearinghouse," Colonel Merington said. "With all new programs, there are always glitches, but it is a valuable tool, and we need to continue using it."

Although it's now closed, the wing's history book includes a stellar record during wartime. Dating back to the D-Day invasion of Normandy and continuing through the peacekeeping mission over Bosnia, Desert Storm and now the Global War on Terrorism, the unit has carved out an impressive record.

"This wing has always risen to the challenge of war and peacekeeping," Colonel Merington said. "I'd rather go to war with them than anyone else. The Cajun mentality is if there is no danger, let's party; but if there's danger, they are

warriors and do their job very well."

As the first Reserve fighter unit recalled to active duty during Operation Desert Storm, the Cajuns became the most decorated unit during the war.

"They (active-duty people) were looking at us as if to say, 'What are you doing here?' We proved to them that we belonged," said Master Sgt. Ron Steib, an aircraft hydraulic technician, who recently retired. "All of our training paid off, and we rose to the occasion."

"After that it was like a drug to me. Anytime the unit deployed, I needed to go. They were my family."

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the Cajuns were once again called to duty, as the unit deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

"I was a little nervous because everyone's emotions were real high right after 9/11, and I'm thinking, 'Geez, am I up to the task here? Can we go over and do what needs to be done?'" said retired Lt. Col. Neil McAskill, former commander of the 706th Fighter Squadron. The colonel led the Cajuns in Bagram during Operation Enduring Freedom.

"The team was so fantastic," he said. "The guys were so motivated. We flew an enormous amount of sorties and didn't lose any to maintenance or logistics problems. They pretty much put the Air Force A-10 community on track for doing night operations with NVGs (night-vision goggles). For me it was the most special time in my military career, those four months at Bagram."

A lasting memory of the Cajuns is on

display for the entire world to see. An A-10 Thunderbolt II known as "Chopper Popper" lives on at the Air Force Academy. The "Warthog," flown by then Capt. Bob Swain, now a colonel, was part of the first air-to-air kill during Operation Desert Storm.

Colonel Swain, an academy graduate and former 926th FW commander, is currently 22nd Air Force vice commander. And although he has moved on to bigger and better things, he will always be linked to the 926th FW.

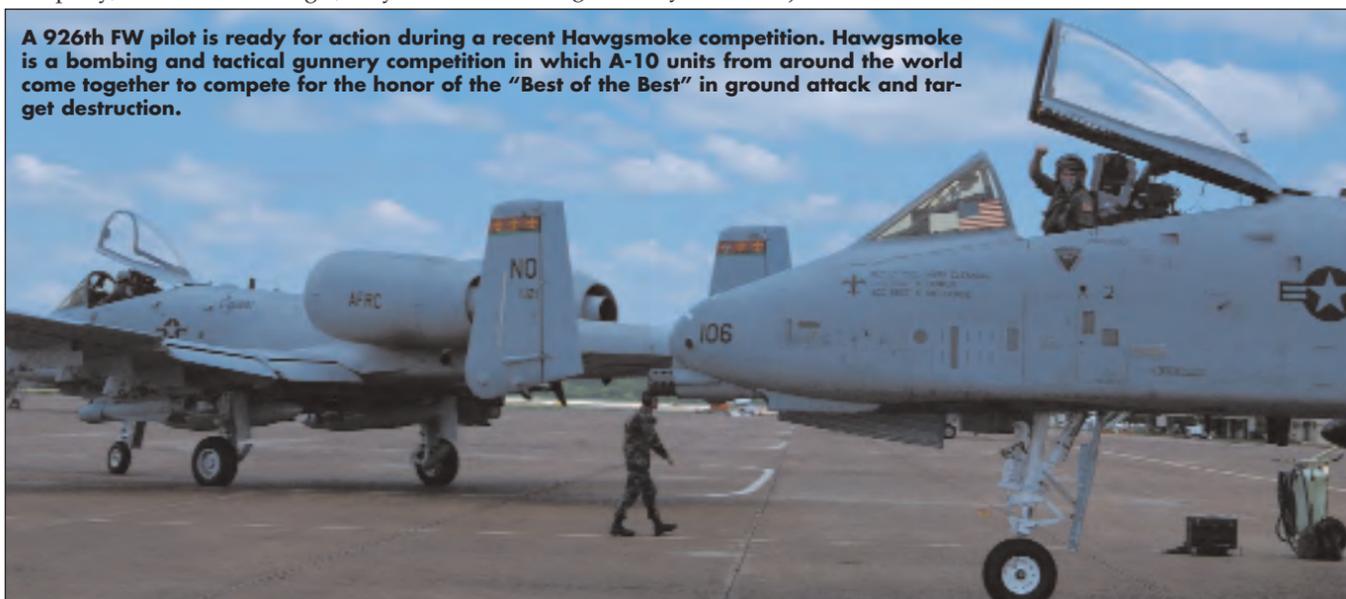
"I owe a lot to New Orleans," he said. "I showed up as a captain and learned a lot about core values and got to work with some great personalities there."

But it was during Desert Storm in 1991 that the Cajuns made their mark by setting the bar for total-force integration. Colonel Swain's shooting down of an Iraqi helicopter was just lagniappe, a Cajun term that means something extra.

"It was just another mission, but the first is always a good thing," Colonel Swain said. "That airplane will be there long after we leave the Earth. It reinforces total force and is a great honor for the unit to have it on display at a great institution where we train future leaders."

For all members past and present who have served in the 926th FW, the colonel said the aircraft serves as a reminder that "when called, we served." ★

(Sergeant Babin is a traditional Reservist who served in the public affairs office of the 926th FW. He wrote this article while on a temporary duty assignment with Citizen Airman.)



A 926th FW pilot is ready for action during a recent Hawgsmoke competition. Hawgsmoke is a bombing and tactical gunnery competition in which A-10 units from around the world come together to compete for the honor of the "Best of the Best" in ground attack and target destruction.

MASTER SGT. CHANCE C. BABIN



A KC-135 assigned to the 939th Air Refueling Wing taxis through a water arch on the flight line at Portland International Airport, Ore., in August. All eight of the 939th's KC-135s have been reassigned to March Air Reserve Base, Calif., or Tinker AFB, Okla., as part of the Base Realignment and Closure process.

STAFF SGT. JORGE A. RODRIGUEZ, 4TH COMBAT CAMERA SQUADRON

BRAC brings significant changes to other Reserve units

By Master Sgt. Chance C. Babin

As the 926th Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La., was being deactivated, three other Air Force Reserve Command units were undergoing significant changes as a result of the most recent Base Realignment and Closure action.

The 939th Air Refueling Wing, Portland, Ore.; the 440th Airlift Wing, Gen. Mitchell Air Reserve Base, Wisc.; and the 944th FW, Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., all began shifting aircraft and other assets as part of the BRAC process.

In August, the 939th ARW's final four KC-135 aircraft left Portland International Airport for their new home at March Air Reserve Base, Calif. The wing's four other KC-135s left Portland in July and settled in at Tinker AFB, Okla.

"The departure of these aircraft signifies a major milestone in the transformation of our wing," said Col. William N. Flanigan, 939th commander. "Since becoming an air refueling wing three years ago, members of the 939th have been steadfast in the face of tremendous adversity."

Before the 939th received KC-135s and converted to an air refueling wing, it performed a search and rescue mission.

Although there won't be any aircraft left, the Reserve will maintain a presence in Portland once the 939th is deactivated as the 304th Rescue Squadron will continue to employ approximately 100 people at the Portland International Airport. The 304th RS performs both civil and combat rescue operations by air, land and sea.

Meanwhile, the 440th AW sent 13 people to Pope AFB, N.C., in August to begin setting up operations in preparation

for the rest of the wing moving. The BRAC recommendations call for Pope AFB to convert to Pope Army Airfield.

The main body of the wing, which includes about 200 full-time flying operations and aircraft maintenance specialists, is scheduled to be at Pope by May 1, 2007, with the command element making the transition between May and July 2007.

All eight of the unit's C-130 Hercules aircraft will move to Pope in August 2007. General Mitchell is scheduled to close by February 2008.

At Luke AFB, the first of the 944th FW's 17 F-16s left for Hill AFB, Utah, in mid-August, where it will undergo Falcon Star, a life-extending set of upgrades. After the program is completed, the aircraft will make its new home at Nellis AFB, Nev.

The wing's remaining 16 aircraft will begin leaving Luke in March 2007 bound for various locations including the Tucson Air National Guard headquarters; Edwards AFB, Calif.; and the California ANG in Fresno.

Luke's historic 302nd Fighter Squadron, which traces its lineage back to the Tuskegee Airmen, will find a new home at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. The 302nd will join two active-duty squadrons as a Reserve associate unit flying the Air Force's next-generation fighter aircraft, the F-22 Raptor.

"It's a little sad taking the first jet off the ramp," said Maj. Scott Crogg, 302nd FS pilot. "Since the 1950s, the Air Force has been right-sizing. We do what we can and look to the future." ★

(This story was compiled from information contained in several AFRC News Service releases.)

The Anatomy of a Vision

New document the result of a collaborative process

By Senior Airman Erik Hofmeyer

(Editor's note: Following is the first in a series of seven articles on the Air Force Reserve's new vision document and how this vision is shaping the future of the Reserve. The first installment focuses on the process of how the new vision was developed. Subsequent articles will deal with the six aimpoints that make members of the Air Force Reserve unrivaled wingmen.)

The recently released vision document, "One Air Force, Same Fight ... An Unrivaled Wingman," sets the tone for the new Air Force Reserve — one that is more operational in nature than in the past.

"My vision for the Air Force Reserve is to provide the world's best mutual support to the Air Force and our joint partners — flying and fighting as an unrivaled wingman," said Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, chief of Air Force Reserve.

While the focus for the past few months has been on familiarizing everyone in the Reserve with the document and educating them regarding its contents, not much has been said regarding the process of how the vision was developed. Col. Gary Crone, chief of the Strategy Division in the Office of Air Force Reserve at the Pentagon, led the effort. He said the document came together over a period of 18 months through a "well thought out, deliberate process that touched all aspects and levels of Air Force Reserve life."

"Staying on target in times of change requires a steady aimpoint," Colonel Crone said. "The objective of the Air Force Reserve vision process was to define the main aimpoints needed to guide us into the future."

"The Air Force is in the midst of adapting to a changing national security environment, and a clear vision for navigating the Reserve through these trying changes is required. The vision document identifies and articulates a new Reserve organizational vision that supports the Air Force mission to deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States of America and its global interests — to fly and fight in air, space and cyberspace."

Assisting Colonel Crone in development of the vision were Lt. Col. David Hembroff and Maj. Bruce Johnson, who both work in the Strategy Division. In addition, the Commander's Action Group at the Pentagon, under the leadership of Lt. Col. Anthony Seely, and the Air Force Reserve Command CAG at Headquarters AFRC, Robins Air Force Base, Ga., led by Lt. Col. Ron Whittle, provided vital support to the effort. Col. Eric Sitrin of the Directorate of Strategic Plans, Programs, Requirements and Assessments at HQ AFRC provided the link in the chain of effort between the CAG staffs. His close alignment with the effort ensured the vision document aligned with the command's strategic planning efforts, Colonel Crone said.

A Well Thought Out Vision Provides a Context for Better Decisions

In the 10 years since the last Air Force Reserve vision was articulated, the national security environment and the Air Force have significantly changed. As a result, in early 2005 General Bradley asked Colonel Crone's organization to utilize the Air Force Reserve Transformation Steering Group as its main resource to develop and publish a new Air Force Reserve vision.

Realizing it was too arduous to physically bring together the entire group for the time required to build a new vision, the Strategy Division devised what it termed a "virtually facilitated

roundtable" approach to writing the vision.

"The VFR enabled the TSG and other key leaders to participate in every level of the vision development," Colonel Hembroff said.

Members of the Strategy Division conducted one-on-one interviews with all of the Reserve's senior leaders. When face-to-face meetings weren't possible, they used video teleconferencing facilities to gather information. To gather more feedback and gain an "outside" perspective, they conducted a number of interviews with senior leaders from Headquarters Air Force, the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Our Future... We will focus on six aimpoints that make our Airmen unrivaled wingmen.

Making Sure Every Phrase, Paragraph and Picture Counted

Colonel Crone and his staff orchestrated each step of the vision development process, from the initial interviews to the distilling of the interview information to design of the document pages. No detail, regardless of how small or minute it seemed, escaped their scrutiny.

Colonel Hembroff came up with the term "unrivaled wingman," considering it the best representation of General Bradley's vision for the Air Force Reserve.

The vision document is organized for maximum use and readability.

"Organization is key to communication, allowing the document to meet a variety of needs with minimal repackaging," Major Johnson said. "The key elements, beyond the explanatory text, are the vision statement, vision bumper sticker, and the aimpoints, vision vectors, tag lines and push lines.

"The aimpoints lay out markers to gauge the direction we are headed in the future. The vision vectors are the action items, if you will, on how to achieve each aimpoint. The tag lines and push lines are phrases that are descriptive of each aimpoint and the goals associated with them. Communicators will find the push lines and tag lines helpful for promoting the document. These short, clean and efficient phrases encapsulate different facets of the vision and provide an excellent way for communicating the vision when time and print space is limited."

Each aimpoint can stand alone as a kind of commentary on where the Reserve is going in the future, Colonel Hembroff said.

"Combined, the aimpoints and vision vectors lay out a framework for choosing the way ahead," he said. "They point out a direction and give some requirements for choosing a route, but they do not dictate a mode of transportation or an exact path to take."

In order to achieve the vision, general officers will be assigned as "aimpoint champions" to provide the desired level of leadership and necessary accountability to ensure a robust and determined effort is made to adhere to the principles laid out in the document.

Thinking 'Good to Great' Gives the Reserve a Proven and Widely Accepted Process to Follow

The Strategy Division determined the key to developing a good organizational vision is understanding what the Reserve can do the best rather than what it merely can do well.

"The 'best-in-the-world' standard

is a much higher bar to reach than a core competency standard," Colonel Crone said.

Team members reviewed the concepts for building an organizational vision used across the military and private industry. The approach they decided to adopt to meet the Reserve's requirements was taken from the book "Good to Great" by Jim Collins.

"An organization might have a core competency but not the capacity to be the best in the world at it," Colonel Crone said. "There may also be missions that you could become best in the world but which you have no current competency. Consequently, this good-to-great concept is not a goal, strategy or intention; it is an understanding."

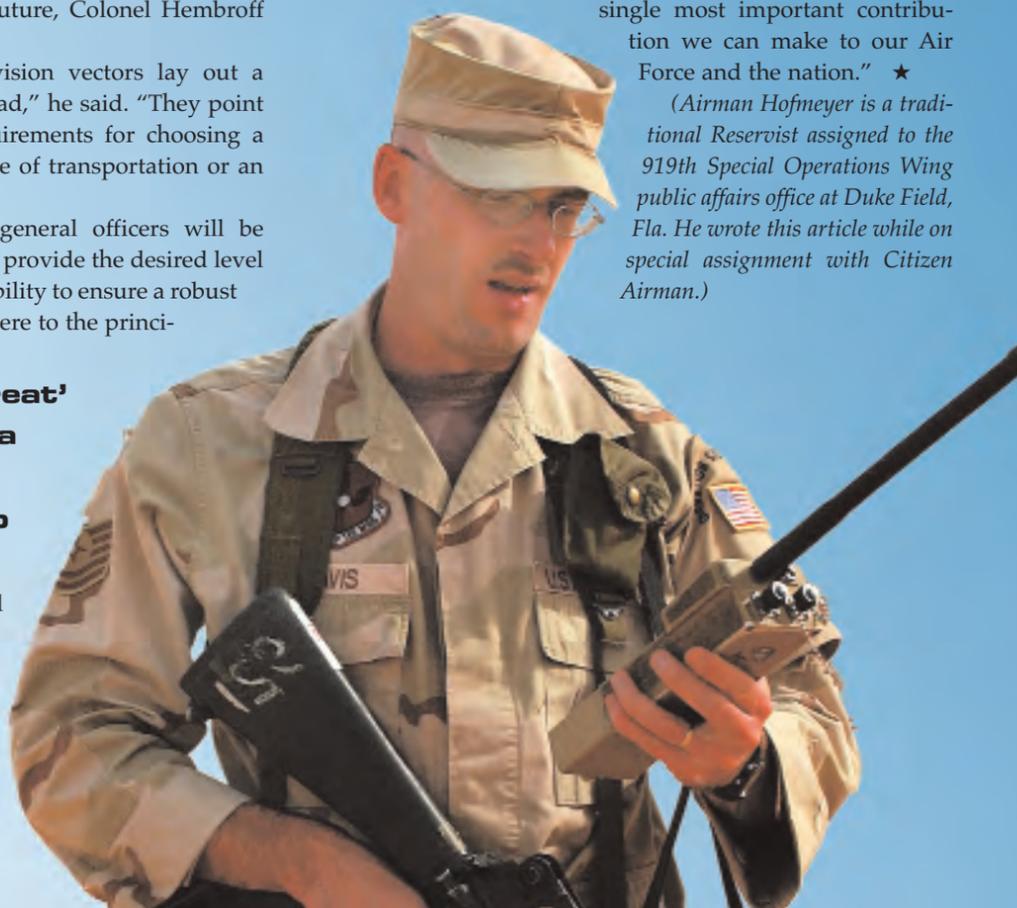
The colonel said the new vision requires all Reservists to break free from the old ways of thinking and dated perspectives in order to provide the needed support to the Air Force.

"By adopting new concepts and language, the Reserve frees itself from the structure originally meant for a Cold War-era strategic force to become the operational force needed to fulfill the daily security requirements of the nation," he said.

"Change may start at the top, but it is only effective when understood and accepted by every Airman," General Bradley said. "In the daily workings of all Reservists, the vision requires them to incorporate the aimpoints and vision vectors where appropriate to ensure a unity of effort. Alignment is the key first phase of vision implementation. This phase requires all Reservists to first and foremost understand and adopt the vision's terminology and meaning. Realizing the vision is the

single most important contribution we can make to our Air Force and the nation." ★

(Airman Hofmeyer is a traditional Reservist assigned to the 919th Special Operations Wing public affairs office at Duke Field, Fla. He wrote this article while on special assignment with Citizen Airman.)



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AIR FORCE RESERVE

A Better C-130



Aircraft 99101, assigned to the 908th Airlift Wing, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., comes in for a landing at Lackland AFB, Texas, after making its first flight with all new digital instrumentation on its flight deck.



The C-130 modified flight deck following the Avionics Modernization Program.

Upgraded avionics to benefit flight crews and maintainers

The Air Force's first C-130 Hercules to go through the Avionics Modernization Program took to the skies for the first time Sept. 20.

Taking off and returning to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, the aircraft, a C-130H2 model that belongs to the 908th Airlift Wing at Maxwell AFB, Ala., had a successful flight that lasted approximately three hours, according to officials at the Boeing Co., defense contractor responsible for the conversion.

Aircraft No. 99101, now dubbed AMP aircraft H2, is the first of approximately 350 C-130s slated to undergo the modernization program. The 908th AW is programmed to be the first wing to be equipped with the modified aircraft.

The aircraft left Maxwell in January 2005 to enter the AMP program. Modifications included replacement of the analog instrumentation familiar to generations of C-130 pilots with six

digital displays and the flight management system Boeing developed for its newest version of the 737 commercial airliner.

Currently, the Air Force has 14 variants of five different models of the C-130: E's, H1's, H2's, H3's and J's. When the AMP program is completed, there will only be two major C-130 models: the AMP modified aircraft and the J models.

908th AW Commander Col. Michael J. Underkofler, a veteran pilot with more than 5,000 flying hours in multiple versions of the C-130, including the new J model, said the conversion will offer many tangible benefits.

"Based on my experience flying the C-130J, equipped with heads-up displays and the APN 241 color weather radar, installing this technology on our aircraft as a part of the Avionics Modernization Program will reduce pilot fatigue while improving situational awareness, safety and combat

capability," Colonel Underkofler said.

The AMP conversion holds promise to make life easier for both fliers and maintainers.

"Currently, when we deploy we often find ourselves in a mix of different models of the aircraft," said Col. John Jones, 908th Operations Group commander. "This creates a real nightmare for operators who try to build a flying schedule several days in advance.

"For example, if I've got an H1 lined up to fly and it breaks, the spare may be an E model. So now I've got to send the H1 crew home and call in an E crew. The effects of one change can disrupt the plans for several days of flying. When this conversion is complete, it will make scheduling and operations in a deployed environment much easier."

Training will also be simplified, Colonel Jones said, since there

will only be two schoolhouses — one for the AMP model and another for the J. When pilots complete training and go to a squadron, they won't need more training to qualify in a cockpit significantly different from the one they flew at the schoolhouse.

In addition, the conversion will offer benefits for those who maintain the aircraft.

"There will only be two types of C-130 parts to maintain, instead of the present five," said Col. Jerry Kohler, 908th Maintenance Group commander. "The AMP parts will also be shared with those with the newest 737, so there will be a bigger pipeline and inventory of parts."

Aircraft No. 99101 will remain with Boeing for operational test and evaluation for the next two to three years. ★

(Story provided by the 908th AW public affairs office at Maxwell AFB; Photos courtesy of the Boeing Co.)



Tricare Reserve Select

Medical coverage available for qualified Reservists

By Tech. Sgt. J.C. Woodring

Thousands of Guard and Reserve Airmen in the Selected Reserve are eligible to purchase health insurance from Tricare for themselves and their families.

Tricare Reserve Select offers three-tier medical coverage to all members of the Selected Reserve, said Joyce Nackowicz, a Tricare Reserve Select representative at Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver.

The tiers are determined by the service members' status: Tier 1, contingency driven for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom; Tier 2, unemployed with state benefits, self-employed or employed without benefits; and Tier 3, other Selected Reserve.

To certify their eligibility, service members must first file an intent on the Guard/Reserve portal and then complete a Department of Defense Form 2895, Agreement to Serve in the Selected Reserve for Tricare Reserve Select. Once the form is completed, Guard Airmen turn it in to their units, while Reservists submit it to ARPC.

Reservists can fax the forms and supporting documentation to 303-676-6298 or DSN 926-6298. They also can scan the forms and e-mail them to arpc.contactcenter@arpc.denver.af.mil or attach them to a new request online at <https://arpc.afrc.af.mil/vPC-GR/newrequest.asp>.

While the coverage is the same for each of the tiers, the premiums are different, according to the TRS Web site.

The first tier, which is the least expensive, is offered to Airmen who have been released from at least 90 days of active-duty service during a contingency. They can apply for the coverage while in an active-duty status or within 90 days of leaving active duty.

"It's very important that they do not miss the 90 days," Ms. Nackowicz said. "The law was written to give them the extra 90 days. If they apply late, there is nothing we can do for them."

She said she recommends that people apply while they are still on active duty because they have easy access to their commanders who must sign the form.

Selected Reserve Airmen who are not on contingency orders must apply during the open season each year from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31 for Tier 2 or Tier 3 coverage to begin in the new year. Payments to Tricare must be postmarked by Nov. 25.

There is a proposal to revamp the TRS program that will benefit all Reservists. Details will be released when finalized, said Senior Master Sgt. Ramon Roldan, ARPC Entitlements Division.

An exception to the annual open season requirement is made for people who experience a "qualifying life event." These people have 60 days from the time of the event to purchase, change or terminate coverage. The assistant secretary of defense for health affairs designated a "qualifying life event" as "a change in immediate family composition" or "a change in employment of the member or spouse that affects the coverage status of the member or member's family."

Once Ms. Nackowicz and others on her team verify eligibility, they update the information in the Military Personnel Data System and the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. Then, they notify the service member, either by telephone or e-mail, of his or her eligibility for coverage.

After their information is entered into DEERS, service members need to log into the Tricare Guard-Reserve portal to print a personalized enrollment form, which is only available online. After completing and printing the form, service members must submit it with the correct one-month premium to the regional Tricare contractor.

Tricare officials caution that they will not process the request form if the correct payment is not enclosed or the form is incomplete or inaccurate. The contractor will notify service members if their request form has errors.

For information, visit the TRS Web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/reserve/reserveselect/index.cfm> or call the Reserve Personnel Contact Center toll free at 800-525-0102 or DSN 926-6528. ★

(Sergeant Woodring is assigned to the ARPC public affairs office in Denver.)

Tier 1 (Contingency Operations)	Tier 2 (Certified Qualifications)	Tier 3 (Service Agreement)
28% of total premium amount	50% of total premium amount	85% of total premium amount
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Called or ordered to active duty for a period of more than 30 consecutive days supporting a contingency operation on or after Sept. 11, 2001 Served continuously on active duty for 90 days or more under that active duty order OR served less than 90 days solely due to an injury, illness, or disease incurred or aggravated while deployed Released from that active duty after April 26, 2005 Signs a service agreement within 90 days after release from active duty to serve in the Selected Reserve Will be a member of the Selected Reserve on the start date of TRS coverage <p><i>Note: Members of the Individual Ready Reserve have until one year after the last day of qualifying active duty or the last day (180th day) of Transitional Assistance Management Program coverage to occupy a Selected Reserve position.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does not qualify for Tier 1 Signs a service agreement to serve in the Selected Reserve for a period of time that extends through the TRS coverage Will be a member of the Selected Reserve on the start date of TRS coverage Meets <u>one</u> of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible for unemployment compensation No employer-sponsored health plan Self-employed Qualifies during open season or submits sufficient documentation establishing a qualifying life event <p><i>Note: Members of the Individual Ready Reserve have until one year after the last day of qualifying active duty or the last day (180th day) of Transitional Assistance Management Program coverage to occupy a position in the Selected Reserve.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does not qualify for Tier 1 or Tier 2 Signs a service agreement to serve in the Selected Reserve for a period of time that extends through the TRS coverage Will be a member of the Selected Reserve on the start date of TRS coverage Qualifies during open season or submits sufficient documentation establishing a qualifying life event <p><i>Note: Members of the Individual Ready Reserve have until one year after the last day of qualifying active duty or the last day (180th day) of Transitional Assistance Management Program coverage to occupy a position in the Selected Reserve.</i></p>
National Guard/Reserve member released from active duty supporting a contingency operation	Drilling Guardsmen/Reservists No employer-sponsored insurance	Drilling Guardsmen/Reservists With employer-sponsored insurance

Tricare North Region	Tricare South Region	Tricare West Region	Tricare Overseas
Health Net Federal Services, Inc.	Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc.	TriWest Healthcare Alliance	Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc.
Tricare Reserve Select Enrollment P.O. Box 870162 Surfside Beach, SC 29587-9762	P.O. Box 105389 Atlanta, GA 30348-5389	P.O. Box 42048 Phoenix, AZ 85080-2048	P.O. Box 105389 Atlanta, GA 30348-5389
800-555-2605	800-444-5445	888-874-9378	800-444-5445
www.healthnetfederal.com	www.humana-military.com	www.triwest.com	www.humana-military.com

Taking the stage at the Hawkinsville Opera House in Georgia for a community performance in August, Staff Sgt. Marcel Marchetti belts out a rendition of the "Second Line," a New Orleans rhythmic jazz tune associated with jazz funerals and Mardi Gras parades. The sergeant blows his trumpet and dances a jig as he and other members of the Blue Notes rip through the number.

For Sergeant Marchetti, this or any other performance might not be possible if not for a thin layer of Kevlar mesh and the miracle of modern medicine.

Most people in the military associate Kevlar with vests and helmets, worn over their uniform, used to protect them from bullets and flying shrapnel. But this member of the Band of the Air Force Reserve goes a step further. In addition to wearing Kevlar outside of his uniform, Sergeant Marchetti wears it on the inside. Not just inside his uniform, but, literally, inside his body.

The 12-year veteran of the Band of the Air Force Reserve and operational director for the Blue Notes was born with a weak stomach lining, a condition he was unaware of until he was an adult.

"When I was young, it didn't bother me," he said. "I had no clue."

It wasn't until he was playing a gig in the late '90s at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., that he found out there was a problem.

"I was playing an Arturo Sandoval (a Cuban jazz legend) tune; he's one of my idols and a great trumpet player," Sergeant Marchetti said. "I try to play music true to the style. If it's Cuban, which is high and loud stuff, then that's what I do. Well, I did, and it killed me. I definitely felt a pop but kept on playing. It wasn't life-threatening. I didn't think much of it at the time."

Later on, during a routine physical, doctors told him he had a problem. That "pop" Sergeant Marchetti felt during his performance at MacDill was medically diagnosed as a bilateral inguinal hernia. Inguinal hernias can either be congenital (present from birth), although they don't manifest themselves until later, or can occur as a result of repetitive pressure (such as that created by blowing a horn), strain or injury.

In Sergeant Marchetti's case, the hernia affected the structural integrity and function of his already weakened abdominal wall.

"It was a screaming high note that did it," he said. "It's a technique I use to play. Music directors tell you to play from your diaphragm. The diaphragm pushed down and blew the wall out."

The cure for his ailment was to insert a flexible, yet sturdy, piece of Kevlar mesh into his stomach to support the stomach tissue. Doctors put the wafer-thin, flexible mesh under the hernia to immediately "repair" it.

The mesh covers not only the hernia itself but also the thinned and weakened tissue that surrounds the area, according to the North Penn Hernia Institute's Web site.

"It's definitely less painful now," Sergeant Marchetti said. "I play better now because I'm older and more experienced, and I keep working on my trade. I'm stronger for it. I just want to play

my best and do my job for the Air Force."

He jokes about the Kevlar saying, "Let's hope if I ever get shot at it will save me in another area I never thought about."

But for now, he's just traveling and doing what he loves, playing music in the Blue Notes, a zoot suit-wearing band that he co-founded.

"They asked me to do Dixieland Express (another group within the band)," Sergeant Marchetti said. "That's a great group, but it has limitations when it comes to reaching out to the people. This group expands the possibilities and has more capabilities in different areas."

"When I was asked to join Dixieland, I said it wasn't what I really wanted to do. But if you let us, me and Tech. Sgt. Bill Granger, make something and run with it, we'll give you a product you'll be pleased with. We kind of stuck our necks out."

Sergeant Marchetti said his group covers a wide range of bases. He compares the Blue Notes to the new F-22 Raptor. One plane can take out seven targets instead of seven planes for seven targets.

"If a military band goes into a school for recruiting, the uniform sets up a wall," he said. "This is a feel-good band that gets the kids off their seats dancing in the aisles, and they forget we are military. Then we let them know about the jobs available in the Air Force, that it's not all war fighting. We inform them on the benefits."

For Sergeant Marchetti a real testament of how far the Blue Notes have come is the fact that former Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper requested the group to play at the Conference of the Chiefs of the Air Forces of the Americas.

As the Blue Notes wind down their set in Hawkinsville, Sergeant Marchetti's jacket is long since gone, and he is soaked with sweat as he bows to the crowd, with a smile on his face and only a good feeling in his stomach. ★

(Sergeant Babin wrote this article while on a temporary duty assignment with Citizen Airman.)

Bulletproof Belly

Kevlar stomach lining allows trumpet player to keep hitting those 'screaming high notes'

By Master Sgt. Chance C. Babin

Staff Sgt. Marcel Marchetti rips through a number with the Blue Notes during an August performance.



MASTER SGT. CHANCE C. BABIN

TRICARE Reserve Select

Health Care Coverage For You and Your Family



TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) is a 3-tiered, premium-based health care benefit available to qualified Reserve component members and their families. Call the Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) for information, eligibility and enrollment at 1-800-525-0102, or DSN 926-6730/6528.



You may also go to the TRS web site listed below.

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/reserve/reserveselect>