

Citizen AIRMAN

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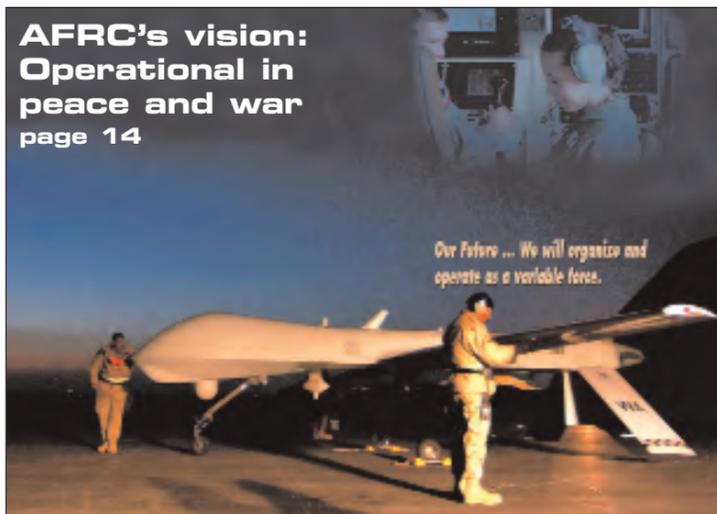


Making the Move

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head south to Carolina**
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Operational in
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*Our future ... We will organize and
operate as a variable force.*

From the Top

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

Everyone has role to play as 'communication ambassadors'

I just returned from a visit with the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I am truly proud of the many sacrifices and commitments made by each of you.

Every opportunity I get to meet with senior leaders, the general public, the media and Congress, I tell them the great things you are doing for our nation. However, I am only one voice. We need many voices — acting as my “communication ambassadors” — to spread the Air Force Reserve message at home and abroad.

As a communication ambassador, I need you speaking strategically. In July, I stood up a Strategic Communication Directorate to help organize our efforts. This organization is developing some pretty innovative ways to get information to you in a timely manner, making it easier to keep abreast of our current messages and assessing their impact on intended audiences.

My goal is also to arm each of you with our key messages so you can help deliver them to those you come into contact with — those who impact our quality of life as Air Force Reservists. By delivering these messages, you will play a vital role in shaping how we view ourselves and others see us.

You can have an immediate positive impact by helping me spread the word that the term “active duty” is no longer the purview of the regular component. Active duty is a status, and thousands of Reservists are on active duty every day. When you say “active force” or “active component,” you are talking about a significant portion of the Reserve and Guard, too. Making this simple but fundamental change in the way we think and talk about one another puts us in the right mindset to support the Air Force as a whole.

Why is this important? We need to start speaking clearly about our increased operational role. Long ago we recognized we were no longer a force held in reserve but a force engaged — an operational force. As we develop further what it means to be operational, it will help us to remember that our Reservists



Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, Air Force Reserve Command commander, during his recent visit to Iraq and Afghanistan

should be counted as part of the “active force” and the “active component,” too.

This seems like a simple task, but just think how many times we hear someone (including ourselves) use the term “active” to only refer to full-timers in the regular component. Changing this perception requires reminding people that thousands of Reservists are on active duty every day. These Reservists are part of an operational force that helps ensure the Air Force can perform its missions.

Another example is using the phrase “Air Force and the Guard and Reserve” in a way that implies that the Guard and Reserve are not part of the Air Force. Title 10 U.S. Code defines the term “Air Force” to include the Guard and Reserve. If we truly believe in our Vision, “One Air Force, Same Fight,” then when we use the word “Air Force” it should mean the total uniformed force — regular, Reserve and Guard.

We need to remember we are all part of one Air Force and remind others when we are in the field. When an aircraft breaks on our ramp, we won't ask whether it is a regular component problem or a Reserve problem — it is an Air Force problem that we will work together to fix.

As we all grow into our role as communication ambassadors, we will need to keep our messages clear and on target. All of us can probably recall in grade school our teacher whispering a message into a student's ear and then passing it until the last person in the class repeated the message. We were all surprised how much the original message had changed.

This simple lesson should not be lost on us. We need many voices, but we need them carrying the same message. You are going to be my communication ambassadors. I am going to arm you with the messages and the means to communicate for effect.

Together we will keep our messages on target while taking another important step in achieving our vision of “One Air Force, Same Fight ... An Unrivaled Wingman.” ★



Chief's View

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

Lessons learned from 9/11

It's hard to believe that soon it will be six years since the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Since that day, our hearts and minds have not been the same, and to this day we struggle with the question of “why.”

Our military was asked to respond to these attacks, and we have answered the call with a vengeance. For us in the Air Force Reserve, we have answered with levels of volunteerism never before seen. Indeed, the reality of an “operational Reserve” is firmly entrenched.

We have deployed thousands of Airmen, asking all to put themselves in harm's way for a cause that may be a distant memory for many Americans. But to us, the events of 9/11 are still very real. Thousands of innocent people lost their lives that day, and many more since then have made the ultimate sacrifice supporting the war against terrorism. We can't afford to forget!

I would like to give you just a glimpse of that day from my eyes along with the life lessons I learned.

For me, that day began like any other day at the Pentagon. There was the usual laughter and chit-chat among co-workers and banter about the day's events. All that quickly came to an end when we turned on the television and saw video of the World Trade Center on fire. Word was the fire was caused by a plane hitting one of the towers. How could that be?

Suddenly, an uneasy chill filled the room as a terrible thought entered our minds: “Was there something more to come?” I stood looking at the TV in disbelief. Then another aircraft crashed into the second tower. This was no accident. Then it happened.

I felt a compression of air and then paper — reams and reams of paper — was flying through the air. I just stood there, frozen in my tracks. The paper was quickly followed by fire and smoke. A third plane had just struck the Pentagon.

Words cannot describe the horror and panic seen on everyone's face. I came across a friend, and we knew there were people in need of help. We made our way toward the area of the building struck by the aircraft. The smoke was thick, and the smell was indescribable.

We assisted many people before being asked to leave the building because of the threat posed by another inbound air-

craft. We quickly made our way outside to an overpass where a makeshift triage area was set up and medical evacuation helicopters were landing. For the rest of the day, I was filled with mixed feelings of anger, fear and disbelief.

Thirty hours later, my final destination was the mortuary, where we assisted the county coroner and other governmental agencies in identifying uniform items. To this day, I can shut my eyes and see everything.

I never want to forget those horrible hours of my life. I'm just one person of a proud military team, but if we, as a whole, keep the memory of that day in our minds, we will ensure something like that will never happen again. We owe that much to the American people!

The biggest lesson learned that day is that terrorists don't care if you wear a uniform or not, nor if you are a woman, man or child. I don't want future generations to grow up in a country of fear. I want them to enjoy the country that I knew — one that is free from the fear of terrorism.

A second lesson learned is life is short. On that day six years ago, many people — mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers — lost their lives. We must cherish each day we have with our families and treat it as if it's our last.

Life is full of challenges, twists and turns, and most of the time we don't understand why things happen the way they do. But fate and destiny have a way of playing out. I have grown closer to my family due to the events of that day and encourage each of you to do the same. We often get caught up in the events of the day and carry frustration home with us. On days like this, you need to ask yourself: Was what happened really that big of a deal?

Many of us take for granted the simple pleasures in life and dwell on what we don't have. I challenge each of you to live your life true to yourself, and always keep an eye on your wingman. When you question why, just remember the events of 9/11 and how your life was changed that day.

I hope what I have shared with you in some way can make you see how valuable your life is to everyone. Once again, thank you for the privilege I have of representing you, our most valuable resource, our enlisted Airmen. ★



CE Provides Head Start

A young member of the Washoe Indian tribe in Carson City, Nev., enjoys the playground facilities at the Stewart Head Start school. This spring, members of the 94th Civil Engineer Squadron at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., including Staff Sgt. Rodney Cox, an electric power production journeyman, deployed to Carson City to perform some much-needed repairs at the school. They accomplished the repairs as part of an Innovative Readiness Training project. IRT is a civil-military partnership through which Reservists receive valuable training while leaving something of value behind for communities throughout the United States. Reserve civil engineers have been involved in performing IRT projects for more than 10 years. During their deployment to Carson City, the Dobbins Reservists also worked on a community center and housing office for the Washoe tribe. (Robert Bush)

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Front cover photos: (Top) Left to right, Maj. Gen. Martin Mazick, 22nd Air Force commander; Col. Merle Hart, 440th Airlift Wing commander; Col. Timothy Zadalis, 43rd AW commander; and Chief Master Sgt. Carmon Francher, 440th AW command chief master sergeant, march to a hangar at Pope Air Force Base, N.C., during a ceremony June 10 marking the 440th AW's relocation to the base from Gen. Mitchell International Airport Air Reserve Station, Wisc. See story, page 16. (Photo courtesy of Andrew Craft, The Fayetteville Observer.) (Bottom left) Staff Sgt. Jose Cortez, 556th RED HORSE squadron structures journeyman, frames a building during New Horizons Guatemala '07. For more on the construction project, see page 20. (Master Sgt. Chance C. Babin). (Bottom right) The fifth in a series of seven articles on the Air Force Reserve's new vision, "One Air Force, Same Fight ... An Unrivaled Wingman," takes a look at how the Reserve remains operational in both peace and war. See page 14 for the story.

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

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OUTSTANDING AIRMEN

Air Force Reserve Command's top Airmen and First Sergeant for 2006 are ...



Senior NCO of the Year

**Senior Master Sgt.
Ronald Colaninno**

NCO in charge of training and a traditional Reservist, 514th Security Forces Squadron, McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.

CARLOS CINTRON



NCO of the Year

Tech. Sgt. Frank Fox

aerospace ground equipment craftsman and an air reserve technician, 419th Maintenance Squadron, Hill AFB, Utah

STAFF SGT. NATHAN GREEN

Airman of the Year

**Staff Sgt.
Clinton Petit**

security forces journeyman and an individual mobilization augmentee, 45th Security Forces Squadron, Patrick AFB, Fla.



STAFF SGT. PAUL FURSE



First Sergeant of the Year

**Senior Master Sgt.
Michael Brimmer**

first sergeant and a traditional Reservist, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

TECH. SGT. CHARLIE MILLER

Practice Makes Perfect

A C-130H Hercules from the 302nd Airlift Wing at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., drops a load of water during annual Modular Airborne Firefighting System training in Albuquerque, N.M., May 2. C-130 aircrews from the 302nd and three Air National Guard units participated in the training in preparation for the 2007 wild fire season. The 302nd AW is the only Air Force Reserve Command unit equipped with the airborne firefighting system. In an actual mission, a C-130 equipped with MAFFS is capable of dropping 2,700 gallons of fire-retardant chemicals. Crews drop the chemicals in front of, not directly on, fires in an effort to slow down or stop their progress. (Tech. Sgt. Rick Sforza)



Round the Reserve

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

Dover Adds First C-17 to Fleet of C-5 Aircraft

A combined flight crew from the 436th and 512th Airlift Wings at Dover Air Force Base, Del., traveled to Long Beach, Calif., to assume ownership of the base's first C-17 Globemaster III aircraft from the Boeing Co. May 31.

After accepting the aircraft, known as the Spirit of the Constitution, the crew flew it cross-country to McGuire AFB, N.J. Gen. Duncan McNabb, Air Mobility Command commander, officially delivered the C-17 to Dover June 4.

The active-duty 436th and its associate unit, the 512th, are in the process of integrating the new airframe with its current fleet of C-5 Galaxies.

"When I arrived at Dover in May 2006, the C-17 transition was just beginning," said Maj. Justin Riddle of the active-duty 3rd Airlift Squadron, who served as aircraft commander for the flight from California to McGuire. "For the next year, I witnessed Dover's transformation and how every base agency contributed toward the beddown."

"So much work and effort has gone into the C-17s arriving at Dover," said Capt.

Paul Scambos, a member of the flight crew. "To be a small part of that is an honor and something I will always remember."

Other members of the crew that flew the aircraft to McGuire were Maj. Kevin Higginbotham, 326th AS and Team Dover's first Air Force Reserve Command C-17 pilot; and Master Sgts. Steve Rucker and Mike Wright, Dover's first active duty and Reserve (respectively) C-17 loadmasters.

Also on board for the flight from California was Brig. Gen. Alfred Steward, 21st Expeditionary Mobility Task Force commander at McGuire AFB,

New people, resources expand aerial spray unit's capabilities

By Tech. Sgt. Bob Barko Jr.

The Department of Defense's only fixed-wing aerial spray unit is getting more people and money to deliver its one-of-a-kind services.

The 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, uses its modified C-130 transport aircraft to spray for mosquitoes and other insect pests, contain large oil spills in oceans and lakes, and deliver herbicide on unwanted vegetation.

To enhance that mission, the wing's aerial spray maintenance flight will gain nine traditional Reservist positions and receive \$2.6 million worth of new and additional equipment. Once the positions are filled, the Reservists will be the first part-timers for the maintenance flight to help perform the wing's ongoing aerial spray mission.

"(The Reservists) will certainly enhance our capability to meet mission requirements for 24/7 aerial spray operations," said Senior Master Sgt. John Daniels, the organization's flight chief.

The extra equipment will allow the modification of two more C-130 aircraft for the aerial spray mission and upgrade vital mission components in aircraft and on the ground. One major upgrade involves the Global Positioning System units used in the aerial spray aircraft.

The maintenance flight is already playing a key role in the upgrade. A series of ground and air tests are under way on a new agricultural unit that is specifically designed for the aerial spray mission. If the tests prove to be successful, the new unit will be installed in all of the aerial spray aircraft.

"In addition to giving latitude and longitude, this GPS has a database for tracking the sprays and predicting the spray clouds and deposition area (location where the spray will land)," said Master Sgt. Michael Birmingham, avionics technician. "This allows the subsequent sprays to be much more accurate."



Master Sgt. Michael Birmingham, an avionics technician in the 910th Aerial Spray Maintenance Flight, works on a laptop computer to locate satellites used by a new Global Positioning System unit being tested to replace the devices currently installed on the 910th's aerial spray aircraft.

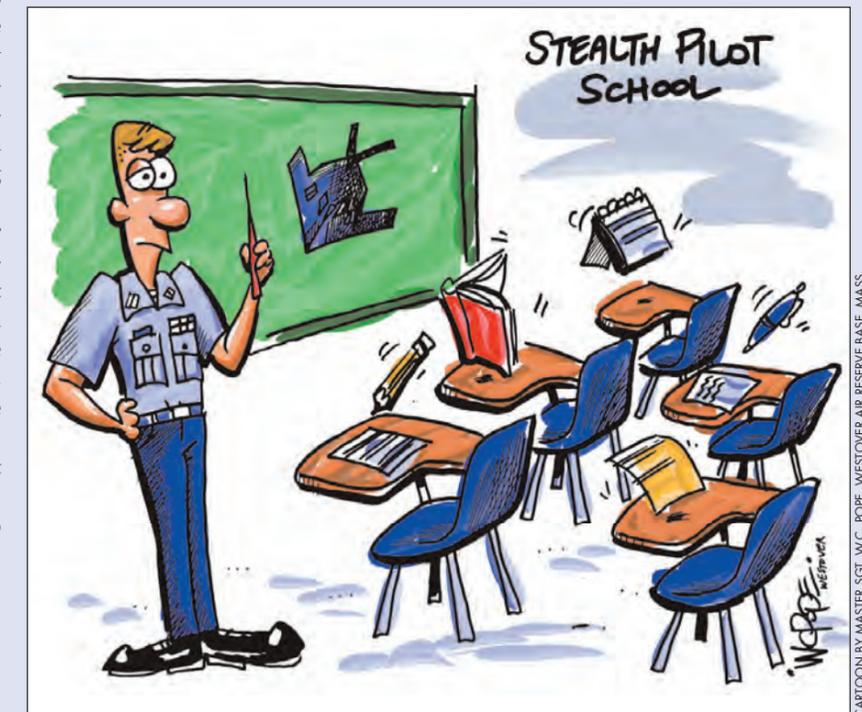
While the current GPS system is accurate within 150 feet, Sergeant Birmingham said with the correct satellite information the new GPS unit can match the precision of a laser-guided bomb in being "on target" during a spray mission.

"With an Omnistar subscription, this new system enables the spray missions to be accurate within 15 centimeters of a pre-selected target area on the ground," he said.

The sergeant said the Omnistar system allows the Air Force to use an optimum number of satellites to allow this kind of precision in spraying even as the aircraft are delivering their payload from 150 feet in the air. ★

(Sergeant Barko is assigned to the 910th AW public affairs office at Youngstown ARS.)

Pope's Puns



who served as delivery official.

It didn't take the Reserve's 326th AS long to get to work after the aircraft's arrival, taking the first flight aboard the Spirit of the Constitution just one day later. The flight was a local training mission to further the Reserve crew's proficiency in tactical and instrument approach procedures as well as combat offloading and night-vision goggle use.

Dover is scheduled to receive 12 other C-17s during the next two years. The aircraft will complement the base's current inventory of 18 C-5s, which have been modernized with digital avionics and are scheduled to have their engines upgraded, said Lt. Col. Craig LaFave, chief of the 512th AW Program Integration Office.

The Spirit of the Constitution is the first new airplane to arrive at Dover in 21 years. The C-5s first arrived at Dover 36 years ago. (2nd Lt. Nicole Langley, 436th AW public affairs)

Charleston Unit Produces Television Show

The 315th Airlift Wing at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., in partnership with Comcast Cable Television, is producing a monthly news-talk television show called "Troop Talk."

"Troop Talk" reaches more than 110,000 households throughout the Charleston television market and showcases to the community the efforts of the base and the 315th AW.

Each 30-minute show airs five different times during the first week of the month on Comcast C-2, giving viewers choices to view the program at their convenience.

The first episode of "Troop Talk" aired in May and featured the missions of the host active-duty 437th AW and 315th. The episode also highlighted Charleston's explosive ordnance disposal team along with the local Veterans Administration hospital.

Capt. Wayne Capps, public affairs chief for the 315th AW, hosted the show. Members of both wing public affairs offices produced segments for the program.

"This is an exciting way to show our community what goes on here at the wing," said Maj. Bill Walsh, Reserve public affairs officer for the 315th and executive producer of the program. "It's our

way of telling the Air Force story direct to the viewers with no filters."

One segment of each show will feature the VA or other military units in the Charleston area such as the naval weapons station, Coast Guard group, and Army and Marine Corps units.

"We're going to open up the show to all military installations in the area to give them a vehicle to let the community know about the great things military members are doing right here at home and deployed," Major Walsh said.

"Troop Talk" is part of the community outreach program of the 315th AW and Comcast Cable Television. (Tony Clark, 315th AW public affairs office, Charleston AFB)

Commander Inactivates Three Portland Units

More than 500 people attended a formal ceremony in Portland, Ore., May 6 during which three of the 939th Air Refueling Wing's subordinate units were inactivated. The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission mandated the drawdown.

During the ceremony, wing Reservists, distinguished guests from Oregon and Washington, veterans, and family members witnessed the encasing of the 939th Operations Group, 939th Maintenance Group and 83rd Aerial Port Squadron's flags and guidons. The act symbolized the closure of the units and the end of 45 years of service in the Pacific Northwest.

"It's a tough thing to do — to close a wing — and we're doing it in several places," said Lt. Gen. John Bradley, commander of Air Force Reserve Command and the presiding officer for the ceremony. "We've been here as the 939th for more than 45 years and had Reservists operating out of Portland for 50 years. It's a very hard thing for us to have to move out."

The general explained the cost savings realized through base realignment and closure actions does stand to benefit the service in the long term. However, the downside, he said, comes in the form of Reservists being moved out of a number of communities across America, thus diminishing the ties Citizen Airmen have with those they serve and protect.

"You've got a great history here that spans many years and many kinds of air-

planes and different missions," he said. "It's a hard thing to let go. This is a unit of dedicated professional and highly trained Airmen. You've flown thousands of sorties and offloaded millions of gallons of jet fuel to refuel airplanes that are defending America and helping those forces in combat."

General Bradley issued a personal thanks to the 939th members for "every

single day spent away from jobs and families."

He concluded his remarks by saying, "I understand the pain of leaving a great unit. ... leaving a great community. We've done it in a lot of places recently, and I can't think of anything I like doing less. I want you to know your leadership appreciates you and what you do. My prayers are with you."

In a final show of recognition, General Bradley presented the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award streamer to Col. William N. Flanigan, commander of the 939th ARW, who, in turn, placed it on the wing's flag.

"This ceremony marks the closure of a chapter in the long and storied history of the Reserve here at Portland," Colonel Flanigan said.

DOD announces improvements to Tricare Reserve Select

By Bo Joyner

The Defense Department is making some major changes to the Tricare Reserve Select health plan, and that's good news for Air Force Reservists.

"Beginning Oct. 1, all drilling Reservists, including IMAs (individual mobilization augmentees), will have access to this health-care benefit at its lowest premium rate," Lt. Col. Alexander Alex, Air Force Reserve Command's health benefits manager, said, explaining that the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act calls for the restructuring of Tricare Reserve Select to eliminate the three-tier payment system that has been in effect since 2006.

In the past, only Reservists on or recently returned from a contingency operation qualified for Tier 1, which had the lowest cost premium. Beginning Oct. 1, monthly premiums for all drilling Reservists will be \$81 for the TRS member only or \$253 for the member and his or her family. Premiums are adjusted annually effective Jan. 1 of each year.

"We've been working hard for years to improve health-care benefits for all Reservists, and this is a big step in that process," said Maj. Gen. Allan R. Poulin, AFRC's vice commander. "I encourage all Reservists to take a new look at this program to see if it meets their needs."

"As a health-care consultant, I have looked at numerous plans, and this is a very competitive 80/20 indemnity plan where the government pays 80 percent and the member pays 20 percent of the cost share," Colonel Alex said. "One of its huge benefits is the pharmacy program. If used wisely, members can get a 90-day supply of medicine for \$3 per prescription. Additionally, there is a \$1,000 catastrophic cap that is among the lowest in the industry. Once a member has paid \$1,000 in a fiscal year, Tricare will pay 100 percent of the Tricare allowable cost after that."

Currently, about 11,500 members of the reserve components across all services — and about 2,700 Air Force Reservists — are enrolled in Tricare Reserve Select. Colonel Alex said these people will be required to re-enroll in the program if they want to keep their coverage.



Lt. Col. Alexander Alex

"All interested Reservists, including those who are currently enrolled in Tricare Reserve Select, must fill out a newly developed DD Form 2896-1 to take part in this restructured program," he said.

To begin the application process, Reservists should visit the Guard and Reserve Web portal at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/tsa/index.jsp>. DOD officials said they are looking into a simpler application process.

For specific information as it becomes available, go to the TRS Web site (<http://www.tricare.mil/reserve/reserve-select/>) or contact the Air Reserve Personnel Center toll free at 800-525-0102 or DSN 926-6730. The fax number is commercial 478-327-2215 or DSN 497-2215. Online customer service is available at <https://arpc.afrc.af.mil/vPC-GR/>, then click "New Request."

All drilling Reservists are qualified for the restructured Tricare Reserve Select program starting Oct. 1 with one major exception: If a drilling Reservist is eligible for Federal Employee Health Benefits or is currently covered under FEHB (either under his own eligibility or through a family member's eligibility), the Reservist is not eligible to purchase Tricare Reserve Select.

"We want every Reservist to know that Tricare Reserve Select is something they have earned through their service to their country, and it is a benefit that our senior leaders have worked very hard to obtain," Colonel Alex said. "We hope all of our Reservists will take a good look at what the program has to offer."

Colonel Alex encouraged all Reservists to visit the Tricare Reserve Select Web site for more information.

"This Web site is kept very current and will be updated as the new TRS restructuring takes effect," he said.

If members are having difficulty finding information after Aug. 12 or if they have general questions on Tricare Reserve Select medical coverage, they can e-mail Colonel Alex at AFRC/TRICAREreserves@afrc.af.mil ★

The Air Force Reserve assigned the mission of global air refueling to the 939th in April 2003.

At the same time, it designated the 304th Rescue Squadron (also at Portland) a geographically separated unit responsible for combat search and rescue. The 304th RQS is scheduled to continue operating after the closure of the wing. The remaining units of the 939th will close in June 2008. (Maj. James R. Wilson, 939th ARW public affairs, Portland.)

In-Resident School Nominations Open Until Sept. 14

The Air Force Reserve Developmental Education Designation Board is accepting applications from people interested in attending in-residence developmental education schools in 2008-09.

The deadline for receipt of application packages is Sept. 14. Application instructions are available on the Web at <https://arpc.afrc.af.mil/forcedevelopment/training/rdebd.asp>.

In-residence developmental education schools include Air Command and Staff College, Joint Military Intelligence College, the Capitol Hill Fellowship Program, Air War College, Army War College, Naval War College, National War College, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, the Harvard National Security Fellowship and Inter-American Defense College.

Reservists who submit a nomination package automatically compete for all programs for which they are eligible. Selected candidates' school preferences and experience as well as the needs of the Air Force Reserve are considered when determining school assignments.

Members of the Active Guard and Reserve and unit Reservists must submit senior rater endorsed packages through their military personnel flight or numbered air force personnel office, as appropriate. No packages will be accepted directly from applicants.

Individual mobilization augmentees must submit their senior rater endorsed packages to their program managers.

For specific questions regarding application procedures, headquarters AGRs may contact Lt. Col. Randy Robertson, 703-588-1104; unit air reserve technicians, traditional Reservists and AGRs may contact Senior Master Sgt. Roxann Santos, 478-327-1291 or DSN 497-1291; and IMAs may contact Senior Master Sgt. John Glenn, 478-327-2318 or DSN 497-2318. (Staff reports) ★

It's Your Money

By Ralph Lunt

Now's a great time to ...

Log in to your Thrift Savings Plan account (www.tsp.gov). Are your deferrals consistent with your investment philosophy? In plain English, are you investing in fund(s) with a risk level and objective that you are comfortable with? Should you rebalance? Several of the funds have done very well over the past year, and it's quite possible that your desired asset allocation is askew.

Review your life insurance beneficiary designations. I know I've hammered on this before, but it's so important, I'll continue to do so!

Set up a Roth Individual Retirement Account. If you have extra cash to invest, this is certainly an account to seriously consider. Roth IRAs are my financial weapon of choice. They're not perfect, but they're darn good. In a nutshell, after-tax money that if properly cared for will allow for tax-free distributions of all earnings. Parents, if your children earn money from a summer job, they, too, can open a Roth IRA! Make sure you understand and follow the rules.

Look over your property and liability insurance. If you haven't spoken to your insurance agent in a year or more, I'd strongly recommend you pull together all your insurance papers and give him or her a call. Review your policy line by line looking for holes in your coverage. Discuss the ramifications of your hard-earned possessions being damaged or destroyed by fire, theft, collision, water or wind. For those of you in an area where homes have appreciated in value, double-check to make sure you haven't blown through the limits of your homeowner's policy.

Go to annualcreditreport.com and run your credit report with one of the three sponsoring agencies. Ideally you would check this three times a year, rotating among the three providers.

Open a 529 account for yourself or your children. I mentioned in a previous column that this is how my wife and I save for our children's college expenses.

Validate the amount of life insurance coverage on yourself and, if issued, your spouse. My rule of thumb is to take the total amount you or your beneficiaries would receive and multiply it by .04, which represents a 4 percent withdrawal rate. If this number, in conjunction with other savings and income sources, allows you or your beneficiaries to maintain the desired standard of living, then the level of coverage is most likely correct. If not, I recommend you add accordingly. ★

(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 in Cleveland, Ohio, Mr. Lunt is a certified financial planner and vice president of a financial planning and consulting firm. He is also a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserve, serving as the reserve forces director for the Great Lakes region of the Civil Air Patrol advisors program.)



Enhancing and enabling the key attributes that make our
component operational in peace and war

Operational in Peace and War

By Senior Airman Eric Hofmeyer

(Editor's note: This is the fifth in a series of seven articles on the Air Force Reserve's new vision, "One Air Force, Same Fight ... An Unrivaled Wingman." The subject of this article is Operational in Peace and War, one of the six aimpoints contained in the vision document that are designed to establish markers to gauge the direction the Reserve is headed in the future. It is these aimpoints that make members of the Air Force Reserve unrivaled wingmen.)

In the last 10 to 15 years, the Air Force Reserve has undergone a fundamental shift in philosophy regarding how it conducts its day-to-day business.

From the time of its inception in 1948, the Reserve pretty much operated separately from the regular Air Force during peacetime. It truly functioned as a force held in reserve, its members training to respond in time of war but otherwise not really getting heavily involved in normal operations.

However, "quite some time ago, the Air Force saw the value of having Reservists training and working alongside their regular component counterparts," said Col. Gary L. Crone, director of strategic communications for the Air Force Reserve and primary architect of the Reserve's vision document. The first associate units were stood up in the late 1960s.

While the associate program grew gradually over the next 20 years, "soon afterward the Air Force embraced the concept of training its Selected Reserve component to the same readiness standards as the regular component," Colonel Crone said. "In one respect, a 'peace dividend' for the Air Force coming out of the Cold War was the 'operationalization' of its reserve components."

Since Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and Operations Northern and Southern Watch, Air Force leadership has sought to better integrate the experience and skills Reserve Airmen offer into daily operations. This profound shift in philosophy from a force in reserve to an operational force continues today.

The Air Force Reserve is now operational in peace and war.

"In today's Air Force, the role of the Reserve component is considered critical in almost every mission area," said Lt. Col. David Hembroff, a member of Colonel Crone's strategy team and key vision architect. "Reservists, literally by the thousands, all over the country have risen to meet the challenges associated with the operational demands on our Air Force."

"Unlike any other time in our nation's history, Reserve Airmen are performing operational missions in large numbers as unrivaled wingmen to our Air Force counterparts."

Take Capt. Ted Janicki, for example. A member of the 916th Air Refueling Wing at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., Captain Janicki volunteered for a deployment in 2006 to Afghanistan to train soldiers from the Afghanistan national army. Among other things, he taught Afghan soldiers proper drill and ceremony procedures as well as basic computer-related courses.

The computer information systems professor from Mount

Olive College in North Carolina lived, ate and worked with the Afghan soldiers. He served as the lone Air Force Reservist among a joint task force that included reserve and regular component service members from the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine Corps.

"This was the first deployment in my 13 years of service," said Caption Janicki in an e-mail from Afghanistan. "It was time to put all of my valuable military training to use for its intended purpose. I also thought that it was a noble cause."

During unpredictable times, the mix of Reservists performing active duty and the missions they perform can rapidly change, Colonel Crone said. The Air Force Reserve successfully brings a broad array of capabilities to a wide range of missions, spanning combat and mobility air forces, expeditionary combat support, space operations, unmanned aerial vehicle operations, information operations, and air training operations among others.

"Our challenge today is to understand what is the maximum effort of volunteerism we can sustain in support of operations without needing to resort to mobilization," the colonel said. "If we can learn to predict that accurately and set expectations accordingly, we will have gone a long way toward identifying what it means to be a viable operational Reserve."

In recent years, the level of support provided by the Reserve for operational missions has increased substantially, both for aerospace expeditionary force operations and other requirements. This, along with increasingly complex training requirements, has led Reservists to participate beyond the minimum requirements of unit training assemblies and annual tours, Colonel Crone said.

Master Sgt. Dale Canofari, a first sergeant from the 911th Airlift Wing, Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pa., volunteered for a deployment to the Middle East in 2005. Prior to volunteering, the Pittsburgh homicide detective

and former Reserve security forces member was activated twice after 9/11.

"It's very simple," Sergeant Canofari said regarding his reasons for volunteering for deployment. "I've been in (the Reserve) for a long time, and I'm not going to sit around and just make money during peacetime."

Sergeant Canofari felt he could make a difference because of his extensive life experience and understanding of people in general.

"I wanted to utilize my training; it was time to act," he said.

Many factors contribute to the success the Reserve has demonstrated in meeting its many different requirements through volunteerism. Flexibility in tour length and timing, continuously available assignments, and the knowledge that Reservists will not be asked for more unless it is important are key factors that facilitate the individual decisions to deploy, Colonel Crone said.

To minimize the need for mobilizations, the Reserve will continue relying on volunteerism as its primary means of providing required support to current Air Force operations, he said.

"However, the use of mobilization authorities will remain an option whenever there are not enough trained individuals or units in the regular component to perform the operational mission and the requirement for reserve support exceeds our maximum efforts to provide volunteers," Colonel Crone said. ★

(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.)

**Our Future ... We will organize and
operate as a variable force.**

Making the Move

Members of the 440th Airlift Wing stand at attention during the relocation ceremony at Pope Air Force Base, N.C. On the opposite page, 440th C-130s line up on the flight line at Pope. (Photos courtesy of Andrew Craft, The Fayetteville Observer)

Wisconsin wing raises flag at new Carolina home

By Maj. Ann Peru Knabe

For more than 50 years, the 440th Airlift Wing called Wisconsin home. That five-decade legacy officially came to a close in June when the unit's flag and command section left Milwaukee bound for their new home at Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

"The 440th's rich history isn't over," said Col. Merle D. Hart, wing commander, to a crowd of more than 500 people who assembled at Gen. Mitchell International Airport Air Reserve Station to say goodbye to the wing. "We're just starting a new chapter, and what a glorious chapter it will be."

The move from Wisconsin to North Carolina was part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommendations approved by Congress. In a symbolic ceremony, Colonel Hart boarded a C-130 at General Mitchell June 9 with the Reserve unit's flag waving in the wind. The next day, Col. Timothy Zadalis, 43rd AW commander, officially welcomed the unit to Pope as Maj. Gen. Martin Mazick, 22nd Air Force commander, looked on.

"While many of our men and women were sad to leave Milwaukee, they're excited about the many new opportunities at Pope," Colonel Hart said. "We're the first wing to associate active-duty squadrons under a Reserve wing commander's operational direction for day-



to-day operations at home station. This historic association reflects Total Force in action. When the association is complete (no later than October 2008), the 440th will be the lead flying wing at Pope AFB."

Although two of the wing's units, the 440th Airlift Control Flight and the 34th Aerial Port Squadron, were inactivated during the relocation ceremony, the wing will actually gain new missions and an increased number of Airmen at its new home.

Two active-duty units, the 2nd Airlift Squadron and 43rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, will fall under the operational direction of the 440th AW commander. In addition, the wing will also gain two new Reserve units: the 53rd APS, which is already located at Pope AFB but geographically separate from its current wing in Charleston; and a new squadron, the 440th AES, which is

expected to stand up in April 2008.

In addition to the growth in personnel, the wing will see its number of assigned aircraft increase from eight to 16 as part of the relocation.

Colonel Hart is optimistic about the wing's future.

"The world needs changes, and that's why the 440th is moving," he said. "The men and women who have filled the ranks of the 440th since its founding in 1943 have served their nation well and earned many deserved honors. The discipline of operations and the innovations of our people have made the wing one of the strongest in the Air Force, and we will carry these values with us to our new home at Pope."

Several hundred Wisconsin Reservists are expected to continue serving with the wing at its new home, some moving to the area permanently and others commuting on weekends for unit training assemblies. Many 440th Airmen have accepted offers for positions in the Air National Guard and other Reserve units closer to Wisconsin. Wing leaders expect they will need to fill about 80 percent of available positions with people new to the 440th, and the unit will soon have a new wing mascot representing the C-130 active-duty and Reserve aircrews. ★

(Major Knabe is chief of public affairs for the 440th AW at Gen. Mitchell IAP ARS.)

440th AW actually returning to its historical roots

While the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission announcement that the 440th Airlift Wing would be moving to Pope Air Force Base, N.C., was a surprise to most members of the unit, and the community for that matter, the wing is actually returning to its roots after spending more than 50 years in Wisconsin.

"Our 'return' to Pope is significant because of the combat history between the 440th and many of the units under the 18th Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, which is collocated next to Pope AFB," said Col. Merle D. Hart, 440th AW commander.

In 1943, the 440th was activated as a troop carrier group, and on Dec. 17 of that year the wing arrived at Pope Field to begin airborne training missions with the 18th Airborne Corps at neighboring Fort Bragg. The training was to prepare for the Allied invasion of German-occupied Europe. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, members of the 440th took off from Royal Air Force Base Exeter, England, loaded with 101st Airborne Division soldiers bound for Normandy, France.

"The Soldiers and Airmen were heroes, destined to reshape

the outcome of the war," Colonel Hart said. "The missions were some of the first combat airborne infantry drops in U.S. history."

After D-Day, the 440th led multiple missions throughout Europe to include the airdrop of 82nd Airborne Division soldiers into Holland during Operation Market Garden. Using Airmen from the 95th Airlift Squadron to resupply frontline troops, the 440th provided a major lifeline for 101st Airborne Division soldiers who found themselves surrounded by enemy troops during the Battle of the Bulge at Bastogne, Belgium. The 440th also played a critical role in the resupply of frontline troops during the crossing of the Rhine River in March 1945.

While based in Milwaukee, Wisc., the wing supported other major military operations, including the Cuban Missile Crisis, Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Provide Promise/Hope, Northern/Southern Watch, Restore/Uphold Democracy, Joint Endeavor, Shining Hope, Allied Force, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. ★



Maj. Mark J. Bortiatynski (left) and Lt. Col. Jonathan Burgwald, fighter interceptor duty officers, work in the North American Aerospace Defense Command-U.S. Northern Command Battle Management Center at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. Major Bortiatynski and Colonel Burgwald are among a group of individual mobilization augmentees who routinely support active-duty crews during exercises that involve the strategic defense of North American airspace.

Team Players

Expertise of Reservists invaluable to NORAD's mission

Story by Maj. Stacia Reddish, photos by Navy PO1 Shane Wallenda

Early on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, Lt. Col. Jim "Mongo" Myers arrived for work at Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, Colo., to replace Lt. Col. Deacon "Zeke" Winters after an eight-hour shift as part of an exercise being played out in the North American Aerospace Defense Command Battle Management Center.

Colonels Myers and Winters, along with other individual mobilization augmentees, routinely augmented active-duty crews during command exercises that involved the strategic defense of

North American airspace.

On that fateful day, the Air Force Reservists, who were assigned to the Battle Management Center as fighter interceptor duty officers, had just finished the morning changeover briefing. Colonel Winters accepted an offer to join the Canadian deputy commander of NORAD for breakfast. Together, with breakfast in hand, they learned of the real-world events that occurred in New York City that would alter the course of history and significantly change the NORAD mission.

Prior to the terrorist attacks in New

York and Washington, D.C., NORAD's mission was to provide airborne early warning and defense for North America. Answering to the call of a changed America, NORAD quickly re-postured itself to also monitor airspace within the interior of North America. To fulfill its traditional role of vigilance and execute this expanded mission, the command called on the broad skill sets of the Air Force Reservists attached to its Current Operations Division.

"Immediately following the tragic incident, it was apparent that NORAD didn't

have enough active-duty personnel to perform the necessary 24/7 FIDO (fighter interceptor duty officer) role required in this post-9/11 world," said retired Lt. Col. Bill Glover, assistant air operations director in the NORAD Battle Management Center when the terrorist attacks occurred. "The expertise of the Reservists was invaluable in filling the gap between what we were doing and what needed to be done."

There was a lot that needed to be accomplished in the direct aftermath of the terrorist attacks, and the Reservists assigned to NORAD became key contributors in the tactical operation chain as the command's mission focus expanded.

"Reservists quickly began contributing to the new mission of NORAD," Colonel Winters said. "We coordinated with the geographic regions of North America concerning the combat air patrols. We monitored all aspects of the operational mission: alert status, weather, scrambles, exercises, mission results. ... you name it. More importantly, we provided the 24/7 situational awareness the NORAD commander relied on for time-critical decisions during a crisis.

"The new mission presented us with a shift in relevance. Once just augmenting for exercises, now we were key players in the 'operational' success of the new mission."

Reservists are the right people to use to complement the mission, according to Maj. Gen. Robert Ostenberg, director of reserve forces at NORAD and U.S. Northern Command.

"The NORAD Reservists bring valuable skills and training to the table," General Ostenberg said. "Their experience as active-duty pilots and flying for the commercial airlines makes them a true asset to the NORAD team.

"The Reserve FIDOs understand the culture and chain of command of both organizations. Since the Federal Aviation Administration and NORAD now work side by side supporting the aerospace defense of North America, this dual expertise is very important to the success of the NORAD mission."

Today, NORAD fighter interceptor duty officers also execute the commander's strategic planning and tasking guidance in times of increased tensions or threat.

"In essence, based on their experience and continuity, the Reservists are 'go-to' people if anything like 9/11 were to occur again," said Col. John Weigand, reserve adviser to the director of NORAD operations. "The active-duty turnover on the headquarters staff does not always allow for great continuity. The Reservists provide that link with great transparency."

Currently, nine NORAD operations Reservists accomplish approximately 30 percent of the more than 500 annual FIDO shifts in the NORAD and USNORTHCOM command center.

During real-life contingencies, NORAD IMAs contribute to the composition of the command's crisis action team. The CAT provides additional support and planning outside the normal capability of the NORAD operations center.

The NORAD operations Reservists are also involved in planning, coordinating and executing national security special events, such as presidential State of the Union addresses, G8 conferences, national conventions and major sporting events. And the IMAs support various command exercises.

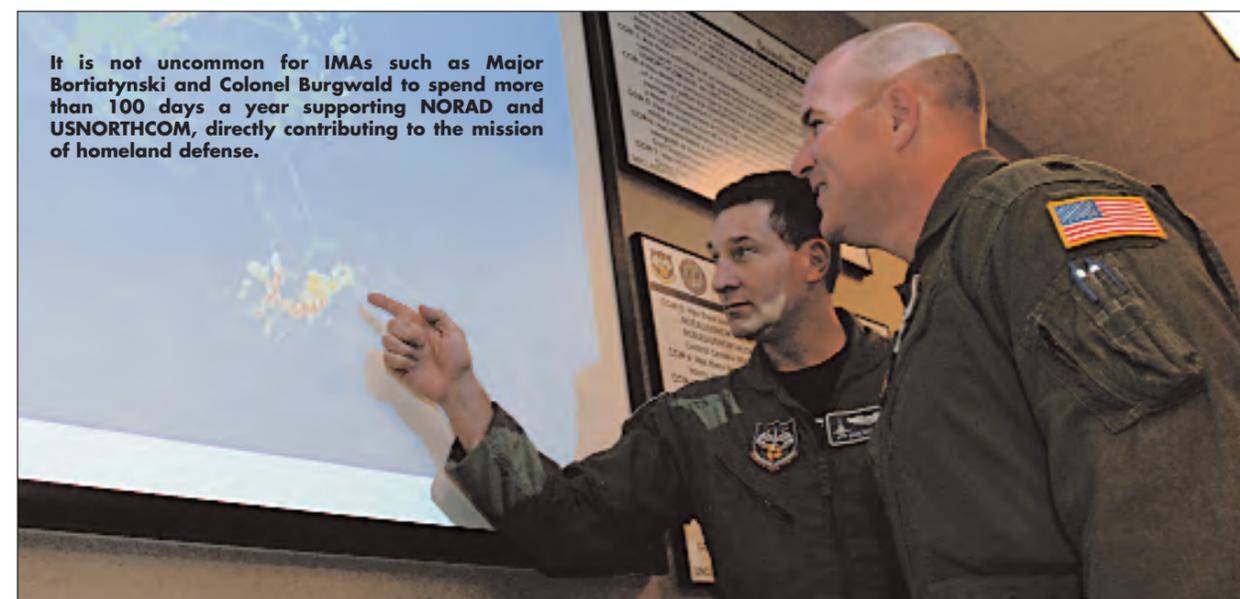
"Reservists add a lot of value to this mission, as well as other missions in NORAD and USNORTHCOM," said Colonel Myers, who now serves as the NORAD and USNORTHCOM Air Force Reserve adviser. "The FIDOs, along with the other IMAs, serve willingly, putting in a lot of time in the conduct of the command missions."

It is not uncommon for many of the NORAD IMAs to spend more than 100 days a year supporting the command.

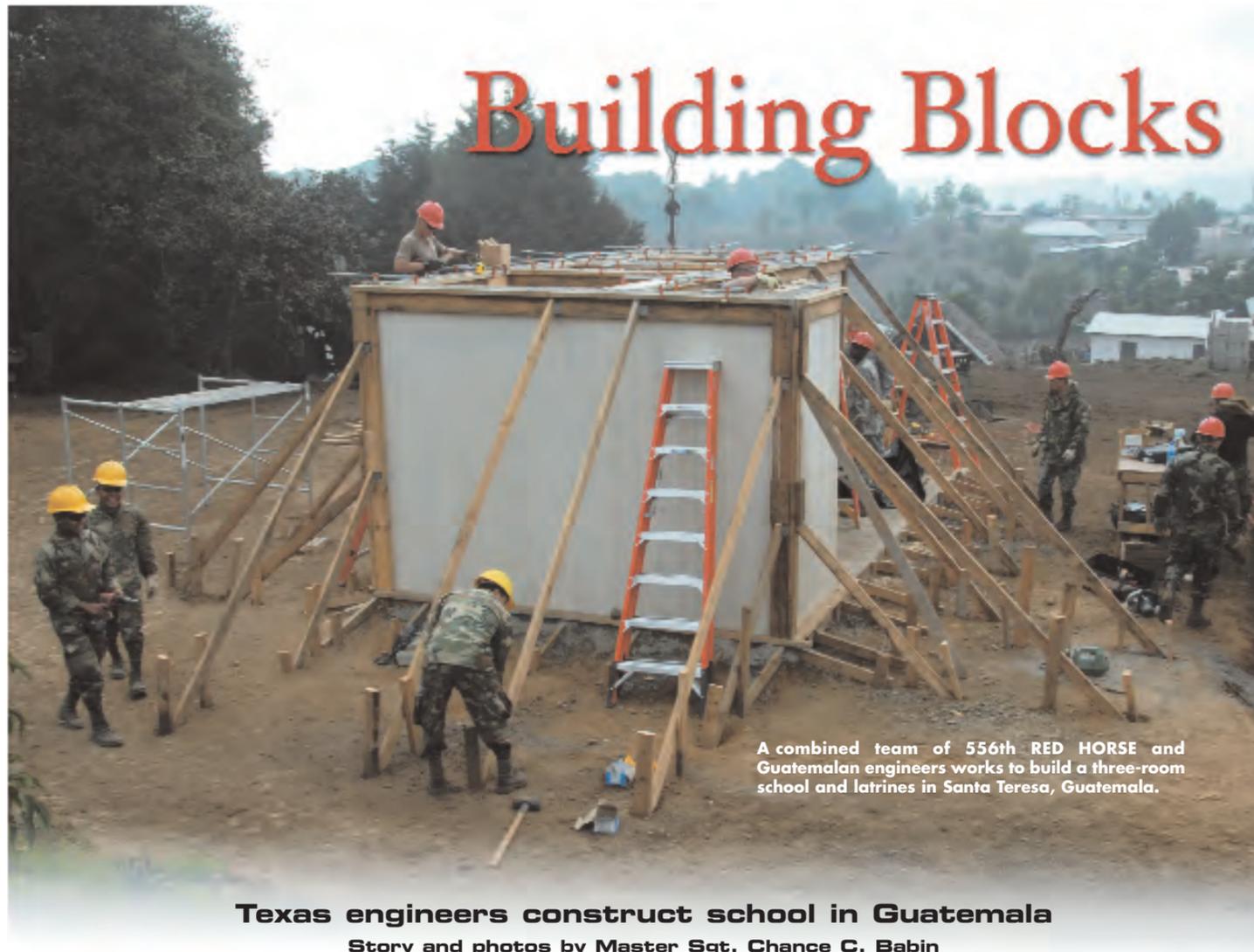
"Reservists assigned to NORAD operations are fortunate to be able to contribute to the mission of homeland defense," Colonel Weigand said. "We're not spectators. We're on the frontline, and we feel privileged to be part of that team."

The United States has become forever changed since 9/11. NORAD's mission has been indefinitely altered, and NORAD Reservists continue to provide critical expertise and continuity, seamlessly integrating themselves into the command's ongoing missions of aerospace warning and control for North America. ★

(Major Reddish is assigned to NORAD and USNORTHCOM public affairs, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.)



Building Blocks



A combined team of 556th RED HORSE and Guatemalan engineers works to build a three-room school and latrines in Santa Teresa, Guatemala.

Texas engineers construct school in Guatemala

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Chance C. Babin

What started out as an empty, dusty, weed-infested plot of land ended up being the pride of a small village in the mountains of Guatemala, thanks to the efforts of a group of about 90 Air Force Reserve engineers.

The engineers, members of the 556th Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers, built a three-room schoolhouse on the land in Santa Teresa. The structure is capable of withstanding a Category 4 hurricane and, more importantly, able to accommodate up to 180 students.

The Reservists traveled from their home at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Santa Teresa as part of New Horizons Guatemala '07. They went in four, two-week rotations to complete the task.

In addition to the Reserve project, Army National Guard units built two other schools and a medical clinic.

New Horizons is a Joint Chiefs of Staff-

approved, U.S. Southern Command-sponsored engineer and medical humanitarian and civic assistance exercise conducted annually in Central and South America. The exercise often involves Reservists and National Guardsmen from the Army, Navy and Air Force.

The purpose of the exercise is to provide joint readiness training for U.S. engineer and medical units while improving the infrastructure of the visited country. This year's exercise in Guatemala focused on constructing schools, clinics and water wells, as well as conducting medical readiness training.

For many RED HORSE members, the opportunity to leave a lasting impression on the people of Guatemala and, more importantly, the youth made the mission worthwhile.

"I'm just happy. It's so satisfying because it's for the kids," said Staff Sgt. Joey Rimkus, 556th RHS structures superintendent. "I see how downtrodden the

community is, and then you have this beautiful building there for the kids to go to school and hopefully give them a better chance to get out of that situation and make a better life for themselves."

Despite serious delays in getting concrete from local suppliers and overseas deployments within the unit, the team was able to finish a little ahead of schedule thanks to the members' level of expertise and multiple skills.

"Each rotation was geared toward what the job required at that specific time. That's the way our leadership planned it," said Senior Master Sgt. Russell Brashars, 556th RHS utilities superintendent. "In addition, the people we send on these deployments are capable of handling everything on the mission."

RED HORSE units provide the Air Force with a highly mobile civil engineer response force to support contingency and special operations worldwide. They provide heavy repair capability and con-

struction support when requirements exceed normal base civil engineer capabilities and where Army engineer support is not readily available.

The primary RED HORSE tasking in peacetime is to train for contingency and wartime operations. Members participate regularly in Joint Chief of Staff and major command exercises, military operations other than war, and humanitarian civic action programs. They perform training projects that assist base construction efforts while at the same time honing their wartime skills.

In addition to supply issues, the Reservists encountered other delays as they had to make due with fewer people than planned because of overseas deployments as well as add-ons to the project.

"Even though we had some people (about 40) who had to go to Iraq, we were able to produce a quality product," Sergeant Brashars said.

"During the mission, add-ons were given to the project, such as a drop ceiling," said Senior Master Sgt. Gonzalo Acosta, 556th RHS project manager. "Keeping up with these changes was a challenge. We adapted and overcame."

Although the Reservists had built countless structures before, New Horizons provided them with their first opportunity to work with a prefabrication building system. The walls of the school were formed with plastic vinyl and rebar, and concrete was poured in to create a strong structure.

"We got a lot of good experience with a new method of construction," said Capt. David Losleben, 556th RHS engineering officer.

"It was easy to assemble, but the concrete was a challenge to pour," Sergeant Acosta said. "The building ended up with a beautiful finish and is very sturdy. It can be used as a storm shelter as well as a school."

Joining the RED HORSE team on the project was a small group of Guatemalan engineers.

"The Guatemalan engineers were extremely helpful and were hard workers," Sergeant Brashars said. "They fit right in with our style."

An advantage the group from Lackland had over other teams working in the region was bilingual language skills.

"About half of our people speak Spanish," Sergeant Acosta said. "Other sites need interpreters. We don't. When we send people out to the community to get supplies, they're able to establish communication and relationships because they speak the language."

While most members of the RED HORSE team are seasoned veterans, missions like New Horizons still provide valuable training, particularly to younger, less experienced Reservists.

"It was an outstanding training opportunity," Sergeant Brashars said. "This will build their confidence and skills so when they deploy for a real-world scenario they will be ready."

For some, like Senior Airman Michael Garrison, 556th RHS structures apprentice, this was the first time they had deployed with the unit.

"It's definitely different than tech school," Airman Garrison said. "You have to adapt more and figure things out as you go."

Airman Garrison credited his more senior co-workers with setting him straight during the deployment.

"They criticize you and correct you," he said, "to make sure



Tech. Sgt. Jon Brady, a 556th RHS heavy equipment operator, doesn't let the Guatemalan heat slow him down during construction of the Santa Teresa school.

you are doing it right. That's the best way to learn."

Edwin Ozorio, director of the new school, talked about how helpful the facility will be for the community. He said there's one school in the area for 11 communities in Santa Teresa, and this new school will allow the children and teachers more space to expand. He said he was happy to have the RED HORSE team there helping and that the Reservists' efforts will improve the quality of education for all students.

"It was a great opportunity to give back," said Army Capt. Bryan Taylor, quality assurance officer liaison for Joint Force Bravo, Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras. "When you get right down to it, projects like these help the people they directly affect."

While the engineers left the Guatemalans with a building that will last, they received lasting impressions from the people of the community, especially the children.

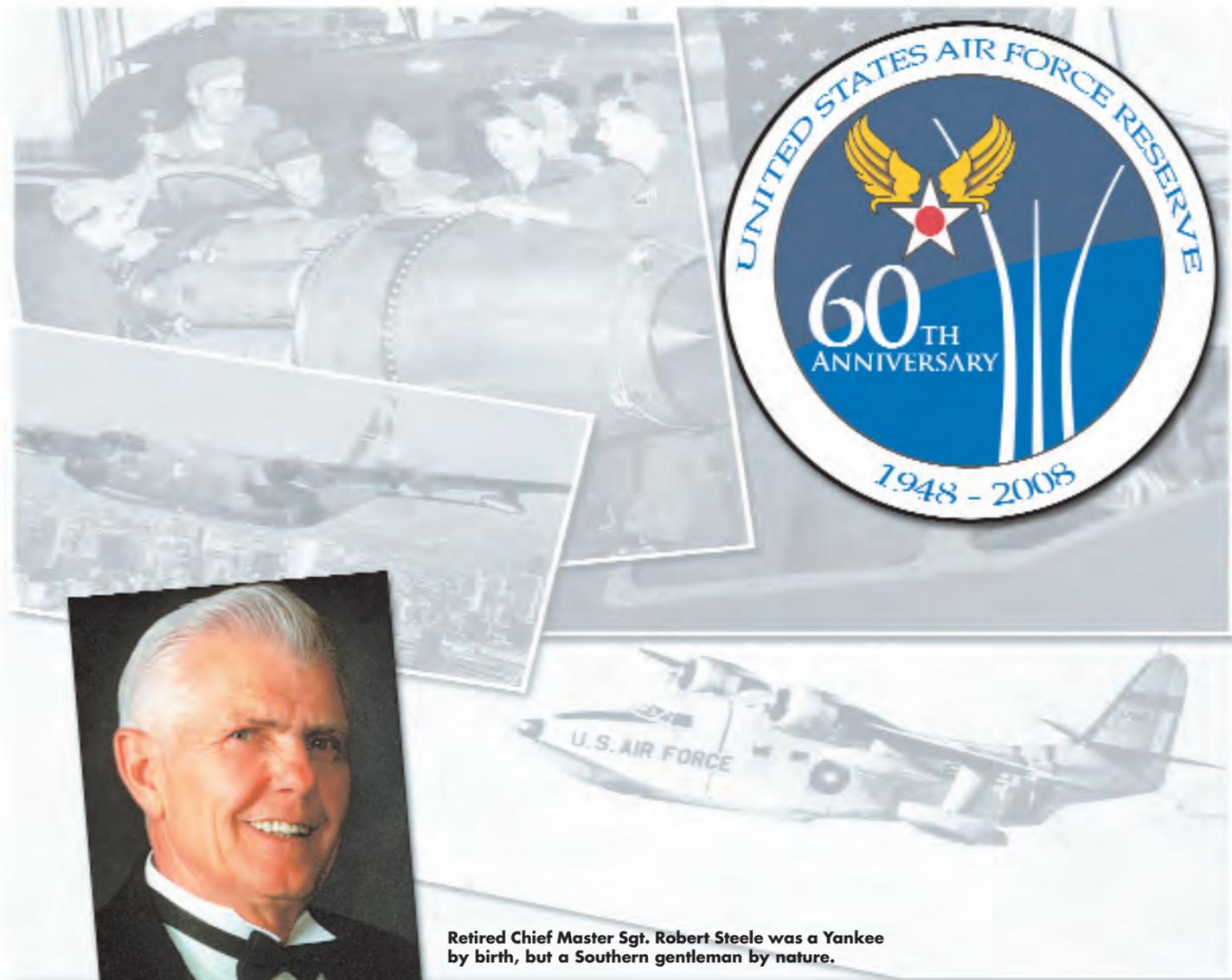
"The biggest part is knowing we are helping the kids, and they know it," Sergeant Acosta said. "They came out to the job site to watch us. We actually had to back them up because they were too close. The people of the community helped us with water, food and hospitality."

While the daily ride out to the work site only covered a distance of about 30 miles, it took around an hour and a half to get there due to the mountainous conditions and the sub-standard roads. However, one constant was the daily welcome the Reservists received.

"The children came out to greet us along the route every day like clockwork," Sergeant Brashars said.

"I think it's wonderful that the military can perform humanitarian projects in developing countries," said Captain Losleben. "It's very rewarding to be able to improve their circumstances with this new school." ★

(Sergeant Babin is assigned to the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla.)



Retired Chief Master Sgt. Robert Steele was a Yankee by birth, but a Southern gentleman by nature.

The 'Mayor'

Robert Steele a huge figure in Air Force Reserve logistics

By Gene Vandevanter

(Editor's note: In 2008, the Air Force Reserve will celebrate its 60th anniversary, having been established in 1948 as an organization separate from the regular Air Force. This is the second in a series of six articles leading up to this celebration that honor some of the people who are responsible for where Air Force Reserve Command is today and how it got here. The articles are based on the personal experiences and fond memories of Gene Vandevanter, who served as an aide-de-camp at Headquarters AFRC from 1986 to 1990. Mr. Vandevanter currently works as a civilian in the Directorate of Historical Services at HQ AFRC, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. People of diverse ranks and grades are listed in no special order. By telling these people's personal stories, Mr. Vandevanter hopes to both recognize their outstanding sacrifice, determination and foresightedness while expounding upon the Reserve's prestigious history to the next generation of Citizen Airmen.)

To many people who knew him, retired Chief Master Sgt. Robert Steele was affectionately known as the "mayor." For years, Robert served as a city councilman in Warner Robins, Ga., and filled in at times as "mayor pro tempore" when the presiding mayor was out of town. Robert left his mark as a transplanted "New Englander" in love with the Warner Robins area and, in particular, Robins Air Force Base.

I met Robert when he was working as a civil servant in the Headquarters Air Force Reserve logistics area. Robert was a huge figure in logistics, both in stature and importance. He had that distinguished gentleman look about him. He was tall, fit and well dressed, and communicated in a polite, discretionary way. His Massachusetts accent made him stand out even more,

especially in central Georgia. Robert had a full, thick head of hair, and it was as white as snow. When he walked into a room, your eyes were naturally drawn to him.

Along with those talents and characteristics, Robert was a man who wasn't shy about expressing himself. He'd tell you exactly how things were. People respected his contributions and honest talk.

One of his areas of interest was all of the billboards that dotted the streets of Warner Robins. He suggested more than once that a good tractor could take care of all of those eyesores in a day or two. As one might expect, the business owners who had the signs put up weren't quite as excited as Robert was about that idea.

Robert served on the city council for nearly 10 years. He did this while holding down his supply duties in the headquarters. He was a constant figure in the local community, working hard to put Warner Robins on the map and contributing significantly to its successful growth and future development.

His involvement extended to a variety of organizations. Robert was a board member of the Happy Hour Workshop, a Little League baseball coach, president of the Warner Robins Touchdown Club and an ambitious member of the Exchange Club. He was an active member of Central Baptist Church, serving as a deacon, Sunday School teacher and in a variety of capacities within the church's administrative office. It

would be an understatement to say that "the man was involved."

In 1975, after retiring from the Air Force, Robert served as a Junior ROTC instructor at Warner Robins High School. He came on staff at Air Force Reserve headquarters as a civil servant, and, after he retired from his logistics post, he went on to serve as director of business development at Ranhill Technologies.

I really didn't know too much about Robert's younger days other than the fact that he had served in the Marines — before transferring to the Air Force — and that he possessed a fantastic sense of humor that would go far beyond just a punch line and a laugh. In 1950, he married Mary Dunlop, also from Quincy, Mass., and through their Air Force years, they raised three boys and one girl, traveling around the world.

One of his assignments was to Bien Hoa, Republic of South Vietnam. It was there, in 1968, that he was awarded the Bronze Star, not once but twice, with a "V" for valor device for his unselfish devotion to duty in an explosive ordnance disposal

squad. As one of his award citations read, "During a clearing and reconnaissance mission, Sergeant Steele, while under fire, checked for hidden explosives and de-armed unexploded munitions."

I heard Robert tell many a story, but I never heard this authentic piece about him until his daughter Leslie relayed it to me in 2006, three years after he passed away.

What else didn't I know about this white-haired warrior? That he finished his active Air Force career at Robins as the superintendent of the Air Force Logistics Command NCO Academy and Leadership School. That he was a sports enthusiast and loved to play intramural basketball, football and tennis. When he was stationed in England, he was the only "Yank" on a local English tennis team.

What I do remember him telling me about was his early service days participating in boxing competitions. He said his boxing years didn't last too long and that he would go down in history as the first fighter ever to enter the ring ugly and leave it a handsome man!

Whether he saw you while glancing over his spectacles from behind his desk or when he passed you in the hallway, he always had a story to tell. One story I remember was about a young nephew and his dying old aunt. The nephew grudgingly went to visit her in the hospital where she lay in a deep coma about to die. The nephew noticed some peanuts in a dish left by her bedside, no doubt given to

her by a visitor. The nephew thought, well, she'll never eat those salty nuts. So, he decided to help himself.

He got down to the last few when miraculously his aunt awoke from the coma, sprung up in the bed and shouted out his name. He was so spooked by the incident that he could only manage to blurt out how sorry he was for eating her peanuts. To which she replied, "Nuts, can't stand them. That's why I suck all the chocolate off them and stick them in that dish over there." Robert would finish that line with a Jack Benny-like straight face as you laughed yourself silly.

More than his story telling and gentlemanly air, Robert Steele was a patriot through and through. He expected more from his senior NCOs because he was one. He would exude pride because he was a proud man. Moreover, he honored and praised his family, nation and God because he knew the tangible qualities of even the most inanimate objects would get him to see future days in an even greater, positive light.

Robert "Bob" Steele might have been a Yankee by birth, but he was a Southern gentleman by nature. ★

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