

A Citizen AIRMAN

Vol. 65 No. 3 June 2013

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Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

Powered by Innovation

AFRC-developed program
taking the aircraft
maintenance world by storm
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Leadership team looks
to fuel the fires of innovation
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By Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command

Keeping a Reserve-Work-Life Balance

In today's fast-paced culture, a common expression heard is the importance of maintaining a healthy "work-life balance" between one's job and personal life. For Citizen Airmen, you are uniquely asked to maintain a "reserve-work-life balance" among your Air Force duties, employer responsibilities and everyday life.

Keeping a reserve-work-life balance can be a challenge. Competing requirements pull us in different directions. Civilian jobs can be demanding. Family obligations can be plentiful. Education takes time, whether you're pursuing a degree or completing professional military education. The majority of us spend several days a month performing reserve duty. Many contribute much more.

The reasons we volunteer to serve in the uniform are numerous. Love of country is certainly at the top of most lists. So is a common willingness to protect and defend our way of life. Whatever the reason for your "why," I thank you for your willingness to seek a reserve-work-life balance among the numerous demands of life.

Our ability to maintain a reserve-work-life balance is determined in part by our level of comprehensive fitness spanning the four areas of mental, physical, social and spiritual. Comprehensive fitness is at the core of our wingman culture. ... a culture of Airmen who proactively take care of themselves and each other.

To assist in improving our comprehensive fitness levels, Air Force Reserve Command developed the "one-stop shop" Wingman Toolkit available on the web at AFRC.WingmanToolkit.org. I hope you'll take time to view the videos, sign up for updates via Facebook or Twitter, download the mobile app and be aware of the red "Get Help" bell in case you or someone you know is in an emotional crisis.

It's also important to recognize comprehensive fitness is a team sport. Together we can help improve each other's balance. A good wingman is really a good mentor, willing to help a fellow Airman improve his fitness in any area. A good wingman recognizes out-of-balance situations and is willing to help a friend or co-worker. A good wingman recognizes when he needs assistance and is willing to seek another's help.

Keeping the reserve-work-life balance is a challenge, but it's one not faced alone. The Air Force Reserve is a team of brothers and sisters in arms, part of the Air Force Total Force team, dedicated to the service of our nation. ... and each other.

I wish to thank Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody for taking the time to contribute a guest commentary. By addressing the "Fellow Airmen" of the Air Force Reserve, he reminds us that together we serve as part of the Total Force Team. It's an honor to join him and say, "Thanks for all you do!" ★



By Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force
James A. Cody

Working Together More Critical Than Ever for the Total Force

Fellow Airmen:

Since President Harry Truman called for the formation of the Air Force Reserve in 1948, Citizen Airmen have served our nation proudly. Originally conceived as a "standby" force for emergencies, today's Air Force Reserve is anything but on standby. More than 70,000 Reservists are fully engaged in our mission to fly, fight and win.

The Air Force Reserve supports every Air Force core function with a diverse portfolio of capability, including unique missions like the Hurricane Hunters and aerial spray. Our Air Force simply would not be as effective without our reserve component.

While the Total Force concept is an important and guiding concept in our structure, the term Total Force seems to have become a euphemism for Reserve and Air National Guard Airmen. Let me be clear: Total Force means everyone in the U.S. Air Force.

You'll notice I addressed this commentary to "Fellow Airmen." Reservists are a unique group; you serve in a distinct and different way from Airmen in our other components. However, the Air Force is the sum total of its components. First and foremost, you are fellow Airmen.

As we navigate through the current fiscal situation, resources are becoming more scarce, and our Air Force is going to get a bit smaller. This will make working together as a collective team more critical than ever.

This means a further blurring of the lines between components. An Airman is an Airman, no matter if he or she is on active duty or serving as a Reservist, Guardsman or civilian. The best example of this is how Airmen from all components operate as a cohesive team downrange.

We're working to strengthen the team through initiatives like 3-to-1 Total Personnel Management. This secretary of the Air Force-sponsored effort will establish uniform policies and processes for managing Airmen across the entire organization. The Air Force is fully integrated operationally, and we want to bring that teamwork to everything we do.

We're also looking at how we deliberately develop Airmen. EPME-Next will deliver the same level of exposure to our Air Force's core competencies to every Airman across the enterprise via a blended learning model. This type of delivery has been proven the most effective form of learning and is the same method many of today's colleges and universities are using. For the first time, every Airman will get the same level of exposure to professional military education, and it will be delivered along timelines every Airman can commit to, regardless of component.

Getting through the challenges ahead will require the efforts of every Airman. I want you to know your Air Force leadership is making decisions with each of you and your families in mind. It is all of you who help make our Air Force the greatest the world has ever known.

Thank you for all you do. ★

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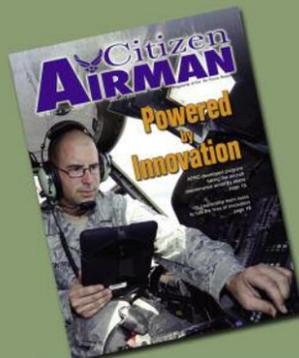
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Reservists, retirees eligible for affordable health care programs

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New management tool helping Reserve units figure out which self-assessment checklists to use



On the cover: Tech. Sgt. Darren Montefu, an aircraft maintenance engineer with the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., performs a pre-flight inspection using a semi-rugged commercial mobile device as a technical data reader. Using these devices as opposed to hardcopy technical publications is part of Air Force Reserve Command's eTools Lite initiative. The tablets allow maintenance workers to easily navigate through more than 2,000 technical orders. For more on this initiative, see the stories that begin on Page 16. (2nd Lt. Leslie Forshaw)

Gen. Mark A. Welsh III *Chief of Staff, United States Air Force*

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Senior Airman Sharon Navarro, 482nd Communications Squadron knowledge operations manager, checks for a dial tone after connecting a new phone line in the Telephone Central Office at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. The Telephone Central Office hosts all of Homestead ARB's phone lines, alarm circuits, commercial communications lines and television services. (Nicholas Caceres)

Reserve Snapshot

Senior Airman Christopher Dehart, a fire team member with the 302nd Security Forces Squadron, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., takes aim with an M240B machine gun from the prone position. Dehart and his teammate each fired 1,300 rounds to qualify on the M240B during a recent unit training assembly at Airburst Range, Fort Carson, Colo. (Staff Sgt. Nathan Federico)



Tech Sgt. Sean Loose of the 305th Rescue Squadron completes a preflight check on an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter prior to a routine training flight during the 943rd Rescue Group's April unit training assembly weekend at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. (Staff Sgt. Sarah Pullen)



Members of the 310th Space Wing try on mobility equipment during a recent unit training assembly at Schriever Air Force Base, Colo. The wing was preparing for an upcoming mobility exercise. (Tech. Sgt. Nicholas B. Ontiveros)

Staff Sgt. Elias Lopez, 442nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, removes the gun pin from an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft prior to an exercise sortie. The exercise utilized 10 aircraft, flying 38 sorties in one day. The A-10 Thunderbolt II is assigned to the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. (Staff Sgt. Lauren Padden)

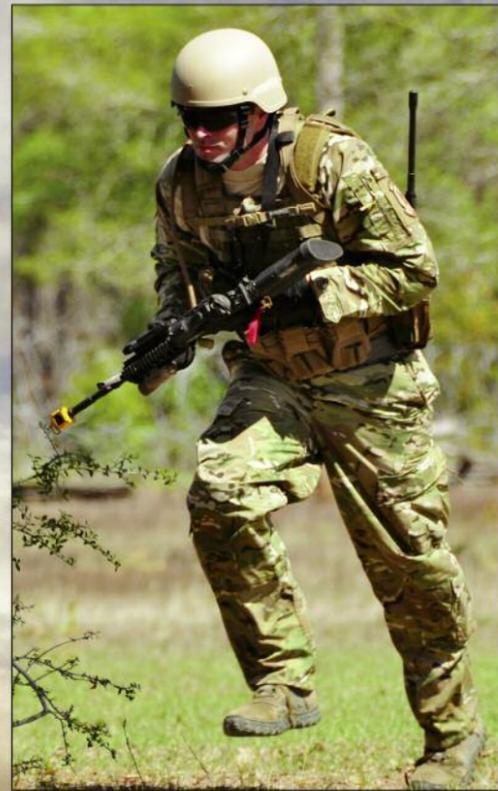


Three F-22 Raptors land at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. The Raptors were flown by Reserve pilots assigned to the 302nd Fighter Squadron during a recent 477th Fighter Group monthly training weekend. During the week, the 477th, Alaska's only Reserve unit, integrates with the active-duty 3rd Wing. (Tech. Sgt. Dana Rosso)

Reserve Snapshot



Tech. Sgt. John Shea, a medical technician in the 459th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Joint Base Andrews, Md., demonstrates how to properly secure a breathing tube to Senior Airman Jasmine Simms and Staff Sgt. Khai Davis, critical care air transport team members with the 459th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, during a training mission to Texas and California. (Staff Sgt. Katie Spencer)



Staff Sgt. Thomas Maloney of the 919th Security Forces Squadron runs for cover during an extraction exercise at Duke Field, Fla. (Tech. Sgt. Cheryl L. Foster)



Tech. Sgt. Kelley Lasiewicz, 477th Security Forces Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, gets a shot of pepper spray in the face during recent training. The 477th SFS activated as a squadron under the 477th Fighter Group March 1. (Tech. Sgt. Dana Rosso)



A member of the 452nd Air Mobility Wing, March Air Reserve Base, Calif., marshals a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft during Patriot Hook 2013 at Los Alamitos Army Airfield, Calif. Patriot Hook is an annual exercise that simulates a response by a joint military and civilian force to a natural disaster in a forward-deployed location. (Staff Sgt. Heather Cozad)



Chief Master Sgt. Robert Michalak, 482nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron superintendent, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., describes how an F-16 jet engine afterburner works during a recent base tour. Thirty-five students participating in Miami's Read2Succeed program took part in the tour. Read2Succeed is a non-profit after-school program specializing in targeting literacy amongst youth as well as providing children the necessary tools and resources to achieve academic success. (Tim Norton)

ROUND THE RESERVE

DOD Secretary Eliminates New Medal

Two months after it was created, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced the elimination of the Distinguished Warfare Medal.

Instead, the military will recognize service members who directly affect combat operations without being present through distinguishing devices that will be affixed to already existing awards.

Soon after being sworn in as defense secretary Feb. 27, Hagel asked Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to lead a review of the medal.

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the concurrence of the service secretaries, have recommended the creation of a new distinguishing device that can be affixed to existing medals to recognize the extraordinary actions of this small number of men and women," Hagel said in a written release.

"I agree with the Joint Chiefs' findings and have

directed the creation of a distinguishing device instead of a separate medal," Hagel said. "The servicemen and women who operate and support our remotely piloted aircraft, operate in cyber and others are critical to our military's mission of safeguarding the nation."

The distinguishing devices will serve to recognize these service members' achievements, he said.

The undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness will develop the award criteria in close coordination with the services and the Joint Staff, officials said.

DOD announced the creation of the Distinguished Warfare Medal Feb. 13.

"I've always felt — having seen the great work that they do, day in and day out — that those who performed in an outstanding manner should be recognized," then-Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said during a news conference announcing the medal.

"Unfortunately," Panetta added, "medals that they otherwise might be eligible for simply did not recognize that kind of contribution."

Members of veterans' service organizations and others objected to the Distinguished Warfare Medal, officials said. The medal's order of precedence was to be just below the Distinguished Flying Cross and just above the Bronze Star. Some commentators objected that it would rank higher than the Purple Heart — awarded to those wounded or killed in action.

"When I came into office, concerns were raised to me about the Distinguished Warfare Medal's order of precedence by veterans' organizations, members of Congress and other stakeholders whose views are valued by this department's leadership," Hagel said.

The distinguishing devices can be affixed to awards at different levels, so, once written, the criteria for the awards must reflect that, officials said.



COURTESY PHOTO

Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Gill honored victims of the Boston Marathon bombings by running the entire Salt Lake City Marathon while carrying an American flag.

Hill AFB Reservist honors Boston Marathon victims

A member of the 419th Operations Group at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, chose a unique way to honor victims of the Boston Marathon bombings.

Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Gill ran the entire Salt Lake City Marathon April 20 while carrying a large American flag.

Gill said the marathon was a tough race, both physically and emotionally.

"It was about 50 degrees, with constant rain and hail," he said. "I ran the whole 26.2 miles carrying a five-foot American flag, which got very heavy in the rain.

"It seemed much lighter, however, when the police doing traffic control stopped the cars for me to pass, then turned around and saluted my flag as I passed. I also ran four miles later in the race with an amputee."

Gill said he experienced pain in his legs and shoulders, but he didn't let it stop him from running.

"The pain ... was of no concern, as no matter how much pain I experienced, it is nothing compared to what the people in Boston who are recovering in the hospital are enduring," he said.

"Bystanders yelled, 'USA, USA, USA' as I passed. There was also a very elderly veteran from World War II who gingerly rose from his chair, came to the position of attention and rendered a proud salute.

"I am glad that it was raining, as I wept many times," he said. "It is a race that I will never forget." ★

(419th Fighter Wing public affairs)

For example, the criteria for affixing a device to an Army Commendation Medal would be different than those for a Meritorious Service Medal — a higher award. (Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service)

706th Fighter Squadron Pilot Makes F-35 History

A member of the 706th Fighter Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., is the first Reservist to fly the Air Force's newest aircraft.

Maj. Joseph Scholtz is an operational test pilot integrated into the regular Air Force's 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron. He is Nellis AFB's only qualified F-35 Lightning II pilot.

"It's great to be on the ground floor," Scholtz said. "The program gives us a chance to influence how the Air Force is going to operate."

The 422nd TES is unique in that it is the Air Force's only flying squadron to have all of the service's fighter aircraft: A-10s, F-15Cs, F-15Es, F-16s, F-22s and now the F-35.

Each flying platform within the squadron has its own division, and each division generally takes several years of planning meetings, infrastructure expansion and dedicated maintenance support to become established. At least one Reservist is integrated into each division.

"Major Scholtz was a natural choice upon which to build our new F-35 division," said Lt. Col. Ryan Suttlemyre, 422nd TES commander. "He is incredibly smart on the test process, a hard worker and very detail oriented."

Before joining the Reserve in 2009, Scholtz was a regular Air Force Airman in the 422nd TES flying A-10s. His prior experience with the unit, coupled with the potential to remain at Nellis for a long period of time, proved advantageous to the new program.

After board selection for the position, Scholtz trained for three months at Eglin AFB, Fla., to become qualified to fly the fifth-generation, multi-role fighter.

As test director, Scholtz is responsible for organizing ways to explore tactics and learning how to integrate the aircraft with other airframes.

"Some of the tests we execute are planned and flown over a number of years, and the ability to have Major Scholtz in place as the test director and have long-term continuity for the program is invaluable," Suttlemyre said.

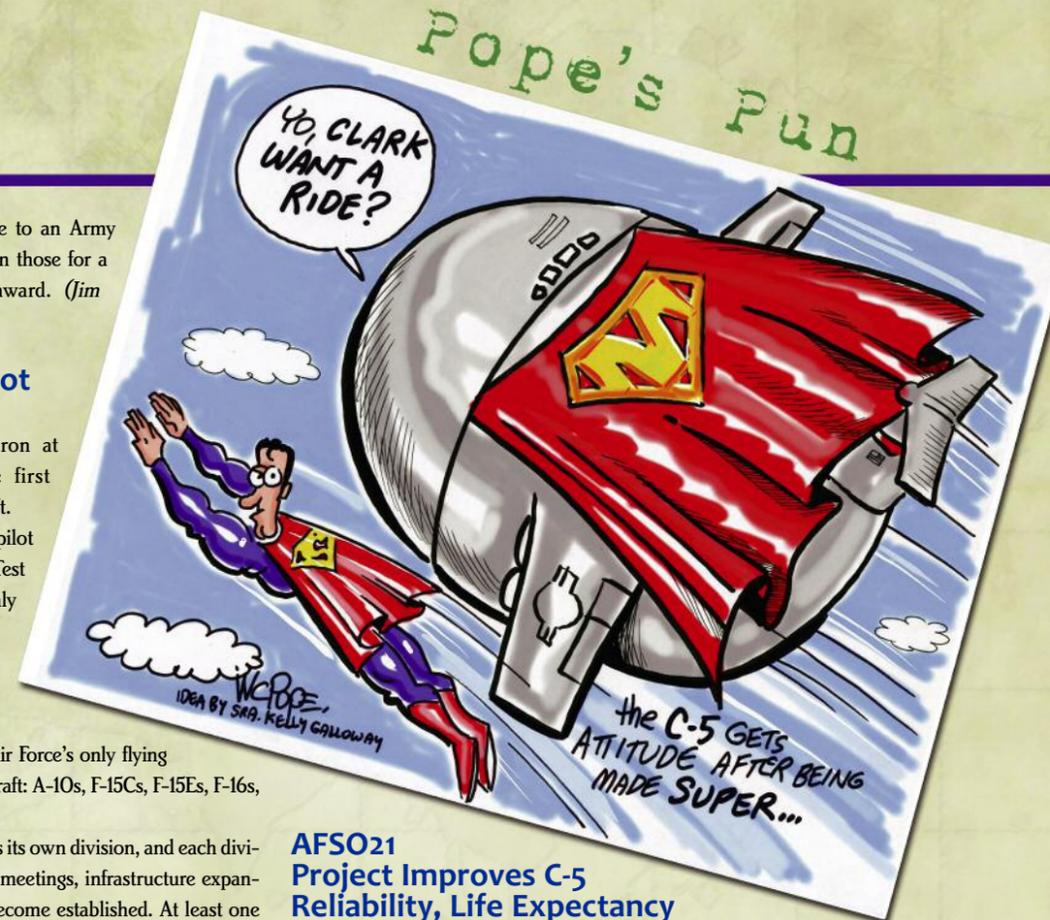
"We depend on having key relationships with the contractors and engineers who develop new hardware, software and weapons, so having the same person interact with them provides unique benefits," he said.

Just as the Reserve-RegAF partnership is significant to the various divisions at Nellis, interaction with the operational test community is essential for the programs' success.

"While the long-term continuity of Reservists is key, it's also important to balance that with a continuing influx of RegAF aircrew entering the operational test community," Suttlemyre said.

"Our RegAF aircrews, most of whom are arriving from operational tours, guarantee we remain connected to the current challenges of combat-coded squadrons and what is happening in the combat theaters," he said.

The F-35 is a single-engine, single-seat fighter made for air-to-air and air-to-surface operations. It was designed with international compatibility and integration in mind, with Nellis receiving the conventional takeoff and landing variant specified for the Air Force. (Maj. Jessica Martin, 926th Group public affairs)



AFSO21 Project Improves C-5 Reliability, Life Expectancy

Using Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century principles, active-duty and Reserve Airmen from Dover Air Force Base, Del., were able to improve the reliability and life expectancy of the C-5M Super Galaxy.

AFSO21 is the Air Force's dedicated effort to maximize value and minimize waste in all of its processes.

"We identified the whole process with the dewars and fire suppression system of the aircraft as being one of the leading causes of downtime," said Master Sgt. Jay Haller of the 512th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "Sometimes it was taking three weeks to get an airplane back in the sky because of some of the defects."

A dewar is a double-walled flask of metal or silvered glass with a vacuum between the walls that is used to hold liquids at well below ambient temperature.

In August 2008, Airmen from a variety of organizations involved in C-5 maintenance at Dover came together to see what they could do to make the system better. They came up with a lot of ideas but soon realized they weren't going to be able to implement a lot of the fixes at the field level.

In April 2009, they went to a Product Improvement Working Group at the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex, Robins Air Force Base, Ga., and developed lines of communication with the engineers. The Warner Robins complex has worldwide management responsibility for the C-5, and its depot facility repairs, modifies and overhauls the aircraft.

A month later, they put together a Dover Dewar Conference, which included two engineers from Warner Robins, seven engineers from Lockheed Martin, C-5 community maintainers and people from Parker Hannifin, manufacturer of the fire suppression system.

"For two days, we had the best and the brightest in one room talking about the system and what we needed to upgrade it," Haller said.

The new system puts liquid nitrogen, at a temperature of minus 320 degrees Fahrenheit, into the dewar tank. This not only helps with aircraft fires but also puts a positive pressure on top of the wings and the fuel systems.

The fire suppression system works by opening up the valves and letting the

nitrogen flow through the plumbing into the non-manned areas of the aircraft. Oxygen is pushed out, allowing the nitrogen to put out the fire. Also, by placing nitrogen into the aircraft fuel itself, replacing the oxygen, there is less chance of having a fire inside the fuel tank.

What has been developed and improved through the AF5021 process are re-designed valves, a universal wiring harness, an upgraded fire suppression system control panel, and better seals and plumbing.

"The team's work has come to fruition, and 100 percent of C-5M aircraft are being retrofitted with the new system," said Chief Master Sgt. Chris Ford, 512th Maintenance Squadron superintendent.

Ford said the system is an improvement that came about through an enterprising teamwork effort spanning across multiple Air Force and Department of Defense agencies.

"The dewar system augments the congressionally authorized C-5M Reliability Enhancement and Re-engining Program and enables an aged aircraft to operate beyond the year 2040 while simultaneously fostering an increase in C-5 reliability, something that has plagued the aircraft over its 40-plus-year lifespan," Ford said. (*Airman 1st Class Ashlin Federick, 436th AW public affairs, Dover AFB*)

DEERS Streamlined for Better Efficiency

A modification in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System is expected to streamline personal records for better efficiency, the director of the Defense Manpower Data Center said in Washington, D.C., April 9.

In an interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel, Mary Dixon said information is now entered into DEERS in personnel offices, rather than identification card offices.

DEERS is used for benefits determination in the Defense and Veterans Affairs departments. It includes active-duty service members, active reservists, retirees, and certain civilians and contractors, as well as members of the Coast Guard, Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The system comprises 44 million people, Dixon said.

Family members can continue to use the identification card office to change their vital information, Dixon said, while others are now referred to their personnel office. The change is expected to increase accuracy of records, she said, noting that any time data is moved around, there's the possibility of typing mistakes.

"It won't solve all the problems," Dixon said. "Data quality is an issue that's a continuing journey and process."

While cost-saving figures are not yet available, Dixon said, the change will be a time-saver. In the



A loadmaster with the 919th Special Operations Wing admires an MC-130E Combat Talon I in flight one last time April 15 before it and three other Talons are retired to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

Last of Combat Talons retire to Arizona desert

By Tech. Sgt. Samuel King Jr.

The Air Force's last four MC-130E Combat Talon I aircraft, belonging to the Air Force Reserve's 919th Special Operations Wing at Duke Field, Fla., were retired April 25 during a ceremony at the base.

April 25 is a significant day in the history of the Combat Talon I. On that day in 1980, several of the aircraft at Duke Field took part in an ill-fated mission to free American hostages being held in Iran.

After the ceremony, the aircraft were flown to the Air Force "boneyard" at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

"This is an emotional and historic day for the Airmen of the 919th Special Operations Wing," said Col. Andy Comtois, 919th SOW commander, during the retirement ceremony. "Since our inception, the 919th SOW has primarily been a C-130 wing and, for almost 20 years, a Combat Talon wing. We will miss these great warbirds."

The aircraft flew their final mission April 15. Flying in two two-ship formations, the Combat Talons carried more than 40 of the wing's Airmen who had a long association with the aircraft and wanted to be a part of the historic final flight.

"I was glad we were allowed to be a part of it," said Tech. Sgt. Lora Huett of the 919th Force Support Squadron. "The best part was when they opened up the ramp and took people back to sit on it. It was a beautiful view."

Chief Master Sgt. Tom Mason, the wing's

new command chief, flew his last mission as a loadmaster on aircraft No. 54-551. The chief transitioned to the loadmaster career field when the Talons arrived at Duke in 1995.

"I've had many great missions over the years, both at home and in war," Mason said. "I don't know that I could have planned a more honorable way to end my career as an enlisted aviator than with the last flight of the mighty Combat Talons."

The final flight and retirement of the Talons are large steps in the wing's ongoing transition to the new aviation foreign internal defense mission for Air Force Special Operations Command. The wing currently has 10 new C-145A aircraft to perform that mission.

"As our future mission emerges, we must say goodbye to the past," Comtois said. "The sun has set on the Talon mission. The 919th looks forward to a new aircraft and a new mission. Our citizen air commandos are more than ready and capable to take on this new challenge."

The MC-130E made its first Air Force flight in 1966 and took part in every major U.S. conflict since. The Talon's primary mission was to provide infiltration, exfiltration, and resupply of special operations forces and equipment in hostile or denied territory.

Secondary missions included psychological operations and helicopter and vertical lift air refueling. ★

(King is assigned to the 919th SOW public affairs office at Duke Field.)

past, she explained, the hope was that in addition to going to the ID card office to update DEERS information, people would also go to the personnel office and change the information in their personnel records so the records would match. When employees didn't go to both places, she said, it created "a lot of work" to figure out how to reconcile mismatched data.

Record accuracy in the DEERS system helps ensure eligibility for benefits and mitigates identity theft, fraud and abuse, Dixon said.

Dixon encouraged people who are enrolled in DEERS to check their records at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/> to make sure their information is accurate and to report any errors they find to their personnel office. (*Terri Moon Cronk, American Forces Press Service*)

Barksdale Group Begins Transferring A-10s

The 917th Fighter Group at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., started transferring its 24 A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft to other units April 8 as part of force structure changes authorized by the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

Three aircraft were transferred. One A-10C was moved to the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. The other two aircraft were transferred to the 355th Fighter Wing at Davis-Monthan.

Over the coming months, one additional A-10C will transfer to the AMARG; five aircraft will transfer to the 442nd FW, Whiteman AFB, Mo.; and the remaining 15 will transfer to the 355th FW.

In addition to the loss of aircraft, the FY13 NDAA authorizes the inactivation of the 917th FG and 47th Fighter Squadron. A date for the inactivations has not been announced, but it is expected to occur sometime during the last quarter of 2013.

"The 917th Fighter Group proudly served our nation at Barksdale and deployed locations for over 50 years," said Col. John Breazeale, group commander. "It has been an honor to be a part of Team Barksdale and the local community." (*307th Bomb Wing, Barksdale AFB, news release*)

Dover Reservists Voice Concerns Through Hotline

Members of the 512th Airlift Wing at Dover Air Force Base, Del., have a new resource available to voice their concerns to senior leadership.

Through the Human Resources Development Council Hotline, callers can anonymously provide feedback about everything that affects their ability to accomplish the wing's mission or that pertains to general base operations.

The HRDC addresses issues identified via the hotline during regular meetings held during unit training assemblies, said Capt. Brian Cortez, 512th Memorial Affairs Squadron HRDC representative.

Decisions and actions taken by the council are posted on the HRDC's Enterprise Information Management page under the "FAQ" tab.

Col. David Berkowitz, 512th Airlift Wing vice commander and the HRDC director, said the postings on the site act as a direct response to hotline callers.

"We can't fix every problem, but having me as director gives the council the horsepower needed to take this feedback to the (wing commander) to find answers," Berkowitz said.

Berkowitz said the hotline functions not only as an action line for the Liberty Wing, but also a tool to assist HRDC's mission of engaging wing members to succeed, both personally and professionally, by using their talents and skills to support national objectives and the Air Force Reserve's vision.

Berkowitz said Liberty Wing members are still encouraged to provide feedback through their chain of command and through their squadron or group's HRDC representatives. But if a member desires anonymity, calling the hotline may be the best route.

"Anonymity is important in case a caller is shy about taking (his) concerns, complaints or feedback directly to the chain of command," said Tech. Sgt. Carrie Huot, HRDC member.

The hotline, 302-677-HRDC (4732) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (*Senior Airman Joe Yanik, 512th AW public affairs, Dover AFB*) ★

It's Your Money

'Complexly Simple' Annuities

By Ralph Lunt

Looking at my 2012 Thrift Savings Plan statement the other day, I noticed it said my TSP balance at that time was enough to provide me with a monthly benefit of \$292.

Before I get ahead of myself and begin explaining the basics of annuities, I need to point out the assumptions used to calculate this monthly benefit. First, the estimate assumes a 1.75 percent interest rate. It also assumes that I would start receiving my annuity payments at age 62.

In effect, what my statement says is, given my current age, account balance and interest rates, if I wanted to exchange my TSP account balance for a guaranteed monthly income, I'd expect to receive \$292 a month from the competitively chosen TSP.Gov annuity provider.

Annuities are one of the most "complexly simple" products ever! The simple part is you give your money to an insurance company. The complex part is what happens next. Do you want income now, an immediate annuity, or later, a deferred annuity? Should something happen to you, if issued, do you want your spouse to get a percentage of the income? Would you like to direct the investments yourself or let the insurance company do it for you? Is the best deal available from the TSP provider, or would it be better to "shop" the market for a better deal? Do you want your money in stocks or bonds, or a bit of both? If you decide to defer your payments, what happens if you pass before they start? How will you be taxed? What if the insurance company you choose goes out of business?

To be sure, that's a lot of things to consider. I toss out all these issues now with the hope that, if you are considering an annuity, you will review and discuss all of these things accordingly well in advance of the decision process.

We all have reasons for our financial decisions. It sure helps to be appropriately informed when making these decisions.

You know the drill. Plan the flight, fly the plan, and adjust to weather and maintenance conditions as required. Knowledge is power. Fly safe! ★

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



OUTSTANDING Airmen of the Year



NCO

Master Sgt. Shawn J. Jones

Public Affairs

514th Air Mobility Wing

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-

Lakehurst, N.J.

SENIOR AIRMAN CRYSTAL CHARRIÈRE



Airman

Senior Airman Frederick C.

Danneman

419th Medical Squadron

419th Fighter Wing

Hill Air Force Base, Utah



Senior NCO

Senior Master Sgt.

Peter A. DeSanctis

934th Maintenance

Squadron

934th Airlift Wing

Minneapolis-St. Paul

International Airport

Air Reserve Station,

Minn.



First Sergeant

Senior Master Sgt. Daniel J.

Anthony

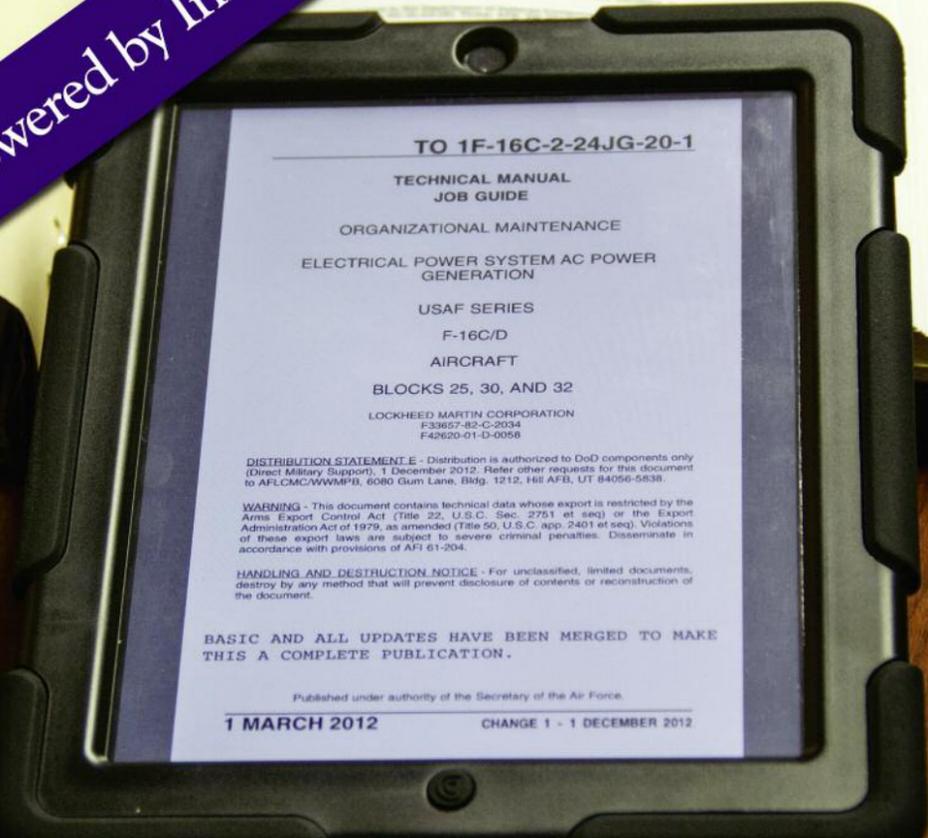
302nd Maintenance Squadron

302nd Airlift Wing

Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.



Airmen Powered by Innovation



Using an Air Force Reserve Command-developed program called eTools Lite, loaded on an iPad, aircraft maintainers now have more than 2,000 technical orders available with the swipe of a finger. (Staff Sgt. Alexy Saltekoff)

'Game Changer'

AFRC program makes it easier for aircraft maintainers to access tech orders

By Philip Rhodes

An innovative program developed by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command is expected to improve productivity, reduce maintenance man-hours and save the Air Force \$12 million.

Called eTools Lite, the program improves on the Air Force's original mandate to put aircraft maintenance technical orders into an electronic format by placing the digital files on iPads instead of costlier, heavier and more complicated ruggedized laptop computers.

With the iPads and eTools Lite, access to more than 2,000 TOs is available via a simple swipe of the finger, a convenience not lost on aircraft maintainers.

"Maintainers are calling this the best thing since sliced bread, a game changer," said Corey Runge, a former F-16 crew chief and member of the AFRC team that developed, tested and fielded the ingenious solution.

Developed in partnership with AFRC's Communications and Logistics directorates, eTools Lite reduces the number of ruggedized laptops needed by the maintenance community. Some laptops will still be used in supervisory and troubleshooting roles, but the vast majority of tech data accessed by AFRC maintainers will be done via iPads.

According to Col. Wendy Deemer, chief of AFRC logistics operations, eTools Lite will be adopted by the Air Force on an attrition basis.

Col. Larry Stephenson, deputy director of logistics, led the AFRC team that took eTools Lite from concept to implementation in just 2 1/2 years. Team members included Deemer, Maj. Christina Manning and Ellen Weaver, Capt. Terrell Eikner, Senior Master Sgt. Wendy Blevins, Jerry Ruiz, Bruce Gaynor, Cynthia Schultz, Michael Phillips and Runge.

Several years ago, Air Force mandated that TOs and other

instructions be converted from paper to portable digital format so aircraft maintainers could easily access tech data on laptops instead of lugging binders of paper TOs to the flight line.

In concept, the laptop solution seemed plausible. In reality, Deemer said, the laptops did not work as originally intended.

Runge agreed. A crew chief for eight years at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., before joining the AFRC logistics team, he has firsthand experience with the cumbersome, heavy laptops.

"We had to wait 10-15 minutes after logging in just to connect to the network," he said. "By the time I got out to the flight line, I had to deal with WiFi connectivity issues. It just wasn't working. At the time, most of the mechanics preferred to take paper TOs."

"It really defeated the purpose (of having electronic TOs)," Deemer said. "The whole idea was to save money. It didn't save a whole lot of money."

Ruggedized laptops cost nearly \$3,500 apiece. Converting to the iPads provides the Air Force a cost avoidance of more than \$12 million over the course of a three-year tech refresh cycle, Deemer said.

Michael Phillips, AFRC Technical Order Distribution Office manager, is credited with bringing the iPad solution to the table.

The iPad was chosen because it performed better than other tablet devices the team tested, Phillips said.

"The iPad can hold thousands of TOs, and it can open more than one book at a time, which wasn't a capability of some of

the other tablets we tested at the time," he said.

"These are standard off-the-shelf iPads," Phillips said. "We haven't changed a thing other than disable WiFi and the camera. All we added was a rubber waterproof and scratch-resistant cover. And, we can field them at less than one-ninth the cost of the ruggedized laptops."

"Oddly enough, the maintainers like the iPads so much they take better care of them, because they see them as such a valuable tool," he said.

To ensure the iPads could safely be used in and around aircraft, the devices underwent military standards testing at the Air National Guard and Air Reserve Test Center in Tucson, Ariz.

The command then fielded iPads at six AFRC bases to stress the devices in extreme cold, heat and humidity. Maintainers in Minnesota, Massachusetts, New York, Indiana, Ohio and Florida put the iPads through the paces.

"Feedback we got from the maintainers was fantastic," Phillips said. "They said the devices could revolutionize maintenance."

"What we're seeing with the iPads is more efficient and effective tech order usage, as has been reported during operational readiness and other inspections," Deemer said.

A recent Air Combat Command Combined Unit Inspection at the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., commended the unit for "its superb use of technical data." The rescue wing was an early adopter of the eTools Lite system.



Staff Sgt. Mark O'Neal of the 920th Rescue Wing maintenance support section at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., maintains the technical orders library. Updating TOs as they are now — paper pages in a four-inch-thick binder — is an all-day job. Using the eTools Lite software on an iPad to update the TOs will save O'Neal six hours a day. The 920th RQW is among the first Air Force Reserve Command units to use this technology.

The iPads are so convenient and easy to use that maintainers race to the tool crib each morning to get one before they run out.

Runge explains why.

On a typical maintenance job, an F-16 crew chief carries six to eight TOs, work cards and job guides, he said. This makes

the TO kit weigh 15 to 20 pounds. The iPad, which contains nearly all the TOs in the Air Force library, weighs 2.5 pounds and can be grasped in one hand.

"With paper tech orders, maintainers have a tough time dealing with wind, rain and hydraulic fluid," Runge said. "The paper has the potential to blow away, cre-

ating a foreign object damage hazard better known as FOD. You get the picture."

Despite the benefits of the iPads, the Logistics Directorate faced an uphill battle to get them, Deemer said.

"There were a lot of naysayers," she said.

Fielding the iPads took considerable effort, including selecting the best device from a host of competing products, testing, and developing the concept of operations, policies and procedures to manage the program.

"But, it was worth pursuing," Deemer said.

"We've had the great privilege to have leaders who recognized that it was worth pursuing and went through all the pain that is required to get something like this," she said. "I think this is a tremendous accomplishment."

"This is one of the greatest advancements in maintenance that we've seen in recent years, because it directly benefits maintainers. It immediately makes their jobs easier, quicker. I'm excited about this, and as more people start using the iPad, they will be excited, too." ★

(Rhodes is assigned to the Headquarters AFRC public affairs office at Robins AFB, Ga.)



STAFF SGT. AILEY SAITEKOFF

Michael Phillips, Air Force Reserve Command Technical Order Distribution Office manager, is credited with bringing the iPad solution to the table.

Focused Leadership Team fueling the fires of innovation

The Air Force vision document states the Air Force is fueled by innovation and powered by Airmen. Specifically it says, "The story of the Air Force is a story of innovation. Airmen, using their unique perspective, have long stood for and pioneered innovative ways to win the fight while shaping the future."

America's Citizen Airmen add to that perspective by uniquely blending their civilian and military expertise for the delivery of Total Force capability.

Lt. Gen. James Jackson, Air Force Reserve Command commander, is building upon this theme by putting an emphasis on leadership at all levels to infuse a culture of innovation. He's looking for improved ways to harness, share and implement the great ideas of America's Citizen Airmen. To fuel the innovation fire, Jackson created a Focused Leadership Team to spearhead this effort.

Brig. Gen. Abel Barrientes, mobilization assistant to the director of operations, Headquarters U.S. Pacific Command, is the Focused Leadership Team leader.

"We already have great tools to affect change," he said. "The focus now is on the essential element of leadership. We simply can't continue to do business as usual. This is a call to action."

The general said the command is only going to be able to

make these substantive changes if leaders empower each and every Airman to make improvements in the way they do their work.

"Our Airmen are innovators, and they deserve our very best," Barrientes said.

The mandate is to improve efficiency and effectiveness within each individual leader's span of control. Issues that fall beyond that span are elevated up the chain of command for action.

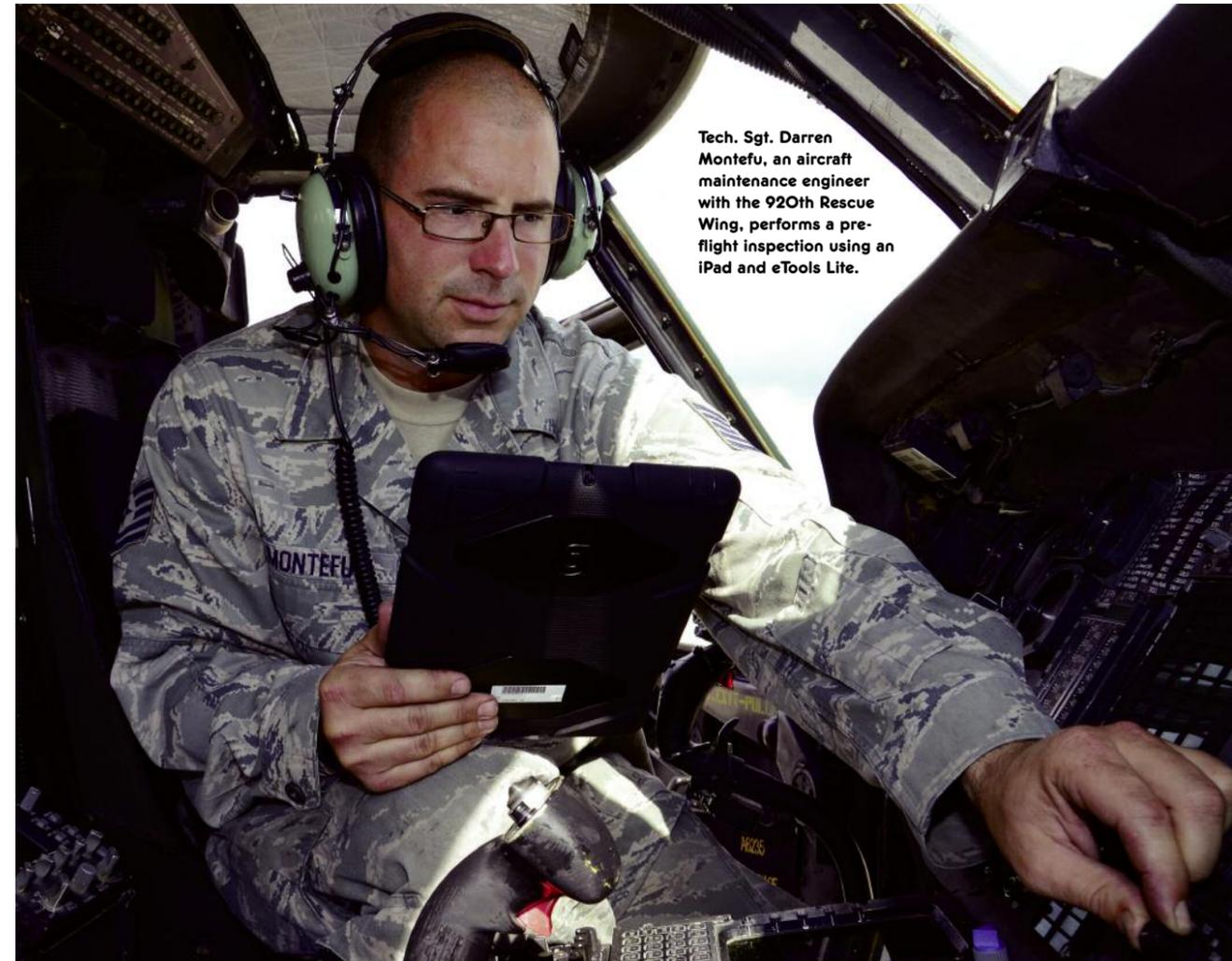
"The solutions cannot be forced down from above," said Col. John B. Williams, commander of the 349th Air Mobility Wing at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., and a member of the command's Focused Leadership Team. "Who knows better how to make our processes more efficient and more effective than those actually performing the work?"

The Air Force Reserve will focus on mission sets that leverage its unique capabilities, Williams said.

"In these financially constrained times, we will learn to do less with less," he said. "It is essential to minimize waste to use all of our resources to produce combat-ready forces."

The team will be discussing Jackson's initiative with wing leaders in the coming months. ★

(Staff reports)



Tech. Sgt. Darren Montefu, an aircraft maintenance engineer with the 920th Rescue Wing, performs a pre-flight inspection using an iPad and eTools Lite.

2ND LT. LESLIE FORSHAW

eTools Lite and iPads are a big hit with rescue wing maintainers

By 2nd Lt. Leslie Forshaw

Aircraft maintenance Reservists at the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., have a new tool in their bag in the form of an Apple iPad.

Weighing just 2.5 pounds, which includes the rugged carrying case, iPads used with the Air Force Reserve Command-developed eTools Lite software are revolutionizing the way the Airmen do their jobs.

"This is an easier and faster way for the Reservists to get technical data," said Rebecca Mitchell of the 920th RQW Technical Order Distribution Office.

Mitchell is responsible for training maintainers and updating the wing's 37 iPads with software that replaces paper/laptop-based technical orders used daily for aircraft maintenance work.

"Right now, the 920th RQW is among the first units to use this technology," Mitchell said. "It's looking like it's a really good move."

It takes about a week of training to learn how to dock the machines and accept software updates, she said.

Staff Sgt. Mark O'Neal of the maintenance support section maintains the wing's TO library.

"The eTools Lite will replace 17 entire libraries," O'Neal said. "All of the aircraft files will be stored on the iPads."

Updating TOs as they are now — paper pages in a four-inch-thick binder — is an all-day job. Using this new technology will save about six hours a day, he said.

TOs provide maintenance instructions for repairing HH-60G

Pave Hawk helicopters and HC-130P/N King tanker aircraft. These orders are used for routine maintenance on the aircraft and have 'how-to' instructions for replacing parts.

"Instead of carrying three or four binders out to the flight line, I can carry out one little iPad," said Tech. Sgt. Gary Watkins, an aerospace propulsion craftsman. "It saves us a lot of time by not having to search through pages and pages of a binder. You just use the 'find' button."

This new and industrious way of maintaining aircraft paid dividends during the 920th RQW's Combined Unit Inspection in April. The maintenance group received an overall "Excellent" from the Air Combat Command inspector general. Their sound technical data usage was identified as a strength in the report.

"It saved us time," Watkins said. "That was the biggest thing while on the flight line during the exercise."

All the TOs are right there on one device, and it saved the maintainers from having to run back and forth if another binder was needed, he said.

"It's another tool that aids us in doing the best we can do," Watkins said.

And it's a popular tool. By 7:30 a.m., 90 percent of the iPads are checked out, O'Neal said.

With more iPads scheduled to arrive at the 920th RQW, this "best practice," as designated by the ACC IG, is here to stay. ★

(Forshaw is assigned to the 920th RQW public affairs office at Patrick AFB.)

'I Never Thought I Would be Raped. But It Happened.'

(Editor's note: This is the first of a four-part series of articles defining and outlining the importance of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, resilience, and the wingman initiative, written from the personal perspective of a rape victim. The first part of this series focuses on how the experience of the victim highlights the need for such programs. In addition to being an Air Force civilian employee, the author is also a traditional Reservist.)

I was raped in December 1990.

I've never kept this part of my life a secret. I guess it's because nothing can ever change that moment in my life over which I had no control. However, it took me this long to consider telling my story in such a public forum, even after becoming a victim's advocate in 2006 when the 301st Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, implemented its Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program.

As the years passed, it seemed the possible benefits from sharing my experience began to outweigh the reasons for not going public with an article. I realized my experience touches three of the most important focuses of the Air Force and Department of Defense: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, comprehensive Airman fitness and the wingman initiative.

So much has been written on these programs, but I question how much of an impact this has made on service members, considering the number of reported sexual assaults and suicides in the military. I wonder if it's because people have a hard time relating to sexual assault, suicide and other traumatic experiences if there are no connections to these events in their personal lives.

I never thought I would be raped, but it happened. I don't want anyone to consider my story as a source of inspiration, because others have experienced more trauma than I probably could ever endure. But I want people to understand that we all have choices in our lives. Even when we face the worst difficul-

WE ALL HAVE CHOICES IN OUR LIVES. EVEN WHEN WE FACE THE WORST DIFFICULTIES LIFE CAN OFFER, WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE VIGILANT, AND WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE RESILIENT. AND, IN SUPPORT OF OTHERS, WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE SINCERELY CARING AND COMPASSIONATE.

ties life can offer, we can choose to be vigilant, and we can choose to be resilient. And, in support of others, we can choose to be sincerely caring and compassionate. ... a wingman.

Some of what I share might be uncomfortable to read for people who have survived similar experiences or are close to someone who did. The topic itself can also be uncomfortable for those who have no experience with sexual assault. So I am trying to tell my story in a way that corresponds to relevant support programs, particularly the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program and the concepts of comprehensive Airman fitness and the wingman initiative. The Air Force and



Department of Defense put these programs in place to prevent sexual assault, help people recover from their experiences and urge each of us to more proactively support each other.

My attack happened a week before Christmas. It was around 2 a.m., and I had just arrived home after a holiday gathering with friends. As I unlocked my door, I noticed the screen to my kitchen window was lying on the ground below. I walked inside any way, where I realized my home had been broken into.

Rather than immediately turn around, get back into my car and go get help, I matter of factly walked around assessing the damage and feeling annoyed that I had been robbed. I walked into my bedroom to find, oddly enough, all my expensive jewelry scattered on the bed, but three containers with pocket change, along with the pillow case from my bed, were missing.

I finished the brief walk-through by glancing into the spare bedroom, which included a sliding glass door at the opposite end of the room that opened into a screened-in patio. The floor-length, thermal curtains were open, and the door looked intact. As I turned to go back into the living room to call the police, a man suddenly leapt from behind the curtains and pushed me forward into the bathroom across the hall.

We both fell to the ground, where I was pinned by the toilet to the left of me and the tub behind me. I fought him off as best as I could in that narrow space. I tried to scratch his eyes, but I remember that didn't faze him. I tried to think of other ways to resist and escape as quickly as possible.

One of my most immediate fears was being knocked uncon-

FOR A FEW MONTHS AFTER THE ATTACK, FEAR SEEMED TO

HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER ME. BUT AS I CONTINUED

MY RECOVERY PROCESS, I HAD TO CHOOSE TO NOT LET

THOSE FEELINGS CONTROL ME ANYMORE.

scious, and I knew if I tried to fight him from my position, he could strike my head against the tub or the toilet bowl. I thought about grabbing the cuticle scissors on the curio stand next to me and stabbing him.

But I didn't think that would be enough to let me escape, and he could use the scissors against me. I knew for certain that whatever move I made had to be enough to knock him out or give me a chance to get away.

I remember asking him over and over again why he was doing this. I even insulted his manhood at one point. The entire time he was in my home, he only said one thing to me. But it wasn't an answer to my questions.

I don't remember how or when, but somehow I finally got the chance to run for help. I only got as far as opening the front door when he grabbed me. That's where we struggled most

and where I sustained much of my bruising. Thankfully, visible signs of the struggle were in areas easily covered by clothes, so I didn't have people asking what happened in the days following the attack.

To this day, I can't say for certain how long the attack lasted. But as soon as he left, I locked the door, called the police and then called the couple who had left the party with me. The pain in my head and back were starting to become unbearable, but I couldn't sit still.

While I waited for someone, anyone, to arrive, I checked all the doors and windows and tried to account for what had been taken — anything that might help the police find evidence faster and that kept me moving. I could have gone to the neighbors, but I was afraid to leave my home.

The details of what happened fade in and out when I think about that night. I can't even remember whether or not I switched the lights on as I entered my home. Yet, I still feel some of what I did back then. I remember the wetness on my fingertips when I tried to scratch his eyes. I remember the taste

of the dirty sock he wore over the fist he jammed in my mouth. And I remember the fear of him coming back before the police arrived.

For a few months after the attack, fear brought on by those memories seemed to have complete control over me. But as I continued my recovery process, I had to choose to not let those feelings control me anymore.

Programs like SAPR had not yet been developed, and things like resilience and the wingman concept didn't exist either. Now these programs are available, and my experience makes me appreciate everything the Air Force and DOD are doing to help military members with sexual assaults, suicidal feelings, traumatic experiences and, basically, their overall welfare.

If you haven't actually given any time to understanding SAPR, comprehensive Airman fitness or the wingman concept, I urge you to take a look at them now — if not for you, then for someone who may someday really need you! ★

(Dermarderosiansmith is assigned to the 301st FW public affairs office at NAS JRB Fort Worth.)

Helpful Resources

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: www.sapr.mil

Safe HelpLine: www.safehelpline.org

Comprehensive Airman Fitness (Resiliency): <http://hprc-online.org/total-force-fitness>

Wingman Toolkit: <http://afrc.wingmantoolkit.org>

Defense Department determined to put an end to sexual assault in the military

By Terri Moon Cronk

To combat and put an end to sexual assault in the military, the Defense Department has designed programs to boost victim medical care, increase assault reporting and hold offenders accountable for their crimes, the director of the Pentagon's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office said April 5.

Responding to questions as a member of a panel discussing the 2012 movie "The Invisible War" as part of the End Violence Against Women international conference in Baltimore, Md., Army Maj. Gen. Gary S. Patton discussed DOD's no-tolerance policy on sexual assault for an audience that included first responders, prosecutors and criminal investigation department agents.

Charged with positioning the military to "win the war on sexual assault," Patton said he believes that sexual assault cannot be conquered until it is a more visible issue. "The Invisible War" helped with that awareness, he said.

Sexual assaults are terrible crimes that have a

The 2012 movie "The Invisible War" has helped bring more awareness to the problem of sexual assault in the military.

"lasting, scary, traumatic effect" on victims, the general said.

The Defense Department works worldwide to prevent and respond to sexual assault, using "five lines of effort," Patton said: prevention, accountability, investigation, victim advocacy and assessment.

Prevention begins with training commanders in best practices and working that effort down to the lowest level, Patton said. Each service branch, he said, has such a program in place.

The interactive training includes scenario-based discussions led by professionals and also features victim testimony and other issues that "underscore the emphasis and the importance this training has to prevent sexual assault."

Accountability's aim is to hold sexual offenders appropriately accountable in the military justice system and to encourage victims to report the crime, Patton said.

Investigation into sexual assault is performed separately from the chain of command via a policy to obtain optimum results, he said.

"We're creating a special victims capability for each of the services," Patton said, "and will deliver a distinct group of specially trained professionals such as victim witness liaisons, paralegals and so forth, all united under our common policy framework of standardized training. ... to come together and work these important aspects."

Victim advocacy is a way to standardize and offer reporting options to victims, to motivate reporting, and enable greater accountability for offenders, Patton said, noting that military sexual assault victims who want to change their units have had

a 99-percent success rate.

Assessment includes surveys and reviews for commanders to see how their program is doing in a meaningful and accurate way, from victim intervention to medical care, Patton said.

The general said the Defense Department's efforts to curb sexual assaults will enable culture change.

"I believe we can turn this around," he said. "The (department) is firmly committed to changing the culture."

Panelist Russell Strand, chief of family advocacy law enforcement training for the Army Military Police School at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., also weighed in on the importance of culture change.

"I've never seen a culture change (happen) so fast, so well and so immediately in the military," said Strand, a former service member. He added that sexual assault is taken seriously in the military.

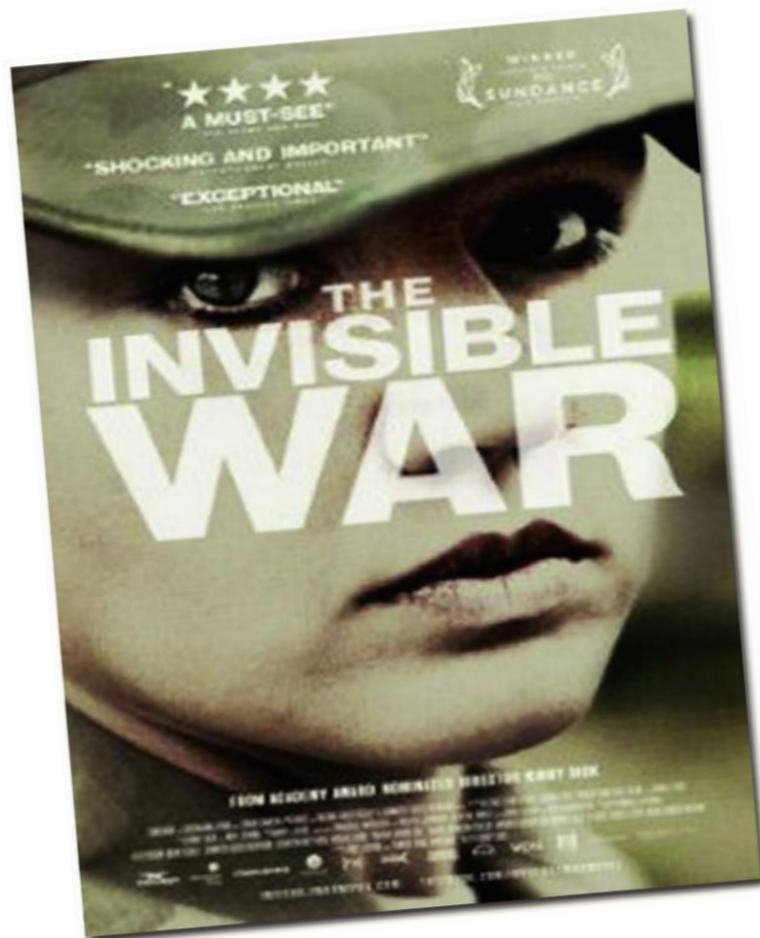
"We will do whatever it takes to minimize, and eventually eradicate, this scourge upon our military," Strand said.

"We have the best military in the world, (and) we have a lot of things we do well and some we don't do so well," he said. "There are hundreds of thousands of people in the military who take this issue as seriously as we do. When we hear or see a story, it breaks our heart, collectively and individually."

Patton said DOD's efforts to combat sexual assault are far-reaching.

"We intend to make the U.S. military a national leader in sexual assault prevention and response," he said. ★

(Cronk is a writer for American Forces Press Service.)



Minehounds

Reservists practice using the Minehound VMR2 ground-penetrating radar detection system at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga.



Dobbins training center teaches Reservists how to sniff out land mines, IEDs

Story by Gene Van Deventer, photos by Don Peek

Throughout military history, for almost every weapon introduced on the battlefield, a countermeasure has been created to offset its effectiveness. For example, shielded battle armor protected against swords and arrows, masks and chemical suits were developed in response to poisonous gases, and steel-toed jungle boots protected against punji sticks.

During U.S. and coalition military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, friendly forces have been facing the devastating effects of hidden mines and improvised explosive devices. Countermeasures used to protect against these deadly devices include up-armored vehicles, detection equipment, and improved tactics, techniques and procedures.

Typically, land mines are factory-manufactured explosive devices that activate when pressure is applied to sensors. IEDs, on the other hand, are diverse in design and may be composed of several types of fuses, detonators and explosive charges. They are commonly composed of conventional munitions or home-made explosives that are rigged together via multiple

triggering devices to include battery-operated mobile phones, timers, pagers or garage door openers. IEDs are activated from a distance and are oftentimes used to distract, disrupt or delay an opposing force in an effort to facilitate another type of attack.

Whereas IEDs are intended for immediate use, a buried land mine may remain active for up to 50 years. The United Nations estimates that more than 100 million hidden land mines, plus millions of unexploded bombs, shells and grenades, remain undiscovered around the world, with Afghanistan and the African/Asian continents having the largest known or suspected quantities. Anti-personnel explosives do not discriminate between military and civilian personnel. Children are particularly vulnerable to mines due to their curiosity and lack of awareness.

In his September 2012 appearance before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense, Army Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, director of the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, talked about a

three-pronged approach to neutralizing or mitigating the land mine/IED threat. The approach included, what he called, "attacking the network, defeating the device and training the forces."

Attacking the network involves first identifying the communications triggering device, then exploiting, jamming and making it inoperable. Defeating the device refers to the deployment of a comprehensive inventory of capabilities such as mine rolling vehicles, electronic jamming devices, robotics, aerial and ground surveillance systems, K-9 detection service dogs, and hand-held detectors. Finally, training the forces entails providing military members with the latest detection skills and information during the pre-deployment phase of their tour.

Barbero testified that more than 80 percent of the explosive devices in Afghanistan are made using home-made explosives from fertilizers and chemicals. In summation, he commented that it is imperative that the U.S. capture and institutionalize the lessons from a decade of combat operations.

"Although there is currently no absolute in discovery and making inoperable all hidden anti-personnel explosives, our best defense remains the warrior with the right intelligence, training and equipment," he said.

Providing Airmen with the right intelligence, training and equipment is the goal of the Air Force Reserve Command Expeditionary Combat Support-Training and Certification Center. Located at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., and operated by the 622nd Civil Engineer Group explosive ordnance disposal unit, the center uses the latest equipment, information and technology to counter the deadly land mine/IED threat.

While there are several different kinds of mine detectors in use, the hand-held Valon VMR2 "Minehound" ground-penetrating radar detection system used at the training center offers several unique advantages over traditional metal detection-only devices.

The most obvious of these advantages is the mine detector's ability to find objects that don't have an electro-magnetic signature, such as the plastic home-made explosive jugs preferred by terrorists. Additionally, the Minehound allows the user to pin-point the exact location,

size and shape of an object.

There is, however, a tradeoff in weight and portability. The VMR2 is slightly larger and heavier than most metal detector-only devices. But for situations where non-metallic explosives are likely used, there is no finer tool.

The Minehound is simple to use, with or without headsets, providing the operator with clear audio signals to alert the presence of a hidden threat. When a threat is located, the audio signal provides accurate position information. The ground penetrating radar provides additional information and identifies a cross-section image of the target, even the smallest buried mines.

According to Master Sgt. David Ewbank, EOD instructor superintendent, the center offers six scheduled training classes per year and provides "just-in-time" sessions as required for short-notice deployers. Ewbank said the average class size is 16, with AFRC EOD technicians being the primary training audience.

Minehound certified instructors have



The Minehound is simple to use, providing operators with clear audio signals to locate objects that don't have an electro-magnetic signature, such as the plastic home-made explosive jugs preferred by terrorists.

been asked on occasion to assist in the training of Army engineers, Army and Navy EOD specialists, and Special Forces personnel.

"Our EOD professionals aim to provide the latest specialty training in mine detection to help save lives, no matter the service connection," Ewbank said.

Assisting the EOD instructors at Dobbins is Fred Orozco from Fort Gordon, Ga.

He is the region's technical subject matter expert for the Minehound.

"Instructors provide the students with equipment operation skills, then test their ability to properly identify both metal and non-metal components (non-explosive) buried at varying depths at the center's training grounds," Orozco said, describing the 40-hour training class and hands-on skills testing used during certification.

"Operating skills may fade away if not used on a regular basis, and with any new device the more you practice with it the more proficient you become," Orozco said.

Instructors bury simulated land mines/IEDs of varying sizes and composition in "training lanes" at different depths.

"It is definitely a challenging course of instruction where the students must utilize their knowledge of tactics, techniques and procedures from actual battlefield discoveries and become most familiar with all types of detection equipment, especially the Minehound," Ewbank said.

If U.S. troops ever needed a technological "leg up" on defeating an enemy's improvised method of destruction, it is now. Thanks to the deployment of the Minehound and other detection systems distributed across the military services, in-roads to hidden explosive identification and neutralization are becoming more successful.

But there's definitely room for further improvement, and that's the training center's constant goal.

"We cannot and will not be satisfied until our identification and neutralization rates reach 100 percent," Ewbank said. ★

(A frequent contributor to Citizen Airman magazine, Van Deventer is assigned to the Expeditionary Combat Support Division of the Installation and Mission Support Directorate at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga.)

FINDING HER VOICE

Son's memory leads Reservist on worldwide entertainment tour

By Maj. Cathleen Snow

The song "You Bring Me Joy" by Anita Baker sums up everything for one talented Air Force Reservist who shed her fear and stepped on stage to sing it with all she had for her son AJ, who she lost to suicide last fall.

The memory of her son inspired Tech. Sgt. Altrameise Myers, information management craftsman in the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., to abandon all lingering doubts about herself and sent her on a journey of hope and joy.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Myers was a little confused when she received a package in the mail with a lone T-shirt emblazoned with the words "Mission Audition." It came from the Air Force's highly coveted entertainment troupe Tops in Blue, to which she had recently sent an audition video.

Similar to the reality television show "American Idol," Tops in Blue sets out to find the most talented vocalists, musicians and dancers in the Air Force. The group's primary purpose is to entertain military members and their families throughout the world, even those deployed to combat zones.

"At first I thought the T-shirt was a consolation prize; like thanks for auditioning, but no thanks," Myers said.

However, a telephone call revealed that the T-shirt was actually Tops in Blue's way of inviting Myers to participate in its seven-day audition in San Antonio, Texas.

Excited about the opportunity, Myers said she was determined to "put my very best foot forward."

Up until that time, Myers said her only experience performing in public was singing the national anthem. Even then, Myers said she was plagued with terrible stage fright.

"I'd be shaking in my boots every time," she said.

Myers said that all changed with the terrible loss of her beloved 17-year-old son September 30.

When she would sing around the house, Myers said her son "would always tell me, 'You need to do something with that talent, mom.' I think about him, and it takes all of my fear away."

At her son's urging, Myers went to a studio, recorded a song and sent it off to Tops in Blue.

"It (performing) is something I've been afraid of, but lately I have not been afraid," she said.

"We loved your singing! Thank you for participating," she said the voice on the other end of the telephone told her when she called about the T-shirt she received.

Her commander, Col. George Raeder, 920th Mission Support Group, concurred.

"I get goose bumps every time I hear her sing," he said of her soulful rendition of the national anthem.

Myers said sending a T-shirt invitation is one of many of Tops in Blue's longstanding traditions. Its history dates back 59 years, and it's one of the oldest and most widely traveled entertainment groups of its kind.

The group has appeared on national television with such legends as Ed Sullivan, Bob Hope, Alabama, Barbara Mandrell, Boyz II Men, Lee Greenwood and many others.

Myers said if selected she knew she would be one of a few Reservists who make the team, which comprises 35 to 40 of the most talented vocalists, musicians, dancers and technicians in the Air Force.

THE AUDITION

Prior to the audition, Myers said she wasn't very confident. "There will be a crazy amount of talent. I have no experience, stage presence or anything like that. ... I'm out," she said.

But she went with a photo of AJ close to her heart, the blessing of her 13-year-old daughter, Alexandra, and a positive attitude to have fun.

But, then it wasn't so fun.

"When I got down there, I thought this is not for me," Myers said.

The experience took her back to the regimented routines of Air Force boot camp.

"They said, 'You're gonna walk in a straight line if you're gonna be Tops in Blue. You're going to carry yourself like Tops in Blue. You will carry your bag in your left hand, and, along with your other 11 female teammates, you will walk single file wherever you go together,'" Myers said.

She began doubting her place with the entertainment troupe but stood tall and kept at it.

"On day four, they explained why they do the things they do," Myers said. "They want us to be cohesive; they want us to gel and work as a team."

Tops in Blues members are not only the entertainment on stage, but also the stage hands, Myers said. It's a job that takes its talented members from on stage to backstage and from place to place around the world for 365 days.

"It isn't about you, it's about the team. The more I heard about this, the more positive I became about it," Myers said. "Then my whole thought process changed."

Once she adjusted her thinking, she was ready to be on stage and give the judges everything she had.

"We had to free dance, then we had to show our ability to

Tech. Sgt. Altrameise Myers, an information management craftsman with the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., poses with a photo of her late son who passed away in 2012. Myers' grief helped to melt away her stage fright, which led to an invitation to audition for the Air Force's Tops in Blue entertainment troupe. (Maj. Cathleen Snow)



pick up a (dance) routine. We had to sing a variety of different songs: jazz, pop, rap. Then we had to join in a band and find the harmony. ... I can't find harmony, but I can mimic it."

Myers said being late for any of these events resulted in disqualification.

A WIN BUT NOT IN

"I'm almost 40, a tech sergeant, so I'm old when you compare me to the group," Myers said. "I'm thinking they're not going to pick me; the other competitors are young, full of energy, and they have elasticity in their skin. ... they are not gonna pick me."

But her emotional rendition of Anita Baker's "You Bring Me Joy" led the judges to a unanimous decision — she was the best female vocalist.

"I won first place out of 26 women," she said. "But everyone was saying just keep in mind that just because you won does not guarantee you a spot on the Tops in Blues bus."

Myers was told that Tops in Blue was not looking for the best singer; instead, the group was looking for team players who have the whole package: stage presence, dance moves and attitude."

THE CALL

After the audition, Myers said the first girl got the call, and she started to get a little excited.

"They got to the 10th woman, and I thought, 'That's a wrap!' I was convinced I was not going to be selected."

Then at 2:04 p.m. on Feb. 22, Myers received a phone call from her commander.

"I thought, 'Oh my God! He's calling to tell me that I didn't get selected.'"

"He (Raeder) said, 'I just had a nice conversation with a nice lady in DC, and you have been selected!'"

"I kept saying, 'I'm gonna scream! I'm gonna scream!'"

"Colonel Raeder said, 'It's perfectly fine to scream.' And I



Myers is starting a non-profit organization called AJ's Peace Project to reach out to other military members and families who have lost loved ones. She is hoping that her Tops in Blue appearances will help her reach families in need of help.

was like, 'YEAH!' He probably got ear damage.

"Everyone in the building was saying, 'What was that? What's going on?'"

Myers had every reason to scream. She will join the ranks of Tops in Blue's world-class entertainers and distinguished Air Force ambassadors during the 2013 worldwide tour later this year.

AJ'S PEACE PROJECT

Myers said her news about going on tour was received with mixed reactions at home.

"My mom wasn't so supportive at first. She said, 'What are you doing running away?' But my dad was (very supportive). He said, 'You can either grieve for 12 months right here in Orlando and become a zombie, or you can grieve in a positive way. This is good for you,'" Myers said.

She said Alexandra, her 13-year-old daughter, understands what she's doing and supports her. Both mom and daughter are attending grief counseling and are starting a non-profit organization called AJ's Peace Project to reach out to other military members and families who have lost loved ones.

"I want to be able to tell other parents who are dealing with their troubled teens that maybe they (their teens) are self-medicating to deal with their demons (mental illness). ... Tops in Blue is a platform for me to reach out to them and honor my child."

They are still in the start-up stages of the project, but Myers said AJ's Peace Project will help other teens who are not only dealing with anxiety, depression and hormonal changes, but who have the added layer of a mental illness like bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.

Since AJ was a sketch artist, Myers said she plans to incorporate art therapy such as painting, poetry, sketch art, sculpture and other forms of artistic expression into the program.

ON TOUR

With a renewed sense of herself and her talent, Myers said she's ready to go on tour.

"I'm gonna have to run circles around these young puppies," she said with a laugh.

Myers was scheduled to travel to San Antonio April 2, her 40th birthday, to train with former cast members on all aspects of the show. However, training is on hold due to budget constraints.

When she does go, training will consist of a highly accelerated educational process to prepare the candidates to succeed.

Myers said she's excited about the journey and the prospect of working with her new team.

"They really are a family; they are blue through and through," Myers said.

As one of the only Reserve members on the team, Myers will stand tall as an ambassador in blue, but she will also use the stage to talk about AJ's Peace Project to all who'll listen.

More information on Myer's new non-profit organization is available on Facebook.com/AJ's Peace Project. ★

(Snow is chief of public affairs for the 920th RQW at Patrick AFB.)



Reservists, retirees eligible for affordable health care programs

By Col. Bob Thompson

Tricare has affordable health care programs available for all Air Force Reserve retirees, including "gray-area retirees," and actively participating Air Force Reservists, no matter what orders they are on.

Reservists who retire before age 60 are eligible for Tricare Retired Reserve coverage while they are in the "gray-area." This is the waiting period between retiring from service and collecting Air Force Reserve retirement pay at age 60.

While on active-duty orders for more than 30 days, all Reservists are covered by Tricare Prime. However, Reservists could find themselves with no health care insurance when they are in between active-duty orders. To ensure coverage for themselves and their families during these times, Reservists can enroll in Tricare Reserve Select.

Both Tricare Reserve Select and Tricare Retired Reserve provide comprehensive health coverage including emergency care, outpatient visits, preventive care such as wellness exams and immunizations, hospitalization, maternity care, mental/behavioral

health coverage, and prescriptions.

Currently, the monthly premiums for Tricare Reserve Select are \$51.62 for the Reservist only, and \$195.81 for Reservists and their families.

The monthly premiums for Tricare Retired Reserve are \$402.11 for a retired Reservist only, and \$969.10 for retirees and their families.

At age 60, Tricare Retired Reserve coverage ends, and retirees are eligible for coverage through Tricare Prime, Standard or Extra. Currently, the yearly premiums for Tricare Prime are \$269.28 for the individual plan and \$538.56 for the family package.

At age 65, all Americans come under Medicare coverage. Also, Medicare health insurance covers people under 65 with certain disabilities.

To find out more or to enroll in Tricare's programs for Reservists, go to www.tricare.mil/trs. ★

(Thompson is a public affairs officer assigned to the Office of Air Force Reserve at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.)

Defense Department extends terms of current retiree dental program

The Department of Defense has extended the current Tricare Retiree Dental Program contract.

Originally scheduled to expire Sept. 30, 2013, the contract will now run through Dec. 31, 2013. It went into effect Oct. 1, 2012.

The contract extension brings no change in premiums or scope of benefits. However, the annual maximum for enrollees in the enhanced program will be increased to \$1,500 for this period. Those in the basic program will see their maximum increase to \$1,250. And, although the maximums are being increased for the extended period, enrollees will not be asked to pay a higher deductible.

These changes were implemented April 1. Those who had already reached their maximum for the year should have their dentist resubmit their claim(s) that were not paid due to exceeding the maximum.

Delta Dental will serve as administrator of the new five-year TRDP contract, which will begin Jan. 1, 2014.

The TRDP, authorized by Congress as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1997, offers affordable dental benefits as a voluntary option to the nation's 5 million-plus uniformed services retirees and their family members. With current enrollment of more than 1.3 million people, the TRDP is the nation's largest

voluntary, all-enrollee-paid dental program.

The TRDP will continue as a worldwide combined fee-for-service/preferred provider program that offers enrollees access to any licensed dentist in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Canada and overseas.

For information regarding the program, contact Joe Montoya at 715-824-2940 or via email at jmontoya@delta.org. ★

(Information for this article provided in a Tricare news release.)

Check it Out

New management tool helping Reserve units figure out which self-assessment checklists to use

For units throughout the Air Force, an important part of the process of preparing for an inspection is the self-assessment. Units spend a great deal of time and effort evaluating their various processes and procedures to make sure they are in compliance with regulations and requirements, and demonstrate they are ready to perform their mission.

One of the biggest problems units face in determining how to best assess their compliance through self-assessment is figuring out what checklists to use. Air Force Reserve Command is doing something to address this continuing problem and identify specific checklists that everyone can use to prepare for an inspection.

During an Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century event, AFRC inspector general officials developed an idea for a standardized tool that everyone within the command can use to assess their level of compliance. Since that time, the Checklist Identification Management Tool has continued to evolve beyond the test phase to the point that it is gaining widespread acceptance.

The underlying philosophy and stated purpose of the project is "build, validate and institute in a customized, specific way with buy-in and accountability from and for all elements of the AFRC enterprise," said Col. Carlos Halcomb, chief of the Inspection Division with the IG office and former inspector general at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. He leads the team spearheading CIMT implementation.

"The current iteration of this tool can be likened to the Wright Flyer of the checklist identification process," he said.

After the AFS021 event got the ball rolling, the next step in CIMT development involved getting each of the directorates at AFRC headquarters to provide specific, detailed information to units throughout the command to help determine and identify existing checklists. Then, late last year, individual functional checklist managers went through all of the identified checklists to determine which ones apply to which types of units and mission sets. In addition, they validated questions and references on their checklists. These checklists form the foundation of CIMT.

Next, the CIMT was ready for testing. The inspector general's office selected six test units based on the variety of their mission sets. In addition, the office made sure the test included both tenant and host units as well as classic and active associate units. The six were the 23rd Combat Communications Squadron at Travis Air Force Base, Calif.; 482nd Fighter Wing, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla.; 916th Air Refueling Wing, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.; 419th FW, Hill AFB, Utah; 555th RED HORSE Squadron, Nellis AFB, Nev.; and 315th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Charleston, S.C.

Each of the six organizations took the CIMT and parsed the information out to their subordinate units for validation.

They were looking to answer several key questions, including: Did each of the units agree that they should be held responsible for the identified set of checklists? Were there checklists missing? Were checklists identified that the unit did not believe it should assess? For any suggested changes, units were asked to provide a brief rationale.

In addition, the test units were asked to provide feedback, both positive and negative, on the tool itself, including layout and ease of use. The test lasted six weeks, and the overall response was positive.

"Thank you all for allowing us to be in on the beta test," said Lt. Col. Donna McNabb-Riley of the 315th AW. "We loved it and really put forth honest and thorough responses in return."

"The CIMT product sparked a lot of discussions in the unit," said Maj. Richard Wallace of the 23rd CBCS. "I found the tool beneficial and easy to use."

"On average, each of our 20 units added 15 new checklists to their Management Internal Control Toolset self-inspection dashboard prescribed by CIMT," said Capt. Kimberly Champagne of the 315th. "That's 15 checklists that we did not know we were supposed to be running. Adding the new checklists brought a lot of confidence in the tool. Now the units can run a successful self-assessment program without wondering if they are missing something."

After the test phase was completed, the functional checklist managers in each of the AFRC directorates reviewed all of the unit checklists selections and inputs. After this final validation step, units now know exactly what programs AFRC inspectors will assess to determine compliance based on the governing directives.

Revalidation of CIMT should only occur after a full compliance cycle is complete, an existing unit is re-missioned, a new unit is activated or a significant change in Air Force instruction requirements.

Now the task is to implement CIMT across AFRC's 80-plus wings, direct reporting units, geographically separated units and detachments. The command IG is looking at using existing SharePoint technologies to take CIMT from a single unit-driven spreadsheet to a more dynamic online push/pull capability.

Explaining how units might use this online tool, Capt. Sharon Spudic, one of AFRC's Self-Assessment Program managers, said it would be helpful to "think of it in terms of a sporting event tournament bracket in reverse. Units will select answers to a series of questions as they drill down to a 'generic' set of checklists. From that they will customize which of those actually apply to their unit. Functional checklist managers will validate and confirm these selections."

Spudic said that using a "crawl, walk, run analogy, the building and initial test phase of the tool was crawl; SharePoint implementation and deployment throughout AFRC is walk; and full utilization and integration of this tool into MICT is run."

"It may be a long while until we run, but the advancement of this tool within AFRC should provide the Air Force enterprise a basis to build similar models for other commands and grow this concept to its full potential," she said.

"From the Wright Flyer to the space shuttle ... where does CIMT have to potential to take us?" Halcomb said. ★

(Information for this article provided by Lt. Col. Lisa M. Craig of the AFRC inspector general's office.)



Capt. Kimberly Champagne uses the Checklist Identification Management Tool at the 315th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Charleston, S.C.

Download this and other materials at: AFRC.WingmanToolkit.org

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