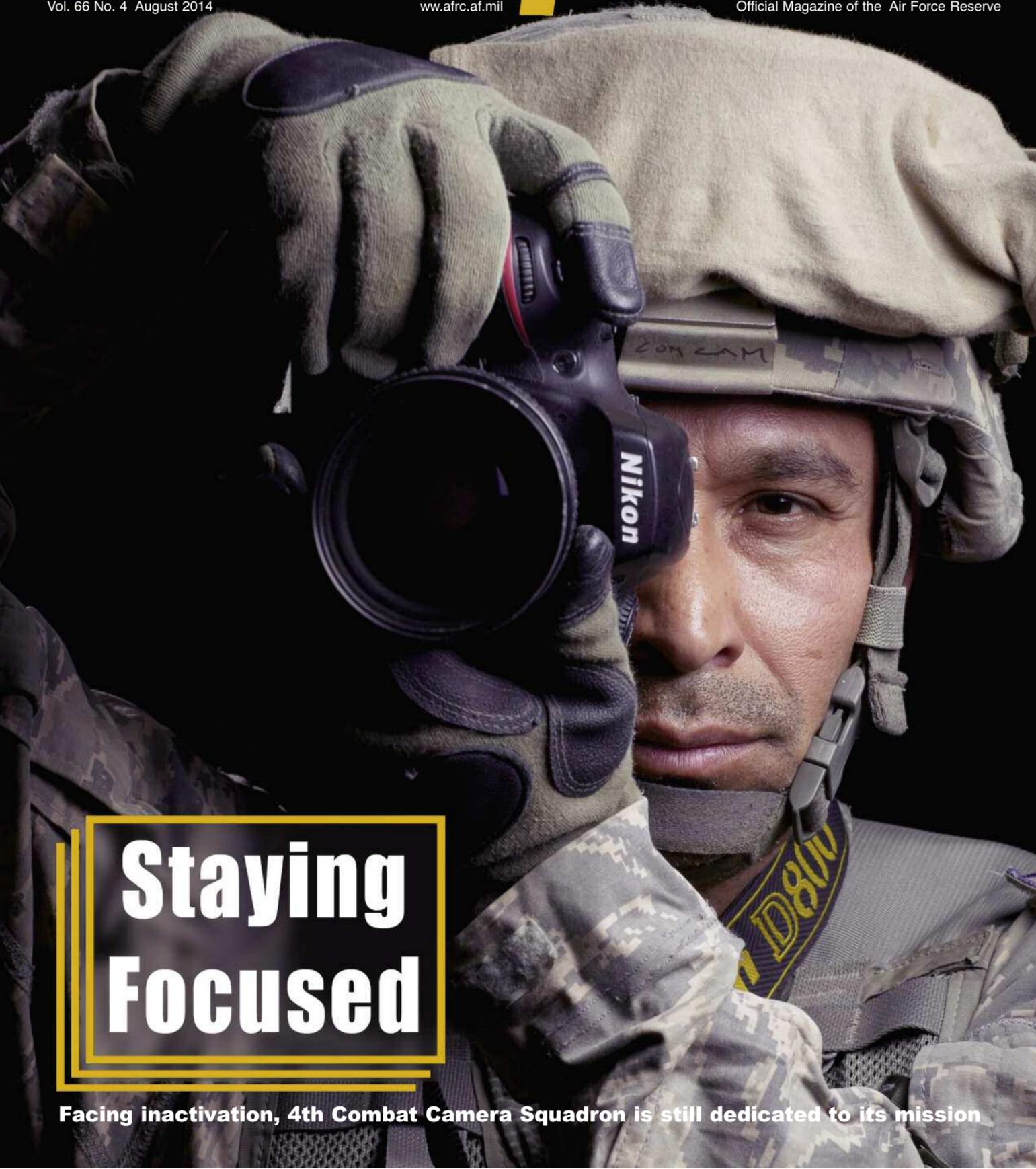


CITIZEN AIRMAN

Vol. 66 No. 4 August 2014

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Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve



Staying Focused

Facing inactivation, 4th Combat Camera Squadron is still dedicated to its mission

LIEUTENANT GENERAL
James F. Jackson
 ★★★
 FROM THE TOP



“Every day, Air Force Reserve teams deliver for our nation in a wide variety of mission areas.”



NOTES FROM THE ROAD

One of the most important aspects of my job is visiting units and meeting our Citizen Airmen. This is my chance to hear directly from you, from the brand-new Airmen to our most seasoned professionals. I'd like to take this opportunity to share a few of my notes from the road.

Your talent is on display. I accompanied Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James to visit the Air Force Reserve wings at Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts; Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina; and Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. She likes to get to the root of the issues by listening to our Airmen. I appreciated how each wing proudly showcased the talent of our men and women. What a great impression you made!

Our Airmen's expertise is incredible. I recently visited Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, home to the only full-time, fixed-wing aerial spray unit within the Department of Defense. I was fortunate to get a ride on one of the unit's specially modified C-130s. As I watched the crew in action, their years of experience and system knowledge were on clear display. Every day, similarly skilled Air Force Reserve teams deliver for our

nation, in a wide variety of mission areas. For that, I'm tremendously grateful!

Leadership at all levels matters. When I visit a base, I like to meet as many people as possible to get a sense of the unit's climate. I meet with commanders and chiefs to get their views from the top. I also meet with the first sergeants, as they are my primary source for understanding the people issues. I enjoy dining with young Airmen and getting the viewpoints of our next generation. I also always sit down with the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator to discuss current challenges and make sure we are doing everything we can to prevent sexual assault. No matter which group I meet with, I'm looking for the leaders, because if leadership is infused at all levels and we are taking care of our people, then I'm confident the unit is taking care of the mission.

Your service is deeply appreciated. One of my favorite road trips is to a Yellow Ribbon event, where I meet with our deployers and their families. Deploying and answering the nation's call to duty always impacts the "reserve-work-life" balance of our Citizen

Airmen. Yellow Ribbon events help with this balance by giving Airmen and their families an opportunity to focus on their personal needs and assisting through a variety of resources.

Chief Master Sergeant Kirksey's commentary further addresses how much we value Yellow Ribbon events, for they give both of us a chance to tell you and your families, "Thanks for all you do!"

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT
Cameron B. Kirksey
 CHIEF'S VIEW

NOTES FROM YELLOW RIBBON

Like Lieutenant General Jackson, I, too, am frequently on the road, visiting units and attending various Pentagon meetings. Some of my most memorable travels have been to Yellow Ribbon events, where I get to spend time with you and your families. Here are a few notes from weekends spent with Citizen Airmen as they prepared for or returned from a deployment.

Family matters most. When I first walk into a Yellow Ribbon event, I take a minute to look around the room and see the dozens of units represented by hundreds of Citizen Airmen from across the country. Rarely do we have the opportunity to bring our Air Force Reserve family together like this. Even more rare is the opportunity to bring your family along. I initially wonder how many lives will be changed during the weekend's events. By the end of the weekend, I hope you and your family will better understand the meaning of reintegration and be better prepared for life pre- and post-deployment.

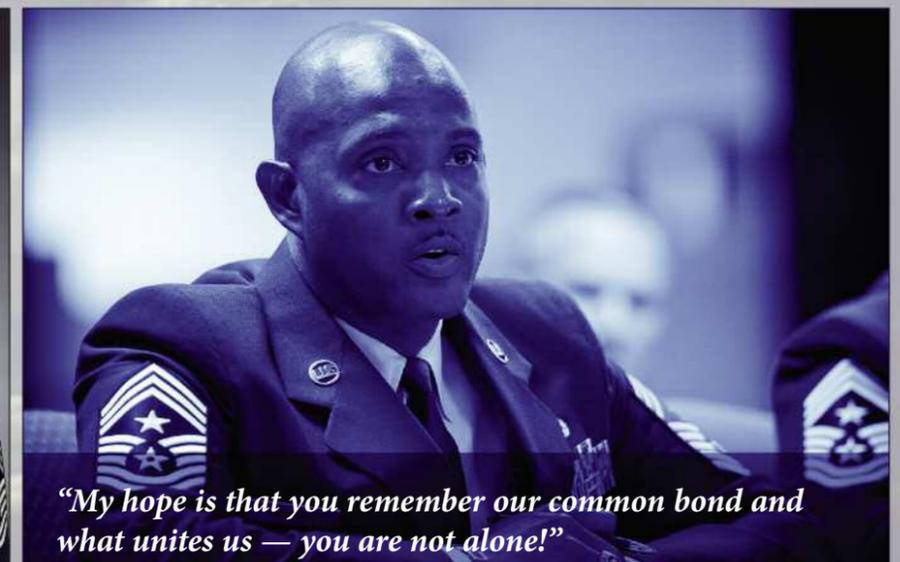
The parade of stars is a showcase of resources. After the leadership welcome, each event kicks off with a "parade of stars"

where resource providers introduce themselves and briefly comment on the services they provide. Some examples being: job assistance from Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and Hero2Hired, entitlement assistance from TRI-CARE and Veterans Affairs, wellness assistance from the Psychological Health Advocacy Program, and spiritual assistance from the chaplains. There are too many to list, but trust me, the parade is long and provides a reminder of the various resources available to assist you and your family.

Breakouts are the heartbeat of a Yellow Ribbon event. Breakout sessions are "small group" forums lasting about an hour, which focus on information sharing, networking opportunities and informal support groups. Attendees also get tips on finances, fitness and resume writing. Tough issues are also discussed during breakout sessions, as emotions surrounding deployment can run the gamut. Feelings are shared and relationships examined. Frequently heard are stories of rekindled marriages. After a weekend's worth of breakouts, attendees walk away more informed and, hopefully, with a renewed perspective on life.

Similarities are greater than our differences. Every person's deployment experience is different, just like every attendee's Yellow Ribbon weekend is different. Although deploying is never easy and the personal sacrifices are many, my hope is that you remember our common bond and what unites us — you are not alone! We all volunteered to serve as Citizen Airmen, to wear the cloth of our great nation, to be a part of something bigger than ourselves.

If you've been tapped for an upcoming deployment or just returned from one, I encourage you and your loved ones to attend the next Yellow Ribbon event. Your unit's Yellow Ribbon representative can provide you more specific information about dates and how to register. Together, with the support of your fellow Citizen Airmen, your Air Force Reserve leadership and programs like Yellow Ribbon, there are many saying, "I'm here for you!"



“My hope is that you remember our common bond and what unites us — you are not alone!”

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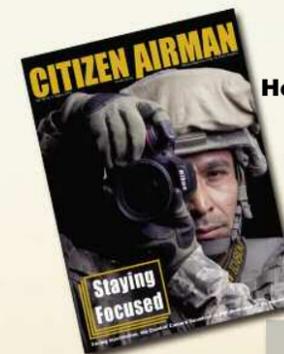
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On the cover: Tech. Sgt. Efren Lopez is a highly decorated military photojournalist who has been plying his trade with the 4th Combat Camera Squadron at March Air Reserve Base, California, since soon after it was activated in 1996. Today, Lopez and his fellow photographers and videographers are staring down their lenses at a pending unit inactivation. For the story, see Page 14.



Master Sgt. Elizabeth Concepcion, a photographer assigned to the 4th Combat Camera Squadron, March Air Reserve Base, California, documents events during Patriot Hook 2014 at Los Alamitos Army Airfield, California. Patriot Hook is an annual exercise simulating a joint military and civilian force response to a natural disaster in a forward-deployed location. Earlier this year, it was announced that the 4th CTCS has been slated for inactivation. For more on that story, see Page 14. (Staff Sgt. Heather Cozad)

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

Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson *Commander, Air Force Reserve Command*

Col. Robert P. Palmer *Director of Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command*

Cliff Tyler *Managing Editor*

Bo Joyner *Associate Editor*

Adam Butterick *Designer*

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The sun peaks through cloudy skies over the 507th Air Refueling Wing's flight line at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, after two days of severe storms and high winds. (Senior Airman Mark Hybers)

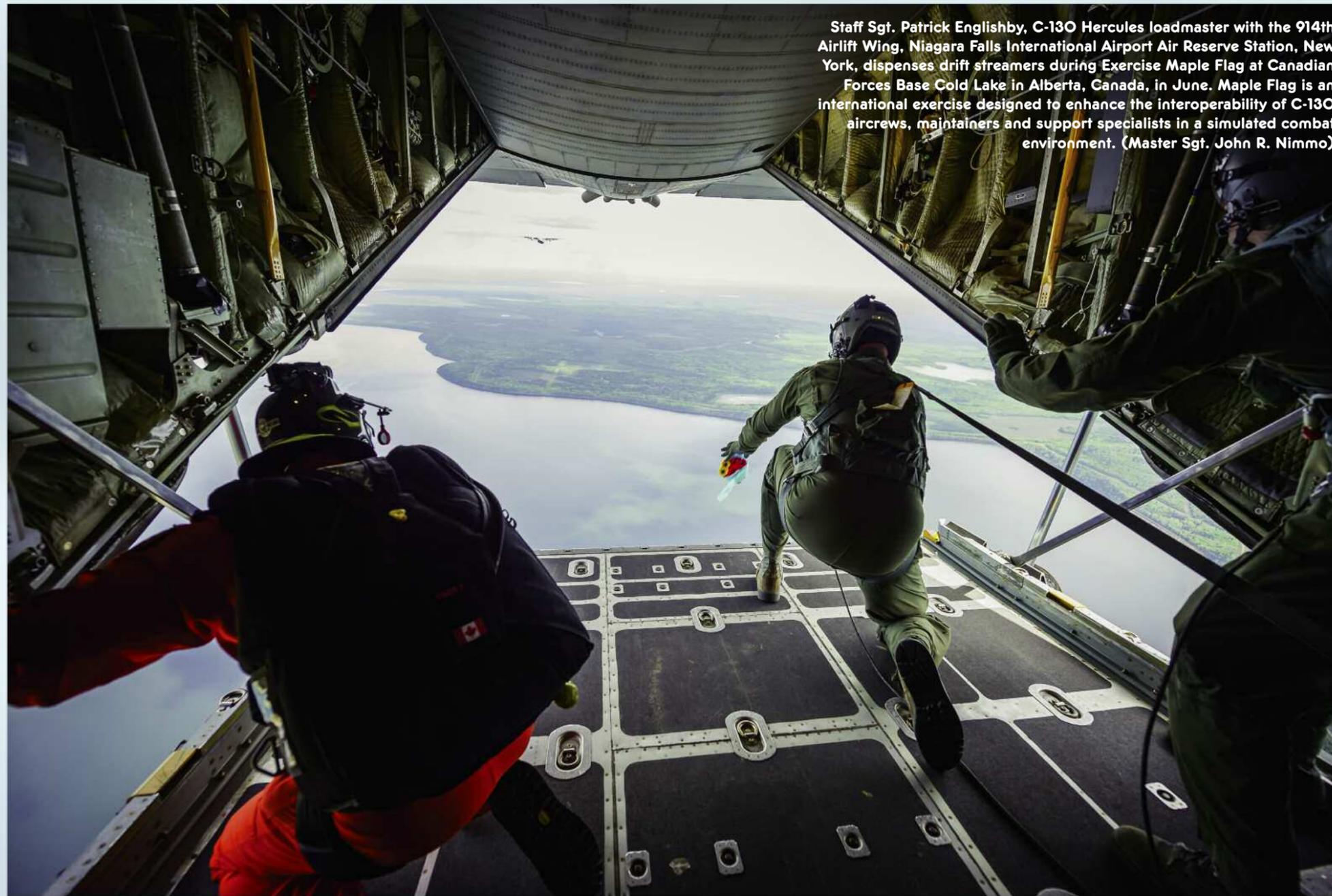
Staff Sgt. Joseph Brown, 307th Logistics Readiness Squadron, steps off a forklift after delivering a pallet loaded with equipment for a C-17 Globemaster III at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. More than 45 Airmen from the 307th Bomb Wing left for a month-long deployment to support an active exercise at Nellis, AFB, Nevada. (Master Sgt. Jeff Walston)



Tech. Sgt. Joshua Krepps, 94th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron propulsion technician, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, performs maintenance on a recently received C-130H3 Hercules. (Don Peek)

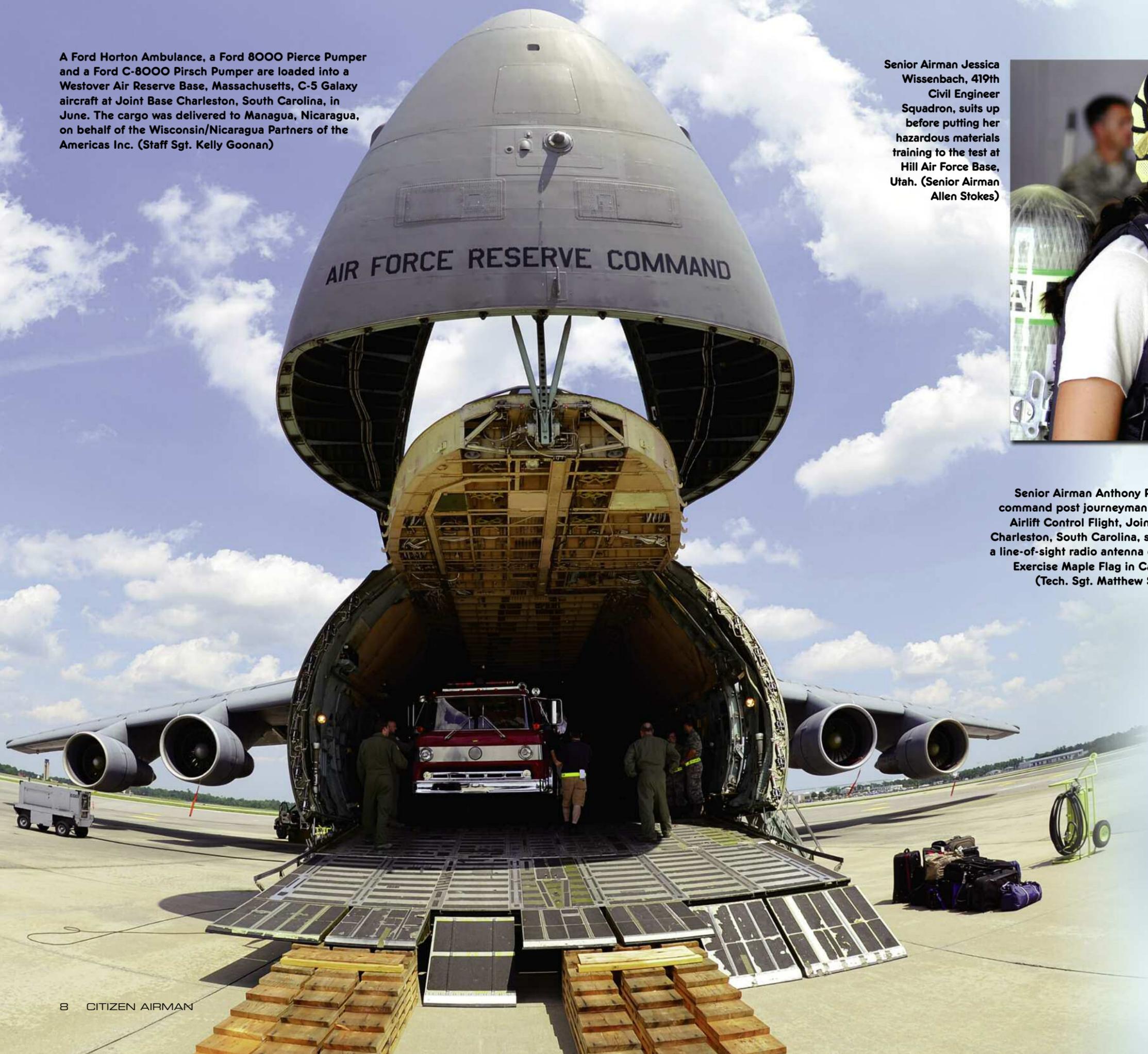


Capt. Phillip Chapman, C-130 Hercules pilot with the 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, maneuvers to avoid a simulated ground-to-air threat while keeping an eye on the position of his wingman during Maple Flag. (Master Sgt. John R. Nimmo)



Staff Sgt. Patrick Englishby, C-130 Hercules loadmaster with the 914th Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, New York, dispenses drift streamers during Exercise Maple Flag at Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake in Alberta, Canada, in June. Maple Flag is an international exercise designed to enhance the interoperability of C-130 aircrews, maintainers and support specialists in a simulated combat environment. (Master Sgt. John R. Nimmo)

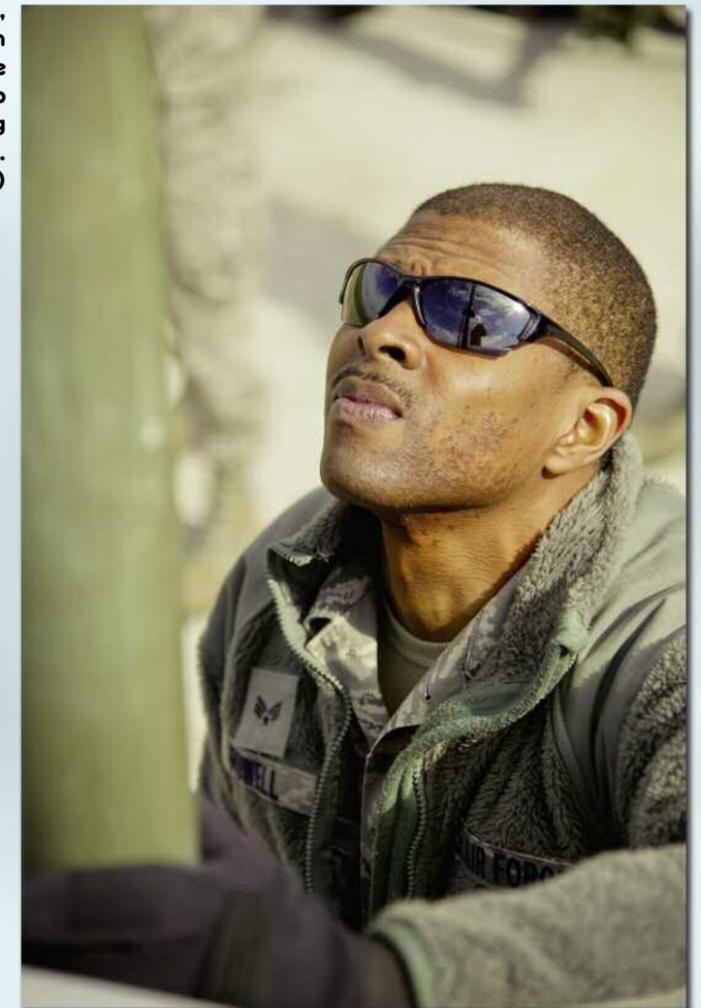
A Ford Horton Ambulance, a Ford 8000 Pierce Pumper and a Ford C-8000 Pirsch Pumper are loaded into a Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, C-5 Galaxy aircraft at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, in June. The cargo was delivered to Managua, Nicaragua, on behalf of the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners of the Americas Inc. (Staff Sgt. Kelly Goonan)



Senior Airman Jessica Wissenbach, 419th Civil Engineer Squadron, suits up before putting her hazardous materials training to the test at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. (Senior Airman Allen Stokes)



Senior Airman Anthony Powell, command post journeyman, 315th Airlift Control Flight, Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, sets up a line-of-sight radio antenna during Exercise Maple Flag in Canada. (Tech. Sgt. Matthew Smith)



Remotely Piloted Aircraft Squadron Begins Operations in Florida

The 2nd Special Operations Squadron, a remotely piloted aircraft unit, officially moved its operations from Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, to Hurlburt Field, Florida, in June.

The squadron, part of the 919th Special Operations Wing at Duke Field, Florida, includes approximately 140 people who are associated with their active-duty counterparts in the 3rd SOS. The 3rd is part of Air Force Special Operations Command's 27th SOW at Cannon AFB, New Mexico.

Along with the change of scenery, the squadron changed its aircraft, transitioning from the MQ-1 Predator to the MQ-9 Reaper. None of squadron's MQ-9s are actually located at Hurlburt Field. Instead, they are flown in various combat theaters throughout the world.

Since its inception in 2009, the 2nd SOS has flown 2,346 combat support sorties totalling 57,225 hours. (*Air Force Print News*)

Chief Master Sergeant of Air Force Stresses Service Unity

There is no distinction among Airmen within the Air Force components when it comes to how they perform their jobs, how they live up to standards and how they embrace the service's core values, said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody during a visit to Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, June 24-25. Robins is home of Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command.

"Robins is a great example of our Air Force," Cody said during an enlisted call. "I'm looking out at all of you, and you represent the United States Air Force. We have four distinct components: active duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and civilian employees. Together they make up our United States Air Force."

For the past 20 years, members of the reserve components have been called upon and have served in the same capacity as their active-duty counterparts. According to Cody, they offer unique strengths — strength in community and resiliency in units — because they are able

to stay connected for longer periods of time.

"What our reserves bring to the table is their civilian experience, a different level of depth than active-duty Airmen, who predominately focus on the way they must do their Air Force job."

Because there is only one Air Force, Cody explained that all Airmen must understand and appreciate the fundamental differences between the components. The unity among the active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilians is crucial to the Air Force mission.

"Airmen serve worldwide. When they are where the nation needs them to be, we don't have this discussion," Cody said. "We just see Airmen doing what our nation calls them to do, but somehow when we get back home we revert back to this 'I'm in the Guard, I'm in the Reserve, I'm in the active duty.' No, you are in the United States Air Force."

In addition to speaking to the importance of unified components, Cody talked about the challenges facing today's Air Force.

"We're going to be a smaller Air Force," he said. "Where we maintain capability and capacity is important for what our nation is going to ask us to do."

Cody said fiscal challenges are forcing tough and sometimes unpopular decisions. He assured the Airmen that they and their families are always a major consideration in these decisions.

"The future will always change, and if we don't shape it ourselves, we will be shaped by it," he said. "The fact is that what you do has purpose to our nation and is impacting people around the world. Don't lose sight of that. You and your families are without question our most valuable asset. Our nation treasures each and every one of you." (*Staff Sgt. Kelly Goonan, 439th Airlift Wing public affairs, Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts*)

Reservists Lead Space Fundamentals Course

The Reserve National Security Institute at Schriever Air Force Base, Colorado, provided a full cadre of instructors in March to teach 21 students enrolled in the Air Force Space Command's Advanced Space Operations School.

The instructors led the Space Operations Course, a two-week classroom and field training environment designed to provide a bridge for new space support people or those within operations with little to no previous exposure to space operations. Subject areas included orbital dynamics, space environment, space physics, force application, doctrine, space law, intelligence systems applications and missile warning.

Maj. Doug Arioli, an air and space integration instructor, said now that Reservists have shown they're capable of providing the instruction, they will be called upon more in the future.

"We are a huge asset to (active duty) when they need us due to deployments, permanent changes of station, budget issues, contract issues and a litany of other areas," Arioli said. "The Advanced Space Operations School now has a larger pool of qualified instructors to use for all its courses."

Students who take the Space Operations Course come from a variety of backgrounds. They include Department of Defense civilians, U.S. military members from a variety of service branches as well as Australian and German nationals.

Throughout the course in March, each student was

challenged with classroom-based theory and knowledge. Later, the students applied what they learned in the classroom by participating in hands-on space applications, to include a spacecraft design exercise, a war exercise and an off-site mock search-and-rescue exercise at Ute Valley Park in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The RNSSI is comprised of a mix of space operators, aviators, acquirers, intelligence analysts and communications systems experts. Also, it pulls from a variety of part-time "traditional Reserve" talent. (*Lt. Col. Karen Slocum, Reserve National Security Space Institute*)

Air Force Introduces Total Force Commissioning Process

Air Force officials have implemented a new commissioning process that allows the service to provide multiple career avenues for officers being commissioned through Air Force ROTC by offering cadets the chance to pursue opportunities in the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard.

Called the Total Force Commissioning Process, the program also synchronizes the overall number of officers being commissioned with recent reductions in the size of the active-duty force. In addition to pur-



suing opportunities in the Reserve or Guard, there are also opportunities to be released from active-duty service commitments.

The program, implemented July 10, is modeled after the Army's process, creating additional opportunities during a cadet's senior year to serve in either the active or reserve component after graduation.

Reserve units finish first, second in Hawgsmoke competition

By Airman First Class Sivan Veazie

Air Force Reserve Command fighter units captured the top two spots in the 2014 Hawgsmoke competition.

The 47th Fighter Squadron, which is under the operational control of the 924th Fighter Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, captured first place in the biennial worldwide A-10 bombing, missile and tactical gunnery competition. The 76th Fighter Squadron, assigned to the 476th Fighter Group at Moody AFB, Georgia, placed second.

A total of 14 teams from around the world took part in the competition July 9-12 at the Barry M. Goldwater Range Two in Tucson, Arizona. The 355th Fighter Wing at Davis-Monthan was host to the event.

"Usually Hawgsmoke itself takes place over two days and includes team and individual scoring of strafing, high-altitude dive bombing, 30-degree dive bombing, Maverick missile precision and team tactics," said Maj. Kyle Lanto, a 355th Training Squadron pilot instructor. "But this year's competition focused more on forward firing."

Traditionally, the winning team gets to host the next competition. Since the 357th FS at Davis-Monthan finished in first place in the last Hawgsmoke, in 2012, this year's competition was held at the base.

The competition kicked off with a remembrance ceremony in honor of fallen A-10 pilots. After reading the name of the lost avi-



An A-10 Thunderbolt II from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, goes on a strafing run during the 2014 Hawgsmoke competition at Barry M. Goldwater Range Two in Tucson, Arizona. Air Force Reserve Command teams finished first and second in the biennial event.

ators, the competitors took a customary shot of whiskey and smashed the empty glasses in a fire pit.

The next day, it was time for the pilots to gear up and show the judges what they were made of.

Before the competition started, pre-positioned cameras and acoustic panels were set

up to accurately calculate each pilot's score. The pilots were all given the same amount of ammunition and were scored on their execution of A-10 maneuvers, as well as their accuracy with the high-, medium- and low-angle strafes.

(*Veazie is assigned to the 355th FW public affairs office at Davis-Monthan.*)

Pope's Pun



“The (Air Force) ROTC program is very competitive, and we enjoy the luxury of having an abundance of quality cadets who have chosen to serve their country,” said Lt. Gen. Sam Cox, the Air Force deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services. “Unfortunately, given budget reductions, the Air Force must reduce its active-duty force, limiting the number of cadets we can accept into the active component.”

Cadets graduating from July 10, 2014, through calendar year 2015 will be able to pursue opportunities in the Reserve and Guard or seek release from their active-duty commitment July 14 through Sept. 15.

Cadets who apply for voluntary release will be notified by late October whether their request has been approved. Cadets seeking opportunities in the air reserve component will be notified by the Guard or Reserve unit to which they applied, and the unit will respond as promptly as possible on their acceptance status.

After the volunteer phase for the release and ARC volunteer programs, a merit process will be implemented to determine if a cadet is awarded an active-duty position after graduation. The merit system will be based on detachment commander rank, field training rank, Air Force Officer Qualification Test

score, academic aptitude and cumulative grade point average.

Those who are not retained for active duty can choose to stay in the Individual Ready Reserve and pursue opportunities in the Reserve or Guard. Recruiters will assist those who select to pursue opportunities to affiliate with a Guard or Reserve unit. Those who leave the Air Force, remain in the IRR or receive an ARC allocation will not have to repay scholarships or stipends.

At this time, the program is not open to U.S. Air Force Academy cadets, and officer training school will not be affected. *(Bekah Geffert, secretary of the Air Force public affairs)*

Grissom, Wright-Patterson team up to tell Air Force Reserve story

By Tech. Sgt. Mark R.W. Orders-Woempner

Since the Wright brothers first took to the sky, Ohio has been known as a state for aviation innovation, and in that spirit, two Air Force Reserve units found a creative way to showcase their missions to the world.

The 434th Air Refueling Wing from Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, partnered with the 445th Airlift Wing at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, to host a combined media flight showcasing their unique missions June 18.

“This was a great opportunity that allowed us to showcase both airframes (the 434th’s KC-135R Stratotankers and the 445th’s C-17 Globemaster III aircraft) and mission sets,” said Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th ARW commander. “The community needs to see what our great Citizen Airmen are doing each and every day.”

Making the combined media flight opportunity easier to execute was the fact that Grissom’s Stratotankers were operating out of Wright-Patterson while the Indiana base’s runway was undergoing construction.

Eight Ohio media representatives came face to face with a C-17 as they flew onboard a KC-135R during air refueling operations. Seven media members from Indiana were onboard the C-17, learning more about airlift operations and aeromedical evacuation missions, with one even becoming a patient in a medical training scenario.

Rocky Walls of 12 Stars Media raised his hand and volunteered to take part in the aeromedical evacuation training and quickly found himself being treated for a simulated collapsed lung.

“I like getting in the middle of it and getting my hands dirty, and they gave me a good picture of why and how they do what they do,” Walls said. “There’s always that chance something could go wrong, and they have to be ready for anything. A patient they pick up could have any number of challenges, and they have to be ready with the right people in the right places to take care of him.”

The media flight also provided a good opportunity for the two aircrews, said Maj. Francis W. Saul III, 89th Airlift Squadron C-17 pilot.

“It’s incredibly rare for the crews of the receiver and tanker aircraft to meet in person because we are generally coming from two different bases and headed in two different directions,” Saul said. “But I love being able to meet these guys; it puts a face on a voice over the radio and lets you connect and learn what these guys are all about.”



Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Gerritsen, 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron aeromedical evacuation technician, trains on treating Rocky Walls with 12 Stars Media, who served as a patient with a simulated collapsed lung.

With their footage and experiences in hand, the media representatives left Wright-Patterson knowing what both air refueling and airlift operations were all about and were armed to share the Air Force Reserve mission from an entirely new perspective.

(Orders-Woempner is assigned to the 434th ARW public affairs office at Grissom ARB.)

Little Rock C-130 Unit Gets New Name

Air Force Reserve Command’s C-130 unit at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, has a new name.

Maj. Gen. Mark A. Kyle, 22nd Air Force commander, activated the 913th Airlift Group and presented the unit’s new guidon in a ceremony July 13.

The 913th AG replaces 22nd Air Force, Detachment 1. The detachment was activated in March 2011.

With more than 500 people currently assigned, the 913th is authorized to increase its size to about 800 Airmen and civilian employees in fiscal 2015.

“The Air Force Reserve at Little Rock has been preparing for this transition for a while, and we’re proud to have a more visible place in Team Little Rock,” said Col. Archie Frye, group commander.

Elements of the 913th include a headquarters unit, the 327th Airlift Squadron, the 913th Operations Support Squadron, the 913th Maintenance Squadron, the 96th Aerial Port Squadron, the 913th Force Support Squadron and the 913th Aerospace Medical Squadron.

Prior to being activated at Little Rock, the 327th AS was part of the 913th Airlift Wing at Willow Grove Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania, from Jan. 15, 1963, until it was inactivated Sept. 30, 2007, in conjunction with the closure of the base. While at Willow Grove, the squadron accumulated a total of 7,284 flying hours. In 2004, the 327th deployed three rotations of C-130s and Airmen to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, for Operation Joint Forge and supported NATO-led stabilization and peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In early 2005, the 327th completed a conversion from the C-130E to the C-130H3 model aircraft. That same year, more than 125 people were mobilized for activation and phased deployments for Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. *(Air Force Print News)*

Travelers Can’t Keep Compensation for Involuntary Flight Changes

Military members and civilian employees are often required to travel via commercial airlines as part of their duties. Most of the time, everything goes as planned, and there are no complications. However, sometimes an airline will overbook a flight, and government travelers, through no fault of their own, are involuntarily bumped from the plane.

When this happens, the airline will book travelers on a later flight and issue them a check to compensate them for their inconvenience. Before you accept the check and rush to the bank, or pull out your smartphone to deposit the check, you need to be aware of what the Joint Federal Travel Regulation has to say about this subject.

“If a traveler is involuntarily denied boarding on a flight, compensation for the denied seat belongs to the government,” the regulation states. “The traveler must request that the carrier shows the Treasurer of the United States as payee on the compensation check and forward the payment according to service/agency directives.”

Furthermore, Air Force Instruction 24-101, Transportation Passenger Movement, states, “The traveler may not keep compensation for ‘denied boarding’ when an airline does not allow a traveler to board an overbooked flight. Travelers must turn in any form of compensatory payment they receive from carriers to the finance office with their travel voucher.”

What about government travelers who are provided compensation for voluntarily relinquishing their seat on an overbooked flight? In this case, travelers are allowed to keep the payment. *(Information provided by the Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, staff judge advocate office.)*



Reflections on the year so far

By Ralph Lunt

As I write this, we are halfway thru 2014, when I perform many client reviews. Following are my thoughts on the year so far.

Roughly five years ago, many market indexes and stocks lost nearly 50 percent of their value. Now, the stock market is at an all-time high. My wealthiest clients paid little attention to the gyrations of the stock market. They didn’t try to “time it” or sell at market highs or lows. As a result, their accounts have more than regained their value.

For my older clients, who are financially secure and may have assets remaining when they pass, I have asked them to think about what they want their money to do. For instance, do they want their money to go to their children or grandchildren? A charity? I have also asked if they would like me to discuss options to lock in this all-time high.

In some cases, health permitting, my clients have purchased life insurance for portfolio diversification and to provide a certain estate to designated heirs. Some clients, again for diversification reasons, have been attracted to alternative investments in America’s burgeoning natural resources industry and resurgent real estate market.

Others I’ve met with have cash in their accounts and are asking me how they can make more money. Quite frankly, they are frustrated that they missed out on last year’s 30 percent market run. My advice to them has been that they should never put money in the equity markets if, upon a significant drop of say between 20 percent and 40 percent, they’ll pull it out and “lock in” their losses.

Ralph’s rule: You can’t put money in an up stock market and pull it out in a down market and expect to increase your account value. Please do not invest in the market and expect it to not fluctuate in value.

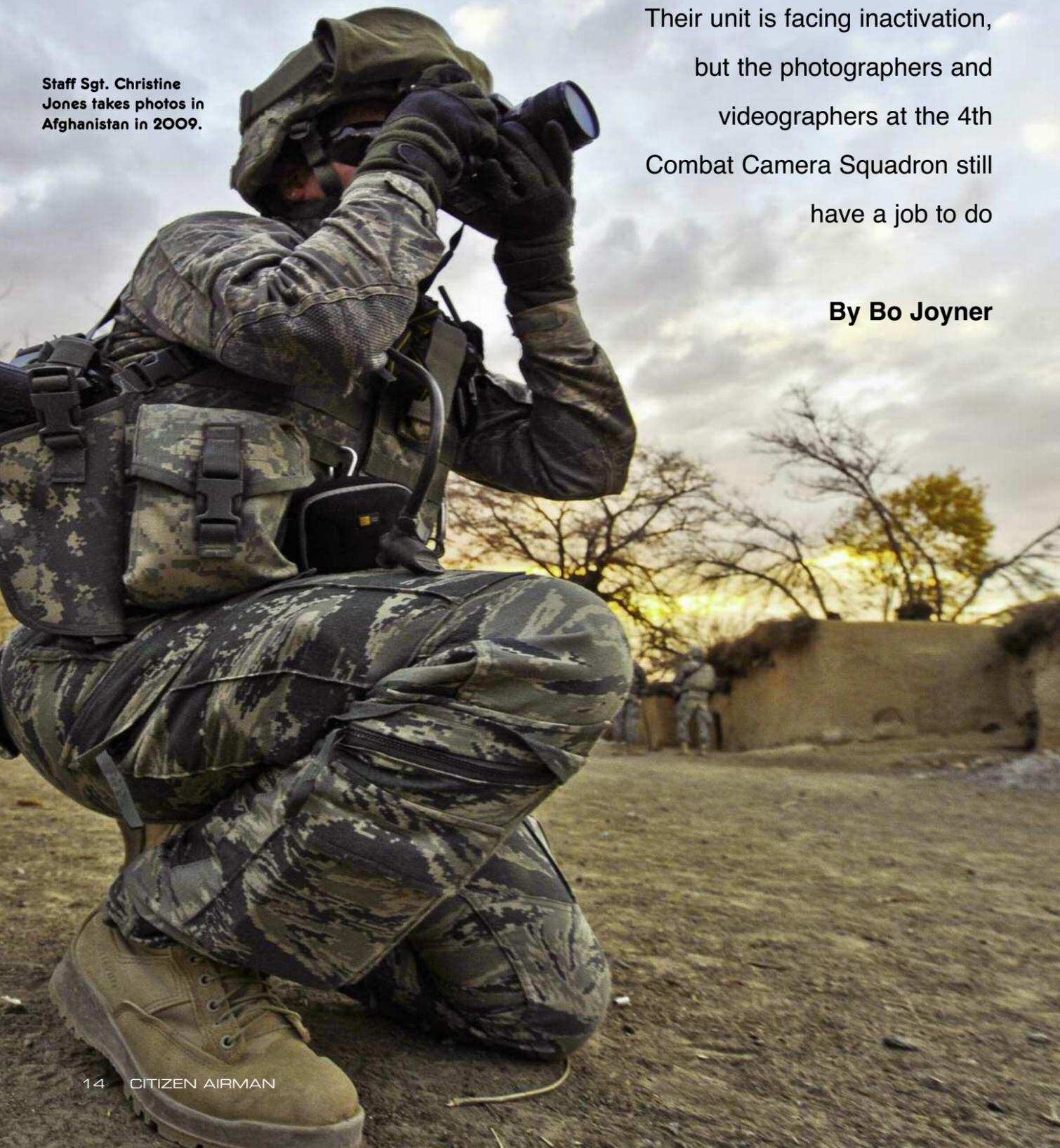
For my more senior readers, money can be a great tool to do things you may never thought possible: provide scholarships, give to charities or establish family foundations. For the young troops, be patient. Stay out of debt, invest regularly, and know that history and experience have taught me that for the most part, this will provide you financial security.

Fly and stay 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, 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.)

Staying Focused

Staff Sgt. Christine Jones takes photos in Afghanistan in 2009.



Their unit is facing inactivation, but the photographers and videographers at the 4th Combat Camera Squadron still have a job to do

By Bo Joyner

For the past 18 years, whenever and wherever there has been a worldwide crisis, a contingency operation, an exercise or a wartime operation, there is a good chance the highly skilled professional men and women of the 4th Combat Camera Squadron were there acquiring the imagery necessary to support the mission.

Now, the photographers and videographers at the 4th CTC's March Air Reserve Base, California, offices are getting ready to pack up their cameras and other gear for good. The Defense Department's fiscal year 2015 budget request, released in April, called for the inactivation of the squadron. Since that time, the 4th has been fighting a battle on two fronts — making sure the mission still gets done and helping its people map out their future.

"We are committed to taking care of our people but are not losing sight of the important work that still needs to be done," said Lt. Col. Beth Horine, former 4th CTC's commander. Horine turned over command of the 4th to Maj. Hamilton Underwood on July 12.

"In many regards, it's business as usual," Underwood said. "We have been busy supporting activities from San Diego to Western Europe. Our unofficial motto has been, 'honor our past ... continue with class. There's lots of work to be done, and we always get it done on the road or in garrison,' he said.

"We knew for a couple months before the announcement that this could be a reality," said Maj. Karen Davis, 4th CTC's operations director. "We decided that it was the best course of action to be open and honest with all members of the squadron about the possibility of being inactivated."

That meant letting the 120 or so members of the squadron know as soon as possible that the squadron might be inactivating and helping them look for other Reserve positions.

"The official word came down in March, and we were having job fairs in April and May," Horine said, explaining that most of the people being affected by the inactivation are pursuing one of three options.

First, Reservists who would like to continue serving at March are exploring options to cross-train into open positions at the Riverside base.

Second, people who want to remain Air Force Reservists in the public affairs career field are looking to move into open unit or individual mobilization augmentee positions within AFRC.

Finally, Reservists who want to continue serving as combat



Tech. Sgt. Rodolpho Castro shows some of his video footage to a group of Afghanis during a deployment.

cameramen are looking to join Navy or Army reserve combat camera squadrons.

"Whatever path they choose, we are here to help," Underwood said. "And the people at March, AFRC and our sister combat camera squadrons have all been terrific about working with our people to help them find work."

Right now, the inactivation of the 4th CTCS is scheduled for April 2015. Until that time, the Reserve photographers and videographers will continue to perform their mission of providing photographic and video imagery for use in operational analysis, training and public information programs, and as a permanent historical record.

"Our imagery is a fundamental tool of commanders and

decision makers throughout the Department of Defense," the unit's official website says. "It is a timely, accurate information resource, providing a 'you are there' perspective, and is essential battlefield information in support of strategic, operational and tactical mission objectives."

"We have the hardest-working Airmen I've ever seen," said Underwood, who has been with the 4th since 2000. "They'll shoot on a job for 10 or 12 hours, then come back to their Humvee, their tent or their barracks and caption photos and transmit their images for another two or three hours. We have some extremely talented and dedicated Airmen here."

During her tenure as commander, Horine saw her people successfully mobilize twice to Afghanistan and twice to

Combined Task Force – Horn of Africa. Combat cameramen from the 4th have won multiple individual and unit major command-level awards and have provided world-class documentation support of joint exercises for multiple major commands.

"I'm so proud of the work our people have done and continue to do," Horine said, pointing out the squadron's work in support of Hurricane Sandy as a highlight of her tenure as commander. "Right after the storm, we had planes from March in the air transporting aid and equipment, and our combat cameramen were there every step of the way, getting some amazing photos and video of the damage and the relief effort that was underway. I remember watching the news the first night and seeing the president holding a combat camera

photo as he spoke. Our people always do wonderful work, but they really went above and beyond after Sandy."

Master Sgt. Roy Santana, who serves as the squadron's still photo standardization director, was one of the photographers who documented relief efforts at March after Hurricane Sandy — just one of the numerous assignments he has had at the 4th CTCS in the past 17 years. The squadron was officially activated in March 1996, and Santana joined the unit in January 1997.

"I cross-trained from aircraft maintenance to join the 4th Combat Camera Squadron, so I've been here since practically the beginning," he said.

Through countless temporary duty assignments and two



Hooray for Hollywood

4th has a connection to the movie industry that continues to this day

By Bo Joyner

The flag of the 4th Combat Camera Squadron was not officially unfurled at March Air Reserve Base, California, until March 1996, but the squadron has a lineage that dates back to the early days of World War II and a unit that played an important part in the Air Force being established as a separate military service.

When the United States entered the war in December 1941, the U.S. Army Air Forces was a part of the Army, and motion picture production was the responsibility of the Army Signal Corps. Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold, the Army Air Forces commander at the time, believed that the formation of an independent film unit would help lead to the air service gaining its independence.

In March 1942, Arnold commissioned the head of Warner Bros. studio, Jack Warner, and producer Hal Wallis to produce

and release a recruitment film that would help the Army Air Forces meet its critical need for new pilots. They completed the film, called "Winning Your Wings" and starring a young James Stewart as a dashing pilot, in only two weeks. The film was a huge hit and, according to Arnold, was pivotal in attracting 100,000 pilot recruits.

The success of

"Winning Your Wings" created a demand for training and recruitment films, which proved difficult for Warner Bros. to meet. So Warner was tasked with developing the organizational structure for an independent motion picture unit. The dual mission of the unit was to produce training and morale films, and to train combat cameramen. The ranks were to be filled with film industry professionals; the first time in history such a unit would be formed.

On July 1, 1942, the First Motion Picture Unit became an active unit of the Army Air Forces. The FMPU released more than 400 films between 1942 and 1945. The films were extremely popular and were praised for being informative as well as entertaining.

The people assigned to the FMPU included some of the most well-known film professionals of the day. Actors like Clark Gable, William Holden and Alan Ladd served with the unit. Future president Ronald Reagan was a captain in the unit. As the personnel officer, he was responsible for maintaining personnel files and orienting new recruits to the operational aspects of the FMPU. Like the other notable actors, Reagan appeared in the films produced by the unit, but to avoid distracting the audience, they were eventually relegated to narrating the films.

In addition to making movies, the FMPU was charged with producing trained combat cameramen. In 1943, six officers and 23 enlisted men were transferred from the FMPU and activated as the 4th Army Air Force Combat Camera Unit. Their mission was to capture motion and still pictures in combat zones. With the drawdown of World War II, the unit was inactivated in December 1945. Redesignated as the 4th Combat Camera Squadron, it was activated as part of the Air Force Reserve at March Field in March 1996.

"It's fun to look back at our history and learn that Combat Camera was started by Hap Arnold himself before the Air Force was even established as a separate service," said Lt. Col. Beth Horine, former 4th CTCS commander. "And that people like Clark

Gable and Ronald Reagan were a part of Combat Camera. Fourth Combat Camera Squadron has a wonderful legacy, and the people who have served in the unit for the past 18 years have done a tremendous job of building on that proud tradition."

Master Sgt. Sam Ameen, a director of photography who has been with the 4th CTCS since 1998, is extremely proud of the squadron's heritage and its ties to the film industry. As an Emmy-nominated freelance cinematographer who has shot feature films, television programs, commercials and documentaries, he carries on the tradition that the 4th has shared with Hollywood over the years.

He is also an active member of the International Cinematographer's Guild, the same union to which members of the FMPU belonged during World War II.

In his civilian career, Ameen has worked with a wide range of filmmakers, including Academy Award-winning actor/director John Voight and Golden Globe-winning actor/director Anthony Edwards. Many of his feature films have appeared on network and cable television, including HBO and Showtime. His television shows include specials for many prime time network series, including "Lost," "Gray's Anatomy," "The Fosters" and "George Lopez" as well as several reality series.

"I'm afraid I might be the last of my kind," Ameen said. "With the inactivation of the 4th, we might be losing that connection between Hollywood and the Air Force."



Director of photography Sam Ameen, a master sergeant in the Air Force Reserve, carries on the tradition that the 4th has shared with Hollywood over the years.

Ironically, at the time of this interview, Ameen was working as a director of photography on a recruiting commercial for the Air National Guard.

His civilian and military careers have intersected at several points over the years.

"I think I've been in more war zones as a civilian cameraman than I have with the 4th," he said, recalling numerous freelance jobs that took him to the Middle East and other hot spots across the globe. But that doesn't mean he hasn't seen his share of action with his combat camera unit.

"I deployed to Afghanistan, I've been to Iraq, and I've had people who I worked very closely with killed," Ameen said. "As combat cameramen, we're definitely an outside-the-wire unit," he said. "We've had people in our unit injured in combat — people who have earned Purple Hearts. I think that's what makes this unit so special. You have some very artistic people here in the 4th, but they are able to combine their art with military service. It's a special thing."

Ameen said he is saddened to see the 4th heading toward inactivation.

"It takes a lot of years and experience to become a great photographer, and the 4th CTCS is full of great photographers," he said. "It's a shame that the Air Force Reserve is going to be losing some great talent."



A First Motion Picture Unit film crew poses in the early 1940s.



Members of the 4th CTCS took this photo about 10 years ago as a nod to their roots.



Videographer Senior Master Sgt. Keith Baxter gets close to his subject during a recent assignment in Afghanistan.

TECH. SGT. EFREN LOPEZ

deployments, which have taken him to all seven continents, he's seen an awful lot through the lens of his trusty Nikon camera.

"This is the best job in the Air Force," Santana said. "It's like National Geographic with a gun."

Through the years, he's photographed operations from Guantanamo Bay in Cuba all the way to Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq. He's taken pictures over Yosemite National Park from the backseat of an F-15 and documented airlift missions to Antarctica.

Santana said his plans right now are to stay at March after the inactivation and try to find an air reserve technician or civilian position at the base. He said he's going to miss the incredibly talented people who work at the 4th CTCS and the camaraderie they share.

"I know it sounds cliché, but we really are like one big family here," he said. "Everybody cares about each other and works so well together to get the job done. I've definitely found the place where I belong. There are truly some amazing artists here."

One of those amazing artists is Tech. Sgt. Efren Lopez, one of the squadron's most highly decorated photographers. He, too, has been with the 4th since the beginning and has covered the globe with his camera in hand, documenting more than 40 military missions in the past 18 years.

In 2009 alone, while deployed to Afghanistan, Lopez documented more than 50 combat missions and was the most published military photographer covering Operation Enduring Freedom.

"That was, without a doubt, the highlight of my career so far," he said. "As a combat photographer, I wanted to test myself to see if I could do the job. It was a great experience."

Lopez is also an aerial photographer and has covered numerous humanitarian, training and contingency missions around the world from multiple attack, fighter, cargo and aerial refueling airplanes.



Combat cameramen work outside the wire, and injuries in the line of duty are not uncommon. Here Master Sgt. Tom Coffin gives the thumbs up after being wounded in combat in Iraq in 2007.

STAFF SGT. JORGE RODRIGUEZ

In 2011, he was the first Reservist selected to attend the prestigious Military Photojournalism Program at the S.I. Newhouse School of Communication at Syracuse University. As if being one of the military's top still photographers isn't enough, he's currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in filmmaking and is branching out into shooting video.

Lopez said he is still weighing his options for when the unit inactivates and is considering joining the Navy Combat Camera unit in San Diego or possibly transitioning to the Air National Guard.

"I'm not sure what I'm going to do right now, but I really hate to see the 4th go away," he said.

And while almost everybody who works in the 4th CTCS thinks of it as a family, for Lopez, it truly is. His wife, Master Sgt. Elizabeth Concepcion, is also assigned to the unit as a combat photographer.

"I met my wife, and we have raised our kids around the 4th Combat Camera Squadron," Lopez said. "It's been our second home for a long time. It's going to be really hard to say goodbye."

A New Chapter

Readiness Management Group inactivates; mission moving to Buckley

By Capt. Candice Allen

Air Force Reserve Command's Readiness Management Group held its inactivation ceremony at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, July 1.

The RMG was created in April 2005 to centrally manage individual mobilization augmentees. According to the AFRC commander at the time, now retired Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, the goal of the organization was to ensure that the Reservists in the program were ready to support the Global War on Terrorism.

"Today is truly bittersweet," said Col. Dawn M. Wallace, the last RMG commander. "When I took command, we established several focus areas: readiness and end-strength, partnerships, standardization, meaningful metrics, leveraging information technology platforms, and outreach. Collectively, we've hit the mark on each of these. One of the focus areas I'm most passionate about has been our outreach and use of videos, ARCNet messages, our website and Facebook."

Since its inception, the group increased the visibility of the Individual Reserve program, centralized IR advocacy, improved major command/combatant command partnerships and infused IR tenants through Air Force policies. The group, with 170-plus members, took participation readiness for more than 7,000 IRs from 9 percent in 2005 to 82 percent at the end of fiscal year 2013. Moreover, it has consistently maintained a 97 percent mobilization rate.

Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, AFRC commander, presided over the ceremony as members of the group retired the RMG guidon.

"The inactivation became a reality when the flag was encased," said Senior Master Sgt. Candy Green, superintendent of RMG Detachment 16 that serves the IMA population in Air Force Global Strike Command units.

Green is one of a handful of RMG members who have been with the organization since its inception.

"This ceremony was very emotional," she said. "I saw this birth and saw it end."

The Air Force Reserve is consolidating personnel transactional work from the MAJCOM Directorate of Manpower, Personnel and Services staff to the Air Reserve Personnel Center at Buckley AFB, Colorado. However, not everything the RMG accomplished could be incorporated in the move to ARPC, so the Individual Reservist Readiness and Integration Organization was established.

RIO was activated Feb. 1, at Buckley AFB as a subordinate organization to ARPC. When fully operational, it will integrate Air Force Reserve individual Reservists into active-duty units to meet Air Force and combatant commander requirements.

"This was a deliberate transition to ensure it was as seamless as possible for our individual Reservists," Wallace said.

Retired Col. Roxane Barker (Towner), who attended the inactivation ceremony, was the first commander of the RMG



Col. Dawn M. Wallace, Readiness Management Group commander, presents the RMG flag to Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, chief of Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, for encasement during the RMG inactivation ceremony.

RAY GRAYTON

and led the group for two years.

"Balancing the integration of the individual Reservist into active-duty units while creating the administrative construct within AFRC presented challenges at every turn," Barker said. "The Airmen assigned to the RMG rose to the challenge and exceeded everyone's expectation."

"It was amazing to be part of the historical effort at the beginning and end."

Though the name of the managing organization has changed, the IR program remains a priority for AFRC.

"As the RMG, we had a good mission and purpose," Wallace said. "We achieved our mission, and because of the solid foundation we've built, our hard work will endure as the responsibilities are transferred to RIO."

Following the inactivation ceremony, HQ RIO had its first commander's call at Robins AFB.

Col. Christopher Cronce, HQ RIO commander, conducted medal presentations and delivered his expectations to 70 RMG members, to include detachment program managers and superintendents.

"We need to continue to ask ourselves: How can we make this transition more successful, and what can I do to make this process better?" Cronce said. "We have to be flexible, and we will have to adapt as we continue our transformational journey."

Cronce echoed Wallace's sentiment.

"We must continue to be united, because unity has been and will continue to be one of our strengths," he said. "We are a family, and although the organization's name will change, that fact will not."

(Allen is the public affairs officer for the Readiness Management Group.)



Continuity

Reserve pilots provide a stabilizing force for F-35 training program at Eglin

By Master Sgt. Chance Babin

As the Air Force, Navy and Marines continue to put the F-35 Lightning II through system design and development testing, while working toward initial operational capability, or IOC, pilots at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, are training pilots and maintainers in preparation for that day.

For the active-duty Air Force's 33rd Fighter Wing and 58th Fighter Squadron, four pilots from the reserve components — two each from the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard — are in it for the long run, providing long-lasting continuity for the program.

"The experience level that Guard and Reserve members bring to initial standup of the F-35 is a huge factor in its success," said Lt. Col. Brett Robison, pilot training lead at the academic training center, Eglin AFB, and one of the Reserve pilots. "And now, over the long run, we will offer the continuity to continue developing and not having to revisit things that we did several years ago, and we can keep the program moving forward."

Currently at Eglin, the Air Force is training with the Netherlands, and the Marines are training with the United Kingdom. The Navy is training there, too.

"We're now training a mix of pilots," Robison said. "Initially, most pilots we trained stayed here and went straight to being instructors. As part of the Air Force's initial cadre, our task was to train the pilots who were going to be trainers. Over the last year, manning at the 58th Fighter Squadron has reached the desired level, and now the training is focused on developmental test pilots, operational test pilots and instructor pilots who will stand up Luke Air Force Base, Arizona."

Luke received its first F-35 in March. Eventually, the base is

scheduled to receive 144 F-35s in six squadrons, all part of the active-duty 56th Fighter Wing. The base will serve as the F-35 pilot training center for seven partner nations, making it the world's largest fighter pilot training facility.

For the two Reserve pilots, their vast experience flying the F-16 Fighting Falcon gives them versatility to help serve alongside their active-duty counterparts.

"The big thing we bring is continuity. We also bring credibility," said Lt. Col. Andy Faulkner, F-35 instructor pilot and deputy operations group commander.

All four people occupying the reserve component positions were board selected, and every one of them is a weapons officer with 2,000 to 2,500 fighter flying hours, Faulkner said.

"So, for the most part, we are going to be the most experienced fighter pilots/weapons officers here to begin with, and we are going to be here long term for continuity," he said. "So that's the biggest thing."

For the Air Force Reserve, having pilots on the ground floor working with the newest fifth-generation fighter jet is significant.

"I think it's key for our Guard and Reserve that we are (involved) early, get that background, too, and have a good pool of Reservists and Guardsmen in the program for different leadership positions later," Faulkner said.

The pilots are administratively attached to the Reserve unit at

Luke AFB: the 944th FW. The 944th is just now getting cranked up for its first Reserve F-35 pilot and will have a full squadron of pilots and maintainers in the near future. The unit at Eglin is two years into the F-35 program. And while the Reserve pilots at Eglin do not have to attend every one of the 944th's unit training assemblies, they do stay in regular contact to share their wisdom and knowledge.

"From a Reserve perspective, we don't do much with them, but from an F-35 perspective, I talk to guys out there on a weekly basis as they are building their academic training center," Robison said. "They are asking questions about how they should stand up their academic training center, what issues we have with the contract and what they need to start preparing for, so F-35-wise we talk to them quite a bit."

Robison said there are several different pieces to the pilot training program, including the syllabus, which is developed at Eglin, with the help of the Airmen who left there to go to Luke to stand up the 61st Fighter Squadron.

"I went to their last UTA and basically gave them a briefing on how the airplane is actually flying, not just (what it says) in the glossy brochure the contractor has, but the, 'Here's what it's really doing, here's what you can do with it,'" Faulkner said. "I can foresee a couple of Reservists will be available to go there and to Hill AFB (in Utah) once they stand up, to fly with those guys and help get them started if they need the additional instructor help or just to pass on those lessons learned over the last couple of years."

The last two years at Eglin have been fast-paced as the unit has grown from minimum manning and F-16 proficiency flying to a full-fledged F-35 training squadron.

"It is an unbelievable difference from two years ago until now," said Robison, who arrived at the unit when it got its first aircraft. "In two years, we've gone from zero jets here at Eglin to 26 now, 28 if you count the Netherlands' two jets. So we effectively went from no airplanes to two years later having a full squadron, full of jets with full manning."

Both Robison and Faulkner believe that with the fast pace of the unit, their continuity skills will be required sooner rather than later, as active-duty people start to move on to other assignments.

"Those guys leaving, maybe they come back, maybe they

don't," Robison said. "As Reservists, we've seen the progression, and we just keep it moving forward. When you are talking about a large operation like Luke, I believe continuity is important. But it's even more important when you are standing up an organization from beginning to end. From the first flight to IOC, things change so fast, and if you don't have that continuity, then you're going to go back and revisit lessons that you should not have to revisit."

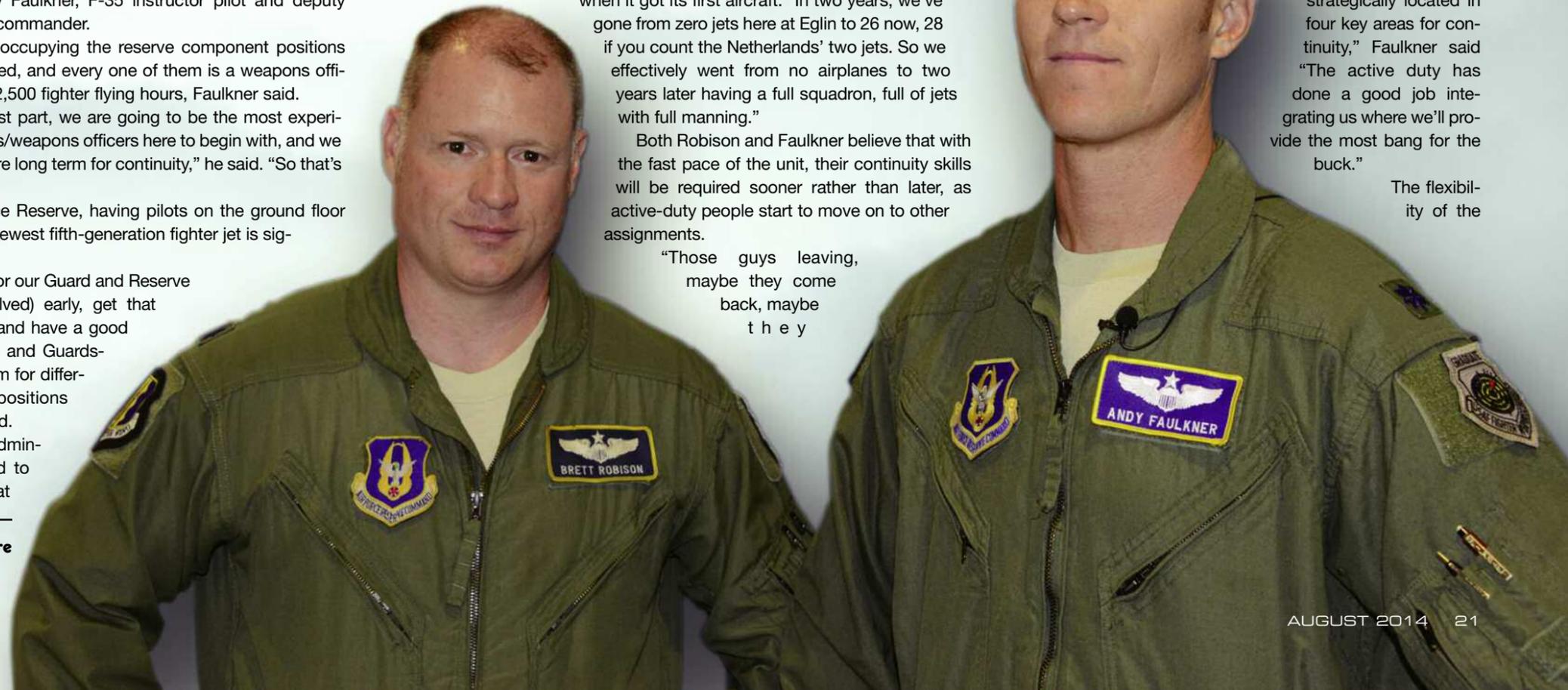
In addition to being the knowledge bank for lessons learned, the Reserve and Guard pilots also have the experience to fill in many different roles within the organization.

"In the early stages of the program, there's lots of change happening fast — going from one software block to another and basically picking up on lessons learned as we go," Faulkner said. "Reservists are providing continuity and are able to move where the active-duty Air Force needs us. If one guy leaves a key position and they need us to fill in for a few months until his replacement arrives, we have that breadth of understanding of what's going on with the entire program that we can fill in wherever we are needed."

Faulkner said he believes it's wise for the four Reserve component pilots to be dispersed throughout the unit. He is currently in the deputy ops group commander slot, while Robison is in the training center. One Guard pilot is in the weapons shop, and the other serves as assistant director of operations.

"Right now, between the two Guardsmen and two Reservists who are here, we're strategically located in four key areas for continuity," Faulkner said. "The active duty has done a good job integrating us where we'll provide the most bang for the buck."

The flexibility of the



Air Force Reserve pilots Lt. Col. Brett Robison (left) and Lt. Col. Andy Faulkner are being called on to provide continuity to the F-35 training program at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)

Reservists is on display. Robison is holding a position until an active-duty person arrives. He said that when the active duty has a manning shortfall in an organization, one of the Reservists or Guardsmen can quickly and easily be plugged in to that job and be effective immediately as opposed to bringing in a younger, inexperienced person who needs to learn the job.

“The perfect example is right now we don’t have the deputy director of the academic training center,” Robison said. “The Marine director just left, and the deputy moved up to the director job. So now I’m filling in for the next couple of months as the deputy director until a Navy guy shows up.”

One of the advantages the Airmen at Eglin have is the opportunity to work alongside their Navy and Marine brethren as well as people from partner nations. Plus they have the opportunity to do simulator training and other work group activities at the aircraft manufacturer’s facilities in Fort Worth, Texas. They use the lessons learned from these events to help write tactics for training.

As an example, pilots from Eglin recently participated in a joint cockpit working group in Fort Worth. During the working group, representatives from the Air Force, Marines and Navy, along with people from partner nations, gave their inputs to the future aircraft capabilities and enhancements.

“We are unique here at Eglin because we have the opportunity to do that cross-talk with the Marines and Navy, so we have that opportunity to go talk tactics and build our situational awareness between the services,” Robison said. “We all speak fighter pilot, so it’s pretty seamless. At times, there are competing interests, but it’s nothing that can’t be overcome.”

While the F-35 has the A, B and C models, with each one featuring different capabilities, there is just one F-35 training system that is shared between the three services and partner nations.

“When we go to combat, between the Air Force, Navy, and Marines, we’re all going to be able to talk to one another via datalink,” Faulkner said. “We are all going to speak the same language on the radios. We’re basically going to be able to execute the same tactics for the most part.”

“And right now the tactics manual is a joint Navy, Air Force, and Marine document. So if all three services have to pick up and go to war and we don’t meet until we are in the air, we will be able to execute together, and our jets will be able to talk to one another, which hasn’t always been the case in the past.”

While the F-35 still has some operating restrictions at Eglin, both Reserve pilots agree that the plane flies great, with very easy take offs, landings and air refuelings. In addition, they see vast improvements in software as the program progresses, allowing for exponential jumps in operations and tactics. And future software updates will add even more capabilities that are key to the F-35’s core missions.

For Faulkner, getting the opportunity to fly the F-35 at Eglin is everything he could ask for. He and his wife are both natives of nearby Pensacola, so the opportunity to be so close to home is perfect.

“This was my dream job,” he said. “I actually applied for the F-35 program on active duty. That was probably the one thing that would have kept me in — making that initial cadre board. But I was an alternate, so I didn’t quite make it.”

Not to be deterred, he found an air reserve technician job flying F-16s at Eglin and eventually landed his current job flying the F-35 in August 2013.

“Being a fighter pilot on the beach, there’s no better job,” he said. “I’ll stay here forever if they let me.”

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



Faulkner and Robison take part in a pre-flight briefing before heading to their aircraft.

MASTER SGT. CHANCE BABIN

Feedback

It’s a critical part of Air Force’s new officer, enlisted evaluation system

The first step of a more comprehensive Air Force evaluation system for officers and enlisted members went into effect July 1 with the implementation of a new Airman Comprehensive Assessment Worksheet performance feedback tool.

The ACA Worksheet, tested in 2012 by 45,000 Airmen, introduces a tool and a process designed to improve communication between supervisors and subordinates while reminding Airmen of the importance of Air Force core values and the role they play in accomplishing the mission, said Will Brown, Air Force Personnel Center Evaluation and Recognition Programs Branch chief.

In an email announcing the new officer and enlisted feedback forms, Col. Stephanie Gass, Air Force Reserve Command’s director of manpower, personnel and services, said the new evaluation system had been in development for some time and is a total force effort.

The new system is designed to better meet the needs of the Air Force and Airmen, differentiate more effectively between good and great performers, and value job performance first and foremost, Air Force leaders said.

In a letter to all Airmen, Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody wrote that the forms “facilitate a purposeful dialogue between supervisors and the Airmen they lead. Proper feedback is the most important element of a strong evaluation system.”

In a recent Roll Call, Cody said all Airmen need meaningful and purposeful feedback to reach their full potential.

“The importance of feedback is not new to our Air Force,” he said, “yet we often struggle to capitalize on this opportunity to strengthen our team. We all need feedback, and we need it often. ... it enables us to accomplish great things for our nation, as individuals and as a team. It’s one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement. ... it is essential to winning the fight, strengthening the team and shaping the future.”

Of significance, the forms and process require Airmen to assess themselves prior to a face-to-face feedback session with their supervisor.

“This gives Airmen the opportunity to reflect on their own knowledge and awareness of their responsibility, accountability and core values, and enables them to identify areas where they need more information and education,” Brown said. “An Airman will complete the self-assessment portion of the worksheet and provide it to the supervisor two or three days before the feedback session, which gives the supervisor time to tailor the session to that Airman’s specific needs.”

To be effective, Brown said all Airmen must follow the process and use the forms as they are intended to be used.

“During the test phase, Airmen who used the forms and process as intended saw notable improvement in communication, morale and productivity,” he said. “Clearly, this is an opportunity for supervisors and their Airmen to grow together. But it will only work if we use it.”

Learning to use the forms isn’t hard, Brown said. Form numbers are the same: Air Force Form 931 is for airmen basic

through technical sergeants, AF Form 932 for master through chief master sergeants and AF Form 724 for lieutenants through colonels.

“This is about more than using a form, though,” Brown said. “This is about developing strong relationships with our Airmen. This is about talking to them, caring about what they need and want, showing them how to succeed, and teaching them to make good choices.”

The essence of successful evaluation is captured in worksheets that focus on standards like responsibility, accountability, understanding the Air Force culture, and understanding and meeting performance expectations.

In addition, the forms require the rater to clarify the Airman’s role in support of the mission.

“When an Airman can see how he or she directly impacts the mission, that’s motivational,” Brown said. “Too often, young Airmen don’t know how their work impacts the end goal. It’s tough to be motivated and excited when you don’t know if your job matters, so this section will help us educate and motivate our Airmen.”

The new forms include an individual readiness index identifying whether or not an Airman is deployable.

“Ours is a mobile force, so this addition helps us remind Airmen that we have global responsibilities,” Brown said.

The performance feedback section is the most familiar part of the forms. It requires the rater to tell the Airman specifically how well he or she is doing in job knowledge, leadership skills, resource management, communication and more.

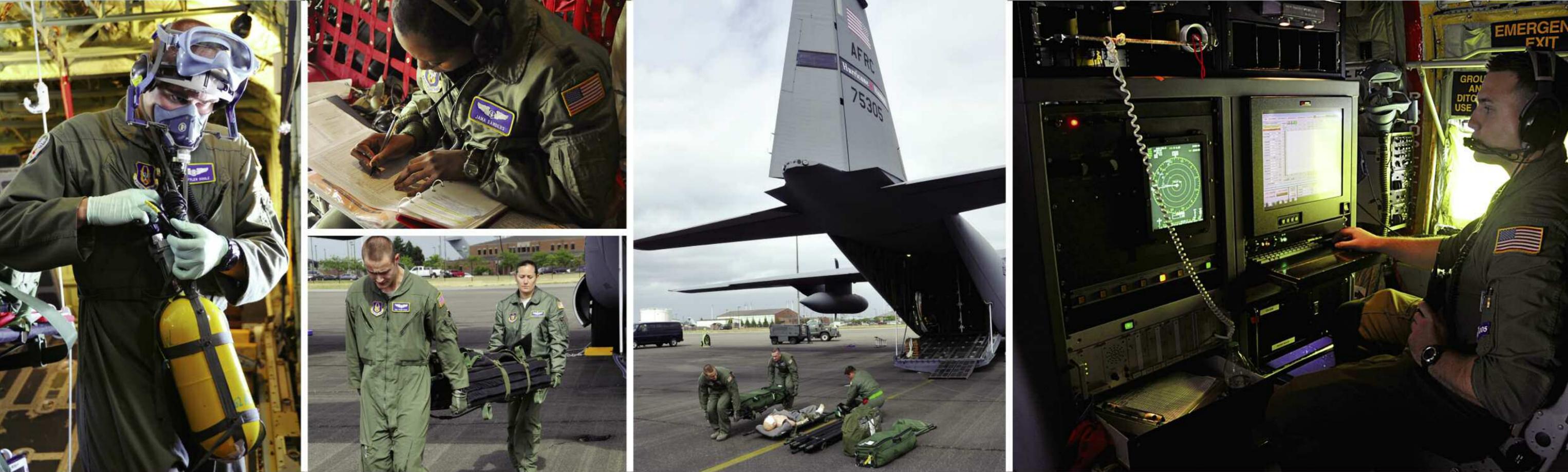
“This section has far more depth than the old feedback forms,” Brown said. “We want to be crystal clear on what the expectations are and how well Airmen are doing. Airmen want to succeed, and here’s where we tell them how.”

Also new to the feedback process is the “knowing your Airman” section. Although discussion driven by this section isn’t for evaluation purposes, it enables raters and supervisors to talk about Airmen’s goals and dreams, to vector Airmen toward achieving those goals and dreams, and to help their Airmen find a mentor and become a mentor.

“We have amazing, talented Airmen in our service, and every day, enthusiastic, smart kids make a commitment to join us,” Brown said. “They are offering us their lives. We have an obligation to honor that fact by teaching them how to be great Airmen, and that starts with open, honest, regular communication. That’s what these forms and this process are for.”

To review the guidance memo explaining how to use the ACA worksheets, go to the e-Publishing website at www.e-publishing.af.mil and enter AFI 36-2406 in the search window. To review the new ACA worksheets, select the forms tab in e-Publishing and enter AF931, AF932 or AF724A in the search window.

(Information for this story taken from stories written by Debbie Gildea of the Air Force Personnel Center public affairs office at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, and Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie, Air Force Public Affairs Agency Operation Location – P in Washington, D.C.)



TEAMING UP

Hurricane Hunters, 446th AES join together for life-saving training

Story and Photos by Maj. Marnee A.C. Losurdo

The 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron's Hurricane Hunters based at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, and the 446th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, McChord Field, Washington, have vastly different missions; however, the one thing they do have in common is saving lives.

The two Air Force Reserve Command units paired up aboard a WC-130J for three in-flight medical training missions June 13-15.

The Hurricane Hunters flew simulated storm missions gathering data for the National Center for Environmental Prediction, a National Weather Service agency, while the aeromedical evacuation team trained on various medical scenarios they might encounter while transporting sick or wounded patients to a treatment facility.

"The jobs are unrelated, but we are all training, which is an efficient use of time and resources," said Lt. Col. John Wagner, 53rd WRS pilot and aircraft commander.

Airborne medical care

In the cargo area of the aircraft, the 446th AES team treats a patient with an eye injury when smoke fills the aircraft.

Maj. Laura Ely, a flight nurse, and her AE team grab their oxygen masks, or MA-1 walk around oxygen bottle, and hastily put them on, testing their equipment to ensure it's operational. It was one of many scenarios the team encountered during the weekend training, teaching them how to respond to a variety of medical and emergency situations ranging from treating a patient suffering from cardiac arrest to preparing for a crash landing.

Ely is part of a five-person AE team consisting of a medical crew director, flight nurse and three aeromedical evacuation technicians. The 446th AES is a 150-person squadron, and 16 people took part in the weekend training.

"Training while in flight is an important part of the mission," she said, adding that providing patient care is vastly different once in the air. "When you are at a hospital, all the equipment is there. When you fly, you have to take all that with you."

"When you are up in the air, that's it; you don't have anything to fall back on," said Master Sgt. Charlene Taylor, AE technician and trainer and evaluator for the event. "So we need to ask all the questions we can possibly think of now (while on the ground). That way your situational awareness is that much more heightened when you are in the air."

Taylor said most medical events occur during take off and

(Far left) Senior Airman Tyler Soule, 446th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron medical technician, puts on his oxygen mask during a simulated emergency at McChord Field, Washington. The 446th AES teamed up with the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron's Hurricane Hunters for inflight medical training in June.

(Top left) Capt. Jana Sanders, 446th AES medical crew director, documents training.

(Bottom left and above) 446th AES members carry litters off a WC-130J at McChord Field.

(Far right) Senior Airman Nathan Calloway, 53rd WRS loadmaster, takes part in training.

landing due to the changes in altitude and pressure on a patient's injuries.

In addition to training for various emergency and medical situations, AE crews must be familiar with transporting patients on the C-17 Globemaster III, C-130 Hercules and KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft.

"McChord only has C-17s, so this is a rare opportunity for us," said Staff Sgt. Kyle Knox, medical technician. "Different airframes require specific types of medical equipment and litter configurations."

For example, a C-17 is equipped with therapeutic oxygen, but crews have to bring it when flying on a C-130.

Ely, who joined the Air Force Reserve in 2008 and is a nurse at a rural hospital in Washington, deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan, in 2010 and attests to the importance of training on the different airframes.

"We flew a lot of patients on the C-130," she said, adding that the aircraft can transport up to 80 patients at a time.

When transporting patients from a deployed location, AE personnel frequently work with critical care air transport teams. CCATTs consist of a doctor, intensive care nurse and respiratory therapist. This specialized medical team operates a portable intensive care unit.

"If we have a patient who is severely ill or a critical patient who needs one-on-one care, we will have a CCATT crew," Taylor said. "Our job is to ensure their equipment integrates with the aircraft and they have everything they need to ensure they can do their job."

In Southwest Asia, patients are flown from the area of responsibility back to Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Depending on their condition, they will be treated there until stable and then transported back to a stateside military medical facility. Research has shown that patients recover better if they are near their families and loved ones, Taylor said.

"Once someone is injured and enters the AE system, there is a 98 percent survival rate, said Knox, who added that the Air Force Reserve and Guard conduct 85 percent of AE missions.

When dealing with life or death, training is vital, and that's why the 446th AES trains on different systems of the body each month. They are also required to fly on an AE training mission a minimum of every 90 days.

"We train for the worst-case scenarios," he said. "We are constantly training for anything that can happen."

Newcomer Senior Airman Tyler Soule, a medical technician on the flight who reported to McChord after two years of

training, said he considered it a pretty normal training flight.

"They throw a lot of far-fetched scenarios, events that may rarely happen, but if they do happen you have to know how to respond," he said.

"That's why training is important," Taylor said. "You are not going to have patients who come home with the same symptoms. It may be a cardiac patient, burn patient or a psych patient; they are all going to be varied."

Into the virtual storm

While the medical people were busy in the cargo compartment of the aircraft, members of the 53rd WRS were conducting their own training — on winter storms. The squadron is known for its hurricane hunting mission, providing surveillance of tropical storms and hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean,

Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and eastern Pacific Ocean for the National Hurricane Center in Miami. However, it also flies winter storm missions.

The data the Reservists provide improves the accuracy of forecasts by as much as 30 percent, which can save property and lives, said Lt. Col. John Gallagher, aerial weather reconnaissance officer.

The National Center for Environmental Prediction can task winter storm missions in the Pacific, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.

"The National Weather Service builds the route with specific points where it wants dropsondes released," said Wagner who was responsible for a nine-person crew. "During a winter storm missions, we can drop about 15 to 20 sondes, but we are dropping three for this training mission."

Dropsondes are sensors that are used to collect tempera-

ture, wind speed, wind direction, humidity and surface pressure data. They are dropped from the aircraft and drift down to the water's surface with a parachute. Information is transmitted to the National Weather Service to assist it with making forecast models.

A five-person crew conducts the mission aboard a WC-130J, which is equipped with meteorological data-gathering instruments. The pilot and co-pilot man the flight controls while the navigator keeps track of the aircraft's position and movement and monitors radar to avoid severe weather activity. In the back of the aircraft, the flight meteorologist observes and records meteorological data at flight level using a computer that encodes weather data every 30 seconds. The weather reconnaissance loadmaster collects and records meteorological data from the dropsondes.

"This is a prime opportunity to increase and enhance the

skills of the weather loadmasters," said Master Sgt. Jeff Stack, standardization and evaluations loadmaster. "When flying with aeromedics, the loadmaster is able to launch dropsondes as well as assist in the loading and offloading of personnel."

There was also some real-world application as part of this mission.

"We got new software used to gather meteorological data, so this cross-country trip and AE trainer gave us the opportunity to identify any issues and resolve them before we get into the active part of the hurricane season," said Lt. Col. Ray Deatherage, aerial weather reconnaissance officer.

With training such as this, the Hurricane Hunters and 446th AES will be ready to save lives when their nation calls.

(Losurdo is chief of public affairs for the 403rd Wing at Keesler AFB.)

Razor Sharp

916th Air Refueling Wing shines during new inspection process

By Staff Sgt. Alan Abernethy

The sky rumbled, and the earth shook as two F-16 Fighting Falcons flew low over Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina. As explosions rang out, Airmen responded to the attack by scrambling to care for the injured.

Though it was only a test, and the injuries were simulated, the situation was as realistic as possible and the environment very serious.

It was all part of Exercise Razor Sharp, a four-day event conducted by the 916th Air Refueling Wing over an extended Reserve drill weekend in June.

"Razor Sharp was unique," said Lt. Col. Scott Teel, 916th ARW inspector general. "I don't know of another wing that has, totally in-house, combined an ability to survive and operate conventional inspection with a non-conventional generation inspection in a four-day period."

The exercise was designed to fulfill the wing's requirements for annual readiness and aircraft generation inspections, he said. It's all part of the new force-wide commander's inspection process.

"It's up to our wing commander to determine what his requirements are to be confident that his people can deploy to an austere location, establish a base, and operate and survive at that base," Teel said. "The good thing about the new program is that it's not one size fits all; it's tailored for what, realistically, our unit would be tasked to do."

In addition to a simulated attack with "boomer" gas-cannon explosions, the exercise included skills evaluation centers for weapons handling; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense, and self-aid and buddy care.

"The battle staff was almost task-saturated throughout the inspection by naturally occurring events, as well as IG injects,"

Teel said.

This was the largest exercise the 916th ARW has ever planned and executed, said Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Williams, 916th IG inspections superintendent, who has been a member of the wing for more than 25 years. To execute such a broad range of scenarios, the wing paired with many active-duty units, including some from the 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson's active-duty host.

"We employed multi-command, total force integration support while flying real-world support for Exercise Razor Talon, the largest air defense exercise on the East Coast," Teel said.

Active-duty units that participated in the exercise included the 4th FW inspector general office, 4th FW explosive ordnance disposal organization and 4th FW civil engineer organization. The 77th Fighter Squadron from Shaw AFB, South Carolina, provided the low-flying F-16s.

All players were encouraged to fully embrace the challenges imposed by the exercise, said Col. Gregory Gilmour, 916th ARW commander.

"We have new people in key positions," Gilmour said. "I know we can perform the mission, so my guidance was to focus on making it a learning experience."

While the IG staff did uncover some weaknesses, many outstanding performers and overall strengths were observed, Teel said.

"I think wing leadership will agree with me when I say everyone learned an enormous amount on how to effectively manage demanding missions while, at the same time, determining the health of the wing," he said.

(Abernethy is assigned to the 916th ARW public affairs office at Seymour Johnson AFB.)

916th Air Refueling Wing Airmen care for Senior Airman Emanuel Carraway, 916th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, as he plays the role of an injured victim during Exercise Razor Sharp in June. (Staff Sgt. Alan Abernethy)



The GHOST HIGHWAY

Reservists renew bond with Desert Storm AC-130A gunship

More than 20 years after two Air Force Reserve Command leaders flew into combat together over the “Highway of Death” in Iraq, they were reunited with the aircraft that took them on the mission.

Maj. Gen. Richard S. “Beef” Haddad and Col. Randal L. Bright boarded the AC-130A gunship — No. 55-0014 — again June 12 at the Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, where the aircraft is on display for the public to see. Robins is also home of Headquarters AFRC.

On Feb. 26, 1991, Haddad, then a captain, and Bright, a first lieutenant — both members of the 711th Special Operations Squadron at Duke Field, Florida — were assigned to a mission over a road connecting Kuwait City to Baghdad. In August of the previous year, Iraqi soldiers had invaded Kuwait, sparking a chain of events that soon led to the United States sending military members to Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Desert Shield/Storm. The 711th was part of these operations. The road was crowded

with Iraqi military vehicles exiting Kuwait and going back to Iraq.

Two other Reservists, Maj. Michael N. Wilson and Maj. Clay McCutchan, piloted the lead aircraft as the 711th SOS raced to stop Iraqi forces fleeing from Kuwait to Iraq. Wilson and McCutchan determined that they did not have enough fuel to successfully execute the mission. As a result, they radioed Haddad and implored him to “hurry up” and “get up here.”

While en route, Haddad noticed that his aircraft’s autopilot feature was not working. Without the autopilot, Haddad and his copilot, Bright, faced a greater challenge than they had anticipated because they relied upon the autopilot’s altitude-hold function to keep the aircraft at a fixed altitude while they banked and fired the gunship’s weapons.

To compensate, Haddad had to manually control the ailerons to turn the aircraft while also firing the guns. Bright, facing an equally challenging task, crouched down in his seat in order to work the aircraft’s throttles and yoke

simultaneously to maintain a fixed altitude. Working in tandem to complete the mission, Haddad, Bright and the rest of the Reservists aboard the aircraft remained on station, firing their weapons with little resistance — a situation that quickly changed.

As they began to leave the “kill-box,” Haddad and company discovered that their efforts had not gone unnoticed. As they headed south, Master Sgt. Don Dew, the illuminator operator, excitedly yelled “missile launch” over the radio. In response, Haddad increased power and put the aircraft in a dive while Capt. Jose Davidson, the aircraft’s navigator, released flares to counter the missile. Unaware of the navigator’s actions, Haddad and Bright, hearing the noise and seeing the light produced by the flare, believed their aircraft had been hit.

“My hands were gripping the throttles, thinking we were going down,” Haddad said.

After seeing more flashes, Haddad and Bright realized that they were in no danger.

The significance of the mission they participated in that night was not immediately apparent to Haddad and his crew. However, the stretch of road that they had fired on quickly became known as the “Highway of Death” due to the enormity of the destruction caused that night.

While the exact number of casualties remains unknown, the attack destroyed an estimated 1,400 to 2,000 vehicles. Haddad, Bright and the crew destroyed at least 20 enemy trucks and four armored personnel carriers. They received the Air Medal for their

actions that night.

More than two decades after Operation Desert Storm, Haddad, who now serves as vice commander of AFRC, and Bright, chief of the Plans Division in the Directorate of Plans and Programs at Headquarters AFRC, reflected on that eventful night in early 1991.

“It was an exciting time for me and the other members of my crew,” Haddad said. “That experience helped me go to war in the future as we went to OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom) and OEF (Operation Enduring

Freedom). It helped in terms of realizing the risks and what it was like to be a crew member going into that kind of environment.”

Like Haddad, Bright maintained that the night had a lasting impact on him and his career because it “was always something I could hang my hat on. As a youngster in the Air Force, I had seen combat.”

(Information for this article was provided by Mr. Paul H. Larson, a historian assigned to HQ AFRC at Robins AFB.)



Aircraft No. 55-0014 looks less menacing on display at the Museum of Aviation at Robins AFB than it did over the “Highway of Death” during the Gulf War. On the night of Feb. 26, 1991, the crew of the AC-130A gunship was credited with destroying at least 20 enemy trucks and four armored personnel carriers. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)



Maj. Gen. Richard S. “Beef” Haddad (left) and Col. Randal L. Bright get reacquainted with the cockpit of No. 55-0014, the AC-130A gunship they flew into combat in 1991. Haddad is vice commander of Air Force Reserve Command, while Bright serves as chief of the Plans Division in the AFRC Directorate of Plans and Programs at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)



At headquarters, command is getting rid of the Human Resources Development Council and switching to a program focused more on ...

Diversity

By Bo Joyner

Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command is transitioning from the Human Resources Development Council to a program focused more on diversity.

"Here at the major command level, we are transitioning the HRDC function to the Defense Department- and Air Force-mandated AFRC Diversity Office," Col. Stephanie Gass, AFRC's director of manpower, personnel and services, said in a memorandum sent out in early June. "Although HRDC has an aspect of diversity included in the program, this change will place diversity as the major emphasis."

Despite the change at the headquarters level, the current HRDC program at the AFRC wing level remains unchanged.

"While it is recommended that each wing have an HRDC, it is not mandated and should be understood that it is the commander who ultimately decides if the

program should be active within his or her wing," Gass said.

She added that wing HRDCs are encouraged to continue their participation in various outreach events, but participation will be at the discretion of the wing commander. For years, HRDC members have attended outreach events sponsored by organizations like the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Tuskegee Airmen in an effort to promote diversity within the command.

At AFRC, the Diversity Office is included under the Equal Opportunity program and is being run by Lee Floyd, who previously headed the command's HRDC program.

"Diversity is a complex thing, and it can be difficult to measure and track," Floyd said, "This office will be responsible for tracking, gathering and reporting AFRC diversity data to the Air Force and

Defense Department."

He said he will continue to use established HRDC chapters at the respective wings to help him with this process.

"The Air Force and DOD are still working out exactly what they will be requiring from the major command diversity offices, but we are already tracking a lot of demographic data that gives a picture of AFRC in terms of gender, race and ethnicity," Floyd said.

In addition to a host of other categories, Floyd keeps track of the overall make-up of the Reserve as well as accessions and promotions by gender, race and ethnicity. He also can compare how diverse AFRC is compared to the overall civilian population, other major commands, and the Air Force and DOD.

His latest numbers show that the Air Force Reserve is about 71 percent white, 17 percent black, 10 percent Hispanic, 4 percent Asian, 1 percent

Alaskan Native/American Indian and 1 percent Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander. Hispanic is considered an ethnicity, not a racial category, that is registered separately and in addition to the other racial categories. In addition, about 5 percent of Reservists decline to provide information about their racial or ethnic heritage. About 74 percent of the Reserve population is male and 26 percent is female.

When looking at diversity by the numbers, Floyd said AFRC compares favorably to both the Air Force and DOD.

"But numbers are a tricky thing," he said. "What we are hoping to do is establish a highly effective, efficient and harmoniously diverse work force where everyone is treated fairly based solely on merit, fitness and capability. And you can't do that by simply tracking numbers."

Floyd said the Air Force and DOD are encouraging diversity within the sci-

ence, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines, which have historically been dominated by white and Asian men.

"That's just one area where we have not seen a lot of diversity in the past, and we already know that is one area we are going to be concentrating on," Floyd said.

"Other than that, the DOD diversity program is still in its infancy right now. We are waiting to see what the Defense Department vision of a diverse work force looks like and roll that into AFRC's vision.

"What we do know is diversity is a mission enabler, and our whole organization benefits when we recognize and celebrate our individual differences," he said.

For more information on AFRC's new Diversity Office, send an email to the HQ AFRC/A1KQ workflow box at afrc.a1kq.workflow@us.af.mil or call Floyd at DSN 497-0294.



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