

Vol. 68 No. 1 FEBRUARY 2016

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CITIZEN AIRMAN



Living the Dream

Senior Airman is first 'off-the-street' KC-10 flight engineer

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



REFLECTING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

The beginning of each year provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the progress we made over the last 12 months. In 2015, our Citizen Airmen supported every combatant commander by providing critical operational capability and humanitarian support. The Air Force could not have accomplished its mission without you. I am exceedingly proud of what we have accomplished.

I want to highlight some of the accomplishments we made as a component that prepare us for the future. This past year we opened up opportunities for our Citizen Airmen to serve in new ways, ushered in the next generation of fighter aircraft and laid the foundation for future success through direct accession of ROTC cadets.

In 2015, we opened up unique opportunities under the Voluntary Limited Period of Active Duty program, which allows Air Force Reservists to serve in a variety of active-duty billets for a set period of time. Under this program, Air Force Reserve officers are able to apply for ROTC assistant professor of aerospace studies as well as ROTC detachment commander billets. Officers also have the chance to be instructors at Air Command and Staff College. In 2016, we anticipate opening up similar opportunities for our enlisted Airmen in nearly 100 different career fields, including maintenance, aircrew operations, and command and control systems operations. These types of programs provide our Reserve members unique experiences and strengthen our total force partnership.

Even more exciting is the fact that we are also increasing the number of command opportunities for our Reservists in active-duty organizations. Col. Michael Hernandez was selected to command the 325th Fighter Wing at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. We also had three high-potential officers selected to lead active-duty maintenance squadrons. These Reservists join two others who are completing their assignments as vice wing commanders in active-duty units. These opportunities (all covered in the story on Page 23) highlight the professionalism and experience of our Reservists and provide valuable additional opportunities to develop future Air Force senior leaders.

In addition to creating opportunities to develop our team in 2015, we also made great strides in building the future force we need in terms of modernization. This past year, the Air Force Reserve's 419th Fighter Wing, along with Air Combat Command's 388th Fighter Wing, took delivery of the first operational F-35s at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. This total force partnership has been in place for decades and is a perfect example of how we can continue to leverage the talents, experience and strengths of both Air Force components. Finally, we announced Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina, as the location of the first Reserve-led KC-46A main operating base. Although the KC-46 aircraft won't arrive until 2019, the selection of the 916th Air Refueling Wing provides the backbone and foundation for future operations. This location, along with our associations in the KC-46A at McConnell AFB,

Kansas, and Altus AFB, Oklahoma, fills Air Force requirements and ensures we remain an agile and responsive force.

To be successful in the future, we must creatively harness the manpower and talent to support emerging mission requirements. Last year we were able to directly access 26 cadets from ROTC programs to fill Air Force Reserve pilot positions and other critical Air Force specialty codes. We are also looking at ways to implement constructive credit and training waivers to ensure we are recruiting the right people at the right time, particularly in the cyberspace and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance career fields. This type of recruiting helps us develop the team we need into the future.

As we look to 2016, we must be ready to provide the combat-ready Citizen Airmen and the daily operational capability, strategic depth and surge capacity that this nation requires. I want to say thank you for your hard work and dedication that have made all of this change possible. Also, I challenge you to continue to look for innovative ways to leverage our unique strengths to remain operationally relevant against future threats.

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT
Cameron B. Kirksey
 CHIEF'S VIEW

PASSING THE TORCH

One of my focus areas over the past couple of years has been team wellness. Hopefully, by now you understand how important these focus areas are to me. I have always done my best to embody these principles, because I believe they make us better Citizen Airmen and a stronger force.

Part of wellness is ensuring we are taking care of our own health and the health of our families. Due to recent medical challenges

for both me and my family, I can no longer accomplish this part of my mission and provide you the leadership you deserve. It is for this reason that I am stepping down from my role as command chief of Air Force Reserve Command.

This is my last opportunity to share my thoughts with you in this forum. There is so much I could say, but, unfortunately, I'm bound by a maximum word count. Let me start by simply saying thank you for the amazing support you have given to me in my tenure as your command chief. Thank you for the personal emails, text messages and phone calls wishing me well in my retirement. It has been my privilege and honor to serve with such a high-caliber team of professionals who not only cover down on the mission but, more importantly, take care of their people. Our enlisted force is the backbone of the Air Force Reserve, and it is your hard work, dedication and leadership that have kept us strong and resilient in very demanding times.

I have served this country for more than 27 years, and those years, while at times challenging, were incredibly rewarding. The end of one's career is the perfect time to reminisce and think about the people who have helped you along the way, the challenges that taught you the true lessons of leadership and the accomplishments that embodied teamwork.

Harry S. Truman once wrote, "It's amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." I submit it is you, the team, who deserves the credit! You made it easy for me to do the things that I did on behalf of the team, and for that I am eternally grateful.

As I prepare to "depart the fix," I challenge you to think about the legacy you want to leave behind. I challenge you to take the time today to say thank you to a fellow co-worker, your supervisor, your subordinate, your civilian employer and, more importantly, your support team. I challenge you to confront the tough issues and make the decisions that will take your team to the next level.

Lastly, I challenge each of you to continue to serve with honor and distinction. I am constantly impressed and amazed by the dedication, sacrifice and service you offer our great nation every day.

In the words of the great Winston Churchill, "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." Remember that you are amazing! And as always, I'm here for you!



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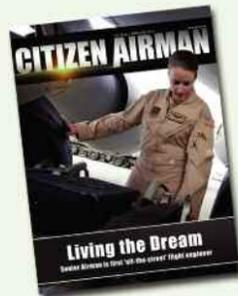
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Three Reservists selected to command active-duty units



On the front cover: Senior Airman Katie Rettinger, a flight engineer with the 78th Air Refueling Squadron at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, prepares a KC-10 Extender tanker aircraft for flight. Rettinger is the first Airman to enlist directly into a KC-10 flight engineer position without having prior experience in another military profession. Read her story beginning on Page 18. (Shawn J. Jones)

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Citizen Airman magazine (ISSN No. 0887-9680) is published bi-monthly by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command Office of Public Affairs for the commander of Air Force Reserve Command. Periodical postage paid at Warner Robins, Ga., and additional mailing offices. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to the homes of all Reservists. Content is normally news articles and features developed for release to commercial media as part of the Air Force Reserve's continuing public affairs program. Opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force Reserve. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. Readers-per-copy ratio: 4-1.

Send inquiries and submissions to HQ AFRC/PAP, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661. Or, email them to afrc.pap@us.af.mil. For questions about the magazine or its contents, you can call (478) 327-1770 or DSN 497-1770.

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Caeden Sleeper, son of Staff Sgt. Keith Sleeper of the 1st Special Operations Security Forces Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Florida, and Staff Sgt. Candice Winn of the 919th Special Operations Medical Squadron, simulates piloting a C-145 Skytruck during the Operation Hero event at Duke Field, Florida. The event was a mock deployment exercise for 919th Special Operations Wing children. The exercise started with the kids receiving orders before deploying to the 919th Special Operations Logistics Readiness Squadron building. The "little deployers" were issued fake military ID cards, dog tags and immunizations. (Tech. Sgt. Jasmin Taylor)

Indiana Wing Sets Flying Hour Record

The 434th Air Refueling Wing at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, logged more flying hours in fiscal year 2015 than ever before.

Reservists flew the wing's fleet of KC-135R Stratotankers a total of 7,030 hours, an increase of 36 percent over FY 2014.

"The statistics are remarkable," said Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th ARW commander. "This is a tremendous achievement for the entire wing. Everyone deserves a pat on the back for a job well done."

"This is a milestone for Grissom," said Lt. Col. Todd Moody, 74th Air Refueling Squadron director of operations. "We've never flown this many hours in one year."

According to Moody, the dramatic increase in flight hours can be attributed to the support Grissom Airmen provided both stateside and overseas during extensive deployments to Southwest Asia.

"We had over 3,600 combat flight hours this year, and it proves that we can employ our capabilities because our training prepared us to do so," Moody said. "This [record] shows that preparation and training at home station provide what the warfighters need wherever we deploy to, and kudos to maintenance Airmen for allowing us to accumulate

this many flying hours."

"I am very proud of all the maintainers," said Col. Anna Schulte, 434th Maintenance Group commander. "From keeping up with scheduled inspections to having proactive support personnel ... working together harmoniously, this [achievement] takes all team players coming together."

The 434th ARW holds the record for most aerial refuelings in a one-week period with 290. These refuelings involved the transfer of more than 1 million pounds of fuel. The unit also set a single-day record by refueling 90 aircraft with more than 283,000 pounds of fuel.

"The success of Grissom's record flight hours is a real barometer of the execution of everyone doing their jobs right," said Lt. Col. Brian Hollis, 72nd ARS director of operations. "Everyone in this wing should take pride in this milestone." (*Senior Airman Katrina Heikkinen, 434th ARW public affairs*)

Lab Provides Reservists Opportunity to Enhance Medical Skills

A one-of-a-kind laboratory at McChord Field, Washington, is providing a realistic environment where medical technicians and nurses can complete their required training.

The Regional Skills Laboratory, operated by the 446th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, is the only facility of its kind in the Air Force Reserve.

"The more realistic you can make it (training), the better your Airmen can be prepared to deal with real-life situations," said Lt. Col. Deborah Sands, 446th ASTS chief nurse. "The lab provides an area where our medical technicians and nurses can train for deployment."

The skills lab is broken down into 10 stations. Each station focuses on different parts of the body or different types of specialized care.

The lab also has a high-tech patient simulator called the METIman. The simulator is a lifelike mannequin that allows instructors the ability to input scenarios for realistic training. The METIman can breathe, talk, cry and even bleed. Using a wireless tablet, an instructor can change the simulated patient's condition based on what the students are doing.

The \$60,000 simulator is portable and can be used in the field as well.

"Having this lab allows us to teach classes every Reserve weekend," said Capt. Eddie Gonzalez, officer in charge of the lab. "Having tools such as the METIman helps Airmen to maintain their skills when they go into the field."

The 446th ASTS uses the lab to provide training for other units as well. This past year, 11 units from different branches of the armed services utilized the lab to enhance their members' medical abilities.

"The more hands-on practice I get in the skills lab, the better my own skills become," said Tech. Sgt. Richard Eckert Jr., medical technician for the 446th ASTS. "The better my own skills are, the better I can teach others." (*Tech. Sgt. Bryan Hull, 446th Airlift Wing public affairs*)

Kansas Refueling Group to be Redesignated as Wing

The Air Force announced plans in December to redesignate the 931st Air Refueling Group at McConnell Air Force Base,

Kansas, as a wing in an official ceremony this year. As of press time, a date for the ceremony had not been set.

The newly designated 931st Air Refueling Wing will grow by nearly 400 people to meet the needs of the organization.

The wing designation will result in the establishment of the 931st Operations Group, 931st Maintenance Group and 931st Force Support Squadron, and the standup of the 905th and 924th Air Refueling Squadrons.

"This has been a long time coming," said Col. Mark S. Larson, 931st ARG commander. "It is the result of sustained excellent performance from numerous Citizen Airmen over the past 20 years, the steadfast resolve of our elected officials and the unparalleled support of our local community leaders. As we make this historic transition, I have complete confidence in the ability of the men and women of the 931st ARG to make this new wing one of the premier units in the Air Force."

The 931st ARW will be the first Reserve associate unit to fly and maintain the new KC-46A Pegasus tanker. The KC-46A is intended to replace the Air Force's aging fleet of KC-135 Stratotankers, which have been the service's primary refueling aircraft for more than 50 years. The Pegasus will provide more refueling capability and an increased capacity for cargo as well as aeromedical evacuation. (*931st ARG public affairs*)

KC-10 Aircrews Implement Electronic Training Tracking System

KC-10 Extender aircrew members assigned to the 78th Air Refueling Squadron at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, are preparing to switch from a paper-based to an electronic training tracking system.

The new system is designed to more efficiently track and monitor aircrew evaluations and certifications while providing better feedback and data for aircrew leadership.

"Everything is easily accessible as opposed to the paper-based training that we were used to," said Maj. Shawn Mosher, an instructor pilot with the 78th ARS. "Now, Air Mobility Command and Air Force Reserve Command headquarters are able to see the data instantly."

The electronic training tracking system was introduced to the squadron two years ago, but it wasn't fully developed, said Master Sgt. Ramon Cruz III, an instructor boom operator. "For that reason, we decided not to adopt it until the program was ready to use."

Cruz, along with seven other Reserve and active-duty KC-10 representatives, recently returned from Travis Air Force Base, California, where they spent several days learning how their West Coast KC-10 counterparts have effectively used the system. (*Senior Airman Jasmine Zielomski, 514th Air Mobility Wing public Affairs, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst*)

Duke Field Gets New C-146 Aircraft for Maintenance Training

Maintainers with the 919th Special Operations Wing at Duke Field, Florida, welcomed a new aircraft to the base Jan. 5, officially marking the start of the wing's newest mission.

The white and blue C-146 Wolfhound is going to be used exclusively as a training aircraft for the wing's maintenance personnel.

"We are excited to begin this new mission phase with the Wolfhound," said Maj. Terrell Eikner, 919th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander. "Our initial cadre of Airmen has already begun establishing a training plan and developing the best prac-



tices for the new aircraft."

The cadre will create brand new lesson plans, checklists and maintenance procedures for the aircraft with help from current maintenance contractors. Up until this point, the wing's C-146 aircraft have only been maintained by contractors, centrally located at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico.

Once those plans and procedures are in place, the cadre of Airmen will begin training all maintenance personnel on how to maintain the C-146. This will mark the first time Airmen will be trained on this non-standard aviation aircraft.

This is not the first time that the 919th SOAMXS has built a maintenance procedure and training plan from scratch. In 2012, with the arrival of the C-145 Skytruck, the maintainers created the maintenance procedure and training plan for that aircraft as well.

"We are building the Air Force's maintenance plan for this aircraft," said Senior Master Sgt. Jimmy Sands. "We are incorporating all of the contractor's maintenance materials along with the factory specifications and creating not just the Air Force's C-146 maintenance procedures, but also how to train Airmen to do them."

The first training class is scheduled to begin in April. Once the 919th cadre has trained enough Airmen on the Wolfhound, maintenance responsibilities for the aircraft will transfer from the contractor to the 919th SOAMXS. (*Tech. Sgt. Sam King, 919th SOW public affairs, Duke Field*)

Program Offers Opportunities for Limited Active-Duty Tours

Air Force Reservists have opportunities to serve limited active-duty tours thanks to the Air Reserve Personnel Center at Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado.

At the beginning of fiscal year 2016, ARPC launched the Voluntary Limited Period of Active Duty program, which allows members of the Reserve in certain Air Force specialties the opportunity to serve an active-duty tour for a period of three years and one day. During that time, Reservists will receive the same benefits as active component Airmen.

Right now the program has Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor openings for captains through lieutenant colonels at various locations across the country.

"I taught Air Force ROTC twice, the first time was from 1996-1999 and the second time was 2000-2004," said Col. Ellen Moore,

Pope's Pun



Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command manpower, personnel and services director. "I wanted to become an ROTC instructor because I wanted to give back and help shape our future leaders for the Air Force."

Moore said it's great to see where her cadets are now and how they have progressed in their own Air Force careers.

In addition to ROTC instructors, other officer opportunities available under VLPAD include ROTC detachment commanders, Air Command and Staff College instructors, remotely piloted aircraft pilots, and T-6 instrument simulator instructors. As the program progresses and expands, opportunities will be available for enlisted Airmen in nearly

100 different career fields, including maintenance, aircrew operations and command control systems operations.

The VLPAD program and several other programs are being put in place to help bolster the Air Force's end strength from 312,980 to 317,000.

"Being selected for any of these special duties or career fields is a significant achievement for any officer or enlisted Airman," said Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, AFRC commander. "Not only are these opportunities helping our Citizen Airmen, but they are also allowing us to assist in some critical, yet undermanned, career fields across our Air Force."

Little Rock Reservists contribute to restoration of Vietnam-era helicopter

By Master Sgt. Jeff Walston

After more than a year of planning and hard work, military and civilian members gathered at the Jacksonville Museum of Military History near Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, Nov. 9 for a ceremony to unveil a newly restored helicopter affectionately known as a "Huey."

Years of being exposed to the weather while displayed on a pedestal in front of the museum had taken a toll on the Bell UH-1 Iroquois. The iconic Vietnam-era helicopter was in desperate need of repair when a decision was made to restore the aircraft's original paint scheme.

From the beginning, there were a number of challenges that could have doomed the project had it not been for the dedication of many different individuals and groups.

"Estimates were high for the restoration of the Huey, which were actually based on prior expenditures for the museum's F-105D Thunderchief," said DannaKay Duggar, museum director. "They ranged from \$30,000 to \$50,000, which included labor, materials and equipment rentals to do the work while it was still on the pedestal at the museum."

Raising enough money to fund the project was one problem, and finding people to perform the labor was another. The museum conducted a fund-raiser to help with the money problem. Duggar's chance meeting with Col. Edsel Frye Jr., who was serving as commander of the Air Force Reserve's 913th Airlift Group at Little Rock at the time, helped with the labor issue.

"During our conversation, he told me, 'If you ever need help with any (museum) projects, let me know. We are all about community engagement,'" Duggar said. He contacted Frye about the project, called Operation Restore Angel, and Airmen from the group's 913th Maintenance Squadron answered the call for help.

The initial plan was to complete the restoration work while the Huey was still on its pedestal, as was done with the F-105, but cost became a major factor.

"There were many cost and safety factors involved with doing the work while the Huey was still on the pedestal," said Chief Master Sgt. Ralph E. Babcock II, 913th MXS superintendent. "It was more effective to take it down."

Once the helicopter was removed from the pedestal, the restoration team needed a suitable place to complete the work.

"One of the biggest obstacles was finding a place out of the weather, for little or no cost to the museum, that could accommodate the Huey for the length of time it would take to complete the restoration work," said Senior Master Sgt. Harry Watson, 913th MXS aircraft electrician supervisor.



(Left to right) Staff Sgt. Brandon Thelen, Tech. Sgt. Christopher Holmes, Senior Master Sgt. Harry Watson, Master Sgt. Michael Jester, Senior Master Sgt. Jesse Brown, Kevin Wagers, and Master Sgt. Jerry Killian, all of the 913th Maintenance Squadron at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, were among the volunteers who worked to help restore the Bell UH-1C Iroquois helicopter in the background at Jacksonville Museum of Military History.

That place ended up being the Jacksonville City Recycling Center, not far from the museum. A little more than two months of actual hands-on work from civilians and military members went into restoring the Huey at the recycling center.

"It's taken us a while to get here, but it's been good for the organization to do work of this magnitude," Watson said. "It's been such a positive experience working and interacting with the community, which is always so very supportive of us."

(Walston is assigned to the 913th AG public affairs office at Little Rock AFB.)

Unit Reservists require a letter of recommendation from their wing commander in order to apply for a position under the program. Individual mobilization augmentees and members of the Participating Individual Ready Reserve require a letter of recommendation from their unit commander (or equivalent) or Readiness and Integration Organization detachment commander.

For more on the VLPAD program, visit the myPERS web page at https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/30624/kw/vlpad/p/16,17. (Staff Sgt. Sarah Hanson, Headquarters AFRC public affairs, Robins AFB, Georgia)

AFRC Implements Upgraded Instant Messaging Software

Air Force Reserve Command implemented the Microsoft Lync-Enterprise Instant Messaging system that allows all users across the command to connect, collaborate and share in real time.

Lync-Enterprise, part of the Microsoft Office suite, is the upgraded version of the Lync-Standard instant messaging software the Air Force deployed to all users Dec. 15, said Lt. Col. Clayton Sammons of the AFRC Communications Directorate.

AFRC invested \$3.3 million to extend the much-more capable Lync-Enterprise to all Air Force Reserve members.

"One of the biggest advantages of having Lync-Enterprise is the ability to share your desktop," Sammons said. "This includes being able to share PowerPoint slides, shared applications, whiteboard and screen sharing. The ability to initiate multi-party audio and video conferences allows AFRC personnel to reach the people they need to, globally, in a matter of seconds."

Lync-Enterprise has the potential to reduce dependence on corporate email because it offers some of the same file and link sharing features, but the content is shareable and viewable instantly. Users can drag and drop images, documents and links into the instant messenger dialogue box.

Users will find much more capable collaboration tools, which are helpful when budget constraints prevent travel for training.

"Desktop sharing is especially crucial in a training environment," Sammons said. "I use it in A6 with our bases and tenants, and our knowledge managers use it to conduct ad-hoc training on a user's desktop from across the country. (Headquarters AFRC public affairs, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia)



Michael Johnson, an electrician with the 564th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, prepares wiring for installation of new liquid crystal displays in a KC-135 cockpit at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma. The new displays are part of the latest KC-135 Stratotanker upgrades that are being retrofitted into Air Force Reserve Command jets in the 507th Air Refueling Wing.

Tinker KC-135s first within AFRC to undergo important upgrades

By Maj. Jon Quinlan

KC-135R Stratotankers operated by the 507th Air Refueling Wing are scheduled this month to be the first Air Force Reserve Command tankers to be retrofitted with a new upgrade at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex, Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma.

The latest KC-135 upgrade, called Block 45, will completely remodel the inside of the flight deck with new liquid crystal display panels, a new radio altimeter, a new auto pilot, a new digital flight director and other computer module updates.

Active-duty Stratotankers at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, were the first aircraft to receive the modifications. Due to the changes in the cockpit, aircrews will be required to obtain certifications in the upgraded jets to resume daily operations.

Block 45 is the third series of major modifications designed to add capability to the aging KC-135 fleet. The KC-135 is often referred to as the "workhorse" of the air refueling fleet, and these aircraft must stay mission capable for many years. This upgrade keeps the KC-135 fleet updated and viable as the Air Force is in the process of acquiring the newest air refueler, the KC-46A Pegasus.

Col. Martin O'Grady, Legacy Tanker

Division chief at Tinker, said the \$910 million upgrade program will reduce equipment failures and promote operational efficiency.

"The modification to the KC-135 is important for several reasons," O'Grady said. "The upgrade allows for more efficient air traffic management activities, improves system safety by creating key system redundancy and reduces the logistics footprint with utilization of more reliable avionics components."

Reliability and availability of parts and gauges is another reason for the upgrade as some components are no longer manufactured for the 50-year-old aircraft.

Daniel Witt, a senior avionics engineer in the Legacy Tanker Division, highlighted the importance of avionics upgrades that will allow the KC-135 to have a fully digital integrated cockpit. The glass LCD will replace numerous flight instruments that are nearly obsolete.

"These upgrades significantly improve reliability, reduce maintenance actions and provide supportability beyond 2030," Witt said. "We also get updates on the software that will allow us to continue to support the KC-135 in the future."

(Quinlan is assigned to the 507th ARW public affairs office at Tinker AFB.)

ZONE YELLOW

Increasing knowledge and understanding are keys to removing stigmas associated with seeking mental health care

By Lt. Col. Mario Tommasi

(Editor's note: Tommasi is a Citizen Airman. As a civilian, he is a licensed and board-certified psychologist. When wearing the uniform as an individual mobilization augmentee, he serves as the consultant for psychology to the chief of aerospace medicine in the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command surgeon general's office at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, and senior leader for AFRC psychologists. Tommasi lives in New Jersey with his wife and two children. Master Sgt. Lori Elwood and Staff Sgt. Mitchell Dawson, both of the command surgeon general's office, contributed to this article.)

Sometime ago, I was a member of a strategic working group. Its director — let's call him Colonel Tuffe — was a hard-charging group commander. Tuffe started his day at 4:30 in the morning, worked most weekends and was seemingly indifferent to the concept of work-life balance. He even once wanted to “hang out” on Feb. 14, oblivious to the fact that it was Valentine's Day.

So imposing was his working style that I fretted when accepting his invitation to join him on his daily habit of “grabbing a beer” after work. After finishing his first beer, Tuffe said to me and the other officer at the table, “When I was deployed, I was always in the yellow zone.”

After finishing a second beer, Tuffe went on to explain that the yellow zone was somewhere in between the serenity of the green zone and the chaos of the red zone. He alluded to fearing for his life and the stability of his marriage (no surprise). By the time the colonel started on his third beer, I quipped, “Sir, maybe you should talk with someone in mental health?”

I was being somewhat flippant, as he was well aware that I was a psychologist, but I also was being sincere. Stress, I presumed, was getting to him, and I knew that there were better ways to deal with it than drinking three beers a day. I was also sensitive to the barriers or stigmas that inhibited people from seeking mental health care, so I was not totally surprised when Tuffe chuckled, “Yeah, sure,” and changed the subject.

Many of the same stigmas associated with military members seeking help when dealing with personal struggles that existed back then still exist today because of a lack of knowledge and understanding. I will attempt to increase Reservists' knowledge and understanding about the mental health care system by answering some common questions.

What is a mental health diagnosis? A mental health diagnosis is a medical term used by licensed providers to document that a patient is experiencing some sort of significant mental health problem. Other terms are interchangeable with

mental health diagnosis. For example, mental disease, mental disorder, psychiatric disorder and psychiatric illness all have the same meaning. That is, a person with a mental health diagnosis is experiencing symptoms and having problems that are associated with personal distress and impairments in his or her ability to function.

Mental health diagnoses number in the hundreds and are experienced by very large numbers of people. National-scale epidemiological studies reveal that in a given year, about 19 percent of people age 18 years and older — or 43.7 million American adults — have had a mental health illness (not counting substance abuse disorders). So, chances are you know one or more people with a mental health diagnosis. The most common mental illnesses are depression and anxiety. Alcohol abuse is the most common addictive disease.

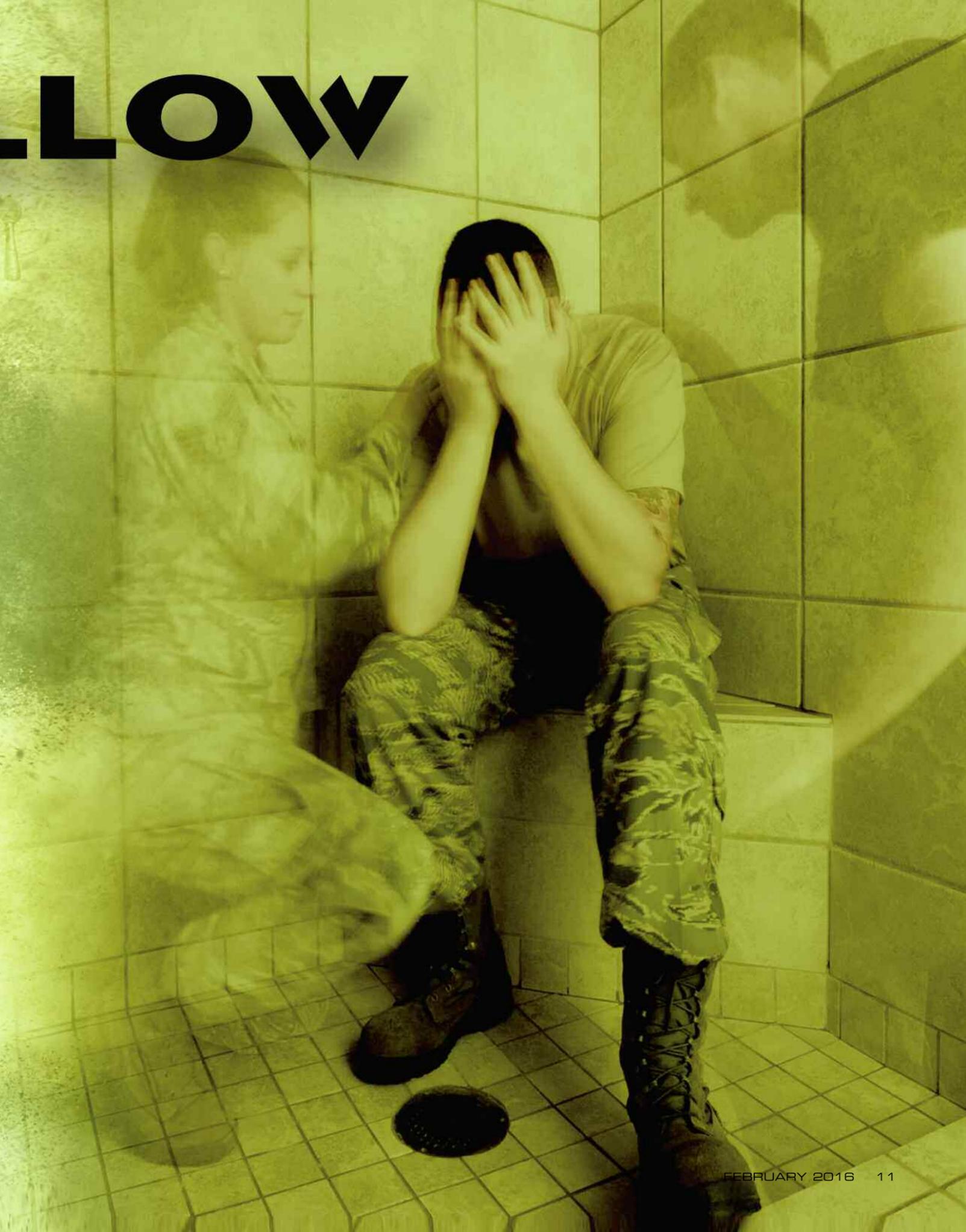
Should I get help with my mental health problem? Yes. Many mental health illnesses are very amenable to treatment, and people do recover. For example, several talk psychotherapies are available to treat post-traumatic stress disorder and major depressive disorder. And advances in pharmacology have resulted in the availability of highly effective prescription medications for mental illnesses.

It is important to point out, however, that most people struggle with many other problems that seem like mental illness but do not meet the medical criteria for a diagnosis. Such problems include stressful relationships, family issues, economic stressors and difficulties at work or school. The effects of these sorts of problems can build up over time. The cumulative effect can lead to reduced work performance, medical problems, excessive alcohol use and being inattentive to important relationships (like forgetting your spouse on Valentine's Day).

So, it is important to get help even if it feels awkward and at odds with your military duty.

The good news is the Air Force has developed a full range of helping resources, and the once prevailing stigmas associated with seeking mental health care are greatly reduced. Among the resources available to reservists are Military OneSource, the directors of psychological health, the Psychological Health Advocacy Program, sexual assault response coordinators and programs sponsored by the chaplain's office. I urge you to visit the Wingman Toolkit webpage (www.wingmantoolkit.org) for more information and resources.

In some cases, mental health problems are outside the scope of services that the Reserve makes commonly available. In those cases, Reservists are encouraged to seek mental health care in their communities. In this regard, the direc-



tors of psychological health and other programs can assist Reservists in finding appropriate resources.

Do I have to tell my unit if I have a mental health diagnosis? Yes. The reason is the military environment could make your mental health symptoms worse or result in a dangerous situation. For example, people struggling with depression often have trouble sleeping and concentrating. In some cases of depression, the sufferer has persistent suicidal thoughts or behaviors. Moreover, some medications used to treat depression can cause dangerous side effects such as daytime drowsiness, confusion and jitters.

These conditions are no different from those of any other medical problem that could cause impaired duty performance. For example, diabetes, if left unchecked, can result in a host of duty-limiting problems such as blindness, confusion and fatigue.

Will I be able to participate in unit training assemblies if I have a mental health diagnosis? Whether or not you can participate in UTAs depends on if your mental illness impacts your current or future duties, degrades the mission or puts personnel at risk for injury.

When a member discloses that he or she has a diagnosed mental health illness, the responsible medical unit is required to annotate that person's records, most often with a duty-limiting condition report (aka a "profile") and an assignment availability code. This report and code indicate the extent to which a Reservist will be permitted to perform his or her assigned duties or be eligible for worldwide qualification.

There are many AAC codes in the relevant Air Force instructions. But most often the AAC code indicates that a person will be placed in a "no-pay and no-points" status for a period of time and will not be allowed to drill. The impact of this action is worrisome for Reservists because it raises fears that their income and military career are in jeopardy.

But the good news is these worries are often based on stigma and inaccurate information. Air Force policy is firmly grounded in the presumption that service members can return to duty. Moreover, Air Force instructions require that medical decision-makers balance the health and well-being of personnel with the demands needed to complete the mission.

For example, the participation waiver process and duty-limiting condition determinations afford service members the opportunity to remain on the roster while their mental health condition is being assessed. The presumption is that most service members will return to duty once their condition is resolved. By doing this, the responsible medical authority is taking precautionary steps that are meant to protect the safety of those who are affected as well as other Reservists. People will not be permitted to return to drill status until senior medical staff members in the command surgeon's office at Robins AFB make a disposition and communicate it to the appropriate unit.

Can I be discharged if I have a mental health diagnosis? It depends. Retention decisions involve collaboration among military medical and occupational health professionals, as well as command discretion. Each case is evaluated separately.

Every situation is different, and there is no single answer that applies to everyone. In general, however, retention determinations are made through a stratification process that takes into account the timing and extent that the mental illness will or could impact the members' ability to perform their duties. Cases enter the evaluation board process when the mental illness was caused or made worse by military duty. Cases that are not duty related, typically, do not enter the medical board process.

For more information about the retention process, contact your local physical evaluation board liaison officer. Advocacy for the evaluation board process is available to Reservists through the Office of Airman Council (www.afjag.af.mil). Applicable Air Force instructions are 10-203, 36-2254, 36-2910, 36-3208, 36-3212 and 48-123.

OPERATION PAPERBACK

Spouse provides
free books to troops
and their families

By Staff Sgt. Sarah Hanson

One Reserve spouse out West is trying to get deployed members, veterans and military families to exercise their minds by delivering free books to their doorsteps.

Morgiana Celestine-Lewis, executive assistant to the president of a hospital in Oakland, California, and the wife of Master Sgt. Ganell Lewis of the 349th Air Mobility Wing at Travis Air Force Base, California, is part of an organization called Operation Paperback.

According to its website, Operation Paperback is a non-profit organization whose volunteer members nationwide collect gently used books and send them to American troops overseas as well as military families in the United States. Since 1999, the organization has shipped more than 1.9 million books to locations around the globe.

Celestine-Lewis said Operation Paperback's mission is something that is close to her heart.

"I've always read a lot and found that reading is a good escape."

She said her passion for reading dates back to her childhood and that her parents always encouraged her to read.

"My passion for literacy stems from my childhood," Celestine-Lewis said. "Neither one of my parents finished

secondary school, so when I came along there was a big push for education and reading in my house."

Since Celestine-Lewis has such a strong passion for literacy, she made it a goal of hers to provide 1,000 books for distribution through Operation Paperback.

"I want to send 1,000 books that I have personally selected, packaged and shipped to troops or military families," she said. "I'm a little shy of 850 right now."

*"Reading is to the mind what
exercise is to the body."*

--Sir Richard Steele

When Celestine-Lewis reached the 500-book mark in her quest, she received a letter and certificate from the organization. She also received a thank you letter from a military member down-range.

"A year or so ago, I got my first thank you letter in the mail," she said. "It was from a troop in Afghanistan. It meant a lot that he took the time to send me a thank you note for the box of books I sent."

Over the past 17 years, Celestine-Lewis and her husband have been through several deployments. During each one, she sent him care packages with hand-written notecards and, of course, plenty of books. She started to think about other members who may not have a family member to send them something.

"I tear up a little. I can just imagine what they're dealing with and not having the luxuries that I have," she said. "So this is my way of contributing a little something back to other troops out there."

Celestine-Lewis has been involved with Operation Paperback on and off for three years and has now dedicated time to regularly supporting the mission. She encourages other spouses to get involved in different activities or causes and make an impact.

"Find something you're passionate about," she said. "I'm passionate about books, and I am a literacy advocate for children. It doesn't take a lot of my time or money. I can do it after work or on the weekend, and I know it will have an impact on someone else."

Anyone in the military community who would like to receive books can go to the Operation Paperback website (www.operationpaperback.org), submit an online form and then wait for the books to appear in their mailbox.

"The generations coming up now don't really read; there's a lot of online and social media activity, but they don't really sit and read," Celestine-Lewis said. "There's just something very personal and intimate about holding a book, which is why I think this is so important to me."

"If I could distribute books around the world full time, that would be a dream."

Celestine-Lewis also has a dream to expand her publishing company, Gentle Storm Publishing, with her own staff



Morgiana Celestine-Lewis has set a goal of providing 1,000 books to troops and military family members through Operation Paperback.

and catalog of authors and poets. However, for now she is working toward her goal of delivering 1,000 books to service members in need.

"Spouses like Morgiana are very important to not just the local community, but to our Air Force mission," said Chief Master Sgt. Cameron Kirksey, Air Force Reserve Command command chief. "She is providing our Airmen and their families with a gift that can help military members get through a deployment, or a family to teach their kids the importance of reading. Either way, her participation is critical to the success of our mission."

For more information on Operation Paperback, visit the organization's website or email Chrissy Honeywell at chris@operationpaperback.org.

High Flier

Training, mentoring help Army brat soar in the Air Force Reserve

By Lt. Col. Beth Kelley Horine

Traveling around the world as an Army brat growing up, Melissa (Jones) Coburn knew she wanted to fly airplanes. Now as a colonel in the Air Force Reserve, Coburn shares how training, mentoring and opportunities she has received as a member of the Air Force helped her achieve her dream to fly — and fly well — both in aircraft and her career.

“My dad was an Army officer and knew I wanted to fly,” said Coburn, a U.S. Air Force Academy graduate who now serves on the Air Staff in Washington, D.C. “He pointed me toward the Air Force, so I joined and have been flying since 1994. I love flying.”

Coburn started out flying C-141 Starlifters while on active duty and transitioned to C-17 Globemaster III aircraft as a member of the Air Force Reserve. She has accumulated a total of more than 4,000 flying hours.

“I brought my active-duty C-141 time, which included some incredible experiences supporting humanitarian missions around the world, to the Reserve,” she said. “And then the Air Force Reserve put more training, time and money into me learning to fly the C-17.”

Not only did Coburn learn to adeptly fly the C-17, she was selected as the first Reservist to attend the Weapons Instructor Course for the C-17 community. Also, she was the program’s first female Outstanding Graduate.

“Most of my success I attribute to having really great mentors, both on active duty and in the Reserve,” Coburn said. “Mentors like Lt. Col. James Fryer, my squadron commander at the 732nd Airlift Squadron (Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey), who really pushed me to develop as an officer, not just as a pilot, and pushed me to go to weapons school.”

Other leaders encouraged her to attend Air War College in residence.

“The professional development and mentorship I’ve received gave me the same experiences as active-duty members,” she said. “This is so important to our success as a total force, because Reserve, active-duty and Guard members all end up serving in the same roles and doing the same things, regardless of status. Integrated, joint training has really helped me become a better officer.”

The colonel’s Air War College classmates agreed.

“As a Marine attending an Air Force school, I certainly brought some preconceived notions about the Air Force,” said Lt. Col. Dawn Alonso, the senior aide-de-camp to the Marine Corps



Col. Melissa Coburn, a C-17 pilot who currently serves as the senior executive officer for the chief of Air Force Reserve, was present for the unveiling of the Profiles in Leadership display Dec. 7 at the Pentagon. The stories outlined in the display highlight a broad spectrum of Airmen from many different backgrounds, military specialties and civilian careers.

commandant. “Colonel Coburn flipped those stereotypes on their head.”

“Training and flying with Reservists like Colonel Coburn definitely helped me understand the benefit and importance of a more integrated, fighting total force,” said another Air War College classmate, Lt. Col. David O’Malley, deputy chief of mission analysis in the Air Force’s Studies, Analyses and Assessments Directorate.

“I’ve flown as a happy customer on many an Air Force Reserve aircraft,” Alonso said. “To me, the Air Force and Air Force Reserve program is seamless, as far as not knowing if someone is active duty or Reserve. And Colonel Coburn’s one of the best officers I’ve ever met across all services and components.”

Coburn transitioned from active duty to the Reserve in 2001 after the birth of her son, intending to serve part-time as a traditional Reservist pilot while flying in the commercial airline industry. However, her plans changed drastically on Sept. 11, 2001.

“After 9/11 happened, I never looked back,” she said. “The Air Force had invested too much money and too much time in me. I

didn’t feel like I could leave. There was a mission to do, and I had the skills and training to do it. I’ve been full-time Reserve ever since.”

One of the aspects afforded to Reservists is a different timeline to serve. Most active-duty members serve 20 years, give or take. The Reserve, however, offers a bit more flexibility.

“I can serve up until I’m 57 if I want to. ... allowing me to fly a lot more and stay flying a lot longer than my active-duty counterparts,” Coburn said. “I see this as an opportunity to really hone my skills as a pilot and a weapons officer, and to teach and mentor other aviators.”

The colonel’s influence and mentorship doesn’t extend just to Reservists. Every unit she has served in has been a total force integrated unit, with an active/Reserve association, including at deployed locations.

“In 2010 I had the opportunity to deploy,” Coburn said. “The Air Force needed a weapons officer, and I was available. No one specified active duty or Reservist.”

She deployed with the 60th Air Mobility Wing from Travis Air Force Base, California, which shares an association with the Reserve’s 349th AMW.

“I was just their weapons officer; a lieutenant colonel with lots of experience,” Coburn said. “No issue or point was made because I was a Reservist. The Travis crews had guest help from the Reserve members of their associate unit as well. Great mission, great integration.”

Throughout her career, Coburn said she has experienced a few obstacles as a Reservist.

“I was a little older than the rest of the crowd, especially in weapons school,” she said. “I was more senior (as a major) than the captains in my class, so they didn’t really understand me or know how to relate to me at first.”

Of the six classmates she graduated weapons school with, five work in the Pentagon where Coburn works as the senior executive officer for the chief of Air Force Reserve.

“They’re now all my best friends,” Coburn said. “Overcoming some of the cultural misconceptions led us to a better understanding about the role of the Air Force Reserve and has undoubtedly helped us integrate and work together in our jobs since.”

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

Reserve honors leaders in Pentagon exhibit

The Office of Air Force Reserve unveiled 12 portraits of Reserve leaders during a Profiles in Leadership display ceremony Dec. 7 at the Pentagon. The display celebrates and honors Citizen Airmen’s contributions in serving the nation.

Col. Bruce Bender, Air Force Reserve Command director of public affairs, spent more than a year working on the project.

“These leaders were selected based on how integral they are in shaping our Air Force Reserve,” Bender said. “Through the Profiles in Leadership project, Citizen Airmen shared personal stories about how their service impacted their lives and made a difference to the Air Force Reserve.”

The significance of the date of the unveiling was not forgotten.

“The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor galvanized our nation, and it also revealed the strength of our nation and highlighted the dedication and commitment of our troops,” said Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, AFRC commander. “Today we honor their sacrifices and legacy by honoring those who have come after them.”

The exhibit features a broad spectrum of Airmen from many different backgrounds, military specialties and civilian careers. Their stories paint a mosaic of experiences illustrating how Citizen Airmen use their civilian expertise to benefit the Air Force in a variety of ways.

One of the honorees, Col. Melissa Coburn, a C-17 pilot and senior executive officer for the chief of Air Force Reserve, attended the unveiling ceremony.

“I am truly honored to be among such great leaders who are part of this new display,” Coburn said. “I hope our stories help inspire the next generation of Citizen Airmen.”

Notable Airmen like pararescue team leader Tech. Sgt. Daniel Warren are among those featured in the exhibit. Warren received a Bronze Star for valor and was named a winner of the prestigious MacKay Trophy for his heroism during a firefight in Afghanistan.

The Airmen honored in the exhibit are among more than 70,000 Reservists who serve in operations with active-duty forces around the globe. Whether it is through supporting disaster relief or combat operations, Reserve Airmen answer the call of duty and contribute to the best Air Force in the world.

Bender said the Reserve plans to replace the portraits every year with leaders who make a significant impact to the service’s legacy. The display is a lasting testament to the proud tradition of excellence and service by America’s Citizen Airmen, he said. The portraits are displayed in the Pentagon on the fifth floor, A ring, 10 1/2 corridor.

(AFRC public affairs)

LEADERS FEATURED IN THE EXHIBIT:

- Maj. Gen. Stayce Harris, 22nd Air Force commander
- Maj. Gen. Michael Kim, mobilization assistant to the AFRC commander
- Maj. Gen. Ken Lewis, director of air, space and operations at AFRC
- Maj. Gen. Richard Scobee, 10th Air Force commander
- Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Josef Schmid, flight surgeon for NASA
- Col. Melissa Coburn, senior executive officer for the chief of Air Force Reserve
- Col. Chris Cunningham, emergency preparedness liaison officer for the state of Indiana
- Col. John Tree, member of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service Board of Directors and chief executive officer of Raymond Express International
- Lt. Col. Brett “Zipper” Robison, F-35 pilot training lead at the Academic Training Center, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida
- Maj. Dan Rooney, 301st Fighter Squadron pilot at Tyndall AFB, Florida, and founder/CEO of the Folds of Honor Foundation
- Master Sgt. Samuel Ameen, broadcaster, 4th Combat Camera Squadron
- Tech. Sgt. Daniel Warren, pararescue team leader

Good Neighbors

Reservists from C-130 community train their Afghan counterparts

By Staff Sgt. Jonathan Hehnlly

Approximately three dozen Reservists from several different C-130 airlift wings deployed to Afghanistan where they became the first members of Air Force Reserve Command to perform the mission as air advisors to their Afghan counterparts on C-130 Hercules maintenance, flight and operations procedures.

The first operations air advisor package from the C-130 Reserve community included members of the 911th Airlift Wing from Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania; the 302nd AW from Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado; the 94th AW from Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia; and the 908th AW from Maxwell AFB, Alabama. At the conclusion of their deployment, they were replaced by a contingent from the 934th AW, Minneapolis-St. Paul IAP ARS, Minnesota; the 910th AW, Youngstown ARS, Ohio; and the 914th AW, Niagara Falls IAP ARS, New York.

In addition to the operators, the deployment packages also included maintenance personnel from the 911th and 908th.

All of the Reservists involved in the mission deployed in support of Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air. The total force integration environment of TAAC-Air at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul comprises active-duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Airmen working hand-in-hand with Afghans to build a self-sustaining and operationally capable air force.

"This was the first time the rotation called for anyone from AFRC to take on the major tasking of the C-130 air advisor

mission in Afghanistan," said Maj. Wesley E. Cranmer Jr., an instructor navigator from Pittsburgh's 758th Airlift Squadron. "There was nothing routine about this operation. Our Reservists had done nothing like this before."

From April through October 2015, 12 members of the 911th AW joined with other Reservists to train and advise their Afghan counterparts to help ensure their mission readiness.

911th instructor navigators and maintenance specialists assisted the Afghans as they prepared for and flew military transport and casualty evacuation missions using the AAF's four C-130 Hercules aircraft.

"What we were doing was eye-opening," said Master Sgt. Antonio Policicchio, 911th Maintenance Squadron aircraft engine mechanic. "They were flying actual combat support missions, and everything we did had direct impact. It was very rewarding."

Cranmer spoke with excitement about a mission in which the 911th AW Reservists assisted Afghan commandos on their way to fight the Afghan Taliban in Kunduz.

"It was a high-intensity mission," Cranmer said. "We were

working hand in hand with our Afghan brethren to deliver planeloads of commandos, ready to fight to save their country, to their destination."

It is the end goal of TAAC-Air to create self-sufficiency of the Afghan Air Force to keep it in the fight. The training of aviators, mechanics and loadmasters in the United States, combined with the air advisor missions in Afghanistan, prepare the AAF to conduct regular maintenance and self-sustainment training in their country.

For Cranmer, his involvement with the AAF didn't stop at the self-sustainment training of pilots and navigators on how to fly or run an operations squadron. The instructor navigator also helped the Afghan military members with communication and language skills, conducting English language instruction several times a week. Cranmer said he has a lot of respect for the AAF and really enjoyed interacting with its members throughout his time in Afghanistan.

"The best experience I had in my Air Force career was working with the AAF," he said. "We have a lot more in common than you might think. You just have to engage."

(Hehnlly is assigned to the 911th AW public affairs office at Pittsburgh IAP ARS.)



Airmen assigned to the Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air train their Afghan counterparts on an Afghan Air Force C-130H at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. (Staff Sgt. Corey Hook)

Senior Airman Katie Rettinger is the first Airman to enlist directly into a KC-10 flight engineer position without having prior experience in another military profession.



KC-10's first 'off-the-street' flight engineer is ...

LIVING THE DREAM

Story and Photos By Shawn J. Jones

Senior Airman Katie Rettinger walked around a KC-10 Extender on the flight line at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. She inspected the landing gear, engines, wings and other important parts of the refueling tanker's exterior, ensuring it was fit to fly into a combat zone in Southwest Asia. The passengers boarding the tanker, most of whom were dressed in the sand-colored flight suits of Airmen headed to war, probably had no idea Rettinger was the first flight engineer in the KC-10's 34-year history to fly without first serving in another military specialty.

Flight engineers help operate the KC-10 by calculating the aircraft's weight, balance and performance data, determining fuel

consumption, performing pre-flight and post-flight inspections, and monitoring the aircraft's engine and control systems. They also serve as masters of checklists that help ensure every procedure gets done correctly.

These many responsibilities make it difficult for new enlistees to qualify as flight engineers, which is why every other KC-10 flight engineer except Rettinger had a previous military profession, most commonly in aircraft maintenance.

While Rettinger said she appreciates being the first "off-the-street" engineer, for her the experience is more about living out her childhood dream and the roundabout path she took to do it.

"I had an obsession with space starting when I was about 6

years old," she said. "All I wanted to do was pilot the space shuttle and go to Mars."

She said she thought the best way to get to pilot the space shuttle was to learn how to fly in the military. This led to a budding interest in airplanes and aviation.

"I liked to look up at the planes flying over my parents' house," Rettinger said. "I remember waving up at them, and I always hoped the pilots would see me and wave back."

However, as she began to transition into young adulthood, her dreams of flight were replaced by athletic pursuits. She was captain of her high school track team and participated in an Olympic developmental program for field hockey. She would go on to play field hockey at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, but her dreams of sport were eventually replaced by academic pursuits.

Rettinger said she always considered herself adventurous and was interested in maps, languages and cultures from across the globe. Her college studies were dominated by classes related to geography, cartography and the Mandarin Chinese language.

After graduating from Rutgers, she got married and began working as a cartographer and surveyor for a historical preservation and archaeology company.

"I learned a lot about local history, participated in archaeological digs and made some awesome maps, but I just wasn't truly happy and knew something was missing," she said.

That's when her husband, Rick, a former active-duty Airman, encouraged her to revive her childhood dreams of flight. Rettinger decided to pursue her private pilot license. Her obsession with flying quickly returned, and she earned her license in 2013.

About that time, she reached out to an Air Force Reserve recruiter to see if she could fly with the military. The recruiting process for aspiring aircrew members is more extensive than for their non-flying counterparts, said Rettinger's recruiter, Tech. Sgt. Andrew Davis. The enlistment process for a non-flyer takes approximately 30 to 45 days, he said, but an aircrew enlistment can take six to nine months.

"There are so many additional roadblocks and ways for applicants to get weeded out," Davis said.

Rettinger's major roadblock was that no other Air Force applicant had successfully enlisted into a KC-10 flight engineer position, but she was determined to fly as an aircrew member.

Davis had his doubts about trying to recruit a new Airman into a flying position, but he figured Rettinger was worth the effort because throughout the recruiting process, she was responsive, thorough and detail-oriented.

"In the three years I've been a recruiter, she's been my best applicant," he said.

So Davis and Rettinger talked with Chief Master Sgt. Robert Gozdur, chief engineer for the 78th Air Refueling Squadron, to see if his unit was willing to take on a brand new Airman. Gozdur said his squadron looks at a variety of factors when hiring a new flight engineer and must be especially careful when considering an "off-the-street" recruit.

But after interviewing Rettinger, Gozdur said the choice wasn't difficult at all.

"Her qualifications would have enabled her to apply for a pilot position, had she chosen that route," Gozdur said. "It's not just her education credentials that impressed us. Her cartography career and the maturity shown in her interview were also factors in the hiring decision."

Before welcoming Rettinger to the squadron, Gozdur had to secure the approval of the decision-makers at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, who promptly agreed that Rettinger was an exceptional candidate, worthy of a flight engineer position despite her lack of prior Air Force experience.

After completing basic military training and flight engineer technical training, Rettinger began flying with the 78th ARS in January 2015. So far, she said it's been everything she's dreamed of.

"I want to fly in the Reserve for as long as possible," she said.

But with a resume as strong as hers, Rettinger said she would consider switching seats in the future.

"As an engineer, I'm learning a lot about the airplane, and I already know I can fly," she said. "As much as I love the engineer seat, I would take a pilot job in a heartbeat."

And Rettinger still has an interest in space flight, but she said she's in no particular rush to pursue that path.

"I finally feel like I am back on track with my childhood dreams. I feel like this is where I belong, and I absolutely love it," she said. "I have no regrets with the other paths that I took before this one, but I'm happy that I finally found the right path for me."

Now, when Rettinger looks down from the clouds, she said she wonders if there are any little girls waving up at her, dreaming of flight.

(Jones is assigned to the 514th AMW public affairs office.)

(Editor's note: This article is a condensed version of an essay written by Gerald T. Cantwell, who served as director of historical services for Headquarters Air Force Reserve at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, from 1970 until his retirement in 1989. A World War II veteran who served as an Army paratrooper, Cantwell is the author of the book "Citizen Airman," a history of the Air Force Reserve from 1946 through 1994. This article was edited and abridged by Gregory T. Mattson, a current employee of the Air Force Reserve Command history office.)

During the height of the Cold War in the 1960s, the U.S. government became involved in a conflict in Southeast Asia in order to assist the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), an ally struggling against Communist forces that were aligned with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the People's Republic of China. Initially limited to material aid and advice, U.S. intervention in the region escalated substantially in 1964, when Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to deploy U.S. military personnel in force to South Vietnam under the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. All branches of the U.S. armed forces subsequently engaged in combat operations against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), the National Liberation Front (the Vietcong) and other regional Communist adversaries. In several diverse capacities, American air power played a critical role throughout the course of the Vietnam War.

Initially, Johnson avoided mobilizing reserve forces due to political considerations, fearing that the deployment of "part-time" military personnel to an overseas conflict would arouse widespread opposition to his administration and jeopardize his ambitious domestic programs. This policy created a perception that reserve units existed as draft-dodging havens and unreliable assets for contingency operations. However, the Air Force Reserve initiated missions to Southeast Asia as early as 1965. The degree of this participation increased steadily as the Vietnam War escalated and continued at varying degrees of intensity until the U.S. disengaged from the region in 1975.

Air Force Reserve participation in the Vietnam War commenced in the early months of 1965 with C-124 Globemaster II missions to Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam. Crewmen from the 935th Troop Carrier Group conducted these flights

out of Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base, Missouri. This group was one of five Reservist C-124 groups transferring from the 442nd Troop Carrier Wing to the 512th TCW that year. Allocated by Continental Air Command, these missions to South Vietnam provided the Reservist Airmen with valuable experience transporting passengers and cargo.

Each participating Air Force Reservist received an annual authorization of 24 inactive duty days and 15 active-duty training days. In addition, aircrews had 36 days per year allocated to flying operations to maintain skills, which the Military Air Transport Service often used for overseas missions. "Man-day" status provided duty days that were allocated for training and paid from the reserve personnel appropriation. For additional Air Force requirements, Reservists received pay from the military personnel appropriation as necessary.

With these pay systems, MATS and CONAC tasked Air Force Reserve aircrews with flights to Saigon and other locations across the Pacific Ocean for several months. Channel traffic through Travis AFB, California, by Reservist crews steadily increased from 440.6 tons in January 1965 to 1,148.6 tons in July. From October through March 1966, Air Force Reserve C-124 groups flew 41 missions to Saigon and Japan in support of the Vietnam War.

Reservist C-124 crews completed 1,252 missions to Southeast Asia for MATS and Military Airlift Command from January 1966 through November 1972, when the last C-124 departed the Reservist inventory. These Airmen expended a total of 95,395.2 aircraft hours and carried 27,125.7 tons of

cargo and 3,435 passengers on these trips. This activity reached its apex during fiscal year 1967 with C-124 Airmen flying 20,922.5 hours in 264 missions, delivering 7,031.5 tons and 1,238 passengers. At its peak this airlift service consisted of 19 groups equipped with 158 airframes.

Air Force Reserve C-124 contributions to operations in support of the Vietnam War continued in FY 1968. Along with 422 flights to Saigon, Reservist aircrews completed 228 missions totaling 17,571 hours transporting 4,255 tons and 397 passengers in support of the war effort. From May to October 1969, C-124 pilots participated in Operation Cold Shakey, relieving MAC's critical shortage of experienced aviators as the command phased the aircraft out of its strategic fleet.

Two significant events in East Asia expedited the increased mobilization of reserve forces in 1968. In the Sea of Japan, the North Koreans seized the USS Pueblo, a U.S. Navy intelligence-gathering vessel, and interned its crew in late January. The following week, North Vietnamese and NLF forces unleashed the Tet Offensive, striking several areas throughout South Vietnam, including the U.S. embassy in Saigon. These crises provoked the U.S. government into mobilizing about 15,000 air and naval reservists to backfill personnel from the strategic reserve, enabling active-duty air units to deploy to Korea without removing those stationed in Southeast Asia. However, the president maintained strict limits on reserve recalls that year as domestic opposition to the war grew substantially and became more vocal.

Air Force Reserve C-124 units mobilized in response to these two events consisted of the 349th Military Airlift Wing and 938th Military Airlift Group at Hamilton AFB, California; the 921st MAG at Kelly AFB, Texas; the 445th MAW and 918th MAG at Dobbins AFB, Georgia; the 904th MAG at Stewart AFB, New York; and the 941st MAG at McChord AFB, Washington. The 305th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron also mobilized from Selfridge AFB, Michigan, and took nine CH-97 Stratofreighters to the conflict in Southeast Asia. Collectively, these Reservist organizations brought 4,851 Airmen and 52 aircraft into the fight during this time period.

The C-124 aircrews mobilized in response to the Pueblo crisis quickly integrated into MAC global organization and commenced active-force missions. Within a month, they completed 76 overseas airlift missions, 29 of them to Southeast Asia.

The 349th MAW moved 22 of its 26 aircraft into the mobilization system within two weeks. During the first six months of the mobilization period, the wing completed 486 missions, flying 14,877.8 hours and delivering 1,452 passengers and 1,316.2 tons of freight. This total included 172 missions to Southeast Asia that transported 2,754 tons of cargo. Missions to the region decreased somewhat in later months as the 349th MAW and 445th MAW carried out additional taskings in Europe.

At McChord AFB, the 941st MAG began channel flights to Southeast Asia at the end of January 1968. "Missions poured

GLOBEMASTERS

Reservists and their C-124s played a critical role during the Vietnam War

A C-124 Globemaster II lands at Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base in Kansas City. The 442nd Troop Carrier Wing received the Air Force Reserve's first C-124s in April 1961 and flew these aircraft until 1971.

in from 22nd Air Force as fast as aircraft could be turned around," according to the group historian. "Four or five planes often occurred in the system simultaneously, and on two occasions in February all six aircraft were offshore." The group compiled an average daily utilization rate of 5.5 hours per aircraft.

Channel missions tended to follow the same route: McChord AFB to Hickam AFB, Hawaii, to Wake Island to Tachikawa Airbase, Japan, to Clark AB, Philippines, to Vietnam. Return flights traversed across the mid-Pacific channel through Mactan AB, Philippines, and Guam or Kadena AB, Okinawa. About half of the missions conducted by the 941st MAG shuttled between Japan and Kimpo, South Korea, before continuing to Vietnam. The most frequent terminus in Southeast Asia was Tan Son Nhut AB in Saigon, but flights occasionally went to other locations in South Vietnam or Thailand.

Reservist C-124 aircrews continued participating in overseas operations for several months. Airmen from the 349th MAW flew 1,092 missions from January 1968 through May 1969, 376 of them to Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the 445th MAW accounted for 387 missions, 46 of them to the region.

The 921st MAG historian described succinctly his group's involvement in the Vietnam War as it progressed in 1968: "Airlift operations to the Southeast Asia Theater began almost immediately following the active-duty call-up. By the middle of February, all nine assigned aircraft were out in the Military Airlift Command Pacific area, and for the first time since receiving C-124 aircraft two years ago, the Kelly ramp was empty. Six aircraft and crews met at Wake Island, some eastbound and some westbound."

One of the 941st MAG's crewmen garnered accolades for a heroic act. Capt. Robert B. Hutchins Jr. received a nomination for the Bronze Star and a Republic of Vietnam Medal for

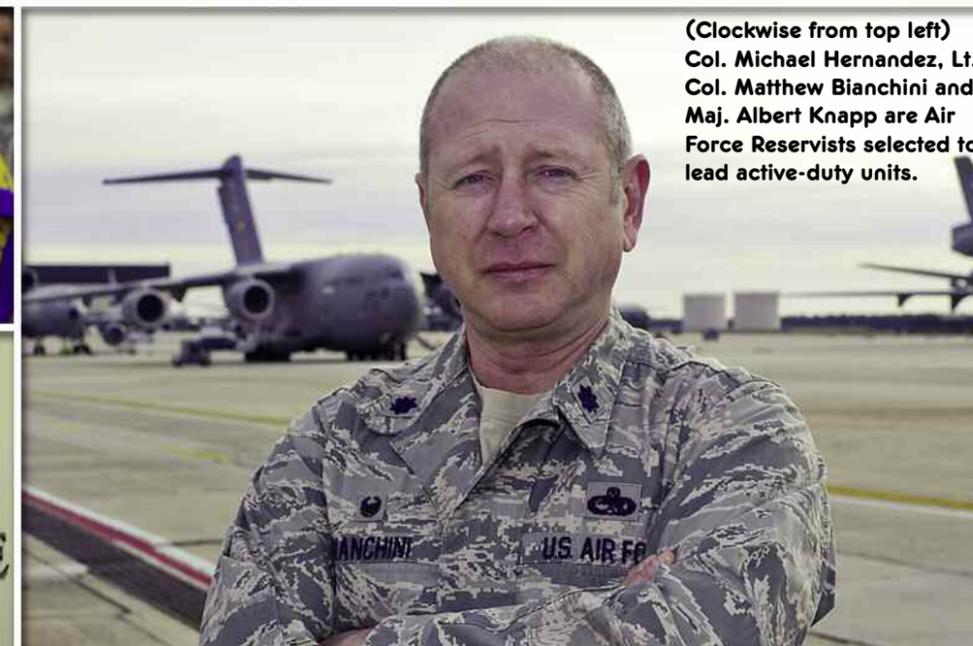
his actions at Tan Son Nhut AB on Nov. 1, 1968, during a rocket attack. At the request of the base command post, Hutchins and his crew removed from a ramp 19,200 pounds of explosives that were vulnerable to detonation from an enemy-launched projectile. As their aircraft departed, five rockets struck the base.

Air Force Reserve participation in the Vietnam War continued with less frequency during the conflict's later stages as the U.S. government gradually withdrew American military personnel from the region. However, the 1972 North Vietnamese Easter Offensive provoked an abrupt surge in flying missions to the theater of operations in support of U.S. and South Vietnamese armed forces endeavoring to blunt the invasion. MAC transported thousands of personnel and several tons of assets to the region, and Reservist crews participated in these airlifts, working on 18-hour schedules with reduced rest times.

Lacking sufficient numbers of navigators, MAC turned to Reserve units for such specialists. The 903rd MAG at McGuire AFB, New Jersey, and the 943rd MAG at Charleston AFB, South Carolina, received 135-150 mandays to render this service, while individual navigators from the 349th MAW from Hamilton AFB volunteered for tours of duty lasting up to 60 days.

After the Communist Easter Offensive slowed down and halted in the face of U.S. and South Vietnamese countermeasures, Air Force Reserve personnel participated in actions aimed at disengaging American forces from the region and helping the South Vietnamese armed forces assume primary responsibility for the war effort. This participation continued until the end of the conflict in 1975, when Reservists assisted with the evacuation of U.S. citizens and refugees as the North Vietnamese Army swept through the south and conquered Saigon.

A deploying Air Force Reserve C-124 crew of the 349th Military Airlift Wing, Hamilton Air Force Base, California, awaits clearance at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, to continue its airlift mission to Southeast Asia in 1967.



(Clockwise from top left) Col. Michael Hernandez, Lt. Col. Matthew Bianchini and Maj. Albert Knapp are Air Force Reservists selected to lead active-duty units.

Three Reservists selected to command active-duty units

By Philip F. Rhodes

Three Air Force Reserve officers will be leading active-duty units after being selected under the Voluntary Extended Active Duty Tour program.

EAD tours assign Reservists to active-duty units to help meet active force requirements. The assignments are part of a larger initiative to leverage total force capabilities that includes assigning active-duty officers to lead Air Force Reserve units.

The three Reservists selected to command active-duty units are:

- Col. Michael Hernandez, 482nd Fighter Wing vice commander, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida, who will command the 325th FW at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida.
- Lt. Col. Matthew Bianchini, 514th Maintenance Squadron commander, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, who will lead the 736th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Dover AFB, Delaware.
- Maj. Albert Knapp, Air Force Reserve Command Directorate for Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection executive officer, who will command the 56th MXS at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.

They join Lt. Col. Michael Giedt, who is currently on an EAD tour as deputy commander of the 23rd MXS at Moody AFB, Georgia. "Their selection speaks highly of their qualifications and continued outstanding performance," said Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, AFRC commander. "I am confident they will excel in these command opportunities."

Hernandez is the first air reserve component colonel in recent history to be selected to lead a regular Air Force wing. His career has been a blend of total force assignments. He spent 16 1/2 years on active duty, is a former active-duty F-22 squadron commander, and has racked up more than 2,900 flying hours in the F-22, F-16 and T-38.

"I'm thankful for the opportunity the Air Force is giving me to lead the wing," Hernandez said. "This is another example of the Air Force's commitment to the total force."

The selections are part of a growing crossflow of active-duty and Reserve members.

Col. Robert Bruckner is a RegAF officer serving as vice com-

mander of the Reserve's 919th Special Operations Wing at Duke Field, Florida. Lt. Col. Stuart Rubio is an AD member from Air Mobility Command's squadron commander list and will lead the Reserve's 815th Airlift Squadron at Keesler AFB, Mississippi.

Col. Robert Graham is a Reservist who is winding up a tour in an active-duty command billet. He is serving as the 436th Airlift Wing vice commander at Dover AFB, Delaware. And Col. Jim Lackey just finished a tour as the active-duty vice wing commander at Vance AFB, Oklahoma.

"These actions serve to strengthen the Air Force enterprise to help build the future force we need," Jackson said.

The three Air Force Reserve selectees bring extensive experience to their positions and went through a rigorous screening process. Candidates are selected by their development teams and must be on the AFRC Command Screening Board list. The names are then vetted and approved by a panel of general officers. After that, the active-duty command screening board considers them for assignment to fill command opportunities.

Both Knapp and Bianchini come highly qualified. With a combined 52 years of maintenance experience on multiple airframes and multiple deployments to Southwest Asia, they understand the rigors and responsibilities of command.

"I'm excited and energized," said Bianchini, a maintainer for 27 years. He served 12 years as an enlisted guidance and control technician, got commissioned in 1998, has held command positions at two Reserve wings, served as a Pentagon action officer, and has deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. "This is an awesome opportunity that I hope opens more doors for other Reservists."

"I think we are forging new ground [with the EAD program] that will open opportunities that didn't exist in the past", Knapp said. "Anything is possible. I'm beyond excited and ready to go do this job."

For more information about the Voluntary Extended Active Duty Tour program, including details about other opportunities for Reservists to serve, visit the myPers website at https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/30624/kw/vlpad/p/16,17.

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

PARTING SHOT



Tech. Sgt. Brandon Zangeneh of the 932nd Maintenance Squadron at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, stands inside the wheel compartment of a C-40 aircraft during a routine detailed inspection. The 932nd Airlift Wing is the only Air Force Reserve Command unit that flies the C-40C, which is used to provide world-class airlift for U.S. national and military leaders. (Christopher Parr)