

CITIZEN AIRMAN

August 2018

**EARTHWORMS AND THE AIR FORCE RESERVE
HOW THEY INSPIRED THIS MOLECULAR BIOLOGIST**



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From the Top

 @AFRCCommander

TO REMAIN COMBAT READY, WE MUST CONTINUE TO EVOLVE, ADAPT

We live in a world that is constantly changing. Today, technology evolves at a rapid pace. The global-geopolitical environment is always in flux. Equipment, strategy, tactics, theaters of operation and adversaries shift over time. If our Air Force Reserve is to remain a combat-ready force, we must continue to evolve and adapt.

Stagnation breeds obsolescence. Even the most cutting-edge organization will eventually become outdated if it only maintains the status quo. This drives the need for continual improvement. We must constantly enhance our current capabilities, our operations and, most importantly, our organization.

However, if we only seek to improve, we may not be prepared to execute the right missions. We must anticipate future requirements and threats, and adapt accordingly. Our current way forward is defined by the National Defense Strategy. This document outlines how the Department of Defense will field a combat ready joint force to protect our nation's security in tomorrow's operating environment.

The National Defense Strategy was the focus of the recent wing commander and command chief's conference, which was held last month. During this two-day event, your wing leadership team met with Air Force Reserve senior leaders to discuss ongoing readiness initiatives, including implementing the NDS, resourcing and human capital management needs.

However, these initiatives are not just the responsibility of your senior leaders. Every single Reserve Citizen Airman has a part to play when it comes to improving our Air Force Reserve. Therefore, I'd like to highlight some of the command's current focus areas.

The purpose of the Air Force Reserve is to provide a combat-ready force ... to fly, fight and win. We maintain our readiness through training, and it is critical that we align our training to meet mission objectives and counter current threats. In order to achieve a more mission-focused training environment, we must reduce tasks that do not directly contribute to the overall readiness of the force. To meet this objective, commanders have been authorized to defer or re-align these tasks at their discretion.

If the Air Force Reserve is to remain effective, we must also adapt how we operate. Therefore, we are seeking new and improved ways to do business, by encouraging innovation at all levels of the organization. Another initiative to enhance operations and improve interoperability is determining how to best facilitate information sharing and sync operations between units, both in and across our wings.

One major change in our operations is the implementation of the Dynamic Force Employment concept, which is outlined in the NDS.

This calls for a flexible, rapid response with a scalable force. Therefore, the Air Force Reserve is looking at our current deployment models to determine how we can meet this requirement while maintaining predictable deployment cycles for our Airmen.

These are just a few examples of current initiatives and focus areas. We continue to evaluate our force structure, equipment and infrastructure to ensure we are properly manned and equipped. In addition, we are examining medical readiness and taking action to reduce the timeline for medical reviews. Recruiting, retention and human capital management remain high priorities for the command, as does the development of current and future leaders across all ranks.

These ongoing initiatives will continue to improve the operational capabilities, training, moral and quality of life for our Reserve Citizen Airmen. If we continue to foster an innovative environment for our people, they will improve the Air Force Reserve from within. I challenge each and every one of you to do just that. It is an honor to serve side-by-side with the greatest Airmen this country puts forward, and I thank you for all you do.



Maryanne Miller

MARYANNE MILLER
Lieutenant General
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command

Chief's View

 @AFRC.CCC

IMAS PLAY CRITICAL ROLE IN OUR SUCCESS

As I travel across the command and spend time with our Airmen, I find that Individual Mobilization Augmentees consistently experience unique challenges.

From my perspective, many of these challenges stem from the fact that IMAs are not connected to the rest of the command in the same way as other statuses.

One reason is the shared operational and administrative control. Other challenges arise because of the lack of understanding on how our IMAs fit into the overall strategic mission of Air Force Reserve Command. I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the work that is being done to support our IMA program.

First, let's talk about connectedness and relationships. About four years ago, the Headquarters Readiness Integration Organization aligned under the Air Reserve Personnel Center, which also realigned some personnel and processes.

While it has taken time to grow into the new structure, listen to feedback and identify opportunities to improve, I am happy to say that today there is an unprecedented collaborative and synergistic relationship between HQ RIO, ARPC and all levels of AFRC.

For our enlisted, one opportunity for collaboration is at the Air Force Reserve Senior Enlisted Council. One of the council's primary goals is to ensure all of our Reserve Citizen Airmen have opportunities to broaden their skill sets and expand and further develop the capabilities they bring to the fight.

With the support of ARPC and HQ RIO, we increased participation of our IMAs on enlisted boards across the spectrum, to include the Command Development Team, Enlisted Development Education Board, Stripes for Exceptional Performers II Board and functional developmental education boards.

We have also streamlined the force development application process for our enlisted IMAs, so they are connected to the Reserve chain of command and have representation similar to that of our Airmen who are assigned to a numbered Air Force or headquarters.

In addition, we expanded nominative course positions for senior enlisted leaders. We still have work to do to integrate our IMAs into our enlisted grade structure, but I am extremely pleased with the progress we have made this past year.

HQ RIO is implementing innovative new means to connect the IMA community. The RIO Connect IMA Mobile Wingman app gives IMAs easy access to the tools and information they need to manage their careers.

It allows users to access content from the HQ RIO website on their mobile devices and receive critical career impacting information, such as Outstanding Airmen of the Year and STEP II nominations. Another new platform in development is Desktop Anywhere, which will increase connectivity by giving Airmen access to personnel services from their home computers.

Additionally, IMA pay processes are moving to myPers, which will increase much needed transparency in tracking and accountability, ensure timely pay, and make submissions more efficient and accessible.

Reserve Citizen Airmen are key to our nation's success. We are always there, in every mission and every domain, and our IMAs are an integral part of that mission. Be assured your voice is being heard and together we will continue to strengthen our Airmen and our missions.

I would like to thank Chief Master Sgt. Jeannette Masters, ARPC/CCC, for helping me understand the important value of our IMA community. The support her staff exhibits on a daily basis is integral to the overall mission readiness of all Reserve IMAs.

Ericka & Kelly

ERICKA KELLY
Chief Master Sergeant
Command Chief Master Sergeant
Air Force Reserve Command



CITIZEN AIRMAN

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An Air Force Reserve pararescueman from the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, jumps out of an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter during the second annual Salute to American Heroes Air and Sea Show, in Miami Beach. This two-day event showcased military fighter jets and other aircraft and equipment from all branches of the United States military. (Staff Sgt. Jared Trimarchi)

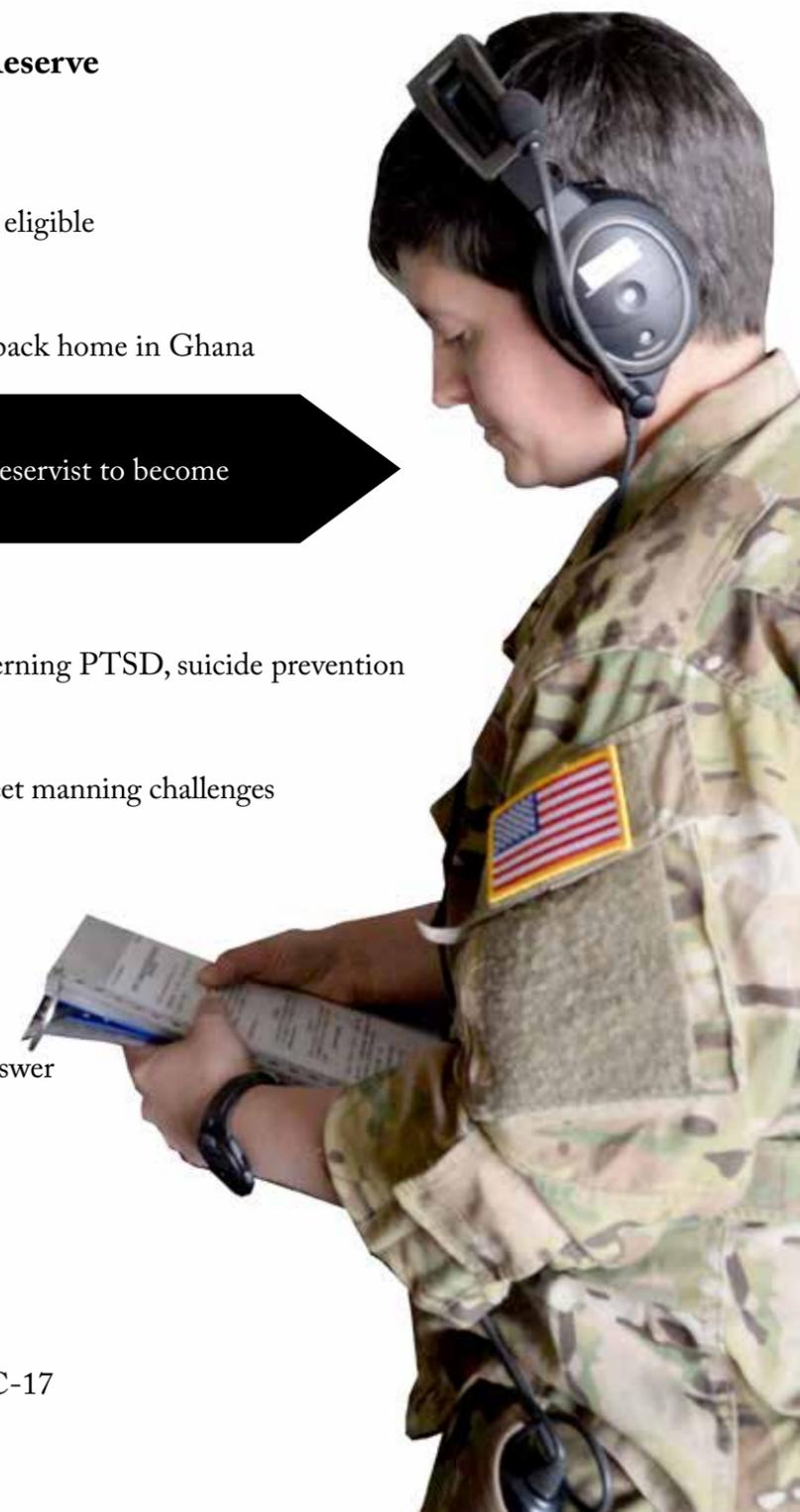


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On the cover: Master Sgt. Michael Guderyon conducts research using stem cells in San Antonio. A Reserve Citizen Airman with the 307th Bomb Wing's maintenance squadron, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, Guderyon is also a doctoral student studying methods to conduct bone marrow transplants in a less invasive manner. The research is designed to help cure a host of diseases and extend the life of patients. (Charlotte Anthony)

Master Sgt. Michael Guderyon, a traditional Reservist with the 307th Bomb Wing's maintenance squadron, stands in front of a B-52 Stratofortress bomber at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, where he serves as a structural maintenance mechanic. As a civilian, Guderyon is studying for his doctorate in biology of the aging at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. (Master Sgt. Ted Daigle)

EARTHWORMS AND THE AIR FORCE RESERVE

HOW THEY INSPIRED THIS MOLECULAR BIOLOGIST // BY MASTER SGT. TED DAIGLE

Think earthworms aren't important? Don't tell that to Master Sgt. Michael Guderyon. The slim, little earth-dwellers, along with some help from the Air Force Reserve, literally changed the trajectory of his life.

Growing up in the small town of Mamou, Louisiana, Guderyon lacked ambition, direction and drive. Uninterested in school, he seemed to be on a fast-track to nowhere.

Not many in Guderyon's family had graduated high school and few people in his small town could see the potential that would one day allow Guderyon to become a doctoral student conducting stem cell research on incurable diseases, especially one serving as a senior non-commissioned officer in the Air Force Reserve.

"The importance of academics was never really stressed to me growing up," said Guderyon, who now possesses a master's degree in biochemistry and molecular biology. "My plan was to drop out of high school and just sort of see where life took me."

Those plans changed suddenly one day when his high school biology teacher showed Guderyon an article on how scientists actually extended the life span of earthworms from a couple of weeks to several months.

Guderyon asked the teacher why the same could not be done in humans. His teacher shocked the young student, first by admitting he didn't know the answer, and then by challenging him to go to college and find out.

Suddenly excited about the prospect of going to college, he still struggled with two major obstacles, a lack of discipline and the necessary funds to further his education.

A visit to an Air Force Reserve recruiter solved both those issues by introducing Guderyon to a whole new way of thinking.

"Growing up in a small town, I thought small," he said. "Everything in the Air Force was just the opposite of that mindset and it gave me the discipline and the responsibility to overcome character flaws that held me back earlier in life."

Armed with a new outlook on life, Guderyon entered a local community college, earning an associate's degree in science before moving on to study mechanical engineering at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette.

In the Air Force Reserve, Guderyon had grown to love his work as a structural maintenance mechanic, but found himself bored with his mechanical engineering studies in college. He thought back to his conversation with his former high school teacher, and began pursuing a course of study on aging research, hoping that one day he could help people live longer, more productive lives.

"There weren't many mentors in the area of aging research at Louisiana-Lafayette and I wasn't sure if I should pursue a biology route or a chemistry route, so I did both," he said.



Guderyon checks the maintenance log of a B-52 Stratofortress. As a Reserve Citizen Airman, he serves as a structural maintenance mechanic. As a civilian, he is a doctoral student doing research using stem cells to find cures for more than 25 different diseases. (Master Sgt. Ted Daigle)



Guderyon studies a lab sample. He has leveraged his military background to become a doctoral student at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. (Charlotte Anthony)

Guderyon is now a doctoral student at University of Texas—San Antonio doing aging research on a new method of conducting bone marrow transplants with stem cells. The research is designed to make the procedure open to more patients and heal more diseases. In spite of the academic workload, Guderyon still managed to deploy twice with the 307th Bomb Wing, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, while earning his degrees.

"The military comes first," he said. "Even with the deployments, the Air Force Reserve still gives me the flexibility to contribute to my country and still pursue my education."

Currently, bone-marrow transplants are only available for a few types of diseases due to the highly toxic nature of the procedure. It requires heavy doses of radiation and chemotherapy, which is very traumatic for the patient. So, the procedure is limited to patients whose condition is life-threatening.

Using stem cells, Guderyon and a team of researchers have discovered how to perform the same bone marrow transplant using a simple intravenous procedure using much safer reagents, all of which are FDA approved. By only using an IV, bone marrow transplant proce-

dures can be open to patients with serious, but not necessarily life threatening diseases.

"In theory, we can potentially cure or treat more than 25 different diseases including Parkinson's, sickle-cell anemia and HIV," he said.

Guderyon plans to get his doctorate and bring the new procedure out of the lab and into hospitals where it can begin helping patients. In the meantime, he plans to continue serving his country in the Air Force Reserve. He also hopes to combine his desire to serve with his passion for aging research.

(Daigle is assigned to the 307th Bomb Wing public affairs office at Barksdale.)

SOME ARTS ELIGIBLE FOR AVIATION BONUS

BY STAFF SGT. CIARA GOSIER

Air Force Reserve Command is expanding its Aviation Bonus Program to qualifying Air Reserve Technicians as part of an effort to increase rated aircrew retention.

“For years, eligible AGR (Active Guard and Reserve) pilots received bonuses of up to \$25,000 per year. However, far fewer ART pilots were qualifying for similar incentives until very recently,” said Col. Mike LoForti, commander of the Reserve’s 920th Rescue Wing Operations Group, Patrick Air Force Base, Florida.

The request for ART retention incentives has increased dramatically recently, but the process is laborious, compared to applying for an AGR bonus, LoForti said. As a result, the command is looking at ways to streamline or simplify the process for commanders.

The former Aviation Bonus Program was only approved for AGR positions. Changes to the program expand the bonus opportunities to ARTs who meet specific requirements.

“The target audience, which is the rated ART community, has already shown strong interest in the program,” said Christopher Vorse, AFRC’s chief of rated aircrew management.

Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller, AFRC commander and chief of the Air Force Reserve, said when it comes to the pilot shortage, the most challenging part isn’t attracting pilots, it’s keeping them.

She explained that AFRC, as a whole, is able to bring in a sufficient number of new pilots, but retaining them for the long term continues to be very problematic. This new incentive is in line with efforts to retain more pilots.

During the Senate Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on Defense hearing in April, Miller further addressed the pilot shortage and its ramifications.

“In response to these challenges, we’ve implemented bonuses, incentive pay and special salary rates for our pilots and maintenance force,” she said. “Though this approach has positively impacted retention, it may not be sufficient for the long term. We need to continue to discuss other full-time support options and incentives with your staff and we need to garner support for these options to improve our full-time manning.”

The Aviation Bonus Program is designed to both bring more ARTs into the Reserve and to retain them.

“The AvB competes with the economy when (commercial airline) pilots are retiring,” said Vorse. “This is a way to get ahead and close that gap. Every day there are new applicants to the program.”

Eligible ARTs will receive a bonus of up to \$18,000 while AGRs will now receive up to \$35,000.

Interested pilots have until Dec. 31 to apply.

AGR or ART aviators must meet the following minimum requirements to be eligible for an AvB agreement:

- ❑ Must be qualified for operational flying duty in accordance with Air Force Instruction 11-401, Aviation Management, and AFI 11-402, Aviation and Parachutist Service, Aeronautical Ratings and Aviation Badges, and meet all other requirements for their particular aviation career specialty.

- ❑ Must be entitled to and receiving Aviation Incentive Pay at the time of agreement.

- ❑ Must be in the pay grade of O-5 or below at the time of the agreement effective date. Promotion to O-6 does not prohibit member from completing the agreement and receiving payments.

- ❑ Must have completed the initial Undergraduate Flying Training service commitment. Individuals who have joined the Reserve through the Palace Chase program must have 10 years active service (pilots) or six years active service (combat systems officer, air battle manager or remotely piloted aircraft pilot) since UFT graduation.

- ❑ Must have less than 24 years active service at the time of agreement effective date to be eligible for the minimum length agreement of one year.

- ❑ Must not be awaiting involuntary separation under AFI 36-3206, Administrative Discharge Procedures for Commissioned Officers.

- ❑ Must not have been dismissed or discharged for cause.

- ❑ Must not have retired or separated for any reason authorized under any provision of law or policy.

- ❑ Must not be awaiting an operational flying disqualification resulting from a Flying Evaluation Board or a medical disqualification.

- ❑ May not perform leave without pay in any type of civilian status away from their ART position. ARTs must not use more than 31 consecutive days and no more than 60 cumulative days of leave without pay in the bonus year and still receive the bonus.

The Air Force Reserve is committed to retaining experienced Reserve Citizen Airmen with skills in critical demand, like pilots, maintenance technicians, space operators, cyber specialists and more.

(Gosier is assigned to the public affairs office at Air Force Reserve Command headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.)

In an effort to improve pilot retention, Air Force Reserve Command is expanding its Aviation Bonus Program to qualifying Air Reserve Technicians.



SAVING LIVES

CITIZEN AIRMAN TEACHING CRITICAL SKILLS BACK HOME IN GHANA

BY MASTER SGT. MARK OLSEN

Serving locally, making a global impact is what is expected of every Reserve Citizen Airman.

Senior Airman Selina N. Okyere takes it to a whole new level.

“I want to teach everyone in Ghana basic life-saving skills,” said Okyere.

This is no easy task. The Republic of Ghana is the size of Oregon with nearly 29 million people.

Yet, she is succeeding.

In January, Ghana-born Okyere, who is assigned to the 514th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, visited three high schools in the city of Kumasi. At one location, she taught basic life-saving skills to more than 5,000 students. This summer she plans to return to certify the teachers so they can build it into their curriculum.

Before joining the 514th Air Mobility Wing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, in 2016, Okyere was with the New York Army National Guard’s 69th Infantry Battalion. During her training, she took a combat lifesaver course.

The course was an epiphany for Okyere. She realized she could teach what she had learned in Ghana. It also gave her a purpose.

“I believe you don’t have to be a health professional to save a person’s life.”

Okyere created Global Life Savers, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization and in 2016 it was incorporated and granted 501 status.

With her own money, she bought six blocks of land in Kumasi.

Okyere is in the process of raising \$500,000 to finish the school.

“The foundation is laid and I hope the school will be open in three to five years,” said Okyere.

The public’s lack of life-saving skills has had a personal impact on Okyere.

In February, a friend of hers, famous Ghanaian singer Ebony Reigns, was injured and later died in a traffic accident.

“Everybody stood around and took photos; no one stepped forward to help because they didn’t know what to do,” she said.

Ghana will benefit from Okyere’s training. After she completes her schooling as a medical technician, she plans on getting her nursing degree.

“The knowledge I get here, I can take back to Ghana and maximize what I do there.”

In Ghana, few people outside the medical field know life-saving or even basic first aid skills – not even members of the military, police and fire departments.

“My priority is the police,” said Okyere. “With this training they can save more lives.”

This is critical, because in large cities, the traffic is congested nearly 24 hours a day. That means it might take an ambulance 45 minutes to get to the hospital. And because most ambulances are not

equipped with life-saving equipment, if your injury is life threatening, chances are you will die before you make it to the hospital.

“The police are the solution because they are the first responders when there is an accident.”

The key is getting buy-in from the government. Okyere is working on setting up classes at the 10 regional police training schools in Ghana.

“I reached out to the inspector general of the Ghana police because in order to make this happen, it will have to be mandated from the top down,” she said.

Okyere is also working with Dr. Anthony Akoto Osei, the Ghanaian minister for monitoring and evaluation. Akoto Osei set up the teaching opportunities at the three Kumasi high schools.

“He understands and endorses the need for this training,” said Okyere.

In the meantime, Okyere is buying training aids, such as CPR manikins, as well as first aid kits for every school to go along with the training.

“I want a curriculum that starts at the elementary level and builds on it through high school,” she said. “I want to build a generation of life savers.”

Okyere has also taken those life-saving skills on the road to churches and sporting events. That training is paying off.

In the town of Ejisu Asaman, one of Okyere’s students saved a man who had a heart attack. In the past, that person would have died. Because of that class, that person lived.

“This is not one persons’ problem; it can happen to anybody. We are all in this together,” said Okyere.

(Olsen is assigned to the 514th AMW’s office of public affairs.)



Senior Airman Selina Okyere, a crew chief with the 514th Air Mobility Wing, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, poses with a CPR manikin. Okyere created a nonprofit organization to teach basic first aid skills to the citizens of the Republic of Ghana. (Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen). Previous page, Okyere teaches life-saving techniques to students at Al-Azhariya Senior High School, Kumasi, Ghana. (Courtesy photo)



FIRED UP

WATCHING THE BLACK FOREST BURN INSPIRED RESERVIST TO BECOME A MAFFS LOADMASTER

BY STAFF SGT. FRANK CASCIOTTA

Annie had just found a decent vantage point to get a better look at the infamous Black Forest fire as it was burning near her hometown of Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 2013 when she spotted an aircraft dropping a line of bright orange retardant on the outskirts of the wildfire. At the time, she had no idea that she would be flying as part of the crew in one of those aircraft herself one day.

“I just remember thinking, ‘they are doing that firefighting mission. That has to be the coolest job ever,’” said Staff Sgt. Annie Lepillez, one of the 731st Airlift Squadron’s newest Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System-qualified loadmasters.

Joining the Air Force Reserve was the furthest thing from Lepillez’s mind when she graduated from college in 2011 with a degree in aviation. Her plan was to be an air traffic controller with the Federal Aviation Administration, but that was not to be.

“Unfortunately, I graduated while there were budget cuts that resulted in a three-year hiring freeze,” she said.

She ended up working odd jobs until having a conversation with her brother-in-law, who at the time was an Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft pilot.

“He said, ‘if you’re going to look into enlisting I recommend anything that will bring you close to an airplane,’” said Lepillez.

Taking his advice, she met with a recruiter who set up a meeting with Reserve loadmasters at the 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado.

While meeting with the loadmasters, she connected the dots and realized these were the people dropping retardant from the C-130 during the fire she saw.

“I thought to myself, ‘you’re kidding me, that’s something you can do?’” she said.

About four years and more than 900 flying hours later as a C-130 loadmaster, Lepillez is now among those qualified to fly on MAFFS missions after the annual MAFFS recertification training sponsored by the U.S.D.A Forest Service held at McClellan Reload Base in Sacramento, California, April 22 through 27.

Lepillez was on her second MAFFS training sortie of the day when

Staff Sgt. Annie Lepillez, a 731st Airlift Squadron loadmaster, poses for a photo before a training mission in April. Lepillez is one of the newest MAFFS-certified loadmasters assigned to the 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. (Maj. Jolene Bottor-Ortiona)

the pilot let the aircrew know they were headed back to base. Her instructor walked over, fist-bumped her and handed her their squadron’s MAFFS patch. She completed her certification.

“That was such an awesome moment,” said Lepillez, who was named the Air Force Reserve Command 2016 Enlisted Aircrew Member of the Year. “I’m so grateful just to be able to take part in a mission like this.”

Becoming a MAFFS-certified loadmaster is strictly voluntary. Before loadmasters are considered for the position, they must have at least 750 flying hours and be evaluated by the entire aircrew, which includes a pilot, co-pilot, navigator, flight engineer and other loadmasters already MAFFS-qualified.

“MAFFS loadmasters are our most experienced and highly qualified,” said Master Sgt. Thomas Freeman, a 731st AS evaluator loadmaster and Lepillez’s MAFFS instructor.

Freeman, who flew missions during the Black Forest fire, has been flying MAFFS missions since 1991 and has helped train more than 100 loadmasters on MAFFS throughout his career.

“It’s very challenging. The learning curve is more like a 90 degree angle than a curve,” said Freeman.

Typically, loadmasters are responsible for loading, securing and escorting cargo and passengers before and during flight. They calculate proper weight distribution for cargo and oversee the safety of any passengers. On a MAFFS mission they fill that same role in addition to and making various adjustments to the MAFFS unit during flight and ensuring it releases retardant as needed. They are also in charge of overseeing the refilling of the MAFFS unit.

“The co-pilot is actually the one who presses the button to drop the retardant,” Lepillez said. “Our job is to make sure everything else is good to go as far as having proper air compression, making sure the hydraulics are functioning and using the control panel to set the amount of coverage we will drop on the pass. We also make sure the emergency dump system is ready as well just in case something malfunctions.”

Lepillez is a traditional reservist and when she’s not serving her country at the 302nd AW, she’s busy managing her own small business in Colorado Springs selling and making fresh crepes. She says her inspiration for the business comes from having spent time in France while growing up and making crepes on Sunday mornings with her family.

(Casciotta is assigned to the 302nd AW’s office of public affairs.)

'THE EPIDEMIC HAS TO STOP'

WIDOW VOWS TO SPREAD AWARENESS CONCERNING PTSD, SUICIDE PREVENTION

BY MAJ. CATHLEEN SNOW

Air Force veteran Stacey Pavenski, 46, of Palm Bay, Florida, has post traumatic stress disorder, but she didn't get it from serving in combat. It came from her husband's combat struggles that drove him to take his own life in their bedroom, Sept. 18, 2017, while she was in the kitchen. He was 45.

That fateful day has led her on a journey to bring awareness to PTSD and traumatic brain injury disorders that lead 22 veterans a day to take their own lives. During PTSD awareness month, she has joined forces with several non-profit organizations that provide assistance to those suffering with PTSD and has vowed to share her story and get the resources out there to help others.

Wearing shorts and a T-shirt with the words 'Not All Wounds are Visible' broadcasting her new mantra, she shares glimpses into her life as a military spouse and as someone living with PTSD.

She met her husband, Master Sgt. Pete Pavenski, at Moron Air Base, Spain, where she was stationed in 2002. They fell in love and she left the service to be with him. They were married in 2010.

"He was such a good man," said Stacey, describing her husband as her best friend and a selfless servicemember who saved lives as part of an Air Force Reserve rescue unit.

With 10 years serving on active duty and another 10 serving in the Air Force Reserve as an aerial gunner, Pete saw a lot of action. He performed duties in the back of a combat-search-and-rescue helicopter where he took part in dangerous rescue missions on the battlefield, saving the lives of an untold number of injured servicemembers. But the missions got to him.

He was plagued with PTSD and sought help. Stacey even went with him to counseling to try to understand his plight.

That dark September night after a seemingly normal argument, Pete calmly walked past Stacey. A few minutes later he yelled to Stacey, "This is going to be loud!" He then pulled the trigger and shot himself.

"What I heard, what I saw and what I continue to relive in my head daily is why I have PTSD. It never goes away.

"Pete got rid of his pain, but now everyone has pain," said Stacey, referring to the couple's entire family.

"I don't want anyone else to have to die."

Pete's death also came as a shock to his squadron members, a very tight-knit group of helicopter aircrew personnel. Pete was the unit jokester, and no one saw his suicide coming.

"We had no idea and that's what was unnerving for us," said Chief Master Sgt. Randolph Wells, 301st RQS chief enlisted manager.

The chief recalls one particular mission that really got to Pete when he and his crew were flying in the hotly contested Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Oct. 31, 2011. "While on the ground performing casualty evacuations, bullets from an enemy sniper entered the cabin area narrowly missing him."

Stacey hails her husband as a hero.

As a veteran herself, she describes being an Air Force spouse as "way more difficult" than serving.

"When you have to function in everyday life and worry about your spouse; when they call from a far you have to be upbeat. You have to put that face on for them," she said.

"When he came back, I started to notice the irritability. I noticed the isolation. He was always tired. He didn't want to play his guitar anymore. There was a little more drinking than normal. And he woke up with nightmares, just agitated, irritable," Stacey recalled.

"Even though it was difficult for me, living with it as the spouse, I was not going to be a statistic. Meaning, I wasn't going to divorce him. I was going to stick through it, thick and thin. But it became a statistic in another way," she said.

Now Stacey's mission is to get the resources out about PTSD and to "talk about it."

For Stacey, PTSD came with myriad symptoms, one of them being nightmares that continued to haunt her until relief finally came in the form of a 67-pound service dog named Memphis Belle who rests at her feet while she talks nervously in a soft voice that reveals her fragility.

Midnight Sun Service Dogs in Alaska learned about Stacey's difficulties through Pete's squadron, the 301st Rescue Squadron, and gifted her the jet black Labradoodle two months ago. The company trains and places service dogs with wounded military members and veterans and prides itself on specializing in PTSD therapy dogs.

Now when Stacey experiences nightmares, Memphis Belle's training kicks in and Stacey finds herself face-to-face with a wet nose and tongue nudging her awake. Memphis Belle is trained to detect when her handler is struggling with difficult emotions that erupt unforeseen.

Stacey explained that Memphis Belle can also detect her uneasiness with crowds, another one of her symptoms, and shields Stacey by leaning against her legs to let her know 'she's got this.'

Not only does Memphis Belle protect her from potentially stressful situations, but she soothes her when she detects Stacey's emotions heightening by placing her heart-shaped velvety football-sized head on Stacey's lap.

"Suicide does not discriminate," said Stacey pointing to the recent news of celebrity suicides of Anthony Bourdain and Kate Spade.

"PTSD sucks," she said. "Suicide is real."

She explained that you have to have a support system. When she gets to a tipping point, she has a list of loved ones she calls.

"I called my mom to tell her I didn't want to be here anymore. We talked through it. I'm still here. If my mom doesn't answer the phone, I call someone else."

Stacey said her life is not about that one single moment.

"When you feel like life is so hard and you're ready to end your pain, realize that there are a lot of people who love you and you are putting it all on the people who love and care about you," she said

"If I can talk about it (suicide) and get other people on board, they might have the knowledge, the know-how to get themselves out of it."

She explained how the color teal is for PTSD awareness; and the color purple represents suicide. "Not all wounds are visible," she emphasized, but the colors help make them easier to see.

"As difficult as it is to talk about it, we have to deal with it."

She said she's working on her grief. "Time is the hard part, being alone. You have to find reasons to laugh. It doesn't mean you ever forget."

Since Memphis Belle came into the picture, she gets out more. Her new furry companion with gray bushy eyebrows like Einstein is a welcome sight. "She's a big dog, she needs exercise. I have to play with her, take her out. She makes me laugh. She's perfect."

Not only does Memphis Belle help Stacey, but Stacey regularly sees a therapist at the local Veterans Administration, takes medication and leans on her tight circle of friends and family for support.

"My focus is my purpose," she said deliberately.

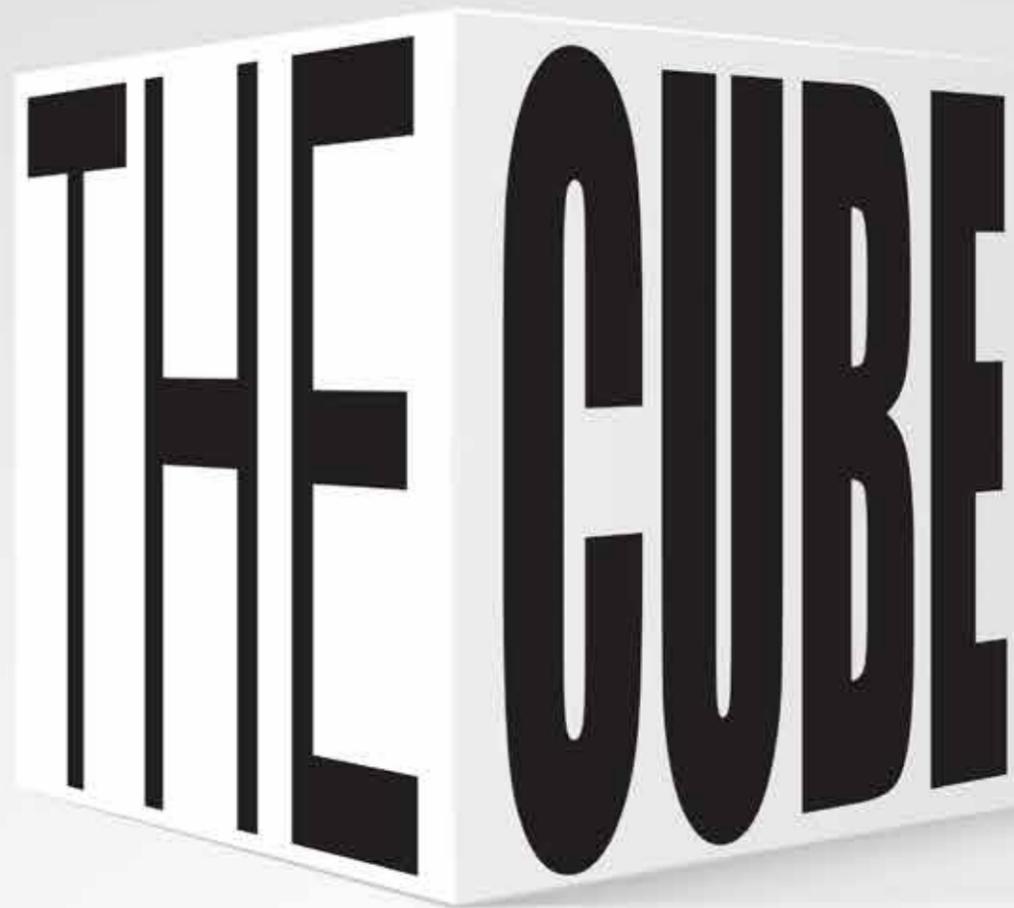
She wants those who are hurting and may be contemplating suicide to have access to the resources and she wants them to know they are not alone. She said PTSD does not have to mean suicide.

"The epidemic has to stop."

(Snow is the public affairs officer for the 920th Rescue Wing.)

Stacey Pavenski gets help coping with post traumatic stress disorder from her service dog, Memphis Belle. Stacey's PTSD resulted from her husband's combat struggles that drove him to take his own life in 2017. Master Sgt. Pete Pavenski is shown in the inset photo. Stacey is determined to bring awareness to PTSD and suicide prevention. (Maj. Cathleen Snow)





NEW RESERVE INITIATIVE DESIGNED TO HELP COMMAND MEET MANNING CHALLENGES

BY BO JOYNER

Air Force Reserve Command just fielded a new weapon in its ongoing effort to positively impact recruiting, readiness and retention. It's called the Cube, and it brings together many of the key players in the Reserve's quest to meet its manning challenges.

"Each wing in the Air Force Reserve has recently been staffed with two additional people who will work together with the people whose job has always been to positively impact manning," said Col. Lisa Craig, the director of manpower, personnel and services at AFRC headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

The new people are the career assistance advisor and the civilian personnel liaison. They will combine with the senior force support officer and the recruiting flight chief to form four sides of the Cube. "Our Airmen and our leadership at every level round out the six-sided cube. Each of these members provides a critical piece of the manning challenge puzzle," Craig said.

"The aim of the Cube is to drive at the beginning and the end of the retention life cycle – to place qualified Airmen into vacancies and retain them using all the flexibilities and opportunities available within the Air Force Reserve," the colonel added.

"The Cube is critical to the success of the Air Force Reserve's manning efforts," said Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller, AFRC commander.

"I encourage everyone to use this valuable tool to help further our deliberate emphasis on readiness, effective manning and retention."

Here's a look at the duties and responsibilities of each of the four key members of the Cube:

Force Support Officer

The senior full-time member of the Force Support Squadron serves as the lead for each wing's Cube. He or she is the wing's manning subject matter expert and manages the manning plan through coordination and input from the base recruiting squadron flight chief, career assistance advisor and civilian personnel liaison.

This individual is also responsible for facilitating monthly manning meetings with the wing commander and ensuring all Reserve Management Vacancy System vacancies are advertised. The FSO's goal is establishing a culture in which retention is first but recruiting is always timely and effective.

"Our FSOs are uniquely central to effective manning," said Maj. Renata Turner, Chief of HQ AFRC's Force Integration Support Team. "They have oversight of the Force Management element within the FSS and will bridge the divide amongst Cube members to meet the wing commander's manning goals."

Career Assistance Advisor

The wing career assistance advisor will manage and serve as the principal advisor to commanders, supervisors and Airmen on retention, benefits, incentives and reenlistment programs. He or she will coordinate with wing leadership concerning retention issues related to loss trends and determine whether current efforts are supporting attainment of goals specified by the Air Force Reserve's Human Capital Management Leadership Team.

The CAA will also educate wing personnel and their families by coordinating with program officers and presenting benefits and entitlements briefings. He or she will also provide consultant services relating to career opportunities, progression and planning through symposiums, workshops, conference and organizational visits. Finally, the most important role of the wing CAA is to serve as a counselor to Airmen making vital life-changing decisions regarding their military career and to ensure the decisions they make are well informed.

"What I hope to see with the Cube is for the CAAs to really hone in on the importance of being available and visible," said Chief Master Sgt. Melody Younger, AFRC's chief of force management. "Face-to-face interaction is an important part of making this retention effort successful and equipping our Airmen to make the most educated and sound career choices possible. We are looking for our CAAs to be actively engaged in collecting and analyzing data to identify trends so leadership can adjust accordingly."

Civilian Personnel Liaison

The civilian personnel liaison will help the wings navigate the civilian personnel processes. He or she is the conduit between the wing, the civilian personnel flights and the Air Reserve Technicians and serves as the civilian subject matter expert in tenant unit wings.

This member will work with all supervisors to submit requests for personnel actions, ensure position control is accurate, work unit manning document clean-up and help with position description reviews.

The CPL is a source of information on key management tools like recruitment, relocation and retention incentives and superior qualification appointments. CPLs will track and update leadership on the status of any ART or civilian request for personnel action.

The goal of the CPL is to ensure full-time resources are retained whenever possible and recruitment is timely and effective when necessary.

Crissy Gonzalez-Flores is the CPL with the 433rd Airlift Wing, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. "My goal with the Cube is to bridge the gap between management and the complex hiring process as much as possible and to ensure we are getting and retaining the most qualified members to accomplish our mission," she said. "We plan on using constant tracking and a host of management and personnel tools to bring our members into our wing as quickly and effectively as possible."

Recruiting Squadron Flight Chief

The recruiting squadron flight chief is the lead accessions subject matter expert. As a key manning advisor, he or she provides critical


recruiting, retention & readiness = lethality

FSS Officer
RS Flight Chief
Career Assistance Advisor
Civilian Personnel Liaison

manning expertise and analyses on the unit's strength, collaborating closely with unit leaders and Cube partners to provide actionable data and management methods to improve human capital health and capabilities.

The RS flight chief also provides hiring process and systems guidance and training. The recruiting flight chief's insight and counsel is critical to influencing the unit's human capital environment and positively impacting unit readiness.

"The implementation of the Cube is exciting because it puts all of the key players on the same page working a unified vision to meet end strength and effective manning," said Senior Master Sgt. Melissa Melichar, the RS flight chief at the 932nd Airlift Wing, Scott AFB, Illinois. "It will no longer depend on what each wing wants, but what each wing needs."

As a key member of the Cube, Melichar sees her responsibilities as helping create the wing's manning plan, pushing production, removing roadblocks, providing training and ensuring quality control of accessions.

"I work hand-in-hand with wing leadership to identify readiness, manning needs and future vacancies. This information allows my recruiters to go out in the community and target recruit. The Cube requires the Force Support Squadron to openly share all vacancies on the unit manning personnel roster and input into the Reserve Management Vacancy System for all to see. This will eliminate the blind spots recruiters now face when obtaining positions for our future Citizen Airmen," she said.

"Our Citizen Airmen – all duty statuses, civilian and military – across the globe remain vital to the overall Air Force mission – to fly, fight and win in air, space and cyberspace," Craig said. "The Air Force Reserve Human Capital Management Leadership Team and key staff are hard at work across the Reserve enterprise building new plans and solid courses of action to positively impact readiness, effective manning and retention of our most valuable military weapon system – our people. The Cube is a major component of the Human Capital Management Leadership Team's overall plan."



Tech. Sgt. Daniel Faust chats with Staff Sgt. Lisa Neetz at Air Force Reserve Command headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. Faust has experienced a lot of ups and downs in his life, including being nearly homeless. He credits the Air Force Reserve with helping him get his life back on track. (Tyler Grimes)

BOUNCING BACK

A RESERVE CITIZEN AIRMAN'S JOURNEY FROM NEAR HOMELESSNESS

BY TYLER GRIMES

As a young man working in a grocery store in 2000, Daniel Faust didn't realize the ups and downs life had in store for him. But he would soon find out.

While working in the grocery business, Faust made the decision to join the active Air Force in October of 2000.

"I wanted to do something more significant with my life than just working at a grocery store," he said during a recent interview at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

He spent several years on active duty and had a number of different careers, including work in aircraft maintenance, security forces, information management, the postal service and mental health.

One of Faust's assignments took him to Germany. While there, he said he started to feel like he was being called to do something greater with his life. He felt compelled to help others rise to their highest potential.

"My initial motivations were purely selfish and to chase rank and assignments," he said. "It was gaining a faith and connecting with the Spangdahlem (Air Base) Chapel Navigators Ministry that started to change my focus."

It was during his next assignment at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, that Faust faced some major life challenges.

"I got married, changed jobs and was tasked to deploy all within a

two-month time period," he said. With so much happening in his life all at one time, Faust felt overwhelmed and said he started wrestling with the idea of divorcing his wife, who was pregnant at the time.

This was definitely a low point in Faust's life, but he said things took a turn for the better when he received a care package from his wife. In it was a book titled "Positive Personality Profiles" by Dr. Robert Rohm. The book and some long talks with his Air Force chaplain helped him further discover and refine his life's purpose. That purpose, Faust said, is to teach people how to have better relationships.

"It was the first time in my life I understood how God wired me and others, especially my wife," he said. "Since then, everything I do – no matter where I am financially – is to help others thrive in their relationships. God has given us so much and it's in our hearts to serve."

With a new focus in his life, Faust decided to leave active duty in July 2012 and try to make a living helping others. He started his own business, focusing on church staffs as his clients, in Arkansas shortly after leaving active duty.

Looking back, Faust said, "This was possibly the worst decision I made in my life. It takes a long time for people to build trust in a services-based business. When my savings were reduced to six weeks of expenses, I had to start looking for another job."

Unable to find work right away, Faust said he reached a point where he only had \$300 in his checking account and he and his family were days away from being homeless.

"We have actually been close to homelessness three other times," he said.

"It's hard to look into your wife's and kids' eyes and tell them that we might have to live in a homeless shelter and it's hard to have to work six jobs at one time, barely seeing your family, with little money to show for all the time you put in," he said.

Faust said the last time he and his family were facing homelessness, he "was praying to God, asking what to do" when he received a deposit of \$700 into his checking account.

Faust's disability claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs had just come through and he received a letter confirming his claim from the VA that same day.

It was shortly after the Faust family received their money from the VA that they got more good news. Faust received a job offer with the Air Force Reserve and was able to finalize his military contract.

"It was a huge blessing to be back in the service and to be able to take care of my family," he said. "My experience in the Reserve has been extremely fulfilling. It has allowed me to meet great people, travel around the world and finally get to be the person I want to become and perform my calling."

Today, Tech. Sgt. Faust serves as a unit training

manager for both the 944th Fighter Wing's Medical Squadron at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, and at the headquarters of Air Force Reserve Command at Robins.

Senior Master Sgt. Marlos Davis, AFRC's functional manager for education and training, is one of Faust's supervisors and said the technical sergeant is a good representative of his fellow Reserve Citizen Airmen.

"I think his story is synonymous with many other Reservists," Davis said. "Reserve Airmen are a very unique and invaluable brand of Airmen within the Air Force family. This is true because Reserve Airmen are typically Citizen Airmen and bring to the Air Force their varying skills, knowledge, expertise and capabilities from their civilian careers."

For those who may be interested in joining the Air Force Reserve – whether they are prior-service or not – Faust has some advice.

"It is not always easy to transition from active duty or civilian status and the drill weekends will be a sacrifice, but the experience is well worth it," he said. "If you are on the fence, come talk to me or another Reservist. There is so much opportunity and satisfaction when you connect with the right person and do not give up."



Daniel Faust and his family ham it up for the camera. Daniel has weathered many storms in his life and uses his own experiences to help couples build better relationships. (courtesy photo)

FROM CREW CHIEF TO CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE

**INTERNSHIP PROGRAM HELPING AIRMAN ANSWER
GOD'S CALL TO ENTER THE MINISTRY**
BY BO JOYNER

2nd Lt. Joshua Wullenweber poses for a photo at the Robins Air Force Base chapel, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. After spending 11 years on active duty, Wullenweber is now a full-time seminary student and Air Force chaplain candidate. (Master Sgt. Stephen Schester)



Joshua Wullenweber had his life all planned out. After enlisting in the Air Force right out of high school in 2005, he began his career as a flying crew chief with thoughts of being a professional Airman and having a long career working on airplanes.

It turns out God had a different plan.

“I spent 11 years on active duty and absolutely loved my job,” he said. “My last assignment was with the 89th Maintenance Group at (Joint Base) Andrews (Maryland) as a special air mission fly crew chief flying aboard Air Force Two. We carried the vice president, secretary of state and a host of other DVs all over the world. It was an amazing assignment.”

Although he loved what he was doing, it was during his time at Andrews that Wullenweber said he started to get the feeling that God was calling him to change careers.

While he wasn't flying around the world on Air Force Two, Wullenweber was volunteering as a youth minister at his church near Andrews. “That's when I started to get the idea that God was calling me to the ministry full time,” he said.

“I was confused because I really thought I had my life all planned out. But when God talks to you, you can't turn your back and pretend you don't hear. You have to listen.”

Already holding a bachelor's degree in religious studies, the crew chief started to go to seminary part time while still working full time for the Air Force. “Because I had such a busy flying schedule, I was only able to take one class per semester,” he said. “I quickly realized I would probably be about 45 years old when I finally finished.”

That's when Wullenweber first heard about the Air Force Chaplain Candidate Program.

“I was at a picnic and my commander happened to introduce me to a young man who was an Air Force chaplain candidate visiting Andrews for the summer. He explained the program to me and I felt like God might be showing me the path he wanted me to take.”

After more research, lots of praying and long discussions with his wife, Wullenweber decided to apply for the Air Force Chaplain Candidate Program and was accepted.

“It was pretty scary because it meant I would have to leave active duty and enroll in seminary full time.

“I left active duty in November 2016 and literally the next day was commissioned as a second lieutenant chaplain candidate,” he said.

Wullenweber is now a second-year student at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, and an Air Force chaplain candidate.

The Air Force Chaplain Candidate Program is an opportunity for seminary and other professional religious school students to evaluate their compatibility and potential for commissioning as an Air Force chaplain.

“The program allows candidates to define and refine their calling as they develop their pastoral skills through a series of summer training internships,” said Chaplain (Maj.) Eusebia Rios, the Air Force Chaplain Candidate Program manager.

Chaplain candidates draw upon their background, education and experience to function as part of an Air Force chapel team.

Upon graduation and ecclesiastical endorsement, successful chaplain candidates are eligible for reappointment as a chaplain

in the U.S. Air Force, either on active duty or as a Reserve or Guard chaplain.

Wullenweber started seminary last spring. Last summer, he started the Air Force Chaplain Candidate Program by going to the five-week Commissioned Officer Training Course.

“COT was pretty tough,” he said. “I went in with the mentality that it was going to be like basic training, but it was more mental than it was physical. It was difficult, but it really helped prepare me for what was coming next.”

What came next was the Chaplain Candidate Intensive Internship – a 35-day multi-base immersion into the Air Force Chaplain Corps mission that is often referred to as CCII.

“We spent 35 days touring the Air Force,” Wullenweber said. “We went to seven different bases and got to see active duty, Guard, Reserve, Special Ops. ... We saw every facet of the Air Force and got to meet chaplains from all over.”

This summer, Wullenweber is serving a 35-day annual training tour at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, spending time with active-duty, Reserve and Guard chaplains.

This tour is a homecoming of sorts for the chaplain candidate.

“Robins was my first duty assignment after I enlisted,” he said. “I was working on the KC-135s when the 19th Air Refueling Group was still here. I spent three years here and when they shut the unit down, I went to Seymour-Johnson (Air Force Base, North Carolina). I was there for two years before being picked up as a special air mission fly crew chief at Andrews. I am really excited to be back at Robins and to be able to experience the chaplaincy on the active duty, Guard and Reserve sides of the house.”

Wullenweber has spent time with the Guard's 116th Air Control Wing, the active duty's 78th Air Base Wing and the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command chaplain's office at Robins over the past few weeks.

The chaplain's office at AFRC headquarters runs the Air Force's Chaplain Candidate Program so Wullenweber has had the unique opportunity to help shape the program he is currently taking part in.

“I've learned so much here at Robins this summer,” Wullenweber said. “I've had the chance to see the Guard's Joint STARS (Surveillance Target Attack Radar System) mission and what a chaplain does to keep the men and women ready for the job. The 78th here has a chapel and two congregations (Protestant and Catholic) and I've been able to see how Air Force chaplains get the chance to serve as pastors in that setting as well. And, of course, I've had the chance to see how the Reserve operates the Chaplain Candidate Program and see how the command impacts all of the wings and IMAs.”

“Lieutenant Wullenweber has done an amazing job for us this summer,” Rios said. “Like all of our chaplain candidates, he has had the opportunity to learn from some amazing chaplains while receiving some incredible on-the-job training. Having gone through CCII just last year, he has provided us with some invaluable insight to help us improve our program. He is an amazing young man who has done great work so far and we have great expectations for him in the future.”

Wullenweber has a year and half of academic studies and a one-year internship left before graduating from seminary. He is planning



Wullenweber, at the time a technical sergeant special air mission fly crew chief assigned to Air Force Two, and his wife, Heather, pose for a photo with then-Vice President Joe Biden on Wullenweber's last day before leaving active-duty and becoming a chaplain candidate. (Courtesy photo)

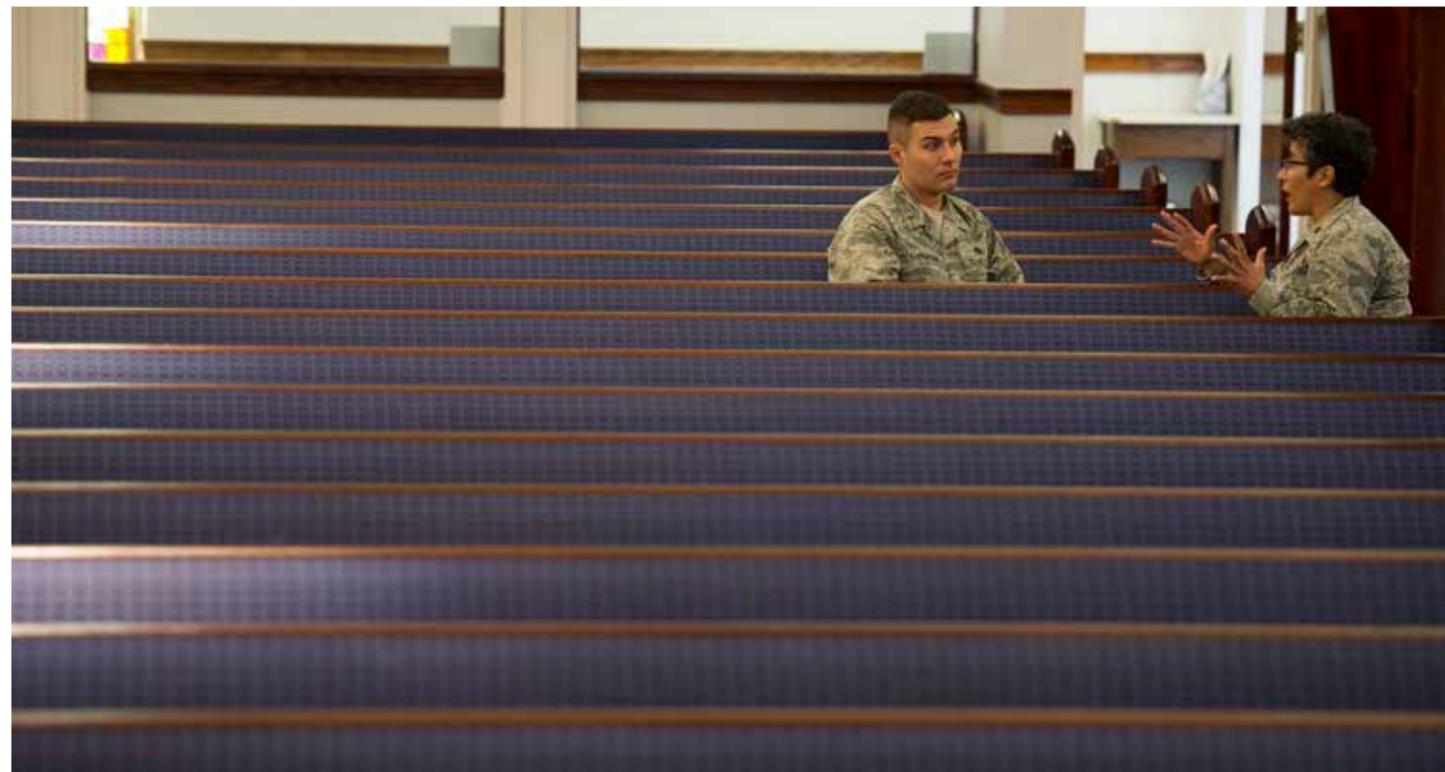
to do another annual training tour next summer to learn even more about the Air Force chaplain program.

“By the time they finish with our program, most of our candidates will have had between 1,500 and 1,800 total hours of training at a number of different bases. We have candidates right now at bases throughout the United States and in Japan, Spain, England, Germany and Italy sharpening the skills they will need to have to be Air Force chaplains,” Rios said. “One of the great things about our program is the candidates are free to leave the program as they discern their call. At any time, if a candidate realizes being an Air Force chaplain is not for them, they can leave the program. We evaluate their suitability and they discern their call in this program. Another great point about our internship is that most seminaries will consider offering academic credits to our candidates for the time invested in training and in the preparations to serve in the Air Force Chaplain Corps.”

After finishing seminary and the Chaplain Candidate Program, Wullenweber is looking forward to a career as an Air Force chaplain.

“I know I am being called to share the good news and to serve the great men and women in the Air Force. The Chaplain Candidate Program is giving me the opportunity to do just that.”

Anyone interested in the Chaplain Candidate Program should contact the HQ AFRC Chaplain's Office at afrc.hcx@us.af.mil or 478-327-1475.



Wullenweber chats with Chaplain (Maj.) Eusebia Rios, the Air Force Chaplain Candidate Program manager, at the Robins Air Force Base chapel. (Master Sgt. Stephen Schester)

AIR FORCE PICKS SINGLE COMBAT UNIFORM

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

Air Force leaders announced the service will move to a single combat utility uniform, adopting the Operational Camouflage Pattern, or OCP, already in use by the Army and Airmen in combat zones and in certain jobs across the Air Force.

Starting Oct. 1, 2018, Airmen who have serviceable OCPs may wear the uniform, and Airmen can purchase OCPs at Army and Air Force Exchange Services at the following locations: Aviano Air Base, Italy; Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina; Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina; and MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. These initial locations will allow uniform manufacturers to produce additional stocks for other locations, eventually outfitting the total force in the coming months.

The service will fully transition to OCPs by April 1, 2021.

Air Force leaders decided to transition to the OCP following feedback from Airmen that it is the best, battle-tested utility uniform available. It will also eliminate the need to maintain two separate uniforms – one for in-garrison and one for deployments – and it is a visible reminder of the service’s identity as a joint warfighting force, Air Force officials said.

“We looked at all utility uniforms currently in our inventory to find the best-of-breed,” said Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. David L. Goldfein. “We spoke to and listened to Airmen on this, and the OCP was the clear choice.”

“The uniform works in all climates—from Minot to Manbij—and across the spectrum of missions we perform,” Goldfein added. “It’s suitable for our Airmen working on a flight line in Northern Tier states and for those conducting patrols in the Middle East,” he said.

More than 100,000 Airmen have been issued or are already wearing OCPs or equivalent two-piece flight suits—from Airmen deployed to Air Forces Central Command, to those serving in Air Force Special Operations Command, and most recently, aircrews in Air Mobility Command and defenders in Air Force Global Strike Command.

As with the Battle Dress Uniform, or BDU, worn by all services until about 10 years ago, the OCP Airmen wear will have distinctive Air Force features. The name tape and Air Force lettering will be a spice-brown color, and T-shirts and belts will be tan. Most rank will also be in spice-brown thread.

Squadron patches will also be worn on the OCP, said Goldfein. Bringing back squadron patches was among the recommendations made by Airmen as part of the ongoing effort to revitalize squadrons.

“Unit patches express squadron identity and heritage – something our Airmen are incredibly proud of and want to celebrate,” he said.

Unit patches and special functional identifiers (Security Forces, Fire, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Tactical Air Control Party, Combat Controller, etc.) will be attached to Velcro fabric on the sleeves. All patches will be in subdued colors; headquarters patches and the U.S. flag will be worn on the right shoulder, and unit patches and authorized duty identifiers will be worn on the left shoulder.

Airmen can find guidance for proper wear of the uniform in the coming months via an Air Force Guidance Memorandum, followed by updates published in AFI 36-2903.

Feedback from the force indicated Airmen find the OCP more functional—from the slanted, Velcro chest pockets to the easily-accessible shoulder pockets. Female Airmen have made it clear that this uniform is a better fit, as well.

“The Army has done considerable work to make the OCPs a better fitting uniform for female service members,” said Maj. Gen. Bob LaBrutta, director of military force management policy, deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services. “The uniform comes in 20 female sizes and 37 unisex sizes. Female Airmen, currently issued the unisex uniform in U.S. Air Forces Central Command, report a better fit and higher morale as a result.”

Enlisted Airmen should start to see an increase to their annual clothing allowances starting Oct. 1, 2018.

“Many of our Airmen already have this uniform from their numerous deployments, so they will be able to make the transition easily,” said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Kaleth O. Wright. “For other Airmen, we must provide enough time for their clothing allowance to fund the items to avoid out-of-pocket expenses.”

Effective April 1, 2019, Airmen can purchase the uniform at any AAFES store that carries them and AAFES online services will open purchases to Airmen around October 2019. The schedule will be updated monthly on the AAFES and Air Force’s Personnel Center websites.

The delay in availability allows the supply chain to produce and field enough uniforms, boots and other associated uniform items to meet both Army and Air Force requirements. Enlisted Guard and Reserve Airmen will receive the new uniform through their unit’s clothing replacement procedures.

The Air Force will also outfit Basic Military Training, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, and Officer Training School starting October 1, 2019.

“This celebrates joint warfighting excellence as OCPs will become the joint combat uniform for Airmen and Soldiers while patches and nametapes will identify our respective services,” Goldfein said. “We’ll maintain our distinctive Air Force uniforms in blues, service dress, mess dress, and PT gear.”



TIMELINE

2018

1 OCT Serviceable OCP's may be worn.
Airmen can purchase OCP's at the following AAFES locations: Aviano AB, Charleston AFB, Shaw AFB and MacDill AFB

2019

1 APR Expansion of in-store AAFES sales locations continues
Tan T-shirt must be worn (Desert Sand is authorized until this date)

OCT Online sales projected to be available

2020

1 JUN Coyote Brown boots must be worn (Tan is authorized until this date)
DLA Issued green socks must be worn (Desert Tan, Tan authorized until this date)

2021

1 APR OCP Mandatory Wear Date

BENEFITS

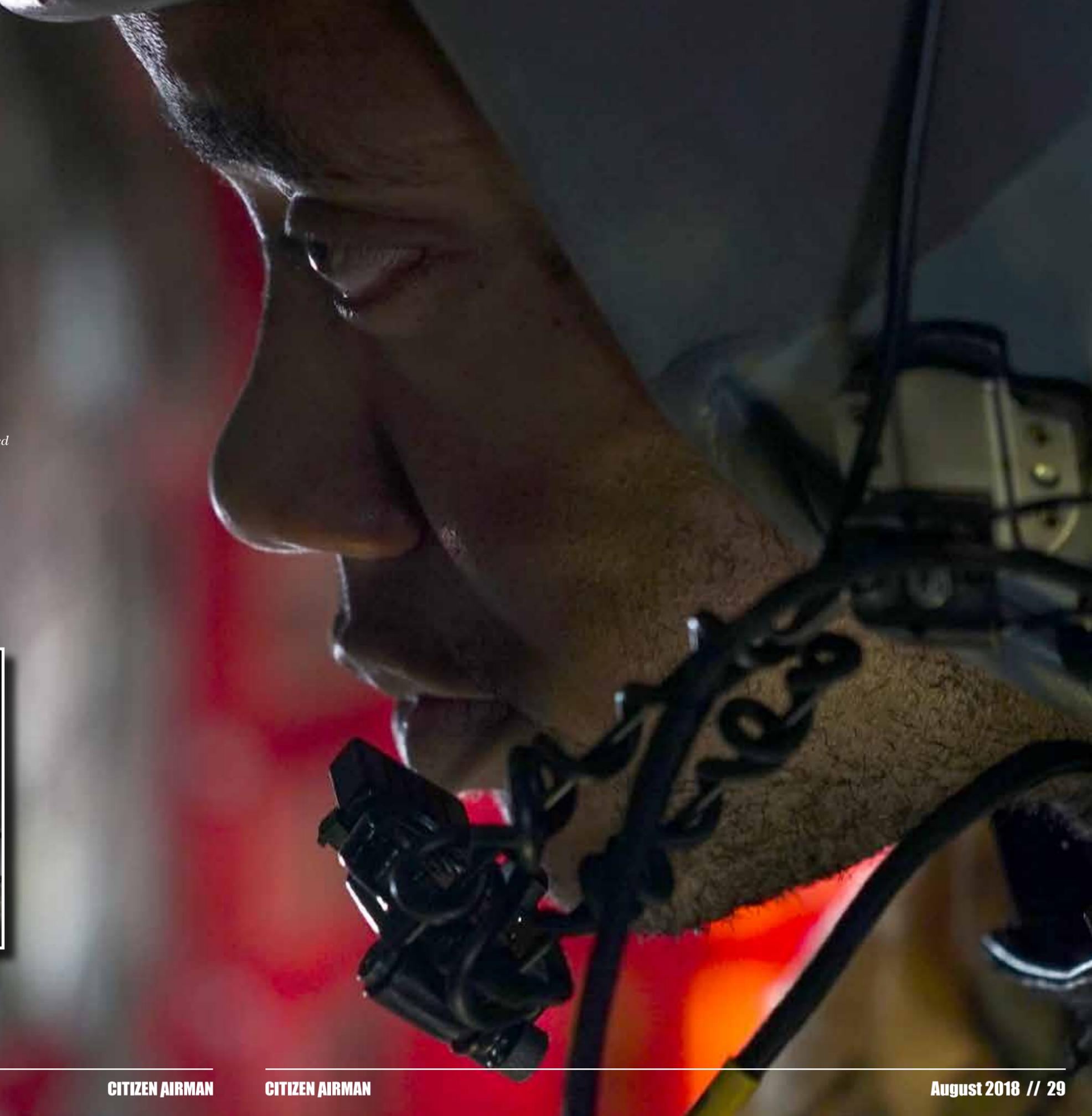
- The OCP works in all climates and across the spectrum of missions we perform
- Over 100,000 Airmen have been issued and/or are already wearing OCPs. This includes Air Force Central Command, Air Force Special Operations Command and our Air Force Global Strike Command Defenders
- The OCP will bring back Air Force heraldry with unit patches
- The OCP celebrates our joint warfighting excellence and close ties with the Army

AIR FORCE OCP UNIFORM GUIDANCE

Further official wear guidance will be available soon in AFI 36-2903, Dress and Personal Appearance

COMBAT AIR DROP

Below, Air Force loadmasters and aircrew members assigned to the 746th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, observe pre-mission preparations on a C-130H Hercules June 3. The C-130H crew conducted a supply airdrop over an undisclosed location in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Inherent Resolve's Operation Roundup. This was the first combat air drop in almost 14 years for the C-130H squadron deployed from the Air Force Reserve's 908th Airlift Wing, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. At right, Staff Sgt. Brandon Morrissette, a loadmaster deployed from the 908th AW, listens to pilot instructions prior to the combat air drop. (Photos by Master Sgt. Burt Traynor)



A MATCH MADE CLOSE TO HEAVEN

**AFTER FALLING IN LOVE ON THE JOB,
FLIGHT NURSES TIE KNOT ABOARD C-17
BY 1ST LT. RASHARD COAXUM**

It's not often you propose to the love of your life on the job. It's even less likely that it happens on a mission in Alaska. Even less likely than that is tying the knot on a C-17 Globemaster III.

But this is just what happened for two 315th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron flight nurses.

Cpts. Derek and Amanda Martindale married aboard a static C-17 at Joint Base Charleston, S.C., May 19, in a small ceremony on the flight-line, presided over by Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Craig Abee.

Joined by family and friends, the two read their vows and wed, capping a friendship almost four years in the making.

"We didn't even notice anyone around us as we stood before Chaplain Abee and recited our vows," Amanda said. "Seeing the smiles on our family's and friends' faces afterwards warmed our hearts and confirmed the support we felt."

Derek said that the two met at Joint Base Charleston and immediately became friends and then best friends. After more and more time spent together over a year and a half, the two began officially dating in September 2016.

While on a mission to Alaska, Derek chartered a plane to the mountains where he proposed to Amanda at Denali, the highest mountain peak in America.

There, he'd ask her the words he'd been waiting so patiently to tell her as they ascended to the mountain top.

"I said 'Amanda Jean, will you marry me?'. Perhaps she was delirious from the extreme cold when saying yes," he said. "In all seriousness, we both feel like we married our best friend. What a wonderful foundation to build a marriage upon.

"I feel super lucky just to have met Amanda, let alone marry her," he said. "Between Amanda and I, we have four wonderful children, and enough pets to fill a small zoo. Amanda is the most caring and compassionate person I know."

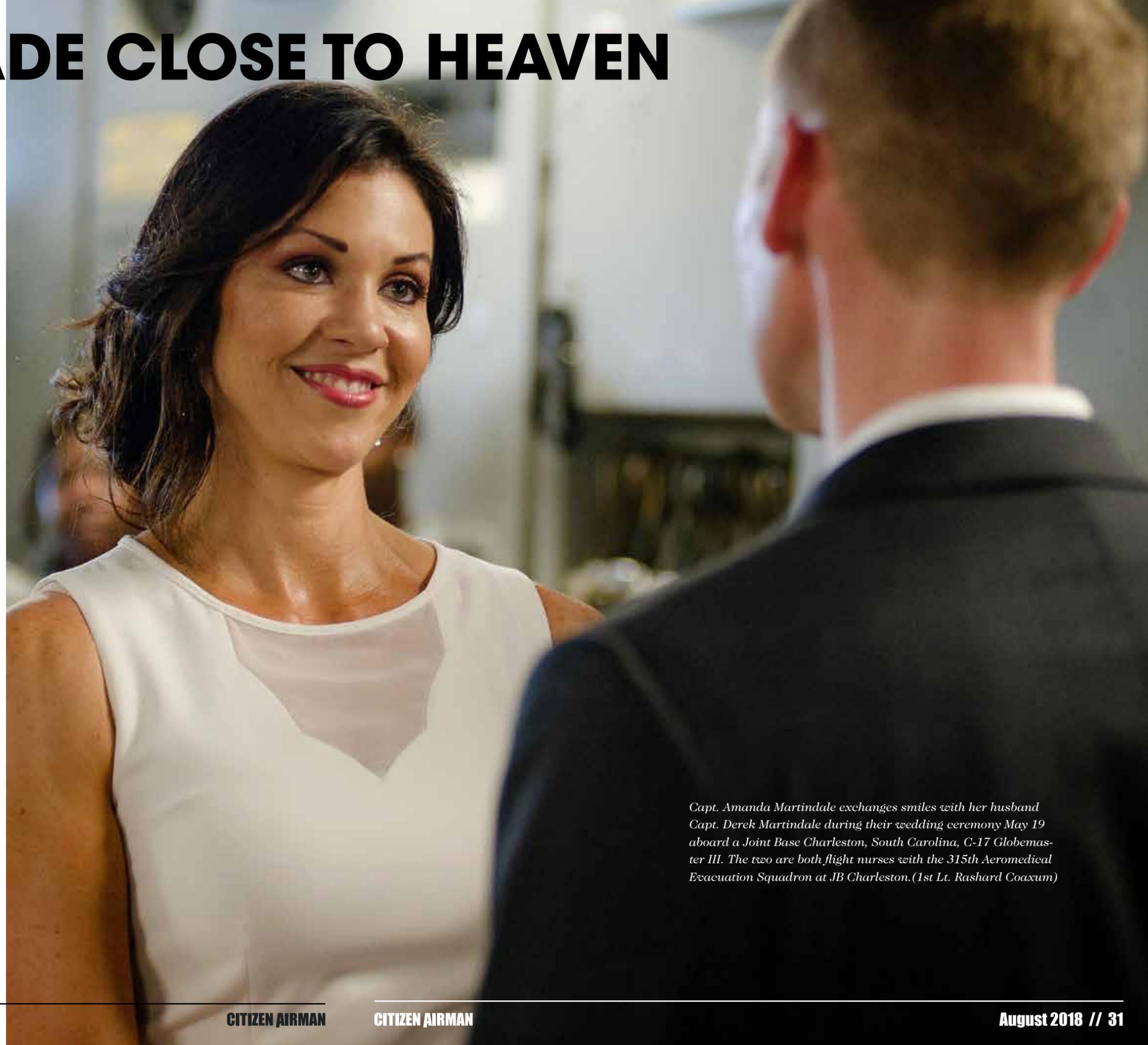
Also, in attendance were many squadron members who came out in support of the new union.

"The squadron was very supportive and excited for us," Derek said. "In fact, once we started dating, Master Sgt. Mary Troja said 'at least the two of you are on the same page as everyone else now'. Apparently, our squadron knew where our relationship was going before we did."

The Martindales said that having family, friends and squadron members in attendance was a blessing and that it's a moment in life they'll never forget.

"To finally have it all come together, where we had clearance to have our families join us and our squadron available to celebrate our union on the aircraft that has serviced so many of our friends and service members, was beyond an honor," Derek said. "We were overwhelmed by support and love for our country."

(Coaxum is assigned to the 315th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office, Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina.)



Capt. Amanda Martindale exchanges smiles with her husband Capt. Derek Martindale during their wedding ceremony May 19 aboard a Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, C-17 Globemaster III. The two are both flight nurses with the 315th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at JB Charleston. (1st Lt. Rashard Coaxum)

2nd Lt. Joshua Wullenweber poses for a photo at the Robins Air Force Base chapel, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. After spending 11 years on active duty, Wullenweber is now a full-time seminary student and Air Force chaplain candidate. His story starts on page 22. (Master Sgt. Stephen Schester)

