

CITIZEN AIRMAN



QUIET PROFESSIONALS

AN EXCLUSIVE LOOK INSIDE THE
RESERVE'S ONLY SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING



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From the Top

 @AFRCCommander

BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

Heroes of the Air Force Reserve: Our success as an organization and our achievements as individuals depend on having a solid foundation. A solid foundation provides a basis for us to continue building, the flexibility to adjust to changing conditions, and as Hurricanes Florence and Michael recently taught us, the faith that we can survive and rebuild after even the worst of storms.

As the chief of the Air Force Reserve, an important part of my job is to ensure we have a solid foundation. This requires setting and aligning our strategic objectives with the National Defense Strategy and our Air Force priorities while eliminating barriers that present challenges to mission success.

Chief Kelly and I recently released an Air Force Reserve strategic priorities memorandum that defines our lines of effort towards these objectives, readies our Citizen Airmen to support the next fight and strengthens its foundation. If you haven't had the opportunity yet, I'd encourage you to visit the Air Force Reserve Command homepage at <https://www.afrc.af.mil> to learn more about our Vision and Priorities, which further explains what we want to accomplish and how we plan to move forward into the future.

The foundation of our Air Force Reserve is the operational strength and strategic depth that our 74,000 Citizen Airmen and civilians provide to America's Air Force, the joint force and this great nation. We are and will continue to be America's weapon of choice, providing agile combat forces to fly, fight and win.

As Reserve Citizen Airmen, we must continue to strengthen our foundation by improving force support programs that benefit families. Last year we made tremendous progress in this area. In February, we made changes to the Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Program that allow Citizen Airmen to bring additional family members to events where they receive information on educational benefits, health care and retirement.

In addition, we reduced the time associated with medical case review at the HQ AFRC Surgeon General's Office by 88 percent over the past year by hiring additional medical staff and improving processes.

We also installed career advisors in 39 military personnel flights, improved Servicemembers' Group Life

Insurance during deployments, and continued converting many positions from Air Reserve Technician to Active Guard and Reserve status.

This past summer, we removed restrictions to increase travel funding during inactive duty training for personnel in select career fields.

We continue to improve retention among ARTs by expanding the aviation bonus to qualified personnel. We are doing these things for you, to create an environment where people want to stay, do great things and serve to their fullest potential.

Most importantly, many of these initiatives support and protect the people Citizen Airmen cherish the most -- their families.

As we enter the holiday season and the new year, please take the opportunity to spend quality time with the special people in your lives. They support you during drill weekends and deployments, help you advance in your career, lend an ear when you need someone to talk to, and give you the faith and reassurance that you can overcome the toughest obstacles.

Most importantly, they inspire you to be your best each and every day!

Janis and I would like to wish everyone happy holidays and a very happy new year!



MASTER SGT. STEPHEN SCHESTER

RICHARD SCOBEE
Lieutenant General
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command

Chief's View

  @AFRC.CCC  @AFRC_CCC

GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE AND EMBRACE CHANGE

I welcome change with a vision of understanding that change will bring a positive transformation in the way we define leadership. Socrates once said, "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."

There are some of us who have been hurt, taken advantage of or just mistreated by a supervisor, a friend or a family member. To those individuals, I say...I've been there. Sometimes we don't know if change is your friend or not. I am here to tell you change is your BFF.

Thomas Aquinas said "if the highest aim of a captain were to preserve his ship, he (she) would keep it in the port forever." You *are* that ship, my friend. You need to take charge and feel comfortable taking risk. We all need to take responsibility of who we are and where are we going. Remember, when we take our lives or careers in our hands, we have no one to blame.

Your goals should not be casual; otherwise, it will be too easy to walk away and give up. I remember wanting to learn Italian. I went as far as downloading a free app, but I was not committed. Learning Italian was not a priority and it was not important. Any distraction moved me from my goal. I am here to tell you that effort lasted a week or so and I gave up.

Sometimes we don't want to change because we are afraid of failure or of what others might think or say about us. Roddy Galbraith, one of my mentors, shared with me that "if you take a chance and fall, you can get back up. You will learn from the experience and you'll become an example for others to follow."

Don't let fear hold and keep you in darkness! As we make choices in life, we become aware of options, situations and circumstances. This awareness will allow us to select the best outcome for each situation.

The process of change is also to understand every decision has a price. When I accepted this job, I knew I was sacrificing my home life. My sons ended up with the responsibility of taking care of my special needs brother and their grandmother, whom is a total-care patient.

In his book "Go Out and Make a Mess!" Galbraith tells us a few key points I would like you to think about. The list is as follows: We are all perfectly imperfect; no one



EDWARD ASPERA

is any better than anyone else, no one is any worse than anyone else; we are all doing the best we can; we can all do better; well all have the opportunity to learn and grow.

As we learn and grow, we make better decisions. As we make better decisions, our lives improve. Please do not pull away from life by being afraid. Change has to start with you. This will allow you to stretch yourself outside your comfort zone.

Winston Churchill once said "I can sum up the success of my life in seven words. Never give up. Never, never give up."

As you change and develop, be patient. It is a daily effort for the rest of your life. Do not be impatient. I promise you if you have the persistence to keep going, your character will form a great foundation to keep growing.

You are great Citizen Airmen and I thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts with you. This time I am asking for you to welcome change in each experience of your amazing life.

Ericka Kelly
Chief Master Sergeant
Command Chief Master Sergeant
Air Force Reserve Command

Senior Airman Christopher Godkin, a Reserve Citizen Airman loadmaster with the 403rd Wing's 815th Airlift Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, looks out the cargo door at 9,000 feet over Laguna Army Airfield at Yuma Army Proving Grounds, Arizona during a combined training event with the Military Freefall School. The 815th AS provided airlift for the joint forces training school, which covers all aspects of military freefall parachuting. (Master Sgt. Anthony Flores)



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CITIZEN AIRMAN

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On the cover: Staff Sgt. Keith Ham, a member of the 919th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element team, fast-ropes from an obstacle course tower at the 7th Special Forces Group compound, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. DAGRE members are trained to meet the unique security and force protection demands of special operations air assets and personnel. For more on the "quiet professionals" from the 919th, see story on page 6. (Master Sgt. Jasmin Taylor)



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QUIET PROFESSIONALS

Citizen Air Commandos from AFRC's only special operations wing embrace diverse mission, one-of-a-kind capability

BY CAPT. MONIQUE ROUX

From an airfield that once served as the training grounds for the famed Doolittle Raiders, Citizen Air Commandos from the 919th Special Operations Wing, Duke Field, Florida, are working daily to deliver superior airpower around the world.

The "Quiet Professionals" of the 919th SOW offer specialized skills to Air Force Special Operations Command made even more distinct by the fact that this "part time" unit is providing a full-time capability for a mission that never stops.

"At any minute on any day, members of the 919th are likely helping to get equipment and special operations forces where the warfighter needs them most," said Col. Frank L. Bradfield, 919th SOW commander. "While they're doing that, others are providing surveillance of the battlespace ready to deliver precision strike capabilities to those who wish to do America harm. It's a no-fail mission and one we're proud to support."

These 1,500 Reservists are part of the Air Force Reserve's only special operations wing. They are fully integrated with their active duty counterparts in the 492nd SOW operating from a small base in a densely wooded area in the Florida panhandle.

The 919th's members are focused with laser-like intensity on employing innovative practices and standards to support four distinct mission sets—enhancing partner nation capacity, training future AFSOC aviators, conducting Remotely Piloted Aircraft operations and performing specialized mobility—all geared toward increasing AFSOC's efficiency and lethality.

COMBAT AVIATION ADVISORS

In a desolate and austere airfield thousands of miles from U.S. soil, a small team of Citizen Air Commandos is having a global impact by enhancing partner nation aviation capabilities, yet most Americans don't even know they exist.

These combat aviation advisors, or brown berets, are highly trained in specialized skills needed for hands-on, adaptive, advisory missions with foreign military partners. Their goal: to conduct special operations activities by, with and through foreign aviation forces.

As one such team of CAAs prepared to land the last training sortie of a recent two-month mission in North Africa, many took a moment to reflect on the experience.

The mission involved 60 days of intense training and constant coordination with seven separate combat units. An unimaginable amount of collaboration and teamwork contributed to the success of this final sortie. Shoulder-to-shoulder with their foreign colleagues, the CAAs prepared their partner nation for their first simulated joint event between its air and ground forces.

CAAs are an elite group of carefully selected, well-experienced Airmen with diverse backgrounds.

Maj. Kevin Riegner, 5th Special Operations Squadron pilot, takes a few minutes for a photo prior to a recent U-28 training mission at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The 5th SOS is one of 13 squadrons assigned to the 919th Special Operations Wing at nearby Duke Field. The wing's diverse mission and ability to fulfill a wide range of requirements for Air Force Special Operations Command places its members in high demand for critical operations at home and at distant points around the globe. (Master Sgt. Jasmin Taylor)





Clockwise from top: Tech. Sgt. Bradley Moore, 919th Special Operations Logistics Readiness Squadron, returns from loading Army airborne soldiers into a C-17 Globemaster III at Duke Field, Florida, in preparation for their qualification jump. The 919th SOLRS provides integrated logistical support to the 919th Special Operations Wing, 7th Special Forces Group and Air Force Special Operations Command. (Master Sgt. Jasmin Taylor) Tech. Sgt. Brandon Bass, an aircrew flight equipment specialist with the 711th Special Operations Squadron, practices individual tactics during a training exercise. (Tech. Sgt. Jodi Ames) Tech. Sgt. Michael Resseguie, 919th Special Operations Maintenance Squadron, manufactures washers for the C-146A Wolfhound on the OMAX Jetmachining Center at Duke Field, Florida. The 919th SOMXS provides round-the-clock maintenance support for the 919th SOW's global mission. (Capt. Monique Roux)



They deploy in 16-member Operational Aviation Detachments which are comprised of 12 different Air Force Specialty Codes, specifically trained to assist the partner nation force with joint operations.

“The OAD composition allows the CAA team to be self-reliant and contains the diversity of skills required to problem-solve and be adaptive,” said Lt. Col. Benjamin Griffith, commander of the 711th Special Operations Squadron.

From security forces and communications, to maintenance and sensor operators, the types of career fields represented by the CAA community are quite diverse.

“The impact of a small OAD on the security and stability of a nation should not be underestimated,” said Lt. Col. Warren Halle, 711th SOS assistant director of operations.

“Any type of operation lives or dies, sustains or fades by an integrated team effort,” said Halle. “Special operations forces Airmen have been well-educated that ‘joint’ is not just a buzz word. Joint operations lead to the gold standard of integration effectiveness.”

By design, the 919th’s CAAs are supported by an entire wing that lives and breathes that standard of integration.

ONE-OF-A-KIND FORMAL TRAINING UNIT

As a Reserve unit, the 919th SOW blends with its active-duty partners not only to accomplish the mission but also to support the training of future air commandos.

The 5th SOS is home to the formal training unit for all Air Force special operations platform education, where they provided instruction on eight different platforms and conducted 6,800 student events in fiscal 2018 alone.

“This schoolhouse mission is a lot more diverse than any other FTU,” said Master Sgt. Joseph Kimbrell, CAA instructor and evaluator for the 5th SOS. “We are teaching the entire CAA aspect of the mission which considers the OAD team to be the weapon system.”

The training conducted by members of the 5th SOS is critical to the accomplishment of the AFSOC mission.

“We are the only FTU in the only special operations wing in the Reserve and we provide the preponderance of AFSOC with its aviators,” said Kimbrell. “We are the tool that sharpens the tip of the spear.”

THE SUN NEVER SETS ON THE 919TH

Not only does the 919th sharpen the spear, wing members also launch it. The 2nd SOS offers round-the-clock support to the warfighter through remotely piloted aircraft missions, taking the fight directly to the enemy.

“RPA missions continue to be the number one most requested capability of combatant commanders around the world,” said Col. Roland Armour, 919th SOG commander. “RPAs are in high demand and ours operate on a 24/7 basis.”

Another 919th unit, the 859th SOS, similarly runs a global mission that never rests. The 859th flies an aircraft not found anywhere else in the Air Force inventory, the C-146A Wolfhound.

Offering light and medium airlift capabilities, the Wolfhound allows the 919th to reach forward deployed special operations forces in locations large aircraft simply cannot.

“Within the past 12 months, the 859th SOS has provided crucial airlift for the AFSOC mission in more than 40 countries and four combatant

commands contributing vital airlift for nation building and stabilization across the globe,” said Armour.

Meeting the unique demands and needs of special operations airlift missions requires constant innovation and problem-solving. More often than not, the 919th’s aerial delivery specialists must figure out how to conform a load to meet the requirements of the air commandos down range.

“We are capable of dropping anything, anytime,” said Senior Master Sgt. Clarence Greene, 919th Special Operations Logistics Readiness Squadron. “Most aerial delivery shops drop standard loads, such as water and basic supplies, but with us it could be anything from a radio to a motorcycle... anything to support the air commandos on the ground.”

SPECIAL SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL OPS

The unique platforms and missions at the 919th SOW have required the unit to adapt a culture of “outside the box” thinking reflected in every facet of its operations.

Even functions as “basic” as aircraft maintenance have had to be tailored to the Duke Field mission. The aircraft flown and maintained at the 919th SOW are commercial aircraft requiring specialized training not offered through traditional pipelines.

“One of the unique ways our unit ensures we are providing the most relevant training for our Airmen is through our in-house training program,” said Senior Master Sgt. Michael Tomi, 919th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. “We sent a cadre of maintenance personnel to receive training from the [aircraft’s] commercial manufacturer and that cadre came back and developed a school house specific to our mission.”

The 919th’s security forces and communications Citizen Airmen have also had to adapt to the unique needs of special operations forces.

“Our agile combat support demonstrates the expeditionary nature of the 919th SOW,” said Lt. Col. Kelly Gwin, deputy commander of the 919th Special Operations Mission Support Group.

One critical component of that agile combat support is the Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element, a mission managed by the 919th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron. DAGRE members are specially trained to meet the unique security and force protection demands of special operations forces, supporting AFSOC’s global mission.

Its global mission also requires constant and reliable communication, often in unfamiliar and rapidly changing environments while air commandos are engaging the enemy. To tackle that challenge, the 919th Special Operations Communications Squadron consistently pushes the barriers of communications technology.

“They train, maintain and deploy some of the most technologically advanced cyber systems in the Air Force,” said Gwin.

SPIRIT OF COOPERATION

Support for special operations forces is the backbone of the 919th SOW mission of providing America’s citizen air commandos...anytime...anyplace.

Another OAD is just weeks away from commencing its next mission. RPAs are flying in undisclosed areas, providing valuable protection for joint coalition partners who are constantly under attack. New pilots are getting ready to join the AFSOC team. And somewhere in a remote and austere location, Airmen are receiving much-needed relief and supplies.

The Doolittle Raiders would be proud.

(Roux is assigned to the 919th SOW public affairs office.)



Master Sgt. Joseph Kimbrell (left) prepares his equipment for a future C-145A training mission while Master Sgt. Brian Schultz assists Tech. Sgt. Matthew Massey with adjustments to his pro gear. All are special mission aviators assigned to the 919th SOW.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

CH

CHAPLAIN

Chaplains provide spiritual care and ensure all military and civilian Citizen Airmen and their families have the opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to the free exercise of religion. Chaplains are trained to help people in their time of need and ensure 100 percent confidentiality. Call your base chaplain or the command chaplain office, 478-327-1475.

DPH

DIRECTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

DPHs are local, professional, licensed clinical social workers on base who can assist with a variety of military and related issues, including, but not limited to anxiety, depression, work stress, family discord, anger, marriage, etc... For a list of DPH offices, go to <https://www.afrc.af.mil/About-Us/PHAP/> and click on the list of DPHs midway down the page.

KS

KEY SPOUSE

The Key Spouse program is a vital network for supporting Reservists and their families. While Key Spouses do not serve as subject matter experts for questions, they do have the training and resources to connect you with the person who has the answers. Find out more by visiting <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Benefits-and-Entitlements/Key-Spouse-Program/>.

YR

YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM

The Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Program is a series of events designed to provide Citizen Airmen and families with essential resources prior to deployment, a level of stability and support while deployed, and successful reintegration techniques after the deployment cycle ends. Call 478-327-1041.

MOS

MILITARY ONESOURCE

Military OneSource offers a wide range of individualized consultations, coaching and counseling for many aspects of military life. Check out militaryonesource.mil or call 800-342-9647 any time.

EAP

CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

EAP is a professional service that provides information, consultation, problem-solving counseling, resource identification and support to all civilian employees and their immediate family members. For more information, call 800-222-0364 or visit FOH4You.com.

AFR

AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS

Airman & Family Readiness Centers serve as the focal point for Air Force Reserve family matters. Their mission is to build stronger communities that promote self-sufficiency and enhance mission readiness, retention and adaptation to the Air Force way of life. For a list of A&FR offices go to, <https://www.afrc.af.mil/About-Us/Airman-Family/>.

SH

DOD SAFE HELPLINE

The telephone helpline provides confidential crisis intervention, support and information to members of the DoD community who have been sexually assaulted. The helpline offers crisis intervention, emotional support and referrals to both military and civilian resources in your area. For more information, call 877-995-5247.

“Everybody needs a helping hand at some point in their life,” said Brande Newsome, Air Force Reserve Command’s community support program manager. “Luckily, AFRC has a host of people and resources available to help more than 74,000 military and civilian Citizen Airmen and their families when they need it most.”

As the chairman of AFRC’s Community Action Team, Newsome is leading the effort to improve access to all of the Reserve’s helping agencies and resources.

“Community Action Teams across the command are using a process called ‘Getting to Outcomes’ to create their Community Action Plans designed to meet the needs of their military members, civilians and family members,” she said.

On the following page are some of the helping agencies and resources available.

“If you need help, please reach out to one of these agencies or check out the resource.

Even if you aren’t exactly sure which agency or resource you might need, the most important thing is to ask for help. We’ll make sure you get the help you need.”

For generic community support questions, e-mail hqafrc.esccommunitysupport@us.af.mil or go to <https://www.afrc.af.mil/About-Us/Airman-Family/>.



'We Are All Survivors'

Earlier this year, Kristen Christy, the Key Spouse for the 53rd Network Operations Squadron at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, was named the Air Force Spouse of the Year by Armed Forces Insurance and Military Spouse Magazine. A survivor of many hardships throughout her life, Christy is committed to helping others overcome life's challenges. (Linsey Slattery photography)

Spouse of the Year eager to help others overcome life's many challenges

By Bo Joyner

Having faced numerous hardships throughout her life, it would have been easy for Kristen Christy to give up. Instead, she has dedicated her life to giving back.

Christy's dad served in the Air Force for 32 years and her family moved frequently while she was young. They were living in Germany in 1983 when Kristen's life was turned upside down... for the first time. Just before her 16th birthday, she suffered a massive stroke that paralyzed her right side and took away her dream of some day serving in the Air Force.

Doctors told her parents she may not live and if she did, she would probably never walk again and would probably have extensive brain damage.

Demonstrating a never-give-up attitude that would come to define her life, she refused to let the stroke beat her. She learned to write with her left hand and, after a year and a half of rehabilitation, she learned to walk again.

The stroke left her with a shock of white hair across her bangs that she wears to this day. "It's my silver lining," she said. "It grew in after my stroke. It reminds me whenever I look in the mirror that there is a silver lining to everything. No matter how bad things might get, you have to keep telling yourself that things are going to get better."

It's that kind of indomitable spirit that helped Christy survive one of the toughest challenges life can bring. Ten years ago, her first husband, Reserve Lt. Col. Don Christy, died by suicide not long after he had returned home from a deployment.

Needless to say, Christy and her two sons, Ryan and Ben, who

were 14 and 12 at the time, were devastated. Ryan, in particular, had an extremely difficult time dealing with his father's death.

"We were catatonic when we got the news that Don had killed himself," she said. "We didn't know what we were going to do, but we had friends and family members who helped lift us out of that dark time. I think a lot of people are afraid to approach someone when they have just suffered a loss because they don't know what to say or are afraid they'll say the wrong thing. You don't have to say anything, you just need to be there."

At age 16, Ryan was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. "I think if he had those years to mature, life would be different for him," Christy said. "He would not have turned to drugs and started self-medicating with meth and heroine."

Christy tried desperately to help Ryan deal with his father's death and the drug addiction that followed. She thought he was getting better. He was sober for three years before he disappeared on Sept. 20, 2015. Christy hasn't seen or heard from him since.

Just like with the stroke, Christy refused to let the suicide or her son's disappearance beat her.

Four years ago, she remarried. Her new husband is Tech Sgt. Sean Lange, a Reserve Citizen Airman assigned to the 53rd Network Operations Squadron (formerly the 960th NOS) at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. She is currently the corporate engagement and events manager for a local defense contracting company, the president of the Colorado Springs chapter of the Air Force Association, the incoming chairman of the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Council and a lecturer who travels the country speaking on resilience and

suicide prevention.

"No matter what I'm going through, my Air Force family has always been there for me," Christy said. "Our Air Force is our family. My parents taught me early on to get embedded in your community. That lesson has stayed with me to this day. There are times when I need people to put their arms around me and help me and there are times when I can be the person who is able to help. By being embedded in our communities and fostering relationships, we become better people and our communities become stronger."

For the past three years, Christy has served as the Key Spouse for the her husband's squadron. She has been the piggyback ride when someone else needed it. She has been there to wrap her arms around someone when they need to be held. And she has quickly earned a reputation for her enthusiasm building relationships and supporting the squadron's Reservists and family members.

"She has worked hard to give us a sense of community," said Lt. Col. Anita Edmonds, former 960th NOS commander. "She's always there for families, whether they are struggling with personal issues or bringing in a new baby. She even reached out to me and let me know about free resources for my children while my husband was deployed."

Earlier this year, Christy was named the 2018 Air Force Spouse of the Year by Armed Forces Insurance and Military Spouse Magazine. She was the first spouse of an Air Force Re-



Kristen's first husband, Lt. Col. Don Christy, committed suicide 10 years ago after returning home from a deployment. Her oldest son, Ryan, went missing Sept. 20, 2015 and has yet to be found (Courtesy photo)

servist to receive the honor.

"I cried when I found out," she said. "My Air Force family has done so much for me. It's a privilege for me to be able to give something back."

The Key Spouse program is an official Air Force program designed to enhance readiness and build unit cohesion outside the work place.

Promoting the Key Spouse program and developing resilient leaders throughout Air Force Reserve Command are top priorities for Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, AFRC commander, and his wife, Janis.

"We need more people like Kristen to step up and become involved with the Key Spouse program," Mrs. Scobee said. "She has a huge heart and is willing to use what she has learned dealing with some extremely difficult experiences to help others. Everyone can learn something about resilience from listening to Kristen's story. I am so proud of what she has done as a Key Spouse and as a member of the Air Force Reserve family."

Not surprisingly, suicide prevention holds a place near to Christy's heart.

"My family has experienced the anguish of a suicide and the lasting effects that follow," she said. "After 10 years, we are ready to share our story. Let our 20-20 hindsight be somebody else's 20-15 foresight. Let us use our resiliency and lessons learned to help others transition from post-traumatic stress to post-traumatic growth."

Kristen Christy is a survivor who would love to see March 4th be commemorated as National Survivor's Day. She is currently working with Mrs. Pence's office and her Colorado delegates to make it happen.

"We are all survivors of something – a broken heart, lost job, illness, death," she said. "We help each other put one foot in front of the other and 'March 4th' and conquer. I would love to see March 4th as a beacon of hope, even for just one day, for those in the throes of life's tests to realize they are resilient and that together we can overcome any challenge."



Christy and her husband, Tech Sgt. Sean Lange, pose for a photo with NA-SCAR driver Darrell "Bubba" Wallace. (Courtesy photo)

A GOOD IMPRESSION

Recruiting Service makes its mark at sporting events

By Master Sgt. Chance Babin



Air Force Reserve Brig. Gen. Christian Funk was back on the field with the Air Force Academy football team Oct. 19 when the Falcons played the University of Nevada Las Vegas at Sam Boyd Stadium in Las Vegas. A football stand-out at the Academy, Funk was the 1984 Western Athletic Conference co-defensive player of the year. He served as the honorary captain for the game against UNLV and was on the field for the coin toss.

“It’s a great honor to represent the United States Air Force, Air Force Reserve Command and the U.S. Air Force Academy,” Funk, who currently serves as the deputy director of strategy, concepts and assessments and deputy chief of staff for strategic plans and requirements at Air Force headquarters at the Pentagon, said.

“It’s all I’ve ever known – being in the Air Force. It’s been my entire adult life and my family’s life. Seeing the Falcons play, especially having the privilege to be on the sidelines with the team, is always a humbling experience. Those kids were me and my teammates 35 years ago. It’s an ageless experience that was shared by many alumni on the sidelines Friday night at UNLV.”

Having appearances like Funk’s at the game is part of AFRC Recruiting Service’s efforts to partner with various sports teams and conferences to generate brand awareness and recruiting opportunities at sporting events.

At the collegiate level, AFRC Recruiting Service is currently sponsoring the Mountain West Conference, Conference USA and the American Athletic Conference. The Air Force Academy is a member of the Mountain West Conference.

AFRC is also the title sponsor for the Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl and a sponsor of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, a mixed martial arts competition.

Air Force Reserve Brig. Gen. Christian Funk serves as the honorary captain for the Air Force Academy during a recent Falcons football game. To his left is Chief Master Sgt. Michael Johnson, Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service chief of advertising. AFRC RS is getting the message out about the benefits of joining the Reserve at a host of sporting events. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)



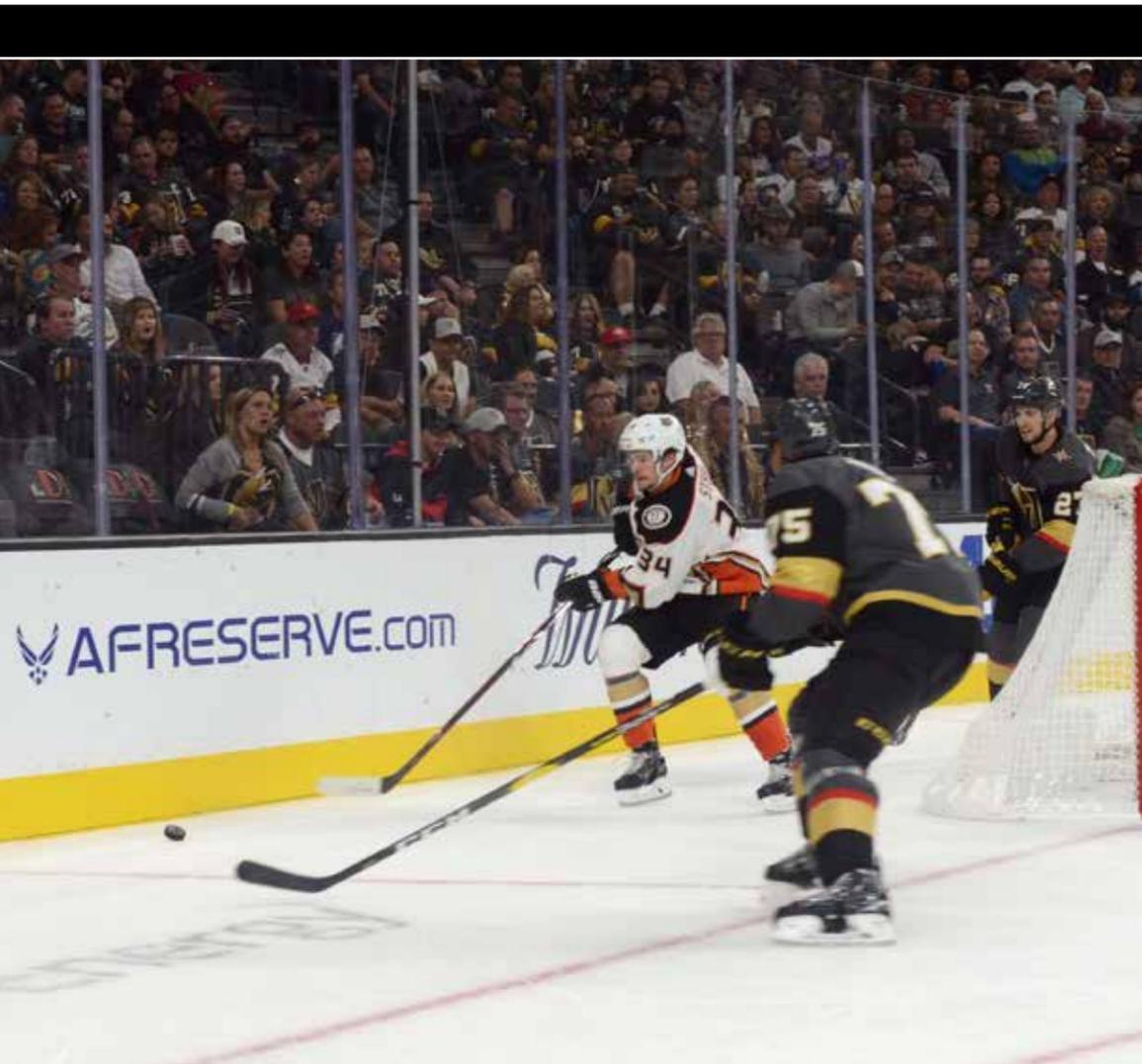
The Air Force Reserve logo was featured prominently during the UFC 229 bout between Conner McGregor and Khabib Nurmagomedov. (Getty images)

In addition to engaging with fans in Recruiting Service’s target demographic online and through digital placements, a recruiting team is often present at games with the Mobile Marketing Platform to actively recruit at these sporting events.

UFC 229, held on Oct. 6 and headlined by Conner McGregor versus Khabib Nurmagomedov, was one of the most watched events in mixed martial arts history.

The Air Force Reserve logo, placed in the UFC octagon, was featured prominently throughout the fight. A post-fight melee created a social media sensation as Nurmagomedov jumped out of the octagon exactly where the Air Force Reserve logo was displayed. Pictures and videos of the fighter exiting the octagon were featured in newspapers and television reports around the country, including ESPN Sports Center, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and *USA Today*, to name just a few.

“The awareness of the Air Force Reserve created by this placement at UFC 229 far surpassed our expectations,” said Chief Master Sgt. Michael Johnson, AFRC RS chief of advertising. “The UFC audience is very patriotic and pro-military, so it is a good place for us to be telling the compelling story of the great opportunities and benefits the Air Force Reserve has to offer prior-service and non prior-service individuals.”



The Air Force Reserve logo is displayed during a recent Vegas Golden Knights National Hockey League hockey game. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)

The three collegiate athletic conferences sponsored by AFRC are spread out throughout the country and are located near many bases that house Reserve units. In addition to football, RS advertises at other events like track and field, gymnastics, wrestling, volleyball and swimming to promote recruiting access to a more diverse audience.

“Having these sponsorships that are often co-located in communities near many Air Force Reserve locations will give us access to these institutions for branding and impression to let them know the many opportunities to serve in the Reserve,” Johnson said. “Many of these schools also have ROTC, which opens more doors.”

2018 is the third year AFRC has sponsored the Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl. The contest is nationally televised and kicks off at noon eastern standard time on ABC Dec. 15 from Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

The Celebration Bowl, which showcases the heritage, legacy, pageantry and tradition of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, features the conference champions from the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference and the Southwestern Athlet-

ic Conference.

“We are excited to be the title sponsor of the Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl,” Johnson said. “This year’s bowl game, which celebrates service, lines up perfectly with what the Air Force Reserve does every day serving our nation at home and abroad as part of this nation’s national defense. We are looking forward to telling the great story of the Air Force Reserve, its mission and the benefits of serving to a national audience.”

AFRC benefits from an amplification effect provided by sports sponsorships. Associating with a sports team or platform that is well established with a significant and enthusiastic fan base translates into

a positive association of the Air Force Reserve in the viewpoint of those fans, Johnson explained.

“These sponsorships offer the Air Force Reserve an opportunity to engage with our target demographic in significant ways onsite and online. From face-to-face interactions for our recruiting teams to digital engagements that create leads that go to our qualification center, we always focus on a positive return on investment to find the right people to fill positions at our locations across the United States,” the chief said.

(Babin is noncommissioned officer in charge of public affairs for AFRC Recruiting Service.)

2018 marks the third year AFRC has sponsored the Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl. The contest is nationally televised and kicks off at noon eastern standard time on ABC Dec. 15. Shown here is action from the 2015 Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)



SHAPING THE AIR FORCE

Reserve maintainers take part in light attack experiment

By Tech. Sgt. Bob Jennings



It's not every day a pair of Reserve Citizen Airmen maintainers get to help shape the future of the Air Force. But events like the recent light attack experiment occasionally provide the opportunity.

Senior Master Sgt. Scott Lopez, the maintenance superintendent for the 476th Maintenance Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, and Tech. Sgt. Lauren Camarena, an electrical and environmental systems craftsman with the 476th MXS, travelled to Holloman AFB, New Mexico, for two months in the spring of to take part in phase II of the experiment.

The experiment tested the capabilities and maintainability of the AT-6 Wolverine and the A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft to determine which plane would best fit the Air Force's needs in a close-air-support role.

The AT-6 is a variant of the Beechcraft T-6 Texan training aircraft currently in use by the U.S. Air Force and Navy. The A-29 is in service in multiple countries around the world.

The planes flew multiple times a day, testing things like reliability, ease of maintenance and cost to operate. Meanwhile, 26 Air Force maintainers watched and documented.

Lopez worked as the maintenance superintendent of the team observing the A-29. His active-duty counterpart, Senior Master Sgt. Ron Dedman from the 366th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, led the AT-6 observation team. Camarena served as an observer, watching directly as the civilian teams worked on the Super Tucano.

"The focus on the maintenance piece was huge," said Camarena, the only woman to be selected for either team. "It's like the Air Force said 'let's look at this plane before we buy it.'"

The Airmen were not allowed to actually touch any of the maintenance during the experiment. More importantly, they were told not to express any opinions.

"We're both very open and expressive people," said Lopez, "so we really had to be careful. We really toed that line."

Each member of the observation teams signed a non-disclosure agreement prohibiting the sharing of information between the AT-6 and the A-29 teams.

"My team did their thing, their team did their thing," he said. "We were completely separated. And we just observed maintenance."

During the experiment, Lopez led his total force team as it documented more than 170 training missions flown in the A-29, including working with three allied special operations forces to train more than a dozen foreign joint terminal attack controllers.

"This was a joint operation," said Lopez. Pilots selected for the experiment included Airmen, Marines, and Naval aviators. He also touted the combined operations with allied nations.

Senior Master Sgt. Scott Lopez, the maintenance superintendent for the 476th Maintenance Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, and Tech. Sgt. Lauren Camarena, an electrical and environmental systems craftsman with the 476th MXS, pose with an A-29 Super Tucano. They took part in the Air Force's light attack experiment to help determine what airframe would best suit the Air Force's needs. (Tech. Sgt. Bob Jennings)

"It was an awesome opportunity," he said.

In all, the team gave the Secretary of the Air Force more than 30,000 critical data points from its inspection data sheets. Team members compiled those sheets into weekly action reports to keep the SECAF apprised of the experiment's progress.

But data collection, while the primary purpose of the experiment, was just the beginning.

The team also, in conjunction with the 49th Wing Weapons Standardization Section, certified ACC's first munitions-load-qualified joint-service aircrew. Team members studied more than 200 maintenance manuals and provided recommendations to build up the Air Force's maintenance capability for the OA-X project.

At the end of the experiment, the team built manning plans for three different scenarios – operations at home station, deployed and at a forward operating base.

"It was three different scenarios, three different sets of numbers," said Camarena, "and we all had to agree."

They also used their observations and their expertise to create inspection criteria, technical data concepts and a structured concept of operations for the both the A-29 and the AT-6. They developed tactics, techniques and procedures that will be used to help shape the maintenance portion of the Air Force's light attack capability.

The observation teams sat in on daily flying schedule meetings to prepare them for the potential maintenance ahead, working with the operations team to ensure they had the most access possible to maintenance that was going on.

"The ops and maintenance relationship out there was second to none," Lopez said. "It was really unmatched."

Lopez said the collaboration helped expand his knowledge of scheduling practices and the command structure and language used in ACC, as opposed to Air Force Reserve Command.

He now incorporates that broader awareness into the Total Force Integration efforts between the 476th Fighter Group and the 23rd Wing at Moody AFB. The 476th FG is a geographically separated unit of the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman AFB, Missouri.

"I think I brought back more of an understanding of close air support," Camarena, a former C-17 Globemaster III cargo aircraft mechanic, said. "Coming off a heavy aircraft, and you're bringing people down to the fight – this one, you're actually in the fight and seeing what they actually do every day and why they need to do what they do."

The results of the light attack experiment haven't yet been released, but Lopez expects a decision to be made in either December 2018 or January 2019. No matter which aircraft is ultimately chosen, the part these two Reserve Citizen Airmen played in the process will be felt for decades to come.

"It's an honor to be a part of that," Camarena said. "To kind of say 'Hey, we helped pick this aircraft for the Air Force.'"

(Jennings is assigned to the 442nd Fighter Wing office of public affairs.)

ACTIVE GUARD AND RESERVE

The many benefits of becoming an AGR

By Tyler Grimes

In today's Air Force Reserve, there are many career paths and options for Reserve Citizen Airmen currently serving. One of these options is the Active Guard and Reserve program,

which offers many unique benefits for Reservists who are willing to serve on a full-time basis.

Capt. Matthew Harding, AGR Assignments Branch chief at the Air Reserve Personnel Center located at Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado, said the program provides Reservists the eligibility to receive the same pay and benefits as members of the active duty Air Force.

"For both Reserve and regular Air

Force members it is an opportunity to continue their career and combine years of active service with an AGR tour to be one step closer to earning active duty retirement," Harding said. "Additionally, each year a member is on AGR orders is 365 points towards Reserve retirement. If a member is pursuing a Reserve retirement it is a huge boost for them."

An AGR tour can be seen as a force development opportunity that enhances a Reservist's resume, providing a different perspective and mission focus or steer a career on a new path altogether.

The initial AGR tour is three years with the possibility of continuation in that position for up to two more years. At that point, the Reservist can apply for and be selected for another tour in a new position. After six years in the AGR program, members are no longer probationary and can be entered into the career program.

Currently, there are AGR positions available in every wing

across Air Force Reserve Command and at other major commands. In addition, there are AGR positions within the Recruiting Service at all Air Force bases.



Currently, there are AGR positions available in every wing across Air Force Reserve Command and at other major commands. In addition, there are AGR positions within the Recruiting Service at all Air Force bases. Here, Staff Sgt. Kristine Butler, a recruiter from the 94th Airlift Wing, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., talks to prospective recruit at a trade show. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)

As of this year, there are more than 3,600 AGR positions across the command and that number is expected to continue to grow in the coming years, according to Harding.

Col. Dion Flynn, headquarters AFRC chief of AGR Transition, explained that AFRC is preparing to adjust the Air Force Reserve full-time support force mix and convert approximately 1,200 Air Reserve

Technician positions to AGR positions.

"These ART to AGR conversions will be resourced through the Fiscal Year 2020 Program Objective Memorandum cycle and phased in from fiscal year 2020 to fiscal year 2022," Flynn said.

Brig. Gen. Anne Gunter, Office of Air Force Reserve Personnel Director, is working with her Human Capital Management Leadership Team to ensure Reservists have AGR opportunities as well as to improve effective manning and meet end strength for the Air Force Reserve.

"The HCMLT is aggressively working every day removing barriers and easing transition between statuses," Gunter said. "We have begun a comprehensive review of all AGR policies, processes and systems to ensure lethality and readiness to provide an agile, combat ready force."

For more information on the AGR program, visit the myPers webpage (<https://mypers.af.mil>) and select Air Force Reserve Active Guard/Reserve Program.

Major changes to medical policies good news for Reservists

By Tyler Grimes

When Col. John Buterbaugh took the helm as the command surgeon at Air Force Reserve Command in late summer 2018, he wanted to make some bold changes to improve processes for the 70,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen serving across the nation and around the world.

In an Aug. 28 letter, Buterbaugh outlined four initiatives to increase medical readiness across the command including, eliminating the medical case backlog, removing the mental health requirement differences between the active duty Air Force and Reservists, providing more full-time medical staff to local units and increasing decision-making ability on medical cases at the wing and squadron levels.

"The current Reserve medical system is out of step with the needs of the mission and the Airmen," Buterbaugh said in the letter. "This has led to the long backlog of cases, task saturation on the (unit training assembly), and decreased quality of medical administrative care of the members. Ultimately this has negatively affected medical readiness and has decreased the ability of the Air Force Reserve to take the fight to the enemy."

Of the four initiatives, aligning the mental health requirements with the active duty Air Force has seen the most progress and affects the highest number of Reservists, according to Buterbaugh. The standards are now the same and some of the mental health issues requiring a waiver or were disqualifying people from the Reserve have been eliminated. As major of a policy change as this was, leadership was able to move quickly to get it approved at the Air Force level.

"This didn't just affect the Reserve, it affected the Guard as well," he said. "Once they had signed off on the way it was written, it was voted on by the Air Force Medical Corporate Board."

The policy change was then added to and published in the Medical Standards Directory. With the new policy in place, Citizen Airmen who currently have waivers for certain mental health issues can now go through a process at their local medical units to have the waivers removed.

The goals of the policy changes are to increase the number

of Reservists who are medically ready to deploy, retain more healthy members in the Reserve by eliminating unnecessary barriers and make it easier to recruit people from active duty into the Reserve.

"This is a huge win for the Air Force Reserve and the Guard too," he said. "People transferring into the Reserve and the Guard were affected by this."

One of test sites for moving the participation waiver process to the local level is the 315th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina. There, Master Sgt. Hope Lapoczka, Aerospace Medicine manager, is working with her team to implement these changes.

"By having a participation waiver granted it gives the members' squadron and leadership an opportunity to ensure their wellbeing while they are going through a sometimes difficult process," Lapoczka said, "especially when someone is going through a mental health related waiver. To some members, the Reserve is their family and their only support system. When you take that away it can have a heavy effect on that member's wellbeing. Overall it will increase our ability to complete the mission effectively across the wing and keep a close eye on our fellow Airmen."

She said the policy changes have had secondary positive effects on the Reservists as well.

"In the past we have had participation waivers denied for members whose full case processing took sometimes over two years," she said. "This has caused the member to have two bad years towards retirement. Also, it helps relieve financial burdens from not having the monthly Reserve income that they were used to and for some members this is their primary source of income. Some members are on orders so often they don't maintain a full time civilian job and rely heavily on military orders. If that type of member is denied a participation waiver for a disqualifying condition, it becomes a sudden loss of income."

At Travis Air Force Base, California, another test site, Col. Henry Schwartz, 349th Aerospace Medicine Squadron chief, said the ability to process participation waivers has added to the amount of work he and his staff has to do but it is a positive change.

"It transiently increased our workload as we dig through our backlog," Schwartz said. "However, the satisfaction of being able to get a valued Reservist back in the fight quickly is huge. The process has resulted in improved moral among the entire staff here at the unit."

These changes along with hiring more full-time medical staff to eliminate the medical case backlog are in motion to enable Reserve Citizen Airmen to serve and succeed.

Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service is getting the word out about the Reserve at a host of major sporting events, like the recent UFC 229 Conner McGregor versus Khabib Nurmagomedov bout. For more on Recruiting Service's efforts to partner with various sports teams and conferences to generate brand awareness and recruiting opportunities at sports events, see the story on page 16. (Getty Images)

