

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

August 2004

Getting the Galaxy Ready

**Reservists help
streamline C-5
maintenance
process**



Through Changing Times, Readiness and Relevance have Remained Constant

It's been 25 years since I joined the Air Force Reserve in the late 1970s. At that time, many Reserve units were flying and operating legacy aircraft that were no longer in the active force. We were a Cold War reserve force that trained to be ready for the "Big One"; a force that would be accessed under full mobilization to stop the Russians when they came charging through The Fulda Gap in Germany. It was much easier to be a one-weekend-a-month, two-week-annual-tour drilling member.

In the 1980s, we became involved with more active-duty missions and started flying newer aircraft. Also, we found ourselves included in more real-world responses. As we approached 1990 and Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the Air Force Reserve consisted of almost 90,000 people, and the active force numbered slightly less than 700,000. We were ready to participate in a big way because of how we had grown into frontline missions and aircraft. We had stayed constant in our readiness. Training to active-duty standards and being evaluated by the active duty had kept us prepared.

In the years after Desert Shield/Desert Storm and the fall of the Berlin Wall, our nation cashed in on the peace dividend. Our active Air Force was reduced to 359,000 people, and many Airmen returned from overseas as we closed bases. The Air Force Reserve drew down to 79,000.

The 1990s found us in many missions that were new to us as we changed to meet the needs of a smaller active force. We became a more important part of our Air Force. In essence, we became a peacetime augmentation force. If you saw a world event in the newspaper, there was almost a 100-percent chance that Reservists were participating in a volunteer status.

To meet an increased world involvement with a smaller total force, the Air



Force implemented the Air Expeditionary Force in the late 1990s. AEF promised to provide scheduled rotational capability to the combatant commanders. We adopted this schedule in the Reserve, and with your volunteerism we were able to source thousands of requirements. Most of these requirements involved 15-day, in-theater deployments, while some of you were able to perform 30-, 60- or 90-day tours.

Today, we have become an indispensable part of the total force. Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 28,000 Air Force Reservists have been mobilized, while thousands of others have served as volunteers. Since the formal cessation of hostilities in Iraq, the Air Force has attempted to use the Blue and Silver AEF rotations to get us back into a normal AEF rhythm. While this has been successful for combat air forces and some parts of the expeditionary combat support forces, the norm has been overcome by higher operational requirements. As a result, the Air Force chief of staff has increased deployment lengths to 120 days and rotation cycles to 20 months. This has not brought relief for many of our mobility air forces. Just ask a C-130 Airman.

We owe you a participation require-

ment that is scheduled, predictable and short of major conflict, stable, and reliable. To this end, we are working with Air Mobility Command to bring volunteerism back as the primary access vehicle instead of mobilization. In addition, we are working with U.S. Central Command Air Forces and U.S. Air Forces in Europe to reduce the duration of deployments.

We want to return to 15-day requirements, but that may be too hard to do. So, we are pushing for 30-day in-theater tours. We have had recent success with CENTAF agreeing to 40-day, in-place tours for our combat air forces' shooters and 30-day, in-place tours for their maintenance people. We will continue to work this hard.

While the buzz within the military today is all about transformation, you can see that our Air Force Reserve has been on a transformation journey for more than four decades. From the creation of the Associate Reserve Program in the 1960s to the integrated unmanned aerial vehicle squadrons in 2002, we have met our Air Force's needs in missions and accessibility. Two constant themes have pointed our way: relevancy and readiness. Relevancy is all about our ability to adapt to mission needs and accessibility. Mission readiness is our only reason for existence, and it is all about you.

Our journey will continue for the foreseeable future, and we will navigate by taking care of our No. 1 resource: you, the men and women of Air Force Reserve Command. It is imperative that you receive the best training, that the environment you work in is one that allows you to perform to your fullest capabilities and that we practice our war-fighting skills together in order to be able to operate as one team. Your service continues to be extraordinary, and your sacrifice has been unprecedented.

Thanks for all you do! ★



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Front cover: Staff Sgt. Georgette Watson, a crew chief assigned to the 19th Maintenance Squadron, Robins Air Force Base, Ga., examines a C-5 as part of an isochronal inspection. Reservists assigned to the 19th are helping streamline the C-5 maintenance process so the Galaxies can be returned to their units faster. For the story, see page 6. (Tech. Sgt. Chance C. Babin)

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CHAD A. BISHOP

FIT TO FIGHT

Program pushes Reservists to
pursue healthier lifestyle

By Bo Joyner



(Left to right) Master Sgt. Christine Cox, Senior Master Sgt. Karen Hendren and Master Sgt. Loney Whitley, air reserve technicians with the 919th Special Operations Wing, Duke Field, Fla., run during their lunch break as part of their overall fitness program.

At units throughout the country, Air Force Reservists are taking the service's new fitness test to make sure they are fit to perform optimally in today's high-operations-tempo climate. But Air Force Reserve officials hope Reservists don't forget about fitness once they have completed the test.

"The idea is not to prepare for the test for a couple of weeks and then abandon your health program once the test is over," said Col. William P. Thornton, AFRC's assistant director of health services, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. "We want Reservists to make exercising and eating right a permanent part of their lives."

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper implemented the new Fit to Fight program Air Force-wide Jan. 1 with the idea that the Air Force must have a healthy, fit force that is ready to deploy at any time.

"I want to make very clear that my focus is not on passing a fitness test once a year," General Jumper said last year. "More important, we are changing the culture of the Air Force. This is about our preparedness to deploy and fight. It's about warriors. It's about instilling an expectation that makes fitness a daily standard — an essential part of your service."

General Jumper's new program makes it a commander's responsibility to ensure his or her people incorporate physical fitness into their daily routine. While active-duty members are given time to work out on duty and have access to health and wellness centers on base, unit Reservists and individual mobilization augmentees don't always have those same opportunities.

Reserve unit commanders and IMA supervisors can authorize duty-time physical training, but it must fit with mission and other training requirements.

"That's the biggest challenge facing Reservists as far as fitness is concerned," Colonel Thornton said. "Our people have a personal responsibility to stay fit. They have to exercise on their own time because they are still required to maintain the same level of fitness as the active duty. Maintaining a fitness level necessary to meet our expeditionary Air Force needs is the individual's responsibility, but establishing a unit environment and cul-

ture that promotes fitness is the commander's responsibility."

"It's the same for IMAs," said Senior Master Sgt. Patrick O'Neal from the Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver. "They are not able to work out with the rest of their squadron three or four days a week at the track or the base wellness center, so they have to find time during their busy schedules for exercise. All we can do is encourage them to make fitness a part of their daily routine so they can operate at their full potential."

To measure the fitness of the force, the Air Force adopted a new assessment that consists of four parts: a 1.5-mile run, an abdominal circumference measurement, abdominal crunches

and push-ups. The overall maximum score possible is 100 points, with 50 points possible for the run, 30 points for the abdominal measurement, and 10 points each for the crunches and push-ups.

A score of 90 or above is considered excellent; good is from 75 to 90; marginal is 70 to 75; and poor is anything less than 70.

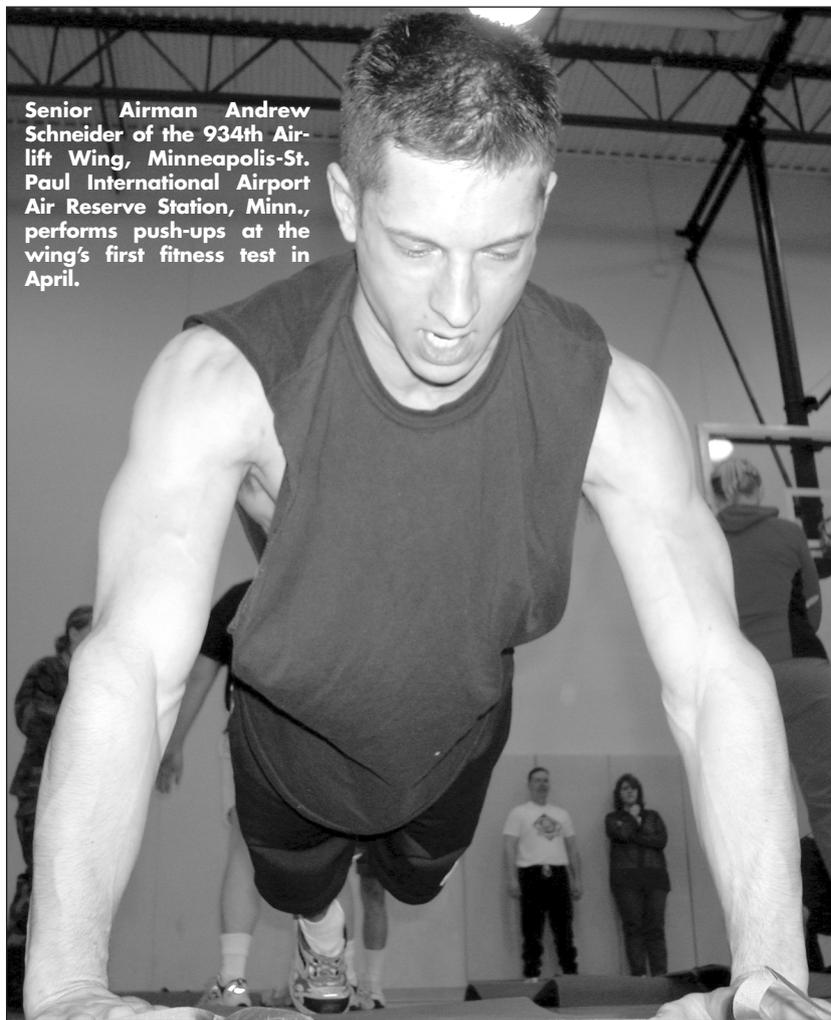
New Air Force charts break down scoring by age and gender. Beginning with "under age 25," the charts go up every five years for both men and women, grouping them at 25-29, 30-34 and so on.

As an Airman's age increases, the number of push-ups and crunches required for a perfect score goes

down, and more time is allowed for the run. However, the waist measurement standard remains constant, regardless of an Airman's age.

For example, a male under age 25 would have to complete the 1.5-mile run in less than 9:36 and perform at least 62 push-ups in one minute and 55 crunches in one minute for a perfect score. A male over age 55 would need a time of 11:06, 35 push-ups and 41 crunches for a perfect score. Both would have to have a waist measurement of less than 32.5 inches for a perfect score.

AFRC began testing Reservists April 1. All Reservists will be tested by the end of the year. Initial testing focused on those who were in the weight management program, which was terminated Jan. 1. Early testing also involved some volunteer



Senior Airman Andrew Schneider of the 934th Airlift Wing, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minn., performs push-ups at the wing's first fitness test in April.

groups to help units get their processes in order. Most units are now scheduling regular testing. Safety in testing, getting people ready for the test and maintaining their fitness is a high priority.

Maj. Therese Kern is the unit fitness monitor for the 440th Airlift Wing, Gen. Mitchell International Airport Air Reserve Station, Wisc. At each of the wing's unit training assemblies, she administers the new fitness assessment to about 160 Reservists.

"It took a while to get some of the logistics worked out, but it's great to be involved in a program like this," she said. "It's really important that our Reservists maintain a high level of fitness."

Major Kern said most of the Reservists she has tested have done well on the assessment, scoring in either the excellent or good range.

Colonel Thornton said early results command-wide have shown that most Reservists are scoring well.

"The Air Force has had some problems with the reporting software, so we don't

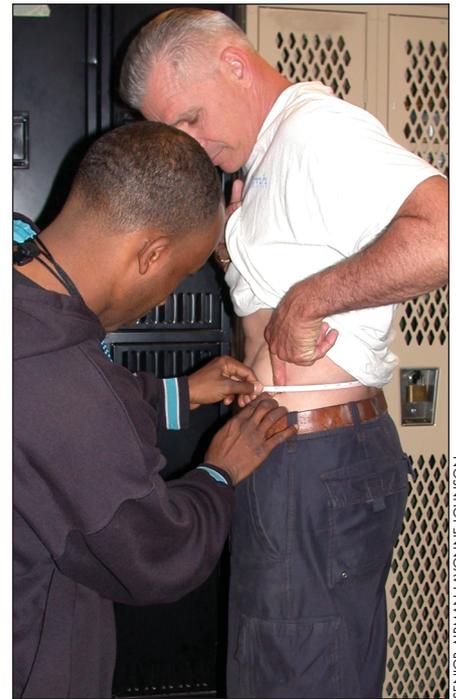
have all of the results from Reservists who have tested so far, but word from the field is that most people are scoring at least in the good range," he said. "Version 2 of the software due out this summer will give us better reports at the unit and command level."

Reservists who score marginal or poor are given additional educational materials, encouraged to begin a fitness program and retested in six months. Those who don't show improvement over time could face administrative action.

Air Force Instruction 10-248 spells out the details of the Air Force's Fit to Fight program.

The instruction and the AFRC supplement are available online at http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/pubfiles/afrc/10/afi10-248_afrc-sup1_i/afi10-248_afrcsup1_i.pdf.

For more information, contact your unit's fitness monitor or Colonel Thornton at DSN 497-1897 or commercial 478-327-1897. His e-mail address is



SENIOR AIRMAN LAVONNE JOHNSON

Tech. Sgt. Eric Holmes measures the waistline of Chief Master Sgt. Frank Lamneck III during the first fitness test at the 459th Air Refueling Wing, Andrews Air Force Base, Md., in April.



Tech. Sgt. Roberta Davis holds Senior Airman Travis Williams' feet while he does some crunches. Both are assigned to the 940th ARW, Beale AFB, Calif.

MAJ. ROBERT COUSEBAKER

A Vision for the Future

Doctor brings eye exams, education to Thailand

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Tudor

With his eyes set on helping a populace that's been rebuilding its health-care system for more than seven years, a Reservist flew to Thailand to help that nation's government build a vision for the future.

Maj. (Dr.) Christopher Rugaber flew 8,661 miles from his home in Chicora, Pa., to spend two weeks supervising eye exams at a Thai university in Bangkok. Dr. Rugaber is the chief of optometry for the 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio.

Since 1985, the doctor said he's made 11 visits to Thailand, some during his tenure in the Air Force International Health Specialist Program. In his past three visits, he's supervised more than 400 exams. During his most recent trip, in March, Dr. Rugaber helped launch the first Thai government-sponsored optometry care for the nation's 64 million people.

Despite the need for optometry services, Rugaber said he realized early on that getting people to accept this form of eye care would be a difficult challenge.

"I knew this would be the beginning of an intense political struggle between those who wish to bring optometry to Thailand and the entrenched forces — ophthalmology and untrained optical retailers — that currently control eye care in Thailand," he said.

While missionaries and others have previously provided this service to portions of the Thai population, this was the first time, Dr. Rugaber said, the government has backed the work.

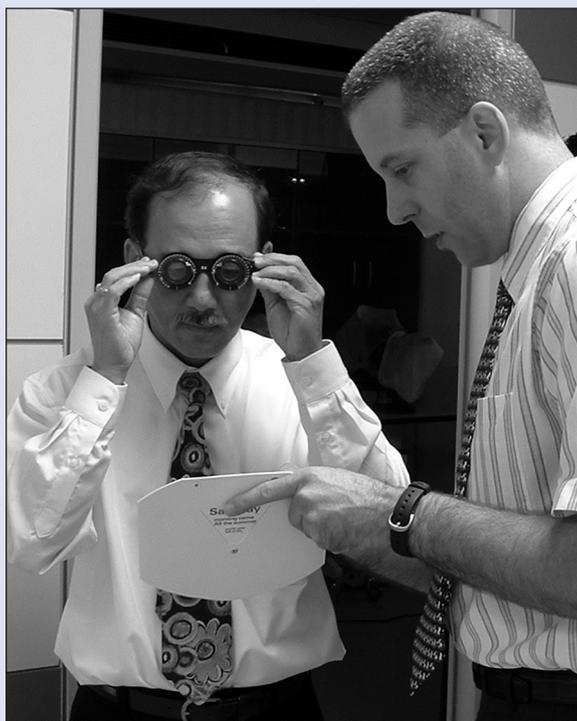
Dr. Rugaber said optometry doesn't exist as a service in Thailand; only ophthalmology. Ophthalmology deals with the science of the structure, functions and diseases of the eye. Optometry is the health-care profession concerned with examining the eye for defects and faults of refraction, prescribing corrective lenses or eye exercises, diagnosing diseases of the eye and treating such diseases or referring patients for treatment.

An economic collapse in Thailand crippled the country's health-care system in 1997 and led to the development of a national master plan to rebuild it. This plan, however, did not address optometry.

Most eye exams, Dr. Rugaber said, are five-minute fares performed by unskilled retailers.

"What the computer estimates your prescription to be is what you get," he said.

The doctor, who speaks Thai and stayed with his non-English-speaking in-laws during the trip, said few ophthalmologists are available outside Bangkok's 972 square miles of city area. That leaves more than 57 million Thai people struggling to find eye care.



Maj. (Dr.) Christopher Rugaber (right) has made 11 trips to Thailand to help the country develop its optometry program. Here, he performs an eye exam on a college official in Ramkamhaeng.

Thai Optometric Volunteers, a nonprofit group of professionals that includes a Thai doctor who recently graduated from the Indiana School of Optometry, is based in the country. The group said the need for trained eye-care specialists cannot be understated. In its recently published "Review of Optometry Status in Thailand: Supply and Demand," the volunteers said "... it would take at least 15 years of a single formal education institute to fill the minimal number of optometrists required by the country."

Helping to champion that cause, Dr. Rugaber lectured at the same university where he supervised exams. He wrote a guide to a 10-point exam and gave lectures about professionalism, ethics and patient confidentiality.

"I had to function way beyond my language ability and motivate people without being a pushy, know-it-all American," the doctor said. "However, I was able to build and supervise Thai eye-care teams in a short-fuse, high-stress environment."

Meanwhile, using his work as a template, the university is creating its first optometry school. The curriculum will include four years of undergraduate work followed by four years of professional work. The doctor's effort is also being aided by instructors from the Indiana School of Optometry and others, he said.

Dr. Rugaber said the first pieces of the vision are now in place. He said he and others are working to establish a clinic run by an American optometry school in Bangkok. He said there's also a hospital that wants to offer eye care that meets American quality standards.

"Thailand has great potential and wonderful people," Dr. Rugaber concluded. ★



Tech. Sgt. Dan Strauser, an electrician assigned to the 19th Maintenance Squadron, Robins Air Force Base, Ga., repairs the wiring on a C-5 indication light. The 19th is teaming Reservists with active-duty Airmen to combine C-5 programmed depot maintenance and the isochronal inspection process in an effort to return aircraft to action faster.

Quick Return

Reservists help speed up C-5 maintenance process

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Chance C. Babin

Traditionally, whenever C-5 Galaxies are sent to the Air Force's repair facility for programmed depot maintenance, Reserve units can expect their aircraft to be out of commission for up to 265 days. The extensive maintenance process takes about 220 days, while an isochronal inspection, which is usually required once the aircraft return home from the depot, keeps the C-5s out of commission another 30 to 45 days.

In an effort to return C-5s to duty faster, as well as save money, Air Mobility Command and the Air Force Reserve have entered into an agreement that will combine the maintenance process and inspections. The plan calls for Reservists, working with members of the 19th Maintenance Squadron at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., site of the Air Force's C-5 maintenance depot, to perform ISO inspections on AFRC aircraft while they are going through programmed depot maintenance.

Actually, this isn't a new concept for

the 19th MXS. The squadron has been doing the inspections on AMC C-5s while at the depot for many years. Recently, 22 full-time Reservists were hired to expand the program to include Reserve C-5s. The Reservists are active Guard and Reserve members who are administratively assigned to the 413th Flight Test Group at Robins.

"We've integrated these folks," said Maj. Jon Claunch, 19th MXS commander. "The Reserve component came on board 110 percent. The bottom line is we have the same mission: enhancing 'stratlift capability.' Air Mobility Command relies heavily on the total force, and it makes sense to integrate them and bring AFRC aircraft through here."

AFRC has two C-5 units: the 433rd Airlift Wing at Lackland AFB, Texas, and the 439th AW at Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass. Every 1,825 days or five years, aircraft undergo programmed depot maintenance. While at the depot, an ISO inspection — a scheduled, recurring maintenance activity — often comes

due. Before the aircraft can be returned to service, this inspection has to be performed. Traditionally, the home units have been responsible for performing these inspections when their aircraft return from the depot facility.

"Once a plane got back to home station, it would take 30 to 45 days before the unit could fly it," said Master Sgt. Bruce McGee, 19th MXS production superintendent. "If we do the inspection here, the plane can go back to home station and return to regular service within five to seven days."

"What this means is we are getting the aircraft back into the channel at least 25 days sooner," Major Claunch said.

He explained what this means in terms of load-carrying capacity. If you have an aircraft, like the C-5, with a 260,000-pound maximum load-carrying capacity and you fly it every day for 25 days, you would gain a 6,500,000-pound load value, the major said.

The 19th MXS traces its origins back to the early 1990s. At that time, the Air

Force was having a similar problem — extended downtime after programmed depot maintenance — within its fleet of C-141s. The 19th was formed in 1993 to perform ISO inspections, as well as field-level repairs, on C-141s as they went through PDM at Robins AFB.

A similar unit was established in 1994 at Kelly AFB, Texas, home of the San Antonio Air Logistics Center, which was responsible for performing PDM on C-5s. When Kelly AFB closed, responsibility for depot maintenance work on the C-5s shifted to the Warner Robins ALC. At that time, work on the C-141 was tailing off as the Air Force was implementing its decision to retire that aircraft from the inventory. The 19th MXS simply shifted gears to switch to the different airframe. To date the unit has performed ISO inspections on 126 C-5s.

Adding Reservists to the fold is just the next step in this evolution.

“If you look at the Air Force mission overall, we’re all fighting the same war,” Sergeant McGee said. “When it comes down to it, whether its AFRC or AMC, it’s all about getting the mission done.”

Expanding the mission to include the Reserve means the 19th MXS will be responsible for 32 more planes. Both the 433rd AW and 439th have 16 C-5s.

In order to create the 22 AGR slots to handle the extra work load, Lackland and Westover had to give up 11 manning slots each.

“We are going to pay these units big dividends by having their aircraft mission ready,” said Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Alaniz, C-5 ISO maintenance superintendent for the Reserve. “We will be getting the first AFRC C-5s in August from Westover.”

In the meantime, Reservists have been busy helping the 19th MXS work on AMC aircraft. The extra bodies allowed the squadron to split into a second shift, which lessened everyone’s work load.

“They’ve been enjoying the fruits of our labor,” Sergeant Alaniz said, “but at the same time, we are focusing on sharpening our skills and staying proficient on our training.”

“We all have the same goal in mind: sending the aircraft back to their home station with a quality product,” said Master Sgt. William Ellis of the 19th MXS.

He admits that at first he and his active-duty co-workers had some doubts about adding AFRC aircraft and people.

“As a unit, we were skeptical about the additional work load and the Reserve providing us with properly trained folks to help with that work load,” Sergeant Ellis said. “But the Reserve did its job of hiring the right folks and getting them here. It’s been a team effort from day one.”

One of the right folks the Reserve brought in was Tech. Sgt. Emonie Lewis, a crew chief. Sergeant Lewis not only works on C-5s but also serves as a training manager and teaches cardiopulmonary resuscitation and fitness.

“It’s perfect,” he said. “They are using my abilities to the max. Being a maintainer and being in training filled the squares for both the active duty and Reserve.”

For Sergeant Lewis, being training manager for both active-duty and AGR troops isn’t a problem.

“There are a few quirks to getting training, but it all works out,” he said.

The sergeant said he believes his experience of being a former active-duty Airman, an air reserve technician, a traditional Reservist and now an AGR has prepared him well for this opportunity. It also gives him insight on how the active-duty perceives the Reservists and their role as part of the 19th’s family.

“The active duty has a better respect for the Reserve,” he said. “They see the expertise we bring from our past experiences with other organizations and how that can help us improve our processes.”

One improvement the Reservists have already brought to the 19th MXS is the introduction of laptop computers on the flight line.

“We’re in the process of implementing the paperless ISO concept,” said Tech. Sgt. James Gullely, 19th MXS crew chief. “The wireless laptops will provide us all the TOs (technical orders) and allow us to do write-ups and order parts. Normally you would have to go back to the office and to supply, but now you can do it all in one spot on the job.”

Once the Reserve C-5s begin arriving this month, the 19th MXS commander said his unit’s approach to doing its job will not change.

“Our focus for this year is training to do things one way, making the process seamless and working the aircraft together, regardless of the (command) patch you’re wearing or the color of the aircraft tail,” he said. ★

(Sergeant Babin is assigned to the 926th Fighter Wing public affairs office, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La. He wrote this story while on a temporary duty assignment to Robins AFB with Citizen Airman magazine.)



Staff Sgt. Bobby Hollis, an aircraft structural mechanic, makes a repair on a C-5 forward ramp.

CARRYING THE LOAD



Tech. Sgt. David Bruner watches Tech. Sgt. John Thompson closely as the two place an oversized piece of cargo in a staging area at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. The two are Reservists assigned to the 67th Aerial Port Squadron, Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

Reservists, Guardsmen make sure Afghan outpost stays supplied

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Andrew Gates

Every day, between 50 and 100 tons of equipment and supplies come into Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, flown in by a constant stream of cargo aircraft at all hours of the day and night.

Since this is a combat environment, getting the aircraft down, unloaded quickly and off the ground again is extremely important. Keeping that logistical pipeline running smoothly and efficiently falls to the men and women of Bagram's Air Terminal Operations Center.

"We do all the aircraft load planning, passenger terminal operations, logistics, loading and unloading that happens at a regular airport — except at a much higher pace," said Master Sgt. Janet Coomes, 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron. Sergeant Coomes was activated from the 67th Aerial Port Squadron, a Reserve unit at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

In fact, the entire ATOC is made up of members of the Guard and Reserve — all 28 team members. Six of them come from

Sergeant Coomes' outfit; two more Reservists are from the 69th APS, Andrews AFB, Md. The remaining members of the team are from the 109th Aerial Port Flight, a New York Air National Guard unit from Stratton ANG Base

This total-force effort is invaluable to keeping Bagram supplied. The ATOC operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

"I don't think we have had a day when we didn't have aircraft in," said Master Sgt. Mark Mann, who is from the 109th APF. "We have to keep aircraft moving in and out quickly because we have a limited number of aircraft spaces on the ramp — so we have a pretty high tempo here."

The high operations tempo sometimes requires the team to perform an engine-running offload — a challenging maneuver in which, while aircraft engines are running, logisticians remove the cargo and upload any new cargo, and the aircraft immediately takes off. This speeds up the process and minimizes the time

an aircraft spends on the ground, said Sergeant Coomes.

Loading and offloading cargo takes up much of the day. The most common aircraft are C-130s and C-17s, with an occasional C-141.

"However, our favorite aircraft is the DHL Worldwide Express L-10," said Sergeant Coomes. "That one brings in the mail and food, so we know people appreciate the cargo coming in."

To offload the L-10, the team uses the next-generation small loader, nicknamed the NGSL. That loader, which carries 25,000 pounds, is the only one that can rise 18 feet to the L-10's cargo deck. For the rest of the aircraft, the team can use the NGSL or any of the other older loaders.

"We prefer the NGSL because it has a roller system that automatically moves the pallets to the back of the loader," Sergeant Mann said. "With the rest of the loaders, you have to physically push the pallets all the way onto the equipment."

It takes the team from half an hour to an hour to unload an aircraft, depending on what is aboard.

"When you have rolling stock, it takes a little less time, because you can drive the equipment off," Sergeant Mann said. "We have this process down to an exact science, so when we have more than one aircraft on the ramp, we can break into three-person teams to get the job done quicker."

One of the oddest pieces of cargo the team has had to off-load was the Burger King van for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

"That took a lot of time because it was somewhat awkward," Sergeant Coomes said. "We had to use a lot of material to shore the van up as we stair-stepped it off the aircraft."

Besides cargo, the logisticians also move more than 9,000 passengers in and out of the Bagram area each month. Although the people can "self-load" onto an aircraft, "cargo doesn't talk back," joked Sergeant Mann.

With the amount of traffic on the flight line and the large number of aircraft and passengers moving into and out of the area, safety is extremely important.

"We have to make sure we adhere to all Air Force loading instructions — we can't load people on an aircraft carrying ammunition, for instance, or with a pallet of hazardous material," Sergeant Coomes said.

Safety is also a major concern during nighttime operations, because much of the activity must be done in the dark.

"There have been some nights when you can't see your hand in front of your face," Sergeant Mann said. "We have a lot of briefings on safety practices, and we make sure all the teams stay in constant communication. Everyone on the team also stays in contact with each other, and the team chief keeps track of everyone."

Both Sergeants Coomes and Mann have a lot of pride in what they are doing and how they are impacting the on-going operations against terrorists in Afghanistan.

"This is a big change from the stereotypical one weekend a month and two weeks a year," Sergeant Mann said. "This isn't



Tech. Sgt. Brian Warren, a Reservist from the 67th APS, releases the cargo stop on a manual loader at Bagram.

"the typical 9-to-5 job — we have all kinds of great challenges."

This feeling pervades the entire deployed team from New York —all of whom volunteered for the yearlong activation. The Guard team spent four months at Dover AFB, Del., deployed to Bagram for four months and then will return to Dover for the final four months of its activation.

"This is also a great opportunity to get out and see new locations," Sergeant Coomes said. "I get a great deal of satisfaction knowing I am helping another country become safer and giving the people the opportunity to enjoy a number of those freedoms we have in the United States." ★

(Sergeant Gates, 354th Fighter Wing public affairs office, Eielson AFB, Alaska, was assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group public affairs office at Bagram when he wrote this story.)



Master Sgt. Janet Coomes marshals in Sergeant Warren as they load a pallet with a liquid-oxygen tank at Bagram. Like Sergeant Warren, Sergeant Coomes is assigned to the 67th APS.

FalconView

IMAs introduce academy cadets to mission-planning process

By Tech. Sgt. Sean P. Houlihan

We've all been there at one time or another. For some people it's algebra. For others it's literature, chemistry, Spanish or geometry. The subject varies, but the scenario is the same. You're sitting in a high school or college classroom, and instead of focusing on the subject at hand, all you can think about is, "Why am I here?" and "What does this have to do with the real world?"

Two individual mobilization augmentees are working hard to help cadets at the Air Force Academy answer these questions and connect the dots between academic theory and the real-world Air Force. Their means of making this direct connection is a mission-planning software called FalconView.

Majs. Paul Hastert and Mike Miller are IMAs assigned to the Air Force Combat Support Office at the Pentagon. Since the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom, they have worked with the academy's computer science and geography faculty to introduce cadets to the mission-planning process.

The two deployed into the combat zone for both operations where they brought mission planning capabilities directly to

the warfighters and observed how they put those capabilities into use on a daily basis.

"Through the initiative of Majors Hastert and Miller, cadets are able to see firsthand how operational systems worked at most flying squadrons worldwide during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom," said James G. Clark, director of the combat support office. "This dose of the real-world Air Force complements the academics taught to the cadets."

FalconView uses satellite imagery and maps from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency to locate navigational points, such as lakes or roads, along a given route and determine elevations and any other important geographic information. Once this information is gathered, pilots can use the software to rehearse missions by "flying" multiple routes in two or three dimensions. The software plots where friendly aircraft will fly during the sortie and highlights known hostile areas along the routes.

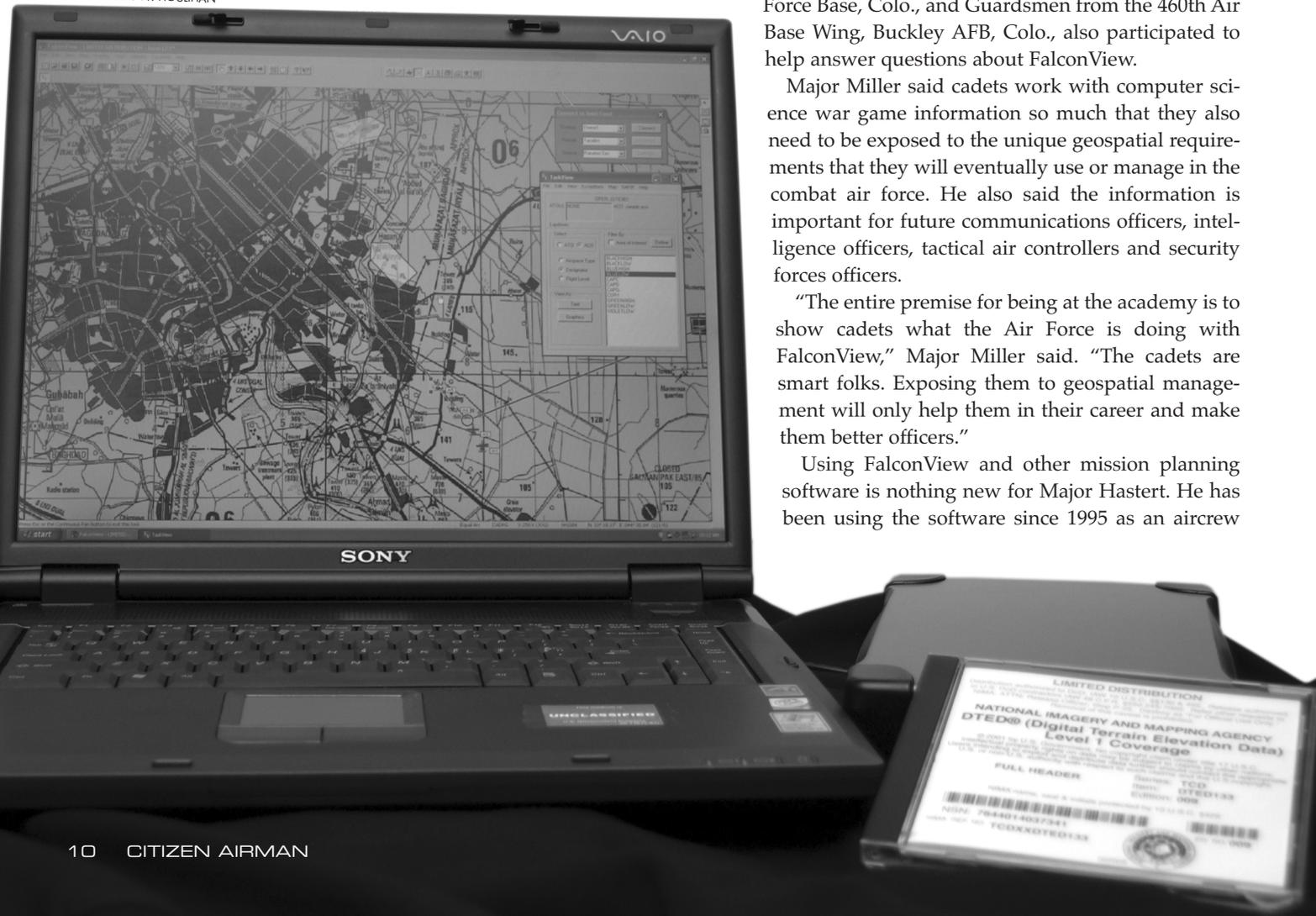
In November, Majors Hastert and Miller participated in a Geospatial Information and Services Day at the academy. Reservists from the 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., and Guardsmen from the 460th Air Base Wing, Buckley AFB, Colo., also participated to help answer questions about FalconView.

Major Miller said cadets work with computer science war game information so much that they also need to be exposed to the unique geospatial requirements that they will eventually use or manage in the combat air force. He also said the information is important for future communications officers, intelligence officers, tactical air controllers and security forces officers.

"The entire premise for being at the academy is to show cadets what the Air Force is doing with FalconView," Major Miller said. "The cadets are smart folks. Exposing them to geospatial management will only help them in their career and make them better officers."

Using FalconView and other mission planning software is nothing new for Major Hastert. He has been using the software since 1995 as an aircrew

TECH SGT. SEAN P. HOULIHAN



member on the MC-130H Combat Talon aircraft. Air Force Special Operations Command asked him to provide feedback on the software and help improve it. Since then, he has expanded his involvement with the program to teaching cadets at the academy.

Major Hastert said that not every cadet will use FalconView after graduation, but those who will be involved with the software will have a good understanding of how it works when they enter the Air Force.

“Having more people in the field with knowledge of mission planning software capabilities will help in the feedback process to the developers,” said the 1987 academy graduate. “We’re connecting the dots so users who need more capabilities will have them in the software.”

“Our hope is to provide cadets the real-world relevance to the theory and application they learn in the classroom,” said Lt. Col. Bruce Frank, deputy head of the academy’s Department of Economics and Geography.

Colonel Frank said each year roughly 250 junior and senior class cadets are introduced to FalconView software and other geospatial technologies from both



CHAD A. BISHOP

Maj. Mike Miller demonstrates FalconView to Air Force Academy cadets Ian Bertram (left), Travis Indharasophang (center) and William Wilkerson.

military and civilian applications.

“The goal of our courses is to give cadets the skills they need to leverage this technology to meet the Air Force mission in a wide range of applications,” he said. “And with all the enthusiastic

involvement we’ve had from the Air Force Combat Support Office IMAs, cadets are gaining that much-needed hands-on experience.” ★

(Sergeant Houlihan was formerly a staff writer for Citizen Airman.)



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No matter how you view it, it's still

68

The number of AFRC members separated in 2003 because of positive drug test results

sixty-eight

LXVIII

AIR FORCE RESERVE
BLUE
true
drug demand reduction program

Will you make it to retirement?

Got enough retirement points - but not enough good health to enjoy it?

AIR FORCE RESERVE
BLUE
true
drug demand reduction program

Air Force Reserve Command's new True Blue drug demand reduction program features posters like these as well as videos, pamphlets, CD-ROMs and a Web site.

True Blue

Command takes hard-hitting new approach to eliminating substance abuse

By Bo Joyner

When you have a critical mission to perform, you want the people working with you to be committed, dedicated and loyal. In other words, you want them to be "true blue." And when the job is on the line, you certainly don't want people around you who abuse drugs or alcohol. That's the idea behind Air Force Reserve Command's new True Blue drug demand reduction program.

"You can't be 'true blue' and have a substance abuse problem at the same time. Sooner or later, that drug or alcohol

problem is going to interfere with the way you do your job," said Don Jenrette, AFRC's substance abuse education and prevention coordinator. "Our goal is to have a workplace completely free of substance abuse."

Together with Bobbie Sellers, the command's drug demand reduction specialist, Mr. Jenrette is hoping the True Blue program the two developed will help them meet that goal.

True Blue doesn't target just people who abuse drugs and alcohol. Rather, it attempts to show all members of the Air

Force Reserve team how they can improve their quality of life in several areas by steering clear of drugs and not abusing alcohol. It also emphasizes how to identify friends or co-workers who might be struggling with an alcohol or drug abuse problem and how to get them the help they need.

"For years, we told people not to abuse alcohol and drugs, gave them a trinket and sent them on their way," Mr. Jenrette said. "With True Blue, we're taking a totally different approach."

He describes True Blue as a 21st-century

alcohol and drug abuse prevention and lifestyle improvement awareness and education initiative. The program features hard-hitting posters, pamphlets, CD-ROMs and video spots centered around four main themes: family, health, career and leadership/work force.

The program's first videos and posters highlight:

- the dangers of prescription drug abuse and how it can lead to addiction, misdiagnosis of serious illnesses, life-threatening circumstances and even death;
- having good overall health so you can make it to and enjoy your retirement years; and
- how substance abuse can bring a quick end to your Air Force career.

There is also a True Blue Web site (<https://wwwmil.afrc.af.mil/trueblue>) designed to reinforce the campaign's key messages and provide links to a number of other helpful Web sites.

"Since 1988, the primary emphasis of AFRC's drug demand reduction program has been detection — random military and civilian drug testing," Mr. Jenrette said. "Relatively little else has been done to effectively deter AFRC members from abusing substances. With True Blue, we're hoping to influence people before they have a serious problem."

The command will continue randomly testing 25 percent of its assigned military end strength every year. In 2003, 68 people were discharged after testing positive for an illegal substance.

Mr. Jenrette and Ms. Sellers took all of their True Blue materials to the 440th Airlift Wing, Gen. Mitchell International Airport Air Reserve Station, Wisc., during the wing's May unit training assembly to kick off the campaign's test run. More than 300 Reservists reviewed and evaluated the True Blue posters, pamphlets, brochures, videos and Web site.

The test run is scheduled to last through the November UTA. Until then, members of the 440th AW will continue reviewing and evaluating new campaign materials. Mr. Jenrette and Ms. Sellers are refining the program based on this input and plan on introducing True Blue to the rest of AFRC in 2005.

"From the responses we've received, I think we are on the right track," Mr. Jenrette said. "Most of the Reservists said



Master Sgt. Thomas Poppe, 440th Airlift Wing, Gen. Mitchell International Airport Air Reserve Station, Wisc., tries to walk a straight line while wearing fatal vision goggles during the kickoff of the True Blue test run in May.

our materials had a positive impact and definitely made them think about their personal attitudes and beliefs about substance abuse."

In addition to evaluating posters, pamphlets and videos, the 440th Reservists had the opportunity to try out fatal vision goggles — special glasses that simulate the visual effects of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

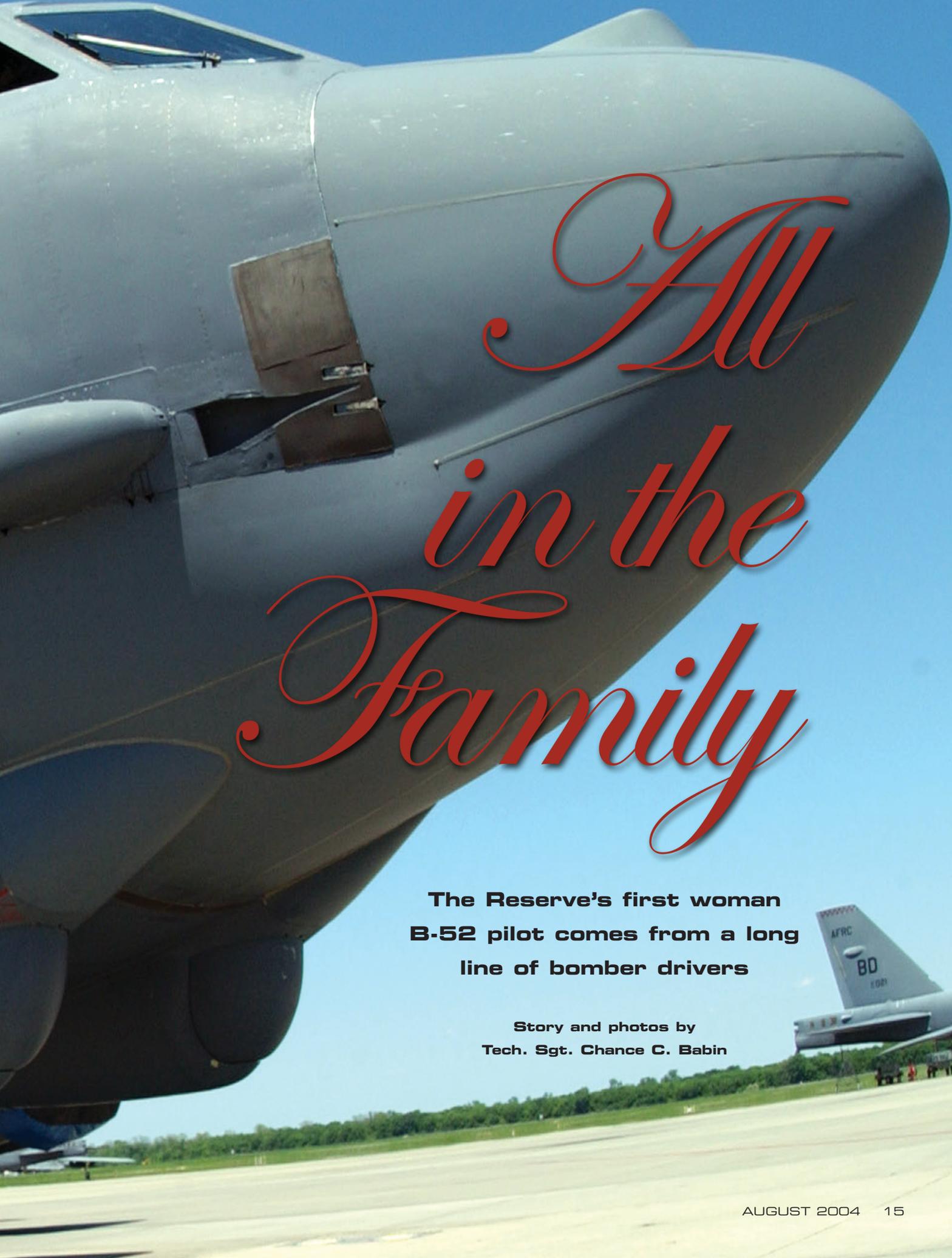
"We've really tried to make the True

Blue program hard-hitting and straightforward," Mr. Jenrette said. "We want to grab people's attention any way we can and change the way they look at alcohol and drug abuse.

"When you are clean and sober, every aspect of your life, both at home and on the job, improves. And only when you are clean and sober can you be the kind of true blue Reservist the Air Force needs." ★

Second Lt. Heather Pearson, 93rd Bomb Squadron, Barksdale Air Force Base, La., is Air Force Reserve Command's first woman B-52 pilot. Both her father and grandfather flew bombers for the Air Force.





All in the Family

**The Reserve's first woman
B-52 pilot comes from a long
line of bomber drivers**

**Story and photos by
Tech. Sgt. Chance C. Babin**

The fact that 2nd Lt. Heather Pearson is the Air Force Reserve's first woman B-52 pilot should come as no surprise; she has three generations of bomber pilot blood running through her veins.

Lieutenant Pearson's father, retired Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Keith Pearson, flew the "big ugly" early in his career and was a T-38 instructor pilot. In addition, he flew the A-10 while stationed at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., the same place his 24-year-old daughter is piloting the old, but reliable, B-52 Stratofortress.

The third link in the chain is the lieutenant's grandfather, retired Maj. Clem Pearson, who flew B-26 and B-57 bombers, in addition to HH-43 helicopters, during his 20-year Air Force career, which included two tours in Southeast Asia.

With those kinds of bloodlines, one might think the decision to fly came easy for Lieutenant Pearson or that she made it at an early age. Not true.

"I decided I wanted to fly in the summer of '98," she said. "I was studying to be a physical therapist, but my sister, who was a speech therapist, talked me out of wanting to do that. We happened to notice my dad lounging in the pool one day, and my sister said I needed a job like his. So I went to my dad (an American Airlines pilot) and told him I might be interested in flying. He put me in lessons the next day, and I loved it!"

For the next three years, Lieutenant Pearson would take her summers off from Louisiana State University and go back home to Keller, Texas, to resume her flying lessons in Dallas.

"I never pushed her," Keith said, "but once she knew what she wanted to do, I gave her all the assets she needed to accomplish her goals."

Lieutenant Pearson obtained her private pilot license in 1998. The next summer she earned her instrument rating and in 2000 received her multi-engine rating. At that time, she started looking

at different Reserve and Guard units for a flying slot, a decision her grandfather questioned at first.

"I was leery at first," Clem said. "I didn't want her to go into fighters. Then one day she told me she couldn't imagine doing anything else for the rest of her life except flying. That's when I knew she was hooked."

"He thought it was great that I wanted to fly but wasn't sure if the military was the way to go," Lieutenant Pearson said. "But he's very proud of me now. He calls

**"I WILL SAY THERE ARE
PROBABLY OTHER AIRFRAMES
OUT THERE THAT ARE
SLIGHTLY MORE FEMALE
FRIENDLY THAN THE B-52,
BUT AS FOR FLYING ITSELF
... IT'S AWESOME!"**

**2ND LT. HEATHER PEARSON,
AFRC'S FIRST WOMAN B-52 PILOT**

and e-mails me all the time."

When it came to choosing a unit, the lieutenant wanted to find a mission that suited her interests and career plans.

"I knew I didn't want to fly fighters, but I did want to drop bombs," she said. "I thought it (flying bombers) would be a cool mission and good experience for flying commercial airliners one day."

She ended up at the same place where her father once served, flying the aircraft he had flown earlier in his career.

"I got hired by the 93rd Bomb Squadron (at Barksdale AFB) my senior year at LSU," Lieutenant Pearson said. "My dad was the biggest influence as far as whether to go active duty or Reserve.

I grew up around the Reserve while my dad was flying A-10s. I think it's definitely the better deal."

After graduating from college in May 2001, she entered Officer Training School. Once she finished OTS and pilot training school, she was ready to train on the B-52.

"My first flight in a B-52, on May 12, 2003, was an eye-opening experience," Lieutenant Pearson said. "It was like driving a bus. It was a lot bigger than anything I was used to. I was used to one-hour flights, and now I had to get used to 10-hour flights.

"It was different than anything else I had ever flown, but I have to say I felt pretty powerful the first time I ever landed. It still amazes me that I can get that big beast into the air and manage to land it without hurting anyone or anything."

Although the B-52 has been piloted by females since the late '90s, Lieutenant Pearson is the first Reservist to fly the aircraft. The H-model planes at Barksdale were built back in the early 1960s, before she was born. Her father said three of the planes he flew at Grand Forks AFB, N.D., more than 25 years ago are now in the inventory with the 93rd BS at Barksdale.

Even though the B-52 has been around for a long time, Lieutenant Pearson said it's a

very dependable aircraft. It has proven to be such an important part of America's arsenal that, despite its age, Air Force officials are planning on keeping it in the inventory for another 35 to 45 years.

"It was old when my dad flew it, so I guess it's ancient now, but reliable," she said. "It gets the job done."

"Physically it's more challenging than most airplanes," said Maj. Rene Gonzalez, 93rd BS instructor pilot. "It's very mechanical, and you have to move it around physically. She does a very good job of learning her position in the airplane and integrating with the rest of the crew.

"She's mature enough to be able to

handle most of the situations that arise. She has a great attitude.”

Although Lieutenant Pearson doesn't make a big deal out of being the first woman in the Reserve to fly the B-52, she is well aware of the significance of her achievement and the potential impact that someone in her position can have on others.

“I feel like I need to be a role model,” she said. “I've done some recruiting among high school students for the Reserve and LSU. I definitely recommend it (the Reserve) to anyone who's interested in flying, but it takes a lot of hard work and dedication.”

She also knows that a big part of her being a role model involves giving advice to other young ladies who aspire to follow her path into the cockpit.

“I tell other females to go for it, if that's what they want to do,” she said. “I know several female fliers, and they all seem to love it, including myself. I will say there are probably other airframes out there that are slightly more female friendly than the B-52, but as for flying itself ... it's awesome!”

“I also tell them to stick with it no matter how bad things may get during training, because it definitely gets better and is well worth it. Nothing compares to earning your wings. There is nothing more rewarding.”

In addition to bringing her a lot of personal and professional satisfaction, Lieutenant Pearson said being a bomber pilot creates a special bond with her father and grandfather.

“I feel like I have a connection with them that the other grandchildren and children don't have,” she said. “I feel like all we talk about is flying at all the family functions.”

“All she wants to talk about is flying,” Clem said. “We get into war tales and talk about flying an awful lot. We have bonded differently. I hope to spend some time with her and go fly with her one day.”

Both Clem and Keith said they are never nervous about Lieutenant Pearson flying.

“I feel very secure in the quality of the unit and the people there,” Keith said. “It isn't as much the aircraft as the unit. I never turned down one plane on pre-flight (while stationed at Barksdale). Many of the same maintenance and sup-



Although she doesn't make a big deal out of being the first woman in the Reserve to fly the B-52, Lieutenant Pearson does feel the need to be a role model, and she encourages other young women to pursue careers in aviation.

port personnel who were there during my 10 years with the 917th Wing are still with the unit today. I told her she's going to be well taken care of.

“I told her she'll never get that kind of flying experience anywhere else.”

Although Lieutenant Pearson may have been motivated to learn to fly when she saw her father lounging out at the pool, she has since learned that her new

career is quite demanding.

“It was a lot harder than I thought it would be,” she said. “You don't get to lie around in the pool until after 20 years.”★

(Sergeant Babin is assigned to the 926th Fighter Wing public affairs office, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La. He wrote this article while on a temporary duty assignment to Barksdale AFB for Citizen Airman magazine.)

Home at Last

Pilot laid to rest 37 years
after his death

By Master Sgt. Bud McKay

More than 100 people attended the funeral of Col. Lester Holmes May 22 in Nashua, Iowa. Colonel Holmes was shot down over North Vietnam May 22, 1967. His remains were not found until 1999 and were not identified until 2003. His family elected to have the funeral on the 37th anniversary of the colonel being shot down.



It weighs only a few ounces, but for almost 40 years Tommy Holmes' MIA bracelet has been like an anchor. He wore the silver bracelet, inscribed with the name of his father, Col. Lester E. Holmes, every day since he was reported missing in action May 22, 1967.

Along with his two older brothers, Bruce and Senior Master Sgt. Roger Holmes, Tommy was finally able to remove the anchor from his wrist — 37 years to the day Colonel Holmes was shot down over North Vietnam. They placed their bracelets next to their father's coffin at a funeral May 22 in Nashua, Iowa.

"I've gone through a couple of them," said Tommy, the youngest of Colonel Holmes' three sons, as he touched the silver MIA bracelet he wore on his right wrist before the funeral. "At times, it's been a shackle in my life. For the last 37 years, my dad was never dead to me — he was missing. After the funeral, I'll never wear this particular bracelet again: I'll put it in my dad's coffin. But once I put that one away, I will wear another one with another name on it. The (MIA) issue is that important to me."

Colonel Holmes' father and mother, Lagrand and Chloe Holmes, of Plainfield, Iowa, and his wife, Norma Jean Holmes, died before ever learning what happened to him. The colonel was laid to rest next to his wife, who passed away in 1986.

Colonel Holmes was last in Iowa in 1966. That's when he took his wife and three sons to his hometown of Plainfield to show them the dream house he planned to buy in preparation for his retirement from the Air Force in 1968. The house had plenty of land for the highly decorated aviator to construct a small runway out back. It also had an area where he planned to locate a gun shop.

His passion for guns landed him on the all-Air Force pistol team. In one competition, he and his teammates went up against the all-Marine Corps pistol team at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Shooting against him was his son, Bruce, who just a few years before was sworn into the Marines. The elder Holmes won four of the five matches against his son that day, and the Air Force won the overall competition. However, he was most proud of Bruce's sole victory.

Colonel Holmes' skill as an aviator earned him aircraft commander opportunities in many major events, including flying the lead jet in Jimmy Stewart's movie "Strategic Air Command" as well as flying Bob Hope around during the Berlin Airlift to entertain the troops. He looked at the chance of flying the smaller O-1E "Bird Dog" as a forward air controller in Vietnam as a dream assignment.

His dream job turned into a nightmare when Colonel Holmes was shot down May 22, 1967.

"Mom always dreaded to see a staff car drive up in the driveway," said Sergeant Holmes, first sergeant for the 36th Aerial Port Squadron, part of Air Force Reserve Command's 446th Airlift Wing, McChord AFB, Wash. "That's exactly what happened to us, only there were two staff cars: the wing commander and chaplain. Dad was shot down on May 22. We were notified on May 23. I graduated from high school on May 24."

When the Air Force officials showed up to notify the Holmes family, Bruce was serving as a Marine, and Sergeant Holmes was away visiting a nearby friend. Only Tommy was home with his mom when the staff cars pulled into their driveway.

"When the staff cars showed up, we knew something bad happened — there's never any good news when they show up," Tommy said. "We were told that he may have been captured or killed. They didn't know. The chaplain who showed up said, 'Let's pray he jumped out with his parachute.' Dad wouldn't wear a parachute; we all knew that. Mom sure as hell knew that. She got very angry and told the chaplain, 'He didn't wear a damn parachute. Don't sit here and speculate on what you think may have happened. Give me the facts of what happened.'"

But facts were scarce. The pilot of an O-1E flying about a mile ahead of the colonel's aircraft heard an explosion. He turned around and saw that Colonel Holmes' plane had been hit. One wing was gone, and the plane was spiraling toward the ground. The other Bird Dog pilot never saw Colonel Holmes' plane hit the ground because he began to take ground fire and had to take evasive action. For 30 minutes he circled the area where he thought Colonel Holmes may have gone down, but he never saw any evidence of a crash site.

Because of heavy concentrations of North Vietnamese forces in the area, which was just a few miles south of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, no rescue mission was possible, according to a Department of Defense report. It would be more than 20 years before the department received any leads into what happened to Colonel Holmes.

"There were so many different reports on what happened or what didn't happen," Sergeant Holmes said. "The Air Force would even bring over pictures it got from various POW camps to see if my mom could identify anyone as my dad. This was three or four years after he was shot down. My mom actually thought she did recognize his nose in one of the photos."

All of the reports gave her and her sons hope, as well as fear, that Colonel Holmes was still alive.

"For the first 10 years, I held out hope that he was captured, although we knew he wouldn't have been the same man," Bruce said. "We couldn't bare the thought of him being tortured if he was captured and still alive."

Soon after he learned that his father was shot down and



Colonel Holmes' O-1E "Bird Dog" went down just a few miles south of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

missing, Bruce volunteered to go over to Vietnam.

"I wanted to go to continue his fight for his country," he said.

But the Marines wouldn't let him go because he had a family member listed as MIA.

"Had he been declared killed in action, they would have let me go," Bruce said. "It was very much a setback. It was very disappointing to me."

Very early in his Air Force career, Sergeant Holmes also tried to go to Vietnam, "for revenge." But he didn't make it either.

Tommy, who toward the end of the Vietnam War joined the Army, is the only one of the brothers who didn't volunteer to go to Vietnam.

"We were at war; dad was at war," Tommy said. "He was doing something

for our country. He never questioned the war, and neither did I. But I didn't opt to go to Vietnam. My mother could never have handled that."

On April 1, 1973, the Holmes family sat glued to the TV as they watched the last of the 591 American POWs arrive home as part of Operation Homecoming. When the last American POW from Vietnam, Army Capt. Robert White, stepped off the plane, the Holmes family's roller coaster ride of emotions started again.

"We watched every single one of them come off the plane — hoping to see my dad," Sergeant Holmes said. "But we never did."

Two years later, in a document to the family, the DOD changed Colonel Holmes' official status from MIA to killed in action.

"All of a sudden in 1975, they changed his status to killed in action. That felt like a slap in the face to us," Sergeant Holmes said. "All through the years, we felt lied to."

But not everyone in the Holmes family believed the colonel was dead.

"Mom swore she recognized my dad's nose in that picture of POWs," Tommy said." She died (in 1986) thinking he was still alive. I took her to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. It was very difficult for her; me, too. We found his name and took a picture of it with our reflection in the picture. My mother's name deserves to be on the Wall — the Vietnam War killed her, too."

In 1991, a Defense Department MIA investigation team turned up Vietnamese witnesses to Colonel Holmes being shot down. But it wasn't until 1998 that a



STAFF SGT. WENDY BEAUCHAINE

Saying his final goodbye, Senior Master Sgt. Roger Holmes, the first sergeant for the 36th Aerial Port Squadron, 446th Airlift Wing, McChord Air Force Base, Wash., salutes the coffin of his father.

team was able to speak directly to members of People's Army of Vietnam's Regiment 238, Division 341, the unit that shot down Colonel Holmes' aircraft with a surface-to-air missile.

Several different reports of the incident were produced between 1991 and 1998. Because each one was based on witnesses' recollections of events that had happened so long ago, the reports varied greatly. The information often was contradictory. Nevertheless, the Holmes family wanted to know everything they could.

"No matter how horrifying, I wanted to know every little detail of what happened to my dad," Sergeant Holmes said. "Was he alive when he went down? Was he burned? Was he killed instantly when his airplane was hit? One of the reports talks about him — forgive me — being decapitated."

Finally, after getting substantiated reports on the location of a possible crash site in the Ke Thuy District, Quang Binh Province, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command team from Hickam AFB, Hawaii, discovered Colonel Holmes' remains July 31, 1999. At the site, team members found small bone fragments as well as a broken piece of eyeglasses. The team also discovered a variety of small pieces of personal belongings, engine parts that could have come from a "Bird Dog" aircraft and small arms ammunition.

Colonel Holmes' remains were repatriated Sept. 8, 1999, and sent to JPAC's Central Identification Laboratory at Hickam, where they were positively identified Nov. 25, 2003. However, the family wasn't eager to accept the DOD's findings.

"When I first saw the report, it really made me angry," Tommy said. "I told them, 'This is (expletive); this is not giving me the closure I need.' When I first saw the final report and saw the pictures, I thought, 'This ain't nothing at all.'"

That was before lab officials took Sergeant Holmes and Tommy around the lab and showed them the painstaking effort that went into the identification process.

"If I had not gone to Hawaii myself and seen the process they use to identify someone, I wouldn't have been convinced those were my dad's remains,"



STAFF SGT. WENDY BEAUCHAINE

Airmen from the 36th APS carry Colonel Holmes' remains out of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command at Hickam AFB, Hawaii.

Tommy said. "But now, I know it's my dad. And if this is all I'm going to get, fine."

After waiting nearly 40 years for an answer to the question of what happened to his father, Sergeant Holmes has finally found peace in his heart.

"In my own mind, I believe he was killed before he hit the ground," he said. "When he was hit, that is when he died. In my mind, he died the way he wanted — in his plane defending his country."

After the Holmes brothers accepted their dad's remains May 18, members of the sergeant's Reserve unit, the 36th APS, who were at Hickam doing their annual tour, ceremoniously marched them out to a hearse.

Tommy flew aboard a commercial airplane to Iowa the next day accompanying his dad's remains home for the funeral. Sergeant Holmes flew to Seattle and then on to Iowa.

Bruce elected to stay in Iowa and handle arrangements for the funeral. Even though he did not get to tour the lab, he accepted his brothers' assurance that they were, indeed, bringing their dad home.

"I had accepted a long time ago that dad was killed and was never coming back," Bruce said. "I think the plane disintegrated in the air when it was hit. I don't think he survived."

On the day of the funeral, local Girl Scouts lined Main Street in Nashua with American flags. The Holmes' cousins, Larry and Vick Sonne, drove Colonel Holmes' flag-draped coffin about 3 miles from the funeral home to the gravesite aboard a Belgian draft horse carriage.

Sergeant Holmes sat next to Mr. Sonne on the carriage. Bruce, carrying an American flag, and Tommy, carrying a MIA/POW flag, rode in the back next to the coffin.

A line of more than 50 cars followed the carriage to the gravesite, which already had close to 100 people waiting.

The day before the funeral, Dale and Madelyn Sonne, cousins of the Holmes, recorded five inches of rain at their farm overnight from a number of storms that skirted nearby tornadoes. The weather forecast for the day of the funeral called for heavy showers and more tornado watches.

However, that wasn't in the plans for Colonel Holmes' return. As the carriage traveled along the town's main street, the sky was clear and blue. As the services ended, clouds were gathering in the distance. Later that night, more tornadoes touched down around the area.

An honor guard from Offutt AFB, Neb., was on hand to provide full military honors. Four F-16s from the Iowa National Guard's 132nd Fighter Wing out of Des Moines flew a missing man formation.

A driving member of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, Tommy provided a loving and heartfelt 40-minute eulogy at his father's funeral, which he referred to as a homecoming.

"Today we add the final chapter," he said. "Your tour of duty is finally complete. You are home and home to stay." ★

(Sergeant McKay is assigned to the 446th AW public affairs office at McChord AFB.)

Can't Get Enough

Every time Tech. Sgt. Tom McKee decided to hang up his Air Force uniform over the last 40 years, something always convinced him to get back in.



TECH. SGT. CHANCE BABIN

Air Force keeps pulling Homestead cargo specialist back in

By Tech. Sgt. Chance C. Babin

Talking about his attempts to leave the “family business,” Michael Corleone, lead character in the movie “Godfather III,” uttered the famous line, “Just when I thought that I was out, they pulled me back in.”

The same sentiment applies to the life of Tech. Sgt. Tom McKee. For the last 40 years, whenever he’s drifted away from his Air Force family, something always pulled him back in. The one thing that seems certain to eventually sever his Air

Force ties is his age.

Sergeant McKee, a cargo specialist with the 70th Aerial Port Squadron, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., first enlisted in the Air Force in 1965. Since that time, he’s been in and out of service as both an enlisted troop and an officer.

“The military was my stepping stone,” he said, “and, because of the Air Force, I’m still stepping on stones 40 years later.”

When Sergeant McKee first started stepping on stones, it wasn’t all that prof-

itable. When he first enlisted in the Air Force, he was making \$83 a month before taxes. It soon became obvious to him that he had to find another job to help make ends meet.

“When I was at Custer Air Force Station, Mich., I worked at a local radio station doing Air Force military sports,” he said. “That was back when the military had a total integrated sports program in which teams played local schools and colleges.”

Initially, the radio station gave him five minutes at 6 p.m. each day to give a rundown on the base sports. Sergeant McKee saw this as an opportunity to promote the military.

"I think I had one of the first military shows to inform the community that we do the same things they do, except we wear uniforms," he said. "This was a chance to bridge the gap within the community and help integrate the civilian community into military life."

After serving four years Sergeant McKee got off active duty and enrolled at Western Michigan University, where he walked on to the football team as a 25-year-old freshman.

"They (the other members of the team) called me pop," he said. "They would say, 'Hey old man, what are you doing playing this young man's game?' I wasn't a big star, but I played enough to let-ter. I got a tremendous amount of satisfaction making a Division I team at that age."

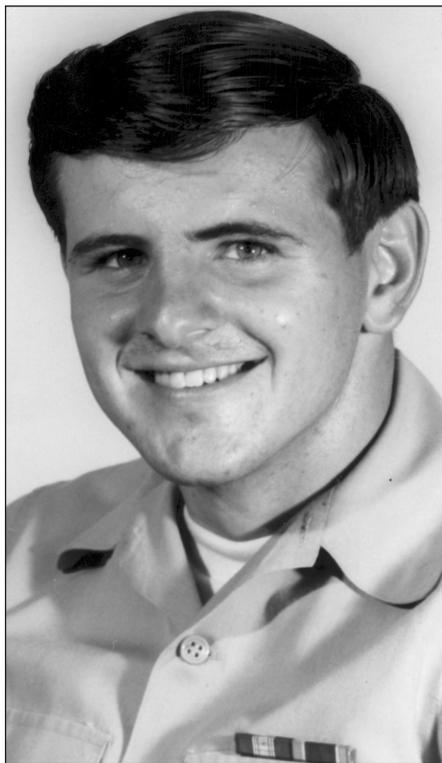
When Sergeant McKee finished college, he was ready for his second round in the Air Force, this time as an officer. He attended Officer Training School and graduated in 1974.

"It (OTS) was harder (than basic training) because being prior enlisted it was tough to accept some of the concepts and ideas that were being drilled into our head," Sergeant McKee. "But it was rewarding seeing how both sides are treated. I feel every officer should be prior enlisted."

During his tenure as an officer, Sergeant McKee served at Homestead Air Force Base, Fla., and Clark Air Base, Philippines. At Clark, he served as a radar operations officer and also as recreation officer. His secondary duty became his primary job after he joined the base football team, the Clark AB Diplomats, a full-contact squad that played against other teams within Pacific Air Forces.

"I was more of a star on that team because of my age and experience just coming out of college," he said. Sergeant McKee set a team record with a 78-yard punt return in a game.

When he started playing football, he left radar operations and went to the Morale, Welfare and Recreation organization full time, working as manager of the golf course.



COURTESY PHOTO

Airman First Class McKee soon after enlisting in 1965.

After his second four-year stretch in the Air Force, Sergeant McKee once again called it quits. He moved back to Miami and began working for Eastern Airlines.

"I drove what is affectionately known as the 'honey bucket truck,' which is the lavatory services truck," he said.

Right around the same time Sergeant McKee was getting established with Eastern Airlines, a new television network called ESPN was getting started in Bristol, Conn., and because of his sports and radio background Sergeant McKee entertained the thought of applying for a job.

"I would have been perfect as an ESPN commentator," he said. "I gave it a passing thought, but I was down in Miami enjoying 80-degree weather in two feet of sand and didn't want to move to Bristol where it was minus 10 degrees with two feet of snow. So my feet stayed put."

Just when Sergeant McKee appeared to have the Air Force out of his system, he left Eastern Airlines in 1988, at a time when the company was on the brink of bankruptcy and experiencing severe labor problems. He moved back to Pittsburgh, Pa., his hometown, where he signed up for round three by becoming a member of the Air Force Reserve family

when he joined the 911th Mobile Aerial Port Squadron in 1990. This time he was back in the enlisted ranks.

"It's strange, but you don't know how much you miss wearing the uniform until you put it back on," the sergeant said.

Sergeant McKee said he could have possibly returned as an officer but chose to remain enlisted.

"I'm very proud to have been an Air Force officer," he said. "It's something they can never take away from me, but I'm more comfortable being a worker bee, working with all my super bees."

His stay with the 911th MAPS was short-lived.

"When Hurricane Andrew came through in 1992, I had a calling to go back to South Florida," he said. "I volunteered to help with the cleanup and decided to transfer to Homestead. I've been there ever since."

During his tenure with the 70th APS, Sergeant McKee has deployed to Italy for Operation Joint Endeavor and most recently to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I enjoy working with him because things get done," said Tech. Sgt. Demaris Hall, 70th APS air cargo specialist. "I know if things need to get done, they're going to get done. I can depend on him. He's a very good mentor to the younger guys."

Sergeant McKee's work ethic was noted while he was working at Ramstein AB.

"His qualities of leadership are exactly what we need in our leaders," said Staff Sgt. Gary Effatt of the 723rd Air Mobility Squadron. "He has a knack for working with people. His attitude is to lead by example."

Although he wishes his Air Force Reserve career could go on forever, Sergeant McKee is serving out his final few years.

"I'll retire with my officer rank when I retire from the Reserve," he said. "I'll retire as a first lieutenant in 2007. That's because I'll be 60. I'd like to stay until I am 70 if I could, but they won't let me." ★

(Sergeant Babin is assigned to the 926th Fighter Wing, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La. He wrote this story while on a temporary duty assignment at Ramstein AB.)

Aging C/KC-135 Aircraft to Receive 'Nose Jobs'

Over the course of the next three years, 495 C/KC-135 aircraft are going to receive nose jobs, but it's not out of vanity.

According to officials from the C/KC-135 Systems Program Office at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center, Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., the 45-year-old-plus aircraft will receive a new radome as organizational-level maintenance units begin replacing existing standard honeycomb nose radomes with new compressed foam units.

The Air Force Reserve's 507th Air Refueling Wing at Tinker, in cooperation with the C/KC-135 SPO, provided one of its KC-135R Stratotankers last fall to support the final test of the replacement process and verify the time compliance technical order instructions.

According to Ron Hopkins, C/KC-135 structural engineer, the new radome, which consists of a foam core sandwiched between fiberglass plies, was chosen because of its high-impact resistance and resistance to moisture intrusion. The part is 10 pounds lighter than what is currently on the aircraft and is easier to repair. Hopkins estimates the meantime between failure for the new radome will be 17,241 hours versus 1,689 hours for the existing honeycomb radomes.

One reason the honeycomb radomes are failing at such a high rate, Mr. Hopkins said, is the layers are separating, allowing moisture to creep in. Once inside the layers, the moisture freezes at high altitudes and causes disjuncting of the radome materials.

Radomes will initially be issued as a TCTO modification kit, which means they will be free to customers. Mr. Hopkins said the new radome assembly kit will apply to a majority of the C/KC-135 aircraft currently being flown. He added that the KC-135D/E aircraft pending retirement have been excluded from the TCTO.

According to Senior Master Sgt. Robert Erickson, 507th Logistics Group quality assurance NCO in charge, "the actual installation of the radome takes four hours to complete. It's great to know our unit can help improve the readiness of the entire fleet of KC-135s."



Airman Ron Arredondo inspects a radome installed on a KC-135R Stratotanker belonging to the 507th Air Refueling Wing at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla. Airman Arredondo was part of a team supporting the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center's final test of the replacement process and verification of the time compliance technical order instructions.

Installation of the new foam core radomes is expected to save \$29.6 million over the life of the C/KC-135 weapon system. The replacement project should be complete by early 2005. *(Maj. Rich Curry, 507th ARW public affairs, Tinker AFB.)*

New Commander Receives Third Star

After officially pinning on his third star, Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley formally became chief of Air Force Reserve and Air Force Reserve Command commander during ceremonies at the Pentagon June 30.

Gen. Richard B. Meyers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presided at General Bradley's promotion from major general to lieutenant general. Minutes later, Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, officiated at General Bradley's assumption of command ceremony.

President Bush nominated General Bradley for the dual-hat position in May.

"I am truly honored to be named chief of Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command," General Bradley said. "With great pride, I accept command of the outstanding men and women of AFRC.

"Our talented and dedicated Air Force

Reservists have faced many new challenges since Sept. 11 (2001). Many of them have been mobilized and separated from their families, enduring hardships not normally associated with traditional Reservists' duties. They are an inspiration to us all."

General Bradley said he looks forward to visiting as many Reservists as he can, seeing firsthand how they are performing their assigned duties.

"By meeting with our Reservists, I will be able to better understand their capabilities, needs and concerns, which are critical to maintaining a strong, combat-ready force," he said.

In his new capacity, General Bradley is a member of the Air Staff and principal adviser to the chief of staff on Air Force Reserve matters. As AFRC commander, he is responsible for the supervision of all Air Force Reserve units around the

world. The command has about 75,800 Reservists who play an integral role in the nation's defense and are vital to the effectiveness of the military in combat.

"The Air Force can't do its job without the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard," General Jumper said. "Air Force Reservists bring invaluable talent from the commercial world."

General Bradley's previous assignments include assistant to the chairman

Paratroopers make final jump from C-141 aircraft

By Senior Master Sgt. Allen Pennington

Paratroopers began jumping out of C-141 Starlifters nearly 40 years ago. They stopped jumping May 13 with the last C-141 troop drop at Fort Benning, Ga.

Providing the jump platform for the historic event was tail number 50229, a March Air Reserve Base, Calif., C-141C with more than 41,860 flying hours.

"This plane has served the Air Force very well," said Maj. Gen. Robert Duignan, 4th Air Force commander and a long-time C-141 pilot. "(However), the maintenance costs are pretty high on this plane. There comes a time when everyone has to leave, and this plane has to go."

Built in 1965, tail number 50229 was first assigned to the 60th Military Airlift Wing at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., and then reassigned to the 62nd MAW, McChord AFB, Wash., in 1971. "Stretched" another 23 feet from a C-141A to a C-141B in 1981, she moved back to California in 1992 to be a part of the 63rd MAW at Norton AFB. A year later, the aircraft was transferred to Air Force Reserve Command's 452nd Air Mobility Wing at March Field. In 1999, it received various "glass-cockpit" modifications and was re-designated as a C-141C.

The first C-141A, delivered to Tinker AFB, Okla., in October 1964, began squadron operations in April 1965. The C-141 was the first jet transport from which U.S. Army paratroopers jumped. It can hold 155 paratroopers.

As tail number 50229 approached the Fort Benning drop zone, aircraft commander Maj. Jeff Minton performed a tactical approach to the airfield, banking the plane 45 degrees in a tight downward spiral to the left.

That maneuver "is a lot fun," said Maj. Jeff Puckett, C-141 navigator. "It is a little aggressive, and the intent is to minimize your vulnerability going into an unknown airfield."

The Soldiers, Airmen and Marines showed a wide range of emotions and facial expressions while waiting for the jump light to change from red to green. Some appeared totally focused, others had a look of absolute terror, but most of them just seemed anxious to jump.

A tradition among student paratroopers is the selection of the "keeper of the wings." The honor goes to the youngest person in the class on the night before the last jump. The keeper is responsible for wearing and protecting a set of jump wings until graduation.

On this flight, Pvt. Jason Stewart of Chandler, Ariz., was the keeper, the last person in his class to jump from the aircraft. It



MASTER SGT. BILL KIMBLE

Pvt. Jason Stewart, the last Army paratrooper to jump from a C-141 Starlifter, stays focused as he approaches the troop door.

was the fifth "training" jump that day.

Quiet and soft-spoken, the private hardly seemed to fit the role of the last paratrooper to jump from a C-141. The fresh-faced 18-year-old appeared to mature rapidly toward Army manhood with each step toward the door before leaping into military history.

"No one explained" the significance of being the last person to jump from a C-141. "I thought I'd just be the last jumper in my class," he said.

After Private Stewart parachuted out, the on-board jump instructors and loadmasters gathered the rip cords, closing another chapter in the storied history of the Air Force workhorse transport aircraft.

Air Mobility Command began transferring C-141s to the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard in July 1986. Reserve C-141Cs are stationed at March and Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. The ANG has C-141Cs at Memphis ANG Base, Tenn. All C-141s are scheduled to be retired from the Air Force inventory by 2006. ★

(Sergeant Pennington is assigned to the 4th Air Force public affairs office, March Air Reserve Base, Calif.)

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for Reserve Matters from December 2002 until his Senate confirmation June 24. From March 2002 to December 2002 he was deputy commander of Joint Task Force-Computer Network Operations, U.S. Space Command, Arlington, Va.

The general commanded the Air Force Reserve's 10th Air Force, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, from February 1998 to March 2002. In that capacity, he was responsible for the command's fighter, bomber, special operations, combat search and rescue, pilot training, and space operations missions.

General Bradley also has commanded a fighter training squadron, fighter group and fighter wing. He is a com-

mand pilot with more than 6,800 flying hours in T-38, A-37, A-10, F-4 and F-16 aircraft. As a fighter pilot, he flew 337 combat missions in Vietnam.

Born in Lebanon, Tenn., the general received his commission in 1967 after completing the Air Force ROTC program as a distinguished graduate at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. *(AFRC News Service)*

Civil Engineers Help Secure Southern Border

Civil engineers from five Air Force Reserve Command units traveled to Arizona in June to participate in a joint project to improve homeland security.

Members of the 917th Civil Engineer Squadron, Barksdale Air Force Base, La., 442nd CES, Whiteman AFB, Mo., 944th CES, Luke AFB, Ariz., and 301st CES and 810th Civil Engineer Flight, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, went to the town of Bisbee to help build fences and vehicle barriers and also improve roads along the border between Mexico and the United States.

While deployed, the engineers worked as part of Joint Task Force Six, which relies exclusively on volunteers from all branches of the military to provide counterdrug support to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection organization, part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Mario Valdez, special operations super-



Senior Airman Daniel Caraway, 442nd Civil Engineer Squadron, Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., uses a jackhammer to break up hard ground so poles can be put up for a fence along the border between the United States and Mexico. Reservists from five units traveled to Arizona in June to participate in a joint task force to help improve homeland security.

2ND LT. TORRIE WHITE

visor for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, said volunteers receive training opportunities directly related to their primary military functions and the chance to work hand in hand with other service members in a total-force environment.

In addition to improving homeland security, the work provides a better life and protection for citizens and landowners along the border.

"Private landowners complained about the foot traffic (from drug traffickers and illegal immigrants) wearing down the vegetation for the cattle, lots of trash left on their land and no way to contain their cattle," Mr. Valdez said. "With the new fences, the landowners have more control over the cattle. Also, residents feel safer with the fences up because it makes it harder for people to cross the border and enter their backyards."

Chief Master Sgt. Russell Wilkinson, 917th CES, did not hesitate to volunteer or encourage others to do so.

"This is an opportunity for us to get great training, work together with other services and units, and directly support homeland security," he said. "We couldn't pass it up."

"This type of training is beneficial because it builds teamwork within the unit and broadens the experience and knowledge of individuals," said Capt. Charles Chapman of the 917th. "Working and living together for an extended time creates a more cohesive team and makes working together more efficient."

U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents are happy to have the support of JTF-6, said Gilbert Estrada, senior tactical coordinator for the U.S. Border Patrol.

"Our borders are safer because of the JTF-6 and the military personnel who have volunteered to help," Mr. Estrada said. "The military members working down here are having a direct impact on homeland security. In the early 1990s, when the task force project started, there were little or no fences in some areas, no cameras, no lights and no vehicle guards. Now they have it all."

"With the new additions and improvements, my agents are able to patrol the land more quickly and effectively," Mr. Valdez said. "It has also allowed me to reallocate many resources to areas that were neglected before. It is definitely a win-win situation for everyone



Master Sgt. David Macerelli (left), NCO in charge of maintenance for Detachment 1, 307th Fighter Squadron, discusses F-16 pre-flight inspection procedures with Airman 1st Class Dan Wiemert, 55th FS crew chief, at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

Reserve hiring maintainers for Fighter Associate Program

Air Force Reserve Command is hiring F-15C and F-16C aircraft maintainers to serve at three active-duty bases in support of its Fighter Associate Program.

The 307th Fighter Squadron, a Reserve unit at Langley AFB, Va., is looking for experienced crew chiefs and avionics and electro-environmental maintainers to fill several part-time and full-time positions. The jobs are in Air Force Reserve detachments at Langley AFB; Eglin AFB, Fla.; and Shaw AFB, S.C.

People interested in the part-time positions will be expected to serve beyond the minimal traditional reserve duty requirements, which is one weekend per month and two additional weeks during the year.

The Fighter Associate Program is designed to retain experienced aircraft maintainers and pilots. Some of them may have separated or retired from active duty, while others may already be in the Air Force Reserve. Together they can provide training and continuity for various active-duty units within Air Combat Command.

"The primary goal of the program is to bolster the experience levels within

the active-duty units to achieve maximum mission effectiveness," said Col. Elizabeth Grote, AFRC's director of logistics.

"Air Force Reserve Command can help meet this goal because reservists can make an immediate impact on the Air Force fighter community with their years of experience and extensive training," she said. "ACC and AFRC partner together in combat, so it makes good sense to train together here at home."

"This program is a win-win scenario for both the Air Force Reserve Command and the active-duty Air Force," said Senior Master Sgt. Cosimo Carbone, 307th FS maintenance superintendent, a reservist with 22 years of experience. "It's an integral part of the Total Force initiative shaping the future of the Air Force."

A typical detachment consists of a full-time detachment commander, three part-time pilots, two full-time maintainers, four part-time maintainers and one full-time administrator.

Sergeant Carbone has more information on available maintenance positions at 757-225-8773 or DSN 575-8773. ★
(AFRC News Service)

involved.” (2nd Lt. Tori White, 917th Wing public affairs, Barksdale AFB.)

Officials Approve Wear of Expeditionary Medal

Air Force officials have authorized wear of the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, which was approved by President Bush in 2003.

The Department of Defense campaign medal applies to active-duty, Reserve and Guard service members deployed abroad on or after Sept. 11, 2001, for operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom.

“The criterion is pretty clear, so members who believe they are eligible can begin wearing it,” said Tech. Sgt. Jeff Simmons, superintendent of the Air Force Personnel Center’s Recognition Programs Branch, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

To qualify, a person must have been assigned or attached to a unit in OEF or OIF and served 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days in specific geographic areas.

The medal will only be awarded once, regardless of how many times a person returns to serve in OEF or OIF. There are no service stars or other devices authorized; however, battle stars may be authorized for service members who engage in actual combat. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the approving authority for battle stars.

Duty locations include these countries: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bulgaria (Bourgas), Crete, Cyprus, Diego Garcia, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Romania (Constanta), Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey (east of 35 degrees east latitude), Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

Other areas include:

- The portion of the Arabian Sea north of 10 degrees north latitude and west of 68 degrees longitude.
- Babel Mandeb.
- The Gulf of Aden.
- The Gulf of Aqaba.
- The Gulf of Oman.
- The Gulf of Suez.



The Air Force has authorized wear of the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

- The portion of the Mediterranean Sea east of 28 degrees east longitude.
- The Persian Gulf.
- The Red Sea.
- The Strait of Hormuz.
- The Suez Canal.

The medal follows the Kosovo Campaign medal in precedence. It will be issued by local military personnel flights when it becomes available and will also be available through the Army and Air Force Exchange Service later this year.

For information, Airmen can contact their local military personnel flight or call the Air Force Contact Center toll free at 800-616-3775. (Courtesy of AFPC News Service)

Volunteers Needed for Force Protection Duties

Reserve component enlisted members in any career field are eligible for a unique program that will allow them to help protect Air Force bases around the country.

The Air Reserve Component Force Protection Volunteer Program gives individual mobilization augmentees, as well as unit Reservists and members of the Air National Guard, in grades E-6 and below the opportunity to serve tours with security forces units at most state-side bases, according to Maj. Scott Parker,

the air reserve component force protection liaison officer at Headquarters Air Force Security Forces Center, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Volunteers will perform force protection duties such as manning entry control and vehicle inspection stations at base gates as well as other duties, Major Parker said.

“People in all (Air Force specialty codes) are eligible,” he said. “Security forces volunteers will hit the ground running, while volunteers from other career fields will go through a one- or two-week security forces ready training program before assuming their duties.”

Tour lengths are variable based on each volunteer’s availability, Major Parker said. The minimum tour length is 30 days, while those who are available for longer periods can begin serving immediately and stay on duty until at least Sept. 29, 2004. The Air Force is funding all travel and per diem costs for program participants.

About 2,100 volunteers are already serving in the program, and at least 400 more are needed this fiscal year, Major Parker said. He anticipates the program will be funded again next fiscal year for up to 3,000 volunteers.

A checklist with requirements and procedures for volunteers is available at <http://afsf.lackland.af.mil>. Air National Guard members who want to volunteer or get more information on the Force Protection Volunteer Program can contact Major Parker at 210-925-7051 or DSN 945-7051. Interested Air Force Reserve members should call Tech. Sgt. David Kahler at 210-925-0305 or DSN 945-0305.

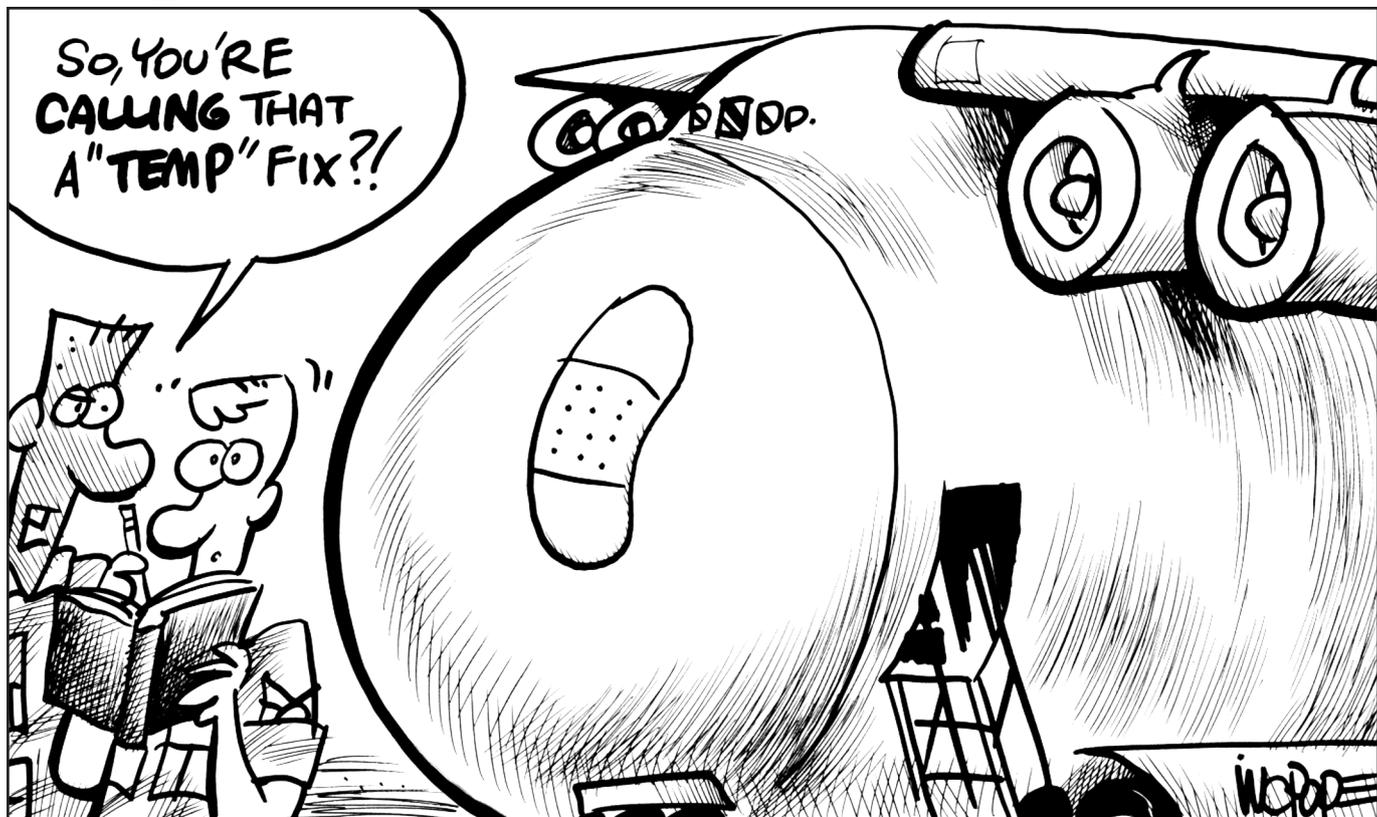
Volunteers cannot be on physical profile, must meet Air Force physical fitness standards and must have a government travel card. (Gary Emery, Air Force Security Forces Center public affairs, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas)

Personnel Center Alters Policy for Handling Calls

In an effort to provide “one-stop” shopping to its more than 950,000 customers worldwide, the Air Reserve Personnel Center is channeling all toll-free calls through its customer call center.

The change in policy went into effect June 28. Previously, when a customer

Pope's Puns



CARTOON BY MASTER SGT. W.C. POPE, WESTOVER AIR RESERVE BASE, MASS.

called the center's toll-free number, 1-800-525-0102, they were given the option of having their call going through the call center or entering a five-digit number for the directorate they wanted to contact. The change eliminated all of the five-digit numbers.

Once the call center receives a call, a customer service representative verifies the caller's mailing and e-mail addresses. This step helps ARPC meet its responsibility of being able to get in touch with its database of mission-ready air reserve component members.

For those questions that can only be answered by someone within a particular directorate, the call center will transfer callers to the proper extension. (*Tech. Sgt. Rob Mims, ARPC public affairs, Denver*)

Reservists Required to Register Civilian Employers

A new program requires reservists throughout the armed forces to register their civilian employer with the Department of Defense.

Called the Civilian Employment Information Program, the registration is the first mandatory disclosure by members of the Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve of their civilian employers into a common database.

According to DOD officials, participation in this program is mandatory. Reservists and guardsmen who knowingly fail or refuse to provide their employment-related information, or who provide false information, may be subject to administrative action or punishment.

"This information will be used to meet three different requirements defined by federal law," said Maj. Gen. John J. Batbie Jr., vice commander of Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. "During activations or presidential mobilizations, the Department of Defense needs to consider the impact on our civilian communities and ensure that reservists fulfilling critical occupations are not kept in service longer than absolutely necessary.

"Also, we have an obligation to inform those civilians who employ reservists of their rights and responsibilities under the Uniformed Services Employment

and Re-employment Rights Act."

Air Force Reservists can enter their employer data by going to the new Defense Manpower Data Center Web site at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/guard-reserveportal>.

Once on the Web site, Reservists enter their employment status, employer name, mailing address, civilian job title and total number of years in their current civilian occupation.

All services will provide commanders with compliance reports that will allow commanders to ensure subordinates have entered employer information to the database and that the information is being maintained on at least an annual basis.

DOD officials said their goal is to have 95 percent of the Selected Reserve and 75 percent of the Individual Ready Reserve registered by the end of 2005.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve staff will not directly contact any employer about a specific individual unless the person asks for assistance. However, ESGR will send general information to employers, including surveys to determine employer attitudes. (*AFRC News Service*) ★

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