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Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy McGuffin

Col. Michael Manion, 403rd Wing commander, retires with 30 years of service during a ceremony at the Roberts Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Facility 2 p.m. Sunday. Thursday was his final flight in a C-130J Super Hercules.

*By Staff Sgt. Heather Heiney
403rd Wing Public Affairs*

Good leaders give clear direction, support their people and guide them toward success. But great leaders take it one step further. They spend the day in Baton Rouge delivering supplies and checking on each of their Airmen after a flood. They drive all day to make it home in time for a child's event because being there for their Airmen means they must live two states away from their family. They try to dodge photos and articles and recognition because they would rather see their people in the spotlight.

According to Airmen in the 403rd Wing, their commander, Col. Michael Manion, is a great leader.

He started his Air Force journey as a student at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and was commissioned upon his graduation in 1987. Once he completed technical and aircraft-specific training in 1989, he began his career as a pilot at his first duty station at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota. Since then he's had seven duty assignments and deployed 10 times in support of operations Desert Storm, Restore Hope, Deny Flight, Noble Anvil, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

"During my service I've been fortunate to be able to do what I trained to do; whether it was refueling F-4's low on fuel in Desert Storm, picking up an Afghani boy at 8,500 feet in the mountains, working at Air Force Special Operations Command headquarters or being a member of the unrivaled 403rd Wing," he said. "It's been a great journey filled with so many wonderful people."

The colonel said joining the military was the only career path he ever considered. He grew up in an Air Force family where his father spent 22 years as an aeromedical technician on rescue helicopters.

"I was raised to see the great opportunities that we have in this country, and I wanted to do something to give back," Manion said. "It was in my blood."

He spent his entire career giving back. One thing he said he's enjoyed about his career is the opportunity to mentor Airmen.

"I've been fortunate to do many things," Manion said. "My first goal was to be a leader and flying was a bonus."

One way he helps develop young Airmen is through his role as chairman of the 403rd Wing Human Resources Development Council. This group was established to give Airmen a forum to voice concerns or share innovative ideas.

To read the rest of the story click on the photo

My brat makes me proud

By Staff Sgt. Heather Heiney
403rd Wing Public Affairs

We worry our child will get hurt. We worry we aren't making the right decisions for them. We worry they've become irrevocably addicted to their iPad and that they really shouldn't spend so much time watching videos of a 5-year-old millionaire open new toys.

Maybe that last one's just me. As military parents we have an extra thick layer of worry. Will our children adjust well to another new place? Will they understand why I'm doing this? Am I missing too much?

We all worry because we can't help it. But these kids make it through separations, they adapt to new surroundings, and they become independent. According to the Department of Defense Education Activity, Month of the Military Child was established more than 30 years ago to honor the sacrifices military children make and the challenges they overcome.

While they often face struggles others may not understand, military children also often get to see places and things others don't. For example, how many kids can say they've sat in the flight deck of an aircraft that flies into hurricanes?

My 3 year old can, though I'm not entirely sure he even knows what a hurricane is. I'm also not sure he actually knows my husband and I are in the military. The uniforms we wear are our "work clothes," when we leave on temporary duty assignments we're going on "work trips," and he identifies a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft by saying, "Hey Mom, look! That's your work airplane."

Even though he might not understand it, he sure acts like a military brat. (Sometimes with the emphasis on the brat, but he's 3 and that's an entirely different story.) He wants to do everything by himself, he fits in at a new school on day one and he's beginning to become completely un-phased by our absence. The other day I told him I had to go on a work trip, but I was only going to be gone a night and he said, "No, I want you to be gone three nights." (See, brat.)

I've tried to explain some different aspects of the military to my son, but I never realized how difficult that can be until he learned how to ask why. Three year olds are not satisfied with the answer at the surface, they make you peel away a concept layer by layer.

"Hey Mom, what's that song called?"

"It's called the National Anthem."

"Why do we have to stop?"

"Because it shows respect."

"Why?"

Respect, it turns out, is particularly difficult to explain in 3-year-old concepts. Eventually, I threw my hands up and said, "I don't know, that's just what it is." A few weeks later when retreat began to play, I knew that maybe I'd explained it just well enough. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw his small blonde head glowing in the sunlight and his hand on his chest. My heart swelled with the music as I watched him stand (mostly) still until the last melodic note of our National Anthem faded. Month of the Military Child is an opportunity for us to recognize the contribution our kids make. When my son mimics our core values or shows strength or succeeds despite challenges, it makes me intensely proud. Maybe that pride is even strong enough to quell the worry, just a little bit.

**Nathan Heiney, son of
Senior Airman Brian Heiney,
403rd Security Forces Squadron and
Staff Sgt. Heather Heiney,
403rd Wing Public Affairs.**



Chief's CHAT

By Chief Master Sgt. Christopher
Barnby
403rd Wing command chief

John Quincy Adams once said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

Leadership can be demonstrated in many different ways. Some may demonstrate leadership simply having a good ear to listen. Others may have a keen eye to see changes that need to happen as well as preventing changes that would burden the team. While others may best demonstrate leadership by simply espousing leadership techniques and philosophies.

In more than 29 years I have found few leaders who have wrapped up all the different qualities into the fiber of their being. These few simply demonstrate leadership through love of country and love of the greatest air power and Airmen this planet has ever known.

This weekend we bid farewell and fair skies to Col. Michael Manion who is one of those few. It has truly been my privilege and honor to have served with him through good times and tough times. The 403rd is your family and always will be! We look forward to hearing of your future successes and seeing you at future family/Wing days. Thank you for being our nation's sword and shield.

403RD HEADLINES

Port Dawgs compete in AFRC challenge

Six Airmen from the 41st Aerial Port Squadron here competed in the Air Force Reserve Command's Port Dawg Challenge Monday to Thursday.

The 96th Aerial Port Squadron from Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, may have claimed the title of "Top Dawg" or best aerial port team in AFRC, but the 41st APS team didn't walk away empty handed.



"We had an amazing time and have a bunch of great take-aways to bring back to our unit," said Master Sgt. Alexander Cruz, 41st APS Port Dawg Challenge team chief. Twenty-three units competed in the bi-annual event and the 41st APS came in 10th place. Aerial porters, nicknamed "Port Dawgs," process personnel and cargo, prepare and load cargo and equipment onto aircraft, pack parachutes and rig cargo for airdrop missions.

36th AES claims command honors



The Air Force Reserve Command announced the winners of the 2016 Aeromedical Evacuation Awards April 28. Senior Master Sgt. Anthony J. Staut, 36th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, is the Outstanding Senior Non-commissioned Officer assigned to a Reserve Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Davis, 36th AES, is the Outstanding AFRC Aeromedical Evacuation Operational Support NCO of the Year. The 36th

AES also won the AFRC Leadership and Management Team Award. They will go on to compete against active duty and Air National Guard members in the Air Mobility Command competition for the AE Excellence award.

Chaplains commit to care

According to the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States, Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. For military members, chaplains are one of main advocates to help them protect this right.

Chaplains provide a number of services in order to support that right and keep Airmen in the fight. They provide religious accommodations to ensure everyone is free to exercise their beliefs, provide ethical advice to leadership, unit visitations and confidential counseling. Just as members of the military take the Oath of Enlistment and swear to defend the Constitution's liberties for civilians, chaplains defend military members' religious freedoms. Chaplains make sure Airmen are not denied the opportunity to witness their faith, said 403rd Wing Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Bryant.



Air Force News



Air Force Reserve chief testifies before senate

The chief of the Air Force Reserve testified alongside the chief of the National Guard Bureau and other services' Reserve chiefs before the Senate Appropriations Committee - Subcommittee on Defense, April 26.

With the deadline of the continuing resolution looming, all of the services' described the need for budget stability and predictably.

"Constrained defense budgets and a lack of fiscal stability stress our readiness levels and threatens our ability to reach and sustain full-spectrum readiness," said Air Force Reserve Chief Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller, in her written testimony "As a critical component of the One Air Force Team, we will not be fully successful without proper and sustainable funding across the future years defense plan."

Active-duty jobs open for officer, enlisted

The Air Force has expanded the Voluntary Limited Period of Active Duty program, adding 51 additional Air Force Specialty Codes for select air reserve component officers.

Reserve and Air National Guard Airmen from select Air Force officer and enlisted specialties may now serve on active duty in vacant active duty positions for three years and one day. Rated opportunities have expanded to include 11X-Pilot, 12F-Fighter Combat Systems Officer and 18X-Remotely Piloted Aircraft Pilot, to name a few. Non-rated opportunities were also expanded to include 15W-Weather, 21A-Aircraft Maintenance, 35P-Public Affairs, BSC-Biomedical Science Corps and NC-Nurse Corps. 13C-Special Tactics and 13L-Air Liaison Officer were also added to the list of Battlefield Airman AFSCs.

WING COMMANDER RETIRES SUNDAY, FAREWELL TONIGHT

After 30 years of service, Col. Michael W. Manion, 403rd Wing commander, will retire during ceremony at the Roberts Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Facility 2 p.m. Sunday. His farewell social is scheduled for 6 p.m. tonight at the Bay Breeze Event Center second floor ballroom. There will be light Cinco de Mayo themed appetizers available as well as a cash bar.

WING CHANGE OF COMMAND SUNDAY

Col. Jennie Johnson will take command of the 403rd Wing during a ceremony at 10:30 a.m. Sunday in the Isochronal Inspection hangar. Maj. Gen. John Stokes, 22nd Air Force commander will be the presiding official.

BBQ ON BAY

The 403rd Wing's Airman and Family day will take place noon Saturday at Marina Park with a BBQ on the Bay picnic.

ALL CALL SATURDAY

There is a 403rd Wing All Call for wing members at the Roberts Maintenance Facility at 9:30 a.m. Saturday.

BLENDED RETIREMENT

Airmen eligible for the new Blended Retirement System can now take the required Opt-In training via the Advanced Distributed Learning System versus Joint Knowledge Online. The Opt-In course is designed to provide information for eligible Airmen to make an educated decision about their retirement system. Only those active Airmen who, as of Dec. 31, 2017, have served fewer than 12 years, or reservists who have accrued fewer than 4,320 retirement points, will have the option of electing BRS or remaining in the legacy retirement system.

GREEN DOT TRAINING THIS UTA

There are several opportunities for members to attend Green Dot training this unit training assembly.

- Initial Training for those who haven't had Green Dot training is 10:30 a.m. to noon today at the Roberts Consolidated Maintenance Facility.
- Refresher training for the 403rd Wing Staff Agencies and Financial Management is 8-9:30 a.m. Saturday at the Don Wylie Auditorium in the Keesler Medical Center.
- Refresher training for the 403rd Logistics Readiness Squadron is 9:30-11 a.m. Saturday at the Don Wylie Auditorium.
- Refresher training for the 403rd Aeromedical staging squadron is 10:30 a.m. to noon, 1-2:30 p.m. or 2:30-4 p.m. Sunday at the Don Wylie Auditorium.

BED, BREAKFAST LODGING NOT REIMBURSABLE

Currently Bed and Breakfast (AirBnB) and like lodging options are not considered "suitable" or "commercial" and therefore not proper for reimbursement or entitlement. The Air Force Accounting and Finance Office is currently working on providing official guidance regarding the issue, however, if travelers continue to use these lodging options they may not be reimbursed or will be limited to the on base lodging rate. In addition, the traveler will not be reimbursed any "fees" associated with procuring the lodging. Furthermore, all travelers should continue to utilize the Contract Travel Office or Defense Travel System reservation module when making lodging arrangement, and should be made aware that not utilizing CTO or DTS may make those charges non-reimbursable.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Shelton Sherrill

HURRICANE AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS

Students from a local school, Ignacio Lopez Rayon, attend the Caribbean Hurricane Awareness Tour in Mérida, Mexico April 15, 2017. The students were dressed in traditional Mayan outfits and sung a native song to members of the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron from Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who hosted the event. With hurricane season starting June 1 now is the time to prepare and assemble a kit. Have a plan for emergency communications, evacuation, sheltering and knowing how to stay informed. For more information on hurricane preparedness, visit <http://www.beready.af.mil/>