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CITIZEN AIRMAN

Volume 72 No. 3

June 2020



A COUNTRY AT WAR

Reservists on the front lines in battle against COVID-19

Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

Ready to Respond ... to Any Scenario

The reason the Air Force Reserve exists is to provide manpower and capabilities to support and defend this nation. This mandate spans the entire spectrum of operations, so we must be prepared to respond to any potential scenario.

As a military organization, our primary focus is combat and operational readiness. However, threats to national security are not limited to adversarial forces. We cannot limit our focus to just combat readiness. Ultimately, our mission is to respond when needed, to any scenario or requirement.

Our world is unpredictable, and the most powerful and volatile force on the planet is nature. Often, when we are called upon to execute a rapid response to an unplanned event, the mission is defense support of civil authorities or disaster relief, rather than combat operations.

Less frequent, but more insidious, are global pandemics, such as the outbreak of COVID-19, which continues to produce widespread effects that require a more complex response.

Responding to COVID-19 is like running a marathon, not a sprint. We can neither predict nor prepare for every possible scenario that may arise. We can maximize our ability to respond and to operate in non-standard circumstances by remaining **resilient, flexible and adaptive**.

In addition to providing support to Americans in our pandemic response efforts, the Air Force Reserve must protect our Airmen and their families from the COVID-19 virus, while continuing to advance the Air Force Reserve strategic priorities: *prioritizing strategic depth and accelerating readiness, developing resilient leaders, and reforming the organization*.

In order to minimize the impact to our combat readiness and meet our daily

mission requirements, we must continue pursuing alternative and innovative ways to operate.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the criticality of **empowering local commanders to act independently**. The severity of the outbreak has varied from region to region. Some locations have been hit harder than others. Therefore, the risk to our wings and unit personnel vary with geographic location. This scenario is further complicated by the differences in mission requirements between units. Certain tasks can be completed from anywhere with ease, whereas others can only be accomplished on location.

Because of the uneven distribution of COVID-19 cases and the unique characteristics of each of our units, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to the pandemic.

Rather, we must tailor preventative measures by location to include when and how to gradually return personnel to their work centers. Local command teams are best suited to make these decisions, because they have the most comprehensive understanding of the unit, its mission, the unit population and the local situation. So rather than issue specific guidance for the entire Air Force Reserve, I provided commander’s intent in response to the pandemic, trusting our command teams to do what is best for their unit.

As always, **caring for our Airmen and our families** is paramount. We must continue with preventative measures to protect our personnel from COVID-19 and minimize the spread of this virus.

As states ease shelter-in-place restrictions, it is imperative to maintain proper hygiene protocols and standards. We must keep our Airmen well informed about the pandemic and provide them with resources. In situations such as



Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee conducts a Facebook Live town hall meeting from his office to stay in touch with Reserve Citizen Airmen during this time of physical distancing. (Lt. Col. Jon Quinlan)

these, it is important for every Airman to maintain strong situational awareness by remaining informed on both the disease and conditions in their local area. Gather information from reliable references, such as the Center for Disease Control, state health agencies, and Department of Defense websites.

If we continue to stay the course throughout this marathon pandemic, we can ensure our Air Force Reserve remains ready and healthy. Stay safe and continue to aim high, Airmen!

RICHARD W. SCOBEE
Lieutenant General, USAF
Chief of Air Force Reserve
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command

Readiness or Resilient Leaders... Which Takes Precedence?

Reserve Citizen Airman Family,

Last year was a tough one for us, as we had to grapple with several natural disasters that limited our ability to train and equip, which had a direct impact on readiness.

It was also one of the most emotionally challenging times in many of our military careers, as we lost more than 30 members of our family – more than half to suicide.

The boss and I were extremely relieved to hit the refresh button this year; but already this year has taken a drastic turn from what we expected. While we can often predict the behavior of our adversaries, we can’t always predict what Mother Nature will throw our way.

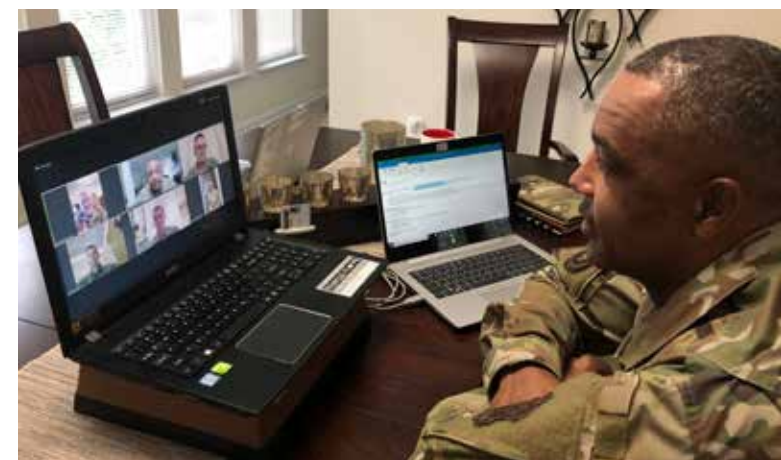
Leaders across the command are committed to taking care of Airmen, our families and the American people by being ready and resilient. But which one takes precedence is the million dollar question. Here’s my take on it.

Readiness: Readiness has and will always be a top priority. Unfortunate as it has been, this pandemic has shown Air Force Reserve Command’s ability to respond to any global threat. During the initial stages of the outbreak, America turned to AFRC as March Air Reserve Base, California, became the first location on U.S. soil to accept American citizens evacuated from China. All the while, we continued to generate air power by flying combat missions and providing combat-ready forces to combatant commanders worldwide.

No ifs, ands or buts about it, we were only able to accomplish this by maintaining a state of readiness. As I write this commentary, Reserve Citizen Airmen are “boots on the ground” in the state of New York taking their readiness to fight and defeat the COVID-19 global enemy.

Resiliency: It’s easy to equate “resiliency” with “resilient leaders” by sheer connotation. It’s also easy to automatically equate “resiliency” or “resilient leader” with some form of personal struggle. Although personal struggle may be a facet of being a resilient leader, personal resiliency or struggle on its own is only one aspect.

Not every leader has or will endure personal struggle, a life-altering event or extreme hardship. Likewise, not every member who has faced personal struggle or hardship will automatically be the type of resilient leader we need him or her



Chief Master Sgt. Timothy White keeps in touch with a few of his fellow Reserve Citizen Airmen via teleconference while teleworking from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Senior Master Sgt. Kori Conaway)

to be during times of adversity.

More often than not, the true test of being a resilient leader is how we lead an organization of Airmen through difficult times, like we currently find ourselves in. What we are doing in New York and in communities across America takes resiliency.

Readiness and Resiliency: Regardless of location, situation or time, we will continue to face hardships and challenges on a global scale. Leaders must possess the emotional intelligence, resiliency and steady hand to lead Airmen through uncharted territory.

Regardless of the domain, our adversaries and those who wish to do us harm will continue to threaten our way of life. In order to preserve and protect the freedom and liberty all Americans enjoy, we must maintain a constant state of readiness by being resilient.

So when asked which takes precedence – readiness or resiliency – the answer to me is quite clear: it’s both.

As always, it is a true honor and privilege to serve as your command chief. Please feel free to share your comments with me via Facebook or at AFRC.CCC@us.af.mil.

TIMOTHY C. WHITE JR.
Chief Master Sergeant, USAF
Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Air Force Reserve
Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Force Reserve Command

Table of CONTENTS

FEATURED STORIES

Volume 72 No. 3

June 2020



06

A Country at War

Reserve medics on the front lines of battle against COVID-19
#ReserveReady #ReserveResilient



14

More Than Medical

It's not just doctors and nurses helping fight coronavirus
#ReserveReady #ReserveResilient



18

Getting Creative

How Reservists are staying connected during pandemic
#ReserveResilient



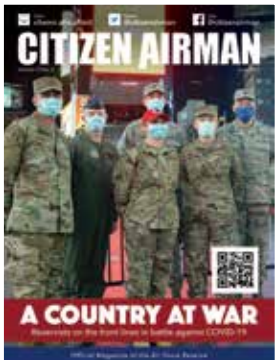
22

AFRC Mission Continues

In these trying times, Reserve keeps on flying, fighting, winning
#ReserveReady #ReserveResilient

ON THE COVER:

Six Air Force Reserve physician assistants who deployed to New York City to serve on the front lines of America's battle against the COVID-19 coronavirus pose for a photo in Times Square. Left to right are Maj. William Steele, Lt. Col. Troy Houston, Capt. Heather Dugan, Capt. Andrew Cruz, Col. Ari Fisher and Lt. Col. Matt Bershinsky. Hundreds of Reserve medics have been mobilized to help care for Americans during the pandemic. For the story, see page 6.



ARPC

TFSC introduces chat function for the Guard and Reserve28

HQ RIO

Welcomes its first command chief29

'Mobilization on Steroids'

How the Reserve got 125 medics to the front lines in 48 hours . . .30

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Leadership

Gen. David L. Goldfein
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Chief of Air Force Reserve's
Strategic Priorities



Priority 1: Prioritize strategic depth
and accelerate readiness
#ReserveReady



Priority 2: Develop resilient leaders
#ReserveResilient



Priority 3: Reform the organization
#ReserveReform

Look for these icons for stories that
focus on these three priorities.



A publication by the
U.S. Air Force Reserve



A COUNTRY AT WAR

Citizen Airmen medics on the front lines in battle against COVID-19

From Staff Reports



Ever since President Donald Trump signed an executive order authorizing mobilization of the Reserve Component on March 27, Reserve Citizen Airmen medics have served on the front lines of the nation's battle against the COVID-19 coronavirus.

"The Air Force Reserve stands ready to surge in support of the COVID-19 response," Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, chief of the Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, said on the day the executive order was signed. "This is an unprecedented mission and COVID-19 is a destructive adversary. We must do all we can to take care of Americans."

Medical professionals from the 445th Airlift Wing's Aerospace Medicine and Aeromedical Staging Squadrons, board a C-17 Globemaster III at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, heading to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in early April. (Patrick O'Reilly)



Top, Reserve Citizen Airmen take a break during a shift at Queens Hospital Center in New York, early in May. Doctors, nurses and medical technicians from throughout Air Force Reserve Command deployed to the city to help with patient overloads resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. (courtesy photo) Right, Maj. Lizzy Windsor, 944th Medical Squadron clinical nurse, poses for a photo prior to her deployment to New York in support of the COVID-19 pandemic from Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. (Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr.)

Reservists Mobilized in 48 Hours

Just days after the mobilization was authorized, Air Force Reserve Command's Force Generation Center received its first request for support.

Within 48 hours of notification, the Reserve mobilized more than 120 medical specialists across the nation to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, to help with the fight against COVID-19 in New York City, the epicenter of the pandemic.

More than 40 doctors, 70 nurses and about a dozen respiratory technicians departed their home stations on April 5, went through further inprocessing at JBMDL and eventually went to work at medical facilities in and around New York City.

Their deployment was part of a larger initial mobilization package of more than 1,000 Reserve Component medical professionals from across the nation.

The FGC ensured the Air Force Reserve volunteers were delivered to the fight in a timely manner.

"The stand-up of the FGC and the capabilities it brought the command has made this COVID-19 mobilization a success,"

Scobee said. "The FGC team and our wing commanders got this mobilization moving in the right direction within 48 hours to take care of Americans in the fight against COVID-19."

It isn't easy to mobilize civilians into military status normally, much less within two days. However, the leadership across the Air Force Reserve leaned forward to pre-identify volunteers from the Selected Reserve – Reserve Citizen Airmen currently actively serving in the Reserve.

"Using SELRES member volunteers enabled the FGC to do a quick-turn to meet this first tasking coming to the Reserve component from the Department of Defense," said Brig. Gen. Stacey Scarisbrick, FGC commander. "It's important to get our Reservists out the door quickly to help combat the spread of COVID-19 and take care of Americans."

The initial group of mobilized Reserve medics comprised both unit Reservists and individual mobilization augmentees.

"From our IMAs to our Reserve medics, I couldn't be prouder of this incredible Reserve team who stepped up quickly to answer our nation's call," Scobee said.

Through the volunteer process, members were screened for



Clockwise from top, Maj. (Dr.) Sanjiv Baxi, 349th Medical Group, Travis Air Force Base, California, poses for a photo in his personal protective gear while deployed to New York City. (courtesy photo) Capt. Trisha Degilormo, a mobilized nurse assigned to the 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, works at Lincoln Medical Center in New York. (courtesy photo) Master Sgt. Blair Bookland and members of the 932nd Medical Group board a 932nd Airlift Wing C-40C at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois to support COVID-19 relief efforts in New York. (Lt. Col. Stan Paregien)



impact to their civilian communities and professions.

“We did not want to pull a doc or nurse out of their community clinical practice or hospital if already ensconced in coronavirus operations,” said Col. (Dr.) Teresa Bisnett, AFRC’s surgeon general. As the top doctor at the command, Bisnett, her team of medical specialists, and the unit and wing commanders, took care to ensure the balance between civilian responsibilities and military requirements were considered in Citizen Airmen deployment selection.

“It was truly a team effort with our units to ensure the right Reservists were selected to provide this surge capability to our nation,” Bisnett said.

Among the initial group of Reservists mobilized the first weekend in April were a doctor and six nurses from the 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Group members referred to themselves as the “COVID Commandos.”

One of the COVID Commandos had only six hours’ notice

to mobilize when one of the original team members had to drop out.

First Lt. Jennifer Gerritsen was covering a 12-hour overnight shift in the intensive care unit at Wright-Patterson Medical Center near Dayton, Ohio, when she first learned she might be deployed.

“They called me during the shift and asked if I was willing to go, and I said yes,” she said. “I thought I would leave on Monday.”

She finished her shift at 6 a.m. on Sunday and went home to her family. Three hours later, she got another call.

“When I hung up the phone, I just looked over at my husband and told him, “They want me to leave today,” she said. “He immediately said, ‘Let’s get you packed.’”

She was on the plane that afternoon – on her way to New York – and the next day, she was going to work in a New York City hospital.

Also on the initial Reserve mobilization was Maj. Jimmy

Jones, chief nurse in the 419th Medical Squadron, Hill AFB, Utah.

When not working for the Reserve, Jones works full time as a nurse practitioner in Pocatello, Idaho, in a surgical center for patients who need extra levels of care. He said his experience in the civilian and military worlds prepared him for the mobilization.

“We train on a variety of medical skillsets in multiple areas, so we have the knowledge we need anytime the nation calls on us,” Jones said. “I’ve been called up once before for Hurricane Katrina. It’s nice to have been in (service) long enough to be used again in this capacity.”

Also called upon for her medical expertise was Maj. Katherine Trout, who works full time as a registered nurse in an intensive care unit in Salt Lake City, and part time in the 419th MDS.

“I’ve been in the medical field for a long time, and deployed several times in the military. I’m definitely prepared,” she said.

First Lt. Joseph O’Brien was another Reservist who volunteered for the first mobilization. “I was sleeping when I received

the phone call to report to MacDill in four hours,” O’Brien, a clinical nurse from the 927th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, MacDill AFB, Florida, said. “I live a couple hours away, so I only had a couple hours to finish packing and say goodbye to my wife and child.”

As an emergency room nurse, O’Brien said he was ready to get to work in the coronavirus hot spot.

“This is what we train for,” he said. “I am ready to help fight this fight and get our country back to some scene of normalcy.”

Tech. Sgt. David Rudd, a respiratory technician assigned to the 433rd Medical Squadron, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, who deployed, said in his 12 years in the military he’s never seen such a short turnaround for a mobilization and deployment.

“The fact that we were able to get the phone call Friday night at 8 p.m. and then boots leaving at 10 a.m. Sunday; I’ve never seen that,” Rudd said. “It’s amazing how all of us were able to get ready so quickly, and it shows what our country is capable of. I took an oath when I became a respiratory practitioner to help people. We’re all medical and we’re willing to help.”

Capt. Drezden Johnson, assigned to the 910th Medical Squadron, Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, cares for a patient at the Javits Center in support of the Department of Defense COVID-19 response. (Army Pfc. Genesis Miranda)



Doctors and nurses assigned to the 927th Air Refueling Wing, board a C-130 at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, headed for Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, to work with state and local authorities in the region as they combat COVID-19. (Tech. Sgt. Peter Dean)





Top, Tech. Sgt. Cynitra Roberson, 307th Medical Squadron technician, fills out paperwork at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, before deploying to New York to aid local medical personnel in their battle with COVID-19. (2nd Lt. Cody Burt) Left, Maj. Katherine Trout and Maj. Jimmy Jones, Reservists from the 419th Medical Squadron, Hill Air Force Base Utah, prepare to leave for the New York City area to help with the COVID-19 response.

Maj. Reginald Whittington, 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron clinical nurse and mobilized Reservist, said that despite the unknown, he felt ready to face the challenges ahead.

"We are trained to expect the unexpected," Whittington said. "I'm looking forward to treating patients and helping people, and I'm ready to meet the challenge."

Whittington said he's been with the 433rd AW for 13 years, and the unit has always been at the tip of the spear; but it doesn't happen without the support of families.

"I'm extremely blessed to have a great family who appreciates what I'm doing," he said. "I'd like to say our families are the heroes in this because they take care of our children and homes while we're gone. So in every case, our families are the ones who are to be celebrated."

More than 150 additional Air Force Reserve medical specialists were mobilized about two weeks after the initial call-up and deployed to support COVID-19 relief efforts in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Staff Sgt. Trevor Talbert, 307th MDS aerospace medical technician, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, was one of the deploying Airmen. A veteran of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, he said the deployment to fight COVID-19 was different from the previous ones.

"You can prepare for combat and normally see an enemy coming; now we are combatting a virus that we can't see," he said. "I'm still excited, because we've got a great group of people going and we are going to do good work."

"I've never been more proud of our Reserve Citizen Airmen and how they've stepped up to support Americans," Scobee said. "The Air Force Reserve is designed to provide critical rapid response and this capability is on full display as we provide support where it's needed most."

Aeromed Joins the Fight

About a week and a half after the first Air Force Reservists were mobilized and sent to New York City, about 100 Reserve



First Lt David Ross, right, administers fluids to a critical care patient at The Javits Center in New York City. Ross is a nurse with the 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. (courtesy photo)



Above, Reservists with the 514th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron pose for a group photo before mobilizing from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. (Tech Sgt. Michael Hong) Below, Senior Airman Emilie Canlas, 36th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, reads over her checklist before deploying. (Tech. Sgt. Christopher Carranza)



“I’ve never been more proud of our Reserve Citizen Airmen and how they’ve stepped up to support Americans.”
- Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee

aeromedical evacuation specialists were called to join the fight against COVID-19.

They were sent to the COVID-19 aeromedical evacuation hub that was established at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, and deployed around the globe as needed.

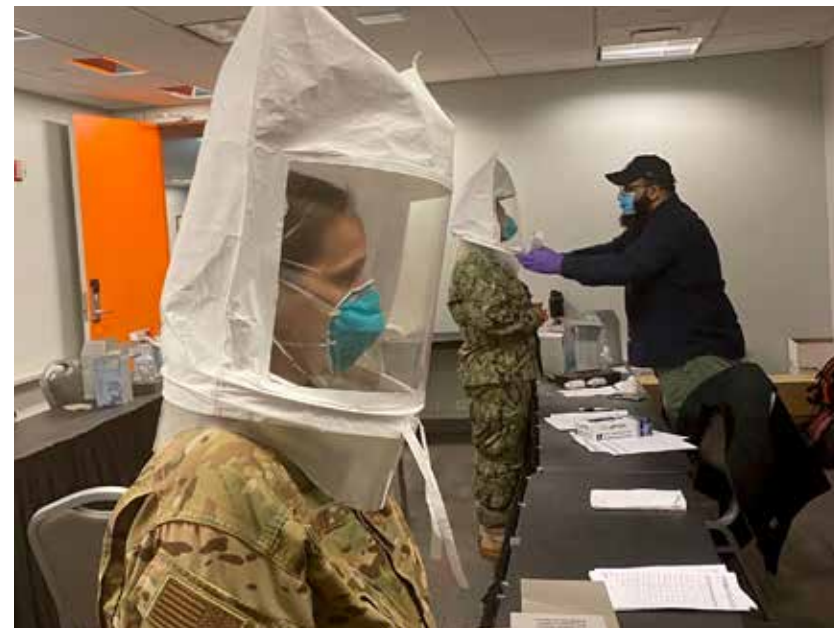
The primary mission for these Reservists is to provide lifesaving in-flight patient care in response to contingencies and humanitarian emergencies. These are specialized medical teams, consisting of flight nurses, aeromedical evacuation technicians and support personnel. These teams can operate on a number of U.S. Air Force aircraft.

"As Citizen Airmen, our people are playing a role in helping Americans recover from this pandemic," said Col. Adam Willis, commander of the 315th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Charleston. "I couldn't be more proud of the work they are doing," he said.

About 10 of the initial aeromedical deployers came from the 403rd Wing's 36th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi.



Maj. (Dr.) Jennalee Gaiser and Lt. Col. (Dr.) Raja Talati, from the 927th Air Refueling Wing, board a bus in New York City to report for duty at Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx. (courtesy photo)



Col. Jeffrey Van Dootingh, 403rd Wing commander, addresses Airmen with the 36th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron prior to their departure. (Lt. Col. Marnee A.C. Losurdo)

"The 36th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron is a unit full of professionals who are absolute experts at their jobs," said Col. Stuart Rubio, 403rd Wing Operations Group commander. "This short-notice mobilization of our Airmen will utilize those skills and strengthen our fight against this formidable foe."

"I am extremely proud of our Airmen who volunteered to answer our nation's call for medical support," said Lt. Col. Rosalind Johnson, 36th AES director of operations. "When Air Force Reserve Command put the call out for volunteers many of our unit members quickly raised their hand to help wherever they're needed."

"We go wherever the patients are," said Senior Airman Emilie Canlas, 36th AES aeromedical evacuation technician. "We provide all the same services as an emergency medical technician does, but in the back of an aircraft. I am happy to help people in any way that I can, so being able to deploy and provide care is very exciting."

Canlas said that being a single mother of two, a college student, and working full-time can be difficult; but during this time she has received all the support necessary to deploy.

"My family, college professors and employer have really stepped up and been really supportive of me, allowing me to perform my mission," she said.

About 20 of the initial aeromedical specialists mobilized came from the 433rd AES, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

"We're not only sending crews of flyers, but we're also sending a ground crew, which includes communications personnel, our medical service corps officer and our admins, who are critical to



supporting the mission," said Lt. Col. Alex Schwan, 433rd AES chief nurse.

"They will be playing a role in the aeromedical evacuation operations team, which is the ground component that supports the aircrew movement."

In his civilian capacity, Schwan is a primary care clinical case manager for the Veteran's Administration at the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veteran's Hospital in San Antonio.

This crew spans a variety of backgrounds. Maj. Tracy B. Tucker, 433rd AES flight nurse, who had a break in service between her time as an active duty enlisted Airman and returning with a commission, hasn't deployed since Desert Storm.

"This is a whole new Air Force for me," said Tucker. "I was an electronic technician. I worked with radio equipment, video equipment and TVs. Back in those days there were VCRs and stuff like that. It has been a long time since I deployed. I'm looking forward to it."

When not on duty with the Reserve, Tucker is a nurse at

Top left, mobilized medical specialists with the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron board a C-17 Globemaster III at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. (Master Sgt. Kristian Carter) Top right, Col. (Dr.) Jennifer Ratcliff, 927th Aerospace Medicine Squadron commander, goes through an N-95 mask-fit test at the Javits Center in New York City. (courtesy photo)

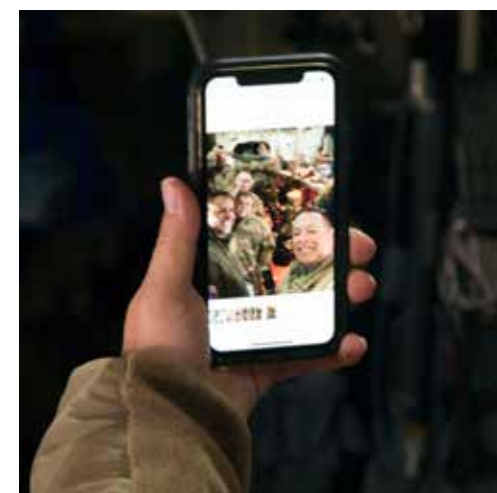


Top, Lt. Col. David Severs, 911th Aeromedical Staging Squadron clinical nurse, talks with Lt. Col. Charles Giordano, 911th ASTS certified registered nurse anesthetist, inside a C-17 Globemaster III before departing Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania. (Joshua J. Seybert) Right, Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Cassidy, 934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron superintendent, takes a selfie with deploying 934 AES Airmen aboard a C-130H Hercules at Minneapolis-St. Paul Air Reserve Station. (courtesy photo)

Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

"I feel blessed to be able to go in and support this operation," said Chief Master Sgt. Jennifer Moses, aeromedical evacuation technician, 514th AES, JBMDL. "It's an opportunity for us to take care of America and our partners." #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient

(Editor's note: 1st Lt. Rachel Ingram, Tech. Sgt. Peter Dean, Tech. Sgt. Samantha Mathison, Tech. Sgt. Christopher Carranza, Master Sgt. Kristian Carter and Staff Sgt. Michael Hong contributed to this story.)





Lt. Col. Michael Eldridge, an Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer from Alaska, works in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Response Coordination Center in Washington, D.C. Eldridge, deployed to support the fight against COVID-19, helped provide emergency management coordination, planning, resource deployment and collection and dissemination of disaster information — all at the national-level.

MORE THAN MEDICAL

It's not just Reserve doctors and nurses helping wage war against COVID-19

From Staff Reports

Hundreds of Air Force Reserve medical specialists have been mobilized to serve on the front lines of America's battle against the COVID-19 coronavirus. Countless more have served behind the scenes to help the nation defeat this unseen enemy. Here are just a few of their stories.

EPLOs Involved in the Fight from the Beginning

As communities across the nation first started to grapple with the threat of COVID-19, one group of Air Force

Reservists was already fully engaged in the fight against the deadly coronavirus.

Assigned to the 1st Air Force National Security Emergency Preparedness Directorate, Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers deployed across the nation to state emergency operations centers, Federal Emergency Management Agency regional offices, the National Response Coordination Center, Air Force bases and the Air Force Crisis Action Team cell at the Pentagon in the early days of the pandemic.

Some Reservists — like Col. Matthew

Tondini — served on the frontlines as FEMA decided how and when to integrate Title 10 Air Force assets (active duty and reserve) into the fight.

Tondini worked 12- to 14-hour days at the New York Office of Emergency Management, maintaining visibility on all aspects of military response in the city, including the arrival of the Navy's Comfort hospital ship, the retrofit of the Javits Convention Center to care for thousands of patients and the need for mortuary affairs augmentation.

Known as EPLOs, Reservists like

Tondini come from a variety of Air Force specialties to this special-duty assignment. During regular operations, EPLOs focus on building relationships within the disaster response enterprise, and informing key stakeholders about their role in the Defense Support of Civil Authorities mission and preparing for disasters.

When crisis hits, these relationships prove crucial.

"The commonality with all of the EPLO missions is proactive relationship building," said Joe Sanders, NSEP deputy director. "Day-in and day-out, EPLOs are on the ground, building relationships, and training with their interagency partners and sister-service EPLOs before disaster strikes. These existing relationships are paying great dividends right now in the fight against COVID."

Early on in the crisis, Col. Ralph Anthenien, the senior director to FEMA Region 3, deployed to Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, where American evacuees from China's Hubei province were quarantined in February. Over the course of several weeks, two groups of cruise ship evacuees arrived and remained in quarantine at the base. Anthenien orchestrated multi-agency support activities and directly supported the installation commander by assisting with Air Force issues that came up during the multi-agency response.

Meanwhile, almost 2,000 miles away, Col. John Trovato worked in a similar role at Travis AFB, California, when the base was selected as a quarantine area for American evacuees from Wuhan, China, and a Princess Cruise ship during February and March.

At Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., Col. Christiano Marchiori served as a liaison between the base and Air Forces Northern, keeping them apprised of developments associated with a group of evacuees from the Grand Princess Cruise ship who were quarantined at the base.

During the month of March, EPLOs also deployed to serve on the Air Force Crisis Action Team cell in

the Pentagon. Col. Rob Mantz, Lt. Col. Karen Shelton-Mur and Lt. Col. Elizabeth Kelpis worked around the clock seven days a week, funneling information back and forth between the White House, the secretary of the Air Force, the chief of staff and other senior leaders.

Aircrews Deliver Medics to the Fight

As Reserve doctors, nurses and medical technicians from around the country reported for duty in and around New York City, it was often Reserve aircrews who delivered them to the country's COVID-19 epicenter.

Within a few hours of notification, for example, an aircrew from the 452nd Air Mobility Wing, March Air Reserve Base, California, took to the skies in a C-17 Globemaster III to transport medical personnel to New York to help combat the coronavirus.

The crew departed April 5 with Air Force Reserve medics from the 940th Air Refueling Wing, Beale AFB, California, the 349th AMW, Travis AFB, California, and the 452nd AMW on board.

"It's important to get our Reservists out the door quickly to help combat the spread of COVID-19 and take care of Americans," said Brig. Gen. Stacey

Scarisbrick, Air Force Reserve Command Force Generation Center commander.

On the same day the C-17 from March was transporting medics from the west coast, a C-130 crew from Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, was gathering and delivering medics from the east coast.

"It took a huge effort to put this all together, not only from our medical personnel, but also from our aircrews, maintenance, logistics and many others" said Col. Craig McPike, 94th Airlift Wing commander. "The response I've seen is amazing. Service before self, happening right before my eyes."

The flight started with four medical specialists from the 94th Aeromedical Staging Squadron at Dobbins and one from the 413th ASTS at Robins AFB, Georgia.

After leaving Dobbins, the crew made stops at MacDill AFB, Florida, Patrick AFB, Florida, and Charleston AFB, South Carolina, to pick up more Reserve Citizen Airmen to join the fight.

"We're here to take care of Americans, our Airmen and their loved ones, while we continue to maintain mission readiness and sustain vital operations here at Dobbins," McPike said.



911th Airlift Wing aircrew members prepare to transport mobilized Airmen from Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania, to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, in support of the COVID-19 efforts in early April. (Joshua J. Seybert)



Top, Col. John F. Robinson, 911th Airlift Wing commander, talks with other aircrew members before transporting mobilized Airmen in support of COVID-19 relief efforts. (Joshua J. Seybert) Right, Capt. Greg Swartzberg, 94th Airlift Wing deputy staff judge advocate, helps a Marine fill out a legal form worksheet at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia. (Andrew Park)

JAGs Help Marines Deploy on Short Notice

In early April, the Dobbins legal office helped more than 60 Marines with legal documents in preparation for a short-notice deployment to assist in the battle against COVID-19.

“It was asking a lot, but we really couldn’t say no,” said Lt. Col. Justin Swick, 94th Airlift Wing staff judge advocate. “If they’re going to go forward and put themselves in harm’s way to stem the pandemic, the least we could do is give them the tools they need before they leave.”

Preparing legal documents is a multi-step process that can be labor intensive, said Swick. First, the member fills out a worksheet with important information such as beneficiary designation and other details to be included in legal documents such as wills or powers of attorney. The legal team then drafts the document and brings the member back in for a consultation to review the document. Finally, the



member signs the document in front of witnesses and gets it notarized.

Swick brought in Reservists to help with the workload. Additionally, Chief Master Sgt. Vicki Robertson, 94th AW command chief, helped out by registering Marines as they arrived.

Once signed in, the Marines headed into the wing conference room where seats were set up six feet apart. They sat at the table and began filling out their worksheets.

The scene was a bit surreal. It resembled any other pre-deployment processing line except for the fact that everyone in the room was wearing face masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The operation was successful, as the Marines were given peace of mind before heading out the door to complete their deployment.

“Hopefully these documents aren’t used in the near future, but it’s about peace of mind,” said Swick. “Whether they’re deploying to Afghanistan or New York City or California or wherever, you want them getting on the plane with the peace of mind that they’re taken care of and their families are taken care of; the only thing to worry about is the mission. So that’s why we do it.”

Freedom Wing Command Team Assists in Fighting Pandemic

Located just a few miles from New York City, the 514th Air Mobility Wing, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, has served as a hub of activity for Air Force Reserve COVID-19 support.

As Reserve medical specialists process through the New Jersey base on their way to serve in hard-hit areas in and around New York City, there is a command team at the Freedom Wing standing by to offer support.

Early in April, Col. Thomas Pemberton, 514th AMW commander, activated the 64th Air Expeditionary Group to serve and assist the Reserve healthcare providers.

The group is comprised of a commander, command chief and first sergeant all from the Freedom Wing. In addition, it has a three-member team for Personnel Support for Contingency Operations (PERSCO) from the 514th Force Support Squadron.

Col. Adrian R. Byers, 514th AMW vice commander, serves as the 64th AEG commander.

“Our Airmen never cease to amaze me,” Byers said. “We always talk about the fact we have 72 hours to answer a mobilization effort but in this case 125 Airmen were identified, mobilized and deployed inside 48 hours. Within 24 hours they were part of the fight against this dangerous virus. I’m humbled to be



Senior Master Sgt. Michael B. Moody, 64th Air Expeditionary Group first sergeant, oversees Staff Sgt Awa B. Diakhate. They were both forward deployed to the Javits Center in New York City to help fight against COVID-19.

their commander, as they all clearly exude one of our most cherished core values – service before self.”

Chief Master Sgt. Len Werner, 64th AEG command chief, worked alongside Byers and two of the PERSCO members at JBMDL. He said he was amazed to see the quick response of receiving medical personnel in such a short time, some from as far away as Hawaii.

“All are accounted for in NYC and hit the ground running at three hospitals,” Werner said.

Senior Master Sgt. Michael B. Moody forward deployed in New York City at the Javits Center as the 64th AEG first sergeant. The Air Force Reservists quickly organized and were mobilized to the local hospitals based on their medical specialties. They built three cohesive teams working with the Navy, Army and New York City hospitals.

Moody has been in the Air Force for 24 years. He’s a maintainer by trade, and said he is impressed with how medical personnel speak their own language and are super supportive of each other. His goal as a first sergeant is to lift any burdens for them so they can focus on what they need to do.

Staff Sgt. Awa B. Diakhate, personnel



Senior Master Sgt. Megan Kuszewski, 459th Operations Support Squadron, sews together a face mask at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. (Staff Sgt. Cierra Presentado)

specialist with the 514th FSS, was on the scene for PERSCO at the Javits Center. She found it amazing to be a part of such a large-scale operation in less than 24 hours after a unit training assembly. She is humbled to see how fast the Air Force Reserve came together in this joint operation in the biggest city in the United States.

“I’m having that feeling I had back in basic training, joining something bigger than me,” she said.

Reservists Nationwide Pitch in by Making Masks

Air Force Reservists from across the country have been helping out with the fight against COVID-19 in countless ways, including making masks for people to use when they can’t stay at home.

At Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, for example, Reservists from several 315th Airlift Wing units pitched in to help Joint Base Charleston’s 437th Operation Support Squadron Aircrew Flight Equipment shop make masks from sheets donated by local hotels.

The Aircrew Flight Equipment Flight is always willing to assist when called upon for help, according to Lt. Col. Justin Warnaar, 437 OSS commander.

“Making masks is not in their normal repertoire, however, they do possess the skillset and capabilities,” Warnaar said. “When asked by the wing commander if

they could make masks, the immediate answer is of course...yes.”

At Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, the 459th Operations Support Squadron’s Aircrew Flight Equipment team met its goal of crafting 1,000 Air Force-authorized face masks for aircrew members, maintainers and other members of the wing. #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient

(Editor’s note: Col. Ann Knabe, Tech. Sgt. James Hodgman, 1st Lt. Alan Abernethy, Andrew Park, Lt. Col. Kimberly Lalley and Michael Dukes contributed to this story.)

Reservists from the 452nd Air Mobility Wing, March Air Reserve Base, California, make face masks for their fellow Reservists when social distancing is not possible.



GETTING CREATIVE

How Reservists are staying connected in this time of physical distancing

From Staff Reports



Staying connected during this time of mandated physical distancing can be extremely difficult. But Reserve Citizen Airmen from every part of the country are getting creative to keep open the lines of communication and stay in touch during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's no secret that Air Force Reserve Command's senior leaders thoroughly enjoy visiting Reserve units and meeting face-to-face with the Reserve Citizen Airmen who get the mission done every day. Since "face-to-face" is not an option these days, Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, Air Force Reserve Command commander and chief of the Air Force Reserve, and Chief Master Sgt. Timothy White, AFRC's command chief master sergeant and Scobee's senior enlisted advisor, have turned

to alternative ways of communicating with Reservists and their family members.

With most of the country staying at home, Scobee, White and their spouses, have embraced Facebook Live as a way of sharing important information with all members of the Reserve team. In addition, the senior leaders have increasingly turned to video teleconferencing and traditional videos to reach out to specific Reservists.

For example, with the COVID-19 pandemic causing the cancellation of AFRC's Airmen of the Year banquet, this year's winners were notified of their victory in an innovative way.

Using a cloud-based video conferencing platform, Scobee, White and Chief Master Sgt. Travon Dennis, AFR command



Left, Col. Brian Beachkofski assumes command of Air Force Life Cycle Management Center Detachment 12 during a virtual ceremony. Bottom left, aircrew members from the 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, come together for a training virtual conference call in late April. The following week they performed aerial firefighting training on a C-130. (Staff Sgt. Justin Norton) Bottom right, Col. Bernard Willis, an individual mobilization augmentee, has a "COVID-19-compliant" private pinning-on ceremony with his immediate family early in April.



Top, Tech. Sgt. Amber Kurka, 624th Public Affairs photojournalist craftsman, speaks with Col. Athanasia Shinas, 624th Regional Support Group commander, during a virtual interview from her home in Mililani, Hawaii. (Christopher Kurka) Right, Staff Sgt. Charlie Trilles, a 624th Civil Engineer Squadron engineering journeyman, teleworks with his 1-year-old son, Evan, on his lap during the 624th Regional Support Group virtual unit training assembly in April. (Courtesy Photo)



first sergeant, surprised the winners with face-to-face teleconferences on April 2.

"It's a shame we couldn't have our annual AOY banquet this year, but the boss and I still wanted to reach out to these outstanding Airmen and let them know personally how proud we are of them and how appreciative we are of the outstanding job they are doing," White said. "We know they will represent us well as they compete at the Air Force level."

Here are just a few examples of how other members of the Reserve team are getting creative to stay in contact during these trying times.

Organizations Turn to Virtual Unit Training Assemblies

Faced with travel restrictions and shelter-in-place orders, a number of Reserve wings and groups have turned to virtual unit training assemblies over the past couple of months. For example, the Pacific Warriors assigned to the 624th Regional Support Group in both Hawaii and Guam utilized innovative solutions to increase social connections while keeping Airmen and families safe during their April UTA.

Instead of physically reporting to workplaces, Airmen throughout the group participated in virtual meetings, computer-based training, daily check-ins and other training from their own homes.

"Our top priority is keeping our Airmen and their families safe," said Col. Athanasia Shinas, the 624th RSG commander. "While we need to be physically distant, we don't want to be socially distant. Now more than ever we need to stay socially connected as a team and as a family."

For many Reserve Citizen Airmen, the Air Force Reserve is not only about the mission, but it is also about camaraderie and taking care of each other during times of crisis.

"When we first realized there was a potential that we would not be doing our April UTA due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a lot of concern for our Airmen and the personal struggles they were facing," said Maj. J. DeMeo, the 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron staff dentist, and key member of the virtual UTA development team for the ASTS. "Being able to connect with people is a really important way to help them manage stress, and to make sure they have the support they need to help their families at this time."

For Lt. Col. Lisa Huntoon, the 624th Medical Operations Flight commander, the ability to connect with her flight was extremely meaningful.

"As a flight commander, having the ability to see my Airmen and ask them how they're doing, and to listen to their personal stories almost had me in tears," said Huntoon. "One of my Airmen had to cancel her wedding and listening to her story was heartbreaking. I could see that my flight members needed this connection, but what was even more amazing was the level of resiliency they have displayed as we continued to connect as a team."

The 960th Cyberspace Wing's 51st Network Operations Squadron, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, also held its first-ever virtual UTA in April.

As a guardian of the Air Force information network, the 51st NOS mission is to develop and empower Reserve Citizen Airmen to assure global operations through cyberspace.

When social distancing guidelines were introduced to stop the spread of COVID-19, 51st NOS leadership quickly implemented contingency plans structured to acclimate their Airmen to a new cyber paradigm, resulting in the unit's first virtual UTA April 4-5.

"When I joined the Cyber Wolves in November, I never could have imagined we would be where we are today, but I am optimistic and excited about this opportunity," Lt. Col. Mike Stucki, 51st NOS commander, said. "This does not change our mission of being operationally-focused Citizen Airmen delivering cyber capabilities globally. If anything, these events only intensify the need even more so. We are going to take this opportunity to get ahead in our ability to assist remotely and showcase what we have to offer to our active-duty teammates."

Chief Master Sgt. James White, 51st NOS superintendent and architect of the virtual UTA model, said he foresees expanded collaborations of this sort in the future.

"Most of our members already operate in a remote capacity with their civilian employers, so coordinating virtually only made sense," White said. "In addition, our squadron is comprised of top subject matter experts in the cyber community. Having this virtual platform for growth and sharing has not only increased our cyber capabilities, it has provided an excellent opportunity to personally engage with members on a one-on-one basis, create individualized training and address the needs of every member like never before. Our unit operates with far greater cohesiveness and sharing than it ever has."

Lt. Col. Richard Yenke conducts a reenlistment ceremony for his daughter, Staff Sgt. Paige Yenke, 926th Wing public affairs specialist, near her family's home in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Virtual Promotions, Re-enlistments and Other Ceremonies Abound

COVID-19 could not put a stop to the countless promotion, change-of-command, re-enlistment and other ceremonies that have taken place throughout Air Force Reserve Command over the past couple of months.

Although the coronavirus did manage to eliminate most large gatherings, it didn't keep people from celebrating monumental events virtually with friends and families tuning in from around the world.

For example, Brig. Gen. William Murphy, mobilization assistant to the director of operations and communication at Air Force Global Strike Command, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, officially pinned on his first star April 4 during a ceremony attended by dozens of friends and family members using remote conferencing services.

"When discussing this promotion with my family, especially my wife, on whether we would delay or maybe even skip the ceremony altogether, I think my wife, Natalya, summed it up best for me - 'even in times such as these, we need to be able to celebrate those once-in-a-lifetime events, marriages, baptisms, graduations and in this case a promotion ceremony,'" Murphy said during the ceremony. "So here we are celebrating what may be the first all-virtual ceremony where each participant and attendee (with the exception of three of my family members) are all at different locations."

Making the ceremony work required additional up-front coordination as the presiding official, narrator and chaplain all connected remotely from their homes, as well as real time interactions from multiple individuals/locations as they switched video feeds, and moderated questions and comments from attendees.

The general said that the ceremony was "surreal," because the audience could see him, but he couldn't see them. Family and friends participated from as far away as Hawaii, Uzbekistan and Germany and from all over the continental United States.

In another example of a socially-distanced celebration, Col. Brian Beachkofski, an individual mobilization augmentee, assumed command of Air Force Life Cycle Management Center Detachment 12 during a virtual ceremony April 15. Detachment 12's mission is to create and rapidly deliver software and applications for U.S. warfighters. With the principals at three different locations, Lt. Gen. Robert McMurry, center commander, virtually passed the Detachment 12 guidon to Beachkofski from the outgoing commander, Col. Enrique Oti.

Staff Sgt. Paige Yenke, a public affairs officer assigned to the 926th Wing, Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, practiced safe social distancing and took to the great outdoors for her re-enlistment ceremony in late March.

With everyone a safe distance apart, Lt. Col. Richard Yenke, Paige's father, conducted the reenlistment as Paige's



T.J. Murphy, daughter of Brig. Gen. William Murphy, is able to watch her father's promotion ceremony via remote conferencing services. Murphy is the mobilization assistant to the director of operations and communication at Air Force Global Strike Command.

roommate, Staff Sgt. Keth Charisse Dalere, and Paige's son attended as witnesses. They used a flag hanging from a neighbor's house.

"I will cherish that moment in time that occurred during such a chaotic turn of events in our country," she said. "Now that it's done, I can breathe a sigh of relief. Currently, we are all having to adapt and creatively overcome the obstacles being presented to us during this challenging time. But I'm thankful for the support and help from my wing and family in getting my reenlistment done in an unprecedented time and for allowing me to continue my career as a member of the Air Force Reserve. I will not forget my journey to becoming a career Airman."

Col. Bernard Willis, an IMA assigned to the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, had a "COVID-19-compliant" private pinning-on ceremony outdoors at the security forces memorial statue at the National Museum of the Air Force with his family and a few close friends April 1.

Over nearly 29 years of commissioned service with the active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, Willis has flown F-16s and MQ-1 Predators, served as an acquisition program manager for the F-15, and been a security forces squadron commander, among other assignments.

"I have had so many other amazing opportunities in the Reserve these last few years as the Crisis Action Team/battlestaff director for the AFLCMC commander, interim commander of the 88th Security Forces Squadron last summer during a break between active-duty commanders, and now leading the effort for the Air Force pilot project from the Weapons and Tactics Analysis Center for installation command and control. I am currently serving as the operations chief supporting the 88th ABW Incident Command Center for the COVID-19 response and loving every minute of it," Willis said.

419th Fighter Wing Hosts F-35 Virtual Field Trip

With closures at schools across the nation due to COVID-19, the 419th Fighter Wing, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, invited students to use their computers or cellphones to "visit" for a virtual field trip in early April to see the Air Force's newest fighter, the F-35 Lightning II.

Col. Brian Silkey, the wing's vice commander and longtime fighter pilot, recorded a video for the wing's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

"We wanted to do a little something for America's students during this difficult and uncertain time," Silkey said. "We thought it would be fun to use the technology we have at our fingertips to bring the F-35 to them. Ultimately, we want them to know we're all in this together, and we hope that some are inspired to follow their dreams to serve in the U.S. military."

During the virtual field trip, Silkey provided an overview of the aircraft's capabilities to his online audience to include details on its stealth technology and how it gives pilots a significant advantage on the battlefield. He also showed off his g-suit and futuristic helmet.

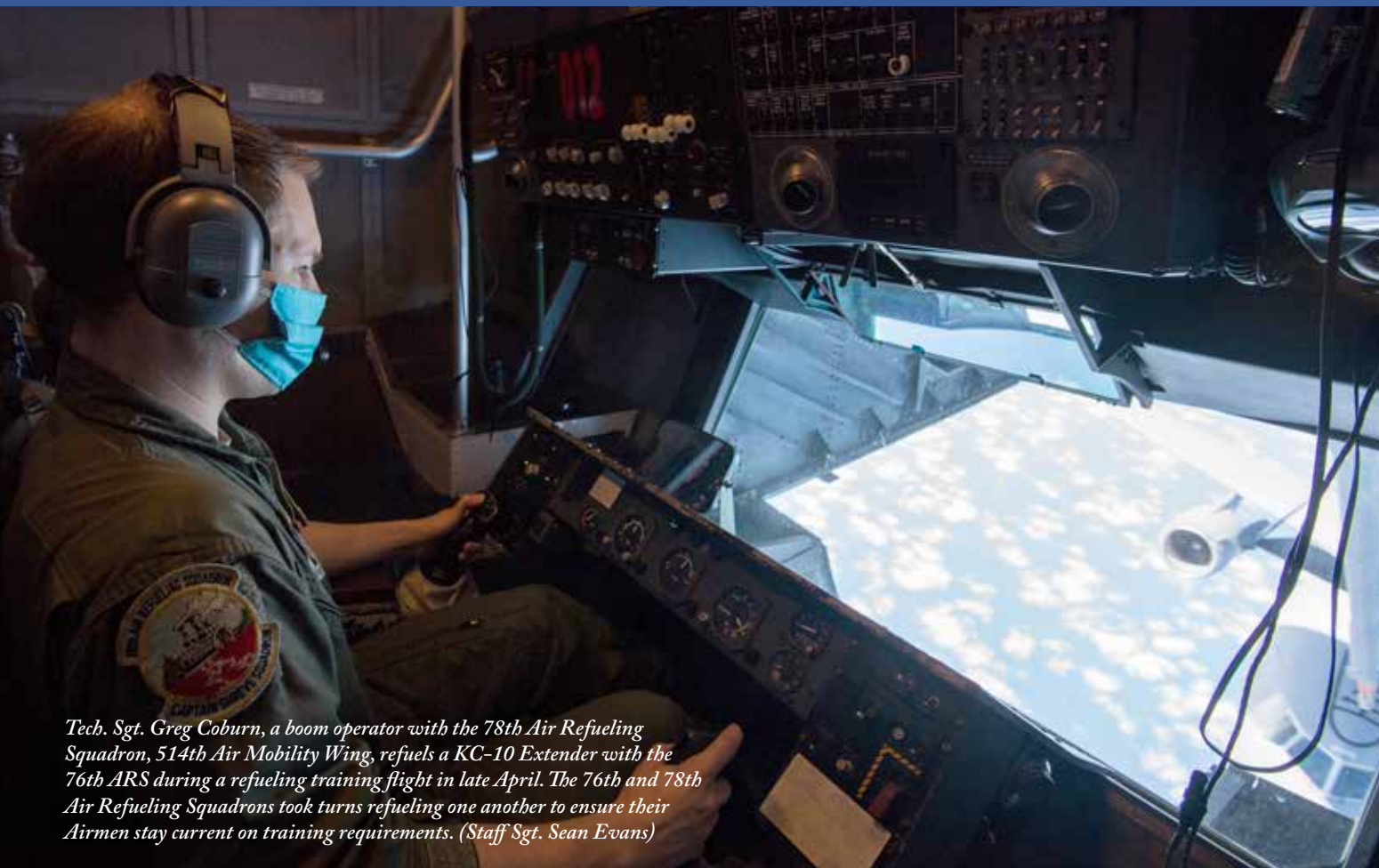
Members of the 419th and their active duty counterparts in the 388th FW are currently the only combat-capable F-35 units in the Air Force.

Even amid the coronavirus pandemic, the wings are sustaining mission-essential flying operations with limited manning to maintain readiness. Several hundred personnel from the wings are deployed to the Middle East.

The video was very successful with more than 150,000 people reached via Facebook and more than 80,000 views between Facebook and YouTube. #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient
(Editor's note: Tech. Sgt. Amber Kurka, Capt. Alan Friedlander, Carla Pampe and Staff Sgt. Paige Yenke contributed to this story.)

Col. Brian Silkey, 419th Fighter Wing vice commander, shows off the F-35 helmet to an online audience during a "virtual field trip" to Hill Air Force Base, Utah.





Tech. Sgt. Greg Coburn, a boom operator with the 78th Air Refueling Squadron, 514th Air Mobility Wing, refuels a KC-10 Extender with the 76th ARS during a refueling training flight in late April. The 76th and 78th Air Refueling Squadrons took turns refueling one another to ensure their Airmen stay current on training requirements. (Staff Sgt. Sean Evans)

STILL FLYING, FIGHTING AND WINNING

While some Reservists wage battle against coronavirus, others ensure the traditional mission continues

From Staff Reports

Reserve Citizen Airmen from across the country have volunteered to help wage America's battle with COVID-19, but that doesn't mean Air Force Reserve Command's long-standing mission of providing combat-ready forces to fly, fight and win has been put on hold.

In fact, unit Reservists and individual mobilization augmentees from coast to coast have continued to train for their wartime mission and perform essential duties during the coronavirus pandemic. Here are just a few examples of how Reservists have continued to accomplish the Reserve's traditional missions in the COVID-19 era.



Turning Wrenches and Flying Missions

While many Americans have been working from home to mitigate the transmission risk of COVID-19, when it comes to flying and maintaining airplanes, some jobs can't be done via telework. Reserve aircrews and maintainers at flying units around the country have continued to turn wrenches and fly missions during this time of social distancing.

As an example, Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 927th Air Refueling Wing took off in a KC-135 from MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, on April 2, to meet up with F-15s to conduct mid-air refueling operations, one of the countless training flights Reserve flying units have conducted despite the coronavirus pandemic. These flights have continued so Reserve Citizen Airmen can maintain their readiness to accomplish their wartime mission.

Flying missions like these allow aircrew members, like 1st Lt. Clayton Gledhill, a new pilot who joined the 927th's 63rd Air Refueling Squadron in February, to practice critical skills.

Gledhill said he identifies with families struggling to balance work, remote school work and family time at home. "When I head to the base to fly, I say goodbye to my wife who will spend the day helping our three kids with school work while also teleworking for her job," said



Tech. Sgt. Brandon Zangeneh, a crew chief with the 932nd Maintenance Squadron, performs a physical preflight inspection in March at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, as the 932nd Airlift Wing and all of Air Force Reserve Command continue training operations during COVID-19. (Christopher Parr)

Gledhill. "On top of that stress, we are very careful about germs I may bring back with me and do our best to protect our family."

Extra precautions have been put in place to minimize the health risk to those still working on and around Reserve flightlines, including splitting shifts and ensuring crews work with the same people when they come in to fly and work.

"Our Airmen are the best in the world at what they do and it's important we do everything we can to keep them healthy while they work," said Lt. Col. Ginger Ormond, the 927th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander.

Rescue Wing Brings Home First HC-13J Combat King II

On the same day Gledhill and his fellow Reservists were refueling F-15s from their MacDill KC-135, the 920th Rescue Wing's 39th Rescue Squadron brought home its first HC-130J Combat King II aircraft to Patrick Air Force Base, Florida.

"This is an exciting time for the men and women of the 39th RQS, the 920th RQW and the Air Force Reserve Command," said Lt. Col. Ellis, 39th RQS commander. "The delivery of the first HC-130J represents a major milestone in our unit's transition. The new aircraft will enable enhanced mission capabilities and ensure the successful execution of future combat search and rescue operations."

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Airmen, as well as Lockheed Martin personnel, took several precautionary measures to ensure their health and the health of those they may come in contact with.

"We eliminated the customary factory tour, team introductions as well as the key ceremony, in which Lockheed Martin gives the gaining unit a symbolic key to the aircraft," said Lt. Col. Rich, 920th Operations Group HC-130J conversion officer. "In fact, our 920th maintenance experts limited their interaction with Lockheed Martin personnel to an absolute minimum prior to releasing the aircraft to the aircrew."



Members of the 302nd Airlift Wing wave to Colorado healthcare workers, first responders and essential employees battling COVID-19 during a flyover in May. The 302nd AW was one of numerous Reserve wings that utilized normal training flights to salute Americans on the front line against the COVID-19 virus. (Staff Sgt. Laura Turner)



Top left, Secretary of the Air Force Barbara Barrett speaks with 388th and 419th Fighter Wings leadership about how the mission is continuing during a visit to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, in late April. (R. Nial Bradshaw). Bottom left, pararescuemen from the 304th Rescue Squadron train for the upcoming climbing season at Mount Rainier in support of the National Park Service. Right, a 39th Rescue Squadron crew poses for the traditional crew photo after delivering the squadron's first HC-130J Combat King II aircraft, but this time with social distancing in mind. (Gwen Kurzen)



The 920th maintenance personnel were able to expedite the acceptance and pre-flight checks of the first AFRC HC-130J, accomplishing all required tasks in nearly half the normally allotted time.

"The aircrew avoided local contact entirely with assistance from the 71st Rescue Squadron out of Moody Air Force Base, Georgia," Rich said. "The 71st provided a pilot and loadmaster to round out our aircrew from the 39th RQS in addition to flying us all from Patrick to the Lockheed factory."

At Lockheed, the crew picked up the aircraft without any fanfare.

"We executed the first-ever engine running offload on the Lockheed Martin ramp and proceeded directly to the aircraft," Rich said. "This has never been done before and the aircrew was able to

avoid the Lockheed facilities altogether. It was a truly unique and exceptionally well thought out plan to limit our exposure to the current threat."

Once the power-up and preflight checks were complete, the combined team from the 920th and 71st departed the airfield in Georgia, without incident.

"The day was complete when the 71st RQS crewmembers, who assisted us, were picked up from Patrick AFB and returned safely to Moody AFB," Rich said. "Despite all that is going on in the world today, I am proud to have been a small part of the great effort by the Total Force working together to overcome seemingly unlimited obstacles. It was inspiring to witness the priority placed on the protection of each Airman while still focusing on mission accomplishment."

Dover Reservists Support Counterdrug Mission

Also early in April, a 512th Airlift Wing aircrew comprised of Reserve Citizen Airmen demonstrated the Reserve's ability to continue to fly critical missions by airlifting counterdrug equipment out of Panama.

The mission from Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, supported the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and involved hauling more than 100,000 pounds of cargo from Panama Pacifico International Airport, Panama, to San Angelo Regional Airport, Texas.

"It was a difficult mission because of all the moving parts and the constantly changing dynamics," said Capt. Scott McCoy, 709th Airlift Squadron pilot and aircraft commander. "It was successful

because we had a crew of highly experienced people who went above and beyond to make sure the job got done."

Loadmasters and DHS personnel filled the cargo compartment with 12 pallets and 11 rolling stock items that included mobile generators, trailers and surveillance equipment used to counter illicit drug trafficking throughout the region.

The 512th AW regularly participates in these operations with both its C-5M and C-17 Globemaster III aircraft to deliver personnel and material for other government agencies, while receiving readiness training for its aircrew.

In addition to the primary mission of transporting cargo, three loadmasters and a flight engineer received and passed evaluation check-rides, ensuring their updated qualifications and readiness.

"With minimal on-ground support in Panama, these loadmasters successfully accomplished a difficult load in an efficient manner," said Master Sgt. David Finfinger, 709th AS evaluator loadmaster.

Overseas Deployments Continue

While most of the country hunkered down at home this spring, some Reservists headed halfway around the world to support critical combat operations overseas.

In late March, for example, more than 80 Airmen and four KC-135 Stratotankers from the 434th Air Refueling Wing, Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Air Force Central Command combat operations.



Members of the 302nd Airlift Wing push a U.S. Forest Service Modular Airborne Firefighting System unit into the bay of a C-130 Hercules aircraft at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, during training for the upcoming firefighting season. (Staff Sgt. Justin Norton)



Tech. Sgt. Kyle Klinkenborg, 512th Airlift Wing loadmaster, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, marshals a forklift as it places a cargo pallet on a C-5M Super Galaxy's rear ramp at Panama Pacifico International Airport, Panama. (Staff Sgt. Zachary Cacicia)



Senior Master Sgt. Robert Bertsch, a loadmaster assigned to the 446th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, flips cargo rails on the ramp of a C-17 to prepare the aircraft for a cargo upload during a local mission in late April. (Maj. Candice Allen)



Tech. Sgt. David Taylor, 434th Air Refueling Wing crew chief, fuels a KC-135R Stratotanker at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana. The tanker, along with three other tankers, were preparing to deploy to Southwest Asia in support of Air Force Central Command combat operations. (Master Sgt. Ben Mota)

"Despite the effects of COVID-19, our mission continues and our deployments are still on schedule," said Col. Larry Shaw, 434th ARW commander. "Grissom has a long history of doing things right and we plan on carrying that forward. People are relying on us."

"Our maintainers have prepared the tankers with required deployment configurations specific to their deployed location," said Col. Gretchen Wiltse, 434th Maintenance Group commander. "That not only includes adding additional refueling requirements, but also ensuring aircraft are capable of transporting troops and cargo."

Working where the rubber meets the asphalt, Master Sgt. Benjamin Bond,

434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron expeditor, said it's a priority to ensure tankers leaving Grissom are prepared not only to reach their destination, but to also make it through their deployments with minimal maintenance.

"If we see things that might become an issue while the tankers are deployed we fix them before they leave," said Bond. "We don't want to create problems for the maintainers down range; we want them to be able to focus on the mission."

"This is a difficult time for everyone, but it's also an opportunity for us to show that we can continue to conduct the mission despite the obstacles at

hand," explained Shaw. "Everything we do involves risk, but the 434thARW has some of the best leaders in the Air Force assessing those risks to ensure the safety and wellness of our Airmen."

Wing Presses on with Transition from KC-135 to KC-46

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 916th Air Refueling Wing, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, continued to transition from the KC-135 to the KC-46. In late March, the wing welcomed back its first two pilots to complete KC-46A Pegasus training:



Senior Airman Alexandra Bouchillon and Staff Sgt. Justin Herod, fireteam members assigned to the 910th Security Forces Squadron, stand guard by a C-130H Hercules aircraft on the Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, flightline. (Senior Airman Noah J. Tancer)

Capt. Joseph "Mike" Orzeck and Maj. Nathan Rodriguez.

Transitioning to a new aircraft after exclusively flying the KC-135 Stratotanker brought about mixed emotions for the two pilots.

"You're excited to learn a new aircraft, but at the same time it's sad that you're leaving a plane like the KC-135," said Orzeck. "I felt honored to fly a plane like that. There's not many four engine jets out there anymore. It's definitely a last of its kind. It was bittersweet."

Part of their new training was learning to take on fuel, since the KC-135 was not equipped to receive refueling in-air.

"I have a brand-new appreciation for the guys that flew behind me (receiver pilots) when I flew as a tanker pilot," said Rodriguez. "When the tanker pilot makes corrections, it makes a big difference to the receiver in the back. It gives me a new appreciation for guys that refuel off me. I think it makes you a better tanker pilot to do receiver work."

During their 10 weeks of training on the KC-46, the pilots couldn't get enough of the new technology that comes along with this new aircraft.

"I love the KC-135, but you're going from a plane with 1950's technology and jumping to a plane in the 21st century when flying the KC-46," Orzeck said. "It's like going from watching a black and white TV to a smart TV, you can't compare the two."

With two pilots down and approximately 38 to go, the 916th has opened its doors to the next generation of air refueling.

Medical Reservists Ramp up Training

With hundreds of Reserve medical professionals from across the country volunteering to be mobilized if needed in the fight against COVID-19, Reserve medical units ramped up their training this spring.

At Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, for example, Reservists with the 34th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron participated in a training mission April 6 to maintain and enhance their medical skills.

While 34th AES reservists trained to maintain their normal skillsets of providing critical medical care to ill and injured patients, they also evaluated how

their response would change if they were activated to support the COVID-19 response.

"Today we have orthopedic injuries, or combat injuries, in our scenario," said Lt. Col. Kimberly MacPherson, 34 AES director of operations. "But due to what is going on in the world, we are also including enhanced infection control while on the plane."

The AES reservists volunteered to participate in the training and were provided the proper personal protection equipment to protect themselves while training. They set up a C-130H to hold their medical gear and then simulated receiving patients onto the aircraft with mannequins. Once they were in flight, the team ran through several scenarios.

"It's important for all the units to maintain mission readiness and make sure our Airmen are ready to respond to a tasking in case we get a request," said Col. James DeVere, 302nd Airlift Wing commander. "That is why we are continuing to train in AE and our normal C-130 air-land mission to answer the call when the American people need us."

Niagara Wing Reaches Full Operational Capability

Almost three years ago, the 914th Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York, started the transition to become the 914th Air Refueling Wing, switching from the C-130 Hercules to the KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft.

On April 1, Col. Mark Larson, commander of the 914th announced the wing was fully operational capable in the air refueling mission.

"My thanks to the many Airmen and the DoD civilians who have worked so hard," said Larson. "While at the same time maintaining our readiness to execute the other taskings and deployments required of many of our wing personnel."

The 914th Operations Group, including the 328th Air Refueling Squadron



TFSC introduces chat function for the Guard and Reserve

The Total Force Service center has introduced a new tool for Guard and Reserve members to reach a representative with their personnel-related questions.

Now when members of the Air Reserve Component log into myPers, they will see a banner advertising the new chat feature to communicate with a live agent to handle their inquiries. Customers will also notice a pop-up screen will appear when they are reading knowledge articles on the myPers website asking if they would like to initiate a chat session.

To initiate a chat session, customers are encouraged to click either the banner or the pop up.

and 914th Aeromedical Squadron, has spent several years training with instructors from across the nation to become eligible to execute the tanker mission. The 914th Maintenance Group has also put in countless hours of work to keep all nine tankers ready to fly at a moment's notice.

"The nation needed NFARS fully back in the fight, and today we are letting our leaders know we are ready and willing," said Larson. #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient

(Editor's note: Some last names withheld for security reasons. Lt. Col. Lisa Ray, Tech. Sgt. Kelly Goonan, Staff Sgt. Zachary Cacicia, Master Sgt. Ben Mota, Staff Sgt. Mary McKnight, 2nd Lt. Lucas Morrow and Tech. Sgt. Joshua Williams contributed to this story.)



Top, Lt. Col. Doug Johnson, 413th Flight Test Group chief of plans and programs, makes his way to a C-130 for a functional check flight at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. Reserve Citizen Airmen of the 413th FTG have continued to fly and support the programmed depot maintenance mission, despite the current COVID-19 epidemic. (Jamal D. Sutter) Left, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 916th Air Refueling Wing, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, continued to transition from the KC-135 to the KC-46. Capt. Joseph "Mike" Orzeck is one of the first pilots to complete training on the new aircraft.

According to officials at the TFSC, representatives will still be available by phone but the chat feature will allow customers to avoid wait times for inquiries to be answered by phone.

When the chat is initiated, a ticket is automatically created for processing and the conversation will be included in the ticket so the customer service representative will have full knowledge of the issue.

The chat function will be available Monday-Friday from 0700-1700 CST. Representatives will be available after hours and on weekends to handle incoming queries by phone.

This new feature for the Guard and Reserve will only be available during the Covid-19 response. Upon returning to normal operations, members of the ARC will be able to reach a representative by phone at 1-800-525-0102.



Tech. Sgt. William Vass from the Aircrew Flight Equipment Shop in the 419th Operations Support Squadron, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, processes a damaged helmet display unit for supply turn-in.

HQ RIO welcomes its first command chief

By Lt. Col. Erin Karl

Chief Master Sgt. Stacy Wilfong, Headquarters Readiness and Integration Organization command chief, talks to Master Sgt. Kevin Wilson, noncommissioned officer in charge of installation personnel readiness at RIO. Wilfong was selected in February to be HQ RIO's command chief and began her duties March 2. (Master Sgt. Leisa Grant)

Chief Master Sgt. Stacy Wilfong is the Headquarters Readiness and Integration Organization's command chief master sergeant, the first for the office that oversees more than 7,500 individual Air Force Reservists around the globe. She began her new duties in March.

As the command chief, Wilfong is the senior enlisted advisor to the commander on all matters affecting operations, training and readiness, health, morale and welfare, and discipline. The benefit of having a command chief at HQ RIO and for all the individual Reservists is having a seat at the table during strategic discussions that affect the IR population.

"I'm excited to advocate for our enlisted men and women around the globe," Wilfong said. "By fighting for the needs of our IRs, whether in policy decisions or everyday operations, I hope to help further our vision of making it easier to serve. I'm looking forward to sharing my experience and knowledge to benefit all of our IRs and hundreds of support personnel."

Previously, Wilfong was the superintendent for HQ RIO Detachment 3, as well as acting superintendent for HQ RIO. She believes her experience in a detachment will allow her to bring that field experience into the headquarters.

"I truly care, and I love what I do," she said. "I look forward to capitalizing on our Airmen's talent, and I am very excited for this opportunity and for the future of HQ RIO."

Col. Amy Boehle, Headquarters RIO commander, selected Wilfong for the position.

"Chief Wilfong is a servant leader and the perfect Airman to be our first command chief," Boehle said. "She exemplifies the qualities that generations of commanders have looked for in their command chiefs. She will positively influence the lives of our individual Reservists, and I'm excited to move forward with such an incredible leader."

'Mobilization on Steroids'

How the Reserve got 125 medics to COVID's front lines in 48 hours

By Bo Joyner

Reserve medics from the 433rd Airlift Wing, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, report for duty 48 hours after being notified they were mobilizing. (Staff Sgt. Sean Evans)



As Air Force Reserve Command's execution arm for mobilizations and deployments, the Force Generation Center is used to answering the call to provide Reserve support around the world when it is needed. It's what the FGC's dedicated experts have been doing on a daily basis since the center was established in 2011.

Perhaps the FGC's biggest test to date came on the first Friday in April this year when the request dropped for 125 specific Reserve medical specialists to report to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, to help overburdened health care providers deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in the New York City area. The catch: they needed to be in place in 48 hours.

This is the story of how the FGC and the Reserve's Surgeon General's office teamed up to pass this test with flying colors.

When President Trump signed an executive order authorizing mobilization of the Reserve Component on March 27, the specialists in the FGC anticipated the call requesting Reserve Citizen Airmen to support the nation's pandemic would be coming soon.

"We had a feeling for what was coming," said Maj. Millie Grey Theriot, chief of the FGC's Agile Combat Support Branch. "We just didn't anticipate the extremely short suspense. This was a mobilization on steroids."

Theriot explained that for a normal planned mobilization, the FGC usually has about two years lead time to start the planning process and Reservists know well in advance when they will be deploying. "For a normal deployment, 180 days before they are leaving, Reservists will know where they're going, all of the pre-deployment requirements they have to have and how long they'll be gone," she said. "They then have several unit training assemblies to meet all of their pre-deployment requirements."

Even in the event of a natural disaster or other sudden crisis, the FGC usually has more time to execute a mobilization.

"It rarely happens that the Secretary of Defense mobilizes someone with less than 30 days' notice," Grey Theriot said. "And when it does happen, it requires notification of Congress. Congress has to agree that it's OK to mobilize someone with

less than 30 days' notice. Well, in this case that requirement was waived immediately, so what we thought was a 30-day notification was now down to two days."

When the FGC received the Secretary of Defense Orders Book on April 3 requesting the 125 medics in 48 hours, it was the first it heard of the request.

"Normally, before we see an SDOB we already know the requirement. We have the unit type codes, the unit line numbers and line remarks," the major said. "We didn't have any of that this time."

When the FGC received the request on April 3, the call was made immediately to the surgeon general's office functional area managers, Lorenzae King and William Smoot, to begin identifying the Reservists who would be mobilized.

Typically, King and Smoot would forward the mobilization request out to the various Reserve units and let the units decide what qualified Reservists they had available and willing to fill the requirements. In this instance, there wasn't time so SG had to do all of the sourcing directly from the headquarters level with some input from the wings.

"Thankfully we already had a list of Reservists who volunteered to deploy," King, SG's chief of medical readiness operations, said. "Unfortunately, the list didn't match up perfectly with the requirement that was coming down."

"Normally for us in deliberate planning, it's usually more nurses and med techs than doctors," Smoot, SG's medical readiness manpower manager, said. "We'll be asked to provide 60 people and four or five may be doctors. The rest hold other types of medical Air Force Specialty Codes. This request was for a lot of doctors, and by the way, we want to limit the impact on the local communities so we don't want people who are already involved in treating a lot of COVID patients."

King and Smoot worked closely with their counterparts throughout SG to find the right Reservists for the mobilization.

As the chief of manpower and the individual mobilization augmentee manager in SG, Capt. Joshua Black played a critical role.

"My involvement came into play because I have access to

a lot of reports and sources of information and have a great understanding of what capabilities we have and how to find that capability," he said. "There are 66 different medical AFSCs, and there are different shred-outs on each of those depending on what their specialties are. When we got this request to provide support in New York, it was important we were able to clearly identify those capabilities."

Black explained that a typical mobilization might call for a flight surgeon, a doctor with a 48R AFSC. But flight surgeons can be internal medicine doctors, pulmonologists, emergency care doctors, critical care doctors, general surgeons, anesthesiologists, etc...

"A typical deployment will just ask for a flight surgeon, but this situation was different in that they were very specific in what they needed," he said. "It takes a lot of data mining and analyzing several different reports to pull all of that information together – hours and hours of analysis to provide those reports to senior leaders so they know where our capability exists and how much we have available."

"What made this requirement even more challenging is that if you are medical in the military, chances are you are medical on the civilian side as well. We didn't want to take away their ability to support their local communities so we had to disqualify anyone who was heavily involved in treating COVID patients in their civilian job."

Smoot said another factor that made this mobilization so difficult was the joint nature of the deployment. "We have AFSCs, the Army has MOSs (Military Occupational Specialties) and the Navy has something different altogether. They aren't all interchangeable. The Navy may equate an Air Force Reserve med tech with a Navy corpsman, but they aren't the same thing at all. There is a lot of education that needs to happen."

As SG's chief of medical operations, Col. (Dr.) Henry Schwartz had a critical role in helping the Reserve meet the quick request for medical specialists. "One of the things we did was help Mr. King in determining the medical qualifications of the medics going out the door," he said. "Looking at the request and seeing they are asking for an emergency physician but we have an internist who is available, would that suffice for the request for forces? In some cases it might and we assisted in making that determination."

Schwartz was also involved with accelerating the credentialing and privileging process for some Reserve medics who are not involved in day-to-day operations at a military treatment facility. "They may not have DOD credentials and privileges in place for the deployment so we had to accelerate that," he said. "That's usually a process that can take two to three weeks. In one case, we did it within 24 hours. It required immense coordination with the members who had to get us all of their civilian credentialing information."

The colonel was instrumental in helping the Reserve match the right people to the requirement. "In one case we needed an infectious disease expert, so I made a call to an infectious disease doc I had on my team when I was assigned to the 349th

Medical Group at Travis (Air Force Base, California)," Schwartz said. "It turns out that the doc (Maj. (Dr.) Sanjiv Baxi) was already deployed in place with his civilian company in the New York governor's office to help fight the coronavirus. He said his company was extremely supportive and he wanted to be boots-on-the-ground in the trenches so he agreed to mobilize."

"I had been working on COVID-19 for a few months before it hit," Baxi said. "Because of my background and being a medical provider for the 349th MDS, I felt I had something to bring to the fight."

Col. Sherry Hemby, AFRC's command nurse, and Lt. Col. Ann Selimos, chief of education and training, helped ensure the Reserve mobilized the best nurses possible for the deployment.

"They needed nurses with ventilator experience and typically those are emergency room and critical care nurses," Hemby said. "We had to help identify the Reservists who did these kinds of things in their outside jobs without taking the people who were already involved in COVID activities in their local areas. Nurses want to take care of people. That's where their hearts are so we didn't have a shortage of volunteers, but we had to make sure we were sending people with the right skills."

One of the final pieces of the mobilization deployment puzzle for the SG team was making sure deploying members had the proper personal protective equipment.

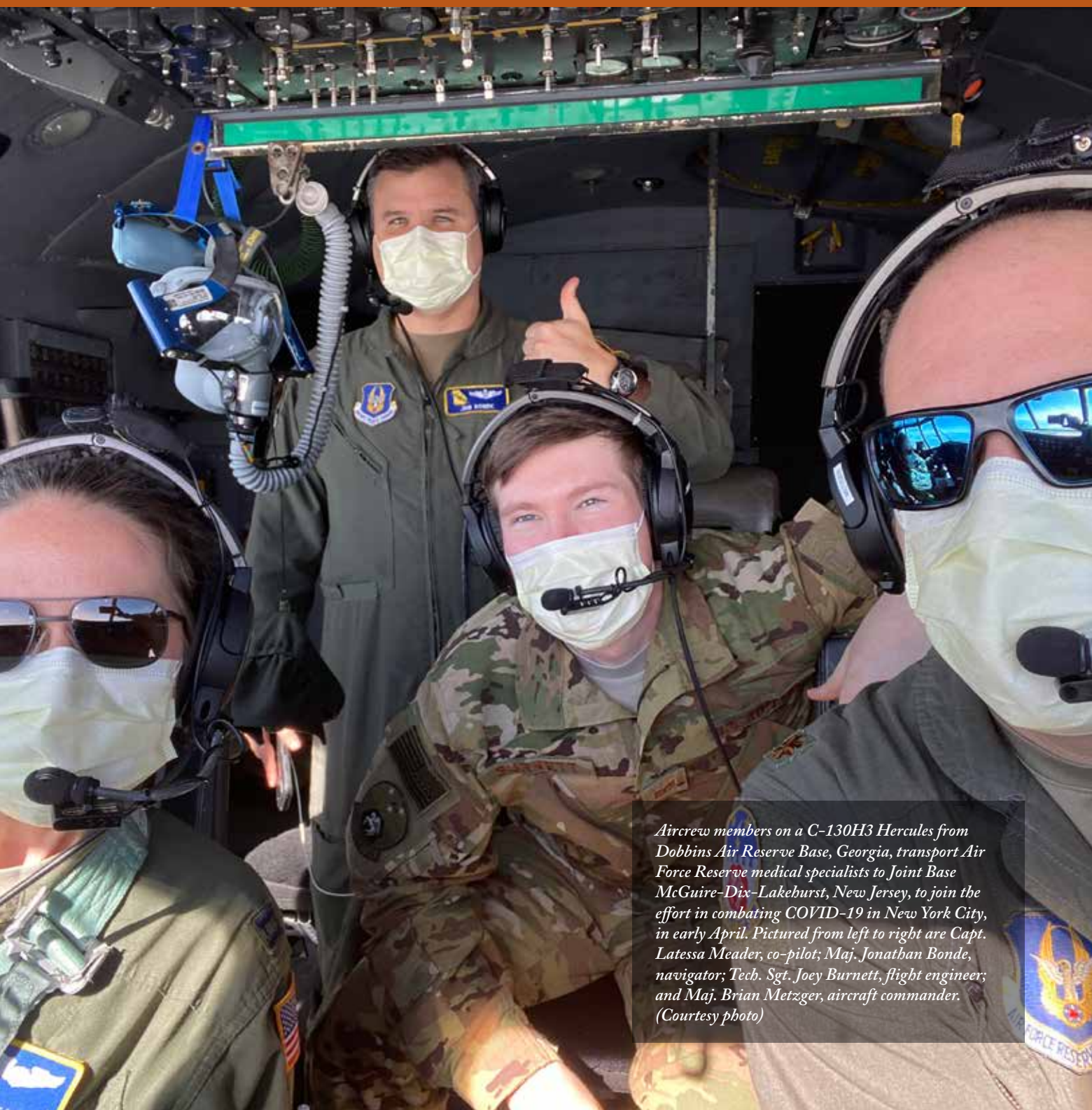
"Our big role was attempting to get PPE for our Reserve medics going to support this mission," said Lt. Col. (Dr.) Jessica Dees, AFRC's chief of public health. Dees, along with Master Sgt. Kunita Dubose and Tech. Sgt. Lorimar Rivera Morgado, worked around the clock to try and secure hard-to-find PPE items for the mobilized Reservists.

"N95 masks were the hard commodity," Dees said. "But we also had to try and get our hands on shoe covers, hair nets and scrubs. We were able to secure a significant amount of PPE for our host units, but had some problems with our co-located units. Thankfully, we were able to send a large shipment of PPE to the Javits Center for our deployers and two of our other Reserve units also sent shipments. Our Reservists may not have left with their PPE, but by the time they got to Javits they had enough PPE to start their orientation right away."

Since the unprecedented mobilization of 125 Reserve medics the first weekend in April, the FGC has mobilized 98 Reserve aeromedical technicians and a second group of 149 Reserve ground medics to help with the battle against COVID-19.

Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, AFRC commander and chief of the Air Force Reserve, said he couldn't be more proud of the Reservists who have mobilized and the people who have worked behind the scenes to get them in place.

"Our Reserve medics have done an incredible job of easing the burden on health care workers in and around New York City and the professionals at the headquarters and units across the country have worked tirelessly to provide them with everything they need to succeed. I am extremely proud of how the entire Air Force Reserve team worked together to make these mobilizations a success," he said. *#ReserveReady*



Aircrew members on a C-130H3 Hercules from Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, transport Air Force Reserve medical specialists to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, to join the effort in combating COVID-19 in New York City, in early April. Pictured from left to right are Capt. Latessa Meader, co-pilot; Maj. Jonathan Bonde, navigator; Tech. Sgt. Joey Burnett, flight engineer; and Maj. Brian Metzger, aircraft commander. (Courtesy photo)