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# CITIZEN AIRMAN

Volume 72 No. 2

April 2020

**#RESERVEREADY  
#RESERVERESILIENT**

**COVID-19**

Coronavirus Disease 2019

**AFRC's Plan Ahead**



*Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve*

# From the Top

 @AFRCCCommander

## OUR PLAN AHEAD

### Heroes of the Air Force Reserve,

I want to share our plan ahead for the Air Force Reserve as we help our country respond to and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. As you know, the president announced a national emergency on March 13, due to the Novel coronavirus. As your commander, I want you to know my commander's intent going forward.

My first priority is to take care of you - our Airmen, civilians and families. First and foremost, we must take preventive measures to protect our personnel from COVID-19 and minimize the spread of illness. In situations such as these, it is important for every Airman to maintain strong situational awareness, keep calm and make sound, rational decisions.

Second, is to ensure information flows quickly to arm you with the facts, guidance and actions at hand so you can make decisions for your unit and your family. This is critical to calming nerves and meeting our mission success. All Reservists should educate themselves on both the disease and the conditions in their local area by gathering information from reliable sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and state health agency websites.

Next is reserving decision space for our commanders in the field. It's essential to have flexibility in this dynamic environment we face. Now more than ever, I need commanders to command. I need our leaders to lean forward, while erring on the side of caution, to balance our operational requirements with the safety of our people.

This pandemic demonstrates the criticality of empowering local commanders to act independently. The severity of the outbreak has varied greatly from region to

region. Some locations have been hit hard while others have not. Therefore, the risk to our wings and unit personnel varies 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 at certain locations.

Through this crisis we will continue to execute our mission-essential operations and wartime missions which are vital to our national defense. Balancing risk with readiness will be tough as this dynamic environment continues. The command is here to help and will continue to support you through this event.

Preserving the force and taking care of Americans is our ultimate mission. Stay the course and watch out for each other. Ask for help when you need it. Be proud of the task put in front of us and continue to serve with professionalism, integrity and service before self.

Force health protection is critical in our ability to accomplish the mission. I'm empowering local and base commanders to assess their community environments, work with local and state agencies, and make smart decisions affecting their Reserve Citizen Airmen, families and communities. Our overall strategy is

to avoid overwhelming the healthcare system by slowing the rate of spread of this virus. We do this by making smart decisions for our Airmen and families.

In closing - let me share this with you: What we are facing will test our readiness. It will test our resiliency. It will test our organizational processes and resources. And it will test our resolve.

Help our Air Force Reserve family stay flexible, proactive and healthy - we will come out a stronger, more confident and successful team in the end. Our nation needs us, and I empower you to lead your people and families through this evolving environment with confidence, calm and care. Aim High, Airmen!



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



# Chief's View

 @AFRC.CCC



### Reserve Citizen Airmen,

Events with COVID-19 are moving rapidly, but as the boss said - taking care of our Airmen and families is job #1.

As such, the Department of Defense announced widespread travel restrictions to protect our Airmen and families. These restrictions affect the entire DoD workforce and our families. Regardless of whether you are a military member, in or out of status, a civilian employee, a contractor or a family member - please do your part and follow DoD directives, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and local protection measures.

We want to ensure our Airmen and their families are getting the facts on COVID-19. We encourage all to visit the Air Force Reserve website at [www.afrc.af.mil](http://www.afrc.af.mil) and Air Force Reserve social media pages.

Still can't find an answer? Your unit leadership is the best and first place for answers. Individual Reservists should stay in close contact with their chain of command and their RIO detachment. If you still need local answers or just want more information, check your unit's web page and social media sites.

Bottom line: Take care of each other by communicating up and down the chain. As we keep you informed - pass on the knowledge to your fellow Airmen, and please keep your families informed.

The commander's intent has been clearly articulated by our boss. Now we must step up together and make it happen. Our senior enlisted leaders must lead and ensure our Airmen and

their families are cared for. We must also support our wingmen while we continue to accomplish the mission.

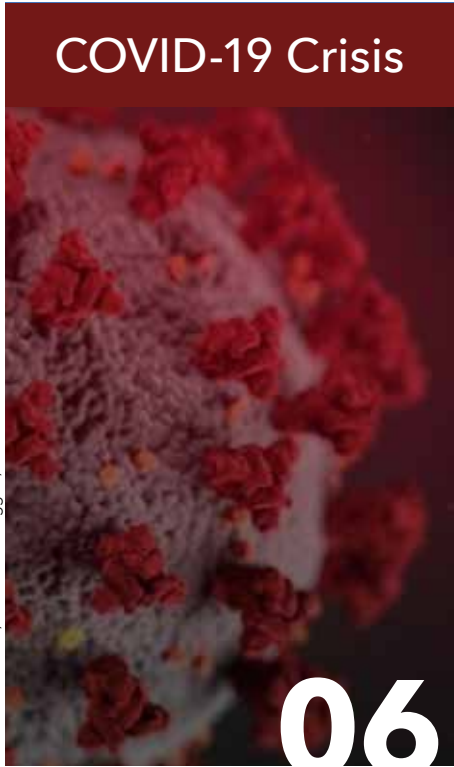
No doubt, we are being challenged. But I know we will prevail because of our people - the same people I meet every day, who impress me no matter what challenges are put before them. I'm proud to serve next to you and humbled to see you take care of our nation under these circumstances. Continue to stay the course, stay resilient and take care of each other. It's an honor and privilege to support you through this dynamic mission entrusted to us. #ReserveResilient!



**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 FEATURED STORIES



## The Mission Continues

How AFRC is dealing with  
COVID-19  
#ReserveReady #ReserveResilient



## No Off Season

Hurricane Hunters spend winter flying  
inside atmospheric rivers  
#ReserveReady



## Resiliency

Reservist embraces resilience while  
honoring brother's memory  
#ReserveResilient

### ON THE COVER:

*This issue of Citizen Airman highlights how the mission of the Air Force Reserve is continuing during the COVID-19 crisis. Check out the stories that begin on page 6 along with other stories of readiness and resilience throughout. (Original COVID-19 illustration by CDC's Alissa Eckert, MS and Dan Higgins, MAMS. Cover layout by Anthony Burns)*



# CONTENTS

## NEWS & PEOPLE

ARPC & HQRIO COVID-19 messages from the commanders.....	12
A Helping Hand 315th AW delivers humanitarian aid to Honduras.....	14
Wanted: Combat Aviation Advisors Command looks for Reservists to fill special operations role ....	16
Bouncing Back Military training instructor shares journey .....	20
Complementary Careers Military experience helps Reservist succeed in business .....	22
Fighter Pilot to Port Dawg An unusual ride for this Keesler Reserve Citizen Airman .....	24
From the Ashes of Tragedy Arkansas Reservist: 'No one is too big or bad to need help' .....	26
It's More Than Spouses Reservists lean on all types of support .....	28
Innovation McChord Reservists develop battery cell extraction tool .....	30



## CITIZEN AIRMAN

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**POSTMASTER:** Please send all Forms 3579 to Citizen Airman, HQ AFRC/PAOM, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661.





*Social distancing wasn't a problem for A-10 Warthogs from the Air National Guard's 122nd Fighter Wing, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and a KC-135R Stratotanker from the Air Force Reserve's 434th Air Refueling Wing, Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, March 17, as the units paired up for a refueling mission. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, both units continue to work to meet Air Force mission requirements. (Capt. Steven Bretscher)*

# The Mission Goes On

## Command gets creative to keep operating while supporting COVID-19 efforts

From Staff Reports



*(Editor's note: As America continues to deal with COVID-19, we urge you to keep track of the most up-to-date information on the pandemic and how it is affecting Reserve Citizen Airmen and their family members on our web site, [www.afrc.af.mil](http://www.afrc.af.mil), and our various official social media platforms. Our bi-monthly magazine, Citizen Airman, is not designed to provide news as it happens. The magazine is better suited to provide a broader, feature-based view of our outstanding Reserve Citizen Airmen and how they fit into the Reserve's mission. The situation surrounding COVID-19 is changing very rapidly and we realize that some of what you read over the next few pages may be "old news" by the time it reaches your mailbox. However, we believe it's important to highlight how the mission of the Air Force Reserve continues in spite of this global pandemic and showcase the innovative ways Reservists and Reserve units thrive in these difficult times.)*

It's been anything but business as usual for the Air Force Reserve over the past few months—since the world first heard the word “COVID-19.” Health Protection Conditions at Reserve locations across the country have elevated, travel limited, unit training assemblies disrupted and people isolated as the country and the world deal with the spread of the Novel coronavirus.

In spite of these challenges, the Reserve continues to execute its mission of providing combat ready forces to fly, fight and win by applying innovative and creative solutions while continuing to support COVID-19 efforts in the communities where they live and serve.

The Air Force Reserve was early to the fight against the virus when a chartered aircraft carrying approximately 200 U.S. citizen evacuees from Wuhan, China, arrived at March Air Reserve Base, California, on January 29. They stayed on

base throughout a voluntary observation period to ensure they did not have the virus and spread it upon arrival in the United States.

With less than a 24-hour notice, Team March sprung into action, along with several federal, state, county and local agencies, to prepare a well-deserved welcome to the weary U.S. diplomats and their families.

“One of the diplomats told me that he understands the work that Team March and the other agencies did to put this all together with such short notice, and is thankful for everything being done to welcome them and make them feel comfortable,” said Oliver Freeman, Airman and Family Readiness, 452nd Air Mobility Wing Force Support Squadron. “He said he was especially happy there were toys, coloring books, puzzles and games handed out to the children so their parents could focus on getting through

the screening process and checking into their rooms,” Freeman said. “It felt good to be part of that teamwork.”

“At the Centers for Disease Control, we're here to support our state, local and sister federal agencies. We've been working together seamlessly, (and) very hard these last few days,” said Dr. Chris Braden, deputy director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases and CDC spokesperson. “The county and the Air Force Reserve have done a superb job in standing up really rapidly to receive our fellow citizens that we care so much about.”

Across the country, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, began receiving passengers from the Grand Princess cruise ship early in March. More than 100 cruisers who were possibly exposed to the novel coronavirus onboard spent their 14-day quarantine at the Marietta base. More were quarantined at the Clay National Guard Center located on Dobbins.

Dobbins has a long history of

welcoming patients from medical emergencies around the world. Designated as the intake center for biological missions tied to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2015, it served as a landing strip for planes carrying patients affected by the Ebola outbreak who were being moved to Emory University Hospital. In 2005, Dobbins also served as a landing spot for many evacuees from Hurricane Katrina.

As Reserve bases on opposite ends of the country assisted with quarantine efforts, Reserve units across the country proved that the mission will go on.

At Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, for example, maintainers assigned to the 943rd Rescue Group were hard at work March 19 ensuring the group's helicopters were ready for any rescue mission.

“The safety of our personnel is our main priority, so to reduce the chance of exposure we're combining the use of telework and minimal manning to accomplish the mission,” said Lt. Col.

Anthony, 943rd Maintenance Squadron commander.

On this day, the maintainers were continuing the 600-hour phase inspection for the HH-60G Pave Hawk with tail number 227. During the inspection, maintainers go through every nook and cranny of the aircraft looking for damage, rust or corrosion.

During the entire process, maintainers remove more than 620 parts from the aircraft in order to access the 1,136 items that must be checked. Once the parts are removed, any discrepancies found must be fixed to meet aviation safety standards. The average phase inspection lasts 100 days, after which the aircraft is reassembled.

“Our folks are motivated and we're ready for anything, including the potential for rescue missions,” Anthony said.

At Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, also on March 19, Reservists from the 403rd Wing's 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron continued to get ready for the upcoming hurricane

*Below, members of the 560th Red Horse Squadron set up a mobile medical screening station at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, to screen aircrew members before and after flying C-17 missions. Right, Lt. Col. Natalie Riley, a physician assistant with the Reserve's 315th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, briefs members of the 437th and 315th Airlift Wings about the new screening process. (Lt. Col. Wayne Capps)*







Left, Tech. Sgt. Larry Banks, 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron loadmaster, prepares to drop a simulated buoy from a WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft March 19, off the Gulf Coast of Mexico. Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hurricane Hunters continue to train to maintain readiness. Right, the pandemic doesn't keep Staff Sgt. Wes, an HH-60G helicopter crew chief, from performing his aircraft maintenance work at the 943rd Rescue Group, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, March 19.



season by conducting training flights over the Gulf of Mexico.

As the only operational unit in the world flying weather reconnaissance on a routine basis, the Hurricane Hunters did not let the virus keep them from preparing for their mission of providing surveillance of tropical storms and hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and the central Pacific Ocean.

The Atlantic hurricane season typically runs from June 1 through November 30.

At Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, Reservists from the 315th Airlift Wing and their active-duty counterparts from the 437th AW kept their C-17 Globemaster III's flying by implementing a medical screening process for aircrew members.

Aircrews now receive prevention education before each mission and a COVID-19 medical screening upon return.

"We set up a mobile screening tent

near our flying squadrons," said Lt. Col. Natalie Riley, physician assistant with the 315th Aerospace Medicine Squadron. "When our crewmembers arrive for their pre-mission briefing, we spend time educating them in order to minimize the spread of the virus, and to focus on preparedness and prevention, based on CDC guidelines."

Each aircrew is also provided with a disinfectant and protective equipment kit. The kits include sanitizer, masks, gloves, thermometers, alcohol wipes and more.

The post-mission screening process is designed to identify potential symptoms of the COVID-19 virus before crew members are reintegrated with the base and community.

"This is not just about taking care of our aircrew members," said Col. Adam Willis, 315th AW commander. "While most of the world is shut down, we still have a mission to do and we rely heavily on our aircrew members to carry out that mission."

The screening process is managed by the 315th Aerospace Medicine Squadron and is outside of the normal medical screenings received by Air Force aircrew members.

"We saw a need and our Reservists stepped up to make this happen for both wings," Willis said.

These are just a few examples of how Reserve Citizen Airmen are supporting COVID-19 operations in their local communities and how they are continuing to accomplish the mission during turbulent times. For the latest on the virus, please continue to monitor [www.afrc.af.mil](http://www.afrc.af.mil), your local unit's web page and official AFRC social media sites.

#ReserveReady #ReserveResilient

(Some last names withheld for security reasons.)

# Quarantined

## Extroverted leader shares how she manages working from home

A commentary by Col. Lisa Craig



Today is March 20. For me, it is Day 6.

I remain symptom free. I am healthy. I know that makes me among the lucky – and hopefully continuing to be lucky – non-COVID-19 stricken. However, life is definitely not normal.

I returned from a TDY visiting our awesome Reserve Citizen Airmen of the 624th Regional Support Group in Hawaii and Guam on Saturday, March 14, to find out the Office of the Air Force Surgeon General indicated that due to the potential of having been exposed, I must self-quarantine and monitor for 14 days.

I am lucky to have a spouse who can absorb day-to-day needs, such as grocery shopping, and my children are grown and out of the house. We have set up a six-foot personal bubble around me. I eat on the far side of a room. I sleep in a guest bedroom. I work out in the morning on my elliptical machine. I ensure anything I touch is well sanitized. I am uber-connected to the news and social media. I choose to remain solidly within my four walls, not even walking the neighborhood; because if I am a carrier, there's a chance I could impact other people. That's not a risk I am willing to take.

I am fortunate that I have the technology to remain mostly connected; although as our systems get stressed, so too does my ability to stay connected and continue to lead my team from away. Like everybody else, my team and I are having to get creative to solve problems. When my laptop stopped working, my team sprang into action and retrieved the ineffective hardware from my front porch (after I sanitized it as best I could and put it all in a bag). After the Reserve Comm Focal Point fixed the problem and fully tested the system, my team returned my machine to my front porch.

My hours remain long. Because I am never more than a few feet away from my kitchen office, I am always at work. And, because I am worried about my team's stressors, I am on the net during all waking hours.

I am lucky that the expert professionals who work for me (they actually work for you in the Air Force Reserve) have a firm grasp on the needs of our Reserve force. They continue to grow the body of knowledge as unique situations arise. Our



Col. Lisa Craig, the director of Manpower, Personnel and Services at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, works from home on March 20. (Courtesy photo)

mission set is complex and touches nearly every aspect of every directorate's mission sets with personnel implications. It's a web in which I am stuck in my cocoon.

I provide injects and vectors as requested, but to a lesser degree than I think we'd all prefer. My team always contributes to our body of knowledge and solves problems, but even more so in this time of crisis. They get the job done.

But... here's the thing: I am an extreme extrovert. While some folks get their energy and vitality from spending quiet, contemplative time, that's not me. I get my energy from people, from engagement, from shared experiences, from human contact.

My kitchen-office set up, the technology, the cell phones – they only connect for the requirements (well, mostly). For right now, gone for me are the office exercise sessions and the face-to-face communications with my work family. Gone are the "how was your kid's soccer game?" and "how is your parent's health?" hallway conversations. Those things that keep us connected now require a much more diligent and deliberate approach.

I worry about our resiliency. How can we stay spiritually connected? How can I ensure the emotional needs of myself and my A1 work family are covered? What can we do to stay physically healthy?

I know that my situation is easy compared to so many others. I am healthy. I am lucky. But, I am lonely in an unusual way.

We are doing all we can to ensure we will all come through this. I will come through this. I pray we can continue to fulfill and take care of those needs for information and resources for those whose needs are greater than this lonely extrovert.

#ReserveResilient

(Craig is the HQ Air Force Reserve Command director of Manpower, Personnel and Services at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.)



# Ready, Resilient and Virtual

How Reserve wing in New Jersey is carrying on in spite of pandemic

Lt. Col. Kimberly Lalley

Flexibility is the key to air power, and the 514th Air Mobility Wing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, has certainly been flexing to continue to provide air power during this dynamic and ever-evolving time.

On March 13, one week before the wing's March unit training assembly, the Department of Defense issued guidance limiting travel, meaning members living more than 50 miles from the base would not be able to physically travel to the UTA. More than 60% of the Freedom Wing lives outside of the local commuting area. A quarter of the wing's members are first responders in New York City, one of the areas hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Then, on March 16, President Trump issued guidance for people to avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people. At that time, Col. Thomas Pemberton, 514th AMW commander, decided on a virtual UTA for March and April.

Pemberton's guidance to commanders has been to "continue the mission." He believes back-to-back virtual UTAs provide an opportunity for the wing to focus on computer-based training, performance reports, vouchers, awards and decorations, and other administrative functions that can be completed via telework.

"Let's use the next few months to clean up the administrative side of things so when we return for a super UTA, we are ready to roll," Pemberton said.

Pemberton said he has been amazed at the innovative ways members continue to carry out the mission.



Col. Thomas Pemberton, 514th Air Mobility Wing commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Dana Capaldi, 514th AMW command chief, conduct a Facebook Live event during the wing's March virtual unit training assembly.

Units are using Zoom and Microsoft Teams to conduct virtual training classes. Chief Master Sgt. Dana Capaldi, 514th AMW command chief, encouraged members to keep thinking outside the box. She pointed out that colleges and universities are offering free online training. Yale University offers one of its most popular classes, "Psychology and the Good Life," that teaches stressed-out students to be happier. 514th members can provide a certificate upon completion and it counts as resiliency training.

Pemberton said his number one priority is taking care of Freedom Wing members and their families. A big part of that is making sure they are staying home and being safe. Most of the wing is

in a telework status to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading the virus.

His number two priority is maintaining mission readiness. The mission continues and the Freedom Wing has qualified and trained individuals for use by combatant commands.

Priority number three is supporting the federal government. "We want to make sure we are putting our folks in a position to be ready," Pemberton said. "So when that call comes for us – and I truly believe that call will come for some of our units to supply skill sets that are needed – we are ready."

The commander said he does not want to cancel UTAs, especially since members may not be able to work at their

“Let's use the next few months to clean up the administrative side of things so when we return for a super UTA, we are ready to roll.”

- Col. Thomas Pemberton

civilian job and may not have an income at this time.

He held a Facebook Live virtual commander's call event on Sunday of the March UTA. He gathered his command chief, group commanders and a few subject matter experts who, while keeping their social distance, answered questions.

Staff Sgt. Kristen Warbrick, an aeromedical evacuation technician with the 514th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, watched the event and said she was very impressed with the way leadership was taking the initiative during these difficult times.

Capt. Lisa Anello, 514th AMW assistant judge advocate, found the virtual UTA productive. "I was happy to feel like I was at drill, but conveniently at home and safe with my family. There is no better work break than hugging my two children," she said.

Pemberton stressed to members that they have a 514th family that is ready and willing to help out in any way.

"Turn off the 24-hour news cycle, open a book, maybe watch a funny movie and spend time with your family," he said. "Take time to breathe a little bit as we go forward because we're going to make it through this. We're going to be stronger. We're going to be better and we'll be healthier eventually." #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient

(Lalley is the public affairs officer at the 514th AMW.)

# Resource Reminder

Help is always available for Reservists and their families

By Bo Joyner



In these difficult times, Air Force Reserve leaders remind Reserve Citizen Airmen and their family members that help is always just a phone call or a mouse click away.

"There are a number of helping agencies that are always available to assist Air Force Reservists and their family members deal with life's problems," said Lisa Matney, Air Force Reserve Command's community support coordinator. "These agencies have ramped up their services in response to COVID-19 and are standing by to help members of the Reserve team during these turbulent times."

For military members, Military OneSource has created a dedicated section on its website, <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/coronavirus>, for Department of Defense-related coronavirus updates and impacts. The site is updated regularly.

For Reservists and their family members who are feeling stressed, counseling services remain available by phone, video and online. Call 1-800-342-9647 or live chat through the Military OneSource web site.

For civilians, help is available through the Air Force Employee Assistance Program, EAP. The EAP phone number is 1-866-580-9078. The web address is [www.AFPC.af.mil/EAP](http://www.AFPC.af.mil/EAP). Once on the website, civilians and their family members will need to scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the Civilian Employee Assistance tab to access EAP services.

Under the "What's Trending" tab at the top of the EAP page is a section devoted to COVID-19 information.

At the local level, members of the Air Force Reserve team can call their chaplain's office, Airman and Family Readiness office, director of psychological health or supervisor if they need help coping in these uncertain times.

For Citizen Airmen or their family members affected financially by the coronavirus, military personal financial counselors are located within the Airman and Family Readiness offices at most installations. Other sites available to help with financial issues include the National Resource directory, <https://nrd.gov>; the United Way, <https://unitedway.org>; the Salvation Army, [salvationarmy.usa.org](http://salvationarmy.usa.org); 211.org; and the Department of Labor, <https://www.dol.gov>.

Military family life counselors are also located at most Airman and Family Readiness offices.

Finally, anyone having suicidal thoughts should seek immediate local help or call the national suicide prevention lifeline, 1-800-273-8255. The lifeline web site is [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

"These aren't all of the resources that are available to Reserve Citizen Airmen and their family members," Matney said. "The important thing to remember is that help is available. You just have to reach out for it. Now, more than ever, we need to be good wingmen and be on the lookout for people who might need a helping hand." #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient



# Innovative Solutions in a Contested Environment



By Col. Kelli Smiley  
Commander, HQ ARPC

Today we find ourselves operating in a contested environment, rapidly responding to the challenges of COVID-19 and its ever-changing impacts. Yet, at every turn, those same challenges are driving us to create innovative solutions and showcasing the HQ Air Reserve Personnel Center team's dedication to taking care of our Airmen.

Our customers are the core of the center's mission, and the men and women of HQ ARPC are passionate about supporting our customers and the air and space missions we enable. In order to continue to provide excellent personnel support, many HQ ARPC teams immediately transitioned from operating from a single location to delivering those services via a remote support footprint. During the transition, our teams prioritized our resources with a focus on functions that impact pay, benefits and status affecting programs – areas we know are important to you and critical to our mission.

You can also help us help you. If you haven't done so recently, this is the perfect time to check myPers to verify your contact information is up to date. If you are unable to access myPers, the Total Force Service Center (1-800-525-0102) stands at the ready to support you as well.

As we evolve to a teleworking/telecommuting business model, HQ ARPC will continue to communicate with our customers through a variety of means to include the HQ ARPC website, [www.arpc.afrc.mil](http://www.arpc.afrc.mil), and myPers, [www.mypers.af.mil](http://www.mypers.af.mil). These are resources Airmen can leverage to stay informed on our COVID-19 response and updates on significant delays or mission disruptions that could impact our services.

In alignment with the March 13 DoD stop-movement memorandum, all developmental and promotions boards scheduled before May 2020 have been postponed but will be rescheduled to minimize career impacts for Airmen.

We understand how important these boards are to our Airmen and our Total Force. We will post the most up-to-date information regarding boards through the HQ ARPC website and myPers.

The Air Force Reserve component is powered by our most valuable resource – our Airmen. Especially in this challenging environment, HQ ARPC will continue to find a way to be ready and support our Reserve Citizen Airmen. As one team, one force, we can do this. I am honored to serve this great nation alongside you!   
*#ReserveReady #ReserveResilient*



## A Message for Individual Reservists By Col. Amy Boehle, HQ RIO Commander



Scan this QR code to reach the instructions for downloading the RIO Connect app and joining your detachment group.



News about the outbreak of COVID-19 is changing rapidly, and we are working hard to keep you updated as quickly as the information flows to us. HQ RIO will continue to work to protect our people while maintaining readiness and will follow risk-based measures consistent with guidance from the Department of Defense and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including applicable travel advisories and disease-mitigation actions.

There are more than 7,500 individual Reservists spread around the globe. Each of you is unique in terms of the countries you live in, the situations you face, the civilian professions you have, how and where you perform your military duties and how you take care of your families. Please know we will continue to work with each of you to meet your specific needs.

**What I want you to know:** The vision of HQ RIO is to make it easy for you to serve. That vision has not waned or changed with the advent of COVID-19. I am here for you. Your detachments are here for you. The HQ RIO staff is here for you. We are all impacted by this event, but through this we have kept our eye on our mission: making sure Air Force individual Reservists have the support they need to serve.

**What I ask of you:** Make sure you're connected to us. Check your profile in MyPers and make sure you have a good personal and military email address in the system to receive our messaging. Download the RIO Connect app to your smartphone (scan the QR code to take you to our webpage that explains how to download it and join your detachment chat group). If you're on Facebook, be sure to like our page and select "Follow>See First" so you don't miss our posts. Finally, share the information in this article and the sentiment of this message with any other individual Reservists you know.

You are strong. Our country is strong. The Air Force is strong. We will get through this uncertain time, and together we will continue to maintain our readiness, support our assigned organizations and their missions and be the best individual Reserve force this country has ever known.

Thank you for all you do. *#ReserveReady #ReserveResilient*





Airmen from the 315th Airlift Wing deployed a C-17 Globemaster III in February to deliver donated humanitarian aid to Honduras in support of the Denton Program.

The Denton Program is a Department of Defense transportation program that moves humanitarian cargo, donated by U.S. based non-governmental organizations, to developing nations. The program helps move donations to ensure proper delivery while simultaneously providing training hours for aircrews.

On this flight, the 701st Airlift Squadron delivered more than 11,000 pounds of mobility healthcare items such as wheelchairs, wheeled walkers, pick-up walkers and crutches. The charity, Helping Hands for Honduras, picked up the items from the jet just after landing at Soto Cano Air Base for delivery to a local public hospital in Danli.

The Denton Program office said once the hospital receives the donated items, they will be used immediately. The majority of the patients who need these mobility items aren't able to buy them and the hospital doesn't have the resources to get them.

"The Denton Program is a great mission that helps our charity distribute donations of much needed medical items from all over to patients and organizations who can't afford them," said Ronald Roll, co-founder and executive director of Helping Hands for Honduras. "We've received a lot of shipments through the Denton Program, helping many people in Honduras, and are so very appreciative to all associated with the program, including the Air Force."

The donating agencies, Interfaith Services to Latin America and Mano a Mano International, are both based out of Minnesota. All the donations were brought in from Minnesota and then transported to Honduras.

Most of the donations come from Goodwill-Easter Seals. Two groups out of Minnesota have volunteers who go to the Goodwill warehouses to sort and select the surplus equipment, and volunteers pack up the shipment for Honduras.

According to the Denton Program office, approximately 700 men, 700 women and 100 children in Honduras will benefit from this load of cargo.



*Members of the 315th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron train while flying on a C-17 Globemaster III on the way to Honduras in February. They received required in-flight training while the aircraft carried donated humanitarian cargo to be delivered to Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras as part of the Denton Cargo Program.*



*Above, Senior Airman Adam Allen, 701st Airlift Squadron loadmaster, helps offload a pallet of cargo at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras. The cargo contained donated humanitarian items as part of the Denton Cargo Program, helping developing countries in need. Opposite, Senior Airman Gage Stevens, 701st Airlift Squadron loadmaster, helps offload cargo.*

In addition to the cargo, 16 Airmen from the 315th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron were on board to conduct an aeromedical readiness mission.

"In addition to running medical scenarios, we also need to be familiar with our aircraft," said Senior Master Sgt. Michelle Geers, 315th AES mission clinical coordinator on this flight. "Running these scenarios helps us stay current and qualified as aircrew and ready to deploy or provide global humanitarian aid."

Pilots, loadmasters, flying crew chiefs and aeromedical evacuation personnel must all fly regularly to stay current on their training. These missions help Joint Base Charleston Reserve Airmen get their required training while delivering items to those in need.

"Anytime we can combine missions where multiple squadrons and countries benefit is a huge win," Geers added.

For more information on the Denton Humanitarian Assistance Program visit <https://www.ustranscom.mil/mov/denton.cfm>. #ReserveReady

*(Mathews is assigned to the 315th Airlift Wing public affairs office.)*



# Wanted: Combat Aviation Advisors

## Command wants Reservists to fill special operations role

By Senior Airman Dylan M. Gentile



Less than 1% of the American population currently serves in the military. An even smaller percentage can say they are part of a special operations team that integrates into foreign aviation forces to deny potential threats around the globe.

Current Reservists, or active-duty Airmen looking to transition to the Reserve component, who want a new and challenging experience can become a part of this unique community by serving as a combat aviation advisor.

"When we deploy, we deploy as the weapon system itself; which means there are many different AFSCs (Air Force Specialty Codes) that make up our team," said Master Sgt. Gregory Lobman, a combat aviation advisor at the 711th Special Operations Squadron, Duke Field, Florida. "We bring a great deal of capability to the table because of the extensive training and variety of skills our members possess."

The need for these advisors has increased substantially among partner nations over the years and spans across multiple geographic combatant commands.

*Tech. Sgt. Matthew Massey, a special mission aviator and combat aviation advisor assigned to the 711th Special Operations Squadron, performs a radio check on a C-145 Combat Coyote aircraft before a training mission at Duke Field, Florida. (Lt. Col. James R. Wilson)*



"Combat aviation advisors have the capacity to conduct a full spectrum of operations in a wide range of environments," Lobman said. "Something else that distinguishes us is the type of training we receive - everything from tactical combat casualty care to culture and foreign language proficiency."

CAAs are required to complete a demanding four-phased training program designed to produce politically astute and culturally aware aviation experts who are also proficient in at least one foreign language. Upon completion of their formal training, CAAs are able to operate autonomously in environments apart from a traditional support base and in concert with other U.S. and Special Operations Forces partners.

"Training together broadens our relationship with our partner nations," said Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Gray, a communications specialist and CAA for the 711th SOS. "Working side by side (with partner nations) builds upon their exciting skills and capabilities and, in turn, makes us better as well."

Part of the qualification course required to become a CAA is intense multicultural training as well as counterinsurgency doctrine and regional skills, Gray said. The process to become a CAA is rigorous, but necessary, as CAAs often take their teams into harsh conditions testing their ability to help foreign partners utilize existing assets in order to complete the mission. In essence, CAAs have to be able to operate seamlessly as an expert in their specialty while also instructing partner nations and executing in a combat situation.

"I'm a propulsion craftsman (in the aircraft maintenance career field)," said Lobman. "Not only do I need to maintain a strong foundation of experience in my career field, but I also have to be proficient in a vast array of other skills that are essential to how you operate and move as a team. It's a tall order and requires a well-rounded person to excel in all of these areas."

The Air Force has two squadrons tasked with the aviation advisory mission. The 6th Special Operations Squadron, which is assigned to the 492nd Special Operations Wing, works in partnership with the Reserve's 711th SOS at Duke Field in accomplishing its shared mission.



*Senior Master Sgt. Jamie Proehl, special mission aviator assigned to the 711th Special Operations Squadron, takes time for a photo in front of a C-145 Combat Coyote aircraft. Proehl, who is also a combat aviation advisor, uses her extensive training and specialized skill set as a CAA to enhance the capabilities of foreign aviation forces in support of combatant commander's objectives around the globe. (Daniel Maffett)*

The 711th SOS is part of the 919th Special Operations Wing, the Air Force Reserve's only special operations wing.

The demand for the skill set in these squadrons is insatiable, requiring Air Force Special Operations Command to make difficult decisions when determining key allies to support with this unique capability. As a result, the career field is growing to ensure it meets goals within the National Defense Strategy.

While the career field is expanding, not everyone is cut out to be a CAA. To be competitive for the selection process, members must possess a 7 skill level or instructor rating in their career field, be language proficient on the defense language aptitude battery, have excellent scores on physical fitness assessments and possess a propensity to excel in some of the most adverse situations.

"We are looking for members who can help strengthen our relations with our partner nations," Gray said. "Those who excel as CAAs are usually very disciplined with strong leadership skills."

The benefits of being part of such a unique community are widespread and can put Airmen on a new and exciting journey.

"Getting to go and immerse yourself in all kinds of different

cultures around the world is pretty amazing in itself," Gray said. "You'll go to places that you would probably never go to with your typical Air Force unit. People go their entire careers and will never see or visit some of the places we get to go to."

Airmen in 16 AFSCs are eligible to apply to become a CAA. Some of the career fields are pilot, intelligence analyst, aircrew flight equipment, security forces, communications specialist, flight surgeon, general medical officer and air liaison officer, among others. For information or to apply to become a CAA, contact the 711th Special Operations Squadron at 850-884-6234 or e-mail [711sos.dolp.rec.org@us.af.mil](mailto:711sos.dolp.rec.org@us.af.mil). #ReserveReady  
(Gentile is assigned to the 919th SOW public affairs office.) ■



# No Off Season

Hurricane Hunters spend their winter flying inside atmospheric rivers

By Tech. Sgt. Christopher Carranza



A map shows proposed flight paths for an atmospheric river out of San Diego, on Jan. 30. (Tech. Sgt. Christopher Carranza)

When the Air Force Reserve's 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, commonly known as the Hurricane Hunters, aren't flying into hurricanes they may be found providing aerial weather reconnaissance inside atmospheric rivers - or ARs - over the Pacific Ocean.

"There is no off season for us," said Lt. Col. Ryan Rickert, 53rd WRS aerial reconnaissance officer. "After the hurricane season is done, we roll into the winter storm season. Part of that is providing support for atmospheric rivers off the West Coast. ARs are flowing columns of water vapor that produce vast amounts of precipitation when they make landfall. The heavy amounts of precipitation can turn into extreme rainfall and snow, which can then cause flooding and mudslides."

The Hurricane Hunters, based at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, performed AR reconnaissance from January

through March. They worked in conjunction with scientists from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service, and the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations to gather data to improve forecasts.

"We're trying to improve the forecast of atmospheric rivers on the West Coast because it matters to the people who manage water and deal with the hazards of flood and debris flows," said F. Martin Ralph, principal investigator for the AR reconnaissance program and director of the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes at Scripps. "We're all working together to try and figure out how to make the forecasts better and AR recon's data gathering is a vital part of that."

The Hurricane Hunters flew two of their WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft on missions from Travis Air Force Base, California, Portland, Oregon and the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point in Hawaii. A Gulfstream IV from NOAA's Air Operations Center flew missions out of Portland.

"In many cases, ARs are great for the state of California because they bring 90% of the state's annual precipitation," Ralph said. "But when the ground is already saturated and more water is added, it can cause hazards. Knowing what is coming helps people to prepare."

During AR missions, the 53rd WRS crews fly up to 30,000 feet to capture as much atmospheric data as possible. The data compiled by dropsondes can create a vertical profile from the aircraft to the surface of the ocean for the research team and forecasters to input in their models.

"We have somewhat of a void in collecting data over the ocean," said Anna Wilson, field research manager for the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes. "Satellites have trouble seeing through clouds so having an aircraft releasing dropsondes in those areas significantly improves our data and the forecast models. We have a lot of room for accuracy and prediction improvements, and aerial reconnaissance is vital to gathering data from within the atmospheric rivers to help improve our weather models."

ARs can be hundreds of miles wide and are categorized from one to five, with five being the most hazardous.

"The observations gathered by the WC-130J definitely help bridge the gaps in data," Wilson said. "It would be great to have more aircraft because we have found that all the spatial coverage helps make the impact larger which helps predict where an atmospheric river will make landfall."

While the aircraft and aircrews can be staged at different locations, there is an additional team working hand-in-hand with the research team at Scripps in charge of mission development and to coordinate with the aircrews.

"Being on site really helps prevent miscommunications between the research team and the assets the 53rd has to offer," Rickert said.



Background, a WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft from the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron sits on the flightline prior to an atmospheric river mission. (Airman 1st Class Karla Parra) Top, Maj. Sonia Walker, a weather reconnaissance officer, checks her tablet for information during a mission. (Tech. Sgt. Christopher Carranza) Below, Maj. Grant Wagner, F. Martin Ralph and Lt. Col. Ryan Rickert work on a flight plan. (Tech. Sgt. Christopher Carranza)

"As soon as the research team finds an area of interest for weather observations, we immediately start coordinating a flight plan that is feasible for our crews and we make adjustments for times and fuel."

Rickert said gathering data from any weather flight ultimately helps the people on the ground who are going to be affected.

Gathering data from within storm environments is inherently dangerous," he said. "But we perform this service all the same, whether it is flying into a Cat Five hurricane or an AR Five. We collect data in hopes of improving the weather forecast and, in turn, save lives." #ReserveReady

(Carranza is assigned to the 403rd Wing public affairs office.) ■



# Bouncing Back

## Military training instructor shares journey from Article 15 to resilient leader

By Janis El Shabazz



Master Sgt. Nickole Rhodes 433rd Training Squadron Reserve Military Training Instructor

Life as a child was less than ideal for Nikole Rhodes. Growing up around drugs and alcohol reinforced every negative thing she had come to know and believe.

She was constantly moving and changing schools – nine in a dozen years, making it hard to make friends, if that were even possible anyway. Statements directed at her more often than not started with, “You’ll never be anything,” and mostly she believed it.

Somehow, she broke away from all the negativity and enlisted in the Air Force.

Things were looking up. But while the ink was barely dry on her enlisted contract, she received an Article 15, a type of military punishment that is more severe than a letter of reprimand but less severe than a court-martial.

She was at a crossroads. She could react to this setback like she had always done and view it as a self-fulfilling prophecy. ... or she could try something different.

She decided to take the opportunity to reset her life, and today she’s one of a handful of Reserve military training instructors hand selected to work for the active-duty 737th Training Group standardization and evaluation flight at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

Master Sgt. Nikole Rhodes shares her story here to offer encouragement to Airmen who might be struggling to overcome hardships and adversity – past or present.

Rhodes, who enlisted in 2005, served as a security forces member for 10 years before she was accepted for a special-duty assignment as a military training instructor with the 433rd Training Squadron four years ago. The 433rd TS is the only Reserve MTI unit in the Air Force. Reserve MTIs partner with active-duty MTIs to produce more than 40,000 new air and space warriors annually.

“Every day I was able to see the transformation of citizens into warrior Airmen. It’s one of the most rewarding blessings I have received,” Rhodes said. “When I got into trouble it was because I had retained negative habits from my life prior to the Air Force. I was used to disappointment, self-imposed and external; but this time was different. My commander’s punishment didn’t include loss of rank. Rather, after a severe talking to and some extra duty, she challenged me to be better, do better. She believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself. My desire to not let her down motivated me to accept the challenge and ‘get my head into the game.’”

As a Reserve MTI, Rhodes has managed 44 commander’s programs and spearheaded the training of 45 evaluators for two separate work centers. Additionally, she served as an interim in-house recruiter facilitating the recruitment of 59 candidates for Reserve MTI duty.

“Master Sgt. Rhodes has done and accomplished more than most senior noncommissioned officers will,” said Rhodes’ supervisor, Senior Master Sgt. Jason Wagner, 433rd TS operations superintendent. “Having served a complete tour as a Reserve military training instructor, she has joined a very small group of Airmen.”

Rhodes said the second chance from caring leadership made all the difference.

“After learning my lesson, I was determined not to let this setback stop me from advancing in my career,” she said. “The guidance and support offered by my leadership and fellow Airmen gave me the strength to break old habits. Being in stan/eval gave me the opportunity to ensure our unit was getting the most accurate, up-to-date information and delivering it in a way that fostered a relationship of confidence and trust between our instructors.”

Rhodes said the Air Force Reserve provided her with the stability and consistency her life lacked, and she hopes to pay it forward by sharing the lessons she’s learned about faith, perseverance and integrity with trainees and colleagues. She said serving has also given her another tangible benefit – making her two kids proud and giving them someone to look up to.

“Pursuing instructor duty is one of the best decisions I ever made,” she said. “Serving in BMT has immeasurably developed me as a leader and as a mother. I let my kids know everyone falls sometime but what’s important is to get back up and keep trying. I also stress to them not to let other people’s ideas and notions hold them back from achieving greatness. I am grateful for every opportunity the Air Force Reserve has ever provided. I wanted a special way to give back, and serving as an MTI allows me – as a leader of men and women – to help shape the culture of the Air Force.”

#ReserveResilient

(El Shabazz is assigned to the 340th Flying Training Group public affairs office.)



Rhodes, a Girl Scout mom, waits for a parade to begin along with her fellow scout leaders and their scouts. (Courtesy photo)



Rhodes and Tech. Sgt. Shane Vandewark, 737th Training Group MTI, assess flight performance during a basic military training graduation at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. Rhodes’ story of resilience is a motivational reminder to all Airmen that they can overcome challenges they face. (Debbie Gildea)



# Complementary Careers

## Military experience helps Reserve Citizen Airman transform veteran healthcare



*Daniel Brillman, a major in the Air Force Reserve, used his passion for helping military veterans to co-found a company that helps bridge the gap between health care providers and social service providers like food banks and homeless shelters.*



By Capt. Emily Rautenberg

Maj. Daniel Brillman's passion for helping military veterans led him to co-found a company that is bridging the gap between healthcare and social service providers such as food banks and homeless shelters.

Brillman, currently an individual mobilization augmentee assigned to the Defense Innovation Unit – an organization tasked with helping the military make faster use of emerging commercial technologies – grew up in Philadelphia and attended Yale University where he earned his bachelor's degree in political science.

During his senior year, he decided to take flying lessons.

"My instructor was a Marine Reserve colonel who taught at the Yale airport for fun," Brillman said. "He started introducing me to the reserves. I also had a mentor who was an Air Force colonel and he said, 'You should definitely join the Air Force.'"

Upon graduation, Brillman moved to New York to do consulting for a financial firm, but he also followed his instructor's advice and joined the Air Force Reserve.

"I always wanted to serve, but didn't know how I wanted to do it," he said. "I liked that I could maintain my civilian job at the same time. I really fell into the

Reserve through my friends and flight instructor."

Brillman went to officer training school in 2007, pilot training thereafter, and made his way to the Reserve 514th Air Mobility Wing's 76th Air Refueling Squadron at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey.

He was stationed at McGuire for 11 years and was deployed twice to the Middle East. After his last deployment, he decided to go back to school to pursue an MBA at Columbia University in 2010.

"When I was in my second year of business school, a lot of veterans I had served with started calling me about health and social service issues," he explained. "These were all Reservists going back to their hometowns after deployments. They thought because of my educational background that I would know what to do. But I didn't."

Brillman said he started calling different housing providers and other social service agencies in an attempt to help out his fellow service members. The challenge to navigate the complex social service system was so profound, Brillman wrote a paper about it.

"The paper focused on technology and why we should be able to share important information across these different social services," he said. "The dean heard about it and passed it on to a venture capitalist who was a graduate of West Point. I worked with him to build out the idea."

### Shared Goals and a New Partnership

Around the same time, Brillman was introduced to Taylor Justice through a veteran program at Columbia Business School that matched current and incoming students. Justice, who had attended West Point and served in the Army, had experienced his own challenges navigating social services. Coincidentally, Justice was interested in solving the same problem Brillman was. The first time they met, they spent five hours in a coffee shop brainstorming.

"We wanted to build meaningful coordinated care networks so that different service providers could have visibility into the client's care journey and the client

wouldn't have to navigate their own way to separate services. We needed money, engineers and customers," said Brillman.

"Our approach was to align the different service organizations to communicate together around a shared client – the veteran or their family member. Our solution was initially technology. And we understood that to support the technology, we needed to deploy people on the ground to build these networks," he added.

### Unite Us is Founded

In 2013, Brillman, Justice, and a third co-founder, Andrew Price, launched Unite Us with the goal of standardizing communication between health and social services and improving service delivery for individuals. The original infrastructure was specifically designed to help veterans.

"What's interesting about the veteran population is that it is one of the most diverse," Brillman said. "It includes different races, socioeconomic backgrounds and ages." Brillman and Justice understood that what they learned about veterans would one day be applicable to the larger population.

Between November 2014 and December 2015, Unite Us launched its first three networks. In 2016, the team launched an additional four networks across the country.

"The goal was to help as many veterans as possible," says Brillman. "We didn't want anyone to fall through the cracks."

In 2017, working within the healthcare sector, Unite Us expanded to serve all populations. "We wanted to make sure people get the services they need," Brillman said. "We now work with innovative and visionary leaders in the healthcare industry, not only taking care of veterans, but anyone who needs it. We've become the standard of how healthcare providers and community-based organizations can work together to improve people's health."

In 2019, Unite Us raised more than \$35 million in Series B funding and partnered with enterprise clients such as Kaiser Permanente, CVS Health, and the state of North Carolina. The company

currently employs more than 165 team members at eight offices across the country, with headquarters in both Manhattan and Los Angeles.

For his work at Unite Us, *Business Insider* magazine recently named Brillman one of its 30 leaders under 40 who are working to transform U.S. healthcare. Rock Health and CB Insights also both recognized Unite Us as a digital startup to watch.

### Applying Lessons from the Military to the Business World

Brillman said he sees a number of similarities between the business world and the Air Force Reserve. "From a cultural perspective, at least in the flying world, there is always a hierarchy. You know who's in charge, but there is a flat, mission-driven approach. We have that in our company. We are a family, and we all have a stake in Unite Us' success," he said.

"From an operations perspective, understanding how flying works, even if it's not perfect, is important to helping all make sure you can execute the mission. While my skillsets from the Reserve helps me run the business, I rely on our expert team members in our organization to make sure we're on track."

To that end, Brillman recognized his own strengths and limitations.

"I knew I would be able to lead and formulate the problem and solution set, but I can't code. I also needed to find someone who wanted to sell and knock down doors. Finding people who complemented my skillset was really important."

Lately, Brillman said he and Justice have been focused on leading the growth of the company while ensuring people have what they need to be successful.

His final advice? "One person can't do it all," he said. "You need to be energized about solving the problem and remember that solving big problems doesn't happen overnight. You have to have serious grit."

*#ReserveResilient*

*(Rautenberg is assigned to the 514th Air Mobility Wing public affairs office.)* ■



# From Port Dawg to Fighter Pilot to Port Dawg

## It's been an unusual ride for this Keesler Reserve Citizen Airman

By Senior Airman Kristen Pittman

Staff Sgt. Jim Cagle is not your typical E-5. At 6 feet 2 inches tall, he's taller than most of his fellow staff sergeants, but that's not what makes him stand out. At nearly 60 years old, he has more gray hair and a few more wrinkles than most other E-5s, but that's not it either. His Facebook page features videos of him playing the piano and singing, but even that's not what makes him so atypical.

What makes him so unusual is that nearly 30 years ago, Staff Sgt. Cagle was Capt. Cagle, an F-15 pilot for the Louisiana Air National Guard.

Now you may be thinking that such a discrepancy in rank would mean a reduction in service or misconduct somewhere along the way, but you'd be wrong. Cagle's story is more about opportunity, unwavering patriotism and, well, certain rules regarding an officer's date of commission in relation to rejoining the military.

After graduating from Columbia High School in Columbia, Mississippi, in 1978, Cagle enlisted in the Mississippi Air National Guard and was off to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio for basic military training.

While working as an enlisted member in the 172nd Aerial Port Squadron in Jackson, Cagle started working on a college degree with his sights set on the Air Force Officer Qualifying Test and commissioning.

Following commissioning in December of 1980, and after rigorous undergraduate navigator training, land survival, water survival and flight lead-in training, followed by F-4 flight training, Cagle's first assignment came as a weapons system officer on the F-4C Phantom II with the Louisiana ANG's 122nd Tactical Fighter Squadron in New Orleans.

During this time, Cagle was often on Air Defense Alert orders and flew as an adversary for fighter units training in Gulfport, Mississippi. His outstanding performance in his position afforded him recognition from his peers and the opportunity to attend undergraduate pilot training, where he graduated in the top 20% of his class and was awarded the UPT Leadership Training Award.



*Cagle, second from left, poses for a photo on a F-4C Phantom. Twenty-six years after separating from service at the rank of captain, Cagle rejoined as an enlisted member with the 403rd Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. (Courtesy photo)*

After completing UPT, Cagle was selected for a position as an F-15A Eagle pilot with the 122nd FS, where he served for several years.

Fifteen years after his Air Force career began, Cagle embarked on a new journey – starting a family. With a new marriage and the prospect of children, Cagle said the fighter pilot lifestyle – which he likened to a “supersonic biker gang” – did not exactly fit into the equation. In addition, the economic advantages of pursuing a career in the commercial airline industry were enticing.

As a result, in 1993, at the rank of captain, Cagle said farewell to the Air Force.

For a while.

Fast forward to 2015. With his two children now grown and his civilian employer revamping its retirement system, Cagle began toying with the idea of returning to the military and completing the five years he needed to retire.

Initially, he contacted an officer recruiter, but there was nothing the recruiter could do for him unless he wanted to be a chaplain, where there was a shortage.

Cagle had pretty much given up on the idea of rejoining when a recruiter called him out of the blue and asked if he was still interested in returning to service.

“I made this life decision all of the sudden, and it was the best decision I’ve made,” Cagle said.

With his 55th birthday fast approaching and the age limit for enlisted members at 60, the recruiter had to hustle to meet Cagle's deadline. But he was able to get the job done.

On March 17, 2015, 37 years after he first raised his right hand, Cagle was once again an enlisted member of the Air Force, this time as a Reservist.

For the past five years, Cagle said he has had the best of both worlds as he continues his career as a commercial airline pilot while serving his country as an air transportation operations center controller with the 41st Aerial Port Squadron at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi.

While he said he had forgotten a lot of what he learned when he first worked in the career field, much of the knowledge eventually came back as he trained with the 41st.

While being an ATOC controller is a far cry from pulling nine Gs in an aircraft capable of breaking the sound barrier, Cagle said he is happy to be here. And his own experience on the ground has made him appreciate the flight line crews he encounters in his civilian job.

“When I’m in my civilian job as an airline captain, I do the pre-flight walk around a lot, even though it’s the co-pilot who is supposed to do them,” he said. “I am always sure to talk to my ground crews. I have a better appreciation of what they do now.”

In addition to having to adapt and learn the job part of his Air Force career, Cagle said it has been interesting to see how much society has affected how the Air Force operates in general.

“It’s interesting to see how society has changed,” he said.

“Young people are a little different today than they were back then and the Air Force has accommodated that. They tend to take people’s feelings more into consideration now than they did back then. Mental health issues were swept under the rug, and now we’re more geared to being open about things that are going on. Overall, the way things are done now is a positive.”

Cagle was scheduled to retire from the military in March, mere weeks shy of his 60th birthday. He said he plans to continue flying until it’s not fun anymore or until he turns 65. After that, it’s all about family and traveling.

“I’m happy to be here and it was the best decision I’ve ever made to come back. It almost didn’t happen. I’m really glad I told that recruiter, ‘You know what? If you can make it happen, let’s rock and roll.’” #ReserveResilient

*(Pittman is assigned to the 403rd Wing's public affairs office.)* ■

*Cagle prepares for takeoff in his Louisiana Air National Guard F-15A Eagle. (Courtesy photo)*



*Staff Sgt. Jim Cagle, air terminal operations center controller in the 41st Aerial Port Squadron at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. Prior to his five years with the 403rd Wing, Cagle served as a weapons system officer and fighter pilot in the Louisiana Air National Guard from 1980 to 1993. (Senior Airman Kristen Pittman)*





# From the Ashes of Tragedy

## Arkansas Reservist: 'No one is too big or bad to need help'

By Maj. Ashley Walker



*The mangled remains of Andrea Sheley's car. Her husband, Matthew Sheley, a state trooper and current Air Force Reservist, was one of the first responders on the scene at his wife's fatal accident.*

Air Force Reserve Tech. Sgt. Matthew Sheley is a prior active-duty Marine, an Arkansas state trooper and not too tough to ask for help.

"Earlier in my life, I had three things that stopped me from getting help when I needed it the most: I was a Marine, a trooper and a male," Sheley, who is currently assigned to the 913th Airlift Group, Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, said. "Bad things happen to good people. I believe you have two choices when tragedy hits – drown your sorrows with bad choices or choose to live."

Sheley met his wife, Andrea, online while he was an active-duty Marine in North Carolina and she was attending college in Texas.

"I used my leave to visit my then-girlfriend, spend time and build that relationship," he said. "Once I left the service, I moved to Arkansas to obtain my degree and work as a state trooper. I continued to spend my free time visiting her in Texas."

Shortly after Andrea's graduation, the two were married and they embarked on the next chapter of their life together.

State troopers are trained to handle just about any situation, but all of the training in the world could not have prepared Sheley for what he would find when he responded to a horrific two-car crash in early in his career.

As he approached one of the severely mangled cars, he found his bride of 55 days wedged among the twisted metal wreckage.

He crawled inside to assist paramedics as firefighters used the Jaws of Life to pry open the debris. Once she was freed, the medics tended to Andrea on the road. Holding on to his wife and hope as they waited for a medical evacuation, Sheley's life came crumbling down around him as his wife took her last breath.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, Sheley threw himself into his work, avoiding emotions and responding to offers of support by saying everything was fine.

"I was physically and emotionally drained," Sheley said. "I felt lost, confused and hopeless with no desire to face my family, friends or coworkers."

To add to the stress, the crash created a financial hardship from the unexpected bills and funeral expenses.

After five long years and some failed relationships, Sheley recognized that he was truly suffering. "I found Bobby Smith with an online search looking for state troopers who also suffered tragedy," he said. "He was a trooper who was shot in the line of duty and lost his eyesight. He dedicated his life to provide counseling to others. After talking with him, my healing journey truly began."

From the ashes of tragedy, Sheley rose to a good life which includes the Reserve.

After reaching out for help, Sheley joined the Air Force Reserve in 2011 to continue his military service.

"I'm currently engaged to a wonderful woman," he said recently. "Once again my life is looking up. My career is also doing well as a state trooper and a Reservist."

"In hindsight, I wish I would have reached out for help sooner. I've shared my story in hopes of helping others, from colonels to young Airmen. No one is too big or bad to need help."

Sheley said everyone has lost someone or something along their life journey. He hopes to help others find healthy ways to deal with these hardships in life.

*#ReserveResilient*

*(Walker is assigned to the 913th Airlift Group public affairs office.)*

*Sheley met his former wife while he was a Marine. As a Reservist and state trooper, he's determined to help others cope with hardships. (Courtesy photo)*



# Resiliency



## Reservist embraces resilience while honoring her brother's memory

By Jessica Dupree

In 2012, two flight nurses and three medical technicians assigned to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, took part in what they thought was a routine medical evacuation mission to Kandahar Airfield. Upon arrival, they learned there had been two mass-casualty events that resulted in enough casualties to fill their C-130 Hercules to capacity.

There were 13 gunshot-wounded patients and four intubated patients. The aeromedical evacuation team was charged with providing all of them with essential medical care on the 45-minute flight to Bagram that would bring them to a higher level of care.

"We were packed in there like sardines," said Maj. Catherine Noel McNeal, a Reserve Citizen Airman flight nurse assigned to the 446th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, who was on that mission. "We agreed to take on the risk to get them all to higher care."

One of the patients was a young female with multiple gunshot wounds. She had used her hands to shield her body from the shots since she was not wearing body armor at the time of the attack.

*Maj. Catherine Noel McNeal, inset, joined the Air Force Reserve in 2010 to honor her brother, Air Force Staff Sgt. Tim Davis, a combat control journeyman who was killed in an improvised explosive device strike in 2009. Davis is shown in the far left of the top photo.*

"Taking care of a female younger than I was really stuck with me," McNeal said.

McNeal joined the Air Force Reserve in 2010 to honor her brother, Air Force Staff Sgt. Tim Davis, a combat control journeyman who was killed in an improvised explosive device strike near Bagram on Feb. 20, 2009.

She sought out a deployment to Afghanistan to pay homage to her brother, but she ended up finding more than that.

"It's a world people don't understand until they're in it," she said. "Service members used to seem robotic, like machines, to me. Once you get in, you see they're all great people."

Getting to know the people and the culture in the Air Force Reserve has made McNeal a more resilient person, she said. While serving, she has had the opportunity to learn more about herself and to come out stronger as a result.

"A lot of people don't get to experience that point when you have no other option but to be strong and to dig deeper," she said.

During her 2012 deployment to Afghanistan, McNeal wanted to take part in a fallen soldier ceremony – a tradition overseas for sending a fallen soldier home with honor and dignity. She recalls trying to work up the courage to be a part of the ceremony, but not being able to do so until the third opportunity. With some encouragement from her wingman, she finally took part.

"I kept thinking about the ceremony they had for my brother when I wasn't there," she said.

The resilience McNeal has found and grown in the Air Force Reserve has given her a purpose in her life she said she has not been able to mirror in her civilian career as an emergency room nurse.

While both careers are rewarding and fulfilling, the mission of an Air Force flight nurse gives her an avenue to continue honoring her brother while making a difference in the lives of others.

"Knowing these wounded soldiers are going to see their families again is healing to me," she said. *#ReserveResilient*





# It's More Than Spouses

## As Yellow Ribbon shows, Reservists lean on all types of support

By Staff Sgt. Mary Andom



Top, Capt. Kristin Broullire, a C-130 Hercules pilot from the 731st Airlift Squadron, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, poses for a photo with her brother, David Espiau, during a recent Yellow Ribbon event. Military members are encouraged to bring a spouse, mother, father, sibling or a friend when they attend a pre- or post-deployment event. Below, Staff Sgt. Merari Antunez, 439th Airlift Wing administration journeyman from Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, poses for a photo with her boyfriend of three months, Cesar Rios, during the event. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Laura Turner)

“Yellow Ribbon is open to everyone. It's not just for the military member. It is for the best friend, the spouse, the sibling, the mom and dad.”

When Capt. Kristin Broullire's husband couldn't attend the February Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program event in Denver, she didn't despair.

Her brother, David Espiau, was right there by her side. Broullire, a C-130 Hercules pilot assigned to the 731st Airlift Squadron at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, decided to turn the trip into a family event.

"Yellow Ribbon is open to everyone, and I like that concept," she said. "It's not just for the military member. It is for the best friend, the spouse, the sibling, the mom and dad."

Reserve Citizen Airmen scheduled to deploy can attend one Yellow Ribbon event for pre-deployment and two events within one year of returning from a deployment. They can bring two adult guests.

The program promotes the well-being of Reservists and their loved ones by connecting them with resources before and after deployments. It began in 2008 following a Congressional mandate for the Department of Defense to assist Reservists and National Guard members in maintaining resiliency as they transition between their military and civilian roles.

Each year, the Air Force Reserve program trains approximately 7,000 Reservists and those closest to them on education benefits, health care, interpersonal communication, retirement information and more.

After attending a Yellow Ribbon event in Chicago last April as a post-deployer, Broullire wanted to share this wealth of information with her brother, so she invited him to the event.

And since they were both in Colorado together, Broullire decided to take a few days of leave, and the siblings went on an impromptu ski trip and a tour of local breweries.

The February event emphasized the four pillars of Comprehensive Airman Fitness to include mental, physical, social and spiritual wellness.

The siblings attended a 30-minute meditation session where they learned techniques on how to breathe and sleep better. Espiau, who is getting married in April, also attended a breakout session focused on developing healthy relationship habits.

"I plan to share this with my fiancée," he said. "I think it's awesome that the military has these types of programs."

Reserve Citizen Airmen are encouraged to invite anyone who plays a vital role in supporting them throughout the deployment cycle, said 1st Lt. Karlene Huggins, the Yellow Ribbon event manager.

"Most of the time, our Airmen bring their spouse and children," she said. "However, many of our deployers aren't in a traditional family, but they will have a support network of close relationships."

Staff Sgt. Merari Antunez, a 439th Airlift Wing administration journeyman from Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, encouraged her boyfriend to attend the event so they could navigate the deployment process as a couple.

"We are learning together," Antunez said. "Every deployer and their support system should attend a Yellow Ribbon. As soon as you think you are ready, you are introduced to a new organization filled with many resources."

For Antunez, this will be her first deployment in nine years as a traditional Reservist. For her boyfriend, Cesar Rios, the event proved to be a crash course in military life.

"Man, there is a ton of information the military gives its members," Rios said. "It's a lot to take in."

While standing in line for lunch, Antunez pulled out her notebook and discussed with Rios her laundry list of tasks. She plans on following up on the information gleaned from the various sessions.

"I didn't know some of these resources existed," she said. "From the Red Cross notification system to the financial programs for deployed service members, Yellow Ribbon is such a valuable resource."

During lunch, Rios broke bread with service members in her unit. He listened intently as they shared the experiences from prior deployments.

"I'm finally starting to pick up the lingo," he said. "I finally know what the terms first sergeant, key spouse and traditional Reservist mean."

Antunez said she wanted her boyfriend to have a support system of his own.

"I want him to know he is not alone," she said. "He is now part of a big family. There are spouses and significant others here he can lean on. If he has questions, doubts or concerns, he knows where to turn."

Rios attended a breakout session called the Warrior Support forum to help ease the transition for Antunez when she returns from her deployment.

"Every couple is different," he said. "You need to have a constant line of communication and be straightforward with your expectations. When she returns, I plan to ask her what she needs, whether it is time or space, so I can support her."

#ReserveResilient

(Andom is assigned to the public affairs office at the 446th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.)



# Innovation Win

## McChord Reservists recognized for developing battery cell extraction tool

Story and Photos by  
Senior Airman  
Christopher Sommers



*Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 446th Maintenance Squadron pose with Maj. Gen. Randall Ogden, 4th Air Force commander, along with the current C-17 Globemaster III battery extraction device and the 446th MXS's new extraction device, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.*

Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 446th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, are earning a lot of recognition for their innovative solution to a common C-17 Globemaster II maintenance problem.

Reservists from the 446th Maintenance Squadron developed a mechanical device that makes extracting depleted battery cells from the C-17 battery housing more efficient and safer. Their efforts earned them a spot among the final six teams competing in the 2020 Air Force Spark Tank competition at the Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium in Orlando, Florida, in February.

William Nelson, the chief of the metals technology shop for the active-duty 62nd Maintenance Squadron at McChord, originally brought the problem to the attention of Master Sgt. Roy Puchalski, the metals technology section chief for the Reserve's 446th Maintenance Squadron. The problem was in a process at the electrical and

environmental systems battery shop that had been in place for decades, ever since the Air Force began flying C-17 cargo aircraft.

The process required one maintainer to hold the battery housing while a second maintainer removed the cell using brute force. During this procedure, the cells would often break and maintainers were occasionally injured.

Puchalski researched what maintainers at other C-17 bases were doing and determined a new tool was necessary. He designed a new tool that would extract cells with little effort and maximum safety.

"It soon became apparent the best, safest and most efficient way to remove stuck, damaged cells was to incorporate leverage," Puchalski said. "I spent many hours drawing up the new tool on our CAD software as well as mocking up a working prototype."

The tool gives the maintainer the ability to apply 14 pounds of force for every pound administered. For example, a

technician can push down on the device with 20 pounds of force and the cell will be pulled out with 280 pounds of force.

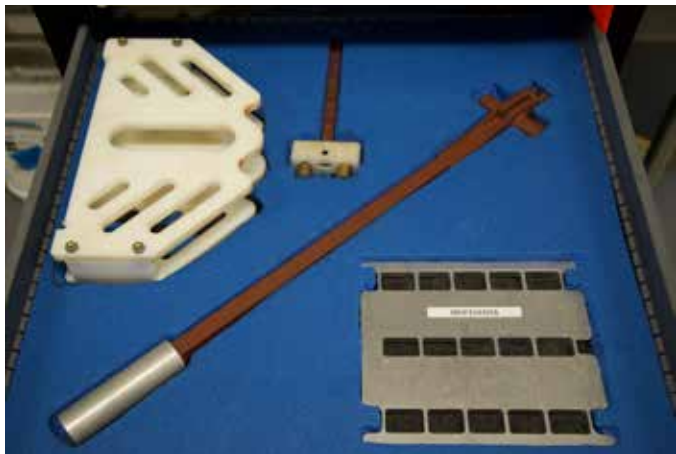
At the time, the maintainers weren't thinking about the Spark Tank competition. Their main goal was to improve the work flow in their shop and create a more efficient process - something Puchalski tries to encourage.

"The metals technology career field draws some of the best talent the Air Force has to offer," he said. "We are always inspired to do great things. I try to encourage my Reservists to be innovative and think a problem through with multiple outcomes. Being a good problem solver can carry over into many facets of life."

When Col. Kristen Palmer, the 446th Maintenance Group commander, became aware of the need for Spark Tank submission ideas, she immediately thought the battery cell extraction device would be a good submission. She began working with Master Sgt. Robert Tingle, the 446th Maintenance Squadron electrical



*Left, Senior Airman Kenneth Purbeck, 446th Maintenance Squadron electrical and environmental technician, demonstrates how to operate the new battery cell extractor. Bottom left, the battery cell extractor in a maintenance workshop tool cabinet. Below right, Purbeck operates the battery cell extractor while Master Sgt. Robert Tingle, 446th MXS electrical and environmental technician, communicates the Air Force process on battery cell removal.*



and environmental systems section chief, to formulate a strong pitch to submit their idea.

"It was a real-world maintenance problem we needed to fix," Palmer said. "Then the Spark Tank opportunity came after the fact and we felt this was a chance to highlight our idea and get some funding for the tool to be made and shared with other C-17 bases."

"This experience has taught everyone in this group that there is always a different way of looking at a problem. When you come across an issue and the book answer doesn't sound right, go ahead and question it. But make sure you go through the proper channels and get permission."

"I've been assigned to this shop for a long time and this is the first time I can remember one of our ideas getting this much attention," Puchalski said.

Tingle helped maximize exposure of this project within the Spark Tank 2020

competition by reaching out through his own personal network, in and out of the military. He has a lot of active-duty experience he brings to his Reserve career as well.

"I have a really good network of mentors who are not in the military helping me," he said. "I have a total force network of military and civilian mentors who have shaped me into the motivated person I am today."

"Spark Tank is a chance to celebrate our Air Force risk-takers, idea makers and entrepreneurs who refuse to accept the status quo, and have determined their own fate by developing solutions that make it easier for us to bring our very best to the fight," said Lauren Knausenberger, Spark Tank director.

"When it comes to finding new and creative ways to improve our Air Force, often times, we don't have to look any further than our own teammates," said

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Kaleth O. Wright. "It's incumbent upon us as leaders to encourage creativity in problem solving. We must create a culture where Airmen are often trying, sometimes failing, and never giving up. This is how truly innovative teams get ahead. We owe it to our team, and to our nation, to do everything we can to bring the best ideas forward with programs like Spark Tank."

Check out the video for the battery cell extraction tool at <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/710141/446th-mxs-battery-tool>. #ReserveReform #ReserveReady (Sommers is assigned to the 446th AW public affairs office.)



# COVID-19 Important Reminders

## Prevention:



Currently there is  
NO vaccine to  
prevent COVID-19.



The best way to  
prevent illness is  
to avoid being  
exposed to  
this virus.



Everyone has a role  
to play in getting  
ready and staying  
healthy. Visit  
[CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for more  
tools to aid in  
prevention preparation.

## Standard Precautions:



Clean your hands  
often with soap  
and water and/or  
hand sanitizer.



Avoid touching  
your eyes, nose  
and mouth with  
unwashed hands.



Avoid close contact,  
putting distance  
between yourself  
and other people.



Stay home if  
you're sick,  
except to get  
medical care.



Cover  
coughs  
and sneezes.



Wear a  
facemask  
if you  
are sick.



Clean and  
disinfect  
frequently  
touched  
surfaces.