



# **On-Final Anthology Vol. 4**

**507th Air Refueling Wing  
Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma**



# mission: Okies fueling the fight with Combat-Ready Airpower



MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL TOW A KC-135R IN PLACE FOR A GROUP PHOTO





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A high-angle, close-up photograph of a KC-135R Stratotanker refueling an F-16 fighter jet. The KC-135R's large, black, winged boom is extended downwards, with a fuel probe inserted into the F-16's refueling receptacle. The F-16 is a grey fighter jet with a single pilot visible in the cockpit. It has several missiles mounted on its wings and a fuel tank under its nose. The background shows a vast, arid landscape with winding roads and patches of greenery under a clear blue sky.

A KC-135R REFUELS AN F-16 FROM NAVAL AIR  
STATION JOINT RESERVE BASE FORT WORTH

## Okies fueling the fight with **Combat-Ready Airpower**

The 507th Air Refueling Wing is the largest Air Force Reserve Command flying unit in the state of Oklahoma. The 507th ARW reports to Fourth Air Force and performs daily missions both locally and around the world in support of Air Mobility Command and U.S. Strategic Command's national emergency war order requirements, operating out of Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma. The wing operates and maintains eight KC-135R Stratotanker aircraft providing world-wide aerial refueling to U.S. and NATO aircraft in times of peace, war and national emergency. The 507th ARW trains aircrew on the KC-135R, the C-17 Globemaster III, and the KC-46 Pegasus at a geographically separated unit, the 730th Air Mobility Training Squadron at Altus AFB, Oklahoma.

Today, the 507th ARW consists of three subordinate groups and 11 squadrons while employing more than 1,100 men and women. The 507th ARW is made up of Reserve Citizen Airmen, many of whom live and work in our Oklahoma communities in addition to their Reserve commitment. Approximately 200 members of the wing are traditional civilian employees or dual status Air Reserve Technicians who serve as a support cadre.



# 507th Air Refueling Wing



**COL. MICHAEL PARKS**  
Wing Commander

## CURRENT STRENGTH

- 1,144 Personnel
- 896 Traditional Reservists
- 142 Air Reserve Technicians
- 57 Active Guard Reservists
- 49 Civilians

## LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Tinker AFB -- \$4.55 billion
- 507th ARW -- \$92 million
- 513th ACG -- \$13 million

## UNIT TIMELINE

- 1944** -- 507th Fighter Group activated at Peterson Field, Colorado
- 1972** -- Established at Tinker AFB, flying F-105D Thunderchief
- 1975** -- Transferred from active duty to Air Force Reserve
- 1980** -- Transitioned to F-4D Phantom II
- 1988** -- Transitioned to F-16A/B Fighting Falcon
- 1994** -- Converted to 507th ARG flying KC-135R
- 1994** -- Redesignated as 507th ARW
- 1996** -- 513th ACG activated
- 2005** -- Aircraft increased from 8 to 12
- 2007** -- Reserve/Air National Guard Association begins
- 2012** -- Force Structure proposal to 8 KC-135R
- 2015** -- Guard association discontinued, AFRC continues
- 2019** -- KC-46 Pegasus delivered to Altus AFB, Oklahoma
- 2022** -- Okies celebrate 50th Anniversary at Tinker



# groups&squadrons

## OPERATIONS GROUP

**465th Air Refueling Squadron**  
**507th Operations Support Squadron**  
**730th Air Mobility Training Squadron, Altus AFB, Oklahoma**  
Operates eight Boeing KC-135R aircraft. Reservists, both pilots and boom operators, fly and maintain worldwide mission-ready status and regularly deploy in support of contingency operations and incorporates traditional operations support functions such as Intelligence, Aircrew Flight Equipment, Combat Crew Communications, Operations Plans, war plans and flight records maintenance. The 730th AMTS is charged with training aircrew on the C-17, KC-135R, KC-46. The Reservists in the unit work next to active duty Airmen of the 97th Air Mobility Wing, training aircrew members for Air Education and Training Command.



## MAINTENANCE GROUP

**507th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron**  
**507th Maintenance Squadron**

These units maintain all eight KC-135R Stratotankers and are responsible for periodic inspections, fabrication repairs, propulsion, aerial refueling boom maintenance, aircraft fuel systems and aerospace ground equipment. From installing replacement parts to building a replacement from scratch in order to restore the structural integrity of the aircraft, they work to ensure the safety of the Airmen who fly them. More than just directing essential maintenance operations, they implement crucial aircraft systems checks, deliver combat support and perform air operations all around the world.



## MISSION SUPPORT GROUP

**507th Civil Engineer Squadron**  
**507th Force Support Squadron**  
**507th Logistics Readiness Squadron**  
**507th Security Forces Squadron**  
**72nd Aerial Port Squadron**

These units are responsible for providing air base ground defense and protecting weapon systems and support personnel. They train and equip engineering teams for worldwide combat support performing rapid runway repair, structural bomb damage repair, firefighting and crash rescue. They aid in transportation, supply, contracting, fuels, maintenance training and plans. Additionally, units load, unload and process airfreight arriving from and departing to locations worldwide, provide personnel management and services support such as lodging, fitness, food, recreation and mortuary affairs.



## MEDICAL SQUADRON

**507th Medical Squadron**

The 507th MDS monitors the medical, dental and mental health of all members in the 507th as well as the personnel in the 513th ACG. Major focus areas are maintaining processes and records for annual physical and dental assessments, currency in immunizations and monitoring occupational environments. Other program responsibilities include training initial first-aid care, CPR training, gas mask fit testing and heightening awareness of suicide and prevention. The medical squadron operates out of Tinker Air Force Base's 72nd Medical Group and integrates with the staff. If mobilized, the medical technicians are trained to support a fixed or mobile field hospital site.







**Mission**

The KC-135 Stratotanker provides the core aerial refueling capability for the United States Air Force and has excelled in this role for more than 60 years. This unique asset enhances the Air Force's capability to accomplish its primary mission of global reach, as well as refueling support to Navy, Marine Corps and allied nation aircraft. The KC-135 is also capable of transporting litter and ambulatory patients using patient support pallets during aeromedical evacuations.

**Features**

Four turbofans, mounted under 35-degree swept wings, power the KC-135 to takeoffs at gross weights of up to 322,500 pounds. A cargo deck above the refueling system can hold a mixed load of passengers and cargo. Depending on fuel storage configuration, the KC-135 can carry up to 83,000 pounds of cargo.

Nearly all internal fuel can be pumped through the flying boom, the KC-135s primary fuel transfer method. One crewmember, known as the boom operator, is stationed in the rear of the plane and controls the boom during in-flight air refueling.

A special shuttlecock-shaped drogue attached to and trailing behind the flying boom may be used to refuel aircraft fitted with probes. Some aircraft have been configured with the multipoint refueling system, which consists of special pods mounted on the wingtips. These KC-135s are capable of refueling two receiver aircraft at the same time.

**Background**

Air Mobility Command manages an inventory of 414 Stratotankers, 70 of which are operated by the Air Force Reserve.

The Boeing Company's model 367-80 was the basic design for the commercial 707 passenger plane as well as the KC-135A Stratotanker. In 1954, the Air Force purchased the first 29 of its future 732-plane fleet.



The first aircraft flew in August 1956 and the initial production Stratotanker was delivered to Castle Air Force Base, California in June 1957. The last KC-135 was delivered to the Air Force in 1965.

Of the original KC-135As, more than 415 have been modified with new CFM-56 engines produced by CFM-International. The re-engined tanker, designated either the KC-135R or KC-135T, can offload 50 percent more fuel, is 25 percent more fuel efficient, costs 25 percent less to operate and is 96 percent quieter than the KC-135A.

Under another modification program, a re-engined tanker with the TF-33-PW-102 engine was designated the KC-135E. In 2009, the last KC-135E retired from the inventory.

Through the years, the KC-135 has been altered to do other jobs ranging from flying command post missions to reconnaissance. RC-135s are used for special reconnaissance and Air Force Materiel Command's NKC-135As are flown in test programs. Air Combat Command operates the OC-135 as an observation platform in compliance with the Open Skies Treaty.

The KC-135R(RT) aircraft continue to undergo life-cycle upgrades to expand their capabilities and improve reliability. Among these are improved communications, navigation, autopilot and surveillance equipment to meet future civil air traffic control needs.

**General Characteristics**

**Primary Function:** Aerial refueling and airlift

**Prime Contractor:** The Boeing Company

**Power Plant:** CFM International CFM-56 turbofan engines

**Thrust:** 21,634 pounds each engine

**Wingspan:** 130 feet, 10 inches (39.88 meters)

**Length:** 136 feet, 3 inches (41.53 meters)

**Height:** 41 feet, 8 inches (12.7 meters)

**Speed:** 530 miles per hour at 30,000 feet (9,144 meters)

**Ceiling:** 50,000 feet (15,240 meters)

**Range:** 1,500 miles (2,419 kilometers) with 150,000 pounds (68,039 kilograms) of transfer fuel; ferry mission, up to 11,015 miles (17,766 kilometers)

**Maximum Takeoff Weight:** 322,500 pounds (146,285 kilograms)

**Maximum Transfer Fuel Load:** 200,000 pounds (90,719 kilograms)

**Maximum Cargo Capability:** 83,000 pounds (37,648 kilograms), 37 passengers

Pallet Positions: 6

**Crew:** Three: pilot, co-pilot and boom operator. Some KC-135 missions require the addition of a navigator. The Air Force has a limited number of navigator suites that can be installed for unique missions.

**Aeromedical Evacuation Crew:** A basic crew of five (two flight nurses and three medical technicians) is added for aeromedical evacuation missions. Medical crew may be altered as required by the needs of patients.

**Unit Cost:** \$39.6 million (fiscal 98 constant dollars)

**Date Deployed:** August 1956

**Inventory:** Active duty, 153; Air National Guard, 171; Air Force Reserve, 72







▲ AIRCREW MEMBERS PERFORM WATER SURVIVAL TRAINING

◀ CIVIL ENGINEERS CONDUCT INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING IN HAWAII





SECURITY FORCES AIRMEN CONDUCT WEAPONS DEFENSE TRAINING ▲



AERIAL PORTER ASSEMBLES PALLET OF MUNITIONS ►





## 50 YEARS 'SH'

From the F-105, to the F-4, to the F-16 to the KC-135, the Okies prove they can adapt to **ANY MISSION, ANY TIME, ANYWHERE.**







# Celebrating 50 years at Tinker

The wing celebrates its golden anniversary

The Okies of the 507th Air Refueling Wing celebrated 50 years at Tinker in May. Across the past five decades, the mission and aircraft have changed, but one aspect remains the same: Okie spirit.

The wing held Family Day April 30, which is historically held in September, to commemorate the 50th anniversary May 20.

The Okies operate like a family, so naturally, this year's family day festivities were a success. The festivities included static aircraft displays, food vendors, and historical displays, highlighting the wing's accomplishments over the past half century.

The 1,100 Reserve Citizen Airmen of the 507th ARW each play a critical role in supporting the mission. The mission support group has the most personnel and are the heartbeat of the wing, performing logistics functions, civil engineering, force support, aerial port, and defense to not only the wing, but also to associate units.

The operations group operates 8 KC-135R Stratotanker aircraft, ensuring fuel is delivered to the fight.

The maintenance group ensures the aircraft fleet is meticulously maintained, ready to deploy at a moment's notice.



The medical squadron monitors the medical, dental and mental health of all members in the 507th as well as the personnel in the associate unit, the 513th Air Control Group, making sure members are ready to serve at any time.

None of these groups could work independently of the others because the Okies are a team. Here are some of the highlights of this landmark year:

In March, current and former Okies searched for a

50th anniversary time capsule in the Charles B. Hall airpark, located at the entrance to the base. The capsule was rumored to be hidden in a compartment of a former 507th TFG F-105 Thunderchief, tail number 62360. Former crew chief, retired Master Sgt. David Phillips, assisted in the search, but unfortunately, the capsule was not recovered from the aircraft.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**



# Anniversary (continued)

In April, the wing invited former Okie George Wallace, former F-105 pilot, to deliver the speech at the wing annual awards banquet. Other guests of note were the grandchildren of Billy Hughes, Kelli and Mitchell Hughes. Hughes was a supervisory aircraft maintenance technician who passed away in active service at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, July 12, 1992, after a decade of honorable service to the wing. Every year, an award for excellence is given in his honor and the Hughes family presented the 2021 Billy Hughes award to Senior Master Sgt. Wiley Warner.

In April, two jets received custom nose art, which is a decorative painting or design on the fuselage of an aircraft, designed to boost morale and help differentiate between crews or planes. Aircraft numbers 580058 and 580051 both received decals on the aircraft in honor of the wing's anniversary.

The artwork on 0058 depicts the Oklahoma City

***"Within a challenging, no-fail exercise scenario, the 507th Okie Airmen clearly demonstrated their ability to execute our U.S. Air Force's top priority mission"***

Bombing Memorial in downtown Oklahoma City, with the U.S. flag filling the entire sky, waving proudly in the background. Aircraft 0051 proudly displays the Okies heritage patch, a yellow arrowhead with a red outline depicting each aircraft the wing has flown over the years and 'SH' for Sooner Home.

Aircraft 0058's dedicated crew chief, Tech. Sgt. Travis Krause, designed the artwork, titled "Perseverance," and explained the significance of the piece.

"The nose art is the soul of the aircraft embodied into a piece of art that instills pride into those who work on it, fly on it and everyone who sees it," Krause said.

In July, the 507th deployed more than 120 Airmen to Hawaii to take responsibility as the lead tanker unit in the Rim of the Pacific exercise. At RIMPAC 2022, the wing provided air refueling support to more than two dozen partner nations by flying 155 flight hours and offloading 1.8 million pounds of fuel to 276 receivers to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

In September, the wing successfully completed a Nuclear Operational Readiness Inspection across three days.

"Within a challenging, no-fail exercise scenario, the 507th Okie Airmen clearly demonstrated their ability to execute our U.S. Air Force's top priority mission," said Col. Michael Parks, 507th Air Refueling Wing commander. "The nation expects all components of the nuclear enterprise to comply with unwavering security, safety and reliability standards."

Also in September, longtime Okie Col. Ken Humphrey, departed the unit and passed the torch on to his son to continue the Okie legacy, which will now span three generations.

Humphrey, former 507th Operations Group commander, flew his final flight as an Okie here September 29, 2022. He was joined by his son 2nd Lt. Kennedy Humphrey, who will join the unit as a KC-135 pilot



upon his completion of undergraduate pilot training.

Col. Humphrey served in the 507th since Feb. 6, 1993 and is the second generation of his family to be a part of the unit.

In October, the public affairs office hosted the second of two spouse flights this year. Between the October flight and another flight in April, 28 spouses experienced refueling missions and saw how our Reservists contribute daily to the refueling mission.

"It was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity," said Eric Metzger, spouse of the 507th Force Support

***"We volunteered for the Texas Tech Veteran's Day flyover not only for the 50,000 fans, but also so the world knows we can deliver airpower on time and at a moment's notice,"***

Squadron's Tamila Metzger.

"The crew, from the pilots to the boom operators, were professional, knowledgeable, and attentive. The plane itself was spic-and-span from front to back and well-maintained. It was obvious the flight crew

took great pride in their aircraft."

In November, the Okies performed three KC-135 flyovers at college football games: Nov. 5, over University of Oklahoma, Nov. 12, over Texas Tech and on Nov. 19, over the University of South Carolina. Lt. Col. Douglas Jeffrey IV, 507th Operations Group commander, explained how flyovers give an opportunity to showcase our mission to the public.

"We volunteered for the Texas Tech Veteran's Day flyover not only for the 50,000 fans, but also so the world knows we can deliver airpower on time and at a moment's notice," said Jeffrey.

On Dec. 16, aircraft 580058 was decommissioned and personnel gathered to bid their goodbyes, signing the aircraft and rendering a final salute to the aircraft as it taxied out to the runway on its final flight. The aircraft will sit in storage at the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, more commonly called the Aircraft Boneyard.

The Okies are proud to call Tinker Air Force Base their home, which celebrated 80 years this year. The history of the wing and the diversity of mission sets proves that the 507th ARW Okies are poised and ready to support a variety of missions for years to come.







# TRUE STORIES

A brief glimpse at some of the heroic, adventurous and awe-inspiring accomplishments carried out by **DEDICATED AIR FORCE RESERVISTS.**





# Serving the World

Reservists build a bridge of service around the globe

Tucked away in a rural town of Nigeria, lies a small mission hospital where a young Ifiok Idem and Emem Idem worked together as local doctors. One day, someone was in dire need of surgery and a blood transfusion, yet there was not enough blood in the blood bank. However, the lack of necessary resources did not stop the Idems from trying to save this person's life.

Ifiok began the surgery, while Emem made her way to the blood donation center to donate her own blood for this patient. Emem soon delivered her fresh donation to be used in the operation room. Emem then continued the surgery for Ifiok while he went and donated his blood, and returned with it, as well. Both doctors took turns with this process, until finally, the patient's life was saved. This selfless act on both doctors' part was not considered heroic in their eyes, but simply a necessary contribution to their proclaimed life purpose: service to others.

The Idems' goal of a life of service led them to do many things in life. And in their hopes to inspire and give back to those who have given to them, Ifiok and Emem eventually became U.S. citizens,



and then raised their right hands in an oath to join the U.S. Air Force.

"We have been doctors, in the United States alone, for 12 years, and for 11 years in Nigeria before that," disclosed Maj. Ifiok Idem, a 507th Medical Squadron flight surgeon. "We've always, always been people of service, and it's never been about what is in it for us."

Both Ifiok and his wife, Maj. Emem Idem, a 507th MDS physician and flight surgeon, started their careers as doctors in their home country, Nigeria. Ifiok added that the happiest he and Emem have ever been in their medical careers was when they were working for almost no money at the mission hospital in Nigeria. They affirmed that seeing the positive impact they had on their patients' lives is the most rewarding thing to them.

"There's something about service that just shows you who you are," mentioned Emem. "We always find ourselves drawn to helping the underprivileged, the vulnerable, the poor, the medically underserved, etc., and the only effective way to make a difference for them, and in life, is to serve."

Emem further stated how serving gives her joy and fulfillment, and becoming part of the U.S. Air Force was all about continuing her service. Both individuals felt they had been so blessed by this country, and joining its military seemed to be the logical next step for them after a nine-year journey to finally become U.S. citizens.

Additionally, Emem conveyed that she and her husband have been so blessed by God for their opportunities in the United States. The Idems revealed that they are not only able to send money home to not only help their families, but also annually offer financial aid to multiple families and individuals from their home towns in Nigeria that they feel need the assistance to grow in those communities.



"Our gratitude comes from being able to have career fulfillment, financial fulfillment, personal development fulfillment, family fulfillment, and financial ability to change lives tremendously," declared Ifiok, as he reflected on his experiences since becoming a U.S. citizen. "This is a very special country with a very special mission, and there is none like it in all of the world. We are very proud to

***"We've always, always been people of service, and it's never been about what is in it for us."***

be American citizens now."

Ifiok maintained that the only way he and his wife Emem were able to help so many people as well as continue providing for their families back home, is due to their fortunate opportunities afforded to them by being in the United States.

Furthermore, both Ifiok and Emem emphasized how they believe the most noble thing a person can do is serve others, as well as the importance of meeting people from other cultures, not only to experience their culture, but to understand without judgment.

"We came into the military to look for how we can build peace, build love, inspire, and comfort people whether they are in the military or not," expressed Ifiok. "If we can be peacemakers between Nigeria and the United States through the military, then we can build a bridge, and it's not going to stop with the Air Force. We want to spread that love and peace around the world."





# Farewell, 0058

Workhorse aircraft 58-0058 is retired

For more than 60 years, the KC-135 Stratotanker has graced the skies with her airlift and aerial refueling capabilities. However, similar to all things in life, each individual jet can reach its expiration date, and its career must come to an end.

With a four-man crew and heavy hearts, members of the 507th Air Refueling Wing flew the tanker with tail number 0058 on her final flight to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, and officially retired the jet December 16, 2022.

"We are retiring this jet because it still has its original, non-updated parts," explained Tech. Sgt. Travis Krause, dedicated crew chief of the retired jet. "I picked up the jet's replacement last month, so now I just have to keep trucking on and treat it as if it's my own until it feels like it is, years down the road."

Krause recounted how he has spent all 12 years of his reserve career, until now, as crew chief for jet 0058. He explained that he designed the nose art on it, put his blood sweat and tears into working on the jet, and how he felt the plane truly became his own during all the time he spent with it.

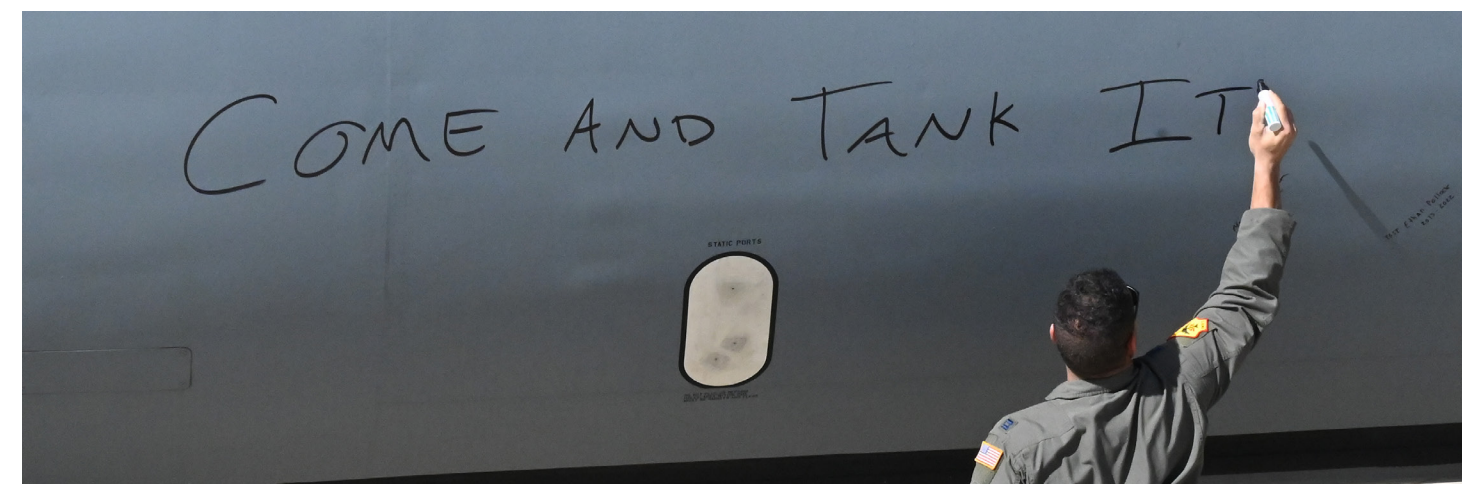
"When I first heard this plane was getting retired, I thought 'It's time for me to retire, too,'" admitted Krause. "That plane means more to



me than anything, and she was the number one reason I stayed at Tinker for as long as I have."

Many flight crew members were able to sign their names and a farewell message on the plane before and after the final flight. Krause was even presented with a framed replica of jet 0058's tail, in honor of his time spent as 0058's crew chief. Nonetheless, Krause confessed that it is sad to say goodbye to a plane that had so much soul.

"That plane lives every day," declared Krause. "The last thing I told her before I went up the ladder for the last time was, 'I'm gonna miss you buddy. I'm really gonna miss you buddy.'"





# Not Our First Reserve Rodeo



Port Dawgs with the 72nd Aerial Port Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, compete in their annual rodeo April 2, 2022.

The rodeo incorporates different tasks completed by aerial port in a fun and competitive atmosphere. The airmen compete against one another to demonstrate capabilities, showcase their skillsets, and build camaraderie.

The Rodeo tests training, but also forms relationships and strengthens teams and determines who has the best aerial porting skills in the squadron.

Port Dawgs are a tightknit group of Airmen who are dedicated to carrying out their mission. The rodeo provides a great way to ensure they stay proficient in their craft and have fun doing so.

AN AIRMAN GUIDES FORKLIFT DRIVER ►



▲ AN AIRMAN CHECKS PROPER MEASUREMENTS OF A TIRE



▲ TEAMS PREPARE FOR THE NEXT EVENT

▼ A TEAM SECURES A PALLET OF CARGO





# KUDOS to the Kiddos



The 507th ARW hosted a portion of the Tinker Air Force Base's 2022 Kids Understanding Deployment Operations event Aug. 27, 2022. KUDOS is an annual event designed by the Military and Family Support Centers for the children of U.S. airmen to learn about how their parents' deployments work through a simulated deployment process. During the event, the children received: a pre-deployment briefing, their own dog tags, a physical training exercise session, a tour of an E-3 Sentry AWACS, a military working dog demonstration as well as multiple rides in a M35 2½-ton cargo truck.



▲ VOLUNTEERS LEAD CHILDREN IN A SERIES OF STRENGTH EXERCISES



▲ CHILDREN BOARD A E-3 SENTRY AWACS AIRCRAFT



A CHILD ASKS QUESTIONS DURING THE KUDOS BRIEFING ▶





# Exercise, exercise, exercise

Practice makes perfect for the wing

## NORI Days and NORI Nights

The 507th Air Refueling Wing here successfully concluded a Nuclear Operational Readiness Inspection Sept. 16-18. The NORI is a routine evaluation used to determine a unit's capability to perform as a nuclear support unit.

Throughout the three-day inspection, the wing was graded on two major areas: Force generation and employment.

"The Okies did a great job across the board showing the inspectors our key role in nuclear deterrence operations," said the 507th Air Refueling Wing command chief, Chief Master Sgt. Stephen Nicholas. "And they did it all while maintaining clear and effective communications," Nicholas said.

NORIs test, assess, and evaluate readiness, and also compare processes and procedures. These inspections are detailed and require a demanding standard of compliance and accountability.

"Within a challenging no-fail exercise scenario,



the 507th Okie Airmen clearly demonstrated their ability to execute our U.S. Air Force's top priority mission," said Col. Michael Parks, 507th Air Refueling Wing commander. "The nation expects all components of the nuclear enterprise to comply with unwavering security, safety and reliability standards."

Earlier in 2022, the 507th ARW Inspector General Inspections Offices rigorously trained the Wing Inspection Team to autonomously and objectively scrutinize the nuclear readiness mission. The training allowed the WIT to evaluate the program on their ability to accurately self-assess.

"The NORI validated our compliance, confirmed our support capabilities and highlighted our flexibility to accomplish our most complex mission task," Parks said.

After the conclusion of the inspection, the 507th ARW continues to train to provide combat ready airpower at a moment's notice.

## Global Thunder concludes

Exercise Global Thunder 22, an annual U.S. Strategic Command nuclear command and control and field training exercise, concluded Nov. 7, 2021, with elements of the 507th Air Refueling Wing taking part.

Global Thunder is designed around realistic training activities against simulated adversaries with the goal of evaluating areas to further improve nuclear readiness and strategic deterrent capabilities. This training involves increased bomber flights, missileer training, and U.S. Navy Submarine Forces ballistic missile submarine readiness, designed to verify reliability and resilience of the nuclear triad.

The Airmen of the 507th ARW provided alert KC-135R Stratotanker air refueling support during the exercise. Participating in the exercise enabled the wing inspection team to observe and evaluate the wing's response actions.

"Global Thunder allows the 507th to demonstrate Air Force Nuclear readiness and exercise capabilities," said Lt. Col. Marvin Ashbaker, 465th Air Refueling Squadron director of operations. "We look for mission effectiveness and how well we can execute the mission effectively within required timelines."

Global Thunder emphasizes the 507th ARW's contribution to the strategic deterrence mission, which requires Airmen to be on alert 24 hours a day in support of USSTRATCOM requirements.

According to the Inspector General team, the strategic deterrence mission is a wing priority. The wing inspection team, made up of about 30 inspectors, participated in this exercise evaluating hundreds of requirements for the commander.

"The inspectors observe, report, and provide meaningful evaluation of wing readiness and recommendations for improvements," Ashbaker said. "Both unit and wing inspection team members showed a sense of urgency and willingness to work aggressively on areas that need improvement."

Global Thunder employed global operations in coordination with other combatant commands, services, and appropriate U.S. government agencies including the 507th ARW to deter, detect and, if necessary, defeat strategic attacks against the United States and its allies.

Col. Michael Parks, 507th Air Refueling Wing commander, stressed the importance of exercises like Global Thunder.

"The Okies use higher headquarters exercises to ensure all aspects of our wing integrate seamlessly to deliver airpower anytime and anywhere," said Parks. "Global Thunder 22 afforded us the opportunity to generate and evaluate our contributions to the US Strategic Command tasked mission."

Parks stressed that this exercise was more robust than many others in the last few years. "The efforts of our Security Forces, Force Support, Logistics Readiness, Command and Control, Operations, and Maintenance Airmen once again demonstrated our preparedness to succeed in the high end fight when called upon by our nation," said Parks.





# Of Air and Water

Airmen participate in a joint exercise in Hawaii

More than 180 Airmen from the 507th Air Refueling Wing here participated in Joint exercise Rim of the Pacific 2022, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, July 27- August 2, 2022.

During the exercise, 186 Okies and five KC-135R Stratotankers flew 32 sorties totaling over 133 flight hours and offloaded more than 1,000 pounds of fuel.

"RIMPAC is always a busy exercise, however, it is also an extremely productive exercise for us," said Lt. Col. Michael Waters, 507th Operations Support Squadron commander. "It provides real world training in a high tempo operational environment."

Members from across 507th Mission Support Group, 507th Maintenance Group, and the 507th Operations Group traveled to Hawaii to take part and support the exercise as a cohesive unit. Members of the 507th MXG conducted critical support to the KC-135Rs during the exercise allowing the aircraft to launch when needed and accomplish the mission. Logisticians from the 507th MSG made sure plans and supplies were provided on schedule. Members of the 507th OG conducted sorties and provided intel on the mission.

"The training we receive during large scale exercises like RIMPAC is invaluable," said Senior Master Sgt. Justin Hopkins, 465th Air Refueling Squadron boom operator. "It prepares us for deployments, allows us to get a lot of qualification training done in a short amount of time, and familiarizes our crews with other service branches and partner nation aircraft that we would work with in the event of a large-scale conflict."

RIMPAC provides a unique training opportunity while fostering and sustaining cooperative relationships among participants critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans. RIMPAC 2022 is the 28th exercise in the series that began in 1971.

"Partner nation relationships are crucial to ensuring the safety and security of the worlds airspace and oceans," Waters said. "We train hard to build cooperative strategic international relationships and to be prepared for any conflict."

More than 170 aircraft took to the sky and 42 naval vessels capturing RIMPAC's theme of Capable Adaptive Partners. RIMPAC forces exercised a wide



range of capabilities, projecting the inherent flexibility of maritime forces and helping to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. An exercise of this scale requires intense planning, according to Capt. Elijah Weyen, 507th OSS exercise planner. Everything went off without a hitch," said Weyen. "Our wing showed the importance of interoperability and how important it is when providing agile combat airpower in any scenario."

More than 26 nations participated in RIMPAC 2022 and utilized over 200 weapons systems and 25,000 personnel. This year's exercise included units and personnel from Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, the United Kingdom and the United States.







# An Okie Legacy

Longtime wing member passes the torch to his son

Col. Ken Humphrey, 507th Operations group commander, flew his final flight as an Okie here September 29, 2022. He was joined by his son 2nd Lt. Kennedy Humphrey, who is currently in pilot training.

Humphrey will be moving the command the 927th Operations Group at the end of the month.

He has been with the Okies since Feb. 6, 1993, and he is the second generation of his family to be a part of the unit.

"I came up to the Okies on a family day weekend with my dad and had an impromptu meet and greet with the squadron commander which turned into an interview for flight training," said Humphrey. "Thanks to some great Okie mentors and a little luck, I was accepted into undergraduate pilot training in the fall of 1994."

Growing up in the local area, Humphrey was intent on becoming an Okie at a young age.

"A field trip in the sixth grade sealed the deal on

"I'm very proud of the time that both my father and grandfather spent being Okies and it is a major source of inspiration for me to be the best pilot and officer I can be."

Kennedy began his career like his father, as an enlisted airman working in the 507th Medical Squadron as a Medical Technician before being selected for UPT.

"I enlisted at 17 years old in November 2014 and headed to pilot training in the summer of 2021," said Kennedy. "I want to fly the KC-135 to be part of an integral component of the Air Force's mission, while continuing to develop my skills as a professional aviator."

Kennedy is looking forward to joining the wing and following in his father's and grandfather's footsteps.

"It feels like a dream come true, at times it can feel daunting when I think about the massive shoes to fill, but to be capable of providing my family the same opportunities and experiences that my

father was able to give to me is something I'm very grateful for," said Kennedy. "I'm excited to carry on the Humphrey family name in the squadron, but I am really looking forward to also making my career my own."

While Humphrey will be leaving the unit later this month, he is excited to watch his son's career take flight in the unit that he loves.

"It's an incredible feeling knowing that my son will continue the legacy that started for me almost 30 years ago," Humphrey said. "Having been through the same military training programs and overcoming similar challenges has brought us closer together."

After decades of service and thousands of flight hours across three generations, the Humphrey legacy with the Okies will continue.

"It's been an honor and privilege to have been in the same unit for such a lengthy career," Humphrey said. "That is not something that occurs often and I would like to especially thank my wife and kids for supporting me and being there all these years; my time as an Okie will always be special and I look forward to the next chapter in my military career."



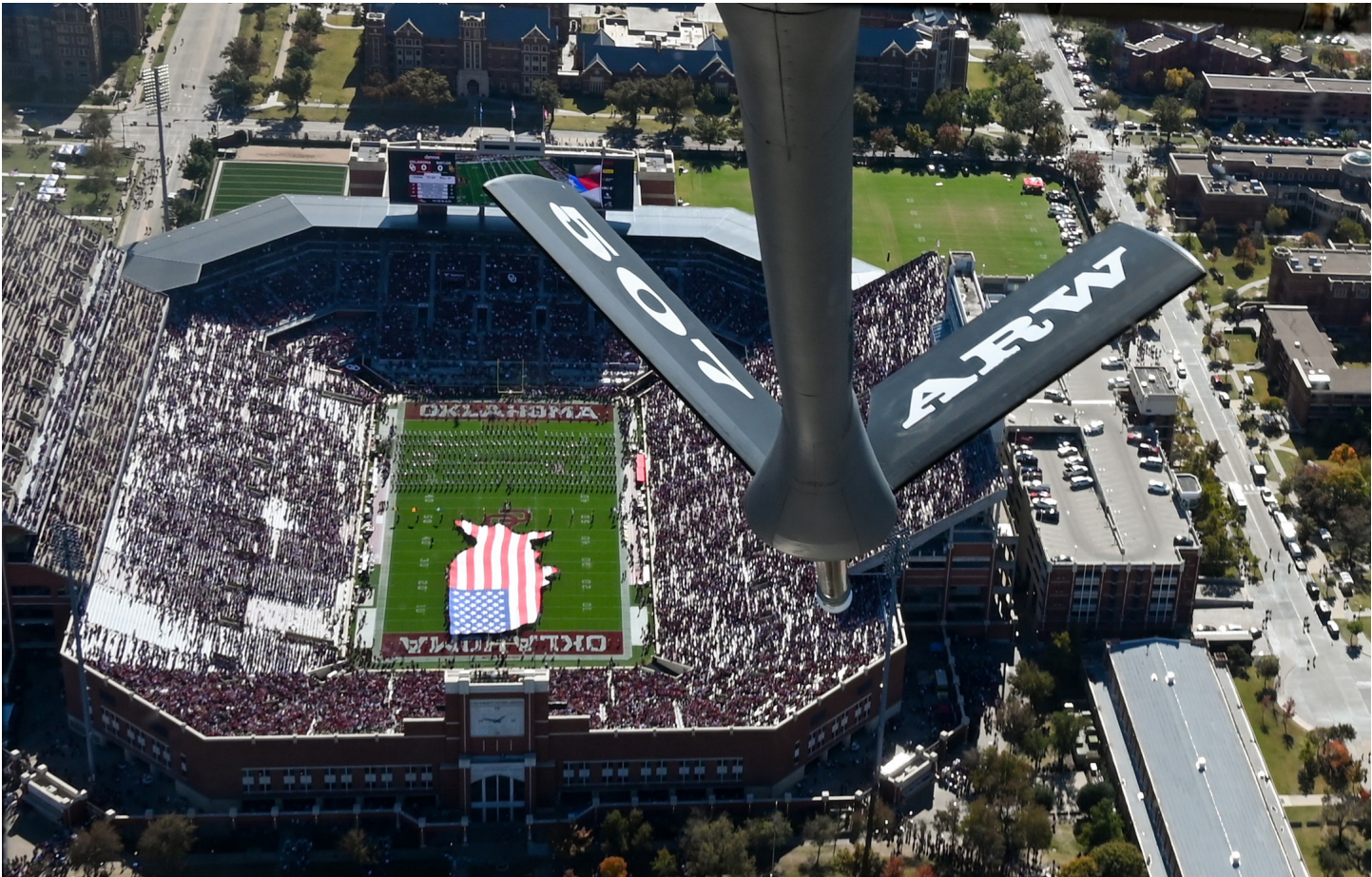
what career path I wanted to take and all my decisions since then were all with the hope of one day becoming a military pilot, said Humphrey. "The Okies gave me a career that allowed me to fly and be there at home for my wife and kids."

Humphrey's son Kennedy will join the Okies as a KC-135R pilot upon his completion of pilot initial qualification. Kennedy Humphrey will become the third generation Okie.

"It's definitely a family tradition," said Kennedy.



# Okies in the End Zone



Okie pilots assigned to the 465th Air Refueling Squadron performed a series of college football game flyovers in a KC-135R Stratotanker, all during the span of 3 weeks in November 2022.

The flyovers serve as a way to connect with the community, as well as demonstrate opportunities available to young ROTC cadets if they choose to continue down the Air Force Path.

During a flyover, the aircraft usually flies over the stadium during the final notes of the National Anthem.



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA FOOTBALL FANS RECOGNIZE AIRMEN FOLLOWING FLYOVER



AIRCREW RECOGNIZED ON THE FIELD FOR COMPLETING A TEXAS TECH FOOTBALL GAME FLYOVER IN HONOR OF VETERAN'S DAY



MEMBERS OF THE 507TH AIR REFUELING WING FLY A KC-135R OVER TEXAS TECH FOOTBALL GAME





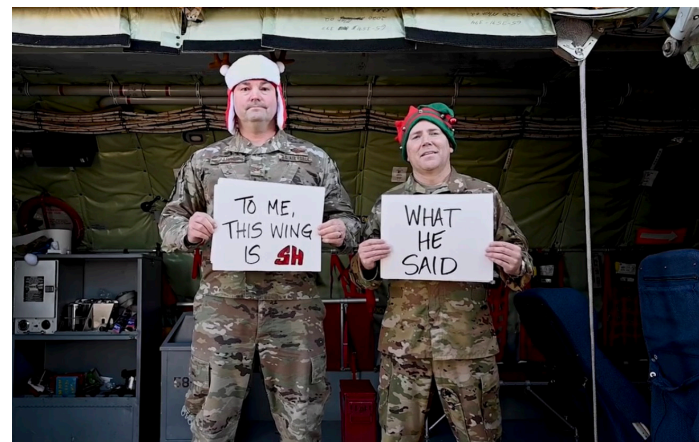
# Delivering holiday spirit

Fueling holiday cheer for 50 years



▲ RESERVISTS DELIVER GIFTS TO 30 VETERANS AT THE NORMAN VETERANS CENTER

AUCTIONEER TAKES BIDS AT OPERATION HOLIDAY SPIRIT, WHICH RAISED \$40,181 IN 2022 AND \$46,785 IN 2021 FOR GUARD AND RESERVE FAMILIES ►



▲ THE 507TH ARW COMMANDER AND VICE COMMANDER'S HOLIDAY VIDEO

SANTA VISITS THE WING TOY GIVEAWAY ►



# Okie Honors

2021 Wing Annual Award Winners



## NCO of the Year

Tech. Sgt. Justin Jarrett  
507th Security Forces Squadron



## SNCO of the Year

Master Sgt. Grady Epperly  
507th Air Refueling Wing

## Airman of the Year

Senior Airman Thomas Carlin  
465th Air Refueling Squadron  
\*Not Pictured

## Spouse of the Year

Sheila Ratcliff  
Spouse of Maj. Jason Ratcliff  
730th Air Mobility Training Squadron  
\*Not Pictured



## Civilian of the Year

Category I  
Ms. Mary Vernon  
730th Air Mobility Training Squadron



## CGO of the Year

Capt. Jose Barreto  
507th Logistics Readiness Squadron

## Civilian of the Year

Category II  
Ms. Audreann Wallace  
507th Force Support Squadron  
\*Not Pictured







A BOOM OPERATOR REFUELS A B-52 STRATOFORTRESS ▲

OKIES REFUEL AN F-18 OVER HAWAII ►





COMMON ACRONYMS & JARGON

**AFRC** *Air Force Reserve Command*  
AFRC provides the Air Force approximately 20 percent of their capability at four percent of the total Air Force budget. The Air Force Reserve performs two missions no other military service does: fixed-wing, aerial-spray missions and hurricane forecasting. AFRC also supports the space program, flight test, special operations, aerial port operations, civil engineer, security forces, intelligence, military training, communications, mobility support, transportation and services missions.



**AGR** *Active Guard Reserve*  
National Guard and Reserve members who are on voluntary active duty providing full-time support to National Guard, Reserve and Active Component organizations for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing or training the Reserve Components.

**ART** *Air Reserve Technician*  
A full-time Department of Defense civilian who is required, as a condition of employment, to be an Air Force Reservist and perform the same duties as a civilian as he/she does during monthly Reserve training.

**AT** *Annual Training*  
The minimum period of Active Duty Training or Annual Field Training the Reserve member must perform every year.

**BOOM**  
The long arm lowered from a KC-135 in flight that allows the refueling of other aircraft, also short for an in-flight refueling technician, or boom operator.

**CATM** *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance*  
Security Forces personnel who train base populace on the use of small arms, oversee, maintain and repair all small arms in the U.S. Air Force inventory.

**DEFENDER**  
Nickname for security forces squadron personnel.

**D&TF** *Development and Training Flight*  
D&TF prepares Air Force Reserve members mentally and physically for the transition from civilian to military life through academic and fitness-based awareness programs.

**FALCON**  
Nickname/call sign of the F-16A. This airframe was flown by the 507th ARW until 1994.

**FOURTH AIR FORCE**  
March Air Reserve Base, California, and its subordinate units are responsible for “strategic reach forces,” which includes aerial refueling and long-range, strategic airlift missions.



**HOSE & DROGUE**  
The hose is a flexible, retractable tube that trails from an aircraft during aerial refueling. The drogue, a small parachute, stabilizes the hose during flight and acts as a ‘funnel’ for the probe of the aircraft being refueled. The KC-135Rs used by the 507th ARW can use either a boom or a drogue to refuel.



**ISO** *Isochronal inspection*  
An extensive examination and maintenance of an entire airframe and systems that seek to increase the overall performance and safety of the aircraft. Can be minor, major or depot level.

**IMA** *Individual Mobilization Augmentee*  
Reservists who augment our active-component counterparts at wings, major commands, combatant commands and government agencies.

**IRR** *Individual Ready Reserve*  
Composed of former active duty or Reserve personnel, these Reservists are not attached to the Selected Reserve, who drill consistently with an organized unit. IRR members can be activated at a moment's notice by the president in times of grave national emergency.

**LOGGIE**  
Nickname for logistics readiness squadron personnel.

**OKIES**  
An endearing term for anyone past, present and future who serve in the 507th Air Refueling Wing.



**PAX**  
A simple, shortened term for aircraft passengers.

**PEGASUS**  
Nickname/call sign of the KC-46A recently delivered to the 730th Air Mobility Training Squadron. The KC-46A is the Air Force's newest refueling aircraft.

**PHANTOM**  
Nickname/call sign of the F-4 fighter jet. The F-4 was flown by the 507th ARW until the switch to F-16s.

**PME** *Professional Military Education*  
Refers to the professional training, development, and schooling of military personnel.

**PORT DAWG**  
Nickname for aerial port squadron personnel.

**PRIME BEEF**  
Nickname for civil engineer squadron personnel.

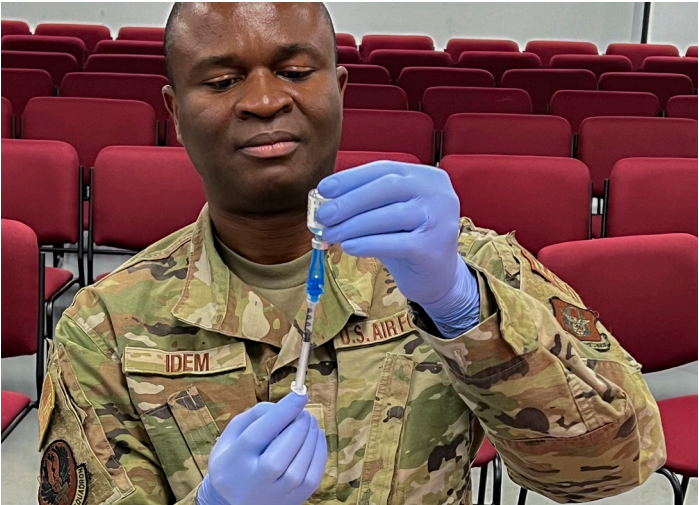
**RUTA** *Rescheduled Unit Training Assembly*  
When needed, Reservists can reschedule a unit training assembly.

**TDY** *Temporary Duty*  
Used to describe a temporary duty location other than ones permanent station.

**THUNDERCHIEF / THUD**  
Nickname/call sign of the F-105D Thunderchief supersonic fighter-bomber used by the Air Force. Capable of Mach 2, it conducted the majority of strike bombing missions during the early years of the Vietnam War.

**TR** *Traditional Reservist*  
TR's are Reservists who work and perform readiness training with their Reserve unit one weekend per month (24 days), plus an additional two-weeks of active-duty training per year.

**UTA** *Unit Training Assembly*  
A UTA is a required, two-day, monthly training period for Reservists, usually scheduled for the first or second weekend of each month. Commonly called drill.







▲ FIREFIGHTERS INSPECT A KC-135R

◀ A MEDICAL TECHNICIAN ADMINISTERS THE FLU VACCINE





▲ A KC-135R REFUELS A C-17 GLOBEMASTER ABOVE THE ATLANTIC

## 507TH ARW HEADQUARTERS

WING COMMANDER  
Col. Michael Parks

COMMAND CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT  
Chief Master Sgt. Stephen Nicholas

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF  
Lt. Col Amanda Hacman  
2nd Lt. Mary Begy  
Master Sgt. Grady Epperly  
Master Sgt. Lauren Kelly  
Staff Sgt. Jasmine Czajka  
Senior Airman Chad Dixon

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