

BUCKEYE FLYER

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Celebrating 30 years of wing at Wright-Patterson AFB

By Tara K. Simpson, Ph.D.
445th Airlift Wing Historian

Thirty years! In September, the 445th Airlift Wing celebrates 30 years of history at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Following the unit's deactivation April 1, 1994, at March AFB, California, the 445th AW was activated Oct. 1 of the same year.

Prior to the arrival of the 445th AW to Wright-Patterson, both the 906th Fighter Group and the 907th Airlift Group were inactivated. Members of the new 445th AW were encouraged to continue the great traditions that had been established by those units.

Despite an initial hesitation to fully merge, the wing was thinking as a collective "we" within months, as they went after the wing mission: providing aircraft, aircrew and support personnel for strategic airlift of personnel and equipment.

In 1994, the 445th AW was authorized 16 C-141B Starlifter aircraft and was composed of four groups: operations, logistics, support and medical.

The 89th and 356th Airlift Squadrons provided airlift services for Air Force Reserve Command and Air Mobility Command.

In the first three quarters following the unit's activation at WPAFB, the wing demonstrated excellence, as the two squadrons logged nearly 4,000 flying hours, all accident-free, flying AMC's Atlantic Express and Pacific Express channel missions. Though repetitive, the channel missions provided opportunities to showcase what the 445th AW does best – demonstrate the wing's readiness.

The phrase "right place, right time" has frequently been attributed to members of the 445th AW. As a result, over the past 30 years the unit has been credited with numerous firsts.

This includes respectfully flying the first casualty



Front page of the November 1994 Buckeye Flyer when the 445th Airlift Wing stood up at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

of Operation Joint Endeavor in January 1996, and flying nearly half of all Reserve missions during NATO operations in Kosovo in 1999.

It also included being selected as one of five total Reserve units tasked to fly humanitarian assistance in the hours following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and flying a "first of its kind" mission for Operation Enduring Freedom when a 445th AW aircrew delivered the first Taliban and al Qaeda detainees to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, April 11, 2002.

Other incredible highlights over the past 30 years include 445th Citizen Airmen who have made history while completing a mission they were trained for.

This includes members of the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron who were on the team that brought back the first POW of the war in Iraq, the aircrew and medical teams who airlifted thousands of wounded U.S. service members during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and ground personnel who ensure the unit is fit to fly so the wing is continually able to answer yes when tasked.

The 445th AW has demonstrated incredible resilience throughout its 30 years at Wright-Patterson.

Since its activation, the unit transitioned from flying C-141 Starlifters to the C-5 Galaxy in 2005 to its current airframe, the C-17 Globemaster III, in 2011.

Much of the work and effort to successfully complete the conversions took place during peak times of unit volunteer deployments and mobilizations, due to conflicts in the Middle East, and continued airlift support both nationally and around world.

Despite these challenges the unit was regularly rec-

See AW, Page 6

Citizen Airman renders care to injured woman while camping, earning medal

Amanda Dick
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Timothy Johansen, 445th Force Support Squadron commander, presented Master Sgt. Amanda Szymanski, 445th FSS personnel technician, with the Air and Space Commendation Medal during their squadron stand down Aug. 3 during the monthly unit training assembly.

According to Szymanski, her family was on a camping trip at the end of July with friends. While her children were out on the lake July 26, she and a friend were coming back from picking up fishing bait when they saw a woman lying in the street.

“As we came up the hill, we noticed a lady on the ground,” Szymanski said. “She was struggling to get up, and she was trying to get out from under her bike. My friend looks over at me, and she’s like, ‘Should we stop?’”

They did stop, and Szymanski rushed over while her friend drove off to get help. She immediately started assessing the woman before moving her and her things off to the side of the road, noticing road rash, a bump on her eye and a wound on her chin.

She continued to assess, directing a retired Soldier and his wife who stopped to help provide care.

“He starts pulling first aid stuff out of his bag, and we start bandaging her up, putting Band-Aids where she’s got a lot of blood coming out over her road rash,” Szymanski explained.

Shortly after that, park employees, including a registered nurse, arrived with another first aid kit and ice, as well as a golf cart to transport the woman back to her campsite where she was taken to the ER by a friend.

Szymanski’s decisive actions were bolstered by her training in the military – the Tactical Combat Casualty Care course to be exact.

TCCC, formerly Self Aid and Buddy Care, provides training to military members on how to provide life-saving techniques and strategies for trauma care on the battlefield.

“Self-aid and buddy care is always the first thing that kicks in,” she said. “You see somebody hurt; you start assessing things, playing those trainings back in your head and going through everything like, ‘Okay. I need to get her out of the roadway so that she doesn’t become even more of a casualty, and I don’t get hurt myself.’”

Szymanski is retiring in November, and while she’s ending her Air Force career on a high note, it’s not something she wanted to make a big deal over. Her husband felt differently and emailed the FSS about what she did why he believed she should be recognized

for her efforts.

“It was terribly hot, and who knows how long that lady would have laid out there in the middle of the road if somebody didn’t come along,” said Nicholas Szymanski, Amanda’s husband and an Air Force Institute of Technology senior network administrator. “If she had said, ‘No, she’ll be alright.’ How many more people would have done the same thing?”

In his email to FSS leadership, that was a key focus for Nicholas, who also served in the military.

“I truly believe Amanda’s quick action and decisiveness saved the lady from possible further injury and could have possibly been lifesaving,” he said in the email. “This is a testament to her character, service before self, leadership and years of Air Force training and service ... I believe she deserves to be recognized for her actions.”

FSS leadership agreed.

“It is Master Sergeant Szymanski’s nature to care for people, so when she saw the woman having a medical emergency, Amanda’s training and servant’s heart kicked in to care for the woman,” Johansen said. “Master Sergeant Szymanski’s Air and Space Commendation Medal is in direct appreciation of answering the call to serve a person in need. We always want to recognize Airmen who go above and beyond. Amanda is one of many amazing Airmen I have the privilege of serving with.”



Lt. Col. Timothy Johansen, 445th Force Support Squadron commander, presents Master Sgt. Amanda Szymanski, 445th FSS personnel technician, with the Air and Space Commendation Medal at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Aug. 3, 2025. Szymanski distinguished herself by providing first aid to an injured woman while on a camping trip July 26, 2025. (Photo by Amanda Dick)

SPOTLIGHT

Rank/Name: Tech. Sgt. Amber Cole

Unit: 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

Duty Title: Dental assistant craftsman

Hometown: Columbus, Ohio

Civilian Job: Dental office manager

Education: High school, some college and Dental Assistant graduate

Hobbies: In my free time, I’m passionate about health and wellness, whether that’s flowing through a yoga session, sauna, meditation, biking or hiking, and soaking up the outdoors. I love exploring new places, trying different foods, and embracing experiences that challenge my routine and expand my perspective. Staying active, adventurous and grounded is how I recharge.

Career Goal: To get my CCAF.



What do you like about working at the 445th? I genuinely enjoy working with the 445th AMDS, and the people I get to serve alongside. I work with individuals from different backgrounds, career fields and perspectives many of whom I wouldn’t cross paths with in my civilian life. That variety challenges me to grow personally and professionally, and it’s

something I truly value about being in the Air Force Reserve. Through this unit, I’ve also had the incredible opportunity to participate in missions and provide dental care in communities across the world – experiences I never would have had otherwise. Knowing that our work has a direct impact, both at home and globally, gives me a strong sense of purpose and pride in being part of this team.

Why did you join the Air Force? I joined the Air Force because I wanted to create a strong foundation for my future, both personally and professionally. I was thinking long term, not just about a career, but about stability, growth and the opportunity to earn a second retirement. The benefits the Air Force provides, especially health care and educational opportunities, also allow me to take better care of my family. I knew that by serving, I’d be investing in a future that supports both my goals and my loved ones.

Wing announces first lieutenant promotions

Air Reserve Personnel Center officials announced results for the Calendar Year 2025 Air Force Reserve Line and Nonline first lieutenant (first half) promotions Aug. 15. The boards selected 153 Citizen Airmen for promotion.

The selection boards convened at ARPC April 1 through 15 to determine those officers best and fully qualified to assume the next higher grade.

Categories considered during these promotions boards were: Line of the Air Force, Chaplain, Line of the Air Force-Judge Advocate,

Medical Corps, Dental Corps, Medical Service Corps, Nurse Corps and Biomedical Sciences Corps.

Four Airmen from the 445th Airlift Wing have been selected for promotion to first lieutenant:

Joseph Brovont with the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron; Cody Green and Heather Willig with the 89th Airlift Squadron; and Casey Jones with the 445th Maintenance Group.

Congratulations to our new first lieutenants!



News Briefs

Promotions

Chief Master Sergeant
Ryan Lamarr, SFS

Master Sergeant
Devin Criden, MXS
Timothy Young, AES

Technical Sergeant
Caleb McWilliams, AMXS
Isaac Smith, 89 AS
Jared Trabert, MXS

Staff Sergeant
Alexander Hall, LRS
Luke Jeung, AES

Senior Airman
Evan Johnson, AMXS
Hayden Arnold, SFS
Puja Khabatari, SFS
Tatiana Rivera, 87 APS
Zachary Ewald, AMXS

Airman
Jarred Livelsburger, SFS
Saroj Chhetri, FSS

Newcomers

A1C Daniel Azubuike, AES
A1C D'Abriea Benson, 87 APS
AB Mamady Dabo, 87 APS
SrA Ivy Deckard, 87 APS
SrA Sean Erwin, MXS
A1C Lorenzo Fernandez Gil, 87 APS
SSgt Brannon Goodbar, MXS
SSgt Chelsea Henning, 87 APS
SSgt Canaan Holmes, 89 AS
SrA James Lee, MXS
SSgt Kyle Lime, CES
SrA Adam Lowery, MXS
SSgt Timothy Manning, MXS
Maj Nsehniitoo Mbah, ASTS
TSgt Laura McArthur, OG
SrA Cryshel Moore,

AMXS
TSgt Haley Morris, OG
A1C Shafick Celis Munoz, OSS
SrA Dru Palmer, SFS
SSgt Taquirra Pittman, SFS
A1C Seth Rychnovsky, OSS
SrA Jacob Sherer, CES
MSgt Jose Vargas Gonzalez, 87 APS
Amn Corey Wells, CES
Capt Eric Yandura, AES
A1C Rediat Zeleke, MSG

Childcare Survey

If you have children, Air Reserve Command is looking for your input for their Child Care Survey. Survey data will be sent to each wing for action to create local childcare solutions. Check out the flyer in the Blue Pages to complete the survey.

Buckeye Flyer

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2025 Family Day
Football
& Squadron
Tailgate



Saturday, Sept. 6, 12-3p.m.
Location: Bass Lake

- Football & Tailgate
- Tug of War
- Volleyball
- Cornhole
- Kids zone/bounce houses
- C-17 static display (bus transportation provided)
- Face Painting
- Video game station
- Inflatable jailbreak

Bring picnic blankets & lawn chairs

PHAs ensure Airmen's health, readiness

By Staff Sgt. Angela Jackson
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Being ready for any mission and able to deploy at a moment's notice is the individual responsibility of everyone in the Air Force. This includes meeting training standards, keeping personal, financial and family preparedness current, and monitoring overall health.

Part of this includes a mandatory Periodic Health Assessment, or PHA, Airmen must complete every year.

This comprehensive health screening evaluates such things as vision, hearing and sight and includes immunizations, blood tests and mental health questionnaires that help identify potential health concerns that could impact an Airman's ability to do their job or deploy.

Once completed, the PHA confirms if Airmen are medically cleared to do their jobs effectively and safely in garrison or abroad.

"When Airmen are 'fit to fight,' they can perform their duties to their best abilities", said Master Sgt. Kathleen Burden, 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron flight medical technician.

Burden stressed the importance of seeking proactive care, following prescribed medications and medical instructions by health care providers, and revealing all medical information to the AMDS.

"It's important to disclose your medical history because early identification prevents deployment complications," Burden said. "Plus, we want to make sure you are taking care of yourself. Reporting protects both the individual and the wing's readiness."

Burden admits the stigma associated with report-

ing health issues – especially mental health – can be a barrier to service members disclosing information or seeking the necessary care they need.

"I think the stigmas around reporting medical issues has lessened, and for the most part members are doing a better job at letting us know when health issues arise," Burden said. "We are finding that more Airmen are self-identifying things and are updating us, although it could always improve. We can access outside provider records, so even if you don't tell us directly, we are able to see changes to your health records."

According to Senior Airmen Joseph Saa, 445th Logistics Readiness Squadron logistics planner, the key is making Airman feel supported in sharing their complete health history with AMDS providers during the PHA.

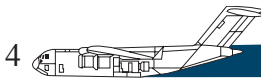
"I generally feel comfortable sharing my medical details, though it's a bit different than with my doctor at home who I have more rapport with, and they are more familiar me," Saa said. "I think the PHAs are an easy way to stay up to date with shots and things like dental. They just tell me when to go to the appointment. It's a really easy process."

If it is considered an "easy process," it is because Burden painstakingly examines each PHA in detail.

"I review every single Airman's file line by line with a fine-tooth comb to ensure retention and deployment standards are met," Burden explained. "I also look for any health changes that may require a waiver or might disqualify them from deploying."



Master Sgt. Matthew Sanders, left, 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron lab superintendent, draws blood from Maj. Matthew Bush, 445th Operations Support Squadron pilot, during a Periodic Health Assessment (PHA) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Aug. 3, 2025. PHAs are a comprehensive look at an Airman's overall health and medical readiness for deployment. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela Jackson)



Supporting mental health during back-to-school season

By Vera Ensalaco
445th Airlift Wing Director of Psychological Health

As summer wanes and a new school year begins, children and youth face a mix of excitement, nerves and transition.

School readiness means more than just fresh notebooks; it is about fostering mental health and emotional resilience.

One in five children experiences a mental, emotional or behavioral disorder, often untreated. Research shows strong links between mental wellness and academic success, making mental health a critical part of back-to-school prep.

Tips for Parents and Caregivers

- Talk openly about school-related anxiety and normalize those feelings.
- Create routines to offer stability: meals, sleep, study and downtime.
- Prepare in advance by visiting schools, meeting teachers and practicing morning routines.
- Encourage social connections: friendships help ease the transition.

Educators Can Help Too

- Recognize warning signs through mental health training.
- Build safe spaces where students feel supported and seen.
- Teach mental health in the curriculum to foster empathy and reduce stigma.

Resources That Make a Difference

- FindSupport.gov: explore treatment options and resources
- SAMHSA Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP – free 24/7 support
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: text/call/chat anytime
- StopBullying.gov: strategies for prevention
- SchoolSafety.gov: fostering safe learning spaces
- “Talk. They Hear You.”®: tips for youth substance use prevention

Let’s make mental wellness a priority this school year for every student, every family, every classroom.

AW from page 2

ognized for its contributions to the Global War on Terror and service in the community. The archives of the unit’s newsletter contain frequent articles that highlight incredible acts of valor, both on and off duty, conducted by the men and women of the 445th AW.

The 445th members’ relentless determination to be accountable for their training and medical readiness has established the unit as one who the Air Force has been able to consistently call on repeatedly, often as the first source for airlift support.

In March 2003, Brig. Gen. Rusty Moen, then-wing commander, recognized the value of this readiness when he stated the Air Force knew the unit was consistently “ready, willing and able to step up and get the job done, regardless of the degree of difficulty, remoteness of the operating location or hardships encountered. We have the training. Our shots are up to date. We are ready.”

Today, members of the 445th Airlift Wing continue to demonstrate their readiness, to include recent successes in deployments to the Central Command Area of Responsibility and unprecedented humanitarian airlifts.

The 445th is a legacy unit whose origins trace back to World War II when it was a bombardment group.

The 445th BG (Heavy), a B-24 unit activated April 1, 1943, earned six Battle Honors and flew more than 200 missions in the war.

In the unit’s history, members of the 445th BG

were recognized for their courage, determination, loyalty, citizenship, devotion to duty and character which made it one of the outstanding groups of the Air Force in the Second World War.

These hallmark qualities of the 445th BG are easily recognized among the Citizen Airmen of the 445th Airlift Wing yesterday and today, and will continue to serve as a driving force of excellence for the unit’s next 30 years and beyond.



Reservists with the 445th Airlift Wing depart from a deployment briefing and proceed to their deployed work areas during the wing’s deployment exercise at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Aug. 6, 2011. (Photo by Senior Airman Matthew Cook.)

Around the wing ...



(left) Senior Airman Jackie Hwang, 445th Security Forces Squadron fire team member, undergoes small arms training during unit training assembly at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Aug. 3, 2025. The combat arms training helps security forces Airmen maintain readiness, and the combat arms training helps security forces Airmen maintain readiness. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough)



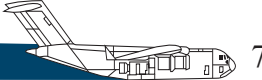
(right) Staff Sgt. Jorden Terry, Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) instructor and 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, demonstrates packing with a hemostatic dressing pressure bandage at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Aug. 2, 2025. When a tourniquet isn’t suitable, hemostatic dressings are crucial for controlling bleeding in compressible wounds. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Johnathan Quiñones)



(left) Master Sgt. Matthew Sanders, 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron lab superintendent, prepares to install vials of blood specimens into a centrifuge which is used to separate the components of blood samples for testing during a Periodic Health Assessment (PHA) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Aug. 3, 2025. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela Jackson)



(right) Second Lt. Madeline Welin, right, 89th Airlift Squadron C-17 Globemaster III pilot, poses for a picture while giving a tour of the C-17 cockpit to the members of The Abilities Connection at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Aug. 8, 2025. TAC is a nonprofit organization that serves people with disabilities and manufactures cargo nets for U.S. Air Force aircraft, including the 445th Airlift Wing’s C-17s. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Johnathan Quiñones)



Resiliency Check: Achieving your best possible self through Values-Based Goals

By Master Sgt. Jason Cordle
445th Airlift Wing Resiliency Integrator

I'm constantly thinking about how we can build a stronger, more resilient Air Force. This isn't just about surviving tough situations; it's about thriving, about becoming the best versions of ourselves, both professionally and personally.

This brings us to the concept of achieving your "Best Possible Self." A journey powered by values-based goals.

We often hear about setting SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. While SMART goals are important for task accomplishment, they don't always address the deeper question: Why? Why are you pursuing this goal? What values are driving you? This is where values-based goals come in.

They provide the "why" – the driving force that fuels your motivation, strengthens your resilience, and ultimately, helps you become your Best Possible Self.

So, how do we identify and leverage our values to achieve this?

1. Know Your Values:

Take some time for introspection. What truly matters to you? What principles guide your decisions? What makes you feel proud and fulfilled?

Some common values include integrity, service before self, excellence in all we do (our Air Force Core Values), family, community, learning, growth, courage, compassion and honesty.

For example, if you value "growth," are you actively seeking new skills, taking on challenging assignments, or reading and learning new things?

2. Connect Your Goals to Your Values:

Look at your goals, both professional and personal. Are they aligned with your core values? If not, consider

adjusting them or adding new goals that are.

For example, let's say you value "service." Instead of simply aiming for a promotion, consider setting a goal to mentor junior Airmen or contribute to a team project that benefits the unit. This aligns your career advancement with your value of service, making the pursuit more meaningful and motivating.

3. Craft Values-Based SMART Goals:

Integrate your values into the SMART framework. Here's an example:

- Value: Excellence
- Goal: To improve technical proficiency
- Values-Based SMART Goal: "To achieve expert-level proficiency by attending PME Course and mentoring 10 junior Airmen in the application of this skill by next quarter. This will contribute to the unit's mission readiness and allow me to exemplify excellence in my technical area."

Notice how the goal is not only SMART but also explicitly connected to the value of excellence and incorporates service to others.

4. Embrace Challenges as Opportunities for Growth:

The path to your Best Possible Self won't always be smooth. You will face challenges and setbacks. But remember these challenges are opportunities for growth and learning.

Draw strength from your values. Let them guide you through difficult times and help you stay focused on your long-term vision. By setting values-based goals, we can unlock our inner potential, build a stronger sense of purpose, and contribute to a more resilient and effective Air Force.



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