

Serving the men and women of the 434th Air Refueling Wing, Grissom ARB, Ind.

Stratotankers get aeromedical upgrades

By Staff Sgt. Ben Mota
Public Affairs staff

The KC-135R stratotanker is known by many for its ability to perform aerial refueling, but recently Airmen from Grissom prepared the aircraft to do more than just that.

The KC-135R stratotanker is receiving an aeromedical upgrade. This upgrades its internal cabin electrical outlets to support the needs associated with Aero-medical missions from around the world.

These missions are an essential tool used to support medical personnel during the transportation of injured military members.

“The electrical outlets being added to the aircraft will allow medical personal to plug in equipment without the use of extension cords and surge protectors,” said Master Sgt. Tim Hill, a crew chief with the 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

The upgrade is directed at the Air Force level and is being accomplished as a time compliance technical order modification – or TCTO. The Air Forces’ entire fleet of KC-135s are being upgraded.

The upgrade includes adding three electrical outlets to the aircraft to increase the amount of amperage that can be used by medical personnel. In the past the galley had to be unplugged



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ben Mota
Master Sgt. Tom Patton, an electro environmental systems technician, installs outlets in a KC-135R stratotanker.

to provide electricity to the equipment. With the upgrade the galley can stay plugged in and still provide a safe amount of electricity to the rest of the aircraft.

“Before the upgrade we had to monitor the amount of electricity that was being used because we did not want to blow a breaker,” he added. “The electricity is an essential compo-

ment of the mission because it provides power to all of the medical equipment.”

When the aircraft is transporting medical patients it has to run all of the equipment that is inside of an intensive care unit. This includes life sustaining equipment such as heart monitors, breathing machines, and defibrillators.

Senior Master Sgt Brent Stephen, a production superintendent with the 434th AMXS, recently went on one of these missions. He said the KC-135R Stratotanker is a good aircraft to use for such missions because of its large size and its ability to travel long distances.

Maintainers install the roller system in the aircraft before it deploys to facilitate easier loading the injured military personnel and the equipment needed to take care of them.

During the missions the aircraft can carry three pallets of medical equipment capable of caring for up to fifteen patients.

“It was eye opening experience to see that the work we do helps to save people’s lives,” Sergeant Hill said. He has participated in three of these missions.

So far Grissom has five aircraft converted and ready to answer the aeromedical call, with more slated as the modification kits are received.

Vaccines help fight against flu strains

By Lt. Col. (Dr.) Brad Winterton
1st Air Force Epidemiologist

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. -- Two hundred years ago, the average life expectancy was about 40 years. Today, it is nearly 80 years. That doubling of life expectancy can be attributed almost entirely to just two things: improved sanitation and immunizations. All other medical advances combined don't even begin to come close to the effects of those two.

The success of vaccines has become their biggest stumbling block. Only the very oldest Americans have seen family members die of diphtheria, measles, mumps, smallpox, tetanus or whooping cough.

Thanks to vaccines, we are insulated from most of the illness and death that were part of everyday life for almost the entire history of mankind (and still are in many parts of the world). Is immunization 100 percent effective? No.

A few people can receive multiple doses of a vaccine and never develop immunity to that disease.

Are vaccines 100 percent safe? No. No medical procedure is 100 percent safe.

A few people have negative reactions to vaccines that cause serious illness or even death. However, given the choice of having a quarter to half



Senior Airman Megan Knutson, a medical technician assigned to the 28th Medical Operations Squadron at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., fills a syringe for a vaccination May 13, 2009. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Kasey Zickmund)

of all children die before reaching adolescence (as still happens today in countries where sanitation is poor and vaccines are not available) versus having one child in a million suffer a serious negative effect of a vaccine, the choice is pretty obvious. It is a

genuine tragedy for that one; it is literally lifesaving for the other hundreds of thousands.

Immunization is largely an individual choice. Those who do not wish to be immunized can refuse based on religious or philosophical objections. However, such individuals are still protected by the very vaccines they refuse by being surrounded with people who are immunized; it's called "population immunity." Once a certain percentage of the population is immune, diseases no longer can circulate because they can't find enough susceptible individuals to propagate effectively.

For most diseases, population immunity is achieved when about 80 percent of the population is immune. If the level dips below that, the disease has enough susceptible hosts to circulate again. But even when population immunity is reached, unimmunized individuals are still at risk and can (and often do) contract the disease when exposed to an active case.

This year, we face a new influenza virus circulating across the globe. We know it as H1N1, novel, or "swine" flu. It spreads easily from person to person but, gratefully, causes mostly nonlife-threatening illness, similar to seasonal

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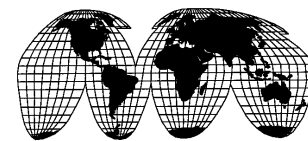
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Any questions regarding any

content should be directed to the editor (765) 688-3348.

Staff

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Photo by Master Sgt. Rob Hoffman

Yellow Ribbon

Tanya Cox, an Airman and Family Readiness center volunteer, helps children with crafts during a Yellow Ribbon event held in Kokomo recently. The program seeks to minimize the stresses of military service, specifically when a reservist deploys and the family faces separation.

Flu, from page 2

flu.

The H1N1 virus is expected to sicken more than 100 million Americans over the next two years, and could take the lives of 100,000. In addition, there is always a chance H1N1 could mutate to cause much more serious illness and much greater loss of life.

In response to this new flu, government agencies and vaccine manufacturers have partnered to prepare a vaccine against it. U.S. and European companies have been manufacturing seasonal flu vaccines for many years.

This year has been a challenge because the companies making the H1N1 flu vaccine are the same ones that also make the seasonal flu vaccine. They cranked up their capacity and completed the seasonal flu vaccine as quickly as possible, so they could then turn their efforts and resources to the H1N1 vaccine.

Seasonal flu vaccine is available now across most of the U.S.

The H1N1 flu vaccine should begin to be available by mid-October; however, because there may not be enough for everyone, health officials have identified those groups who should receive first priority for the vaccine.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials strongly recommend the H1N1 vaccine for pregnant women, parents of infants less than 6 months old, children and young adults 6 months to 24 years, and adults under 65 with underlying illness that places them at higher risk for complications from flu. These CDC recommendations are based entirely on what has been observed with this virus so far.

A disproportionately high percentage of the serious illness and death due to H1N1 has been among pregnant women. It also affects children and young people up to age 24 more than adults, and causes more serious illness in children, young people, and adults with underlying illness. Adults over age 65 seem to have some immunity to H1N1, probably from exposure to a similar flu virus in the 1930s and/or early 1940s.

I believe in immunization. I believe Edward Jenner, the doctor who developed the very first vaccine against smallpox 200 years ago was inspired to do what he did. I believe vaccines are a great blessing to those who live in our day, allowing us to avoid many of the things that routinely killed

our ancestors and their children. Dr. Jenner's vaccine led to the eradication of smallpox from the face of the earth and the development of other vaccines against diseases such as anthrax, chicken pox, diphtheria, hepatitis A and B, measles, rubella, whooping cough, yellow fever and now even some types of cancer.

The Salk and Sabin polio vaccines led to the near-eradication of polio; only Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nigeria still have circulating polio virus, and intense efforts are underway to complete the eradication process there. Once polio is gone, World Health Organization officials plan to focus on the global eradication of measles.

Vaccines against malaria and other illnesses are in development, will further benefit mankind, and may lead to the eradication of even more diseases.

Vaccine-preventable illnesses have caused unimaginable suffering and death; now most of them seem like ancient history.

I will be in line, with my family in tow, to receive our shots as they become available, including the H1N1 vaccine.

ReserveNet now called ARCNet

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. -- ReserveNet has a new name and a new mission.

After a year of coordination between the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard, ARCNet was established Sept. 1 to provide ReserveNet capabilities to ANG members.

Until now, only reservists had access to these resources used to train, communicate and prepare for executing their missions. The new name, ARCNet, was chosen to reflect users across the Air Reserve Component spectrum.

"ARCNet will provide a standard ancillary training program for the Air National Guard," said Chief Master Sergeant Leo Kreifels of the Nebraska Air National Guard. "Prior to ARCNet, each wing created its own way of monitoring ancillary training requirements. The introduction of ARCNet will streamline the process across the Air National Guard."

The ANG community currently is interested in using part of the ARCNet capability - ancillary training, manage-



ment inspection and volunteer opportunity systems. Air Force reservists will continue to have access to the all of the previous ReserveNet capabilities, including reserve duty planning and participation and status management.

Six National Guard units initially will have access to ARCNet. The National Guard Bureau plans to bring

the remaining ANG units on board in 2010.

"The Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard face similar challenges in maintaining a fighting force of primarily part-time workers," said Lisa Woodson ARCNet program manager at Robins AFB. "Partnering together to address these challenges provides value for both sides." (AFRCNS)

Search begins for new aerial tanker

By Master Sgt. Russell Petcoff
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON -- Senior Department of Defense and Air Force officials announced the rollout of the KC-X Acquisition Program at a Pentagon briefing Sept. 24. Air Force leaders are seeking a replacement for the KC-135 Stratotanker that has been a stalwart of the tanker fleet for more than 53 years.

Today, the department is announcing its acquisition strategy for a replacement aerial refueling tanker fleet for the aging KC-135 and KC-10 fleet, said William Lynn, deputy secretary of defense. He termed the search to be a "best value" competition, not one based solely on cost.

"We tried to play this straight down the middle," Mr. Lynn said.

Michael Donley, secretary of the Air Force, and Ashton Carter, undersecretary

of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, also took part in the hour-long briefing.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates returned the KC-X program to the Air Force during an address he gave at the 2009 Air Force Association Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition at the National Harbor Convention Center, Oxon Hill, Md., Sept. 16.

"I don't need to belabor the importance of getting this done soon and done right," Secretary Gates said. "I have confidence that the KC-X selection authority is in good hands with the service's leadership team of Secretary Donley and (Air Force Chief of Staff) General (Norton) Schwartz."

Secretary Donley said the KC-135 first joined the service's inventory in August 1956, with the youngest one dating to 1964. The ever-accumulating age of the tanker fleet is driving this

effort, he said.

"We need to move on with this recapitalization," Secretary Donley said. Air Force officials hope to announce a KC-X decision in the summer of 2010.

Currently, there are 415 KC-135s in the Air Force inventory. The KC-X program calls for 179 new tankers over 15 years, according to Secretary Donley.

The first production KC-X delivery is planned for 2015, Secretary Donley said, with a planned initial operating capability of 2017.

KC-X must be a highly capable and go-to-war-on-day-1-ready aircraft for the warfighter, Secretary Donley said.

"We expect the KC-X to be far more capable than the KC-135," Secretary Donley said.

Mr. Carter said the RFP favors "no one but the warfighter and taxpayer." (AFNS)



Photo by Airman Jerilyn Quintanilla

The last KC-135E taxis after its final flight Sept. 23, 2009, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. The aircraft is now headed to the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group, where it will supply parts to other KC-135 models still in operation.

Final KC-135E retires at Davis-Monthan

By Staff Sgt. Tim Beckham
355th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

9/25/2009 - DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. -- It was a historical day on the flightline here Sept. 23, as the last KC-135E model touched down after its final flight.

The aircraft, which served the Air Force for more than 50 years, will now spend its days basking in the sun in the 'Boneyard' and providing much needed parts to the rest of the fleet.

While the aircraft, with tail number 56-3630, only spent the last couple of decades with the Maine Air National Guard, it has long played a vital role in air superiority for the United States.

"We are proud of the heritage of this aircraft," said Col. John Thomas, commander of the 101st Maintenance Group, Maine ANG. "This airplane was delivered to active duty in 1958, has served through the Cold War,

went to Vietnam a couple of times and served in current contingencies."

This aircraft not only served in many operations, but it also set a speed record in the 1950s by flying from New York to London and back in only 12 hours, the colonel added.

Ten of the E-model KC-135s are being preserved as static displays at various locations and three others are scheduled to be used as ground instructional trainers. But, for the operational Air Force, it's the end of an era as the service transitions to the new air-to-air refueling tanker, dubbed the KC-X.

"For the 827th Aircraft Sustainment Group, this is a bittersweet day," said Col. Robert Torick, 827th ACSG commander and project officer for the KC-135E retirement. "While we close this chapter, the air refueling mission story continues. We say goodbye to a real workhorse who has played a criti-

cal role in the success of the Air Force mission over the last 50-plus years."

Even though this aircraft is now officially retired, the E-model will still play a role in keeping other KC-135 models in the air.

"It (the aircraft) may be here for another 15 to 20 years as we harvest parts off it," said Col. Tom Schneider, 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group commander. "We are going to put this aircraft to good use. It will go into storage, which means it will be eligible for parts withdrawal to keep the rest of the fleet flying."

Colonel Schneider said the reason the aircraft that come to AMARG still play an important role after retirement is due to the quality of their upkeep.

"Generations of Airmen have gone to war with this aircraft," he said. "It's just amazing how our maintainers keep these aircraft flying for so long."

ARPC sets milestone

The Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver demonstrated the significance of personnel service delivery transformation and centralized service by surpassing 1 million customer issues this summer.

In October 2004, ARPC implemented a customer relationship management strategy and online capabilities through the center's personnel service Web site - the virtual Personnel Center - Guard and Reserve.

At the time, the center was getting as few as 45 issues a month outside of customer's phone inquiries.

Today ARPC averages more than 13,000 issues each month in response to phone calls, e-mail, fax, mail or via the Web.

Issues are electronic memos that are generated automatically by customer's Web-based requests, or by ARPC phone counselors.

CFC underway

The CFC was established in 1961 and is the largest workplace charity campaign in the country.

This annual fall fund-raising drive allows millions of federal employees and military personnel to contribute to thousands of local and national non-profit organizations.

Unit CFC project officers have more information.

New web site

Air Force Personnel Center officials have developed a new Air Force civilian employment Web site to educate potential applicants and the general public about available civilian jobs, the eligibility and application process, and finding job opportunities in various specialties and career fields.

The new site will help clarify the Air Force's current civilian hiring process and provide site visitors with detailed information about available career fields. The site also helps explain federal employment benefits and educates visitors on student job opportunities.

Air Force civilian employment opportunities can be found at the new Web site, <http://www.afpc.randolph>.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays

Grand re-opening

Brig. Gen. Dean Despinoy, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, right, cuts the ribbon to officially reopen the base fitness center. Joining the general, left are Vicki Butte, Bruce Cannady, and Will Somers all from Services.

af.mil/afcivilianjobs. For more information about civilian employment, please call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102 or e-mail tfsc.sa_feedback@randolph.af.mil.

Key Spouse Training

Spouses looking for a way to become involved in their Air Force can start with the revised Key Spouse

Training Program.

The program was recently re-introduced, and provides a vital link to families, especially during deployments. Key spouses work as a team with unit commanders and first sergeants to create an official communication network with families.

For more information, please contact your Airman and Family Readiness Center at Ext. 4812.

Heartland Warrior

In the limelight

Medals

Meritorious Service Medal— Lt. Col. James Corcoran, 72nd Air Refueling Squadron; Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Deangulo, 434th Mission Support Squadron; Senior Master Sgt. George Farris, 434th Maintenance Squadron; Master Sgt. Robert Keenum, 434th Maintenance Operations Flight; Technical Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz, 434th Public Affairs; Master Sgt. James McBain, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron; Senior Master Sgt. William Megnin, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron; Chief Master Sgt. James Owens, 434th AMS; Master Sgt. Kevin Pitzer, 434th AMS; Master Sgt. Gary Scheiter, 434th MOF; Maj. Andrew Schliesman, 434th Financial Management Office; Lt. Col. Mark Sigler, 434th Operations Support Flight; Col. Stan Sheley, 434th Maintenance Group; Master Sgt. Kevin Smith, 434th Mission Support Flight; Senior Master Sgt. Randy Sutton, 434th Air Refueling Wing; Master Sgt. James Tubb, 434th AMS; Maj. Kari Tackett, 72nd ARS; Master Sgt. Scott Ward, 72nd ARS; and Master Sgt. Wesley Marion, 434th ARW.



Air Force Commendation Medal—Technical Sgt. Charles Coyne, 434th MXS; Staff Sgt. Jason Darland, 434th MXS; Senior Master Sgt. Darin Daugherty, 434th MXS; Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Devine, 434th AMXS; Maj. John Dwyer, 434th Services Flight; Technical Sgt. Michael Garman, 72nd ARS; Senior Master Sgt. Chuck Gill, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron; Master Sgt. Victor Hasstedt, 434th LRS; Capt. Gloria Hatcher, 72nd ARS; Technical Sgt. Kenneth Knight, 72nd ARS; Staff Sgt. Anthony Krisher, 72nd ARS; Capt. Jeffery O’Toole, 434th LRS; Technical Sgt. Mark Ruhlig, 434th AMXS; Maj. Randall Stivers, 434th Security Forces Squadron; Technical Sgt. Daniel Tomasiewicz, 434th AMXS; and Master Sgt. Ronald Wright, 434th Mission Support Flight.

Air Force Achievement Medal—Technical Sgt. Troy Bell, 434th AMXS; Staff Sgt. Joseph Boelcke, 434th AMXS; Senior Airman Benjamin Bond, 434th AMXS; Senior Airman Jerod Foley, 434th FMO; Technical Sgt. Steven Keller, 434th AMXS; Technical Sgt. James Massie, 434th MXS; Senior Airman James Poole, 434th SF; Staff Sgt. Damon Silvey, 434th MXS; and Technical Sgt. Eddie Stapp, 434th AMXS.

Aerial Achievement Medal—Master Sgt. John English, 434th Operations Support Squadron; Senior Master Sgt. Paul Houser, 434th OSS; and Lt. Col. Paul Wietbrock, 74th Air Refueling Squadron.

Air Medal—Capt. Stephen Akins, 434th OSS; Maj. Joseph Austin, 434th OSS; Capt. Chad Tice, 434th OSS; Master Sgt. John English, 434th OSS; 1st Lt. Brandon German, 434th OSS; Lt. Col. Douglas Gullion, 434th OSS; Lt. Col. Brian Hollis, 434th OSS; Senior Master Sgt. Paul Houser, 434th OSS; Technical Sgt. Kenneth Knight, 434th OSS; Capt. Ladd Leimer, 434th OSS; Senior Master Sgt. Laura McKee, 434th OSS; Technical Sgt. Deborah Melton, 434th OSS; Lt. Col. Brian Nance, 434th OSS; Lt. Col. Thomas Pea, 434th OSS; Lt. Col. Thomas Riedell, 434th OSS; Technical Sgt. Joesph Swisher, 434th OSS; Capt. William Werth, 434th OSS; Lt. Col. Paul Wietbrock, 434th OSS; and 1st Lt. Joel Webley, 434th OSS.

Promotions

To technical sergeant—Agustin Jaramillo, 434th SFS.

To staff sergeant—Jessica Smith, 434th AMDS; Travis Stephens, 434th SFS; Brian Baumfalk, 434th MXS; Robert Oberting, 434th MXS; Jessica Franklin, 434th LRS; and Mary Struck, 49th APF.

To Airman 1st Class—Jamie Wheeler, 434th AMDS; and Richard Barrett, 434th SFS.

To Airman—Bradford Wemmer, 434th SVF; Amber Kruthoff, 434th LRS; and Haley Hill, 434th CES.



Photo by Senior Airman Larry Reid Jr.

Airmen of the 432d Air Expeditionary Wing surpassed the 600,000 flight hour mark in the MQ-1 Predator unmanned aircraft system Sept. 4 at Creech Air Force Base, Nev. The Predator's primary mission is interdiction and conducting armed reconnaissance against critical, perishable targets.

Predator passes 600,000 flight hours

CREECH AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. -- Airmen of the 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing here surpassed the 600,000 flight hour mark in the MQ-1 Predator unmanned aircraft system Sept. 4 here.

The Predator fleet passed 250,000 hours in June 2007, after 12 years and eight months for the aircraft to fly an additional 250,000 hours to reach 500,000 flying hours in February 2009.

Due to the continuous demand for the aircraft by combatant commanders, the Predator reached 600,000 flying hours seven months later.

An aircrew from the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron flew this milestone mission in support of overseas contingency operations.

"We are proud to be a part of yet another RPV milestone and will continue to make significant contributions in the future," said Lt. Col. Robert Kiebler, the 15th RS commander.

"The men and women of the 15th RS provide continuous 24/7/365 intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, close-air support, and combat search and rescue capability to support the warfighters in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their dedication and commitment in the face of adversity is nothing short of astounding," he said.

Fielded in 1995, the Predator's primary mission is to provide armed reconnaissance, airborne surveillance and target acquisition to commanders in the field. The Predator can be armed with two laser-guided AGM-114 Hellfire missiles and carries the

Multispectral Targeting System, which integrates electro-optical, infrared, laser designator and illuminator into a single sensor package.

Col. Pete Gersten, the 432d Wing and 432d Air Expeditionary Wing commander, said the capabilities of the Predator have made the aircraft a vital asset to the joint ground forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"The Predator provides our ground forces direct support with its unblinking eye and persistent stare, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," Colonel Gersten said. "This milestone is a true testament to the impact this capability has in the fight."

Currently there are more than 31 Predator combat air patrols flying 24/7, 365 days a year over Iraq and Afghanistan. (AFNS)