

# Heartland WARRIOR

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U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Benjamin Mota

## On the cover...

An A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft from the Air National Guard's 122nd Fighter Wing in Fort Wayne, Ind., refuels from a KC-135R Stratotanker aircraft from the Air Force Reserve's 434th Air Refueling Wing at Grissom during a mission over central Indiana April 1. The refueling was conducted during a cadet orientation flight with University of Notre Dame Air Force ROTC Detachment 225 and Navy ROTC.

# Jackson visits Grissom

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota  
Public Affairs staff

Lt. Gen. James Jackson, Chief of Air Force Reserve and Air Force Reserve Command commander, got his first look at Grissom and met with Hoosier Wing Airmen before speaking at a Reserve Officers Association dinner here April 17.

"We were very honored to host General Jackson at the Hoosier wing," said Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander. "The visit went very well as he got to see what the great Citizen Airmen do here every single day."

Jackson, who serves as the principal adviser on reserve matters to the Air Force Chief of Staff and supervises 67,000 reservists, started his visit meeting with Airmen and junior NCOs during a breakfast, where he answered their questions and provided senior-leader insight.

"I appreciate what each and every one of you do; this is a very great organization," Jackson said to Airmen. "You should be very proud of the aircraft on the ramp and what you do because you do it very well."

After breakfast, the general toured Grissom's Airmen Wellness Center, which is a unique facility that places all of Grissom's resources for Airmen under one roof, before heading to the base's fire station.

At the fire house, Grissom's firefighters showcased how they are best equipped and trained emergency responders in the region, and the 434th ARW's new explosive ordnance disposal unit briefed him on recently becoming fully-mission capable allowing them to respond and provide their services in the local area.

The general then toured Grissom's maintenance back shops and got to see himself in the floor of one of Grissom's KC-135R Stratotankers - a 1962 model - which he remarked was one of the best kept aircraft in the Air Force."

"The 434th Air Refueling Wing is a superior wing," he said during his lunch with community leaders and elected officials. "The wing has done great work over the past 20 years and will continue to do great work in the future."

See 'Jackson' page 11



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

Lt. Gen. James Jackson, Chief of Air Force Reserve and Air Force Reserve Command commander, speaks to Airmen during a breakfast at Grissom April 17.

# Gates takes over as new vice commander

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner  
Public Affairs staff

The road of life has been said to be an adventure, one in which a person doesn't always know what's ahead, but can be made all the more rewarding through preparation.

Such was the case for Col. Hiram P. Gates, III, who as a U.S. Air Force Academy basic Cadet in 1984, could not have predicted he would end up being the 434th Air Refueling Wing vice commander 31 years later.

"No one was more excited than I was to have Colonel Paul Gates join us as the next 434th ARW vice commander," said Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th ARW commander. "I've known and worked with Paul for many years, and I know what a talented and dedicated leader and officer he is.

"Colonel Gates is absolutely the right person to serve as the wing's vice commander, and I look forward to working with him as we move the Hoosier Wing forward," Schwartz added.

Gates recently moved into the number two position in the Hoosier Wing as he replaces Col. Bryan Reinhart, who retired May 1. Gates previously served as the 434th Operations Group deputy commander.

"I knew the outstanding reputation of the people of the 434th, so my hope was to be able to stay here and work with the great folks at Grissom," he said. "I was hoping to get this vice commander position because it's an excellent opportunity to help Air-

men across the wing."

Despite not always knowing the future, the colonel says his road led him to his dream job in the Air Force because he prepared himself along the way - a message he wants to carry to all Airmen.

"You don't know where you're going to go, and for me, there were several times my career took a different path than I expected," he said. "The best thing you can do is always be prepared for every opportunity.

"This can be a hard thing to do because it's demanding, especially with the time required for training, PME or advanced degrees; But if you make time there are so many more options that are open for you," he added.

His latest option puts him second in command of the Air Force Reserve's largest KC-135R Stratotanker unit, a position in which the colonel said he's extremely excited to serve.

"I'm looking forward to getting out and broadening my view on everything," he said. "A vice commander has got to be ready to step in for the wing commander, represent him inside and outside the wing and act as the conduit for the concerns of Airmen."

In only a couple months on the job, Gates said he's been impressed with Grissom's Airmen already.

"Everyone knows what they're doing here, and things really function well because of that," he elaborated. "Every Airman is vital to the operation of the wing and enables us to do our mission."



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner

Col. Hiram P. Gates, III

To keep things running as smoothly, the colonel said he's going to also be really focused on retaining the best Airmen Grissom has.

"We need to make sure they know how valuable they are. We want to keep them prepared and retrain them as they contribute to the mission of the Air Force," he added.

Gates received his commission in 1988 as a graduate from the Air Force Academy, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in international relations.

He entered pilot training at Williams Air Force Base, Arizona, and was assigned to the 905th Air Refueling Squadron, Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota.

In 1997, Gates trans-

ferred to the Air Force Reserve, where he flew KC-135s with the 63rd Air Refueling Squadron at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan.

Gates has held numerous command and leadership positions to include aircraft commander, instructor pilot, program manager, director of airspace management, chief of current operations, flight commander, squadron commander and deputy group commander.

He is a command pilot with more than 5,000 flying hours and has deployed in support of Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Provide Comfort, Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Deny Flight, Allied Force, Joint Guardian, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

# Grissom listed as KC-46A candidate

WASHINGTON -- The Air Force announced its candidate bases for the first Air Force Reserve-led KC-46A location April 14. The locations are Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma; Seymour-Johnson AFB, North Carolina; Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts; and Grissom ARB, Indiana.

The KC-46As will begin arriving at the first Air Force Reserve-led global mobility wing in fiscal 2019.

“The KC-46A Pegasus aerial tanker remains one of our top three acquisition priorities,” said Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James. “It is absolutely essential that we replace our aging tanker fleet so we have the aircraft necessary to maintain the nation’s global reach for years to come.”

The Air Mobility Command and Air Force Reserve Command will conduct detailed, on-the-ground site surveys of each candidate base.

They will assess each location against operational requirements, potential impacts to existing missions, housing, infrastructure,

and manpower. Additionally they will develop cost estimates to bed down the KC-46A for each candidate base.

Once the site surveys are completed, the results will be briefed to the SECAF and the Air Force chief of staff to select preferred and reasonable alternatives for the operating location. The Air Force plans to announce the Reserve-led KC-46A preferred and reasonable alternatives and begin the Environmental Impact Analysis Process in summer of 2015.

“This basing action is another great example of the Total Force relationship the Air Force Reserve Command has enjoyed for many years with Air Mobility Command,” said Lt. Gen. James Jackson, commander of Air Force Reserve Command.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh said bringing the KC-46A online is an important step in recapitalizing a tanker fleet that has been a leader in air refueling for more than five decades.

“This new-age aircraft will achieve better mission-capable rates with less maintenance

downtime, improving our ability to respond with rapid, global capability to assist U.S., joint, allied and coalition forces and better support humanitarian missions,” Welsh said.

“I want to stress that the tanker units being considered that do not receive the KC-46A will continue to fly their current aircraft for the foreseeable future,” he added.

“Throughout tanker recapitalization, the Air Force is committed to ensuring continued support of combatant commander requirements.”

Air Force officials said the service is committed to its strategic basing process in creating deliberate, repeatable and standardized decisions.

“In this process, the Air Force uses criteria-based analysis and military judgment,” said Mark Pohlmeier, acting deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for installations. “We look forward to the next phase of the process when preferred and reasonable alternatives are announced and our candidate base communities have an opportunity to participate by providing input for the environmental impact analysis.” (AFNS)



*U.S. Air Force graphic by Tech. Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo*

A graphic depicts a KC-46A Pegasus refueling a B-2 Bomber . The KC-46A is a wide-body, multi-mission tanker aircraft designed to replace the KC-135 Stratotankers, which has been the primary refueling aircraft for more than 50 years.

# Kirksey visits Grissom, thanks Airmen for their service

By Tech. Sgt.  
Benjamin Mota  
Public Affairs staff

Chief Master Sgt. Cameron Kirksey, Air Force Reserve Command's command chief master sergeant, met with Grissom Airmen and got an up-close look at the Hoosier Wing before attending an all-call here May 3.

Kirksey, who represents the highest level of enlisted leadership in the AFRC, echoed those words as he toured Grissom's facilities thanking Airmen for their service along the way.

"I wanted to take an opportunity to come out and look at each and every one of you and say thank you for your service," Kirksey said. "We cannot do this job; the U.S. Air Force cannot be the best air force in the world without men and women like you."

The chief began his tour at Grissom's Airmen Wellness Center, a facility that places all of Grissom's resources under one roof to help personnel and their families stay mission ready.

"Make sure you are taking care of each other whether it be home-station or down range," explained Kirksey. "Doing so is easy when you are on active duty and live close to base, but we have individuals here who are hundreds of miles from their base.

"This is where we are unique; this is where we need the skillset and strength to help each other because it certainly is a team sport and family readiness is an important



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

**Chief Master Sgt. Cameron Kirksey, Air Force Reserve Command command chief master sergeant, speaks to Airmen during a visit at Grissom May 2.**

part of that."

Throughout the tour, Kirksey coined several Airmen for their outstanding performance and contributions to their units.

Kirksey also took an opportunity to experience the state-of-the-art visual enhancements in Grissom's KC-135R Stratotanker flight simulator before meeting with Airmen from 72nd and 74th Air Refueling Squadrons.

"What each and every one of you are doing here is critical to the refueling mission, and you do it right," said Kirksey. "Continue doing what you do but also ensure you are continuously improving your skills anytime opportunities arise."

Whether those opportunities are professional

military education or advanced degrees, Kirksey said they would help ensure the Air Force Reserve continues to be a key asset in meeting Department of Defense missions.

"We must improve ourselves by taking advantage of PME and advanced education in addition to incorporating the unique skill-set we already bring to the table from our civilian careers," Kirksey added.

Despite the skills reservists bring to the mission, Kirksey also warned Airmen during an all-call to be cognizant of their limits by properly balancing their civilian careers with their military careers.

"Sometimes I get concerned because I know we don't say 'no,'" Kirksey

said. "There is a threshold out there that you cannot afford to break because once you break it that model will never be rebuilt.

"That model between your employer, between your family, and between this uniform is a fine line that must not be broken," he explained. "We will continue to deploy, we will continue to do the things we need to do for this nation, but when we are approaching that point in time I need you to understand that it is OK to take a knee."

In his role, Kirksey serves as the direct link between the enlisted force, advising Lt. Gen. James Jackson, chief of Air Force Reserve and AFRC commander, on matters concerning the health, morale and welfare of AFRC's enlisted force.

"In days of old it was always the reserve component as the after-thought, but now not so much; we are on the leading edge of the discussions," said Kirksey. "[Leadership] understands we, as reservists, are certainly more cost effective, and we have yet failed to answer our nations call, but to remain at the top of our game you must help us out; stay connected; stay engaged and take care of one another.

"For those of us who have a family or a supporting team, go home and thank them also because you certainly couldn't be doing what you are doing so well without their support," he added. "It's certainly a team effort, and we have to value their sacrifices as well."

# Reinhart retires after 34 years of service

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota  
*Public Affairs staff*

From enlisted fuel cell mechanic to 434th Air Refueling Wing vice commander, one individual defined the term ‘the sky’s the limit’ during his Air Force career.

Amid family, friends and fellow Airmen, Col. Bryan Reinhart, said goodbye to the Air Force after 34 years of service during his retirement ceremony here, April 11.

Presiding over the ceremony, Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th ARW commander, thanked Reinhart for his outstanding performance and for the contributions he made to the unit.

“The 434th’s success, on recent inspections, is a direct reflection of Colonel Reinhart’s outstanding leadership,” said Schwartz. “We will miss this great patriot, officer and friend!”

During the ceremony, Reinhart thanked those who had supported

him throughout his career.

“I want to thank my family who has stood beside me throughout my military service,” said Reinhart. “I couldn’t have made it without your daily support.”

Reinhart’s military service is a true example of perseverance as he moved up the enlisted ranks and then received his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1986 as a graduate of Ohio State University, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in business.

“It’s been a long road, but I don’t regret any part of it,” said Reinhart who moved back to his hometown in Ohio when he assumed his role as vice commander June 2014. “Along the way, I have made friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.”

During the ceremony Schwartz presented Reinhart with his retirement certificate in addition to a Legion of Merit.

The Legion of Merit is conferred

on officers and enlisted members of the armed forces of the United States and on nationals of other countries “who shall have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services” since Sept. 8, 1939, the date of the president’s proclamation of the state of emergency that led to World War II.

Despite the challenges that come with changes after retirement, Reinhart said he is looking forward to spending time with his wife, son and two daughters, but will always look back at his Air Force career and those with whom he served with fondness.

Reinhart is a command pilot with more than 3,500 flying hours and in his civilian capacity is a commercial pilot.

He has deployed in support of Operations Deny Flight, Decisive Endeavor, Joint Endeavor, Deliberate Forge, Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom.



*U.S. Air Force photo by Tec. Sgt. Benjamin Mota*

Col. Bryan Reinhart, 434th Air Refueling Wing vice commander, thanks his children, William, Ashley and Katey, for their support throughout his military career during his retirement ceremony at Grissom April 11.

# Grissom hosts ATTACK-U exercise for AF EMs

By Tech. Sgt.  
**Benjamin Mota**  
*Public Affairs staff*

While most people run from disasters a small group of others move toward them, but without specialized training that might not be possible.

That specialized training came from a unique 10-day course known as All-hazards, Tactics, Techniques for Comprehensive Knowledge University that allowed EM specialists from nine major commands to unite and hone emergency management principles while incorporating combat skills and obtaining mandated annual recertification requirements here at Grissom April 20-May 1 and again May 11-22.

In order to host the course, the 434th Air Refueling Wing fire and emergency services, services, security forces, aircraft maintenance, logistics and emergency managers pulled together to provide the support requirements.

“Air Mobility Command conducted four site surveys; however, Grissom was selected to host the course based on their outstanding logistical support and overall capability of being able to support this event,” said Senior Master Sgt. Michael Henderlong, Headquarters AMC EM superintendent from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. “We considered everything from lodging, equipment needed for support and most of all the EM flight and the subject matter expertise they were able to provide.”



*U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota*

**Staff Sgt. Alisha Knehr, Air Mobility Command emergency management specialist from McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., assists Airman 1st Class Simone Wilson, 319th Civil Engineer Squadron EM specialist from Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., with her oxygen mask during a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and enhanced conventional weapons training exercise at Grissom May 19.**

During the event, eight cadres united to provide 48 trainees a variety of classroom and hands-on training.

“ATTACK-U is a classroom and hands-on training environment built to address training needs of our EM Airmen with a focus on preparing them to perform their duties in an all-hazards environment by addressing their training requirements,” said Richard Farnsworth, Headquarters Air Combat Command emergency management analyst and course facilitator from Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

The course was developed after ACC and AMC were able to retain funding in an effort to enhance EM proficiency training and replace contracted training that had been cut due to budget constraints with qualified Airmen.

“This year’s training takes an adaptive approach to expose EM Airmen to evolving planning efforts that combat emerging threats while also meeting multiple wartime task standards and annual proficiency training certification requirements,” explained Henderlong. “This is the only training event in

the Air Force that brings emergency managers together to meet war mobilization plan manning requirements.

“This setting is more essential than ever as units no longer conduct operational readiness inspections allowing large scale chemical biological radiation and nuclear training events to practice these critical skills,” he added.

Curriculum for this year’s course was developed using surveys and data collection during prior training exercises.

“We coordinated with Headquarters Air Force to receive the most current intelligence from real-world EM scenarios and make adjustments to integrate that information into a condensed course,” said Dan DeAngulo, 434th Mission Support Group base emergency manager and course facilitator. “This allows the course to be consistent with what Airmen could see in a deployed war-time environment.”

One of the scenarios for this year’s course mimicked the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi disaster that resulted in a nuclear meltdown after a tsunami damaged a nuclear power plant in Japan.

The training was extremely beneficial,” said Staff Sgt. Mitchell Birdsong, 60th Civil Engineer Squadron EM specialist from Travis Air Force Base, California. “This is the only environment where I can receive training that prepares me for real world scenarios I might encounter during an actual deployment.”

# Marines conquer swim qualifications

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota  
Public Affairs staff

While every Marine is a rifleman, these amphibious warriors are also proficient swimmers, enabling them to rise from the depths of the sea to challenges the nation places on their shoulders.

Marine reservists of Detachment 1, Communication Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 45, 4th Marine Logistics Group from Grissom, conducted their Marine Corps water survival training program qualifications at Great Lakes Naval Station, Ill., March 21.

“Marines are amphibious in nature, so our ability to survive in water is critical to our mission,” said Capt. Timothy Chun, Detachment 1 inspector instructor. “Water survival is a critical part of our training requirements because it ensures we have the confidence and ability to continue our mission in the event of a water-borne mishap.”

The course consists of basic, intermediate and advanced levels of qualifications. Marines are required to complete the basic level of qualifications every two years and can progress to the advanced levels of training based on military occupational specialty requirements and on a voluntary basis.

“The basic level of qualification gives Marines an opportunity to see what it is like to be in the water with their gear on,” said Sgt. Peter Richards, Engineer Service Company, Combat Logistics Battalion, 4th Marine Logistics Group instructor of water survival. “The training is designed to mimic real-world scenarios we might encounter during a water-borne mishap.”

In the water survival basic level, Marines have to remove their flak jackets, helmets and rifles in shallow water in less than 10 seconds, enter water from a 15-foot tower simulating an abandon ship technique, tread water for four minutes, and conduct a 25-meter pack-swim, explained Richards.

“The qualification really pushed my confidence,” said Sgt. Daniel Morehouse, Detachment 1 training chief. “It was especially beneficial for individuals who are not naturally strong swimmers because it gave them a chance to use the water survival skills they were taught in an environment that replicates situations Marines might encounter.”

“During training approximately 90 Marines completed basic qualification with a 100 percent pass rate,” said Chun. “After everyone successfully completed the basic level, 25 volunteers went on to

complete intermediate qualification.”

The intermediate level consists of employing flotation gear, swimming with full gear and a pack for 50 meters, a self-rescue after jumping off a diving tower and swimming 250 meters. After completing those tasks Marines must employ flotation techniques for 10 minutes and shed their gear in the deep end of the pool.

“The intermediate level really pushed my endurance and tested the skills I learned during the course,” explained Morehouse who successfully passed the intermediate level of the course. “When I was treading water I had to blow up my blouse [a flotation technique taught during the course] to tread water for the longer duration required during intermediate qualification; I couldn’t have done it without those techniques.”

Due to time restraints, none of the Marines were able to qualify further than the intermediate level; however their training goals were met, said Chun.

“We came here with the goal of getting everyone their basic qualifications, and we were able to do that and then some by sending additional Marines through the intermediate qualifications” concluded Chun.



A Marine from Engineer Service Company, Combat Logistics Battalion, 4th Marine Logistics Group, holds his pack and rifle above his head during the 25-meter pack-swim portion of the Marine Corps water survival training program basic qualification at Great Lakes Naval Station, Ill., March 21.



# Perkins retires after 32 years of service



Chief Master Sgt. Karen Perkins, 434th Air Refueling Wing command chief, poses for a photo with Col. Christopher Amend, Air Mobility Command reserve advisor, during her retirement ceremony at Grissom April 12.

**By Senior Airman Jami Lancette**  
*Public Affairs staff*

Amid family, friends and fellow Airmen, Chief Master Sgt. Karen Perkins, 434th Air Refueling Wing command chief, stood front and center one last time to say farewell to the Air Force after 32 years of service during her retirement ceremony here April 12.

"I have had a great time in my career," said Perkins. "I started out as a jet engine mechanic; cross utilized as a crew chief, first sergeant, group superintendent and finally command chief.

"I have met some fantastic people along the way, visited some beautiful countries and learned so much," Perkins added. "The Air Force has given me so many opportunities which have helped me grow as a person and a leader."

Perkins' Air Force career began in 1982 when she left her hometown to attend basic military train-

ing. After basic, she was assigned to the 96th Field Maintenance Squadron, Dyess Air Force Base, Texas as a jet engine mechanic.

She transferred to the Air Force Reserve in 1987 where she became a first sergeant and helped stand-up the first reserve

associate airborne warning and control squadron. Additionally as a reservist, she helped stand-up a reactivated regular Air Force airborne warning and control system squadron and was a member of the inaugural Maintenance Standardization Evaluation Program Team, Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

Perkins has experience working on B-52 Stratofortress, KC-135 Stratotanker and KC-10 Extender aircraft. She has deployed in support of Operations Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

"Some of the best experiences in my career were being a first sergeant," said Perkins. "I had six or seven suicide saves as a first shirt.

"It is really rewarding when you can take that troubled Arman and get

them turned around to a productive contributor," Perkins added. "It's also a great feeling when you can get the folks recognized for the great things they do."

As Perkins said goodbye to Grissom and headed back to her home in Oklahoma, she reflected on her arrival here and taking the command chief position.

"There were some significant challenges when I first arrived," said Perkins. "The wing had been without a command chief for over eight months and there were some programs that had to be reinvigorated.

"It's been a challenging but rewarding position and it's incredible to see the accomplishments of this wing," Perkins concluded. "No one sits in this seat and makes changes without it being a team effort though."



Chief Master Sgt. Karen Perkins, 434th Air Refueling Wing command chief, thanks family and friends for supporting her military career during her retirement ceremony at Grissom April 12.

*U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Airman Jami Lancette*

# Cadets get birds-eye view of Grissom's mission

By **Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota**  
*Public Affairs staff*

Developing the future force is a common theme woven into the fabric of military leaders, and Grissom fueled that future recently.

A group of Notre Dame cadets, midshipmen and their staff participated in an orientation flight onboard a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135R Stratotanker from Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind., April 1.

"These flights are important because they expose our cadets to the operational Air Force and complement the instruction we provide in the classroom," said Colonel Frank Rossi, Notre Dame Air Force ROTC Detachment 225 commander. "To actually go up in a KC-135 and observe air-to-air refueling is invaluable to their overall AFROTC experience."

During the flight 20 cadets and six midshipmen boarded two KC-135Rs to observe the refueling of a C-17 Globemaster III and an A-10 Thunderbolt.

"The cadets and midshipmen benefit from the flight because they get to interact with Airmen performing these missions," explained Rossi. "This is very important to the cadets as they try to determine in which career fields they are interested or have a desire to pursue."

Throughout the flight, cadets and midshipmen had the opportunity to speak with aircrew about their jobs and observe first-hand how their jobs are performed.

"This experience allowed us to meet Airmen from various career fields and backgrounds, and helped to diversify our knowledge-base for career decisions down the road," said John Dean, Notre Dame Air Force ROTC Detachment 225 cadet. "Beyond that, the physical experience of flying on a military aircraft was absolutely new for all those in attendance, and seeing our Air

Force in action was extremely beneficial."

That action started from the point the students boarded the plane and began speaking with

pilots about missions they performed and the training it took to become mission ready.

"The crew members were phenomenal," explained Dean.



*U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota*

**Maj. Brian Thompson, 72 Air Refueling Squadron KC-135R Stratotanker pilot, explains aerial refueling, prior to an orientation flight, to a group of University of Notre Dame Navy ROTC midshipmen, at Grissom April 1.**

“The pilots answered any and all questions we had, whether it was flying-specific or a general question about Air Force life.”

After rotating in and out of the cockpit cadets and midshipmen moved to the back of the aircraft to observe aircraft refueling from a birds-eye view.

“The senior enlisted on the crews were extremely helpful, explaining some of the intricacies of flying the boom through the air and directing the receiving aircraft into the nozzle,” he added. “Watching the crew work in concert with one another to accomplish the aerial refueling was simply impressive.”

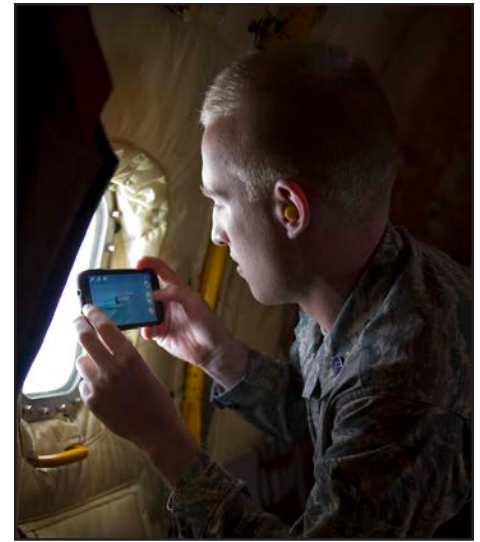
Following the flight, guests had an opportunity to ask additional questions to the aircrew and thank them for their participation during their visit.

“I think my favorite part of the flight was getting to speak with the crews to get a first hand perspective of what they do,” said Dean. “The career experiences that they shared were very informative for me, as a college sophomore preparing to make some important decisions in the course of my potential Air Force career.”

All in all, the flight went extremely well for all who attended concluded Rossi.

“Everybody had a fantastic time,” he said. “As soon as we landed everybody’s cell phones came out as they posted pictures and video clips to their favorite social media site.”

“The next day one of the Navy ROTC midshipmen told me it was the highlight of his year,” he said.



Walker Carlson, University of Notre Dame Air Force ROTC Detachment 225 cadet, uses his cell phone during an orientation flight on a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135 Stratotanker to take a photo of the aircrafts wing after departing Grissom April 1.



Master Sgt. Kenneth Knight, 72nd Air Refueling Squadron in-flight refueling technician, explains aerial refueling to Eric Hickok, University of Notre Dame Air Force ROTC Detachment 225 cadet, during an orientation flight on a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135R Stratotanker that departed from Grissom April 1. During the flight 20 cadets and six midshipmen boarded two KC-135Rs to observe the refueling of a C-17 Globemaster III and an A-10 Thunderbolt and to speak with aircrew.

# 434th AMDS commander pins on eagles

By Tech. Sgt.  
**Benjamin Mota**  
*Public Affairs staff*

Airmen and family members filled a room to witness a long-standing tradition as one of Grissom's own pinned on eagles.

Col. Therese Kern, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron commander, was recently promoted to the rank of colonel in front of family, friends and peers during a pin-on ceremony held here recently.

Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, presided over the ceremony thanking the newly promoted colonel for her military service and dedication to

the Air Force.

"I am so honored to be able to preside over your ceremony," said Schwartz. "To go from enlisted all the way to the rank of colonel is very challenging and takes a person with a lot of energy, a lot of drive and a lot of determination; that alone speaks volumes about the type of individual [Kern] is."

Kern, who began her Air Force career as an enlisted medical technician at 440th Medical Squadron, General Mitchell Air Reserve Station, Wisconsin, thanked friends and family for their support of her military career.

"I am so humbled that so many of you have traveled to share this day

with me," said Kern. "I want to thank my family and recognize them for the support they have giving me throughout my military career; they have always been there and have been my biggest supporters."

Kern, a Wisconsin native and board certified nurse practitioner, graduated in 1987 with her Bachelor of Science in nursing and went on to commission in the medical corps.

Kern has used her medical expertise across the globe in support of Operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. She began her journey here July 2013, serving as chief nurse and took over

command of the 434th AMDS April 2014.

The history of the prestigious rank dates back to around 1505, when the Spanish King Ferdinand reorganized part of his army into twenty units called colonelas. These consisted of about 1,000 to 1,250 men further organized into companies with their commander being named a coronel.

The French, and later the British, adopted the title, and although initially retaining the original Spanish pronunciation, the British soon used the pronunciation of 'kernel' we're familiar with today.

The eagle insignia led to the informal term 'full bird colonel.'



*U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota*

Col. Therese Kern, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron commander, has her husband, Joseph, left, and son, Joey, right, pin eagle rank insignias on her service dress coat during a pin-on ceremony at Grissom April. 12.

## Jackson, from page 2

After lunch, Jackson hosted a town hall meeting for Hoosier Wing Airmen, answering their questions about everything from deployments to the new KC-46A Pegasus.

Ending the general's visit, he experienced newly installed state-of-the-art visual enhancements in Grissom's flight simulator and refueled F-16s, aircraft he once flew, in the base's boom operator weapon's system trainer.

"Wow, this looks identical to the landscape in Guam," Jackson said as he manned the controls of the recently upgraded simulator.

Throughout the tour, Jackson coined several Airmen for their outstanding performance and contributions to their units.

The following individuals were recognized: Maj. Daniel Keeney, 434th Operations Support Squadron plans officer; Senior Master Sgt. Timothy O'Brien, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron logistics plans superintendent; Tech. Sgt. Milita Hopkins, 434th ARW command and control technician; Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota, 434th ARW public affairs specialist; Airman Miguel Thompson, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron jet mechanic; Senior Airman



*U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota*

**Lt. Gen. James Jackson, Chief of Air Force Reserve and Air Force Reserve Command commander, observes an Air Force medium sized robot as Senior Master Sgt. Scott Fleek, 434th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight superintendent, talks about his unit during a base visit at Grissom April 17.**

Jared Easton, 434th Operations Support Squadron intelligence apprentice; and Todd Woolf, Grissom Fire Department assistant chief of training.

"Being coined by General Jackson made me feel really good about the work I'm doing in the shop," said Thompson. "I take pride in my job, and to know that

my work is recognized and makes a difference is awesome."

"What we have here is a great wing and you should be proud of it and you should be loud about it when it comes to what you do here so well," said Jackson. "Thanks again for your service; thanks again for everything you do for us."



**Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, discusses the wing's mission with Lt. Gen. James Jackson, Chief of Air Force Reserve and Air Force Reserve Command commander, during a tour of a static display of a KC-135R Stratotanker at Grissom April 17.**

# YR rep increases program participation

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota  
Public Affairs staff

For centuries yellow ribbons have been associated with returning of loved ones and messages of support and hope, and a new representative exemplifies that support and hope through Grissom's Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

Second Lt. Stephanie Creel recently stepped into her new role as 434th Air Refueling Wing YRRP representative with the goal of bringing awareness to the program to ensure eligible members are using the benefits it provides.

"This program is about taking care of our people," said Creel "It provides Airmen an opportunity to receive resources and training that are critical during their deployment cycle."

Since February, when Creel took on her new role, she has increased program participation by nearly 500 percent.

"Before I began, Grissom did not have a Yellow Ribbon representative," explained Creel. "We've been able to increase participation by streamlining the process and bringing awareness to the program."

The program is a result of a congressional directive in the 2007 Defense Appropriations Act that mandated reserve components provide additional deployment support and reintegration to reservists and their families.

"Reservists and their families have unique needs and challenges during deployments," said Creel. "We have several reservists who live in adjacent states or even further, and this program provides them and their loved ones an opportunity to access necessary pre-deployment and post-deployment resources and services in one location."

The events are for service members who have deployed for more than 90 days but exclude deployments for training. Each member can take up to two adult guests. All Defense Eligibility Enrollment System children count as one guest,



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner

**Second Lt. Stephanie Creel, 434th Air Refueling Wing Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program representative, explains how an Air Force travel voucher is completed to a program attendee during a Yellow Ribbon event in Orlando, Fla., March 28.**

and the other guest can be spouse, significant other, parents, siblings, roommates or even friends.

"The key is to ensure members have the support they need during all phases of deployment," explained Creel. "It's difficult in a reserve setting to only be around an individual once a month and still be able to recognize they are having trouble reintegrating."

"When we allow them to take family members, siblings or someone who sees them on a daily basis, they have a better understanding of how the member is dealing with their deployment," she added.

The program provides participants with resources and training in a variety of locations throughout the United States. Some of the services offered during the events include health care, education, employment, training opportunities, financial and legal benefits.

"The event locations are determined based on popularity and their ability to accommodate the needs for the program," added Creel. "We want to make things easier for the participants by keeping everything in one place so members have more time to spend with their loved

ones."

Spending time with loved ones is one aspect of the program that is beneficial, said Senior Master Sgt. Eric Vance, 434th 74th Air Refueling Squadron superintendent of squadron aviation resource management, who recently attended an event in Washington, D.C. with his wife and three children.

"You are out there with family and that forces you to stay together as a family," said Vance. "The location of the event was completely removed from our daily routine and in a neutral environment; it allowed us to focus on the resources there and not worry about things going on at home."

"We went out together at night and ate dinner together as a family and really connected with one another," he added. "We really learned a lot."

Eligible members can attend up to three events. The first event can be attended prior to a scheduled deployment followed by two additional events after returning from an eligible deployment.

For more information on event dates contact Creel at 765-688-2961.

# Grissom after dark: GFD showcases 24/7 mission

By Tech. Sgt.  
Benjamin Mota  
Public Affairs staff

On a quiet summer night, thirty-foot flames lit the once dark skies at Grissom producing radiant heat that would melt normal clothing, and while most would run from such dangers, one group of individual's moved toward it.

The fire department is one of several organizations here at Grissom that work and train after dark and around the clock to ensure mission essential personnel and property are kept safe.

"Our fire department provides services 24/7," said Todd Woolf, Grissom Fire Department assistant chief of training. "Firefighters work 48-hour shifts and must be prepared to respond to an emergency during

any part of that shift."

That preparation was recently exemplified during a night-time simulated aircraft fire where they honed their skills under the star-lit skies at Grissom's fire pit.

"There's a huge difference between having an emergency during the day and having one at night," explained Woolf. "We need to know our equipment well enough that we don't have to see to be able to use it, and that is accomplished through training and repetition."

"The training we do builds muscle memory that allows us to operate in any type of condition at any given time," explained Josh Van Zuiden, GFD firefighter. "That muscle memory saves time, and for us every second is critical when lives are at stake.

"We have to be able to provide the same quality of response in the middle of the night as we would during the day," he added.

That response begins when the alarm sounds indicating emergency services are needed. After that, firefighters have just 60 seconds to respond, and that response involves much more than just leaving the station.

"You have to be prepared both mentally and physically," said Van Zuiden who is also a registered emergency medical and a hazardous materials technician. "The mental portion comes from the aspect of knowing that you have a job to do and getting it done while the physical part comes from staying healthy and conducting routine training."

To help that, physical fitness training is part of their routine.

"Because of the physical demands of their job, firefighters are expected to maintain a level of cardio and strength proficiency to perform the job," said Woolf. "Firefighting gear alone is 70 pounds and some of the equipment we use is as heavy as 100 pounds.

"Staying physically fit ensures firefighters can respond to the different types of services we provide," added Woolf.

In addition to fire services, GFD responds to vehicle accidents, HazMat incidents, medical emergencies, gas leaks and confined space, and high angle rescues both on and off base.

"Our main mission is

*See 'After dark' page 17*



U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

Two Grissom fire trucks deliver water to a burning mock airframe during a night-time training exercise at Grissom May 21.

# DL PME demands more study time

By Master Sgt. Shanda De Anda  
AFRC Public Affairs Staff

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. -- The Air Force's new enlisted professional military education distance learning courses are demanding and require more study time.

That's according to a memo from the Air Force Barnes Center of Distance Education at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

"The new EPME is a game changer," said Chief Master Sgt. Cameron Kirksey, command chief for Air Force Reserve Command. "Distance learning courses are intentionally more rigorous than previous courses. We know our Citizen Airmen are up for that challenge."

The memo helps enrollees gauge the commitment required by providing a guide of the time courses may take to complete. It also stresses adjusting as individual needs dictate to "master the material before taking the test."

"Allow yourself plenty of time to study and digest the material before you test," said Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Lohsandt, Headquarters AFRC first sergeant.

Lohsandt attended an early

in-residence Airmen Leadership Experience at the Senior NCO Academy and accomplished version 6 during the built-in, eight-day window to complete the prerequisite.

"Our Airmen are now being offered DL courses earlier in their career, and the concepts they are introduced to are built on and applied during the in-residence portion of PME."

Chief Master Sgt. Imelda Johnson, AFRC Enlisted Force Development chief, agrees.

"What Airmen are getting out of the DL course before the in-residence course is a familiarity with the actual content of the new courses," Johnson said. "Most of our members are going earlier in their career, and they're not quite as prepared if they would go to the course without doing the DL first."

In addition to the increased rigors of DL courses, there are also changes in course attendance and enrollment.

"Enrolling in the proper time-in-service window and completing courses on time is the member's responsibility," said Eric Devoursney, AFRC PME program manager.

"However, the biggest challenge may be ... and really it'll be more for the NCO Academy and SNCO Academy ... is that there used to be individuals who had a hard time with the DL and they had the fallback of going in-residence.

"Now, you have to complete the DL if you're going in residence," Devoursney said. "That's going to hinder some people. ALS has remained the same. Airmen can do either DL or go in residence."

These EPME DL courses are intentionally more rigorous than previous ones and reflect the increased leadership challenges and expectations for enlisted leaders. Students are encouraged to approach these courses as they would a college course.

"I would say treat it just like any other distance learning course, like an online bachelor's degree," Johnson said. "Give it the same amount of time and energy and focus you would an advanced degree. It will require the same kind of effort."

Airmen can get more information from their career assistance advisor, education office, Air Force Guidance Memorandum to Air Force Instruction 36-2301, or [www.aueducationssupport.com](http://www.aueducationssupport.com).

## Grissom recognizes 2014 award winners

By Senior Airman Andrew Crawford  
Public Affairs Staff

The spotlight shines on those that rise above, and for eight 434th Air Refueling Wing members that light shined the brightest in 2014.

The 434th ARW held its annual awards ceremony April 11 and recognized the Airman, NCO, Senior NCO, first sergeant and civilian award winners.

During the event, Chief Master Sergeant Cameron Kirksey, Air Force Reserve Command, command chief master sergeant, spoke to the award winners saying what a tremendous job they had done throughout the year and encouraged others to follow in their footsteps.

Grissom winners for 2014 are:

-**Airman of the Year:** Senior Airman Brent Cannon, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

-**Noncommissioned Officer of the Year:** Staff

Sgt. Jessie Vanouse, 434th Security Forces Squadron

-**Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year:** Senior Master Sgt. Nathan Colborn, 434th Civil Engineering Squadron

-**Junior Grade Officer of the Year:** Capt. Bartholemew Erwin, 434th Civil Engineering Squadron

-**Company Grade Officer of the Year:** Maj. Brian Thompson, 74 Air Refueling Squadron

-**First Sergeant of the Year:** Master Sergeant Wendi Conwell, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

-**Civilian Supervisor of the Year:** Carole Cann, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron

-**Non-Supervisory Civilian of the Year:** John Rhoutsong, 434th Operations Support Squadron

The award winners moved on to compete at the Air Force Reserve level, where they competed with others from Air Force Reserve Command.



## 'After dark', from page 15

to support Grissom, but when other local fire departments request our support, we are able to assist through mutual aid agreements," said Capt. James Jones, GFD crew chief.

"Grissom Fire Department is the only department in Miami County that has the capabilities and trained technicians to respond to a hazardous material emergency," said John Ireland, GFD fire chief. "Chemical releases require trained technicians to stop the leak and treat injured patients."

In addition, more than a dozen of the GFD's 49

firefighters are certified rescue trained, allowing them to conduct rescues from high and low angles, in confined spaces and from under collapsed structures.

"Any time you are working in a confined space rescue or in a smoke-filled room visibility can be an issue," said Van Zuiden who is certified rescue trained. "Night training is one of the tools we use to build confidence and learn to work as team."

Working as a team is also an expectation for Grissom firefighters, said Jones.

As a crew chief he is

responsible for three to four firefighters on his crew. After arriving on-scene, it is his responsibility to guide and direct them were to go after receiving command from the senior fire officer.

"I'm responsible for what happens to them and what they do," said Jones. "You have to be able to rely on the guy next to you when responding to an emergency."

"I've been a firefighter for 25 years and there definitely is a brotherhood," he said.

That brotherhood is formed partially from the time spent together

at work combined with the camaraderie shared after-hours.

"That bond is formed from the day you start here; we work together, eat together, and spend a lot of time together," added Van Zuiden. "This is our home away from home, and most of us spend more time here with each other than we do with our own family."

"After hours we watch movies together, we joke around and we laugh, and that's what it's all about in this fire department," concluded Jones. "You have to have a sense of humor to do the job we do night or day."



*U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota*

Jason Hofmeister, Grissom Fire Department firefighter, right, uses a hose to direct pressurized water towards an engulfed mock airframe, as Capt. Jason Cahill, GFD crew chief, helps guide a hose during an exercise at Grissom May 21.