

Heartland

Warrior

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



Photo by SrA. Chris Bolen

An F-15 Eagle pulls up alongside a Grissom KC-135R Stratotanker following an inflight refueling mission. Grissom has always received high marks in the refueling business, and with the results of the latest climate survey the base is earning high marks in many other areas as well.

Grissom earns high marks in climate survey

By Lt. Col. Gary Lockard
Public Affairs staff

The results of the most recent Air Force Climate Survey are in and Grissom members gave the 434th Air Refueling Wing high marks in numerous areas.

The survey, offered every two years, measured how people feel about leadership, supervision, training, communication, recognition, job satisfaction and other aspects of the Air Force.

"I was impressed not only with the results of the survey, but more importantly, this survey compared to the last one," said Col. Kerry Keithcart, 434th

ARW vice commander. "It showed all of the areas we improved in."

Categories that received higher ratings this time around included recognition (plus 12 percent), participation and involvement (plus 9 percent), satisfaction (plus 9 percent), unit flexibility (plus 8 percent), training and development (plus 5 percent), and job enhancement (plus 4 percent).

The survey was open to all unit members and 529 people participated. This included officers, enlisted personnel and civilian employees. The survey was conducted from Oct. 1 – Nov. 23.

"Historically, when you do research, if you get 20 percent participation, that's pretty good," explained Colonel

Keithcart. "The fact that we had over 500 participants (approximately 33 percent of the wing) is phenomenal. It speaks well for our wing that so many people chose to participate."

While all portions of the survey were important to senior leadership at the base, areas that were identified for improvement during the last survey were of most interest. One of the key areas targeted for improvement was recognition.

The wing's Human Resource Development Council was a key player in developing recommendations to improve the recognition process. In the 2003 survey, only 63 percent felt

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Proper planning can help tame the credit monster

By Master Sgt. Ben Seitz
341st Contracting Squadron

“People do not plan to fail. They fail to plan.”

It is an adage spoken countless times. Unfortunately for many, it rings painfully true in today’s easy-credit environment.

I have heard many stories of people who have put themselves into devastating financial hardship due to a lack of planning and fiscal self-control.

I searched through the local phone directory and found no fewer than 15 “pay day” loan companies who prey upon those who fail to plan, often charging interest rates in excess of 600 percent annual percentage rate.

Always be cognizant of the fact that although financial responsibility is a personal matter in the civilian world, military members can be charged under the Uniform Code of Military Justice for financial irresponsibility.

So how can folks avoid financial pitfalls and manage their finances skillfully?

The first step to financial independence is developing a budget.

For the next two months, itemize all of your expenditures to include those quick lunches, café mochas from the coffee stand on the way to work and the lottery tickets you purchased at the gas station.

This can be an eye-opening experience for some.

At the end of two months, look at where your money is going, and develop a plan to harness your spending to meet your objectives.

One critical component of any budget is an emergency fund, which can reduce the burden of unforeseen events like car repairs or unplanned travel expenses. It also helps mitigate the use of credit cards for emergency situations.

The dollar amounts of emergency funds vary according to the person, but in general, a military person should have one month’s salary set aside to cover potential unknown situations.

Once a budget is developed, a person needs to get a handle on his or her credit liabilities — what he owes to others.

Credit cards can be a good thing when managed properly.

Too often, though, people misuse their credit cards to purchase things they do not really need and then pay the minimum payment required monthly.

This can turn that flat screen television you purchased on sale for \$1,500 into an overpriced investment of \$2,500 that will take an additional two to three years to pay off.

If you have credit cards with outstanding balances you cannot pay off at the end of the month, you need a plan.

Most department store credit cards charge in excess of 20 percent interest, and if you are only making the minimum payment, chances are they will not be paid off for several years.

If you have outstanding credit balances, develop a plan to pay them off as part of your budgeting process.

Many experts recommend paying off

the lowest credit card balance first by paying as much as possible on it while paying the minimum required payment on all other cards.

This can give a person a quick sense of accomplishment, and it eliminates another monthly payment.

Soon a person will be down to paying the maximum amount possible on one remaining card.

Finally, a few words about purchasing a vehicle. If buying your first car, buy only what you can afford: that means cash in hand.

If that’s a \$300 junker from the lemon lot, then that will have to do. Then bank the \$400 per month you would have had to pay on a new car loan.

After 12 months, upgrade to a \$4,800 car that should last two years. Continue making the \$400 deposits for 24 more months and you will have \$9,600 to purchase your next car.

The habit you are developing will have you driving newer vehicles in no time and you will never have to go into debt for them.

Always check with your insurance company before purchasing a vehicle to find out the monthly cost of insurance for that vehicle, and ensure the amount is part of your monthly budget.

If you need help, visit the financial experts at the Family Readiness.

They may be able assist you in a wide array of services, including setting up a budget and arranging payment terms with credit card companies.

Best of all, their services are free.

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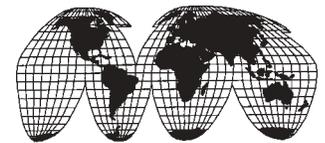
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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays

Moulage rouge

Tech. Sgt. Alicia Bartel, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, applies moulage to an 'accident victim' at the Converse, Ind., Airport. Grissom teamed with area first responders recently to conduct a joint exercise involving a simulated aircraft crash. The exercise allowed Grissom personnel to interact with their civilian counterparts in a realistic scenario.

Climate, from page 2

the wing was doing a good job with recognition. The efforts have paid off as those who said the wing was doing a good job in this area rose to 75 percent.

“A lot of times, the unsung heroes, the guys and gals who are out there doing the job, don’t get big awards or medals,” said the colonel. “We wanted to make sure they are recognized and appreciated for all they do. We still have room to improve and will continue to work this issue.”

Overall, the survey measured more than 50 areas.

Other notable responses included the amount of people who said they had

trust in their supervisor (92 percent), felt the unit was accomplishing its mission (97 percent), were satisfied with their jobs (90 percent), were provided opportunities to improve their (87 percent) and are proud to tell others they are part of the 434th ARW (92 percent).

“I think that is what is so good about the military, and Grissom specifically, is that we have a large level of trust,” explained Colonel Keithcart. “That is so critical because of our jobs. When there have been surveys at large, the military has one of the highest trust levels of any profession. At Grissom, our level of trust is even higher.”

Other notable trends that emerged from the survey were people felt they are prepared to go to war, are ready to deploy, have a strong conviction the things they do are important, feel the wing is successfully accomplishing its mission, are given a chance to improve their skills and what they do on a regular basis is meaningful.

Wing leadership was also pleased that the 434th ARW scored anywhere from 2 to 11 percent higher in most key categories than the average Air Force unit. To view the complete results of the climate survey, please the Grissom ARB web site at: www.grissom.afrc.af.mil.

Reservist's hobby has

By SrA. Chris Bolen
Public Affairs staff

Many folks know Master Sgt. Les McConnell the Reserve historian or civilian fireman; but many don't know him as an engineer.

Sergeant McConnell's love of railroading has become a serious hobby with a certain amount of labor involved.

You might call it a "labor of love with rail equipment," he said while sporting an oily engineer's hat and bibbed overalls.

One of those loves is a vintage 1953 Fairmont S-2 track inspection motorcar also referred to as a speeder car, or just speeder for short.

His speeder was manufactured by the Fairmont Gas Engine & Railway Motorcar Co. of Fairmont, Minnesota. Originally used by the Nickel Plate railroad on its main rail line out of Chicago, its primary use was transporting workers for track maintenance.

Sergeant McConnell bought the speeder about eight years ago from a retired railroad conductor.

Most speeder cars were designed to carry up to a crew of six to perform maintenance on assigned sections of rail road tracks. Comfort

was not a consideration in their design. The cars transported workers in what today would be considered primitive conditions with open sides and back and sporting only the long, wood covered engine compartment for seating.

The plucky little cars rolled along at speeds of up to 40 mph, propelled by a single cylinder 12-horse power, two-cycle engine burning a gasoline and oil mixture for fuel. Sergeant McConnell refers to this as a "hit and miss" type of engine, and it was originally equipped with a hand crank starter.

The speeder gets roughly 20 miles per gallon of gas however "the gas mileage is actually higher than the water per mile," he notes.

Like most internal combustion engines, water cooling is needed. On the front of the car is an evaporator or condenser that everyone mistakes for a radiator. Unlike an automobile which uses a radiator with a water pump, the speeder uses a water "jacket" around the single engine cylinder for cooling.

The water is not pumped, it merely sits. As the engine heats the water it rises upward through the condenser where it cools, and drips downward to pool in the jacket and start the

cooling cycle over again.

The sergeant has taken his speeder on trips across Indiana via rail lines. He's among hundreds of people who own speeder cars and take trips via the railroads, abiding by the regulations enforced by the Federal Railroad Administration. These regulations include strict matters of right-of-way.

Trips must be preplanned in advance with all the concerned railroads traveled on to avoid crossing tracks with a regular train.

Speeder operators prepare like pilots prepare by filing a flight plan before departure.

There are strict guidelines that must be followed and there are blocks of time given to you to travel across a specific sections of track.

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Master Sgt. Les McConnell, 434th Air Refueling Wing historian, stands next to his 1953 Fairmont S-2 Series Track Car -- also known as a speeder car.



Sergeant McConnell checks the water level in the vaporizer. The vaporizer helps cool the 12-horse power single cylinder engine that runs the motors down the railroad tracks.

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riding the rails

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Photos by SrA. Chris Bolen

Speeder car enthusiasts like Sergeant McConnell ride the rails through the United States and Canada. Operators must file travel plans much like a pilot files flight plans to help ensure that accidents the speeders and massive diesel powered locomotives of today operate safely together.



Photo by SrA. Jonathan Jones

Target acquired

Nick Ward, a fire fighter with the 434th Civil Engineering Squadron, prepares to throw a ball during a dodge ball tournament at the fitness center during the June unit training assembly. The Fire Dogs team number one shut down the fiery play of the Fire Dogs team number two to win the tournament.

UTA items

Lodging is open 24 hours a day during the primary unit training assembly and from 6 a.m. - 10 p.m. on alternate UTAs.

The fitness center is open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The dining facility troop feeding hours on Saturday are 6-7:15 a.m. for breakfast; 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. for lunch (12:30 p.m. on the alternate); and 4:30 -5:30 p.m. for dinner.

On Sunday the hours are 5:45-6:45 a.m. for breakfast, and 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. for lunch (12:30 p.m. on alternate).

Box dinners for the Sunday evening meal must be ordered by the Sunday breakfast, and must be picked up by 4:30 p.m. on Sunday.

The 434th Aerospace Medical Squadron's immunization clinic is open on Saturday from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. and 1-3:30 p.m.

434th Security Forces Squadron Pass and ID is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday of the primary UTA.

Upcoming UTAs: Primary UTAs include July 15-16, and Aug.5-6.

Alternate UTAs are July 22-23, and Aug. 19-20.

Worship services are held in Bldg. 596, Room 116.

During primary unit training assemblies, Protestant services are Sunday at 11 a.m. with Catholic worship services at 12:15 p.m.

Farewell luncheon

A farewell luncheon for Brig. Gen. James Melin, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, will be held from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. July 13 at the pavillion behind the services complex.

Those planning to attend should RSVP at Ext. 4340 or 4341 for headcount purposes only.

The cost is \$5 and the menu includes pulled pork sandwiches, beans, potato chips, potato/macaroni salad, and a variety of drinks.

In addition, anyone wanting to make a presentation should contact Maj. Charles Good at Ext. 4341 to be added to the script.

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Photo by SrA. Chris Bolen

Drawing a crowd

A rescue helicopter on display at PatrickAFB, Fla., draws a crowd of Indiana civic leaders and employers during a recent civic leader trip. Those touring had an opportunity to learn about the rescue mission at Patrick, and also toured Cape Canaveral and the USS John F. Kennedy aircraft carrier at Naval Station Mayport, Fla.

Data theft

All military members can check the Air Force Personnel Center Web site at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil> to see if their personal data was compromised in the recent Veterans Administration data theft incident.

This is an additional effort on behalf of the Air Force to ensure affected Airmen are aware their information was compromised.

For the latest information on this issue and for more information on how to protect against identity theft, visit <http://www.firstgov.gov>.

Language pay

Being able to speak another language may translate into more money for some military people, including those who do not perform language duties.

Foreign Language Proficiency Pay rates increased recently for qualified
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military members.

Air Force Reserve Command people can find more details about FLPP online at <https://arpc.afrc.af.mil/education/flpp.asp>.

For specific questions about payments and entitlements, reservists should contact their local military personnel flight.



Toys for Tots

The Marine Corp is sponsoring a golf outing Aug. 12 at the Chippendale Golf Course in Kokomo in support of the Toys for Tots program.

The four-person best ball tournament begins with a shotgun start at 8 a.m. Cost is \$200 per team.

Additional information, including an entry form can be found by visiting kokomomarines.com or by calling Bill Gaunt at 765-868-0179.

Patches

Reservists assigned to the Air Force Reserve Command units will now wear an AFRC patch on their battle dress uniforms.

Previously most Grissom members wore an Air Mobility Command patch on the right breast pocket.

The change is effective immediately and mandatory by Oct. 1, 2006.

Base officials would like for Grissom members to have the patches on for the July unit training assembly if possible.

Unit orderly rooms began distributing patches during the June UTA.

For more information, contact your unit orderly room or unit clothing monitor.

Feedback positive on prototype uniform

WASHINGTON — Based on feedback received during visits with Airmen across the Air Force, the Air Force Uniform Board is reviewing several concepts that Airmen have suggested regarding the appearance of the service dress uniform.

Some of the informal feedback about the current service dress includes Airmen wanting to revamp the service dress to look more military, like the other services.

One senior airman said, “the current uniform resembles a cheesy business suit.” A staff sergeant said, “think world’s most dominating air power, not CEO,” and another described it as a “cheap leisure suit.”

Other comments have suggested that the uniform needs to reflect the Air Force’s history more.

On an Internet message board an Airman recently wrote, “I want to look good and be proud of my AF heritage.”

Another Airman wrote that the dress uniform pales in comparison to any of the other services. “We need something that distinguishes us as proud members of the U.S. military.”

The Air Force began exploring these ideas by producing several prototypes that reflect a combination of ideas that have been gleaned from comments, suggestions and informal surveys conducted over the past several years.

A more formal survey soon will provide additional opportunities for Airmen to provide feedback and comments.

“We’ve been getting informal feedback on our current service dress uniform for several years, and what we consistently have heard from many Airmen is a desire for a more ‘military,’ and less ‘corporate’ look and feel, something more reflective of the Air Force’s heritage, and its role as a professional military organization,” said Brig. Gen. Robert Allardice, director of Airman development and sustainment, deputy chief of staff for manpower and personnel.

“The Uniform Board has come up



Photo by Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez

Brig. Gen. Robert Allardice and Senior Master Sgt. Dana Athnos show off prototypes of the Billy Mitchell heritage coat in the Pentagon on Monday, May 15, 2006. General Allardice is director of Airmen development and sustainment and Sergeant Athnos is a member of the Air Force uniform board.

with some options to explore these concepts and the initial prototypes are direct descendants of our heritage, rooted in Hap Arnold and Billy Mitchell’s Air Force,” General Allardice said.

The survey will provide a more formal opportunity to collect feedback on whether or not Airmen want a new service dress, and if so, what changes, likes, or dislikes they have about the prototypes.

“We believe we need to respond to the force and the constant flow of feedback we receive on the service dress is driving this initiative. We see this as an opportunity to do so, along

with a chance to reflect on our rich history, as well as the image we wish to portray in uniform,” said General Allardice. “We want to make sure our uniforms, all combinations, meet our current and future needs.”

This process will use the standard Air Force Uniform Board process and as with the Airman’s Battle Uniform, Airmen are encouraged to take the opportunity to directly contribute to how their new service uniform might look.

The Air Force will present options based on feedback received on possible service dress designs through the uniform board process. (AFNS)