

Heartland

Warrior

Vol.13 No. 12

December 2008

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

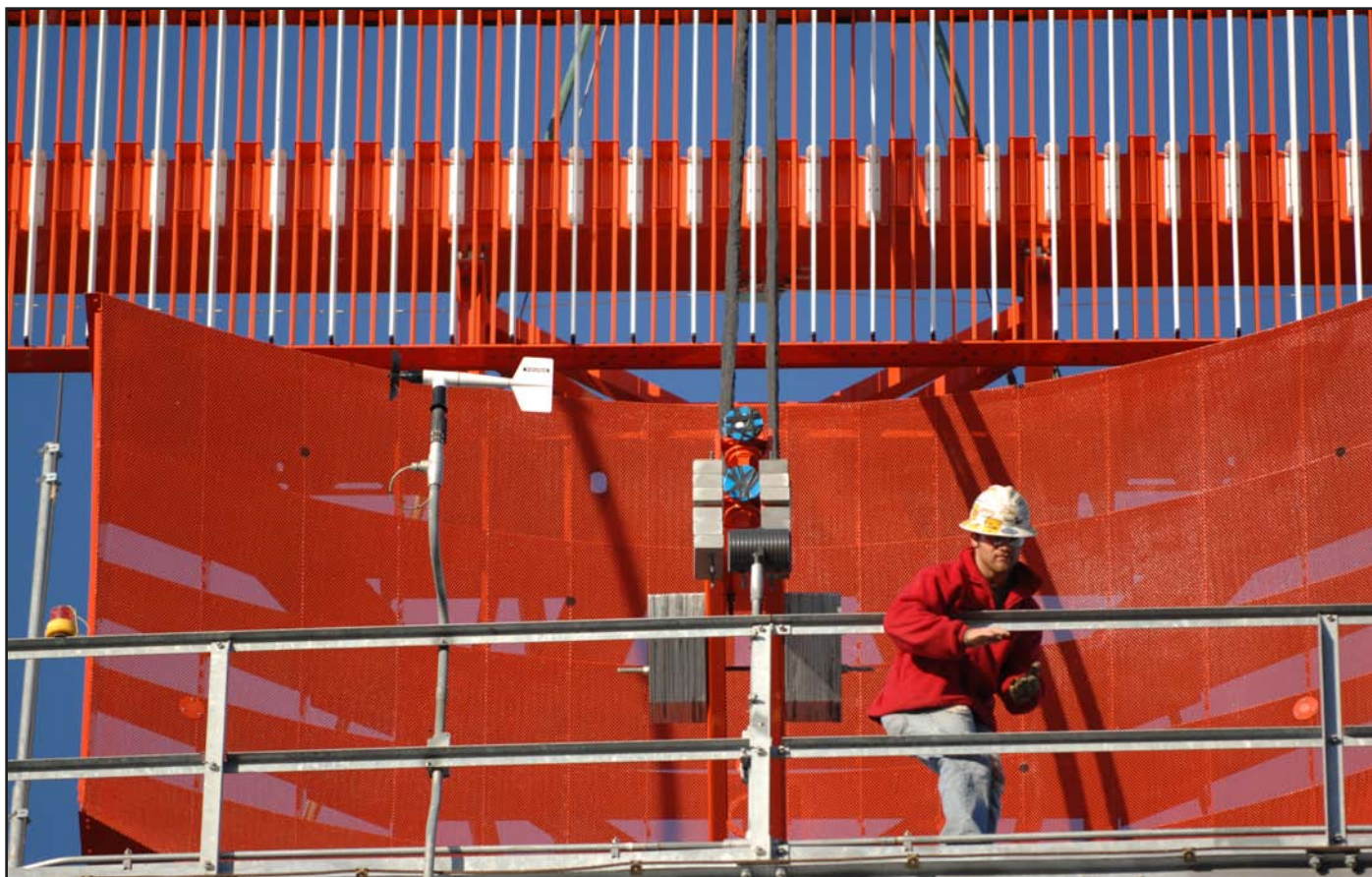


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays

Setting the sail

Ben Jackson, of Todd Hamilton Tower Services, motions directions to a crane operator as they hoist the sail of the digital air surveillance radar into place at Grissom. When operational, the new radar will greatly enhance Grissom air traffic controllers' ability to see and manage aircraft within their area of responsibility.

Changes made to retired pay dates

The Department of Defense issued new guidelines for early receipt of retired pay for members of the reserve components.

Instead of waiting until age 60 to receive Reserve retired pay, eligible members could receive retired pay prior to age 60 but not before age 50.

Under interim changes to Depart-

ment of Defense Instruction 1215.07, Service Credit for Reserve Retirement, issued under a provision of law passed by Congress earlier this year, reserve component members are able to reduce the age at which they are eligible to receive retirement pay by three 3 months for each cumulative period of 90 days served on active duty in any

fiscal year.

Under the new law, members eligible to receive retired pay earlier than age 60 must still wait until age 60 to receive healthcare benefits.

Most active duty time qualifies, including training, operational support duties, and school tours. It does not

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What is it with these kids nowadays?

By Lt. Col. Al Bello
386th EAXMS commander

SOUTHWEST ASIA -- "These kids nowadays." If I had a dime for every time I heard that cliché from my parents while growing up in the '60s and '70s, well, I'd have a bunch of dimes.

Of course, my parents weren't the first to use the phrase. It's been going on for centuries as a "catch all" when each generation finds it difficult to understand the motivations and unconventional behaviors of the next. Now that I'm no longer "cool," and the father of three children ranging in age from 14 to 24, I too have been guilty of using this phrase a time or two.

My children, and the majority of our young Airmen, are what the mainstream media calls Generation Y. Normally, researchers include those born between 1982 and 2001 in this group. Of course, we should never label a whole generation, but those from Generation Y are described in very general terms as being impatient, skeptical and expressive.

They're impatient because, after all, they've been raised in a world dominated by technology where instant gratification is just a text message or mouse click away. They tend to be a little skeptical of everything because while watching their televisions and surfing the net they've watched chief executive officers and other media stars cheat and scam their way to the top. Additionally, reality TV has taught them if you're loud and obnoxious enough, your 15 minutes of fame could last a lifetime. No wonder a par-

ent might mutter "these kids nowadays" every now and then.

Surprisingly, even though I'm far away from my children right now and have no obvious reason to use it, I've said the cliché numerous times in my head almost every day since I arrived in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Interestingly, it hasn't been aimed at my children; it's been aimed at the many young Airmen I've met during my deployment. And the reason is simple; from what I've seen, these kids nowadays are really special.

When I pull up to an entry control point and see an Airman standing in 120 degree heat wearing full body armor and projecting a professional attitude and image, I say to myself ... these kids nowadays.

When I see an Airman working 12-hour shifts, six days a week, with uniforms covered in grease and hydraulic fluid, maintaining and producing mission capable aircraft at twice the rate of home station, I think ... these kids nowadays.

When I watch Airmen load and unload thousands of tons of cargo, moving millions of passengers, providing first-class logistical support to all personnel in the AOR, I again think ... these kids nowadays.

When I see a team of Airmen leading and defending a three-mile long resupply convoy from one end of Iraq to the other, on the road for 15 straight days, I can't help but think ... these kids nowadays.

And when I have the pleasure of re-enlisting an Airman who is performing his third deployment in two years,

knowing full well his fourth and fifth are right around the corner, I again say to myself ... these kids nowadays.

Are you starting to get the picture?

The fact is the young Airmen I encounter every day in the AOR are the best I've ever seen! I'm well aware that we, and Airmen like us, have been doing great things for a very long time. I enlisted in the Air Force in 1986, and have been inspired numerous times by the sacrifice and devotion to duty of countless officers and enlisted personnel during my 22 years.

As our Airman's Creed says, we are faithful to a proud heritage, and we should be. However, I just can't help but feel there's something extraordinary about our young Airmen today. To me, what makes them extraordinary is when they decided to commit their lives to their country.

The fact is, most of our young Airmen decided to raise their right hand and defend the Constitution of the United States during a time of war.

Not many of us older Airmen can say that.

These young people knew up front what serving in the Air Force meant. It meant difficult and frequent deployments away from family and friends, yet they still raised their right hand and continue to do so today. I think it speaks volumes about their character and commitment to this country and our Air Force.

Is Generation Y impatient? Skeptical? Expressive? Maybe. But let me say this without hesitation: I'm extremely proud to serve with these kids nowadays! (AFNS)

Heartland Warrior

Vol. 13, No. 12
December 2008

This funded Air Force Reserve Command newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services.

Contents of the Heartland

Warrior are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

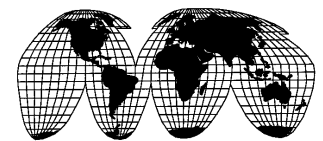
The editorial content is edited, and prepared by the Public Affairs Office of the 434th Air Refueling Wing, Grissom ARB, IN, 46971-5000.

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World Wide Web

Air Force Reserve Home Page

<http://www.afrc.af.mil>

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<http://www.grissom.afrc.af.mil>

Special observances

Observances let unit members celebrate diversity

Major Robin Bruno
434th Air Refueling Wing

Special observances abound, but do you ever ask yourself why?

A special observance is an event involving many, interrelated activities and is designed to enhance cross-cultural and cross-gender awareness.

It promotes harmony among all military members, their families, and the civilian and contract work force. Observances are conducted to recognize the continuous achievements of all Americans and to the diverse American culture in order to increase awareness, mutual respect and understanding.

Since 1968 the Department of Defense has proudly supported observances through the development of local programs of recognition and

many diverse activities.

DOD's approved observances for 2009 are Martin Luther King's Birthday January 15, 2009; African American/Black History Month February 2009; Women's History Month March 2009; Holocaust Remembrance Day April 21, 2009 and Days of Remembrance April 19-26, 2009; Asian Pacific American Heritage Month May 2009; Women's Equality Day August 26, 2009; Hispanic Heritage Month September 15 – October 15, 2009; National Disability Employment Awareness Month October 2009; National American Indian Heritage Month November 2009.

So what does this have to do with you? The 434th Equal Opportunity (EO) office and Grissom's Human Resources Development Council (HRDC) both run and participate in

the observances. Don't be reluctant to join a committee because you don't share the same ethnicity or cultural background as a particular special observance.

With HRDC, it doesn't matter what your race, color, religion, gender or cultural ethnicity is.

In fact, a committee made of a diverse group will do more to promote acceptance of diversity than separate committees for each ethnicity. What better way to support diversity acceptance and education than a diversified group committed to that agenda?

HRDC needs you to assist in any of the special observances. The next HRDC meeting at 11 a.m. Dec. in the Bldg. 596 main conference room on the second floor.

For more information contact the 434th EO office at 688-2408.

Pay, from page 1

matter whether active duty time was paid for under MPA or RPA accounts. There is no requirement to support a contingency or to serve on active duty OCONUS.

Time served on active duty: as an Active Guard Reserve member; on annual tour; while in captive status; for medical treatment, medical evaluation for disability purposes or medical study; as a member not assigned to, or participating satisfactorily in units; under active duty agreements; for disciplinary/courts-martial; or for muster duty is not creditable service for purposes of reducing retired pay age.

Qualifying active duty service performed after Jan. 28, 2008, the date the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act was enacted, is creditable. The law does not provide credit for time served on or before Jan. 28.

An example: Airman Smith agreed to perform five days of active duty service on MPA orders in Feb., 2008.

He then volunteered for active duty service beginning June 1, 2008 for six months ending Nov. 30 (leave, reconstitution and PDMRA inclusive (as applicable)). Airman Smith thus performed 127 days in FY 2008, and 61 days in FY 2009.

Under this scenario, all of the active duty time Airman Smith performed could be credited toward reduced retirement age eligibility because it was active duty time performed under circumstances permitted under the new law.

However, because time credited must total 90 days or multiples of 90 days in the aggregate per fiscal year in order to correspondingly reduce his retirement age by three months, or multiples of three months, Airman Smith will be able to reduce his retirement age only by three months for FY 2008.

Had he performed 53 more days in active service in total after Jan. 28,

2008, prior to going on active duty June 1, he would have served on active duty for 180 days in the aggregate in FY 2008 and thus would be able to reduce his retirement age by six months.

Similarly, because Airman Smith has thus far served on active duty 61 days in FY 2009, he must perform active duty service for an additional 29 days, in the aggregate, in FY 2009 in order to reduce his retirement age by an additional three months.

All Airmen are encouraged to keep track of their active duty service and orders to ensure they are receiving credit for that service, and to ensure they meet the cumulative 90 days thresholds required to reduce retirement age.

For further information visit the Air Reserve Personnel Center Web site at www.arpc.afrc.af.mil.

'Warlord' takes over ORI prep

Activity to build as inspection draws closer

By Staff Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner
Public Affairs staff

Warlord is a term that has been used to describe militaristic leaders who ruled with iron fists during some of the world's darkest times, but at Grissom, a new warlord could lead the way to a bright and excellent future -- when it comes to operational readiness inspections.

Col. James Gray, 434th Air Refueling Wing exercise director, is this new warlord.

The term itself is a slang used for a person in charge of preparing a unit for an operational readiness inspection, and that's what Colonel Gray said he intends to do.

Colonel Gray started out his Air Force career in 1983 in civil engineering on active duty, where he spent five years. He joined the Air Force Reserve a year after earning his master's degree.

Since becoming a Citizen Airman, he has held the positions of CE officer, squadron commander, deputy mission support group commander and mission support group commander at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich.

Before the colonel left Selfridge and while he was the 927th CES commander, he was named "warlord" leading up the 927th Air Refueling Wing's ORI.

"As warlord, I learned a lot about the rest of the wing," he said. "I grew up in CE, so I knew CE very well, but I didn't know the rest of the wing; and that position was good for me because I was able to learn how important all the pieces of the wing are."

All together, Colonel Gray said he has been a part of four ORIs and has worked with various other wings in an advisory role for their inspections. He also stated that ORIs have taught him a lot over the years.

"As painful as ORIs can be, they've always been the turning points in my career, and each one of them has made a significant impact on it," he said. "The thing you find out with ORIs is people know how to do their job."

And doing the job is not where Colonel Gray has seen problems in the past.

"Where we, and when I say we, I mean the Reserve and active-duty both, fall short at is with command and control and the (ability to survive and operate)," he said.

"How you wear the gas mask, how you move through the different zones, how you handle an attack, and how you take care of your troops and still accomplish the mission is where people mess up," he added.

That focus on command and control and ATSO is what the colonel said he focused on while at Selfridge and is what he intends to focus on here at Grissom.

"I put a lot of focus on that in 2004 with my CE background, and it was a good match," said the warlord. "I can't tell you how to do interviews and I can't tell the guys how to fly the planes; but I can help people with training and getting ready with (operational readiness exercises).

When asked about his feelings about becoming a part of the Grissom team, Colonel Gray said he did have some worries at first.

"I was worried that I may meet some resistance, he reminisced. "But, Grissom has at great attitude, great people, and strong leadership in the enlisted and officer corps; this is really a neat environment, and for me, it's a breath of fresh air."

And having the right attitude is the first step to an excellent inspection stated the colonel.

"We're starting with the right attitude, and now we just need to focus

our efforts, make it a priority and we'll do very well," he said. "We're part of a winning team here, and unless the team wins, the individual doesn't win."

That same attitude of individual success relating directly to group success is one Colonel Gray said he has from himself.

"I want people to know I'm not a guest here; I'm a part of this wing and it's us together that are going to succeed," he said. "I'm very proud to be a part of this wing and unless this wing's successful, I'm not successful."

And being successful is attaining excellence, the colonel said, adding that is a very realistic goal.

"We're starting very early; we have 17 months, and you're going to see a lot of activity getting ready for this. We're going to be very busy."

Colonel Gray said that another advantage to having a warlord is that a wing has a dedicated individual whose whole mission is to have a successful ORI.

"The wing has a lot of work done already, but the problem is there are so many competing resources; the ORI, the AEF commitments and the air show," he said. "What I bring to the table, is that I'm not a part of all that. I'm focused on just getting ready for the ORI."

Being that special resource, Colonel Gray wants people to use him if they have questions about the upcoming ORI.

"I can step outside the box and don't have to worry about the air show and deployments, and I can focus on what we need to do as a team to get ready," he said. "People can come to me if they have any ORI questions; I will be here most main unit training assemblies and on some of the alternate UTAs."

Services programs boost morale

Senior Airman Carl Berry
Public Affairs staff

The city of Chicago has the slogan ‘If you’re bored it’s not our fault,’ and that same slogan can be applied to Grissom Air Reserve Base due to its new diversion programs provided by the 434th Services Flight.

“With the upcoming deployments beginning next year, we have been actively creating programs for service members and their families that will help relieve some of their stress,” said Vickie Butte, services director.

The diversion activities that have been created have events that correspond with the seasons, said Ms. Butte. Some of the upcoming events are a dodge ball and basketball tournaments. A tailgate party, a lift-a-tanker challenge, deployment blast and holiday luncheons are also scheduled.

“Some people like to exert energy by participating in a competition, while others would rather relax with comrades and throw darts,” said Ms. Butte. “Our job is to have programs that accommodate everyone in order to build esprit de corps.”

Some of the benefits of having multiple diversion activities on base are they keep people on base which allows less of an opportunity for people to get in trouble, and they also provide an alternative method to the Fit to Fight initiative, said Chief Master Sgt. Somers, 434th SVF superintendent.

“There are typically not a lot of healthy activities in the surrounding area,” the chief said. “The activities we plan are for service members to get to know each other and boost morale.”

For some of the events there is a slight fee, but all of the proceeds go back to the Grissom community.

“The money that we receive from the events allows us to purchase new equipment for outdoor recreation and implement new events throughout the year,” he said.

One of the ways the 434th SVF measures success is by the amount of participation in an event.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays

Jessamyn Rhymer, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, tries to avoid having her flag pulled by Kyle Knell, an intelligence officer with the 434th Operations Support Squadron, during a game of flag football recently.

“We’d love to see more participation in the events,” said Ms. Butte. “A lot of organizing and planning go into these events.”

“Something new that the Air Force has implemented is a website, www.ice.disa.mil, which allows service members to leave comments, positive or negative,” said Chief Somers. “In

fact there is a competition that allows people to win prizes by simply leaving comments.”

Information about all of the activities that will be taking place in the near future can be obtained a number of ways, such as commander’s call, staff meetings, the Grissom Inn marquee or by calling Ext. 2414.

Vacant SARC position filled at Grissom

By Staff Sgt. Ben Mota
Public Affairs staff

It can be a frightening and traumatic experience not knowing where to go: in a matter of seconds the world has changed, but there is someone who can help.

Grissom recently hired Alison Duncan, a sexual assault response coordinator, to handle sexual assault matters here and provide the required sexual assault prevention and response training to military and Department of Defense personnel.

“My main goal is to train the base population and to establish a protocol for reporting sexual assault,” said Ms. Duncan.

The SARC position at Grissom has been vacant for a long period of time so there are many individuals on the base who are in need of the required training, she added.

Sexual assault training is mandatory for military members and DOD personnel annually.

Ms. Duncan said that the training is used to educate people on sexual assault matters and to prevent sexual assaults from occurring.

She added that part of her job responsibilities, is being available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to assist victims of sexual assault.

She is currently working with Miami County and other surrounding county agencies to create protocols for reporting sexual assault and providing medical attention, counseling, and services for victims.

Ms. Duncan will also be responsible for recruiting and training sexual assault victim advocates. Victim advocates are volunteers selected to provide essential support, liaison services and care to the victim.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ben Mota

Alison Duncan, the sexual assault response coordinator, provides information to new reservists to educate Airmen on sexual assault issues and provide resources for victims. Ms. Duncan has more than 10-years of experience in social services.

Victim advocates are not therapists or counselors, but they will help the victim throughout the process to ensure that they are getting the services needed. They will have a list of resources and ensure that victims are provided with immediate care.

Victims of sexual assault will be able to report their situation in a restricted or unrestricted manner.

“Unrestricted reporting allows us to turn cases into local law enforcement for investigation, while restricted reporting is an option for victims choosing to keep the information concerning the assault confidential,” said Ms. Duncan.

To be eligible for restricted reporting, a person must be a military member -- active duty or reserve -- in active status.

For unrestricted reporting, a person

can be military -- active, retired, or a reservist, family member of a military member (dependents 18 years and older), or federal civilian employees including contractors. Regardless of the report status (unrestricted/restricted), all victims receive advocacy services from her office.

In addition to her responsibilities as a SARC, she will be responsible for any mental health issues such as depression, suicide or traumatic stress response.

“It is my responsibility to provide psychological first aid to military members and family members affected by a traumatic event,” she said.

Ms. Duncan has over a decade of experience working in social services. Her experience includes working in hospitals, schools and in the courts.

Her office is located in Bldg. 669.

Heartland Warrior



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Bolen

Flu snort

Senior Airman Lisa Hendricks, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, administers a nasal flu vaccine dose to Tech. Sgt. Chris Nack, a boom operator with the 74th Air Refueling Squadron. Yearly flu shots are mandatory for all reservists with the nasal vaccine for those under age 50. Regular shots are required for those 50 and over.

USERRA

A Department of Labor representative will hold a USERRA briefing from 3-5 p.m. Dec. 6 in the auditorium of Bldg. 663.

The briefing will focus primarily on the upcoming deployment and answer questions and address issues associated with mobilization.

Junior enlisted call

A junior enlisted call will be held at 9 a.m. Dec. 7 in the dining facility.

Junior enlisted members will have an opportunity to join the Rising 6 organization as well.

For more information, contact Master Sgt. Trudy Burnett at Ext. 4028.

Deployment blast

The 434th Services Flight will be hosting a deployment blast Dec. 26-28

at Chocks.

The bar will be open for food and beverages beginning at 4 p.m. and college bowl games will be shown on the big screen.

For more information, call Ext. 2414.

Dodge ball

The 434th Services Flight will be hosting a dodge ball tournament beginning at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 6 at the fitness center.

To register teams, contact the fitness center staff at Ext. 2000 for more information.

Basketball

The annual Grissom basketball tournament will tip off in January.

The tournament tips off at 5 p.m. Jan. 10.

Teams can register at the fitness center.

A player's pool will also be held for people who don't have a current team to join.

Details are available by calling Ext. 2000.

Holiday lunch

A special holiday lunch will be served from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the dining facility.

The menu includes a choice of steamship round or pork tenderloin, rosemary potatoes, green beans almon-dine, dinner rolls, dessert and beverage.

The cost is \$9 for club members and \$10 for non club members.

For more information, or to make reservations, contact services by at Ext. 2414.

TRICARE

Premiums decrease beginning in January

Air Force reservists and their families will soon be able to buy more affordable Tricare health care coverage.

Effective Jan. 1, 2009, Tricare will reduce monthly Tricare Reserve Select premiums for individuals by 44 percent, from \$81 to \$47.51, and TRS family coverage will drop 29 percent, from \$253 to \$180.17.

The 2009 National Defense Authorization Act directed Tricare to analyze TRS costs from 2006 and 2007, and to set new rates for 2009.

"Now that TRS has been in place for several years, we were able to calculate premiums for 2009 from actual cost data obtained in earlier years," said Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, deputy director of Tricare Management Activity. "It is important to provide high quality and affordable healthcare coverage for our National Guard and Reserve families."

Established in 2005, TRS is a premium-based health plan that members of the Selected Reserve can purchase if they are not eligible for or enrolled in Federal Employee Health Benefit plans.

The plan provides a health care option for Selected Reserve members when they are not on active duty status. The plan delivers coverage similar to Tricare Standard and Extra to eligible members who purchase the coverage and pay monthly premiums. It also features continuously open enrollment.

"It's an excellent health care option we are proud to offer," said General Granger.

Reservists can determine their eligibility, qualify for, or purchase the TRS through the Guard and Reserve Web Portal or by logging onto <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/esgr/logonAction.do> and selecting the "Tricare Reserve Select Website" link.

More information about TRS is available on the Tricare Web site at <http://www.tricare.mil> (AFRCNS)



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays

Up close and personal

Col. Chris Luithly, the vice commander of the Indiana Air National Guard's 122nd Fighter Wing in Fort Wayne, is seen in the cockpit as he receives fuel for his F-16 from a Grissom KC-135R Stratotanker. Colonel Luithly's F-16 is specially painted to honor the 122nd FW's proud history.