

Heartland WARRIOR

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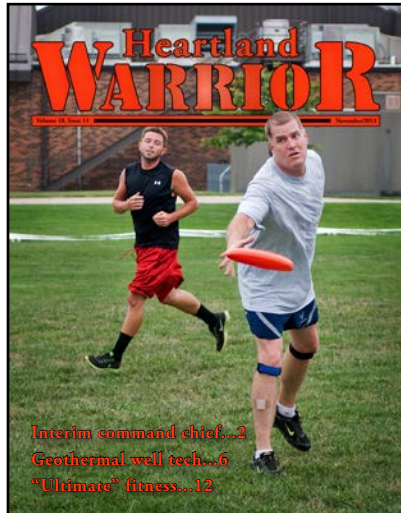
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U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner

On the cover...

Mark Copp lets a disc fly as Brian Wright watches on during a game of ultimate at Grissom Aug. 8. Certain Grissom personnel and their family members gather together each Tuesday and Thursday in the spring, summer and fall to play games of ultimate on their lunch hour as a way to supplement their fitness routines and spend time together.

Bowden fills in as command chief

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

It's been said that when opportunity comes knocking, be ready.

And, being ready to serve is exactly what landed Chief Master Sgt. Michael L. Bowden Jr. in the position of the 434th Air Refueling Wing's interim command chief.

Bowden, who previously served as a civil engineer manager for the 434th Civil Engineer Squadron, was selected by Col. Don Buckley, 434th ARW commander, to serve as command chief while Chief Master Sgt. Karen Perkins is deployed to Southwest Asia.

"I have complete confidence in him that he's going to do a great job," said Perkins, "The wing commander went through a thorough interview and selection process to pick him."

"I appreciate this opportunity Colonel Buckley has afforded me, and it's going to be a new challenge for me, but I'm excited for the challenge," Bowden said. "The command chief's job is both busy and chaotic because it has some sort of input or oversight on every program on base that impacts the morale and welfare of our troops."

But, the 27-year Air Force veteran, who has deployed numerous times both in and outside the wire, said he has the experience necessary to accomplish the mission and is ready to put in the work to excel.

"Having been the chief in CE for as long as I have and gone on as many deployments as I have, I've been exposed to many situations that tested and expanded my leadership in a lot of different areas," Bowden explained. "So, I look forward to serving the men and women of this wing and working with the wing commander on morale and welfare issues."

In his new role as command chief, Bowden said his goals are to help Airmen accomplish the mission and bolster morale and welfare.

"I expect them to work issues through their chain of command as



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

Chief Master Sgt. Michael L. Bowden Jr.

they normally would, but I'm always available to anyone who needs my help or advice," he elaborated. "I'll be out and about and accessible to our Airmen."

When asked about how he got to the point where he was asked to serve as the senior enlisted advisor to one of the Air Force's premier aerial refueling wings, the chief said it came from having a desire to serve and the boldness to take every opportunity given to him.

"You need to take every opportunity given to you to step up and become the leader you want to be and continually work at it," Bowden said. "Leadership doesn't happen overnight; it's something you build up over your career through experiences and relationships."

"We have top leadership in our Air Force constantly working on their leadership skills even at the pinnacle of their careers," he continued.

With this opportunity before him, Bowden said he is once again ready to grow and learn as a leader.

"I'm looking forward to gaining the experience and having the opportunity to meet with more of our Airmen that I didn't know before or that didn't know me," the chief said. "That's really exciting part of it -- getting to know and interact with more of the hard-working folks that make this wing so awesome."

Grissom helps local area students say 'no' to drugs

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

Grissom Airmen are used to taking the fight to enemies overseas, but some of them also fight a battle against drugs here in their own back yard.

Gary Flook, Grissom's drug demand reduction specialist, led a team of 434th Air Refueling Wing Airman out to local area schools to teach nearly 1,000 kids how to say 'no' during Red Ribbon Week Oct. 21-25.

Red Ribbon Week is the largest and oldest drug prevention program reaching millions of Americans during the last week of October every year.

This year, the team engaged with students at Pipe Creek Elementary in Peru, Ind., and North Miami Elementary School, Denver, Ind.

"We do an outreach project in the local community as part of our drug awareness program," explained Flook. "Hopefully we are planting seed that they carry with them and know later in life that just because their friends say something is cool does not mean it's ok."

"It's been a great success, and it's a good way to introduce the whole idea of peer pressure to the students," said Thecla Brown, Pipe Creek's guidance counselor. "I talk to them about this during the year, but this is the kickoff for our program."

The success of the outreach, having now completed its fourth year,



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

Gary Flook, 434th Air Refueling Wing drug demand reduction specialist, speaks to kindergarten students at Pipe Creek Elementary in Peru, Ind., about how they can deal with peer pressure and say no to drugs and alcohol Oct. 22. Each year Flook leads a team of Grissom Airmen to discuss the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse with local area students.

is twofold, said Laura Fulton, Pipe Creek's principal who has 19 years of education experience, adding that the first reason is due to the Grissom team's ability to relate the message to kids.

"It's hard for people to sometimes relate to kids this small and make a topic that is kind of complex fit their understanding and level, but they do a really great job at that," said Fulton. "Any topic is relatable to 5 and 6 year olds, you just have to put it in their terms and make it something they under-

stand."

And, Flook said, relating the dangers of alcohol, drug and tobacco use to children is the primary focus of the outreach.

"Each year we gather more material and try stay more in touch with what the younger kids are being exposed to and tailor it to that," explained Flook.

Fulton said the second reason for the program's success is due to who is delivering the message.

"We share the same message throughout the year, but we are familiar

to them, so it's almost like they sometimes tune us out," she elaborated. "When you have someone come in from the outside in the community, someone who is in a position of authority or play an important role, and they share that same message in a different format, that hit's home."

Brown agreed, stating that having role models in uniform share the message with students helps her throughout the year.

"When we talk about it all year, I can refer back to it and say, 'remember when Grissom came out and told us not to do drugs?'" she added. "And, they do remember it because it stands out."

Flook said he hopes the message is remembered long after this year, as it provides students with tools to keep them safe.

"At this point, we hope they're not exposed to (drugs and alcohol)," he continued. "But, when they get in junior high, we hope they remember this, and that's why we engage them now."

Fulton concurred, adding that it's never too early to talk to children about the dangers in life.

"You want to start having this conversation with children now, even though it might see small, because when they're 16, it's a whole different conversation as they are making life-threatening choices," explained the principal. "We can talk to kids about choices, because they have control over all that."

"It really is just about making good choices," she concluded.

Grissom has \$118 million impact on local economy

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

Grissom's impact is felt globally as its servicemembers deploy around the world, but the Hoosier base also has a big impact at home as well.

The 434th Air Refueling Wing recently announced Grissom had a more than \$118 million economic impact on the local economy for Fiscal Year 2013.

"Grissom is a huge part of this community, and we are proud of that fact," said Col. Don Buckley, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander. "Because of our important mission, we injected over \$118 million into the local economy last year, and in return, the community provides us with hardworking,

mission-focused personnel ready to get the job done to keep America safe.

On top of that, the community is extremely supportive of the military," Buckley continued. "It truly is a win-win for all involved."

Jim Tidd, Miami County Economic Development Authority director, agreed with that assessment.

"As the largest employer, Grissom has a tremendous positive impact on not only the local economy, but on the regional one as well," said Tidd. "That's something we can't take for granted."

With nearly 2,600 employees, the base contributed more than \$70 million in military and civilian payroll alone last year.

On top of that, Grissom, in many aspects, is like a small city, with its

own fire and police departments, store, workers, families and community. And, like any city, the base purchased goods, services, utilities, office supplies, fuel and equipment from the civilian community.

Through those purchases last year, the base contributed more than \$23 million to the economy.

And, as with any major employer, indirect jobs are created in the communities that support the base, said Jason Dunn, 434th ARW comptroller.

Last year, the value of those jobs created reached over \$23 million.

"From the contractors that are able to get work there to the members of the 434th ARW buying goods and services in our community, there's no doubt Grissom has a huge impact on our local economy," concluded Tidd.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. Michael L. Pershing Jr.

Eye-catching

Senior Master Sgt. Michael L. Pershing Jr., 434th Operations Support Squadron aircrew flight equipment superintendent, won top honors in the 2013 Underwater Digital Shootout photography competition with this photo of a puffer fish eye taken near Kralendijk, Bonaire, a South Caribbean island. Pershing won in the point-and-shoot division of the contest.

New instruction means big changes to parts of PT test

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

It's all about meeting standards, and those standards recently evolved.

On Oct. 21, a new fitness instruction was published by the Air Force, which contained some major changes to key parts of the fitness program.

"Most things are the same, like we still have four components, and while some things are not new, they are being stressed more," said Juli Bailey, Grissom's exercise physiologist of the updated Air Force Instruction 36-2905 Fitness Program. "First and foremost, it's still the member's responsibility to ensure they know what the rules and regulations are."

In a recent briefing to 434th Air Refueling Wing unit fitness monitors, Bailey detailed major changes to three parts of the fitness program. These included changes to the ability for commanders to grant waivers, to the abdominal circumference assessment and to the alternate aerobic assessment.

"The commanders are not allowed to give a 30-day exemption to keep someone current anymore,"

said Bailey. "The only things they can exempt are things related to separations, so if someone is sick, they have to go to see a doctor at the clinic to get an exemption."

Also in regard to exemptions, reservists returning from deployments are allowed to receive a 90-day exemption from their return date.

As for the change to the abdominal circumference assessment, those who measure above the maximum allowable waist and who have passed all three other components with no exemptions will have two additional and different measurements taken.

"If you pass your pushups, sit-ups and run with a 75 percent or higher, then we can look at your body mass index," said Bailey. "If you don't pass that, then we look at the body fat assessment."

"If you're exempt from anything

or if you do the alternate aerobic assessment, you do not qualify for the abdominal circumference change," she added.

The BMI standards are based on a height to weight ratio only, regardless of gender; however, body

fat assessments utilize body circumference measurements and are different for males and females.

For males, neck measurements are subtracted from abdominal measurements to determine circumference values, which are used to determine body fat percentages

on a table listed in the AFI.

For females, waist and buttocks measurements are added and then neck measurements are subtracted from those sums to determine circumference values. Once again, the circumference values are used to determine body fat percentages on a table listed in the AFI.

The final change highlighted by Bailey dealt with alternate aerobic tests, also known as walk assessments.

"We no longer have a 1-mile walk test," she said. "It's now a 2-kilometer test, which is about 1.25 miles."

Under the new instruction, the alternate aerobic test no longer utilizes a heart monitor. To pass, walkers must only meet the criteria of finishing within their allotted time for their age group.

"It's a pass or fail, you get no points from it," explained Bailey. "Your score is made up of the three other components if you take the walk assessment."

She also said that a member who has any exemptions or utilizes any of the above changes will be required to test again at a minimum of six-month intervals.

"First and foremost, it's still the member's responsibility to ensure they know what the rules and regulations are."

- Juli Bailey



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

A 434th Security Forces Airman has his waist measured at Grissom Oct. 31. Under a new Air Force Instruction, abdominal circumference assessments have changed so that those who measure above the maximum allowable waist and who have passed all three other components with no exemptions will have two additional measurements taken of their body fat to determine if they meet standards.

AFRC first: Grissom goes geothermal to **heat**, **cool**



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Douglas Hays

Cristian Coffey, a geothermal contractor, installs well supply and return lines to a vault at Grissom Oct. 22. Four energy-saving vaults are being installed, each connecting seven, 300-foot wells used to supply heating and cooling to a newly renovated Bldg. 671.

By Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays
Public Affairs staff

Breaking ground on a building renovation also meant breaking ground on a first for Grissom and the Air Force Reserve Command.

When the renovations began in the spring for Bldg. 671, housing Grissom's maintenance operations and command post, base civil engineers sought a way to move into the green and save energy costs via geothermal heating and cooling.

Geothermal energy is clean, sustainable heat from the Earth.

Sam Pier, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron mechanical engineer, said he had some experience with geothermal exchange and wanted to incorporate the technology into the design.

"When we knew the building was going to be renovated, Wayne Raby, 434th CES project manager, and I sat down and thought about what type of systems we wanted to utilize in the 14,900 square foot facility," added Pier. "I had experience with residential type geothermal units and wanted to see if there was a way to incorporate that technology here."

While the use of geothermal energy to heat and cool facilities isn't an option in all cases, a study was done and the determination was made that it would work. So, Raby and Pier generated the requirement for the designers to incorporate the use into the renovation project.

Getting heat from the ground to come out in a register in an office starts well below ground – 300

feet below to be exact.

Crews drilled 28 wells 300 feet down, the last 240 feet through limestone, to install a closed-loop geo-exchange system.

To make it all work, water is pumped through a pipe, down through a vertical loop, called a circuit, and back in closed supply and return lines and into a vault where each can be isolated. Grissom has four vaults in its geo-exchange field, with each tying into a variable refrigerant flow system that heats or cools the facility based on the season.

Contractors Gus Callahan and Cristian Coffey worked the trenches hooking up the vertical circuits to the vaults in the geo-exchange field behind the facility.

"You're not going to stay clean doing this

work," Callahan joked as he and Coffey worked in close-quarter trenches, two feet wide by about 6 feet deep.

While the geothermal loop installation may not be neat and clean, once finished, base officials estimate that it will be very effective.

"It's the combination of two super-efficient systems," Pier said.

AFRC is trying to reduce as much energy as possible, and it's a great way to conserve energy and use the ground as a heat source, Pier said.

"AFRC is excited about it and we are too," he added.

The cost of the installation ran about \$100,000; however, he estimates the base should see a payback in energy savings in about 10 years or less.

"It's highly efficient, very low maintenance and redundant," Pier said. "If we develop a problem in a vertical circuit, we just shut down that circuit in the vault and utilize the remaining 27 vertical circuits until the repair is made – while still operating at 100 percent."

As more and more emphasis is being placed on energy conservation and going green when possible, Pier said that other geo-exchange loops may be used at Grissom in the future.

"We will look for those opportunities when we can, but the conditions have to be right," he said. "There are underground utilities and systems that have been placed in the past and the geo-exchange field takes up a sizeable area."

Health fair kicks off civilian employee benefits open season

By Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays
Public Affairs staff

Open season for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program, and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program will run Nov. 11 through Dec. 9, Air Force Personnel Center officials announced.

To kick things off Grissom hosted a health fair at the dining facility, where health care providers were on hand to answer questions Oct. 31.

"We want people to have as much information as possible when it comes to selecting health care coverage for their families," said Shari Matz, 434th Force Support Squadron human resources specialist. "Having multiple providers on hand to answer questions gives our employees a chance to interact and their questions answered directly from the source."

"Open season is the best time for employees to review their health care coverage, not only to make desired changes, but also to ensure their plan has not been altered or discontinued," explained Carlos Colon, AFPC HR specialist.

Additionally, open season is a good time for employees who do not have health coverage to consider their options in light of the Affordable Care Act requirement to maintain minimum health care coverage for themselves and all dependents claimed on their federal tax return, or qualify for an exemption, Colon added.

Those who do not will be charged a penalty beginning with their 2014 federal tax return, in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Public Law 111-148 and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010.

The average premium rate for the FEHB Program will increase by 3.7 percent in 2014, according to U.S. Office of Personnel Management officials. That percentage is only slightly higher than last year's 3.4 percent increase, and less than the

2013 national average increase.

The average premium increase for the FEDVIP will be less than 1 percent for dental coverage and average premiums for vision benefits will decrease by 1.3 percent.

Federal Employees Health Benefits

There are no significant benefit changes for 2014 and more plan choices: 256, up by more than 10 percent from 2013.

Some plans are reducing their service areas or leaving the FEHB Program altogether, though. Employees in terminating plans or service area reductions with terminating enrollment codes must enroll in a new health plan during open season if they want coverage.

If they do not enroll in a new plan, they will not have FEHB coverage in 2014. Agency officials have been instructed to notify enrollees of the need to select new plans for 2014; however all employees should review OPM guidance for the 2014 open season before making a selection.

Coverage under an enrollee's new health plan will be effective the first day of the pay period beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2014. For most employees that will be the pay period beginning Sunday, Jan.

12. Enrollees will remain covered and receive the 2013 plan benefits until coverage under the new plan is effective.

Federal Employee Dental and Vision Insurance Program

There are three new dental plans and one new vision plan in FEDVIP. There are a total of 10 dental plans and four vision plans for employees to review during open season. Additionally the GHI plan has changed its name to EmblemHealth.

Federal Flexible Spending Account

Eligible employees can enroll in FSAFEDS during the open season, and current enrollees must enroll annually to continue participating in FSAFEDS. Enrollment does not carry forward year to year.

For more information about the comprehensive open season and the Affordable Care Act, go to myPers at <https://myPers.af.mil>, or the Internal Revenue Service website at www.irs.gov/uac and search for "questions and answers on the individual shared responsibility provision."

(Editor's note: This story was localized from an AFPC article written by Janis El Shabazz.)



Federal Employees Health Benefits Program

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



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

Jill Marconi, Grissom Airman and Family Readiness director, displays her hand as part of an 'I Can' project Oct. 17. Marconi, joined other Grissom personnel in the event aimed at educating people on how they can stand against domestic violence.

Hands unite against domestic violence

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

Joining hands, Grissom recently united against domestic violence in an exercise aimed at educating people on how they can help end abuse.

As part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the base organized an "I can, we can unite to end abuse" project here Oct. 17.

Each participant expressed their personal commitment to ending violence through creative expression, using their hands as canvases. They decorated them with paint, makeup, tissue paper, feathers and more in a

way that completed the statement "I can _____ to end domestic violence."

"This is a time to reinforce awareness, but also encourage a movement toward ending domestic violence and abuse," said Alison Duncan, 434th Air Refueling Wing social worker. "Interpersonal violence impacts all of us in some way, and ending this cycle depends on our willingness to be a part of the anti-violence movement, even if that involvement may seem small or insignificant."

According to national statistics, one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime, children who witness that violence have

the strongest risk factor of transmitting it to the next generation, and most cases are never reported.

"This is such a big problem in our society," said Jill Marconi, Grissom's Airman and Family Readiness director. "It's not just people on the outside; it's people on the inside, people we work and interact with."

According to Duncan, the point of the project was to show people that no effort to stop domestic violence is insignificant.

"When we talk about ending intimate partner or family violence, individuals often feel that they alone can't do enough to make an impact -- it just seems too overwhelming,"

she explained. "That's where the 'I can, we can' project comes in -- empowering each of us to make a personal commitment to ending violence and emphasizing that collectively we do make an impact."

Organizers deemed the project a success after a greater-than-expected turnout and after hearing feedback.

"We had a great turnout and even extended the time to allow for more people to participate," said Duncan. "As people entered and surveyed the room you could see the initial hesitation, but that quickly turned to excitement as their creative energies flowed as they



Staff Sgt. Richard D. Barrett IV, foreground, and Master Sgt. Rebecca Mattox paint their hands with 'I Can' statements here Oct. 17. Barrett is a 434th Security Forces Squadron security response team member, and Mattox is a 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron health services manager.

really got into it.

"Their creations were amazing," she added.

Marconi said she thought the entire project was an amazing idea that truly made people think about their role in stopping domestic violence.

"I think people learned a whole lot more about what they could do," said Marconi. "It's enlightening to see how many people are making a stand."

Some of the ideas generated by Grissom's participants to answer the "I can" statement included phrases such as "empower," "share my voice," "inspire," "educate," "create change," "dry your tear," "be your voice" and more.

"The overall message is that we each have the power to help end violence and abuse," shared Duncan.

"The project was initiated by California-based organization in an effort to strengthen, connect and expand the anti-violence movement through creative expression," she explained. "The project

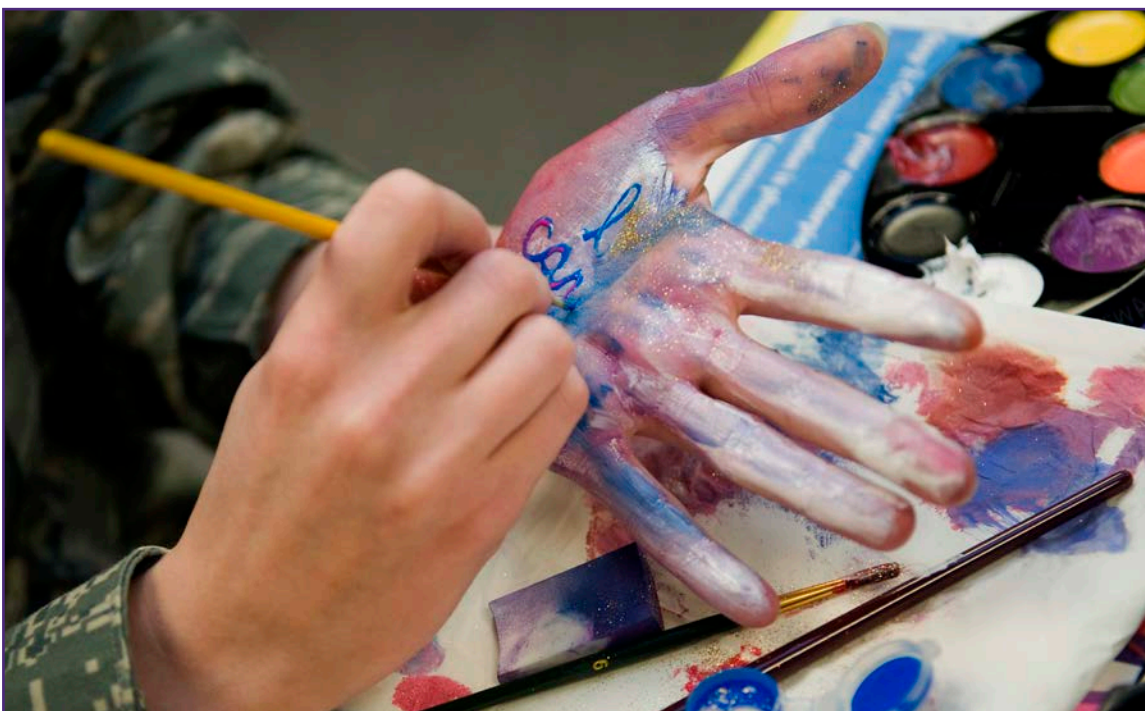
has continued to gain momentum, especially during the month of October, and galleries of the 'I can, we can' art are exhibited across the country."

The "I can" messages created by Grissom members were photographed and will be used for a community gallery, where the art will be displayed as a symbol of the base's commitment to end abuse.

"Once the project is completed, I invite anyone who is interested to visit Bldg. 431 to view our gallery," said Duncan.

If someone or someone they know is in an abusive relationship and wants help, they can call the Indiana Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-332-7385 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE.

"Additionally, I am always available to assist Grissom members in connecting them with various community resources," said Duncan. "Feel free to give me a call, stop by my office or send me an email if I can be of assistance."



Tech. Sgt. Erica Morgan, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron personnel specialist, paints her hand with an 'I Can' statement at the Grissom Airman and Family Readiness center here Oct. 17. October has been named the Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and Morgan joined alongside other Grissom civilian and military personnel as they took time to decorate their hands with 'I can' statements with how they can help as a way to show their support for ending domestic violence.

AF leaders describe future force under sequestration

By Staff Sgt. David Salanitri
Air Force Public Affairs Agency

WASHINGTON -- Two senior Air Force leaders testified before Congress Oct. 23, along with their Army and Navy counterparts on the impact of the continuing resolution and sequestration on the service's acquisition and modernization programs.

Dr. William LaPlante, the principal deputy to the secretary of the Air Force for acquisition, and Lt. Gen. Michael Moeller, the Air Force deputy chief of staff for strategic plans and programs, both testified on the significant impacts of the continuing resolution and sequestration to the House Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces.

LaPlante, along with the other acquisition chiefs, said sequestration will cost the Defense Department more than it saves. Cuts to development programs will drive up unit costs and are already delaying testing, he said.

Under the continuing resolution, the services are not permitted to change how funds are appropriated from one year to the next; leaving some accounts with excess cash while others are underfunded. In fiscal 2013, Congress authorized the transfer of some funds between accounts, but that flexibility has not been renewed for fiscal 2014.

The inflexible funding means the Air Force is likely to have to cut the number of aircraft it buys this year, LaPlante said, singling out the F-35 Lightning II program as an example. "We'll lose somewhere between four and five airplanes in '14," he said.

Since sequestration started, people have been seriously affected. Thousands of Air Force civilians were furloughed without pay earlier in the year, and flying units stood down for a period of time, degrading readiness.

As sequestration continues to take hold, Air Force leaders said cuts need to be made, in addition to those made already.

"We had to look everywhere in order to get billions in dollars of savings," Moeller said.

They went as far as to say the service is looking at cutting entire fleets of aircraft, and under sequestration, the service will need to reduce the force by as many as approximately 25,000 Airmen.

"If sequestration is fully implemented over the next 10 years, it will be a struggle to meet tomorrow's challenges," Moeller said. "The Air Force will be forced to cut thousands of total force Airmen and hundreds of platforms."

With assessments ranging from "sobering" to "painful," representatives from the other service branches described the devastation being wreaked by sequestration and the continuing resolution.

Citing halted development programs, hiring freezes, and narrowing technological advantages, the

acquisitions chiefs warned committee members that the ongoing budget uncertainty is putting the nation at risk.

"Maintaining current readiness and forward presence to the extent possible under sequestration comes at expense to our investment in future readiness," said Sean Stackley, the assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition. "In fiscal year 2014 alone, absent congressional action or mitigating circumstances, the continuing resolution and sequestration would cause cancelled procurements of up to three major warships and 25 aircraft,"

Heidi Shyu, the assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology, pointed to stability's central role in guaranteeing successful acquisitions programs.

"Our capacity to maintain expertise in science and technology, engineering, contracting, cost estimation (and) logistics are all at risk because one of the most attractive benefits to the government employee - the stability - has been undermined," she said.

"Every major development suffers delay, or reduction, or cancellation in this budget environment where uncertainty seemingly guides every decision," Stackley said.

As Moeller concluded his remarks, he stated Air Force leadership's collective opinion of sequestration.

"The bottom line after sequestration, the Air Force is going to be significantly smaller, less capable, less flexible and less ready," Moeller said. "Most importantly, it will make it very difficult to meet the challenges we will face in the future."

(Claudette Roulo of American Forces Press Service contributed to this report.)



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie

Lt. Gen. Michael Moeller testifies on the significant impacts of the continuing resolution and sequestration to the House of Armed Services Committee's subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, Oct. 23, in Washington, D.C. Moeller is the Air Force deputy chief of strategic plans and programs.

Grissom's new nature trails add beauty, save money

By Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays
Public Affairs staff

In an era of people looking for a win-win scenario, Grissom's civil engineers cultivated just the thing.

New nature trails have been recently cut into fields on base that were left to become natural habitat as part of an energy savings plan.

"We were looking for areas that we could refrain from mowing to save ground costs," said Cory Walters, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron biological scientist.

The area west of Bldgs. 663, 667 and 668, and an area just east of the Army Reserve Center were studied and deemed far enough away from the flightline to safely let the grass grow and create a natural prairie habitat.

Mowing crews diverted from mowing those areas earlier in the summer and nature took its course, with native grasses, flowers and plants taking root and growing.

"Grissom personnel are used to seeing a well-manicured area, and some may not care for the look," said David Hughes base civil engineer, "but this is a natural setting for Indiana."

To help highlight that natural habitat, Hughes devised a plan to mow a pathway that people could stroll along.

"You can see flowers, birds, butterflies and native bushes and trees," he said.

After coordinating with mowing crews, a rough pattern was drafted.

Upon looking at it, people started trying to figure out what it looked like – and idea was born.

The engineers tweaked the pathway, and the result was a squirrel-like pattern cut through grass on the north side of Hoosier Boulevard. Across the street from that on the south side, a similar path dubbed the 'nut' is carved out.

"The only ones that can tell it's a squirrel may be the aircrews," Walters joked, "but, it's there."

With the pattern designed, the team staked out the path for mowing crews to follow.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Douglas Hays

David Hughes, base civil engineer, and Cory Walters, biological scientist, look at a cottonwood tree along one of the new nature trails here Oct. 30. The trails were cut to showcase Indiana's natural habitat while saving ground maintenance expenses.

Elous Morgan, a mowing contractor, made several runs through the tall grass, lowering his mowing deck with each pass. The result is a manicured path about five feet wide.

"We're anxious to see how this area is received," Walters said. "It's a nice place to take a small walk during lunch, or a different path to

jog for those wanting a diversion from the perimeter trail."

The engineers said they don't know how the project will be received and are open to enhancing the look with native trees and perhaps some boulders in the future.

The base fitness center has maps outlining the nature trails and access points to it for those interested.

Ultimate fitness:

Grissom servicemembers, civilians come together for disc-slinging fun

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

With the flip of a wrist and spin of a disc, Grissom personnel are getting fit and closer together through “ultimate” competition.

Several Grissom civilian and military members alike recently ended their fifth consecutive season here of playing Ultimate, a flying disc game that loosely resembles American football.

According to USA Ultimate, the governing body for the sport in the United States, it was developed in 1968 by a group of students at Columbia H.S. in Maplewood, N.J., and is played in more than 80 countries by an estimated 7 million people.

The games at Gris-

som are played seven-on-seven whenever possible to match USA Ultimate rules, and they are played to 10 in order to maximize the number of games during a lunch hour.

“We stay as close to U.S.A. Ultimate rules as possible,” explained Mark Copp, 434th OSS combat crew communications superintendent, adding that their season lasts as long as the weather permits. “As soon as we don’t have to have gloves and sock hats, we go out and play.”

The only major variation added by the Grissom players is that defenders must stay at least an arm’s distance away from an offensive player to help prevent injuries, explained Copp.

Since its Grissom debut, dozens of Grissom



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

ABOVE: Michaela McClintock throws a disc during a game of Ultimate at Grissom Aug. 8. McClintock and other Grissom personnel gather together each Tuesday and Thursday in the summer to play a game on their lunch hour.



LEFT: Brian Wright, left, and Andrew Robinson fight for a disc during a game of Ultimate at Grissom Aug. 8. Robinson is a son of Capt. Chris Robinson, 72nd Air Refueling Squadron assistant flight commander, and Wright is a Grissom combat readiness technician.



Cory Walters slips a disc past Jamail Baldwin during a game of Ultimate at Grissom Aug. 8. Baldwin is a 434th Operations Support Squadron aviation resource apprentice, and Walters is a 434th Civil Engineer Squadron biological scientist.

personnel from various units have come together on their lunch break to play as a way to supplement their fitness routines, said Joe Austin Jr., 434th Operations Support Squadron chief of current operations.

"It's a good adjunct to other workouts, such as running long distances, strength training, push-ups and sit-ups," said Cory Walters, a 434th Civil Engineer Squadron biological scientist, adding that it's much more interesting than simply running sprints on a track.

For other players, Ul-

timite is a way to work out without thinking about that's what they're doing.

"I really hate running, but I really love playing," shared Copp. "For me, it's a way to do fitness without realizing you are doing fitness."

Copp also said the game allows him and others to decompress from work, which helps productivity.

"Out there, I don't have deadlines or papers to write," he explained. "I just catch the (disc)."

The sport has also had the benefit of helping base personnel come

together in ways they normally would not have the opportunity to do, said Walters.

"Playing this game, we've attracted members from other organizations around the base," added Austin. "I probably wouldn't have had this much chance to meet other people."

Bringing people together of all ranks, units and occupations is what Copp said he likes most about the game.

"Ranks seem to disappear, and we all want to win," said Copp. "It's a 50-50 split of hanging out and working out."

"This hour at lunch is a great way to get to know (everyone)," Walters agreed, adding that he finds it extremely satisfying whenever he can defend a colonel or officer.

With their season wrapped up for the year, several of the Ultimate players have moved indoors to play basketball, but said they are looking forward to warm weather to get back on the field. They also said they want to see their group grow.

"We'd love to see more people come out next year," concluded Copp. "It's wide open to anyone."

Leaders advise against merging Guard, Reserve



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Marvin Preston

Lt. Gen. James Jackson, Chief of the Air Force Reserve, testified to the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force on Oct. 24, that merging the Air Force Reserve with the Air National Guard would create little value and numerous adverse impacts – detracting from the goal of improving the Air Force structure.

By Col. Bob Thompson
Air Force Reserve Public Affairs

WASHINGTON -- Air Force Reserve leaders told members of the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force that merging the Air Force Reserve with the Air National Guard would create little value and cause numerous adverse impacts - detracting from the broader goal of improving the Air Force structure.

Appointed by the fiscal 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, the commissioners listened to testimony Oct. 24-25. They are looking at the Air Force's structure to determine if and how it should be changed to meet future missions and funding challenges. Their report and recommendations are due to the president by Feb. 1, 2014.

"I believe the nation benefits from the synergistic value of a three-component Air Force consisting of the Active Duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard," said Lt. Gen. James Jackson, chief of Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, during his testimony on Oct. 24.

Members of the National Commission on the Structure of the Air

Force interviewed senior leaders - from past and present, active duty, guard and reserve - to review proposals to integrate the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard into one reserve component.

"I do not believe combining the AFR and ANG is beneficial or value-added to our nation," Jackson told the commission. "A merger of the (two components) has been discussed many times during the 65 years of our history, yet has never materialized."

The commissioners also met with the top enlisted leaders of each of the three components and asked about strengths, capabilities, improvements, shortfalls, resiliency, participation, recruiting, retention and morale.

"We have met our recruiting goal for the 13th consecutive year," said Chief Master Sgt. Cameron Kirksey, AFRC command chief, during his testimony to the commission Oct. 25. "Our retention rate has averaged 88 percent for the past seven years. Morale continues to be high, and our Airmen want to serve more than ever."

"We are concerned with the current budget environment and the effects of sequestration," he said.

"From furloughs and paycheck losses, to the stress caused by financial uncertainty, the resiliency of the force is being tested, with the long-term impacts yet to be fully understood."

Regular Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Airmen work together around the world as a team in air, space and cyberspace. Today's Total Force consists of about 327,600 active-duty Airmen in the Regular Air Force along with 105,400 Air National Guardsmen and 70,880 Air Force Reserve Airmen actively serving in the Selected Reserve as designated by the FY13 National Defense Authorization Act. The Air Force Reserve also maintains a strategic depth of more than 790,000 stand-by or non-participating reservists and retirees who can be called up for national emergencies.

"We deliver our diverse portfolio of capability through air, space and cyberspace as a federal reserve, always in Title 10 status, whether at home or abroad," Kirksey said.

"The Air Force Reserve always serves in Title 10 status as the federal member of the Air Reserve Component," said Jackson.

This is the third time Jackson has spoken to the commission. In previous testimony, he told the commission about an analytical simulation tool called the "Individual Cost Assessment Model," which can determine an Airman's overall life-cycle cost, in all three components.

Leveraging the cost-effectiveness, capability and capacity of the reserve and guard during this time of fiscal austerity is of keen interest to the commission. Led by the Honorable Dennis M. McCarthy, a retired Marine Corps lieutenant general and the previous assistant secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs at the Pentagon, the commission has visited and interviewed Airmen across the country. The vice chair is the Honorable Erin Conaton, a former undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and previous under secretary of the Air Force.