

Heartland WARRIOR

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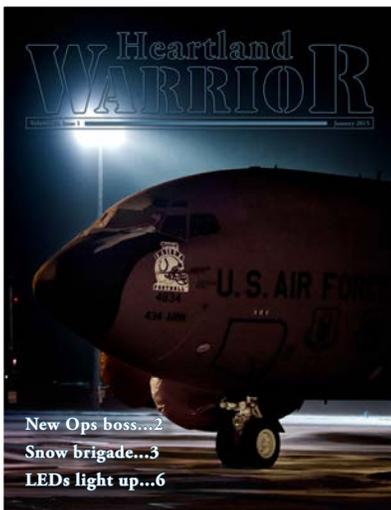
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U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

On the cover...

Recently installed light emitting diodes, commonly known as LEDs, illuminate a KC-135R Stratotanker on the mass parking area at Grissom Jan. 9. The north central Indiana base became the first Air Force base to transition its aircraft MPA lights from a sodium light source to a cost-efficient LED light source as part of the Security Act of 2007, a cost savings initiative to reduce energy consumption by 30 percent.

Sigler to lead 434th OG

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

434th ARW Public Affairs

While trading in temps in the 60s for those in the single digits may not be attractive to most, one Air Force Reserve colonel is looking forward to making the switch.

Col. Mark Sigler, who is currently the 452nd Operations Group commander at March Air Reserve Base, California, has been selected to replace Col. Gerard Malloy as the 434th Operations Group commander here in February.

In his new position, Sigler will be responsible for commanding the largest KC-135R Stratotanker unit in the Air Force Reserve Command. As such, he will manage the day-to-day operations and training of two operational flying squadrons and an operations support squadron.

“Grissom was my home for nine years,” he said. “I left in September of 2009, and I’m thrilled to be coming back.”

The colonel, who is a command pilot with more than 6,000 military flying hours, began his career after joining the regular Air Force in 1986, receiving his commission after graduating Loyola University, Louisiana with a Bachelor of Science degree in computer engineering.

Upon graduation of undergraduate pilot training, Sigler was assigned to be a KC-135A pilot at Pease Air Force Base, New Hampshire. He was then selected to the Air Education and Training Command’s T-1A Jayhawk Initial Cadre, where he played a significant role in the implementation of the Specialized UPT program.

In 1995, the then Captain Sigler, transitioned back as a KC-135R instructor and evaluator pilot and flight commander at Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota. During that time he also spearheaded his unit’s Pacer CRAG, or Compass Radar and Global Positioning System, conversion, which upgraded



U.S. Air Force photo

Col. Mark Sigler

avionics systems on KC-135s and eliminated the need for a navigator for most Stratotanker missions.

Sigler’s first stint at Grissom came upon joining the Air Force Reserve in 2000, when he was assigned to the 72nd Air Refueling Squadron here.

Since that time, he has served in various command and leadership positions at Grissom; Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina; and March. Those positions include plans officer, chief of standardization and evaluation, operations officer, squadron commander and group commander.

“One big thing I’ve learned is that Grissom does things right, especially when it comes to flying and maintaining the KC-135,” Sigler said of his time since leaving Grissom.

“Another lesson that has been really driven home to me the last few years is the importance of the people that you work with and the relationships that you form that really get the job done and make it worthwhile,” he added. “That’s what I look forward to the most about coming back to Grissom – reuniting with my old friends, meeting all the new people and dedicating myself to what I’ve always believed, which is Grissom is really the best air refueling wing in the Air Force Reserve.”

Grissom's snow brigade clears the way

By Tech. Sgt.
Doug Hays
Public Affairs staff

In October when most people are still looking at the fall foliage and preparing to rake leaves other Grissom employees are already preparing for a bigger and colder battle.

Grissom's roads and grounds contractors begin preparing for winter before fall ends to ensure Grissom's airfield remains open and the mission continues.

With a runway length of 12,500 feet and an equivalent of 88 football

fields of ramp space to clear, the snow removal team has plenty to focus on when the snow starts to fly.

The arsenal at the team's disposal ranges from roll-plows to snow shovels.

"We get everything ready to go," Marvin Plunkett, a Grissom roads and grounds contractor, said. "Once the snow flies we are going non-stop and doing routine maintenance before going back out."

That routine maintenance can be as simple as

greasing components to keep blowers, brooms and plows going or as difficult as replacing a bearing on a giant sweeper broom, he said.

This winter the team is using a covered storage facility to store sand that they hope will make their job easier.

"Sand freezes in the extreme cold and tears up the machines," explained Plunkett. "Keeping moisture out should help us."

When the checking and rechecking of equipment is done, the team just waits for Mother Nature to start throwing work their way.

"We have five rollover plows, two straight blade plows, three massive blowers, three 16-foot front mount sweepers, a sand truck, all-terrain vehicles, walk behind snow blowers and even basic snow shovels," Plunkett said.

Plunkett has

been working snow control at

Grissom since 1991, and he's seen some tough winters with last year being among the worst.

"We stay ready," he said. "Our job is to keep that runway open."

"When you get out on that runway on a dark, cloudy night with snow blowing and drifting, it can be difficult just finding the center line," he said. "But we've got guys that have been doing this a long time and are very good at it."

On the other end of the spectrum, imagine hand shoveling snow for five miles.

"Basically that's what we did last year," he said. "I had crew of four guys doing 12 hours of nothing but shoveling snow from around the small lights that line the runway."

"We do what it takes to keep the mission going," he added. "When a storm hits, we're running shifts and working 24-hours a day – we don't stop until the work is done."

"People don't realize how dangerous it can be out there," he explained. "You have to be fully focused, no screwing off or playing around; it's serious business."

While the military may talk about establishing battle rhythms, so too does the snow removal team when the flakes begin to fly.

When each shift arrives they come in, they do a user check, making sure all the hydraulic lines are okay, no broken blades, etc. and have a change-over briefing.

"Once you get through the initial surge, then you back off and bring in the equipment to check all the everything," Plunkett said. "You're always leaning forward getting ready for the next bout of snow."



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

Nick Ross, a Grissom snow removal contractor, drives a stake into the ground at Grissom Dec. 10, to help plow operators know where the edges of sidewalks and curbs are during times of heavy snowfall.

Grissom's legal team gets new leads

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

Maj. Jeremy Flannery, 434th Air Refueling Wing staff judge advocate and Maj. James Gutzman, Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command operating here, recently joined Grissom's legal team.

Grissom is made up of two different legal offices with separate responsibilities. The 434th ARW legal team primarily handles military justice issues during unit training assemblies and the Headquarters AFRC SJA provides the base with a full-time JAG throughout the week.

Despite the different job responsibilities, both SJAs work together to ensure Grissom's mission continues, said Gutzman.

"I'm here to serve the command and serve the people here," he explained. "I want to ensure that everyone is prepared to deploy and their legal needs are met before they leave."

Flannery, who also has a master's degree in clinical psychology, has worked in several aspects of the judicial system including military and civilian prosecution, and military defense, he said.

"I think I bring a lot of experience on both sides of the legal community as far as prosecution and defense goes," said Flannery. "I've covered every specialty area in the legal office, so I know a little bit about anything and everything."

In the legal office "anything and everything" includes powers of attorney, wills, employment rights, and other services.

"Our paralegals draft the wills and the JAG's meet with each client to ensure the will reflects the client's desires," Gutzman said.

"We want to continue to take care of the Airmen and ensure that all of their needs are met," added Flannery. "We have a lot of resources on base and we want people to know that we are here to assist them."

While Flannery and Gutzman



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

Maj. Jeremy Flannery, left and Maj. James Gutzman

both share the mission of meeting the wing's legal needs, their jobs are unique.

"Maj. Flannery's responsibilities focus on military justice and ethics while my primary responsibilities involve civilian actions," said Gutzman.

Military justice involves working with actions such as letters of counseling and reprimand, administrative discharges, Article 15 punishments, and courts-martial, he explained. The civil law portion includes working with claims, contracts, and union issues.

Another distinction between the two is that Gutzman belongs to the regular Air Force while Flannery is a traditional reservist and works full time as a trial attorney specializing in bankruptcy law and enforcement for the U.S. Trustee's Office.

Just as the JAGs' military status affects their jobs, so does an Airman's military status with the legal processes, explained Gutzman.

"The reserve dynamic is unique for active duty JAGs," he said. "This is the first time I regularly had to ask what someone's status was before advising command on appropriate actions."

Despite the differences, Gutzman said he's no stranger to both dynamics of the reserve and regular Air Force. Gutzman has approximately 21 years of total service, first as an enlisted communications specialist, then as a space officer, and now as an attorney. Out of those 21 years, approximately 10 have been active duty.

Likewise, Flannery also has 13 total years of service, with five of those years served on active duty. While on active duty Flannery worked in the base legal office at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, before becoming the installations area defense counsel.

In addition to their military experience, both JAGs said they are excited to be at Grissom and enjoy the small-town family environment.

"I'm a family guy; I have kids and grandkids, so the family aspect about Grissom is one thing that I like," said Flannery. "Almost everyone that I have met is family oriented, and they bring that to the work-place."

"My family likes the small town feel of Kokomo and the Midwest," Gutzman echoed. "That small town feel is also reflected at Grissom."

AF government travel cards get tech upgrade

WASHINGTON -- Beginning this month, Citibank is issuing chip and PIN-enabled government travel cards (GTC) to new card applicants, individuals whose cards will expire in 2015 and individuals who have reported lost or stolen cards.

This is the first phase in a multi-phased rollout, which will enhance the security and convenience of government travel and pay systems.

The new cards are embedded with a microchip that provides for transaction encryption and an elevated level of authentication. Chip and PIN technology strengthens data security, better protecting cardholders' personally identifiable information, as well as the government's sensitive transaction and payment data.

"The cards are yet

another tool to combat potential fraud," said Eric Cuebas, the director of Air Force financial services. "By working together with chip-enabled terminals, they ensure a more secure transaction by validating both the card and cardholder. Additionally, Citi's chip and PIN cards do not use radio frequency functionality and are strictly contact-only cards. Therefore, they are not susceptible to the skimming issue encountered by radio frequency identification cards."

All cardholders should log into CitiManager and review mailing and email addresses and contact information under "My Card Account/Card Maintenance." The cardholder can also review their information using the account listing report in Citibank's custom report-

ing system.

"This new card change should have minimal impact on Airmen," Cuebas said. "If the current card will expire while TDY, the traveler should update the address at least 60 days prior to the expiration date of the current GTC to ensure delivery of the replacement card to the new address. If the card is not expiring while TDY but the traveler feels they need an early reissuance of the chip card, they should contact their agency program coordinator (APC)."

He urged all Airmen who have questions or unusual circumstances to contact their APC for more information and assistance.

Citibank worked closely with the Defense Travel Management Office and services on a phased roll-

out of the new cards.

In the second phase, between July and October 2015, Citi will issue chip and PIN cards for all remaining active accounts (cards used within last 18 months). Individuals with inactive accounts and cards not used within last 18 months will be issued a chip and PIN card upon expiration, regardless of the year. There will be no change to the account number and the three-digit security code for replacement cards and the magnetic stripe can still be used for merchants without chip and PIN technology.

"The cards can be used in regions where chip technology is dominant," Cuebas said. "It is expected U.S. merchants will be adopting chip technology more widely throughout 2015." (AFNS)

Free tax services available to military families

By Nick Simeone
DoD News staff

WASHINGTON -- With the new year comes the annual dread of tax-filing season and the confusion and stress that can go along with it, especially for military families whose tax returns can be further complicated by frequent relocations, involvement of rental properties and other aspects of military life.

To ease the burden, the Defense Department, through Military OneSource, is teaming up again this year with H&R Block to offer no-cost tax preparation to the

military community with a promise of guaranteed accuracy, a service that otherwise could cost military families hundreds of dollars or more.

No-cost consultation, tax preparation

Military OneSource offers no-cost tax consultation and no-cost tax preparation and filing to service and family members, as well as to reservists regardless of activation status, survivors, and separated service members until 180 days after their retirement, discharge or end-of-tour date, said Anthony Jackson, a Military OneSource program analyst.

Since it's online, the service is available to eligible tax-filers regardless of where they are. "They can do one federal and up to three state tax returns -- again, at no cost to the service or family member," Jackson said.

New features this year

This year, he said, the service is adding features to accommodate those with special tax-filing needs. "If your tax situation includes rental property, charitable deductions or mortgage interest, this software can accommodate those particular situations," he explained.

Tax experts also are available by phone at no

cost for anyone who may have questions before they start using the online tax preparation software.

"You're getting individuals when you're talking -- tax consultants who are thoroughly educated on the military situation, no matter what it is," Jackson said. They also have knowledge of special tax exemptions for combat duty and other situations unique to the military.

The tax service being offered by Military OneSource is currently active.

Military OneSource was established by the DOD in 2002 to provide comprehensive information on military life free of charge. (AFNS)

Grissom leads the way with LEDs

By Tech. Sgt.
Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

More than a century after Thomas Edison patented the first commercial incandescent light bulb in 1879 Grissom is leading the way with a more efficient light technology.

The north central Indiana base became the first Air Force base to transition its aircraft mass parking area lights from a high pressure sodium light source to a cost-efficient light emitting diode, commonly known as LEDs, recently.

The idea for the project began after a tornado knocked down one of the light poles in Grissom's aircraft mass parking area and damaged three others during the fall of 2013.

"In comparison, the old lights were just energy hogs and their technology was outdated," said Bryan Jaworski,

434th Civil Engineer Squadron civil engineer and project manager. "The storm was the perfect opportunity to upgrade the lighting."

The LEDs that are replacing the incandescent lights in the mass parking area use approximately 75 percent less energy and last 25 times longer, said Michael Bowden, 434th CES electrical engineer. Based on 151 fixtures, the new LEDs will reduce Grissom's average annual operating costs by \$100,000.

"The project has a payback period of 2.88 years; the Air Force requires a 10-year payback period for any energy project," explained Bowden. "This project clearly exceeds their requirements and has a return on investment of 35 percent."

An additional aspect that makes the new lights more efficient is that they are brighter.

"LEDs produce a brighter and whiter light," Bowden said. "This allows us to reduce the number of fixtures and still deliver the foot candles required for maintenance and security forces to conduct their duties,"

In addition to their efficiency, the LED light fixtures combined with the replacement light poles are more stable.

"We chose a light fixture design that reduced drag from wind; this design reduces stress on the light poles to prevent future damage," explained Jaworski. "The new light poles are made up of reinforced concrete and are stronger and sturdier than the old steel posts.

"During inclement weather you could see the old steel poles swaying back and forth, but combined with the support of the new concrete poles and the reduced wind drag from the new

light fixtures we do not have that problem," Jaworski said.

The LED lights will also save Grissom maintenance manpower, he said.

"The new light fixtures come with a 10-year warranty and last up to 25 times longer than high pressure sodium lights, so fewer man-hours will be spent changing bulbs," Jaworski concluded.

This project and other LED projects around the base are already starting to pay for themselves, said Bowden.

"In the 3rd and 4th quarters of fiscal year 2014 we had a 12 percent energy reduction when compared to the average energy used in the 3rd and 4th quarters of fiscal year 2012 and 2013," Bowden said. "And we are just starting to get warmed up with our LED projects; we have several more we are trying to program."

Sitting with Santa...

Staff Sgt. Lindsey Cassidy, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron material management journeyman, watches her children Ellie, left, and Makayle while they sit on Santa Claus's lap and discuss holiday gifts during a children's Christmas party at Grissom Dec. 6.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jami Lancette

Twenty-two Grissom Airmen earn next stripe

By Tech. Sgt. Douglas Hays
Public Affairs staff

From their first to their last, America's Airmen earn each stripe of rank on their arms, and the Airmen of Grissom are no different.

Twenty-two 434th Air Refueling Wing Airmen from all across the north-central Indiana base were recently promoted to the next enlisted rank here.

Their names are as follows:

To master sergeant:

- Ane Graham, 434th Air Refueling Wing

- Jason Haselhoff, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Kenneth Rowe, 434th AMXS

- Nathan Salvagni, 434th Security Forces Squadron

To technical sergeant:

- Alexander Bower, 434th AMXS
- Benjamin Mota, 434th ARW
- Michael Walden, 49th Aerial Port Flight

To staff sergeant:

- Gabriel Struss, 434th CES
- Gregory St. Martin, 434th SFS
- William Gilvin,

434th Maintenance Squadron
- Patrick Marchman, 434th AMXS

To senior airman:

- Cary Albrecht, 434th AMXS
- Barbara Bitner, 434th AMXS
- Eric Espin-Urbe, 43th AMXS
- Ethan Schmitz, 434th AMXS
- Tyrus Demerath, 434th MXS

To airman 1st class:

- Inri Sanchez, 434th SFS
- Jalen Kelley, 434th SFS
- Angela Hasler, 434th

LRS
- Jazma Falconer, 434th AMXS
- Marshall Berry, 434th SFS

To airman:

- Cameron Hoyle, 434th Force Support Squadron
- Gurwinder Singh, 434th SFS
- Joseph Winters, 434th SFS
- Miguel Thompson, 434th AMX
- Brandon Wascher, 434th AMSX
- Benjamin Gaskins, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Marcus Hardy, 434th LRS

Grissom gets new director of psychological health

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

Having the right tools can make the difference between an easy job and disaster, and Grissom's new director of psychological health is a valuable asset.

Erin Michael-Jolliff, 434th Air Refueling Wing director of psychological health, recently joined Grissom's staff with a tool belt full of experience and resources to assist Airmen.

"Taking care of Airmen and their families' psychological health is my priority," said Michael-Jolliff, who also has a master's degree in social work. "I have several years of experience in social services including the private sector, child protective services, public health and corrections."

As a team, Michael-Jolliff and Amy Little, 434th Air Refueling Wing sexual assault response coordinator and behavioral health support coordinator, will work together to ensure Grissom personnel have the resources they need.

"Together, we will coordinate



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota
Erin Michael-Jolliff

and collaborate to creatively meet the needs of units, individuals and families alike," said Little.

"We both have our own strengths that we bring to Grissom and are excited to put our heads together to assist Grissom personnel during times of crisis."

In her new role, Michael-Jolliff has the responsibility of increasing Grissom's readiness by helping

Airmen and their families maximize psychological health, resilience and wellbeing.

Michael-Jolliff said that she plans on using her past training and experience to help Grissom reach its highest level of readiness.

"Working in social work, public health and especially corrections I experienced my share of crisis situations that required immediate attention," explained Michael-Jolliff. "In these situations people need immediate crisis management followed with possible referrals to long-term care resources."

Some of the more common crisis situations Airmen and their families might experience include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, deployment issues, relationship issues and coping with death, said Michael-Jolliff.

"These are crisis that can quickly spiral into worse situations without proper intervention," she added. "I hope that through outreach education and preventative services these situations can be taken care of at the lowest level possible."

Grissom Airmen awarded medals

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

For their meritorious service in the U.S. Air Force, nine Grissom Airmen were recently awarded medals.

Meritorious Service Medal

Six 434th Air Refueling Wing Airmen were recently presented with Meritorious Service Medals. President Lyndon Johnson established the MSM by Executive Order 11448 on Jan. 16, 1969, as the counterpart of the Bronze Star Medal for the recognition of meritorious noncombatant service. Those who received MSMs are listed below:

- Lt. Col. Stephen McManus, 434th ARW
- Master Sgt. Christopher Hedrick, 434th Maintenance Squadron
- Master Sgt. James Hoagland, 434th ARW
- Master Sgt. Gary Sautter, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Master Sgt. Shane Taylor, 434th Operations Support Squadron
- Tech. Sgt. Ronald Maxwell, 434th MXS

Air Force Commendation Medal

Two Grissom Airmen received Air Force Commendation Medals. This medal was authorized by the Secretary of the Air Force on March 28, 1958, for award to members of the Armed Forces

of the United States who distinguished themselves by meritorious achievement and service. Below are those who received commendation medals:

- 1st Lt. Jacob Hollingsworth, 434th Security Forces Squadron
- Staff Sgt. Andrew Julius, 434th SFS

Air Force Achievement Medal

Senior Airman Chad James, 434th MXS was awarded the Air Force Achievement Medal. This medal was authorized by the Secretary of the Air Force on Oct. 20, 1980, and is awarded to Air Force personnel for outstanding achievement or meritorious service rendered specifically on behalf of the Air Force.

Three Grissom officers selected for promotion to colonel

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

'Tis the season for giving, and three Grissom officers were recently given the news of their selection for promotion to colonel.

The 434th Air Refueling Wing lieutenant colonels learned they were selected for promotion to colonel as the Air Reserve Personnel Center announced results for the 2014 Air Force Reserve Line and Nonline Colonel Promotion Selection Boards Dec. 24.

The Grissom selectees are:

- Therese Kern, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron commander
- James Moore, 434th Mission Support Group deputy commander
- James West, 74th Air Refueling Squadron commander



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

“Congratulations to our new colonel selects!” said Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th ARW commander. “We’re very proud of them, as this announcement speaks to both their past performance and also their future potential.”

A complete list of Citizen Airmen selected for promotion is available online.

Rooted in tradition as old as Rome itself, the

rank of colonel is one that has not only commanded men throughout generations, but still commands respect today.

The history of colonels began around 1505 when Spanish King Ferdinand reorganized part of his army into twenty units called colonelas. These consisted of about 1,000 to 1250 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’ that is used today.

U.S. military colonels rank above a lieutenant colonel and below a brigadier general.

Dates for the selectees to pin on their new rank will vary.

USAFE consolidation upshot released

By Capt. Sybil Taunton
U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa Public Affairs

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany -- The Office of the Secretary of Defense announced the results of the European Infrastructure Consolidation review Jan. 8.

The consolidation review will realign several missions in U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa within seven years.

Under the EIC, the Defense Department will divest three installations in the United Kingdom, including realigning missions from Royal Air Force Mildenhall to other installations in Europe, and consolidating intelligence centers at RAF Croughton.

As required by the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, the Department of Defense also used the EIC process to validate Lajes Field, Azores, Portugal, streamline efforts, previously approved and announced in 2012.

The DOD has concluded the Lajes streamlining process should continue and is expected to complete by the fall of 2015.

The Air Force will adjust the size of the unit to reflect the level of support required while keeping forces at the installation.

"We understand these changes will have substantial impacts on the local areas, but we are dedicated to working

closely with our community neighbors, defense partners, personnel and families to ease the impact of these transitions as much as possible," said Gen. Frank Gorenc, the USAFE-AFAFRICA commander. "These infrastructure consolidations will allow USAFE-AFAFRICA to better meet alliance mission requirements."

The divestment of RAF Mildenhall will result in the move of currently assigned missions to other installations within the command, he added.

Upon completion of the realignment process, which is anticipated to occur after 2020, the Air Force is estimated to save \$125 million annually, primarily in infrastructure maintenance costs and facility upgrades.

While there will be no difference in operational capabilities, the divestment is also projected to reduce approximately 1,300 military, civilian and local national positions.

In addition, approximately 2,600 personnel are projected to be relocated to other locations in the U.K. as well as to Ramstein and Spangdahlem Air Bases in Germany.

"The U.K. remains an essential location for forward-based and ready forces," Gorenc said.

"Our close relationship with the U.K. government and integrated missions with U.K. forces remain integral to USAFE's ability to

execute successful missions in support of our NATO allies."

Additionally in the U.K., intelligence and support elements located at RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth will consolidate.

This will be an investment into a new intelligence complex at RAF Croughton to create efficiencies in operational mission support and other areas.

This consolidation will result in the divestiture of RAF Molesworth and RAF Alconbury in 2022 and the inactivation of the 501st Combat Support Wing.

It will also result in the projected reduction of approximately 200 military, civilian and local national positions from Alconbury-Molesworth and the relocation of 1,200 personnel to RAF Croughton.

"The RAF Croughton site ensures continuation of the strong U.S. intelligence relationship with the United Kingdom and will result in an exponential increase in U.S.-NATO intelligence collaboration efforts," Gorenc said.

Not only will the consolidation of missions at RAF Croughton result in greater efficiencies and operational synergy, it will also allow the U.S. government to meet mission requirements in the most financially responsible way.

"The consolidation at RAF Croughton will realize savings of approximately \$74 million each year, with a return

on investment of approximately four years," Gorenc said.

In addition to the changes within the U.K., the 606th Air Control Squadron at Spangdahlem AB, will be relocated to Aviano AB, Italy.

The move of the squadron and its 300 positions is expected to save the Air Force approximately \$50 million in military construction funding.

Following the relocation of the 606th ACS, Spangdahlem AB will receive the 352nd Special Operations Group, currently located at RAF Mildenhall.

This move will include about ten CV-22 Ospreys and ten MC-130J Commando II aircraft, and associated personnel.

An exact timeline for EIC movements is still being considered, though some relocation efforts are expected to start within a year.

Larger efforts, which include consolidation and divestments, will take place after facilities are ready to receive the mission relocations.

Divestments are expected to be complete within seven years.

"We took a serious and pragmatic look at how we can most effectively meet our commitments," Gorenc said.

"These changes increase our ability to meet the needs of a new dynamic security environment in Europe. Our vow to NATO's Article 5 remains unbreakable and unwavering." (AFNS)

2015 pay and compensation rates released

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Defense announced the 2015 military pay and compensation rates for service members, with most service members receiving a one percent increase in basic pay.

The new rates for basic pay, basic allowance for housing, basic allowance for subsistence, and the cost of living allowance rates for the contiguous United States will take effect on Jan. 1, 2015.

Basic pay for service members will increase one percent, except for general and flag officers who will not see an increase in 2015. For example, an E-4 with 3 years of service will see an increase in basic pay of \$22.20 per month, while an O-3 with 6 years of service will receive a basic pay increase of \$54.30 per month in 2015.

Basic allowance for housing rates for service members in 2015 will increase on average \$17 per month, or 0.5 percent. Rates are calculated using median current market rent and average utilities (including electricity, heat, and water/sewer)

for each pay grade, both with and without dependents. Two changes were made to BAH rate computations for 2015: renter's insurance, which contributed an average of one percent to rates, was eliminated, and the Fiscal Year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act reduced housing rates on average one percent for service members.

However, individual rate protection for service members remains an integral part of the BAH program. This means that even if BAH rates decline - including through the elimination of renter's insurance and the reduction in the calculated rate - a service member who maintains uninterrupted BAH eligibility in a given location will not see a rate decrease. This ensures that service members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if local housing costs decrease.

Service members can calculate their BAH payment by using the basic allowance for housing calculator at: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>.

The 2015 basic allowance for subsistence rates for military members will increase by 2.9 percent over last year. The new rates are:

- \$367.92 per month for enlisted members
- \$253.38 per month for officers

The annual adjustments to basic allowance for subsistence -- a monthly nontaxable cash payment to military members intended to be used to buy food -- are linked to changes in food prices as measured by the annual change in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cost of Food at Home Index. From the beginning of October 2013 through the end of September 2014, the index rose by 2.9 percent, forming the basis for the increased BAS rates.

The Defense Department also released its 2015 contiguous United States cost of living allowance rates. Roughly 12,000 members will see a decrease in their CONUS COLA payments, while some 7,000 members will see an increase or no change, and 4,000 members will no longer receive a CONUS COLA payment. (AFNS)

Bolting the blades...

Jeremy King, a Grissom snow removal contractor, uses an impact wrench to tighten the bolts of a belly-mounted snow blade attached to a special purpose vehicle at Grissom Dec. 10. The snow removal team works in shifts around the clock when inclement weather strikes to keep personnel and equipment ready to keep the 434th Air Refueling Wing mission flying.



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



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