

Heart and WARRIOR

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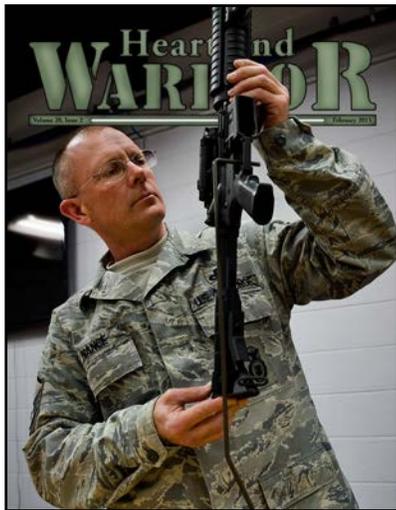
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U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

On the cover...

Master Sgt. Chet Nance, 434th Security Forces Squadron combat arms noncommissioned officer in charge, checks an M-4 rifle's trigger-pull to ensure it falls under the measurements outlined in technical orders at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind., Jan. 28. Grissom's combat arms instructors conduct inspections and repairs on eight weapons systems to ensure 1,600 weapons remain ready to fulfill the mission.

New command chief sees recognition at mission core

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

While he hasn't yet donned the star between the stripes yet, Grissom's newly selected command chief is already looking to the future of the Hoosier Wing.

Chief Master Sgt. Robert P. Herman Jr., was recently chosen by Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, to be the wing's command chief and will start his new job in April.

Herman will replace Chief Master Sgt. Karen Perkins, who is retiring after 30 years of military service.

The incoming command chief enlisted in the regular Air Force in 1992 as a firefighter and joined the Air Force Reserve in 1995. He holds a master's degree in business administration.

"My role is to advise the commander on enlisted matters, get out and meet people, understand what their needs are, help them understand what the needs of the wing and the Air Force are, and balance those to create harmonious progression," explained Herman, who added that some people misunderstand a command chief's role.

"My job isn't to administer discipline," he continued. "It's to make sure we're doing things the right way and to help Colonel Schwartz make educated decisions about the enlisted force."

To help facilitate his transition, Herman arrived at Grissom in January and immediately began to interact with Hoosier Wing Airmen.

"We have amazing people doing amazing things," he said. "I think Midwest values shine in these folks, and I have those same values that you do what you're supposed to do because that's the nature of your character."

While the chief said he admires that heartland work ethic, he also wants to make sure Airmen get

recognized for their hard work.

"What makes them unique is that they don't need the notoriety," Herman explained. "They recognized that they're part of the 434th ARW, that they're a part of something special and bigger than themselves, and so they just get it done."

"My straight-up impression is that sometimes our people keep their nose down doing their work," he continued. "My job is to help recognize those people, even when they don't want recognition."

Herman, who started his Air Force career as a firefighter, said another goal is to help all of Grissom's Airmen understand how important they are to the mission.

Using an Air Force video called The Air Force in Rewind, he illustrated how each Airman is a vital part of the Air Force mission.

"The video starts out with an F-15 dropping a bomb, and then it rewinds and hits on all the people that touch that F-15's mission – all the pieces that help to get that bomb on target from the services troops to the crew chiefs," Herman recalled. "Especially as Citizen Airmen, these are the people who are grinding it out and keeping their heads down so we can project our nation's power as an instrument of diplomacy and airpower."

Still, the chief admitted it can be easy for Airmen to lose sight of their importance in the mission.

"There are so many moving pieces of the 434th ARW, and it's just a microcosm of the Air Force Reserve and Air Force as a whole," he explained. "As a chief, it's my job to leave this unit and Air Force a little better than I found it, and the way I hope to do that here at Grissom is to help recognize people and to help guide and organize the total force here."

"Recognition is at the core; it's the nucleus of what we do," he concluded. "And, my role is to help pat those people on the back and say, 'hey, you're doing a fine job.'"

Ops schedulers coordinate high-altitude connections

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

Two jet aircraft racing toward each other at over 300 mph, then maneuvering just miles apart to connect for inflight refueling at exactly the second they were scheduled isn't just amazing, it's reality here at Grissom.

And making that mid-air connection happen to keep Grissom's warfighters trained and ready for combat are the planners and schedulers with the 434th Operations Support Squadron, who coordinated nearly 1,300 successful missions here through their detailed planning efforts in 2014 alone.

"On average, we fly 20 sorties a week, not including the deployed missions," said Lt. Col. Todd Thibault, 434th OSS chief of scheduling. "Preparation for the actual mission begins months in advance and requires coordination efforts with several other organizations before the aircraft leave the ground."

Those missions include various training and real-world operations to include inflight refueling, cargo operations, personnel movement and aeromedical evacuation missions.

To make those happen, each year the 434th Air Refueling Wing is allocated a number of flying hours, which require schedulers to balance flight hours and missions to stay on target.

"Last year 4,884 flying hours were allocated, but to stay within those parameters we overschedule

to compensate for an estimated 15 percent attrition rate," explained Thibault. "That means if we do not fly due to maintenance, weather or for a variety of reasons we still fall within our allocated flight hours."

"In addition, our allocated flight hours are constantly shifting to maintain mission requirements such as deployments," he added.

Despite all of the variables, schedulers were able to meet their mark with 4,866.5 flight hours flown during fiscal year 2014 out of 4,884 allocated, and that process began with coordination through the 434th Maintenance Group.

"We begin by communicating with maintenance for an amount of sorties we want to fly to create a long-range schedule," said Maj. Dave Curl, 72nd Air Refueling Wing pilot tasked with flight scheduling and planning.

Throughout the scheduling process communica-

tion with receiver units with aerial refueling requirements is critical, said Thibault.

"It's my responsibility to communicate with all the units that have an aerial refueling requirement," he elaborated. "I look at our schedule and determine if there is a refueling track, aircraft and all essential personnel to complete the requested mission; I then correspond with maintenance to ensure we will have enough aircraft to complete that particular mission."

"In addition to maintenance, we also plan to ensure we have enough pilots and boom operators for the missions," he added.

After the task of the long-range planning is completed, schedulers go through another planning process to ensure nothing has been missed, said Curl.

"Two weeks prior to the mission, we iron out all of the maintenance and aircrew schedules in addi-

tion to coordinating with standardization and evaluations and training flight to confirm the mission is still a go," explained Curl. "Planners then take the details and build a packet with all essential paperwork for the mission."

However, after a mission gets its final go, schedulers go one step further to ensure aircrews are taken care of.

"Between family and civilian jobs reservists are limited to the amount of time they have here, so we ensure they are taken care of by setting up transportation, lodging and any other needs they might have for a particular mission," said Thibault. "This allows them to spend their time here focusing on the mission and getting the most out of it."

Ultimately, getting the most out of the allocated flight hours to ensure aircrews remain mission ready is what it is all about, said Thibault.



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

Lt. Col. Todd Thibault, 434th Operations Support Squadron chief of scheduling, points out one of several flight refueling tracks on a map of the United States at Grissom Jan. 30.

Welsh voices concerns over sequestration

By Tech. Sgt. Natalie Stanley
Secretary of the Air Force
Public Affairs Staff

WASHINGTON -- During testimony on Capitol Hill Jan. 28, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III stressed the negative impact sequestration will have on future Air Force capabilities, emphasizing further budget cuts will lead to low morale and declined readiness in the Air Force.

“Pilots sitting in a squadron looking out at their airplanes parked on a ramp certainly feels like a hollow force, whether we define it that way or not,” Welsh said. “People are not joining this business to sit around.”

The common tone of the testimony by all the service chiefs was maintaining the faith and trust each military member has in their respective service by ensuring they have the training, tools and equipment needed to win any

fight, now or in the future.

“We can’t continue to cut force structure to pay the cost of readiness and modernization or we risk being too small to succeed,” Welsh said.

Welsh stated 24 years of combat operations has taken a toll on the Air Force and the need for modernization is no longer a debatable issue.

“We currently have 12 fleets of aircraft that qualify for antique license plates in the state of Virginia,” he said. “Air Forces that fall behind technology fail and joint forces without the full breadth of the air, space and cyber capabilities that comprise modern airpower will lose.”

Welsh credited improved combat squadron readiness over the past year to the Balanced Budget Act, which targeted individual and unit readiness, but stated future sequestration would immediately reverse this trend.

“Squadrons would be grounded, readiness rates would plummet, red and green flag exercises would have to be cancelled, Weapons School classes would be limited, and our aircrew members’ frustration will rise, again,” Welsh said.

He explained sequestration has led to intentional underfunding of infrastructures that produce combat capability over time including training ranges, test ranges, space launch facilities, simulation infrastructure, and nuclear infrastructure.

Welsh appealed to the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee to join with the military to ensure current and future combat capability.

“We do need your help to be ready for today’s fight and still able to win in 2025 and beyond,” he said. “Our Airmen deserve it, our joint team needs it, and I believe our nation still expects it.” (AFNS)



U.S. Air Force photo by Scott M. Ash

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III testifies before the Senate Armed Services Committee Jan. 28, 2015, in Washington, D.C., as Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., looks on. Other leaders present during the hearing were Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Raymond Odierno and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert.

SF Combat arms keeps Grissom on target, mission-ready

By Tech. Sgt.
Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

From the moment a hammer falls, slamming a firing pin into a primer, the destiny of a projectile has already been propelled towards its final target, but that destination would not be as accurate without Grissom's combat arms personnel.

Through inspections, maintenance and in house repairs, 434th Security Forces Squadron combat arms personnel work around the clock to ensure Grissom's weapons are service-ready to support its mission, at all times.

"Grissom has nine separate weapon systems with over 1,600 weapons in our inventory," said Master Sgt. Chet Nance, 434th SFS combat arms noncommissioned officer in charge. "Each of those weapons requires scheduled maintenance and inspections to ensure they meet Air Force standards and will function properly when needed."

Grissom has two full-time combat arms instructors and six reservists, and each is hand selected to ensure the job gets done.

"These technicians are hand-picked from within security forces due to their professionalism and commitment to excellence," said Lt. Col. Christopher Witter 434th SFS commander. "They have been called upon numerous times by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command to conduct Staff Assistance Visits and have deployed to support weapons systems in the area of

responsibility.

"Our combat arms staff are among the best in the Air Force," added Witter.

Combat arms personnel and Grissom's weapon systems play a critical role in its mission both at home and abroad.

"These weapon systems provide a safeguard for Air Force and joint forces conducting global operations and ensure our brothers and sisters in arms are safe to carry the fight to our enemies," explained Witter.

Grissom's firearms begin their inspection and maintenance process moments after arrival, said Nance.

"Each weapon comes with an Air Force Form 105, also referred to as a weapons 'birth certificate,'" he added. "Before a firearm can be put into in-use status, a mandatory inspection must be completed and documented."

Several factors determine the type of inspection process completed on each weapon.

"Our weapons are categorized as base defense, deployable or training," Nance explained. "Each of those has different purpose and inspection intervals based on their technical orders and the category they are placed in."

"A prime example of this would be the M-4 used by security forces here," he continued. "It's inspected semiannually as required by the technical order when in 'active-in-use' status."

That inspection process digs deeper than inspections outlined in the Airmen's Manual.

"Each inspection is



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

Master Sgt. Chet Nance, 434th Security Forces Squadron combat arms noncommissioned officer in charge, inspects the barrel of an M-4 rifle for corrosion at Grissom Jan. 28.

unique; however, most include visual inspections, tightening screws and using gauges to ensure each weapon component falls within the correct measurement specified by the manufacturer," explained Nance. "After the weapons are inspected they are cleaned, reassembled and a function-check is done." Throughout phases of inspections any discrepancies are annotated and repaired.

"During the inspections we annotate any type of discrepancies, and then fix them here if possible,

because sending a weapon for repairs can be up to a 90-day process or longer," he said. "Having the capability of fixing our own weapons saves the Air Force time and money and makes them available for our mission."

"Of the 1,600 weapons we have, none of the weapons are ever waiting for maintenance that we can repair here in-house," concluded Witter. "Our staff is able to complete approximately 95 percent of the repairs needed as long as we have the parts in stock."

Air Force presents FY 2016 budget request

By Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs staff

WASHINGTON -- The Air Force presented its fiscal year 2016 President's Budget request Feb. 2, following the Defense Department and sister services budget briefings.

The Air Force fiscal year 2016 budget request supports the defense strategy and combatant commander requirements. It continues readiness recovery, reduces the short-term capacity risk assumed in the fiscal year 2015 budget while placing significant investments in the nuclear enterprise, space, cyber, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and command and control capabilities.

This budget strengthens the nation's defense

strategy and Air Force unique capabilities that are in high demand by our combatant commanders, said Maj. Gen. Jim Martin, the Air Force director of budget, who presented the service's budget request.

"The FY 16 President's Budget is rooted in necessity, what we need today to begin the recovery from three years of reduced budgets, and is based on long-term strategy," Martin said.

The Air Force requested a topline budget of \$122.2 billion in Air Force controlled funding that continues to protect the KC-46A Pegasus, F-35A Lightning II and the Long Range Strike Bomber, the Air Force's top modernization priorities, and supports a total force end strength of 492,000 personnel.

The service made adjustments from the fiscal year 2015 Presidential Budget request to respond to global changes, adding back the highest priority combatant command requirements. These adjustments include re-phasing the U-2S divestiture and restoring the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System to add more command and control and ISR, and reduce risk to capacity.

The Air Force is resubmitting its request to phase out the A-10 Thunderbolt II fleet by 2019, to shift limited funding and manpower to higher priority combatant commander needs, such as ISR and C2, as well as advanced multi-role platforms ready for the high end fight. Planned F-15C Eagle divestitures were changed to increase

near-term capacity and support the European Reassurance Initiative.

While the fiscal 2016 budget request exceeds funding levels laid out in the Budget Control Act by almost \$10 billion, Martin said it is a necessity to recover readiness.

"We are grateful for the modest, short-term budget relief that Congress provided for fiscal years 2014 and 2015," Martin said.

"It was a start to the long process of readiness recovery, but a return to Budget Control Act funding levels will risk our readiness today and our readiness 10 years from now. We need support of our FY 16 budget request to continue readiness recovery and invest in capabilities we will need in the future." (AFNS)

PA member garners Military Achievement Award

By Tech. Sgt. Douglas Hays
Public Affairs staff

Recognizing service that goes above and beyond the call of duty is a staple of the Veteran's Day Council of Indianapolis who chose to honor one of Grissom's own.

Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota, 434th Air Refueling Wing public affairs specialist was honored by the council with an Indiana Military Achievement Award.

"As a journalist I'm used to helping others into the spotlight," Mota said. "I'm humbled that others recognized the efforts I've done."

During a deployment to Southwest Asia, Mota provided escort and media support to both the secretary of defense and the secretary of the Air Force while managing the websites of eight forward deployed locations.

"While I was deployed my efforts ensured that the stories of ser-



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

Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

vice members supporting the war were told," Mota explained. "The military does so many great things, and without public affairs those stories would never be heard."

When he wasn't helping others tell the Air Force story, Mota put his own journalistic skills to work and by doing so earned first place in Air Force Reserve Command's annual media contest for news writing.

"I've been blessed to be surrounded by good leadership, mentors and coworkers," he said. "I'll always help tell the story of what our great Airmen are doing to support our forces and our nation."

The Veterans Day Military Achievement Award is presented to individuals who have shown exemplary performance in their military careers. Mota is one of two individuals from the 434th Air Refueling Wing to receive the award.

As part of the honor, the Veterans Day Council invited him to attend a formal awards banquet to receive a special token in front of dignitaries throughout the state.