

Heartland WARRIOR

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Heartland **WARRIOR**

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

On the cover...

A B-52 Stratofortress from the 5th Bomb Wing, Minot Air Force Base, N.D., lines up for refueling with a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135R Stratotanker during a mission over the Midwest Nov. 16. During the flight, media representatives from central Indiana learned more about the 434th ARW and the Air Force.

Grissom supports AF band

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

The U.S. Air Force Band of Mid-America performed Oct. 11, at the McHale Performing Arts Center in Logansport, Indiana with support from Grissom's commander and honor guard.

Col. Larry Shaw, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, kicked off the event by thanking guests for their support and attendance.

"Thank you for attending this evening; we couldn't do what we do without the support of the communities around the base," said Shaw. "Our Airmen and their families live and work in your communities, and your support is essential to Grissom's refueling mission!"

Following the introduction of the band, Grissom's honor guard performed the ceremonial tradition of the presentation of colors while the band performed "The Star-Spangled Banner".

"The band's performance was

outstanding, and we were honored to be part of it," said Senior Airman Matthew Kaim, 434th ARW honor guard member.

The band has a long history of performing for the American public and promoting esprit de corps within the military.

They represent more than 660,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilians who are fully engaged as America's joint force in every region of the world, and across the full spectrum of military operations.

At the end of the concert Lt. Col. Michael Willen, U.S. Air Force Band of Mid-America commander, invited Shaw to conduct the last song by the band.

"Being able to be on stage with such magnificent performers was an honor," said Shaw. "Their performance that evening emulated the professionalism of our Airmen, and left a positive impression on those who attended the event."



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

Col. Larry Shaw, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, takes a selfie with Lt. Col. Michael Willen, U.S. Air Force Band of Mid-America commander, and other band members during a concert in Logansport, Ind. Oct. 11. The band has a long history of performing for the American public and promoting esprit de corps within the military. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota)

PSYOP Soldiers honored during family day celebration

By Tech. Sgt.
Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

The Army Reserve's 316th Psychological Operations Company and their families recently celebrated the holidays with a family day event that included a special Welcome Home Warrior-Citizen ceremony for returning deployers and a promotion ceremony in Kokomo, Indiana Dec. 10.

The event kicked off with lunch and festivities followed by the Welcome Home Warrior-Citizen ceremony.

"This award is designed to publicly ac-

knowledge our Army Reserve Soldiers, as well as those who've supported them during the recent military operations," said 1st Lt. Aric Gerke, 316th PSYOP Co. detachment commander who presided over the ceremony. "The Soldiers before you served honorably during their recent deployment to the Horn of Africa from October 2015 to June 2016."

The award was created in 2004 by Congress to honor U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers and their unique sacrifices while serving abroad.

Presenting the awards was guest speaker Col. Jesse Manning, 2nd

Psychological Operations Group commander.

"This is an award only for Army reservists; active duty doesn't get this award because they don't share the same sacrifices," said Manning. "[Reservists] have to deploy and remain just as proficient except you only report for duty one weekend a month two weeks a year, and that makes you special.

"We are not weekend warriors; we are warrior citizens and that means a lot," added Manning. "You do a very good job, and I would like to acknowledge that today. Be proud you get to put on this uniform and defend

the greatest nation in the world."

Following the award ceremony, three Soldiers were inducted into the rank of noncommissioned officer.

The inductees included Sgt. Nathan Richardson, 316th PSYOP Co. PSYOP sergeant, Sgt. Daniel Hiser, 316th PSYOP Co. PSYOP sergeant and Sgt. Stephen Thompson, 209th Quartermaster Company mechanic.

Concluding the ceremony, Manning thanked the Soldiers for their service and the families for the sacrifices they

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

Pfc. Emily Shepperd, 316th Psychological Operations Company, helps Emma Thompson with a board game during their annual family day celebration and awards ceremony in Kokomo, Ind., Dec. 10.

Airman sings for Pope in Rome



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen

Senior Airman, Logan Rivera, 49th Aerial Port aerial port specialist, sings “The Star-Spangled Banner” during a commander’s call at Grissom Oct. 1.

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

“Aim High” an enduring statement of Airmen’s pride in service, was recently exemplified off duty when a Grissom Airmen left home to sing for the Pope.

Senior Airman, Logan Rivera, 49th Aerial Port aerial port spe-

cialist, sang for Pope Francis, head of the Roman Catholic Church, during a trip to Rome, Nov. 14-21.

“The entire trip was an amazing pilgrimage for me,” said Rivera. “Singing has always been a passion, and as a Catholic, singing in front of the Pope in a city with such a rich heritage of my religion was a dream come true.”

Rivera, who traveled to Rome with his church choir, sang for the first time for the Pope during the consistory, a formal meeting of the College of Cardinals called by Pope Francis to elevate new Cardinals to the college.

“Shortly after arriving we discovered that Arch Bishop [Joseph] Toben of Indianapolis was going to be elevated to Cardinal, and we would be performing during the event,” said Rivera. “This was a big surprise to us and we were extremely excited.”

During the trip, Rivera, his church choir and twelve other American choirs sang at several events, but the highlight was when Rivera and the rest of the choir sang during an outdoor service of over 50,000 people with the Sistine Chapel Choir Nov. 20.

“The second time we sang for the Pope was a mass for the closing of the holy year of mercy,” said Rivera. “It was sung in Latin and Italian, and I actually had a spotlight solo.

“Being able to sing with the Sistine Chapel Choir, such an amazing hand-selected group of talented artists, was a once in a life-time experience,” he added.

The Sistine Chapel Choir is a choir based in Vatican City and is one of the oldest religious choirs.

Rivera said he began singing at a very young age because of his love for music. He started off singing in school performances and later with his church choir.

Rivera’s voice has also been heard at various events around Grissom where he is stationed and volunteers to sing for official military functions and ceremonies.

“[Rivera] is a prime example of the versatility shown through our Citizen Airmen,” said Col. Larry Shaw, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander. “He has an amazing voice, and his willingness to share his talent with us is a testament of his character and dedication to the Air Force.”

Airmen fly, pay homage to fallen aviator



U.S. Air Force photo by Col. Hiram Gates

Four F-22 Raptors from the 27th Fighter Squadron out of Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., fly in formation below a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135R Stratotanker from Grissom prior to a flyover in Tipton, Ind., Sept. 29.

By Staff Sgt. Dakota Bergl
Public Affairs staff

Army Air Corps 1st Lt. Robert McIntosh, 27th Fighter Squadron pilot, was honored Sept. 29 with a flyover in Tipton, Indiana by a formation of F-22 Raptor fighter aircraft.

McIntosh was a fighter pilot during World War II whose plane, a P-38 Lightning, disappeared in Italy on May 12, 1944.

McIntosh's sisters, Jeannine Baker-McIntosh and Patricia Talley, both said that they were happy to have closure about what happened to their brother and are very glad the Air Force did so much to honor his memory and sacrifice.

"We are so pleased that he finally made his way home to us," said Baker-McIntosh. "We are a military family from the word go and our mother and father would be so happy to know what happened

to him. Mom had hope that his remains would be found until the day she died."

"We are ecstatic that the Air Force is putting forth all this effort for our brother," said Talley, echoing her sister's thoughts. "We are amazed by the deep respect that is being shown by the Air Force."

The Raptors selected to perform the flyover were from the same 27th FS McIntosh flew with. The 27th FS is now based out of joint base Langley-Eustis, Virginia and flying the F-22.

Capt. Justin, 27th FS pilot, one of the pilots who performed the flyover, said he was honored to participate in the event.

"It's awesome we have the opportunity to give him the respect that he deserves," said Justin. "We have the privilege of being the oldest fighter squadron in the Air Force. All of that history makes me proud of my

job, my squadron, Lieutenant McIntosh for his sacrifice and proud of the Air Force and what we do."

A KC-135R Stratotanker from Grissom helped support the flyover by refueling the F-22s enroute to the ceremony and flyover site in Tipton.

"We are happy to play a small part in honoring a fallen aviator," said Col. Larry Shaw, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander. "Aviators, whether they be past or present, are a fraternity of brothers and we are pleased to play a role in his memorial."

McIntosh's plane was the last in a formation that was returning to base following a mission. Due to the poor weather conditions at the time the formation was told to fly up over the storm however McIntosh never made it above the clouds, his plane was last seen diving through the storm.

In September 2013, the

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (now DPAA) received information from private citizens regarding the partial excavation of a crash site in Santa Cristina, Italy. The citizens found evidence which confirmed this was McIntosh's crash site.

In August 2015, a DPAA recovery team helped excavate the crash site.

To identify McIntosh's remains, scientists from DPAA and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial DNA analysis, which matched two sisters, as well as dental and anthropological analysis and circumstantial evidence.

The 27th Fighter Squadron has been active since World War I, at the time called the 27th Aero Squadron, flying various aircraft. Most recently the 27th FS has been given the task of flying the F-22 Raptor.

Media participate in refueling mission

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

Fueling the fight has long been the charge of the aerial refueling mission, letting fighters fight longer, bombers fly longer and helping cargo aircraft get the parts and personnel wherever needed as soon as possible.

Grissom showcased its airpower enhancement skills to local media members Nov. 16 during a refueling mission with a B-52 Stratofortress from the 5th Bomb Wing at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota.

Seven local members of the media took part in the refueling mission and witnessed first-hand the training Airmen undergo to fuel the fight.

“This was a great opportunity for our local media,” said Douglas Hays, 434th Public Affairs office operations chief. “Not only did it provide them an opportunity to learn about the mission, their stories will be shared with their audiences also.”

At a glance the mission was straight forward, a KC-135R offloading fuel to a B-52, but behind the scenes training was

at the forefront as an inflight refueling specialist was being trained to be an instructor boom, and an instructor pilot was on board teaching and evaluating as well. Taking that training one step further, a public affairs apprentice was also being trained to engage with the media.

“There was training going on everywhere, and we pointed that out to our guests,” Hays said. “We want them to know what we are doing, why we are doing it and how it helps our nation.”

See ‘Media flight’ page 7



Left, Master Sgt. Kenneth Knight, 72 Air Refueling Squadron in-flight refueling technician, reviews an aerial refueling checklist for the boom pod of a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135R Stratotanker that departed from Grissom for a media flight Nov. 16.



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



Left, Lt. Col. Brian Hollis, 434th Operations Support commander, and 1st Lt. Erich Maul, 72 Air Refueling Squadron pilot, show Seth Tocco, radio personality from Logansport's Indiana's Best Radio, review their flight path from the cockpit of a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135R Stratotanker during a refueling mission over the Midwest Nov. 16,

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

With cameras clicking, video recording devices running and a sense of awe in the air, the media were able to ask questions, document and record everything from mission planning, pre-flight activities, and the mission itself.

"The experience was absolutely amazing," said Ken Holtzinger, production manager from Logansport's Indiana's Best Radio. "The crew were very professional and went out of their way to make us feel at home; I'm proud to know men and women like that represent our country!"

"We tell them this

is a training mission," Hays said. "We do this whether you are here or not.

"We're glad you're here to witness and we hope you'll echo what you see to your respective audiences and share our story with them," he added.

What they saw was two older but vital pieces of the Air Force inventory meet over Missouri to provide training for both air frames.

Boom operators in the Stratotanker are required to have at least one daytime contact every 60 days to maintain currency, and for pilots of receiver aircraft they too must have a certain number of contacts to maintain their proficiency.

"They saw the actual inflight refueling, and were able to witness

the training for inflight refueling specialists, pilots and even some of our PA staff," Hays said.

Media flights offer outlets an opportunity to fly, and view operations so that they can report on what they see with their readership.

"It helps us build a relationship with them, and they can see what the citizen Airmen in their areas do in support of our defense," Hays said. "It is an important program because we can't reach all of the people they can reach to tell our story.

"Flying a plane is something that is done quite regularly, but watching two planes flying at those speeds and passing fuel was just awesome!" said Holtzinger. "It's all I've been talking about all day."

Key Support Team assists families



Members of the 434th Air Refueling Wing Key Support Team pose for a photo in front of a KC-135R Stratotanker at Grissom Oct. 1. The Key Support Team was established as a quality of life initiative out of concern for Air Force families after the results of a total-Air Force community action plan found a missing link between military members and their families.

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

By Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen
Public Affairs staff

A recent EF3 tornado in Howard County, Indiana left hundreds of homes damaged and three of those belonged to Airmen from Grissom.

While spouses and family members of those three Airmen were left reeling from the destruction of multiple tornadoes, the Airmen themselves weren't present; they were deployed, but in their absence was a Key Support Team.

"We went to their homes, we brought chain saws with us and we cleaned up their yards," said Jill Marconi-Pyclik, 434th Force Support Squadron Airman and Family Readiness director. "We took care of it – that's what we do."

From providing assistance with home repairs, to cultivating a garden, to having a confidant or even helping salvage a home

devastated by a tornado, the Key Support Team continues to strengthen the Hoosier Wing and its surrounding communities by supporting family members of Airmen attached to Grissom.

According to Marconi-Pyclik, the Key Support Team, formerly Key Spouse Program, was established as a quality of life initiative out of concern for Air Force families after the results of a total-Air Force community action plan found a missing link between military members and their families.

"The Key Support Program is a link between families and the military member," Marconi-Pyclik said. "Sometimes a spouse/family member will have an issue or concern and will want to have a one-on-one conversation with someone who isn't an Airman."

According to Marconi-Pyclik, establishing continuous contact with

spouses and families offers not only the opportunity to learn about the unit as well as provide additional resources if need be, it often forms a network necessary during separations from the military member.

"By encouraging early contact with spouses/family members, we create a great working network for a person to call if/when an Airman deploys," Marconi-Pyclik said. "We always contact the spouse, significant other, and even parents of Airmen when they deploy or are away for a period of time. It's as simple as calling those individuals and saying 'hey how are you. We are the key spouses, we're part of the Airman and Family Readiness Program and we just wanted to call and tell you that we're here, we're going to call you once a month. If you don't want us to call you once a month, that's great but we just want to make sure you know someone will always

be here for you."

The commander-driven 14-member team is currently comprised of Col. Larry Shaw, 434th Air Refueling Wing Commander, key spouse mentors, first sergeants and the 434th Force Support Squadron Airman and Family Readiness Center and has representatives from every unit.

Spouses/significant others interested in becoming a member of the Key Support Team will need to be nominated, selected and approved by the military members' commander followed by classroom training.

"For the military members, this program gives them a peace of mind," Marconi-Pyclik added. "Our job here is to make sure that when Airmen are gone, we will hold down the homefront with everything we can in order to take care of their families so Airmen can accomplish the mission."

Hollis takes command of the 434th OSS

By Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen
Public Affairs staff

Deeply rooted in military tradition since the middle ages, change of command ceremonies afford service members the opportunity to witness the symbolic passing of the torch in the presence of friends, family members and fellow Airmen.

Keeping up with military tradition, Lt. Col. Todd Moody, 434th Operations Group commander and officiating officer, passed the guidon to Lt. Col. Brian Hollis as he accepted command of the 434th Operations Support Squadron during an assumption of command ceremony here Oct. 1.

“Thank you so much for this opportunity,” Hollis said. “I’m going to do my very best for you.”

Before Hollis joined the 434th Air Refueling Wing more than 20 years ago, he began his Air Force career in the Alaska Air National Guard where he was commissioned and went on to complete pilot train-

ing. After returning to Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, he flew the KC-135E and stratotanker.

Before taking command of the 434th OSS, Hollis has held numerous jobs within the 434th ARW, including tanker scheduler, nuclear plans officer, assistant chief pilot tactics officer, chief of mission development, chief of plans and director of operations.

“He is one devoted individual,” Moody said. “He has been here longer than me and has done just about every job in the wing and has been behind the scenes doing fantastic work for us. OSS is in great hands and I’m really happy for him.”

Hollis’ varied jobs in conjunction with an operational perspective at the Hoosier Wing are the foundation for his vision as a commander.

“In order to get the mission done, it takes one thing – people,” Hollis added. “If I were to sum up how I will lead it’s that basis: taking care of people, who take care of



Lt. Col Brian Hollis

our mission. The biggest thing that we need to do, and I’m going to overemphasize this over and over again because we can get caught up in the details, is to always keep focused on what our mission is here – to support the flying mission.”

PSYOP, from page 3

endured while their loved ones were deployed.

“Less than one percent of the U.S. population will ever serve or have served in the military; that means the family and friends who support those who serve are less than one percent also, and that’s quite an accomplishment,” explained Manning. “Thank you for your sacrifices.”

“Thank you so much for the support you provide soldiers when they are gone,” he added. “They couldn’t do it without their families; I know I couldn’t.”

After the ceremonies children received gifts from Santa while Soldiers and their families enjoyed the holiday festivities.

“Family day provides Soldiers and their fami-



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

Soldiers from the 316th Psychological Operations Company stationed at Grissom pose for a photo during a Welcome Home Warrior-Citizen award ceremony in Kokomo, Ind., Dec. 10.

lies a great opportunity to network with other family members and relax for the holidays,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Mark Hutchins, 316th PSYOP Co. PSYOP unit administrator who

brought his wife and three children to the event. “We are unique, and when we deploy our families depend on each other because they don’t have the resources like active-duty bases have.

“This allows us to get to know each other on a more personal level, so if a necessity arises family members already have the rapport and relationships established,” he added.

Service before self; a recruiter's story

By **Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota**
Public Affairs staff

Her neatly pressed blouse and overall appearance exemplify excellence in all we do, and her story is one of integrity first; but what recently stood out was her service before self as she followed her passion of mentoring others.

Tech. Sgt. Sharon Stevens, 434th Aerospace Medical Squadron dental assistant, recently accepted a new role as an Air Force Reserve Command recruiter, but her story of recruiting started many years before accepting her new job.

"I'm a mentor at heart, and I love helping people," said Stevens. "I like what I did [as a civilian] but that was a 'like' and this is a passion.

"There is a drive behind serving, and being part of something bigger than me," she explained. "I want people to know their options."

Like many high school upper-classmen, growing up in the inner city of Chicago, Stevens was undecided about her future and what life had in store for her until she met an Army recruiter.

"At the time we didn't have Air Force recruiters in our schools, but we did have Army recruiters," said Stevens. "When I spoke with him he told me about the military and all it had to offer, and I just knew it was for me."

After serving seven years in the regular Army and Army Reserve, Stevens took a break in

service to care for her daughter, but her passion for serving remained in her heart.

"My goal was always to return to the military after I got my daughter off to college, and that's exactly what I did," said Stevens. "I wanted to be in the Air Force when I was in the Army, but they wouldn't allow me to switch, so when I went to reenlist I knew exactly where to go."

With the same drive and motivation that led her to joining the Army, Stevens proudly reenlisted in the Air Force Reserve in 2011 to pick up the part of her life she had left behind.

"I became a dental technician as opposed to administration [in the Army] because I saw it as a way to help people, and I knew it would put me in a position to speak with people from all areas around base," said Stevens. "I really hoped I could see a lot of people, and impact them in a positive way."

Helping people in a positive way was exactly what Stevens did as she adapted and progressed in her new career in the Air Force.

"She is a picture of what the Air Force should look like; she takes pride in her appearance and it shows," said 2nd Lt. Shannon Tribley, 434th AMDS health services supervisor. "The first day I met [Stevens], she was asking what she needed to do to make the next step in her career, and after she completed that step she mentored others who needed to do the same."

With the dental sec-



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

Tech. Sgt. Sharon Stevens

tion being one of the most over-staffed positions, Tribley said it allowed Stevens to step out of dental and take on additional duties such as training manager.

"The training manager role allowed her to mentor and provide guidance for other Airmen," explained Tribley. "People began to come to her with their upgrade training and school requests not only because she was the training manager, but she just has that motherly instinct where she is naturally drawn to help people."

Stevens' inclination to help others wasn't just making an impact in her unit, it had also been sowing seeds in people much closer in her life.

"My mom has been a mentor and example for

me all my life," said Te Shar Williams, Stevens' daughter. "During her first two years at Grissom, she would always come back and tell me what she had done, and I wanted to be part of that.

"I knew my mom had always wanted to be part of something bigger than her, and I grew to have that same love for my country as well," she said.

Williams' same desire to serve prompted her to join the 49th Aerial Port Flight as an aerial port specialist, and her mother soon had another opportunity to mentor even more Airmen.

"When I first joined, my Air Force recruiter said I should be a recruiter," said Stevens. "A year later she

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Grissom fitness center offers PT help

By Staff Sgt. Dakota Bergl
Public Affairs staff

Fitness is important for all military members, however it can be difficult to find the time and motivation to workout but Grissom's fitness center has a way to help.

The fitness center offers a number of exercise classes to help members get in shape, stay in shape or just get to the gym more regularly.

Jennifer Hunt, personal trainer, said even though many people come to the classes to prepare for fitness tests they stay because they enjoy the class.

"Most people come in for the first time because they are trying to get ready for their PT test," said Hunt. "After they've come to a few classes a lot of people get hooked and love the feeling of being strong."

Deborah Wilson-Strong, 434th Force Support Squadron training technician, said she goes to Hunt's classes every week because it is a good work out and she enjoys having other people to push her to work out harder and more often.

"Jen's class is very helpful to prepare for your PT test," said Wilson-Strong. "I always recom-



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Dakota Bergl

Emily Hentgen, wife of Tech. Sgt. John Hentgen, does an ab work out using free weights during a fitness class at Grissom Dec. 5

mend her class to people who are on orders. It's much easier to get motivated when you have other people to work out with."

For those interested in participating in any of the classes offered by the fitness center the times for each are listed below.

-Spin Time with Bruce: 11:00 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday

-Jillian Michaels Body Shred: 3:15 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday
-Conditioning 101: 6:00 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
-Yoga for Lunch 12:00 p.m. Tuesdays

The classes are open to anyone who has access to the base including military and civilian employees, retirees and family members.

Recruiter, from page 10

sent me her flight chief's information, but at the time I didn't want to be a recruiter because I was happy doing the job I was doing.

"Flash forward to 2016 and I received an email about recruiting, and a lightbulb lit up," she said. "I thought, this is a job where I could help even more people; I would be in touch with even more people because I could have an impact that would affect them for the rest of their lives just as the military has done for me."

With a renewed desire to help Airmen, Stevens put together her package and submitted it to Air Force Reserve Command to begin the selection process.

"The process of becoming an AFRC recruiter is extremely competitive," said Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Zwelling, AFRC recruiting service superintendent. "We start by selecting potential candidates from their packages and then invite those who were selected to come down for an evaluation

and selection course.

"Recruiters have to be more than someone who just needs a job," explained Zwelling. "They have to start with a strong foundation; someone who is a good Airman, and then you have to ensure that Airman is also enthusiastic, self-motivated and has a love for the Air Force."

After completing the process, Stevens was selected to be a recruiter at McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, and with that new journey she hopes to

give people an option she didn't have in high school.

"When I joined the military, only the Army recruiter came to my high school," said Stevens. "I want to go into those inner city schools so I can let them know there are more options, because at one time I was in their shoes.

"I'm ready to be the one who says 'You can join the Air Force and it's an option for you,'" she said. "My goal is to make sure younger people have an option; it's what I love to do!"

434th MSG wins 4th AF award

By Staff Sgt.
Dakota Bergl
Public Affairs staff

The 434th Mission Support Group was recently awarded the Tech. Sgt. Anthony C. Campbell Jr. Trophy in recognition of being the best Mission Support Group in 4th Air Force.

The award was presented Oct. 20 at the annual commander's conference at 4th Air Force Headquarters at March Air Reserve Base, California.

"I'm honored that we were selected," said Col. Scott Russell, 434th Mission Support Group commander. "Our folks have done some tremendous things and I'm glad they received the recognition they so richly deserve."

"There were several extremely competitive groups this year," said Lt. Col. Eddy Palacios, Headquarters 4th Air Force Campbell Award Board chair. "The 434 MSG out of Grissom ARB, Ind., however was the stand-out in the group. We are continually astounded by the great capabilities, and equally great spirit and 'can do' attitude that the 434 MSG demonstrated to earn this recognition."

In addition to running the day-to-day operations of the base support function, the MSG stepped up for some major projects, initiatives and missions during the year.

Over \$50 million in critical construction projects are being managed by the team including a \$36 million fuel hydrant system.

"The fuel hydrant system is significant because it



U.S. Air Force photo by Linda Welz

Col. Scott Russell, 434th Mission Support Group commander, accepts the 2016 Tech. Sgt. Anthony C. Campbell, Jr. Award for the best Mission Support Group in 4th Air Force at the 17th Annual Raincross Dinner in Riverside, California, Oct. 20.

is a major investment in Grissom's future," said Col. Larry Shaw 434th Air Refueling Wing commander.

The MSG commander is often referred to as 'the mayor' of Grissom because the amount of organizations and mission sets that fall under the MSG umbrella. Mission sets that keep Grissom running such as civil engineering, security, communications, force support/services, security, fire logistics, and aerial port.

Those mission sets set the table for the flying mission and maintenance missions to be accomplished and supported.

During the year hundreds of people were processed through deployment and re-deployment processing lines. The MSG is responsible for those lines.

"When it comes to processing personnel we sweat what others may

see as 'the small stuff,'" said Lt. Col. Barbara Cheeks, 434th Force Support Squadron commander. "We care about our members, and we want to ensure that Airmen and their families have all their deployment requirements and personal business taken care of."

"This allows our Airmen to focus on the mission once they arrive at the deployed location," she added.

At home, Grissom's fitness center became the first in the Air Force Reserve Command to go to 24-hour operations.

MSG personnel also impacted the future of others in a positive way.

Through the Denton program, the MSG supported humanitarian relief sending rice and clothing to impoverished and war-torn nations.

"People enjoy the mission, they get a sense of motivation, putting togeth-

er the cargo and the end product is helping others," said Master Sgt. Laurie Latchaw, 49th Aerial Port Flight deputy superintendent.

Another important mission that helped set Grissom apart in the award was explosive ordnance disposal.

During the award period, Grissom EOD personnel rendered safe 11 live munitions at the request of local law enforcement agencies.

"When you look back at all we've done, there is a lot to be proud of," Russell said. "I hope that every MSG member knows they were vital to us winning this award, and vital to the mission at Grissom."

The Award honors the explosive ordnance disposal technician who was killed Dec. 15, 2009, while attempting to steer his team clear of an improvised explosive device in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

DDRP aims to provide substance abuse education

By Staff Sgt. Dakota Bergl
Public Affairs staff

The Air Force's Drug Demand Reduction Program isn't the most exciting program on the base, but it is integral to Airman health and safety.

The assumption might be that the program is only about performing drug testing, however there is much more that goes into drug demand reduction.

Juanita Withrow, 434th Air Refueling Wing drug demand reduction program manager, said the drug testing is only a small percentage of her job. Much of her time is spent educating Airmen on substance abuse prevention.

"I focus more on prevention, educating Airmen on the effects of drugs and helping them avoid substance abuse," said Withrow. "The numbers show that educating Airmen is working; there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of people using illegal substances in recent years."

Withrow said she wants to begin setting up an unmanned display around the base during UTAs in order to help educate Airmen about illegal substances.

"I have this display with information about all kinds of different substances that I'd like to set up," she said. "It would be unmanned so people wouldn't feel like they had to avoid anyone pushing information at them; they could look at it whenever they had a few minutes."

Despite preferring to focus on prevention, drug testing is still an important aspect of Withrow's job. Following collection, the samples must be secured and recorded to avoid tampering before they are sent for testing.

"We have to keep everything tightly controlled," said Withrow. "We have to keep a strict chain of custody to ensure that nothing can be tampered with or damaged. Each person within that chain is trained in the proper procedures and handling of the samples because anyone might be called to



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Dakota Bergl

Senior Airman Melissa Tatum-Wilder, 434th Aerospace Medical Squadron dental assistant, and Tech. Sgt. John Dietz, 434th AMDS dental technician, sign the chain of custody form for a drug test sample October 2, at Grissom.

testify in court. We need to be certain that everyone is prepared for that and does their job the same for each sample."

Withrow also stressed the importance of members reporting any medication they are prescribed as soon as possible to prevent any confusion or possible ramifications.

"If you are prescribed anything you should let the clinic know right away," she said. "If you are on a prescription and get drug tested your medication might cause a positive. Once that happens, we will look back through your records, and if it was caused by a prescription then we note it and nothing else will happen. It's much harder to clear up if you don't report the prescription until after a drug test."

Withrow also wants Airmen to be aware that marijuana and THC are still federally illegal and shouldn't be used by service members.

"If we detect THC during a drug test there is no review process," said Withrow. "We go directly to discipline. THC is legal in certain states but the Air Force still has a strict no tolerance policy regarding its use."

Withrow concluded with a warn-

ing for Airmen about the importance of paying attention to the ingredients in their food and supplements. Due to the increased use of hemp oil and hemp seeds in foods and supplements it is possible for a drug test to come back positive for THC by consuming products made with hemp.

"Hemp seed and hemp oil are seen more frequently in products these days," said Withrow. "Because of this, Airmen should check on the contents of supplements they may be considering consuming. In order to ensure military readiness, the ingestion of products containing or products derived from hemp seed or hemp seed oil is prohibited."

Col. Larry Shaw, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, echoed Withrow's sentiments, stressing the importance of reporting new medications and avoiding illegal substances.

"The bottom line is people just need to do what they need to do when it comes to alerting the clinic on their medications; and to not do what they aren't supposed to do when it comes to illegal drug use," said Shaw.

Purdue aviation students tour Grissom

By Tech. Sgt.
Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

The long-term success of an organization depends on those who will manage it in the future, and Grissom takes pride in developing its future force.

That pride was recently exemplified during a tour in which 30 Purdue University aviation students visited the base to learn more about the base and how their degrees related to military careers here, Nov. 19, 2016.

The visit began with a tour of Grissom's air traffic control tower and radar approach control facility which provides control for all aircraft traveling between Chicago and Indianapolis, going as far west as Lafayette, Ind., up to 10,000 feet.

"Seeing an actual working tower & radar facility gave [students] a glimpse into the world of a controller," said Todd Brewer, Purdue University shop supervisor, who organized the tour. "They talk to controllers on the radio, and it was great to meet some face to face."

Following the tour of the ATC facilities, students had an opportunity to see a static display of one of Grissom's 16 KC-135R Stratotankers.

During the tour of the aircraft, visitors had an opportunity to ask aircrew questions to get a better understanding of their careers in the military.

"Everyone we en-



Aviation students from Purdue University, Ind. pose with a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135R Stratotanker during a tour at Grissom Nov. 19.

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

countered were extremely friendly, knowledgeable and professional and the aircraft was immaculate!" said Brewer. "Considering

it was almost 60 years old, the tanker looked brand new! Its condition is a real testament to the skill of Grissom's maintenance staff."

Grissom holds base tours for groups of 15 or more. More information about tours can be found on the questions link on Grissom's website.



Brandon Rockman, 434th Operations Support Squadron air traffic control specialist, shows students from Purdue University, Indiana ATC manages during their tour at Grissom Nov. 19.

CP staff conducts live fire extinguisher training

By Staff Sgt. Dakota Bergl
Public Affairs staff

If you aren't a fire fighter your instinct is probably to run away from a fire, but for one office at Grissom that isn't an option.

In order to ensure Grissom's continued effectiveness, the Airmen who work in the command post are trained to try to fight a fire, if one occurs, instead of evacuating.

Each year they receive special hands-on fire extinguisher training so that they have practice using an extinguisher if they are faced with a fire.

On October 2, the Grissom

Fire Department set up a small fire trainer behind the command post building, and the command post staff tried their hand at putting out a fire.

Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Withrow, 434th Air Refueling Wing command post superintendent, believes that the hands-on training was important to ensure his employees are more comfortable putting out a fire.

"Due to the nature of our job we can't leave the command post unmanned," said Withrow. "If there is a fire and it is small enough for us to fight we have to be ready to do that. We've been doing this training for several years now, and

it's a great program to give our staff a chance to put out a fire in a safe environment."

Les McConnell, Grissom Fire Department assistant chief, said the odds of having to use the skills they covered in the training is slim but knowing what it's like to put out a fire would help in an emergency.

"The chance of there being a fire in one of the regular office buildings on base is remote, but it can still happen," said McConnell. "This training lets them get experience using the extinguisher. They get to feel the heat of an actual fire which I think makes a big difference."



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Dakota Bergl

Senior Airman Dominic Zaffino, 434th Air Refueling Wing command post controller, puts out a fire during hands-on fire extinguisher training at Grissom October 2., while members of the Grissom Fire Department oversee the training.

Grissom Airmen earn CCAF degrees

By Staff Sgt.
Dakota Bergl
Public Affairs staff

Not only are many of the Air Force's enlisted members able to call themselves graduates of basic military training, they can also call themselves college graduates.

This is now true for 43 Airmen assigned to the 434 Air Refueling Wing as they recently earned their Community College of the Air Force degrees.

Below are the names of those earning their associates in applied science degrees in the following areas of study:

Aircrew Safety Systems Technology:

Tech. Sgt. Russell Fernald, 434th Operations Support Squadron
Staff Sgt. Christina Howland, 434th OSS
Senior Master Sgt. Michael Pershing, 434th OSS

Allied Health Sciences:
Staff Sgt. Deborah Ryan, 72nd Air Refueling Squadron

Aviation Maintenance Technology:

Tech. Sgt. Daniel Apolinar, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Staff Sgt. Fredrick Beck, 434th AMXS

Staff Sgt. Matthew Jindrich, 434th Maintenance Squadron

Senior Airmen Priyank Machhar, 434th MXS
Staff Sgt. Albert Sarroca, 434th MXS

Tech. Sgt. Craig Ward, 434th AMXS

Aviation Operations:

Staff Sgt. Deborah Ryan, 72nd ARS

Avionic Systems Technology:

Tech. Sgt. Joshua Frankum, 434th AMXS

Bioenvironmental Engineering Technology:

Staff Sgt. Damon Spradlin, 434th MXS

Construction Technology:

Senior Airman Sara Nielsen, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron

Criminal Justice:

Staff Sgt. Richard Barrett, 434th Security Forces Squadron

Staff Sgt. Jade Bess, 434th SFS

Staff Sgt. Krystal Collier, 434th SFS

Staff Sgt. Michelle Curtiss, 434th SFS

Staff Sgt. Julie Hazelett, 434th SFS

Master Sgt. Tony Russell, 434th SFS

Staff Sgt. Timothy Sommers, 434th SFS

Master Sgt. James Strode, 434th SFS

Education and Training Management:

Staff Sgt. Robert Grasmick, 434th Maintenance Group

Tech. Sgt. James Walejewski, 434th Force Support Squadron

Financial Management:
Senior Airman Kaila Culpepper, 434th ARW

Fire Science:

Master Sgt. Nicholas Ward, 434th CES

Health Care Management:
Senior Master Sgt. Robert Laviolette, 434th Aerospace Medical Squadron

Hospitality and Fitness Management:

Staff Sgt. Michael Boyd, 434th FSS

Human Resource Management:

Staff Sgt. Takiyah Hall, 434th MXG

Master Sgt. Terry Way, 434th Communications Squadron

Information Management:

Staff Sgt. Jeni Ahearn, 434th AMDS

Staff Sgt. Kara Curtis,

434th ARW

Information Systems Technology:

Staff Sgt. Sergio Barajas, 434th CS

Master Sgt. Steven Price, 434th CS

Mechanical and Electrical Technology:

Tech. Sgt. David Robinson-Johnson, 434th CES

Staff Sgt. Darin Simpson, 434th CES

Metals Technology:

Master Sgt. James Massie, 434th MXS

Non-Destructive Testing Technology:

Staff Sgt. Albert Sarroca, 434th MXS

Pharmacy Technology:

Senior Airman Melissa Tatum Wilder, 434th AMDS

Practical Nursing Technology:

Senior Airman Qiana Jackson, 434th AMDS

Master Sgt. Alicia Santana, 434th SFS

Staff Sgt. Omar Tellez, 74th Air Refueling Squadron

Transportation:

Master Sgt. Bradley Frank, 49th Aerial Port Flight

Senior Airmen Jason Hrycaj, 49th APF

Vehicle Maintenance:

Master Sgt. Terry Way, 434th CS



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jami Lancette

Community College of the Air Force graduates pose for a photo during a CCAF graduation ceremony at Grissom Dec 4. The College annually awards over 22,000 associate degrees from 68 degree programs to Air Force members.